



Doncaster Children's
Services Trust

A Guide to Leaving Care and the Financial Support Paid to Care Leavers 2019 to 2021



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1. Introduction

This guide provides an introduction to the services that you will receive from The Inspiring Futures Team. The process of leaving care can be a challenging and confusing time. The aim of this guide is to describe the type of support that you will receive to enable you to make a successful transition to independence.

2. Who will receive a service?

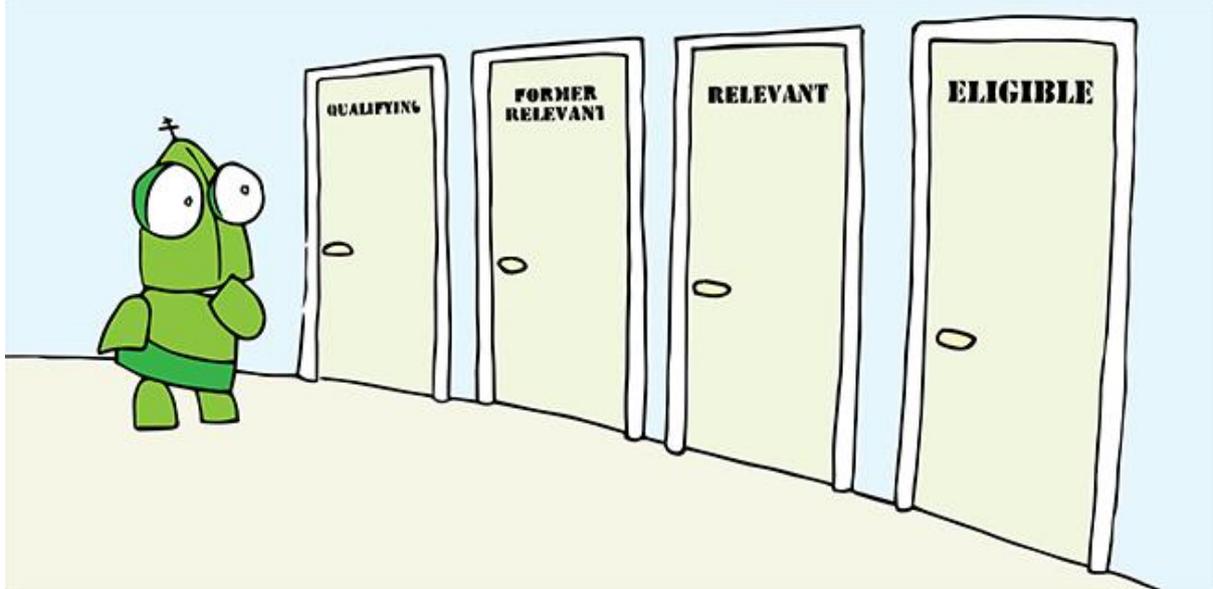
In order to understand the type of support that you will receive from the leaving care service you will need to understand some key words which are used to describe each category of care leaver. These key words and their definitions are described below. If, when you have read the key words, you still need help to explain them then you should discuss these with your Social Worker or Personal Advisor.



3. Categories of Care Leavers

Who is Care Leaver?

Legal Status



- 13/14/16 rule
- 13 weeks or more looked after since your 14th birthday with at least one day on or after your 16th birthday
- An Eligible care leaver is aged 16/17 who meets the above and is still looked after
- A Relevant care leaver is aged 16/17 who meets the above and is no longer looked after
- A Former Relevant care leaver is aged 18 or over and was one of the above
- Qualifying care leavers did not meet the above conditions, but were in other specific arrangements



4. The Role of Social Workers and Personal Advisers

As an **Eligible** Care Leaver, you will be allocated a **Social Worker from the Inspiring Futures Team**. Your Social Worker will have case responsibility and will be responsible for the preparation of your **Pathway Plan**. If you are an Eligible Care Leaver, you will remain allocated to your Social Worker until you are 18 years old when you become **Former Relevant**.

Some **Eligible** and **Former Relevant** young people, who have very complex needs, will be supported by a Social Worker beyond their 18th birthday.

