



HEREFORDSHIRE YOUNG PEOPLE YOUR (OUR) OFFER TO YOU.

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1. Our support to you.

“I spoke with my PA about having ambitions to become a nail technician; she supported me to find an online course that suited my needs, the course was also paid for which meant I could start training straight away!” Young person (Care Experienced).

“It has always been the ambition of Herefordshire Council, and my ambition as a Corporate Parent that we ensure the best possible support for Care Experienced Young People as they move towards adulthood. We want them to have the best start into adulthood, aim high and succeed in their ambitions whatever they may be. I am keen that whatever we do is based on listening to the experiences of young people and to get their views and understand how they feel. We have updated and refreshed our offer, and we will continue to strive to achieve our ambition with and for young people.”

Cllr. Ivan Powell Lead Member and chair of Corporate Parenting Board.

As your corporate parents in Herefordshire and your children’s grandparents, we understand leaving our care is a time of big changes in your life. You will have lots of questions about the support you can get and what services are available to help you.

We want you to leave our care at a time that is right for you.

This Local Offer provides you with information about what to expect from us as your corporate parents. When you live in our care, Herefordshire Council and other key agencies are what is known as your ‘corporate parent’.

Corporate parenting is our collective responsibility to make sure that children and young people are provided with every opportunity to lead fulfilling lives, in the same way that any good parent would do for their child. We are also responsible for helping and supporting you after you have left our care.

All the information you need is in this document however, if you would like to discuss our offer further, please make contact with your PA or call us at the office, as we are happy to help!

Your personal advisor will give you their phone number for you to contact them directly. If you need some urgent advice or support, please contact the leaving care duty worker on: 01432 261626 or come see us at the office; 33-35, Union Street, Hereford HR1 2BT.

There are also lots of national organisations campaigning for better services for care leavers. They run national consultation events, to hear your views. General advice regarding care leavers' entitlements can be found below:

BECOME Charity: <https://becomecharity.org.uk/>.

From the lead member to each member of staff within Herefordshire corporate parenting world, we want to ensure that leaving the care of Local Authority is a supportive experience for you.

Your journey towards leaving care, will start around your 16th birthday. We will start to discuss this with you and other people who are important to you around your 16th birthday. That does not mean you're ready to leave our care, it means that we want to work with you to prepare you for the journey and listen to your wishes, feelings and understand your views.

As with all young people, you will want to make decisions about whether to stay where you feel settled and want to stay on beyond your 18th birthday. You may have questions about what help and support you are entitled to and want to talk about that. It is our responsibility as your corporate parents to provide you with this information, once you read this

document, you may have further questions, want more advice and information, and so please ask us, we are here to help.

We want you to know that just because you are leaving care, we do not stop being involved in your life but you will also want to work towards independence. At this stage, we work with you to get that balance right. We want to make sure you feel safe and supported and know where to go for advice and help and that the same time have a sense of independence as well.

As your corporate parents, this is called our 'offer' to you and sometimes also known as 'the local offer.' Put simply we will help you with:

- Your money.
- Where you live.
- Your education, employment, training, and activities.
- Living healthily.
- Plus lots of other practical support too.

2. Legal information.

The section covers your rights and to what you are entitled to. So, what are your rights and entitlements? This will depend on your legal status, so it is important to understand this. The information will also be found in your pathway plan. Your personal advisor can explain all this to you and will help you to understand what help and support you can get.

The law sets out four categories of care experienced young people ¹ (care leaver categories).

¹ This document refers to the legal term 'Care leavers', young people tell us they want to be called 'young people'. Therefore, this document will use the term young people unless the term care leaver is used as

The Table below explains what you can expect from agencies in Herefordshire and your PA will discuss this with you and where else you can get support for when you leave care.

