

Children's Safeguarding
& Early Help

Local Offer to Care Leavers



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

Title	Key Safe
Purpose/scope	Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires each local authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its care leavers.
Subject key words	Children; young-people; care leavers; children in care; looked after children
Council Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put our children and young people first• Protect and support our vulnerable children and adults
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1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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Changes in national policy and legislation require the Council to reassess the existing services it provides for young people who are leaving the care of the Council. It also extends the criteria for entitlement to care leaver services to 25 years old, regardless of education status as was under the previous criteria. It is known that nationally the outcomes for care leavers have been proven to be significantly poorer than those of young people of the same age within the general population.

The overall aim of requiring Local Authorities to publish an Offer to care leavers is to increase the support to our young people as they face the challenges of living independently as well as to further embed a culture of Corporate Parenting responsibility across Local Authorities.

Published in July 2016 the 'Keep on Caring – Supporting Young People from Care to Independence' details the requirements of Local Authorities to support young people leaving care. This comes under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 calling for more innovative and effective services to be developed and delivered for care leavers.

The above legislation follows on from the 2013 care leaver Strategy built upon the foundations of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Children and Young Person Act 2008 and the Children and Families Act 2014. The responsibility for the evaluation and monitoring of services offered to care leavers remains with Ofsted via their 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services: Single Inspection Framework'.

The intention is to provide more practical and emotional support, a stronger offer and also to empower care leavers by designing services with them. To achieve the latter, a strong level of engagement with care leavers will be required to ensure they are integral to the design and innovation of new or existing services.

The new legislation calls for more innovative and effective services to be developed with and delivered for care leavers. The objective is to provide more practical and emotional support, a strong Offer and to empower care leavers to be involved in the design of services for themselves.

This document tells you about all the help that is available to you as a care leaver. We know that it's a big step to move to living on your own. We want to make sure that you know where and who to go to for advice and help.

Care leavers helped us design this local offer and we will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we offer are what you need. We have written this document with care leavers in Telford & Wrekin. If there is anything in the document you are not sure about or need further information about, please ask your worker.

To be able to get the help detailed in this document, you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16th birthday) or for 13 weeks after your 16th birthday. If you're not sure whether you have, then ask your Social Worker or Personal Adviser.

This document is also available at www.telford.gov.uk

Corporate Parents for children in care and care leavers in Telford and Wrekin have promised to:

- Act in the best interests, and promote the health and well-being, of children in care and care leavers.
- Encourage children in care and care leavers to express your views, wishes and feelings.
- Take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children in care and care leavers.
- Help children in care and care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- Promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children in care and care leavers.
- For children in care and care leavers to be safe, and for stability in your home lives, relationships and education or work.
- Prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood and independent living.

To do this we will:

- Ask your views, listen to what you say and act on it.
- Support you and give you the information you need to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Support you to feel safe.
- Support you to have contact with your family and friends.
- Make sure services and support are available to help you to be the best you can be.
- Have ambitions for you and support you to achieve your goals.
- Have high expectations of you and expect you to act sensibly.
- Support you to access the education and training you need and help you develop your skills and achieve your aspirations.
- Work with you to support other children and young people who may have had similar experiences.
- Provide opportunities for training and work experience and support you to find employment.
- Support you and your children while you gain life experience and become independent from us.
- Provide an open door for support and advice, whatever your age.
- Celebrate your successes and achievements.
- Help you be involved in the community.



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**SUPPORT
THAT TELFORD
& WREKIN
COUNCIL AND
OUR PARTNERS
PROVIDE**

SUPPORT THAT TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL AND OUR PARTNERS PROVIDE

Accommodation

The Council believes that children in care and Care Leavers should be able to live in their home for as long as they need to and wish.

How we do this:

Age 16 / 17

The Council will ensure that you have a suitable placement to live in, such as with a Foster Carer, Supported Lodgings, Supported Housing or in a Children's home.

Over 18

Telford & Wrekin Council will provide advice and support so that you can live in suitable accommodation with the help that you need.

As part of this we will work with partners to ensure appropriate access to a range of suitable accommodation including:

- Remaining with your foster carers.
- Shared accommodation.
- Self-contained accommodation.
- Support to access social housing.
- Out of term accommodation for care leavers in higher education.

