

Local Offer for Young Adults Leaving our Care



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Welcome to the Local Offer for young adults leaving care in Bexley

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a legal responsibility on all local authorities to write and publish a list of services that all care leavers will be able to access after they reach the age of 18 years. This is called the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

We have pleasure in launching our local offer to support young adults leaving the care of Bexley Council. The offer is ambitious and creative and, we hope, will provide all young adults leaving care in Bexley with the best possible chance of success. The ambition within this offer carries on the theme of the ambition contained in the Looked after Children and Care Leavers strategy launched in November 2017.

To complement the Looked after children and care leaver strategy, Bexley have supported our young adults to develop a set of Commitments between Bexley as a Corporate parent, and all young adults leaving our care. These can be read below. The Commitments are deeply important to us as a Council. We take them seriously and hope that the strength behind the words is easy to see. In addition, a **Guide to leaving care booklet**, has been developed for you to use as information. Further, a mini **Entitlements brief guide** has been written as a quick reference list that can be kept in your wallet or purse.

As Corporate parents, we wish only for the best for our children and young people. We are actively focusing on our commitments and responsibilities in that 'parental' role. Positive Journeys and Positive Journeys Seniors, our Children in Care Council and Care Leaver Forum have considered very hard what corporate parents should know and the skills required. The job description is a creative set of essential skills that we all need and commits us all at the London Borough of Bexley to be great corporate parents.

It is essential that we offer strong support and advocacy for our young adults where needed. This is a joint responsibility for every employee at the London Borough of Bexley. We applaud the commitment of our staff in the leaving care teams and look forward to seeing positive outcomes for our young adults as they take up the support contained in the Offer.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Teresa O'Neill OBE
Leader of the Council

Councillor Philip Read
Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Jacky Tiotto
Director of Children's Services