<p>You are an ELIGIBLE care leaver if</p>	<p>You are aged 16 or 17, and are currently a young person in care, and have been a cared for young person for a period of 13 weeks which began after you reached 14 and must include at least 1 day after you were 16 or 17.</p>
<p>You are a RELEVANT care leaver if</p>	<p>You are no longer being cared for by Herefordshire Local Authority but you have been ELIGIBLE and are currently aged 16 or 17.</p>
<p>You are a FORMER RELEVANT care leaver if</p>	<p>You are between 18 and 21, and before reaching 18 you were a RELEVANT young person, or immediately before you stopped being cared for you were an ELIGIBLE young person If at the age of 21 or before reaching 25 you continue to be in education or training, or If at the age of 21 or before you are 25 you wish to start a course of education or training, or If at the age of 21 or before reaching 25 if you wish to have continued support.</p>
<p>You are a QUALIFYING care leaver if</p>	<p>You are at least 16 but under 21 and were a cared for young person prior to the making of a Special Guardianship Order which was in force when you reached 18 or If at any time (but less than 13 weeks in all) after you reached 16 you were still a cared for young person but are no longer in care or were privately fostered and assessed to be in need As a QUALIFYING young person, you are able to access advice and assistance based on a discussion with your social worker if you are under 18 or a Personal Advisor with the Care Leavers Service.</p>
<p>Continued support up to the Age of 25</p>	<p>The law has also placed a duty on all Local Authorities to extend support in relation to former relevant young people who inform the Local Authority of their wish to receive a service after the age of 21 and under the age of 25.</p>

part of a legal or regulatory document. The term care experienced will be used where appropriate instead of care leaver.

3. Your PA (Personal Advisor) and Pathway Plan.

Personal advisor.

A personal advisor (PA) is an experienced young person support worker who is not a social worker but is trained to work with you as a care experienced young person on a range of issues. Your PA is there to use this document to offer you support, advice, guidance and assistance to help you develop your independence. They can help you with finding accommodation, filling in forms, understanding information and signposting you to other agencies. Being an adult involves lots of paperwork and their job is to support to fill these in and to empower you to do this for yourself, wherever possible. They will also listen to your views and help you to manage friendships and relationships which at times can be tricky!

Your PA will be in contact with you regularly and will see you face to face at least once every eight weeks or every twelve weeks if you are aged 21 and over. Their work with you can end at 21 if you have made the decision that you do not want them to have any further involvement. However, you can always come back to the team if you need additional advice and guidance. Although as a care experienced young person you have the right to PA support up to the age of 25, our door is always open for advice and we can point you to other agencies who can support you what we call 'signposting' if needed after you are 25 years old.

Your pathway plan.

A Pathway Plan is a care plan for care experienced young people between the ages of 16 and 25. It sets personal to you and your needs. It covers the help and support you will need as you move from being in care to living independently and making plans into becoming an adult and your future. Your Pathway Plan will start with an assessment of all the different areas in your life. This can include: why you are in care, your family, where you live, school, work or college, your friends and relationships, your finances, your hobbies and interests, your health, your identity, your skills in looking after yourself and what you want in the future. We will then agree a plan to help you achieve the goals, which we will agree together.

It's important to remember that the Pathway Plan is your plan. You should be able to write some of it yourself and you should always receive a copy. It should be written in language that you understand and you can ask for changes to be made to your plan if you don't understand it. You can ask for the plan to be changed, as your circumstances change and

depending whether you are eligible. Your Pathway Plan needs to be updated every six to twelve months depending on your age or if something big changes in your life. The P.A should go through these changes and legal status with you when they complete your Pathway Plan.

4. Your important documents.

As an adult, we have all need to have important documents because without them we are unable to do simple things such as applying for a course, claim benefits or open a bank account. For those who came into the country as Unaccompanied Minors, some of these documents are particularly important.

Having these documents is important, so is keeping them in a special place where you know they will be safe. You can discuss this with your PA, who will support you to organise and keep them safely.

As your corporate parents:

We will make sure that you have all the important documents you need. We will give you the original copies and keep a copy in our records.

- We will pay for one form of photographic ID such as a passport or driving licence.
- We will apply and pay for your birth certificate if you do not already have a copy.