Housing

- If you lose your tenancy we will provide advice to help you source new accommodation.
- If you lose your accommodation and have nowhere else to reside, we would provide you with temporary accommodation and help source new accommodation.
- We will provide you with a personalised housing plan outlining your options and available support.

- We will allocate you a dedicated housing solutions officer to provide advice.
- There will be a protocol between housing and the care leaver's service that will be subject to constant review.
- We will not find any care leaver intentionally homeless at the first presentation to Housing Solutions.
- We will explore all financial support that is available to the young person to help prevent or support them to find a sustainable home.

Working with partners we will:

- Make sure you have access to the benefits you are entitled to.
- Offer further accommodation opportunities if things go wrong.
- The Staying Put/Staying Close offer.
- Provide a Setting up Home Grant of £2000 that can be used to furnish your first property.
- Offer practical moving-in help.
- Provide continuing advice about maintaining a tenancy*, including paying rent, Council Tax and bills regularly.
- Help you look after your home including decorating, minor repairs and cleaning advice.

**a tenancy is a contract between you and your landlord that lets you live in a property as long as you pay rent and follow the rules.*

Education, Training and Employment

We provide opportunities to children in care and care leavers to raise and support your aspirations, help develop awareness of opportunities and skills and help you to be work ready.

We also work with our partners to offer work place opportunities, including work taster sessions, work experience apprenticeships and job opportunities. These are flexible and tailored to young people's needs and are supported by Corporate Parents from across the Council and partners.

We want to be aspirational for our care leavers and help you to access the education, training and employment you are interested in. To do this:

- We will help you to get careers information and advice – this can be either through your Personal Advisor and 'Skills' Service (Job Box, Future Focus) you will have an allocated advisor who will work with you on your options.
 - We will work with you to help you transition from school to post 16 education presenting you the full range of opportunities including the National Citizenship service to help meet your future goals.
 - We will work with our colleges and training providers to ensure your learning needs are met and barriers are identified and support put in place.
 - We will help with transport costs when travelling to training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews, including a free Arriva bus pass for all our care leavers aged between 16 and 24 on Apprenticeships.
 - You will receive additional help if you attend college, including a plan to detail how you are supported to do well in college and individual guidance or help when you need it.
- If you have special educational needs we will make sure that you receive any additional help you require and our specialist Employment Support Team will help work with you to access work experience and employment when you are ready.
 - Young people who attend education or training can apply for a Further Education Bursary from the education or training provider.
 - We provide help in obtaining equipment, essential clothing, and books to support your education training and employment.
 - We encourage and help you choose to go to university e.g. accessing tuition fees and maintenance loans, travel costs at the start and end of term and making sure you have somewhere to live during the holidays – this may be with your foster carer, in your own accommodation or in supported accommodation.
 - If you attend university, you can apply for a Higher Education Bursary of £2000. This will be paid in instalments over the duration of your course and is in addition to any other bursary gained.



- A £1,000 bursary payment will be available to support care leavers aged 16-24 starting an apprenticeship. This bursary will be made to help to meet the costs incurred whilst transitioning into work and support the first year of the apprenticeship, when wages can be lower. This will be paid once to each care leaver in the eligible age range starting an apprenticeship, via their training provider.
- Suitable accommodation during vacations if you are in higher education or in residential further education.
- Telford & Wrekin Council will fund a small number of ring-fenced Apprenticeship opportunities, ensuring where possible a robust matching process is in place. As Corporate Parents, the Council and partner agencies continue to provide opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and employment for care leavers.
- We hold regular events to celebrate the achievements of children in care and care leavers. These are supported by Corporate Parents from all agencies.
- When you achieve educational success we celebrate your achievements - for example take you out for a meal when you finish your A-levels.
- At any point where you are not in education training or employment we will utilise all our resources to enable you to overcome barriers and participate.
- Telford & Wrekin Council operate a guaranteed interview scheme for all care leavers applying for any apprenticeship posts within the Council, and in addition to this our work experience scheme will also be available to care leavers.