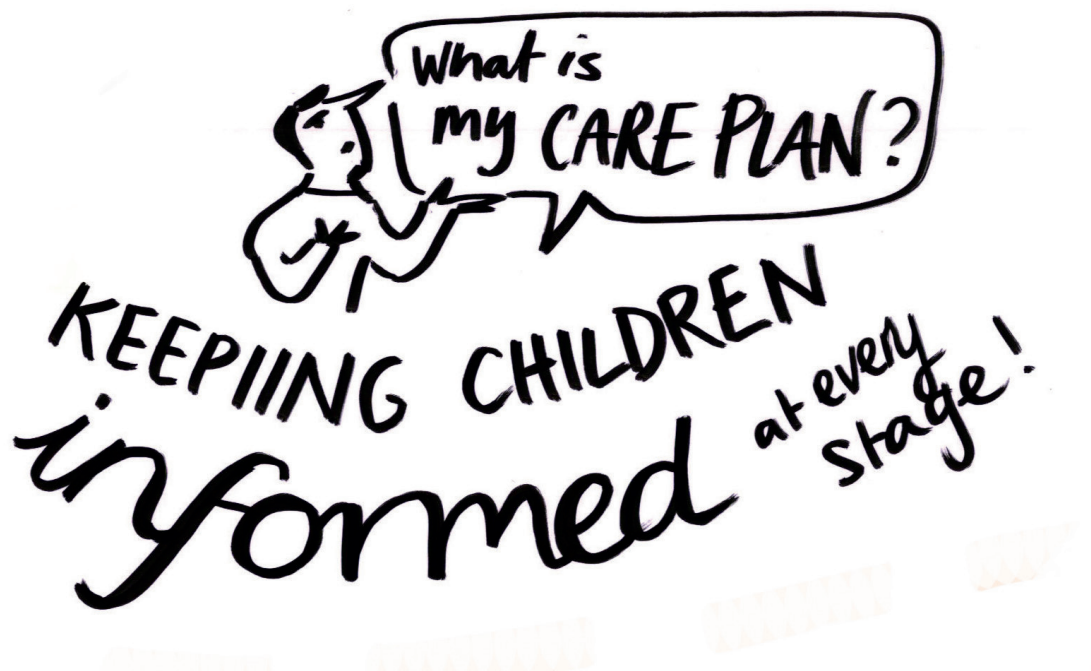
Paul Moore
Acting Chief Executive

Alli Parkinson
Deputy Director, Children's Social Care

Shannon Lidbury
Young Director

What the Children and Social Work Act 2017 says about the Care Leaver Offer

- (1) A local authority in England must publish information about-
 - (a) services which the local authority offers for care leavers as a result of its functions under the Children Act 1989;
 - (b) other services which the local authority offers that may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), services which may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living include services relating to-
 - (a) health and well-being;
 - (b) relationships;
 - (c) education and training;
 - (d) employment;
 - (e) accommodation;
 - (f) participation in society.
- (2) Where it considers appropriate, a local authority in England must publish information about services for care leavers offered by others which the local authority has power to offer as a result of its functions under the Children Act 1989.
- (3) Information required to be published by a local authority under this section is to be known as its “local offer for care leavers”.



The Care Leavers Local Offer in summary:

1. **Care leavers covenant**
2. **Your home**
3. **Education, employment and training**
4. **Health and wellbeing**
5. **Money (helping you manage your money)**
6. **Preparing to leave our care**
7. **Participation in society:**
8. **Entitlements: Accessing my files/Advocacy and complaints**

1. Care leavers covenant

Bexley expect all young adults leaving care to have the same opportunities with education, employment and training as children growing up in their birth families homes. In fact, Bexley have made this very pledge a specific priority in the looked after and care leaver strategy, 'a mile in my shoes'. Read on for exciting news!

Have you heard about The care leaver covenant? www.my covenant.org.uk

The covenant is a pledge made by public, private and voluntary organisations to support all young adults leaving care to be successful. What does this mean I hear you say - well, in a nutshell, it details many exciting opportunities for young adults leaving care to apply for from employment work with placements and internships with big businesses, government departments, museums, theatres, or Premier League football clubs, as well as training workshops or life-skills coaching.

In addition to the private and voluntary sector offers of support, the package of support for young adults leaving care includes:

- 12-month internships from every government department in Whitehall, including 100 12-month internships from January 2019;
- Support from universities, such as bursaries and accommodation, with Cambridge, Leeds, and Manchester universities committing to supporting care leavers - data shows that only 6 per cent of care leavers aged 19 to 21 go on to higher education; and
- Resources and tools from Barclays Life Skills to help care leavers to manage their money better, as they often lack the safety net of financial support from their families.

Watch this space for developments on this and how Bexley expect to be able to 'offer' young adults leaving care local opportunities.

It could not be easier to access, either through the free app, care leaver covenant on the app store www.itunes.apple.com/gb/app/care-leaver-covenant-app/id1438761894?mt=8, online here, or through your PA.



2. Your home

Where will I live?

One of the most important decisions we must agree with you as a Young Adult leaving our care is where you are going to live. It is very important that wherever you live, it is safe and feels like a home.

Your PA is here to help you with this, working through the options available to you and helping you to decide on what will be best for you at that time. All plans for where you live will need to be included in your Pathway Plan and agreed at your reviews.

If you are living with foster carers and want to stay there after you become 18, if both you and the foster carer agree, we will support you to remain there. This is called 'Staying Put'. A Staying Put arrangement refers to a situation where a young person who has been looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, and remained looked after on or after their 16th birthday remains living with their foster carer with whom they were placed when they turn 18. It requires Local Authorities to facilitate, monitor and support staying put arrangements for fostered young people until they reach the age of 21. The principle guiding the new legislation is to offer such young adults, the option to remain living with their foster carers until they feel ready to move onto live independently.

If you have been living in a residential care environment like a children's home, we will help you to stay in touch with special adults there. We will usually try to help you to live locally in Bexley, so you may see less of them but this is something you could write into your pathway plan if it is important to you.

Having somewhere, warm and safe to live is very important. If you were living in a family with your parents, it is unlikely you would move away to live alone at the young age of 18 years old. That is why in Bexley, we will encourage you to stay living with the carers you know, or very close by, so that you have good support.



We will worry about whether you are ready to live alone and we will discuss it together a lot. Your pathway plan will make very clear what is good for you and how we are going to manage this together.

We want it to be 'good for you' so this is one of the most important things about your future planning!