As your corporate parents (continued):

- We will apply for your National Insurance (NI) number for you. Ask if you do not receive it. Always keep this safe.²
- We will support you to apply for your passport. This is an essential item of photo ID. Please do not lose it.
- For asylum-seeking young people, we will fund and support with an application for a travel document. We will also contribute £75 towards travel documents for former asylum-seeking young people with refugee status or with humanitarian protection status.
- If you are entitled to apply for British citizenship, we will support you in how to complete the application.
- We will discuss with you applying for your provisional driving licence. A provisional licence is an option in terms of photo ID as an alternative to a passport.
- We will also consider paying for a course of up to 20 driving lessons once you have purchased your own provisional and have booked a theory test.

² For UASC young people documentation should be obtained from the Home Office to confirm their identity.

5.Participation, engagement, and your voice being heard.

Comments, compliments, and complaints.

Corporate parents, like most parents don't always get things right. We want you to know that you have a right to raise concerns, complaints, and compliments about your experience of being supported by us and the services we offer you.

You can do this simply by leaving a comment, compliment or complaint contact or if you want to contact your PA directly or fill out the form on Herefordshire Council Website:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/council/get-involved/7>

Advocacy.

We have our own Advocacy Service with advocates who can help you if you want to raise a concern or a complaint. You can talk to your PA who can refer you or you can email the Advocacy Service directly at:

hearme@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Further information on our advocacy service can be found at:

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/family-support/hear>

Accessing your records.

You have been in Herefordshire, so we will have records of why you came into care, this is information you may or may not want to know about. You have a right to this information and to access your records.

We completely understand that, as an adult, you may have questions and want to know the details about why you were in our care. You may also want to know about what happened while you were in care, who you lived with, and other questions about your time in our care. We will always carry out a safety plan to support you when you access your

information. A manager in the service will oversee to make sure you have the support you need to have access to your records. This is natural. It is very important that you receive the support you need to answer your questions. There may be parts of these records that are fun, your school play etc. or there may be parts of the information that are emotionally difficult for you. We want to support you with the emotional need while you are going through these records.

We would recommend that you ask your social worker or PA and to support you through this. They may be able to help with access to records.

It is also your right to have an advocate, who can support you with this process. To request your files, email your request to:

Information Governance (Council) at informationgovernance@herefordshire.gov.uk. Further information can be found at [Access to information – Herefordshire Council](#)

Participation, Groups and Forums.

We want you to have opportunities to meet with likeminded young people who have had experience of care. We are currently dedicated to delivering monthly groups for LGBTQ+, Young Parents, Art & Crafts and Baking and Cooking. We want to build communities of young people and your networks, so if you have any suggestions, discuss these with your social worker or PA. You are invited to discuss your passions with our Participation Worker, and if we are unable to form a group you like, we will support you to find one available in the community.

We are also committed to hosting our United Friends Group, a group for Young People who arrived to Herefordshire unaccompanied/separated from their family. United Friends Groups alternate between being hosted virtually, in Herefordshire, and around the UK so that the group is accessible to all young people who have been in our care. We understand that you may have cultural, religious needs if you are part of this group. Discuss these with your social worker or PA. We want you to be yourself and follow your identity as you leave care.

We also host other groups when there is a demand for it, such as sports sessions, music workshops and day trips. We encourage our young people to come forward with suggestions for groups that will inspire them.

We also work with partners in the community such as Landau and MIND to deliver specialist workshops/sessions such as employability training and counselling.

We regularly invite young people to attend focus groups and board meetings to give feedback on projects within the council, so that the young person's views are always considered and welcomed.

We are also committed to having young people on interview panels when appropriate, to offer their thoughts on what professionals should be supporting them.

We have a Care Leavers Council which meets in person monthly, and more regularly when needed. The Care Leavers Council gives our young people a direct route to voice their opinions to Senior Management.

Senior Management have made a commitment to meet with 'The Care Leavers Council' throughout the year to update them on progress and set targets. These meetings allow 'The Care Leavers Council' to hold Senior Management to account, feedback on what is going well and how they can use their influence to support young people.

Young Parents Group.

We are keen to play our role when you become parents. We are of course, corporate grandparents. To support young parents' group, we have a monthly group for Young Parents.

We have a WhatsApp group that Young Parents are able to join if they wish – to share ideas, experiences and give feedback. This is an important network for parents to get tips etc. as you go through your journey as parents.