Alongside your Social Worker, you will be allocated a **Personal Advisor**, who will assist you in preparing for your transition to adult life.

If you are a Child in Care who is supported by the **Children with Disability Service** your current Social Worker will continue to support you as a Care Leaver until your transition to Adult Services.

The Inspiring Futures Team will allocate a **Personal Advisor** to work alongside your existing Social Worker who will be available to support your transition to Adult Services. Your Personal Advisor will take over responsibility for the preparation of your Pathway Plan when you reach 18 and achieve Former Relevant status.

5. Support from a Personal Adviser

All Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers, will be allocated a Personal Advisor when they reach the age of 15 ½ years old. Your Personal Advisor will support you to develop skills that will assist you to live independently at a time



when you are ready to do so. A key role of the Personal Advisor is to provide and coordinate the support that you will need to live in your own accommodation.

Learning the necessary skills to live independently does not begin after you have left care, it begins while you are still in care and young people will be encouraged to develop skills relating to such things as cooking, budgeting and cleaning and self-care skills whilst they are living in care. Children in Care will also be encouraged to complete the Key to My Future workbook.

This workbook will help you to explore and develop important skills that will help prepare you for the transition to independent living.

Your Personal Advisor will provide you with support and advice on a range of issues relating to Leaving Care including:

- Access to training and employment opportunities
- The development of independence skills
- Finding and managing suitable accommodation
- Managing your finances and claiming benefits

Your Personal Advisor can also help you to access specialist support when you need it, including counselling and advice on issues such as drugs and alcohol, sexual health and benefits, such as Universal Credit, Housing Benefits and applying for the exemption of Council Tax if appropriate in the area you live.

Your Personal Advisor will work with you to enable you to put into place the things in your life that will enable you to live independently in your own accommodation.

6. Contacting Your Personal Advisor

Your Personal Advisor will provide you with telephone and email contact details or you can visit your Personal Advisor at the Inspiring Futures Team office, Colonnades House, Duke Street, Doncaster.

If you need to contact your Personal Advisor and he or she is not available you can contact the Inspiring Futures Team office on 01302 737559 and a duty Personal Advisor will provide you with assistance. If the duty Personal Advisor is also busy



when you telephone then we promise that they will return your call as soon as possible and that they will contact you on the same day.

If the matter is really urgent you can ask to speak to either Kelly Bidmead (Team Manager), Lee Turnbull (Advanced Practitioner Social Worker) or Lewis Barber (Advanced Practitioner Social Worker) on 01302 737559.

7. Pathway Plans

We will prepare a pathway plan for all Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Young People. Your Pathway Plan will replace your Care Plan from the age of 16. Your Pathway Plan is about your needs and what we all need to do to ensure your successful transition to adult life.

8. How will I be involved?

For your Pathway Plan to be effective, it will be based on an up to date needs assessment; setting out the support that will be offered to you to achieve your aspirations. We aim to fully involve you in the development of your Pathway Plan.

9. Who else will be involved?

With your agreement, we will seek the views of our partner agencies when completing your Pathway Plan. This may include Housing, Education, Training and Employment providers, Benefits, Health Services, The Youth Offending Service and Youth Services to ensure we all work together to provide you with clear and consistent advice and support.

The following diagram shows some of the areas covered in your Pathway Plan:



10. When will my Plan be completed?

Your initial Pathway Plan will be completed before you are 16 years and 3 months old. If you are over 16 when first accommodated then this will be within 3 months of the date of you being accommodated.

11. What about changes to my Plan?

Your Pathway Plan will be updated and reviewed every 6 months or within 28 working days of any significant change, such as you change your address. As an

Eligible or Relevant Care Leaver, your Pathway Plan will be written and available at your Statutory Review which will be chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer.

A review must take place before making a decision to confirm that a young person is ready to leave care. If you are a Former Relevant young person, your Pathway Plan review meeting will be undertaken by your Personal Advisor/Social Worker and then overseen, Quality Assured by the Team Manager.