Our options for where you can live once you are 18 Include:

- You will be given a home that is safe and 'homely' which will match your individual needs.
- Staying put - We will help you remain with a foster family (if you are already living with that family after turning 18) for as long as possible. Moves to semi-independence or full independence will only happen when you are practically, mentally and emotionally ready to make this happen.
- You will be placed on the housing register as soon as you turn 18 years old. This will mean that when you are ready for a permanent home, you can begin to consider a social housing home.
- Supported accommodation - perhaps a shared house or flat, where you have your own room but share some facilities with other young people and receive support from a housing support officer. Supported lodgings might also be an option. This is sharing with an adult who will be there to help if you need it, but who will also be able to support you to live independently in their home.

- Independent accommodation from a housing association or a privately rented landlord.
- Returning to live with your family.
- When you are ready, a permanent home with either a social housing or private housing tenancy will be considered. Your legal status as a 'Care Leaver' gives you the right to be accepted on to the housing list, however, it is important that this does not happen until you feel able to live completely on your own and manage the responsibilities like paying all your bills on time. We can plan for this when we are writing your pathway plan. We will make sure your name is on Bexley's housing register from the age of 18 years old.
- Moving to live on your own is a massive step; it's not just about paying bills and cooking your own food. It's also about staying healthy and getting on with your neighbours. Your social worker/Personal Adviser will talk to you as part of the pathway planning process about the best ways for this to be a success that lasts.

'Moving in Day' – We will be there to make sure everything goes smoothly on your moving in day. We realise this can be an exciting but also scary time, your PA will be there with you every step of the way for emotional and practical support. We will help you settle in and make sure all practical things are in place such as water, gas and electricity'.

3. Education, employment and training

Your PA will support you to access the London Borough of Bexley's training and career services and you will receive the support from a specialist education and employment advisor. Helping you into education, employment or training.

As your corporate parent we have high ambitions for you and make it our priority to support you into a job that is good for you, an academic option such as a university course, an apprenticeship or a training course.

We will help you get the funding you need in order to do well. Your PA will support you with

any practical stuff that you may need.

Young adults leaving care can also access financial support for their education outside of Leaving care services. Some of this support is specifically for Young adults leaving care; your PA will support you with this.

At Bexley, we believe that every single young adult can and should be able to work or study. Therefore your PA will stick by you when you are deciding what you wish to do – and will be there to give you a helping push when you are unsure!

It does not matter if you have a gap in your education so long as you start it again as soon as is reasonably possible

Leaving care services will help you to make applications that may financially support your education and training placements.

Financial support for young adults who have left our care and attend higher Education (university or at a college)

If you are a Young Adult leaving our care and attending Higher Education, you may be entitled to education equipment and living costs, ask your Personal Adviser for the current amounts. You are entitled to apply for student loans and grants. Usually you will not be able to claim benefits. Student loans and maintenance loans are administered by Student Finance. Both will need to be repaid when your earnings reach a certain amount when you have completed your course of further study. See student finance website for further information www.gov.uk/student-finance.

You may also be entitled to a Higher Education Bursary to meet the costs of your 'out of term' accommodation. Please visit the government funded website on supporting university finances for further information. www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university

Two organisations which are useful to know about are Buttle UK, which is a charity who award universities a 'quality mark' for offering additional support to Young adults leaving care, and Propel, which is run by the Become charity. Both organisations are easy to access and offer good advice. Their details – and details of other charities which offer bursaries and grants are at the end of this document.



There are many opportunities available which would look great on your CV too including:

1. Total Respect training – you will be trained to deliver sessions for children’s professionals on the experience of being a looked after child. This activity has a voucher reward as it is delivered in a professional setting with the usual professional rules, turning up on time, wearing work style clothes. Young adults tell us that they enjoy these days.
2. Recruiting and interviewing new children’s services professionals.
3. Meeting the elected members known as Councillors, to share your experience and help them to consider whether the services for children, young people and young adults are reaching the right people in the right way.
4. You could be involved in one of our focus groups. At different times throughout the year we may need to have a specific group to help us look at certain areas we would like to change or need advice on.
5. Ask your PA for the details for our participation officer or our young director for more information about how to get involved.

4. Health and Wellbeing

We will help you prepare to be ready to leave care by supporting you to develop practical self-care and life skills, health, budgeting, domestic skills and personal and professional relationships.

You will receive a ‘Health passport’ which details your health history. Keep this safe for when you may need it. At the back of this

book there are useful contacts of organisations which registering with the GP or a dentist. It is important that you take care of yourself and speak to your PA about any health concerns you may have. Your pathway plan will also detail any health needs that you may have, remember to keep your PA updated.