We invite our Young Parents to make suggestions for potential groups and activities that we can hold together, with a commitment to hosting a minimum of one session monthly. We link our Young Parents to valuable community partners and invite guest speakers to share advice.

Events.

All of these events are free for our young people.

Awards Ceremony.

The ceremony is a chance to celebrate the success of our 16–24-year-olds and reflect on all of their fantastic achievements; this happens on a yearly basis.

Staff and Young Person Football Match.

The annual football match where staff from the council and our partners compete against our young people in a game of football.

National Care Leavers Week.

Events put on throughout the week include music, sport, cooking and trip away. We commit to getting you to Hereford so that you can attend events during National Care Leavers Week.

Festivals/Celebrations.

We are keen to celebrate religious or other festivals. These are planned with the United Friends Group.

Christmas Baking.

Coming together in the community each year to bake Christmas related treats to take home, so that you can enjoy them over Christmas. We will also support young people to make Christmas dinner, by using our network to provide food hampers when necessary.

Christmas Party.

The party is typically held the week before Christmas, we have a DJ, food and lots of Christmas games! It is a really fun event to get you into the Christmas spirit.

6. Where you live:

Where you live is important for your overall wellbeing. This section covers what is available to you, positive options for where you live and what to avoid, how to access support when you find yourself either homeless or living somewhere that does not feel safe to you.

We start having conversations with you about where you live when you leave care at the age of 16, but we hope that you will stay in care until you are 18. Most young people still live at home with their families at this age. If you are living with your foster carer and want to stay there until you are 21, we can help you to do so – this is called a ‘Staying Put’ arrangement. If you decide to leave care before 18, as a corporate parent we have a ‘duty’ to provide you with suitable accommodation. This may be living with others in a shared setting or it could mean living alone.

When you tell us that you are ready to live independently, your PA will help you to do this by putting you in touch with the Housing PA. This is a person who has knowledge about what is available and what is safe for you. They will put you in touch with a housing worker who will explain all your housing options to you. They will talk you through the different options such as social housing, private rented accommodation and supported housing.

You will be fully involved in all decisions. We will review your living arrangements every six months as part of your Pathway Plan review. We will ensure a PA visits you within a week of you moving into a new home and then visits every two months after that. We have a 'Housing Protocol' which covers your housing needs and your PA can go through this with you.

Sometimes you might need a 'rent guarantor'. That is someone who will pay your deposit when you move into your accommodation. The PA can go through this with you and there might be occasions when we can act as your rent guarantor once we go through your financial information with you.

Homelessness and unsuitable accommodation.

Sometimes you may be living somewhere you don't feel safe or there might be problems with your tenancy or people you live with. You can get in touch with your PA to support you to find accommodation. If you find yourself without a home, they will work with you and housing to find the best options for you. As corporate parents our housing department will want to ensure that you have the highest priority for housing when you need it. Your PA can support you with this.

As corporate parents, we would be concerned if you are living in other people's sofas (sofa surfing) or find yourself street homeless. You can get in touch with us to find solutions together:

<https://www.home-point.info/>

Council Tax.

You are entitled to council tax exemption. We will support you to claim all eligible council tax benefits and reductions. We offer the same exemption support for our care leavers who are living outside of Herefordshire.

7.Your health:

Being healthy does not mean just being physically healthy. It also means taking care of your mental, emotional and sexual health. There are plenty of resources available to support you with all aspects of your health.

You may have had a Health Assessments when you were under 18 years old and this means you will have met with a Children in Care Nurse. You will no longer have health assessments once you turn 18 years of age. However, a Children in Care Nurse should meet with you around your 18th birthday to provide you with your Health Passport. If you do not receive this you need to let your allocated PA know.

The Children in Care Nurses will ensure that appropriate information is shared, with your consent, across health and social care services, so that you continue to receive services that support adults. They should also provide any relevant updates to your GP.

We advise that you find a GP, Dentist and Opticians service that suits you and is near to where you live. You can look up GP surgeries and dentist to see what they offer and how they compare - use the links below.