12. Emergency Assistance

Personal Advisors only work day time office hours between 8.30 am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. If you need to speak to someone urgently outside of these hours you should contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01302 796000.

13. How Long Will I Receive a Leaving Care Service for?

You will receive a Leaving Care service until your 21st birthday or if you are in full-time education or training until you have completed the training programme or until your 25th birthday.

14. Where Will I Live After I Leave Care?

This depends on your individual circumstances and needs. There are a range of accommodation options that are available to meet the individual needs of Care Leavers. The Inspiring Futures Team works in close partnership with St Leger Homes in Doncaster and your Personal Advisor will assist you in registering for social housing if appropriate.



Some care leavers live in individual flats or houses, totally independently and require only very limited support from their Personal Advisor. Many young people, however, in the early stages of leaving care, require additional support to live in their own tenancies and are provided with support staff who visit them on a regular basis or who are based on the same site as the tenant.

Some young people live in Supported Lodgings placements. In Supported Lodgings placements, you would live in someone's home and the home owner would provide you with individual support.

The level of support that you require and the accommodation that will be provided to you will be agreed with you by your Social Worker and Personal Advisor who will discuss and consult with you about the arrangements that will be put in place for the provision of leaving care accommodation. There are many different leaving care accommodation options that you can choose from and you're Social Worker and

Personal Advisor will work with you to find a type of leaving care accommodation that suits you and which you feel comfortable with.

The support that you require and the accommodation that you choose will be detailed in your Pathway Plan. Your Personal Advisor or Social Worker will inform you about organisations that provide support services that match your needs. Your Personal Advisor and/or Social Worker will explore in detail with you the type of leaving care accommodation options that are available to you.

15. Staying Put Placements

Once you have reached the age of 18 years, you will not technically be in care but in some cases, especially where you are living in a foster placement, it may be possible for you to remain in your care placement for a period of time after your 18th birthday. If you want to remain in your current placement for a period after your 18th birthday, you should discuss this with your Social Worker or Personal Advisor. More Information about **Staying Put** placements can be found on the Trust Intranet.

16. Jobs, Careers and Training Opportunities

Working or training to work is an important part of both becoming an adult and living successfully in your own home. Working or training to work not only gives you more money in your pocket, but it enables you to meet people and to live a full and rounded life. You're Social Worker or Personal Advisor will advise you about employment and training opportunities and you can speak to a specialist Careers Adviser who is based within the Inspiring Futures Team. Your Personal Advisor can arrange for you to meet the Careers Adviser or you can contact them directly at 01302 737559.

There is the Key to my Employment workbook available to support you. This workbook will help you to explore and develop important skills that will help prepare you for the transition to employment through CV's to interviews to starting a job.

Further information about Training and Career opportunities is also available on the Doncaster Council Website Connect 2 U.



A Guide to the Financial Support That Care Leavers Will Receive

17. Who will be eligible for Financial Support?

Relevant and Former Relevant will be entitled to financial support from the leaving care service. Qualifying young people will be eligible for financial support subject to an individual assessment.

Where a young person has been looked after or supported briefly, or where they return successfully to their families, it is expected that the families themselves resume responsibility for their welfare and support. This is in line with the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

18. Provisional driving licence and lessons.

All young people will be provided with a provisional driving licence. This will be paid for by the Children in Care, Inspiring Futures Team. All young people who are engaged in EET will be provided with 10 driving lessons. All young people will need to have paid for and passed their theory test prior to accessing their 10 lessons.

DCST will pay for your practical driving test; this will include the lesson immediately before the test.

Should the young person fail their final test then they will not receive further funding.

19. Financial Support to Relevant Young People/Care leavers aged 16-17 Years Old

Relevant young people (16/17 year-olds), in many cases, will not be entitled to claim the major means-tested benefits income such as Universal Credit. Therefore if you are 16 or 17 years old and a Relevant Care Leaver (i.e. you have left care) and are in some form of education, employment or training you will receive £58.00 from the Inspiring Futures Team.