Health and Wellbeing

We will support and encourage you to be healthy and provide the help you need to achieve this. This includes:

- Offering easy access to specialist services such as sexual health service.
- Providing a health passport prior to your 18th birthday – this is a summary of your health information and history.
- Help to register with health services, including a GP practice, dentists and opticians when you move home.
- Help you to manage your emotional well-being – this may include a referral or signposting to other support agencies.
- Help you to attend hospital or doctors' appointments.
- Support from a Healthy Lifestyle Advisor for health improvement advice (healthy eating, being more active, drinking less and quitting smoking).
- Opportunities to train as a 'Health Champion' and to undertake volunteering opportunities in health and community settings.
- Offering a drop-in service for care leavers.
- Offering a mentoring scheme for young people, focusing on specific areas to support positive engagement and outcomes as well as supporting well-being.



Leisure

We will support and encourage access to the town's leisure facilities and activities and provide assistance in utilising these facilities for the benefit of care leavers.

- Provide access to leisure services and activities via the Council's concessionary Telford Loyalty Card scheme.
- Provide free Aspirations health & fitness memberships to the age of 25.
- Help with additional 1:1 support for care leavers undertaking Aspirations membership.
- Assist in sign posting care leavers into sporting clubs or groups.

Finances

We provide financial support to help you prepare for living independently and manage your money. To do this we will:

- Make sure that you have the advice you need to learn how to manage your money and that this is detailed in your Pathway Plan.
- Help you to open a bank account if there is not one already in place.
- Help you to gain appropriate identification documents, such as a passport and/or provisional driving licence.
- Help you to get your NI number – this might be writing a letter or helping you complete an application.
- Offer a Setting up Home grant of up to £2000 for essential items or independent living in line with your Pathway Plan.
- We will pay for your TV licence for the first 12 months.

Single people who claim Housing Benefit and live in private rented accommodation have their Housing Benefit based on the shared room Local Housing Allowance rate. For care leavers up to and including the age of 21, legislation allows Housing Benefit to be paid at the slightly higher one bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate. For care leavers who are unable to afford the shortfall between the Housing Benefit (or Universal Credit Housing Costs) payable and the rent they are charged, can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

The Council's Discretionary Housing Payment Team consider the applicants income, household circumstances and essential expenditure when considering awards. Any awards are usually short term assistance while the applicant takes steps to ease their financial circumstances. The Council's Discretionary Awards Team can provide help and assistance to care leavers with applications. They can also assist with Council Tax Support Hardship applications which can provide short term help with a shortfall between Council Tax charged and Council Tax Support entitlement for those who are unable to afford the shortfall.



Participation

We will help you to share your views and be involved in improving how we support you – such as being a part of the care leavers Forum – “Leavers Come First”. These forums are held on a bi-monthly basis and you can be supported to attend by your Personal Advisor (PA) and help you to be part of wider contributions to decision making such as the National Young People’s Bench Marking Forum (Catch 22), recruitment of staff and carers and commissioning of services.

Other Help and Support

- If you have special educational needs there is a ‘Local Offer’ that describes the help you can expect – we will make sure that this is explained and you are helped to access this support. Further information is available on the Local Offer website.

- We will make sure that young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers have the support they need and this is recorded in their Pathway Plan.
- We will provide a gift at Christmas and at each birthday up to the age of 21 (birthdays and Christmas £10. 18th and 21st birthdays £50).
- We will provide additional support to help you gain additional skills such as obtaining a provisional driving licence - this may also be used as an incentive.
- Advocacy support up to the age of 25.
- We will help you to take part in events and activities such as the Summer Arts College (up to age 18), Leisure Services Schemes and ‘Hot Shots Awards’.



3

STATUTORY ENTITLEMENTS – WHAT THE LAW SAYS YOU MUST BE GIVEN

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Personal advisor

- Telford & Wrekin Council provide a personal adviser for care leavers until you are 21. Care leavers also have the right to a personal adviser up to 25 should you wish
- When you reach 21 if you do not wish to have a continued leaving care service we will send you a reminder of your local offer every 12 months, if your circumstances change you can contact us at any time up to the age of 25.
- The role of a personal adviser is to help care leavers prepare for independent living and to support you after you leave care and to also offer support, advice and guidance.
- Your personal advisor will go through the Local Offer with you and ensure that you understand.
- Your personal advisor will keep in touch but will also see you face to face at least every eight weeks.
- We will ensure that you keep the same Personal Advisor where possible.

