

# 16+ LEAVING CARE TEAM



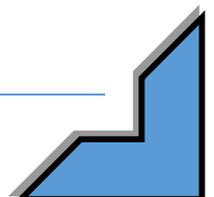
**BARKING & DAGENHAM CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
COMPLEX NEEDS AND SOCIAL CARE  
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# YOUNG PERSONS GUIDE TO SERVICES

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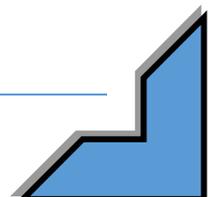
## LEARN 2 LIVE TEAM

### Welcome to the Leaving Care Service

Most young people, by the time reach the age of 15, are thinking about what they want to do in the future, when they are independent. You may wish to move on towards independence at 16, 18 or later than that. Whenever it is, you and the people around you need to know what is on offer to you and what your options are so that you can plan ahead. Learn 2 Live Leaving Care Service is here to help with that.

As you have been in the care of Barking & Dagenham Children's Services, by law we must provide support to you when you leave care in a number of ways. We have to

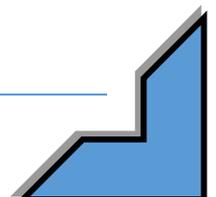
- Make a detailed assessment of your needs
- Record plans for your future in a Pathway Plan until you are 21/24
- Provide you with money to live on until you are 18.
- Provide you with accommodation until you are 18
- Provide a 'personal advisor' to work with you – usually your social worker or leaving care worker
- Provide education, training and employment advice and support – sometimes financial
- Advise you about your general health and wellbeing



## LEARN 2 LIVE TEAM LEAVING CARE SERVICE

**A Leaving Care Worker will be available for every Care Leaver when they leave care.** Your Leaving Care Worker can:

- Advise you of your rights and responsibilities and the services available to help you. They can also advise you on how to complain should you need to.
- Provide help to ensure that you get the benefits you are entitled to at the right age.
- Help you to fulfil your potential in education, training and employment.
- Tell you about the different types of accommodation that you may be able to access.
- Tell you about the Leaving Care grant and how this can be used when furnishing your new home.
- Help you to promote and maintain relationships after leaving care.
- Help you to complete your pathway plan, helping you to plan the best way forward for you and identify the parts of your life that you need assistance with.
- Offer help in case of a crisis
- Generally support you in transition from care to adulthood
- Enable you to complete an exit interview, which is an opportunity for you to comment on your experience of being in care. Your give opinions help shape the care system for the better for young people in the future



## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN?

When you are 15 your Social Worker will make a referral to the Leaving Care service. A meeting will then be arranged between you, your Social Worker, your career and the Leaving Care Team to give you the chance to find out more about the service.

After your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday your Social Worker will complete a needs assessment and pathway plan with you. The purpose of this is to look at plans for your future and decide what will do what when.

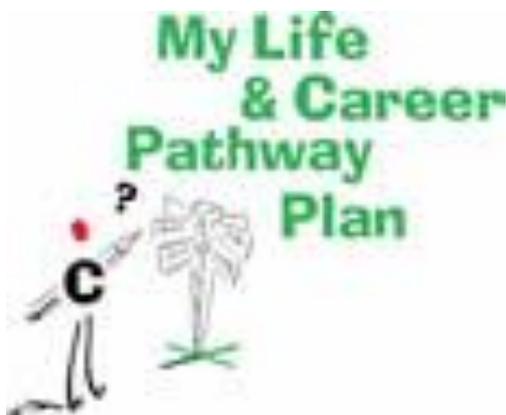
After your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday it may be that you stop seeing your Social Worker and your Leaving Care Worker will be the main person to support you. Their role will be more to co-ordinate services for you as you move towards independence. The Leaving Care service is involved with you until you are 21 (or 25 if you are in higher education).