The service will also cover the cost of your rent until you reach 18 years old. You may also be entitled to claim an Education Bursary through your education provider. More information about the bursary can be found in Section 12 of this guide - **Help with going to college and the 16 plus Bursary**). Your Personal Adviser will assist you to claim the bursary from the college provider. We will also pay the cost of special clothes or expenses associated in maintaining your education, employment or training.

If you are Relevant Care leaver (i.e. you have left care and are 16 or 17 years old) and you are not engaged in employment, education or training, then the level of financial support that you will receive will be less than the amount of money that you would receive if you were in education, training or employment. In such circumstances, you will receive £58.00 from the Inspiring Futures Team.

The leaving care team will also pay:

- Your rent, if required
- The cost of special clothes or expenses associated with attending interviews or associated with starting a job or a training course (e.g. special clothes, equipment and travel). Your Personal Advisor will help you to claim any benefits that you are entitled to inclusive of the education bursary.

Your Personal Advisor will provide you with a copy of your Pathway Plan which will include in it a description of the financial support you will receive from the Inspiring Futures Team. Your Personal Advisor will provide you with advice on how to manage your money and you will be encouraged to complete an individual budget plan which will help you to ensure that you manage your money effectively and do not get into debt. The Pathway Plan will be reviewed regularly so it can be adapted to any change of circumstance you experience.

20. Birthday Allowances to Relevant Young People/Care leavers Aged 16-17 Years Old

All eligible and relevant care leavers aged 16/17years old will receive a birthday allowance of £25.00 on their 16th and 17th birthdays and then £50.00 on their 18th and 21st birthday.

21. Financial Support to Former Relevant Young People (Care Leavers Aged 18-25 Years Old)

Former Relevant young people who are aged 18 to 21 and have left care (or up to 25 if in full-time further or higher education) are entitled to claim benefits. Where a young person is not in education or employment then they are expected to maximise the take up of these benefits.

If you are a Former Relevant care leaver and you are in education or training you will be eligible to apply for Universal Credit, which is currently paid at a rate of £57.90 per week. You will also be entitled to apply for Housing Benefit to cover your rent. The Inspiring Futures Team can assist with financial support until these claims are processed, but you will be expected to apply for these benefits and make an early claim as per DCST/DWP Service Level Agreement.

If you are 18 years old and you are not in employment, education or training, then the level of financial support that you will receive will be less than the amount of money that you would receive if you were in education, training or employment. In such circumstances you will only receive Universal Credit which is currently £57.90 per week. You will be entitled to Housing Benefit to cover your rent. We may also pay the cost of special clothes or expenses associated with attending an interview.

22. Additional Help with Rent and Housing Support Costs

Under certain Circumstance the Inspiring Futures Team can pay for –

- Additional costs associated with the individual staffing support provided to care leavers who live in semi supported living accommodation.
- The start-up costs of a tenancy such as the costs of deposits and retainers for privately let tenancies.

Your Personal Advisor will assess your need for such additional costs and will provide you with further advice about support with housing costs.

23. Benefits

Care leavers may be able to apply for a range of state benefits and allowances. Some benefits, but not all of them such as PIP/DLA will be taken into account when calculating the level of financial support that you receive from the Inspiring Futures Team. Your Personal Advisor will help you to claim any benefits and allowances that you are entitled to receive.

Additional Information about the benefits that care leavers can claim whilst at University and the support that Personal Advisors can provide to care leavers can be found at:

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/assets/documents/CareLeavers.pdf

24. Help with going to College and the 16 Plus Bursary

If you are a looked after child or have left care and are above school age and you are completing a further period of study, then you will be entitled to claim from your place of study, e.g. the college that you attend, a 16+ Bursary. The 16+ Bursary is administered by the college to support you in your studies.

Young people should get in touch with their education provider (e.g. school or college) to find out how to claim the Bursary. For further advice about the Bursary you can speak to your Social Worker, student support services or your tutor. Your Personal Advisor will also assist in claiming the Bursary and will complete a letter to say that you are part of the Inspiring Futures Service.