5. Money

Your PA will help you to manage your money and understand any benefits you may be entitled to.

In addition, your PA will make sure that there is someone to support you in the event of a crisis or when things do not go according to plan.

Although you may still receive some financial support once you are 18, you will be expected to find your income from work, education grants and, if eligible, benefits. In most instances, we will not be responsible for your daily living costs.

Of course, we will not forget your birthdays and you will receive a birthday allowance from us up until you are 25 years old with your special 21st birthday marked with a meal for you and your Personal Adviser. There are of course also Christmas and other religious festivals that you may celebrate. We will mark these special times with a gift and, where possible, a visit

Claiming benefits, if that is what you need, is not simple and you need to ensure you apply for everything you are entitled to. Your Personal Adviser will be able to help you with this. You will need identification documents and a bank account (if you don’t already have one) for the benefits to be paid. Your PA will help you to get these in place before your 18th birthday, and support you to apply for your benefits before your birthday so that everything is set up to reduce any delays in payments. If you are receiving benefits and find yourself in a ‘sanction’ from the DWP, which usually means that you will receive no money, you should contact your Personal Adviser urgently.

Debt and money worries can have a serious impact on your well-being. In Bexley, we would want to know as soon as you start to worry about having enough money. At that moment, WE WILL HELP YOU. We won't be able to give you more money than you are entitled to. BUT we will find ways for your life and living arrangements to be manageable. DO NOT LEAVE THESE WORRIES UNRESOLVED. GET IN TOUCH.

Emergency Payments

There may be unexpected situations that arise that may leave you in a financial crisis or at risk of not being able to eat or heat your home.

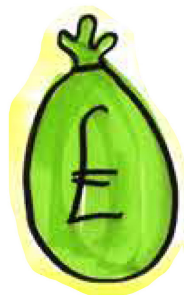
In these times, a one-off emergency payment can be provided. We will talk to you about this option should the need arise.

Help with your rent

If you are over 18, living away from your family and are studying full-time in non-advanced education (up to and including A Level or equivalent), you can claim Housing Benefit. You can enrol in your course of study at any time up to your 21st birthday and can continue to receive these benefits up to the end of your studies or the end of the academic year in which you become 21 years old, whichever is earlier.

This help is also available to you if you have stayed on with your former foster carers.

Housing Benefit can pay for all or part of your rent. If you are likely to have difficulty paying your full rent, you can approach the council and ask for Discretionary Housing Payments. These are not guaranteed, but the council may be able to help you for a period until you find other accommodation or earn enough to pay your rent yourself.



Help with your council tax

Council Tax is a payment made to your local authority for local services such as collecting your rubbish, clearing streets, running services (including providing social workers) and the local parks.

In October 2018, Bexley Council made a decision to exempt all care leavers living in the Bexley area from payment of Council Tax up to the age of 25 years.*

This means that as a young adult leaving the Council's care, you will not have to pay Council Tax. This decision was made so that you have the best chance of success living independently. We hope that you will consider this as a signal that we want to support you and we want your future to be good!!

TV Licence

Everyone who watches TV, even if it is only via a catch-up service or online on your laptop has to have and pay for a licence. Payments can be divided up into weekly or monthly payments, and again, your PA will support you to apply. You are at risk of a fine or worse if you do not have a licence.

Setting up home allowance

It is an exciting time being able to choose your own furniture and how your home will look. We will provide you with a grant of £2000. This will not be given to you in one lump sum and will be spent with your Personal Adviser. The grant is not intended to meet the costs of personal support or accommodation costs. This payment is an important mark of your independence, so we will want you to spend it wisely and on things that will help you to make this important step towards independence.

Additional one off payments

In addition to any benefit or subsistence payments received, care leavers can also receive additional funding in the following circumstances:

Housing costs – dependent on financial assessment and agreement by the Director or Deputy Director of Children's Services .

Travel costs for attending a training course.

Fares to job and education interviews will be provided to young people not in education or training if they do not qualify for Oyster Card coverage.