Your PA can support you with signing up to a GP, Dentist and Optician and support you to some appointments if this is what you want! It is always a good idea to tell your PA who your GP is. You can go to find a doctor website on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp>

If you are getting welfare benefits you should be able to access free dental and optical care. They are also free if you are under 18 years and/or in full-time education.

If you are awaiting asylum or appeal rights exhausted, you will be supported to complete what is known as an HC2 certificate for help with health costs. If you apply to the NHS Low Income Scheme and receive an HC2 certificate for help with health costs, you are entitled to:

- Free NHS prescriptions.
- Free NHS dental treatment.
- Free NHS sight tests' help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses.
- Help with the cost of travelling to receive NHS treatment.
- Free NHS wigs and fabric supports.

You can get further information on the NHS Health costs website:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme/hc2-certificates-full-help-health-costs>

Free prescriptions Everyone is entitled to free prescriptions in the circumstances listed below:

- You're under 16 or over 60.
- You're in full-time education and 16-18 years old.
- You're pregnant or gave birth in the last 12 months and have a valid maternity exemption certificate (known as a 'MatEx'). It's valid for 12 months after your due date, though can be extended if your baby is born later than expected.
- You have a valid medical exemption certificate (known as a 'MedEx') – given for a range of illnesses, such as epilepsy or cancer, or severe disability.
- You or your partner receive income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, income-related employment & support allowance, or pension credit guarantee credit.
- You're receiving universal credit and your earnings for the most recent assessment period were £435 or less.
- You're under 20 and are the dependant of someone who receives income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, income-related employment & support allowance, pension credit guarantee credit. In some instances, you may also qualify if you claim universal credit.
- You have a war pension exemption certificate.
- You're an NHS inpatient.

Free prescriptions Everyone is entitled to free prescriptions in the circumstances listed below (continued):

- If you're entitled to or named on: a valid NHS tax credit exemption certificate – if you don't have a certificate, you can show your award notice.
- An NHS certificate for partial help with health costs (HC3) which may also provide access to some assistance towards prescription costs.

You can find further information about the NHS Low Income Scheme (LIS) on the NHS website, again on the same pages:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme/hc2-certificates-full-help-health-costs>

Sexual health.

If you need any support with your sexual health talk to your PA and they will help you to access the services that you need. You can also talk to your GP or visit Herefordshire's Sexual Health Services website:

<https://sexualhealthservices4herefordshire.co.uk>

If you are having sex or thinking about it, please protect yourself against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

You can discuss any further support you need on sexual health and relationships with your PA.

Substance misuse.

We can support you to access substance misuse (drug and alcohol) support if you need it from Turning Point in Herefordshire. For services local to you and near where you live, talk to your PA and they can help you to access advice, information, drop-in services, structured treatment, and counselling and/or harm reduction techniques.

8.Well Being.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing support healthy eating and exercise on a budget.

We care about your emotional wellbeing. If you need someone to talk to about how you are feeling and your emotional help, we can help to access help and support.

MIND, run a clinic from the Union Street Office every week, usually on a Friday.

CLD Trust (FTB) will offer you specialist mental health services up to the age of 25yrs if you need those and live in Herefordshire. They provide a range of services, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, counselling, solution focused therapy and Systemic Family Practice.

27A can also offer some support with mental health. To access some of these services you will need to speak with your social worker or PA. You may also need your GP to refer you to this service. Having contact with friends, relatives or reconnecting with them can be a positive experience. If you want support, we will support you to stay connected or re-connect with relatives, friends and those that are important to you. We can support in working through some of these relationships and how to reconnect.

You can access this service up until you are 25yrs. They will support you regardless of your circumstances, such as, if you are in custody. They understand that spending time in care can often lead to losing touch with important people, including friends, family, carers, neighbours, teachers or even pets! You can discuss this with your PA and work out a plan that is right for you about who to contact when.

Eating well.

Part of our wellbeing as an adult is to shop for, prepare and eat healthy food within our budgets. The care leaver service has cookery sessions if you would like to learn to cook or just get ideas about cooking.

- Tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables can be cheaper and last a lot longer.
- Take some support from your PA and websites like JACK on budgeting advice for more tips.