The Department for Education have produced a 16 to 19 guide to Bursaries which can be found by clicking on the link below –

www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/16-19%20Bursary%20Fund%202012-13%20Guide.pdf (this is not a link and copy and paste does not work either)

25. Help with the Cost of Going to University

Going to University provides an exciting but challenging opportunity to improve your future career prospects. Your Personal Advisor can help and advise you about your decision to go to University. If you are a relevant or former relevant care leaver and

you enter a higher education or University degree course, then the Leaving Care team will provide you with the following support:

- Accommodation costs
- A weekly living allowance of £38.46p
- Help and support with vacation accommodation
- Liaise with nominated Support Worker at the University to ensure all necessary support is accessed.

All Care Leavers will have to apply for a Tuition Fee Loan, for their course each year. The application forms, PN1 (New Students) and PR1 (Continuing Students) are downloadable, however they recommend applying on line. An application for finance has to be made each year.

Tuition fee loans, to cover the full cost of your course, are paid directly to the course provider, and you won't have to pay it back until after your course, when you're earning above a certain level.

26. Grants, Bursaries and Scholarships (i.e. free cash!)

There are also a number of extra funding options which you don't have to repay if you're studying under certain circumstances. Bursaries and scholarships can be offered by your University based on your academic ability. So ask about these.

Remember that the non-repayable grants no longer exist; these have been replaced with maintenance loans which do need to be paid back.

[Try the GOV.UK student finance calculator](#) to see what extra student funding you're eligible for.

The Student Finance website can be accessed through www.direct.gov.uk. This has lots of information as well as being the place to apply. There are downloadable guides that are very good and are easy to understand.

Applications for grants can usually be made from mid-March. The website will advise you of the date and also the date the application has to be submitted by. If a student changes course they will need to inform Student Finance. Grant Payments are made in three instalments - one at the start of each term.

For 2018-19 the amount of Maintenance Grant a student can get is up to £3,482 per year (as a Care Leaver they will be classed as an independent student and will therefore be eligible for the grant). This does not have to be paid back.

The Maintenance Loan amount a student can apply for is up to £4,302 (however they will be offered less if they have had the full Maintenance Grant). A student does not have to apply for the loan initially if they are unsure. They can wait until they have started the course and see how they are managing financially. This does have to be paid back.

The amount a student will receive for their Tuition Fee Loan will cover their fees and will be paid directly to the University (there are a few exceptions but the University website would say if a course has higher than usual fees). A student will receive a financial notification letter and can keep track of their application online. A student should also usually get some sort of Bursary (a one off payment) from the University - this varies depending on what University they are at. They will get details of this from the University once they have enrolled there. Some Universities also have a Support Worker for care leavers to go to if they need any advice or support.

If the student is a parent with a dependent child they may be able to apply for additional help for childcare costs. The website and guides will let them know what they can apply for.

All Universities have an Access to Learning Fund. Whether students are given anything from this is the decision of the University itself. They can give money as either a grant or a loan and in a lump sum or in instalments. Students need to apply for an Access to Learning Grant to the Student Services Department when they have started their course.

Disabled students can claim additional allowances. These are to cover such things as special equipment or a helper. These are known as Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs) and an assessment has to be undertaken before any money is awarded. These allowances are grants not loans.

In addition to the above many Universities provide additional bursaries to Care Leavers. More information about Bursary payments can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university>

27. Setting up Home Allowance (SUHA)

All Relevant and Former Relevant young people who are eligible for a Leaving Care service will receive a Setting up Home Allowance (SUHA) which is up to £2000. The setting up Home Allowance can be used to purchase furniture and equipment associated with setting up your own home.

All cash expenditure from the Setting up Home allowance must be supervised, by the Personal Advisor/Social Worker from the Inspiring Futures Team. Other colleagues or responsible persons may be involved in the spending of the allowance but accountability for receipts/balancing/supervision remains with the Personal Advisor/Social Worker.

28. Crisis Payments

Living independently can at times be challenging and sometimes things do go wrong. If you require financial support in a crisis then, under certain circumstances, the Inspiring Futures Team can make emergency financial payments to all care leavers up to the age of 25 years. Each individual request for a crisis payment will be

assessed by a Personal Advisor and will be subject to approval by a Manager from the Inspiring Futures Team.