### Your Pathway Plan

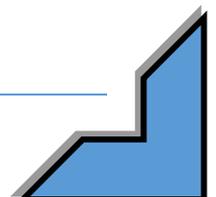
When you are 16 years your Social Worker will be working with you on a new pathway plan. This is a record of your plans for the immediate and longer term future and contingency plans in case your wishes are not possible, or you change your mind. There will be a copy on your file and you will also have a copy of it. Your pathway plan will be reviewed every six months until you are 21.

Your pathway plan will include information on:

- Family and social relationships, and personal support
- Practical skills
- Accommodation
- Education, training and employment
- Your health and development
- Details of any children you have if you are a parent
- Financial support
- Legal issues



Pathway plans are **“Road maps”** and other **navigation aids** showing **connections** between life experiences, personal goals, education, skill progression, and career **opportunities**.



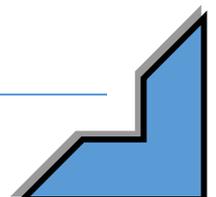


## ACCOMMODATION

### Moving On

Before you leave care you will meet with your Leaving Care Worker and discuss the appropriate accommodation for you. When you decide to leave care, your allocated worker will tell you what sort of accommodation is available. Where possible you will be offered a choice in type and location of accommodation. The Learn 2 Live team will be responsible for your rent if you are under 18. A package of support will go with the accommodation that you reside in to assist you with your self-care skills. I.e. how you pay your bills and buying essential furniture or equipment and weekly shopping. A contingency plan (Plan B) will need to be in place in case the accommodation you first move to doesn't work for you. In extreme or unavoidable circumstances you may need to use emergency accommodation. The different types of accommodation available for care leavers include:

- **16+ Semi Independence Supported lodgings.**  
This involves living in the home of another person or family, who will provide you with a room, support and guidance. It is different from foster care in that you have your own money and will be more independent and responsible for far more than you would in a foster placement.
- **16+ Semi Independence Vinerie.**  
This involves you living in shared accommodation with other young people from the community. You will always have your own room but the support available and what communal areas you will need to share.
- **16+ Semi Independence 24hr Supported Accommodation.**  
This is shared accommodation in a property with a regular package of support from an organisation that owns the property. Staff are based there and sleep in. 24hrs support is offered on site at all times.
- **18+ Share House of multiple occupancy.**  
With this accommodation you live with a small number of other care leavers in a house and share communal areas, you will have your own bedroom. Support is provided through different services based in the community. Workers, will visit the house regularly to see you and are available via telephone after office hours.
- **18+ Foyer / YMCA**  
This is accommodation where you may start in a shared assessment section of the building before moving into your own self-contained room. Resident that live there are aged 18 to 24. Often there are other activities taking place within the service. You will have a keyworker who meets with you at least once a week.



- **18+ Staying Put**

From the age of 18 you are no longer 'in care' or 'looked after' and therefore fostering arrangements will no longer apply to you. In circumstances where a former relevant child remains with their former foster carer after the age of 18, the arrangement should therefore be deemed as 'remaining with their former foster carer' or a 'staying put' arrangement. The term 'arrangement' should be used rather than placement. Once you reach the age of 18 and legal adulthood, the local authority is no longer making a placement, but maintaining a 'staying put' arrangement for a Former Relevant Child.

When you are 18, your allocated worker will help you register for social housing if you are eligible and they feel you are ready to manage your own accommodation. If you are not working when you are 18 your allocated worker will help you apply for the relevant benefits and help you set up and move into your temporary accommodation.



## LIVING COSTS

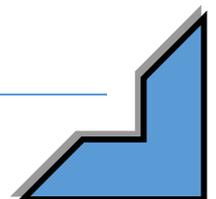
If you start living independently when you are 16 and 17 years old, The Learn 2 Live Team acts as a benefits agency and will pay you a subsistence allowance unless you are working full time. This personal allowance is based on the benefits rate for young people aged 16 to 17 years old.

Every care leaver will need a bank or building society account and your allocated worker will be able to help you with information about setting this up. You will be paid your personal allowance on the same day every week into your bank account once payments have been established. Initially payments may be in cash and budgeted throughout the week until it is established that you can manage your money well yourself. You may also receive allowances to help with education, training and other linked costs in relation to your course.