Local Resources

- The Living Room, they offer support to access grants, will provide you with an emergency food parcel and offer a Community Larder; for just £5, you get your bag of shopping with a minimum of 10 items. Items available will depend on the stock they have. Anyone can be a member, this scheme isn't means-tested. Please visit <https://www.thelivingroomhereford.co.uk/>
- Hereford Food Bank, if you are short of food and need help you can make contact with the Leaving Care team who will make a referral to the food bank. You can find a list of other agencies that can make a referral at <https://herefordfoodbank.co.uk/>

Our team can talk with you about domestic abuse, your individual situation and the various types of help and support available to you, including:

- On-going listening support – now, and in the future.
- Refuge space or other safe accommodation.
- One-to-one support and advocacy, safety planning and advice on protection through the legal system for those who are at risk of harm.
- Recovery Pathway – group programmes for those who are still in, or who have left abusive relationships.

Our team can talk with you about domestic abuse, your individual situation and the various types of help and support available to you, including (continued):

- Support for men, including specific support from the Male Victim Service in Worcestershire.
- Referral and signposting to other appropriate agencies.

Gym membership.

We offer a free membership to Halo Gyms for if you are a Relevant or Former Relevant young person up to the age of 25years old. If you are out of county, we will contribute up to towards your membership to attend your local gym. Please speak with your PA or contact the team if you would like a membership for the gym.

Up until you're 18, you might be entitled to a gym and leisure allowance. (See section above on Gym). Some areas in Hereford have free outdoor gyms. There may be other free health and wellbeing activities and apps to help you keep active and maintain a healthy weight.

Mindfulness and Meditation.

Wellbeing can include free sessions on mindfulness and meditation. These are offers for adults who are either facing stress or just want to feel better and more peaceful in their lives. You can find some free sessions and can discuss opportunities to access these with your PA.

Domestic Abuse Support.

Domestic Abuse is when *'Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.*

³This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- **Psychological**
- **Physical**
- **Sexual**
- **Financial**
- **Emotional**

The Government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

'Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate And/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their Resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed. For independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and Intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

The Government definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. Domestic abuse can take different forms, it is wide ranging. If you feel that you are a victim of domestic abuse, we know how hard it can be to make that first call – your PA can refer you to services that can provide support including having a safe place to stay and to keep yourself safe.

There are services in Herefordshire that your PA can refer you to. These include men as well as women victims of abuse and those in same sex and Trans relationships.

Your PA can provide information and advice on safety planning, reporting to the Police, housing, and access to both our own services and those of other agencies.

Sometimes the most effective thing they do is just to listen, and believe, and let callers know that they are not alone and that there is help out there for them – as and when they are ready.

³ Home Office definition of Domestic Abuse.

Women's Aid can talk with you about domestic abuse, your individual situation and the various types of help and support available to you, including:

- On-going listening support – now, and in the future.
- Refuge space or other safe accommodation.
- One-to-one support and advocacy, safety planning and advice on protection through the legal system for those who are at risk of harm.
- Recovery Pathway – group programmes for those who are still in, or who have left abusive relationships.
- Support for men, including specific support from the Male Victim Service in Worcestershire.
- Referral and signposting to other appropriate agencies. Please visit <https://www.westmerciawomensaid.org/> or make contact with your PA and they can support you to seek help. If you urgently need help as you fear for your safety call 999.

Police and custody.

If you are under 25 years of age and find yourself in a West Mercia police station, the police should ask you if you are a care leaver. If they don't, please tell them so they can contact us. We will then contact you to offer you support.

If you are a former relevant care leaver and in custody, we will continue to offer you support up to the age of 25yrs. If, however, you do not want to be supported after you are 21yrs, then please let your PA know.

Other useful emotional wellbeing services:

MIND.

Call 0300 123 3393 or text 86463

<https://www.mind.org.uk>

Samaritans.

Call 116 123

<https://www.samaritans.org>

Every Mind Matters.

Talk to us and we will listen.