29. Cold Weather Payments

If you are not in receipt of benefits and you are a relevant or former relevant care leaver during exceptional long periods of cold weather additional payments towards the cost of heating bills will be provided to all relevant care leavers who are living in their own tenancy. Payments will be made on the criteria that the local temperature is either recorded as, or forecast to be, an average of zero degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days. Payments will be of £25 for each 7 day when the temperature is recorded as above.

30. Other areas where financial support can be considered include payments for

- Additional needs relating to such things as cultural events, counselling, preparation for interviews, emergency payments.
- Contact with family or other significant relationships
- Incentive payments for participating in training or employment programmes
- Christmas/religious festival allowance
- Special circumstances where you may need additional funds which will be paid subject to an individual assessment.

31. Bank Accounts

Where ever possible payments made to Care Leavers will be paid directly into their bank accounts. If you do not already have a bank account your Personal Advisor will help you to open an account.

In exceptional circumstances where a young person is assessed as not being able to maintain a bank account, direct payments can be made on an agreed basis.

32. Spending Plans

Making ends meet on a limited budget is a challenging task. Spending plans are a useful way of making sure that you budget carefully and don't overspend. Your Personal Advisor will help you to produce a spending plan which can be used to balance your incoming funds with your outgoing costs. Making a spending plan can help you to ensure that you have enough money left over to pay fuel bills and food costs. Completing the spending plan with your Personal Advisor is a useful way of discussing and planning how you will budget, and how to save money.

33. Requests to Support Higher Education after Age 21

If a Former Relevant Care Leaver contacts the service post 21 to discuss support to attend a further education course, a Personal Advisor will be appointed to assess this request. They will also ask the young person what activities they have been involved in since their case closure. An assessment and plan will then be formulated from the meeting which will then be presented to the Team Manager. The Manager and Service Manager will consider the request taking into account the following:

- Assessment/Plan
- Young person's commitment and understanding of the course
- Past involvement in EET
- Length of course
- Financial implications
- Overall support needs of the young person.

They will make a decision and will ensure that this is explained to the young person and that the decision is confirmed in writing. Should a decision be made not to support the request, the young person will be given details of the complaints process and offered assistance to access this. The extent of practical and financial assistance provided, will depend on the assessment of the young person's needs and will reflect the type of course, whether it is full or part-time and the young person's existing income.

Access to Your Social Care Records Viewing your Care File

34. Why do we keep records about you?

Your Social Worker needs to keep a record of your health, education, family members, foster placements etc. so that in future they can look back and see what has happened to you and have a record of your time in care. If there is a change of Social Worker your new Social Worker can look at your file and find out about you. The Social Worker also keeps notes of visits with you and of meetings about you. We also collect information about how we work with you so we can see where we need to improve. In Doncaster, all of your records are kept on an electronic case file. Access to these records is restricted to a limited number of professionals. Only professionals who have been given a secure password can access your files and this means that your records are kept confidential and secure.

35. Can I see my file?

Yes, the law says you have a right to see personal information held about you unless we think it would be emotionally harmful to you. If we decide you cannot see your records then your Social Worker will explain why to you. When you are 18 you will be able to see all of the records kept on you, and your Social Worker will talk to you about what support you will need to read and understand the papers.

36. How can I get to see my file?

If you would like to see your social care file, you must submit a written and signed request saying that you are requesting access to your records under the Data Protection Act 1998. This request can be given or posted to your Social Worker or Personal Advisor. You can access the form at the DMBC website using this link <http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/the-council-democracy/data-protection-policy>

Your Social Worker, Personal Advisor, Foster Carer or Key Worker can help you to complete this written request.

You should be given access to your file within 40 calendar days although it can sometimes take a longer to organise this. If it takes longer than 40 calendar days we will contact you and provide you with a reason for the delay.

If people other than your Social Worker or people who work for Doncaster Children's Services Trust have written things about you then we have to ask their permission to show these documents to you. If they say no, then we will tell you and explain to you what you can do if you want to complain about this. If there is information on your file about other people, for example about your parents or other members of your family then we must ask them for their permission to tell you. We will ask you if you want us to do this.