## Your Leaving Care Grant

Whilst you are preparing to leave care, you will be told about a Leaving Care grant (currently £2000). This is money the Learn 2 Live Team use to help you set yourself up once you have left care and in your own accommodation. It can only be used with permission from your allocated worker. It includes all accommodation set up costs and your TV licence for the first year. Your allocated worker will discuss this with you and outline the sort of things you can spend the money on.



## Education Payments

The Learn 2 Live Team provides education or training incentives. A laptop if required for the course and support with electric and gas if you are in your own accommodation and on an Apprentice Scheme. This support is in addition to other allowance you may be receiving. You may also be entitled to Leaving Care funding for other expenses relating to education, training and employment e.g. travel, clothing and trips (generally agreed on a case by case basis).



## Other Payments

Help with other costs agreed in the pathway plan will also be given. This might include contact with family, emergency or crisis support, independence training support, health or emotional wellbeing, passports, birth certificates and provisional driving licences. We also supply birthday and Christmas gifts/vouchers up to the age of 18,

## Exceptions for Lone Parents and those with Disabilities

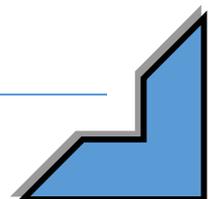
The only exceptions to this are for young people with disabilities and lone parents, who will be able to claim Job Seekers Allowance or Income Support and other linked benefits. Benefits such as Disability Living Allowance will still be paid to all care leavers who qualify for them.

If you are a young person with disabilities or a lone parent, your Leaving Care Worker will be able to help you apply to claim benefits to which you are entitled and you will still be able to get additional support from the Leaving Care team, transitional worker or Adult Social Worker.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

All Care Leavers will be supported through at least one course of further education of their choice, as agreed in their pathway plan. The Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and possible college support funds will help Care Leavers with costs associated with courses

When you leave care you will be encouraged to continue or engage in education or training, which will be agreed and written in your pathway plan if you are in training, the minimum we expect you to live on is your personal allowance.



Costs will be met in full by the Learn 2 Live Team for:

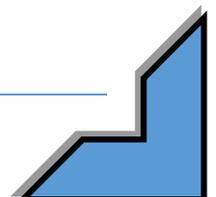
- Registration and examination fees
- Textbooks specified as essential
- Activities essential to meet course requirements
- Public transport between accommodation and course centre
- Transport costs to open days or college interviews
- Specific clothing, including clothes for interviews, and essential equipment related to the course.



## Higher Education

We are committed to helping you to think about qualifications and encouraging you to look ahead to careers of your choice, which will lead you onto university. It is important that this information is recorded in your pathway plan.

- You will be able to apply for grants and loans available to all students
- We will also assist you in applying to charitable organisations for any additional funding you may need.
- Consideration will be given to help with travel, transportation of any belongings to and from university, deposits on accommodation and other associated costs.
- We will provide finance for vacation accommodation for holidays whilst studying at university. Exceptional for the first summer holiday leading up to your course's first year and the summer holiday after the final course year ends. The amount paid is up to £500.00 a year towards your vacation accommodation,
- During the holidays if it is possible for you to return to an ex-foster carer or lodgings provider, then payments to the appropriate carers will be made by you from the £500.00 paid in advance. You will need to contribute an agreed amount to carers for food and utilities. All these finances are already included in your bursary and loans taken out and paid direct to you. You will be entitled to the full loan and bursary due to being a care leaver.



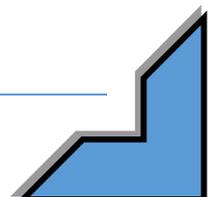
- The Learn 2 Live Team also offers a student bursary of £2000 which is paid over the duration of your course. How this is paid is dependent on your circumstances and needs, but payments are typically divided up and given to you on a regular basis each term. All finances are discussed with you before you start your University Course.
- All student who successfully gain a place at university are acknowledge formally at our Leaving Care Achievement Awards that take place in November.