Open Monday-Friday 10am-5pm

Call us: 0800 023 2033.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>

WhatsApp: 0786 003 4982

<https://becomecharity.org.uk/get-support/care-advice-line/>

As corporate parents, we want to build on this offer and are working to source other services that might be of support to you for your wellbeing.

Young People as Parents.

Becoming a parent whether you are a mother or a father is a life changing experience. We want to support you and your child in this journey. The service is developing an offer for Care Experienced Parents. You have told us that you do not want to have groups for parents, so we will keep our conversations with you and develop services that are supportive and helpful for you. Our health colleagues are keen to work with us to provide this support.

9. Your Education, Employment and Training:

Education.

Being engaged in education, employment or training will help you with your chosen career path and move towards independence. Further education is essential for you to gain qualifications that you will need when searching for employment later. However, college and university are not the only options. There are training and apprenticeship schemes that are very popular and can be a good way to learn whilst you earn an income. There is a lot of information in this section so please take your time to read all the information below.

When you are in education pre -18 years you will be supported by your social worker and a staff member from the virtual school. Your aspirations and educational needs will be assessed and captured in both your pathway plan and your Personal Education Plan (PEP). Your PA, they will also support you, both practically and to make decisions about what is best for you.

If you want to attend further education (college or similar) your PA will help with your application and will help to choose the right course for you, they will support you to visit provisions if you do not have someone to go with.

You will also be entitled to apply for funds and grants to support you. However, these can change each Academic year. The sorts of things available are: 16-19 years bursary; you will need to apply for this bursary from your Student Services Advisor at school or college before you start your course.

The money is to support with education-related costs and is given by the education provider. You will need to be clear about the requirements for you to be eligible, such as, for example, 95% attendance, good behaviour etc.

Discretionary learner support fund.

This comes from your education provider. Tell your PA if you are having difficulty accessing this and they will help you.

Care to learn.

This is a grant for young parents aged 20yrs and under to help with nursery and childminder costs. Again, if you are struggling to access this tell you're PA and they will help you.

Applying for university.

If you are thinking about applying for university, please speak to your social worker or your PA. They will be able to assist with the course and Student Finance Loan application, to cover tuition fees. We will cover travel costs to open days and pay your UCAS fee. We will also provide you with a supporting letter that confirms you have been in our care as this will open additional support for you from the university. If you decide to go to university, we will support you to do your first degree, assist you with your student accommodation including, where agreed, during holiday periods and provide you with additional financial support.

Applying for university (continued):

You can use some of your Setting Up Home Allowance, to cover some costs such as duvets, pots, pans etc. We will support you with a fortnightly allowance. See the 'your money' section for our financial support offer and other support you can get with money.

Our support offer extends to young people over 21yrs and up to 25yrs. We will also support you to undertake a postgraduate course for one further year if that starts before you reach 25yrs. We will ask you to sign our higher education consent form that gives us permission to talk to your university to make sure you are getting on okay. You should also be able to access additional support from the university who often have additional funds and grants for Care Experienced Young People.

You can find more information from the UCAS website:

<https://www.ucas.com/>

You can also visit <https://becomecharity.org.uk/get-support/propel/> this is a website for young people that are Care Experienced and sets out all the support available to you from universities and colleges.

Universities and higher education colleges must make provision for students with disabilities, including some long-term conditions and specific learning difficulties. They will have a Disability Advisor or Learning Coordinator who should help you. If you are struggling to find out who this is or you do not feel you are getting the support you need, tell us and we can help.

The Care Experienced HE Bursary, a total of £2,000 across the entirety of your course which is paid in fortnightly instalments, unless agreed otherwise. In order to access this fund the Local Authority would like you to have: • regular visits and contacts with your 18+ Personal Advisor.

If you have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) this may continue until you are 25yrs old if you are in school or further education. Your PA will support you up to 25yrs if you need them to. When your EHCP is due to come to an end, we will work with relevant services such as Adult Social Care so that you know where to go if you need advice and support.

If you go to university or other educational provision, there will be support available to you such as Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs).

Apprenticeships.

There is additional information also available via Hoople Recruitment who have their own Apprentice Programme in the Local Authority.