37. Who else can see my file?

Other people who believe there may be information about them in your file may ask to see anything on the file that relates specifically to them, for example sometimes parents want to see information that is contained on files about them. If your parents ask to see your file; if you are old enough we will ask you whether you agree to this and we will take your views into account. We may allow them to see parts of your file if we believe it is in your best interests. If there is information on your file which is just about them then the law says they are allowed to see it.

38. Can I see my file after I have left care?

Yes if you have been looked after by us. We have to keep our records about you until you are 75 years old! You have the right to see your records even if you are no longer under a Care Order or if you are no longer receiving a service from the Inspiring Futures Team.

This link provides information and a useful guide to your rights relating to viewing your social care records – <http://www.careleavers.com/cla-lcg>

39. Your Rights: What the Government say you are entitled to as a Looked after Child

The Department of Education are responsible for developing plans and policies for services to children in care and care leavers. They recently published a guide for children in care which describes the services that children in care are entitled to receive.

A copy of this document is provided below or you can find the document by visiting the DfE website by clicking on the following link –

media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/20120514_lac%20entitlements%20leaflet.pdf# (this is not a link)

40. How do I make a complaint?

If you have a complaint, you can telephone, write or email the Manager of your allocated Social Worker or Personal Advisor and explain why you want to make a complaint. Your allocated worker will provide you with the contact details of the relevant manager.

41. Complaints to Ofsted

Ofsted regulate social care services in England, such as children's homes, residential family centres and fostering and adoption services. If you feel that you want to make a complaint directly to Ofsted then the details of how to contact them are provided below–

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

Ofsted National Business Unit Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD

Enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted have produced a guide about how to register concerns and complaints which can be found by clicking on the following link –

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/concerns-and-complaints-about-social-careproviders

42. Commitment to The Department for Education Charter for Care Leavers

The Department of Education have produced a charter for care leavers and they have asked Local Authorities to sign up to this charter. Trafford have agreed to sign up to the charter and to adhere to the principles contained within it. A copy of the charter is printed below. If you want to view the charter on the DfE website follow the link below-

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/cl%20charter%20final%2025%20oct%202012.pdf>

43. Inspiring Futures Care Leavers Charter

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This pledge sets out promises care leavers want from the DCS Trust and Inspiring Futures Service. Promises and Principles help in decision making and do not replace laws; but to show how laws are designed to be interpreted.

The key principles in this Pledge will remain constant through any changes in Legislation, Regulation and Guidance. The Pledge for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what DCS Trust should do to be good corporate parents.

We Promise:

- **To respect and honour your identity**

We will support you to discover and to be who you are and honour your unique identity. We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will celebrate your identity as an individual, as a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community. We will value and support important relationships, and help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events. We will support you to express your identity positively to others.

- **To believe in you**

We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations. We will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of this yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you.

- **To listen to you**

We will take time to listen to you, respect and strive to understand your point of view. We will place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you, negotiate with you and show how we have taken these into account. If we don't agree with you we will fully explain why. We will provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and promote and encourage access to independent advocacy whenever you need it.

- **To ensure you are made aware of your legal entitlements.**

- To inform you of procedures for:
 - Complaints
 - Compliments
 - Participation Forum
 - Hear by Rights
 - Advocacy

We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and the service you can expect to receive from us at different stages in

the journey. We will keep information up to date and accurate. We will ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular touch with leaving care services. We will make it clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information, and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

- **To support you**

We will provide any support set out in current Regulations and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help, we will provide emotional support. We will make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down. We will not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you. We will make it our responsibility to understand your needs. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will help you learn from your mistakes; we will not judge you and we will be here for you no matter how many times you come back for support.

- **To find you a home**

We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living only when you are ready. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not judge you for your mistakes or refuse to advise you because you did not listen to us before. We will work proactively with other agencies to help you sustain your home.