## EMPLOYMENT

All care leavers will be supported through at least one move into employment of their choice. As agreed in the pathway Plan, costs may be met by the Leaving Care service for:

- Smart clothes for interview purposes
- Transport costs to interviews
- Specific clothing or uniform (you may also be able to get help if you need specialist equipment or clothing to do your job or training)
- Start-up equipment, including health and safety equipment
- Public transport from accommodation to employment until receipt of first earnings
- Top up payments for low pay to 16 and 17 years old 'Relevant' young people (If you are working and your income is below the current benefit rate, we will top this up to that rate)



## Health and Wellbeing

You will be supported to enable to maintain your health and development, and to take part in your community. Your allocated worker will help you to understand about healthy eating and shopping for healthy foods, budgeting and give you information about healthy living. These skills take a while to learn and you will be supported with this. Special workshops will be facilitated by The Learn 2 Live Team exploring specific issues relating to your health and Wellbeing.

### Preparation for Adult Life Courses

Before you begin to live have been prepared for yourself.

Leaving Care will run aspects of how to cope allocated Worker will let being held, so that you

When you complete your allocated worker to and the type of support you will require before you are offered the opportunity to apply for reasonable move on permanent accommodation. You can discuss this with your allocated worker and ensure this is captured in your pathway plan. If you want more information about training and opportunities you can this discuss this with our carer's advisor based at our office.



independently, you should and helped in looking after

courses which covers all living independently. Your you know when sessions are can attend.

these courses, they will help know what skills you have

### Health Care Costs

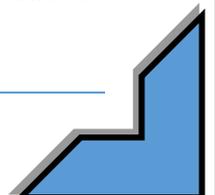
You should receive free treatment for glasses, prescriptions and dental treatment from the NHS whilst you are under 18 years. After this age Leaving Care Team may be able to assist you with some health costs.



If you need to register with a new doctor, your allocated worker will support you to do this. You are also entitled to free optician and dental appointments and this is something else you may need support with.

### Family Contact

Contact with your family is also something your allocated worker can help you with, as we know this is still important even after you have left care. This will depend of course on where your family are and how important different members of your family are. We will need to make an agreement with you individually about how often this is possible. This will also be reflected in your pathway plan.

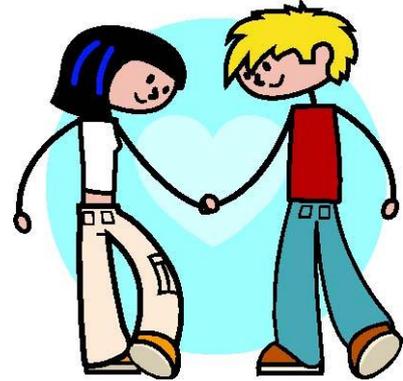


## Other Information

The Leaving Care service offers a drop-in duty facility (typically Mondays to Friday 9.00am to 4.45pm close for lunch 1.2.30 to 1.30pm) Staff are able to explore emergency issues on your behalf if your allocated worker is they are not available. We also hope to run evening activity groups for young people if there is a high demand. This gives you the opportunity for additional advice and support. Ask your Leaving Care Worker for more information.

## Young People with a Disability

Access to Leaving Care services for young people with a disability is exactly the same as all other young people. The role of the Leaving Care service will be discussed and negotiated between your allocated worker and the Leaving Care Team.



It is essential that all young people are referred to the Leaving Care service. This is even if, due to continuing care needs, the young person may not move on to independence as an adult. All young people are entitled to advice, a Personal Advisor, a Needs Assessment, Pathway Plan and Leaving Care Grant. All these things are mentioned in this guide and should be discussed in your reviews leading up to your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## HAVING YOUR SAY

### Information Sharing

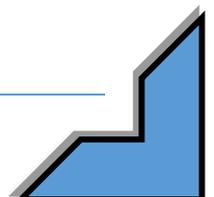
You will be asked if it is okay for us to give information about you to certain professionals. You can sign a form that states you agree for us to share your personal information. This is something that you and your allocated worker can discuss further.