Pathway Plan

- We will prepare a Pathway Plan with you that sets out how we will help you to achieve the things you want to.
- We start the Pathway Plan together while you are still in care – around your 16th birthday.
- We then review the Pathway Plan with you at least every six months to make sure that it is up-to-date and it also includes things that are important to you.
- We will always involve you in preparing and reviewing the Pathway Plan.

Care leavers' rights

- Your wishes and feelings will be an important part of all decisions about when you leave care and your plans for leaving care. This will be done through your Pathway Plan.
- We will make sure that you can let us know what you think of and how you feel about the services you receive initially through your personal advisor or through key contacts listed below.
- You have a right to see the information your local authority has about you, including the files kept about you when you were in care.
- We will support you to 'stay put' in your home until at least 18. However, if you choose to leave care before this, we will ensure that you have suitable accommodation and support.



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WHO CAN HELP?

WHO CAN HELP?

Key contacts for care leavers

Leaving Care Service / Personal Advisers –

Group Manager, Children in Care & Leaving Care

Telephone: 01952 385817

Email: twcareleavers@telford.gov.uk

Housing Needs Team

Telford & Wrekin Council, Darby House,
Lawn Central, Telford TF3 4JA

Telephone: 01952 381925

Email: housing.services@telford.gov.uk

Customer Complaints, Compliments and Feedback

Telford & Wrekin Council, Addenbrooke House,
Ironmasters Way, Telford TF3 4NT

Telephone: 01952 382006

Email: customer.quality@telford.gov.uk

Local Authority Leadership

Mr Clive Jones

Director of Children & Adult Services

Telford & Wrekin Council, Addenbrooke House,
Ironmasters Way, Telford TF3 4NT

Telephone: 01952 385100

Email: clive.jones@telford.gov.uk

Telford & Wrekin Careers Advice & Guidance

Future Focus, Southwater 1, Telford TF3 4JG

Telephone: 01952 388988

Email: future.focus@telford.gov.uk

Children's Participation

Community Support team

Telford & Wrekin Council, Addenbrooke House
Ironmasters Way, Telford TF3 4NT

Telephone: 01952 382245

Email: communityparticipationteam@telford.gov.uk

Rights and Representations

Independent Safeguarding, Quality
and Advocacy Service

Telford & Wrekin Council, Darby House,
Lawn Central, Telford TF3 4JA

Michael Bould

Rights and Representations Co-ordinator

Telephone: 01952 385112

Mobile: 07976 100588

Email: michael.bould@telford.gov.uk

Amanda Farrington

Rights & Representations Officer

Telephone: 01952 385102

Mobile: 07807 966126

Email: amanda.farrington@telford.gov.uk

Cabinet Member for Children & Adults Early Help & Support (Lead Member for CYP)

Cllr Paul Watling

Telford & Wrekin Council, Addenbrooke House,
Ironmasters Way, Telford TF3 4NT

Telephone: 01952 383220

Email: paul.watling@telford.gov.uk

Other places you can go to for help or advice include:

Adult Social Care

Telford & Wrekin Council, Darby House, 4th Floor B Wing, Telford TF3 4JA

Telephone: 01952 385385

The Job Box

A one stop shop for information and support on job vacancies, training and employment in the Telford and Wrekin area.

Telephone: 01952 382888

Website: www.telfordjobbox.co.uk

Kooth.com

Free, safe and anonymous online counselling and support for young people. Kooth.com is available 24 hour per day. There will be professional counsellors available for live online chats at the following times:

- 12noon - 11pm (Monday to Friday)
- 6pm - 11pm (Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays)

Website: www.kooth.com

Ladder for Shropshire

Provides a one-stop-shop for information on Apprenticeships and Training providers in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

Telephone: 0330 999 8441

Email: ladder@apprentice-providers.co.uk

Website: www.ladderforshropshire.co.uk

Telford Wellbeing Service

Telephone: 01952 457415

Email: wellbeing.telford@sssft.nhs.uk

Website: telfordwellbeingservice.sssft.nhs.uk

Recharge Telford

Supports under 21's to overcome their individual barriers, support with emotional wellbeing, drug and alcohol use, self-harm and bullying.

Telephone: 01952 660 000

Email: info@rechargegetelford.org.uk

Website: www.rechargegetelford.org.uk