- **To be a lifelong champion**

We will do our best to help you break down barriers encountered dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges & universities, employment providers and health services to help you establish yourself as an independent individual. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger. We will point you in a positive direction and journey alongside you at your pace. We will trust and respect you. We will not forget about you. We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.

Ask your worker if you want to know more.

44. Useful Contacts, Resources and Sources of Support

The list below provides the contact details of organisations that you might want to contact for support or advice.

Childline

Childline is the free national 24 hour telephone help line for any child in trouble or danger. It is a confidential counselling service which offers information and help to children and young people. You can email Childline, go on-line and chat and also text them,

Telephone: 0800 1111 (24 hour Freephone)

Website: www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children)

The NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000 is a service for anyone concerned about the safety or welfare of a child. You can contact the helpline 24 hours a day, seven days a week by phone, email or online.

National Youth Advocacy Service

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) is a UK charity providing children's rights and socio-legal services. NYAS offer information, advocacy, legal representation and advice to children and young people up to the age of **25** through a network of advocates throughout England and Wales.

If you are a child, young person or ringing on behalf of a child, young person or vulnerable adult and need help, information or advice, please contact the free-phone helpline on 0300 330 3131 or send an email to help@nyas.net

If you would like to speak with someone about a legal matter relating to an individual please call our legal team on 0151 649 8700 or email legal@nyas.net

Direct Gov.Uk

Provides a range of useful information about your rights and entitlements as a care leaver. DirectGov.Uk can be found by clicking on the link below

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Housing/DG_181382

The Care Leavers Association.

The care leavers association provides advice and information and a range of useful information about leaving care and your rights and entitlements.

<http://www.careleavers.com/leavingcare>

Young Minds Young Minds is committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers. Website: www.youngminds.org.uk/

Catch 22 Catch 22 works with young people who are in or leaving custody, involved in or on the fringes of crime, out of work, struggling at school, homeless or facing young parenthood without the safety net of a supportive family. Catch 22 offer practical support services which are flexible, highly personalised and often intensive. This enables young people to reach their full potential and achieve lasting change.

Website: www.catch-22.org.uk

Need2know Need2know provides information on: • Health • Money • Work and leisure • Sex and relationships • Housing and much more Email: www.need2know.co.uk/need2know/contactus.html Website: www.need2know.co.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) The CAB helps people to resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice and influencing policy makers. Some branches can provide legal advice on immigration and asylum cases. Telephone: 08708 408 0808 Email: enquiry@cabline.org

Advice visit: www.adviceguide.org.uk Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk Citizen Advice website for under25s: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me.html

Runaways This is a free phone confidential service for anyone who has run away from home or care, or been forced to leave home. Freephone: 0800 800 7070 Text: 80234 Email: runaways@missingpeople.org.uk

Missing People Website: www.missingpeople.org.uk/runaways/.Missing People is a charity that works with young people runaways, missing and unidentified people, their families and other people who care for them. Address: Missing people, Roebuck House, 284 Upper Richmond Road West, London, SW14 7JE Telephone: 0208 392 4521 Email: supporters@missingpeople.org.uk Website: www.missingpeople.org.uk/

Howard League Free, independent and confidential advice, assistance and representation on a wide range of issues to young people under 21 in custody. Telephone: 020 7249 7373 Email: info@howardleague.org Website: <http://www.howardleague.org/> Community Legal Advice line Community Legal Advice (CLA) is a free and confidential advice service in England and Wales paid for by legal aid. If you are living on a low income or benefits, you may be eligible for free specialist advice from legal advisers on issues including: • Benefits and tax credits • Debt • Education • Housing • Employment • Family problems The advice is independent and confidential. Community Legal Advice will ask you questions about your problem and find out what help you need. You will be asked a number of questions about your finances to see if you are eligible for legal aid. Community Legal Advice has a free translation service available in 170 languages.

Telephone: 0845 345 4345 Website: <http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/>

The Department of Education

The Department of Education (DfE) have published a guide for care leavers which describes the services young people leaving care are entitled to receive.

A copy of this document is provided below or you can find the document by visiting the DfE website by clicking on the following link –

http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/20120514_care%20leavers%20entitlements%20leaflet.pdf