Apprenticeships can also be another way of achieving higher education without accruing the university debt as they are available at several levels, from level 2 (GCSE) to level 7 (Master's degree). You could receive a government bursary of £1000 to help you to transition into work. It is your employer's responsibility to apply for this and so you will need to tell them you have been in our care for them to make the application.

Looking for work.

If you prefer to work, we will provide you with a one-off payment of £50 to purchase interview clothes (for those 18-25yrs). We will also help you with interview practice, assist you to apply for jobs and to create your CV. This is currently completed in a workshop that we have with the DWP, how drop into Union Street monthly. If you would like one to one support please speak to your PA.

10. Your Money.

This section will provide you with information on what financial assistance is available to you. The amount of money you get depends on your age and where you live. Being able to manage your money is important when moving to independence. If you don't know how to budget and spend your money wisely, then you may struggle when you live on your own. Your PA will help you with this.

If you do not have capacity to manage your money, we will support you to identify who should look after it for you and support you to make the decisions you can. We will only do this once we have done a specialist assessment called a Mental Capacity Assessment.

Welfare benefits and other additional benefits.

We will help you to apply for welfare benefits to which you are entitled. This is constantly changing and so the best place to look for the latest information is www.gov.uk. We will need your help to help us to support you to make your claim for benefits; such as giving us consent to speak to your work coach. You really need to attend all your appointments at the Jobcentre and engage with your Work Coach. If you don't, it is likely to lead to problems with your claim and benefits not being paid. If this happens, we will support you to do what you need to get your benefits and consider practical assistance, such as shopping vouchers, to assist you.

As of January 2023, Claims for Universal Credit can be started one month before your 18th birthday. Universal credit is a single monthly payment for those in or out of work. There are two parts to it – a payment to you for your living expenses and a payment to help you pay your rent. The rent part must be paid to your landlord.

If you are unable to claim benefits (not legally entitled to claim benefits) then we will offer you a weekly living allowance. This payment will be the equivalent to state benefits. You will be expected to use this for your living costs in the same way you would your benefits. Ideally, these payments will be made directly into your bank account. If needed, we can pay cash or in vouchers while we help you to get your bank account sorted.

If you would like access to finance advice you can speak to your PA about how to access the welfare support Service (In Herefordshire). You can also be signed posted to your local Citizen Advice Bureau, which is nationwide.

Your savings account.

If you have been in care for a long period of time you will have a savings account. You can access this once you turn 18yrs. You can find out more about the savings scheme on the ShareFound website <https://www.sharefound.org/>.

Setting Up Home Allowance.

You are entitled to a Setting Up Home Allowance. This is an allowance to help you to set up your home. It is used to buy essential items. Wherever possible, we order things online, which helps to make sure things are good quality and you are getting the things you really need.

If you turned 18 years old after April 2023 or did not use your allowance you are entitled to £3,000, an increase of £1,000 from 2022.

18th birthday allowance you are entitled to a birthday gift of £150 on your 18th birthday.

Bursaries when in higher education.

If you are in higher education, you are entitled to bursaries. You are entitled to a maximum of £2,000 paid over three years of study, paid in three instalments, one for each academic year. We would expect most students in higher education to pay for their own travel between home and their place of study. There is lots of additional financial support for your education, training, or employment.

If you are in custody.

Financial incentive if in custody/released from custody If you are a Former Relevant Care Experienced Young Person in custody who is engaging in positive activities whilst in prison (e.g. training/education) we will offer a financial incentive of £20 per month for those 18 yrs up to 25 yrs.

If you are a former relevant care leaver released from custody before your 25th birthday, then on release you will receive:

- one month's travel pass to help you attend all appointments and see friends.
- £100 clothing allowance.
- A smartphone with a pay as you go sim card with a £20 top up voucher (for 2 months).

Conclusion.

There is a lot on offer and a lot to think about when you leave care. The key is to know what you are entitled to and be supported in your journey to becoming an adult. The journey into adulthood is an ongoing one and there are services available for you into this change but also after you leave care whether it is at 21 years old or at 25 years old, and also depending on your entitlement. As your corporate parents we are determined to work with you to have the best journey into adulthood.