Only information that may put you or others in danger can be shared without your permission, but you would always know what is being said, to whom and when.

### Exit Interviews

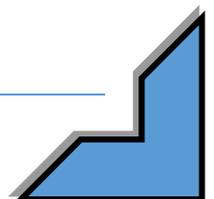
After you leave care you will be asked to complete an exit interview. Your answers will be used to help improve services for all young people in care. Information given in the exit interview is confidential and your permission will be sought if your answers has to be shared for any other reason.

**EXIT**  
INTERVIEWS



## Advocate

This is a person separate from your allocated worker who can help you plan what you want to say at meetings (they will even say it for you if you wish). You may want to have an advocate at your pathway plan meeting or Child Looked After review. An advocate cannot always get you what you want, but they can help you express what you want and make sure your wishes and feelings are being taken into consideration. If you think that you would like an advocate or want to know more about how an advocate can help you, ask your allocated worker for more information.



## Complaints Procedure

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or not benefitted from something you are entitled to, you may wish to make a complaint. This can be a difficult thing to do, but your feelings do matter. You may wish to have an advocate to help you with your complaints and support you through the process.

Your advocate can help you:

- Speak up for yourself or put your views across
- Support you with making and resolving a complaint
- Give you support and guidance

If you think that you would like an advocate or want to know more about how an advocate can help you, ask your allocated worker or call 0208 227 5496

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

At 16 you can:

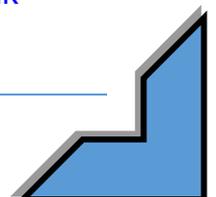
- Have a full-time job if you have officially left school (i.e. after the last Friday in June, even if you are 16 years before then)
- Live independently, subject to certain conditions being met
- Ride a moped with an engine size up to 50 cc
- Apply for your own passport
- Have been or cider whilst eating a meal in a restaurant or eating area of a pub, but not in the bar

At 17 you can:

- Hold a licence to drive most vehicles
- Emigrate
- Not be placed in a Care Order

At 18 you become an adult in the eyes of the law. This means you can:

- Vote in general and local elections
- Get married
- Buy and drink alcohol in a bar
- Buy cigarettes and tobacco
- Ask for your birth certificate if you are adopted
- Change your name
- Be called for jury service
- Sue or be sued
- Make a will
- Have a tattoo
- It also means that you no longer need consent for your parents or guardians to Get married, Join the armed forces and open a bank account in your name.



## MORE INFORMATION

There are lots of places you can get more information, including the publications in your Leaving Care pack, as well as the websites detailed below:

<a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a>	Confidential Drugs information and advice. <b>TALK TO FRANK</b>
<a href="http://www.transitioninfonet.org.uk">www.transitioninfonet.org.uk</a>	Teenagers and young people in the UK who have an impairment or disability and are wondering what opportunities and services there should be when they leave school. <b>Transitions information network</b>
<a href="http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk">www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk</a>	<b>The Who Cares? Trust</b> is a national charity working to improve public care for around 60,000 children and young people who are separated from their families and living in residential or foster care.
<a href="http://www.thesite.org">www.thesite.org</a>	<b>TheSite.org</b> believes all young people have the capacity to make their own decisions and life choices, provided they have access to high quality, impartial information and advice.
<a href="http://www.youth2youth.co.uk">www.youth2youth.co.uk</a>	<b>Youth2Youth</b> – The UK's first National Young Person's help line, run by young people, for young people.
<a href="http://www.leavingcare.org">www.leavingcare.org</a>	<b>Leavingcare.org</b> has been developed and is maintained by the National Care Advisory Service. Please go to <b>NCAS</b> for more information about who they are and what they do.
<a href="http://www.ru-ok.org.uk">www.ru-ok.org.uk</a>	<b>RU ok?</b> – This is a self-help website for teenagers and is about coping with common, but serious problems, as well as urges you to access your strengths.