Travel warrant to support contact with your family if you or they live outside of Bexley

Payment vouchers as follows:

18th birthday	£40
19, 20, 22, 23, 24 and 25	£15
21st birthday	£30
Christmas	£15

6. Preparing to leave care

This whole offer is about preparing to leave our care. We are developing a new programme to help you with your 'future plans'. This is our 'Total Participation' programme and will be updated with details in the next few weeks.

7. Participation in Society

As your corporate parents we will be there to offer you advice and support. A big part of staying mentally and physically healthy is enjoying hobbies and interests. At Bexley this includes access to free Gym membership and swimming.

We can make an agreement through your pathway plan about how we can support you to get involved in sporting activities or other leisure activities near where you live.

Your PA will have lots of details of clubs, community groups, and activities which may interest you, when you next speak with your PA ask for details.

If needed we can assist you to enrol on the electoral register.

We want to hear your views so we can improve the experience for other young adults leaving care.

You will be given the opportunity to get involved in Positive Journeys Seniors (Care Leavers Forum), training professionals, going on trips, participate in workshops and much more. Not only will this help boost your confidence but will also add to your CV.

We will keep you informed with all the exciting things going on in Bexley, including Supper Club (where you can come along and make healthy meals) and special events put on especially for you. List of further available opportunities coming soon.

For more information contact natalie.eastwood@bexley.gov.uk
07815584494.

8. Help to understand your history.

Entitlements and accessing my files

We will help you understand your rights and advocate on your behalf, helping you access information about you and providing support if you need to make a complaint.

Children's Services have to keep written case records of your care history. These records must be kept for 75 years. You can request your records any time after you become 18 years old. You do not have to read through the information on your own. It can be upsetting or confusing to do this alone.

Your PA can support you or you can bring a friend.

We would strongly suggest that you do not do this on your own. You need to request to see your records in writing. Children's Services must then respond to you in writing giving the timescale. It must happen within 40 days. You may find that some of the information is not available for you to read. This is because some of the information in your records may identify other people known as third parties. Additionally, if there is information that may seriously harm your physical or mental health it may not be given to you.

There are 7 principles for a corporate parent set out in legislation. These are the areas of support the Government expects us to provide. As a result, we have developed our own commitments for all young adults leaving our care, developed with our Children in Care Council, Care Leaver's Forum and Positive Journeys Seniors, using the Government's 7 principles for Corporate Parenting.

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Our Commitments in Bexley:

Getting ready for adulthood:

- We will help you with the changes that happen when you stop being a child who is 'looked after' and become a young adult leaving care. We will do this in a supportive and positive way, making sure that you have the time it takes to be ready.
- We will help you remain with your foster family for as long as possible. We will only start thinking about independent living with you when you are practically, mentally and emotionally ready.
- We will help you maintain relationships with your carers, family, friends and social networks so that you have help and support during and after you leave our care.
- We will help you to understand what you need to be able to successfully live on your own and to be happy. We will also show you that we understand that leaving our care is a big step and that you need our patience and understanding, even when you make mistakes.

Practical help

- We will make it our priority to help you to find and keep a safe and welcoming home. We will make sure that you understand and take part in making your personal housing plan.
- We will help you learn how to take care of yourself, stay healthy and safe, manage your money, take care of your home, go to school, college or university, find a job, and have good relationships, able to raise families of your own if that is what you would like to do.
- We will understand that just because you become 18, this does not mean you will suddenly know all there is to know about being a responsible adult. We will help you to work out what being a responsible adult means, support you when you make mistakes and when we feel worried about you. We will make sure especially during the tough times, that we stand ready to help you.
- We will make sure that we see you every month (more regularly if we can) and more often when you first leave our care. We respect your choice to see us less if that is what you would like.

- We will help you to understand how to deal with conflicts and challenges without getting angry and frustrated at others or making things worse. We will help you through our own example, being patient and understanding. When things don't go according to plan, we will help you make a plan B to fall back upon.
- We understand that as an adult you may make choices that are not good for you and may even mean that you are unsafe. We know that you are free to make such a choice, but we will always act to help you to protect yourselves and others around you. There may be times that we need to make contact with other services or people who can help you. If we need to do this, we will make sure that you know and are clear about what will happen next.
- We will help you to find special support, like therapy or counselling, when the time is right for you and if you tell us that this would help you.
- We will make sure that you feel part of our Bexley "Corporate family" and like other families, we understand that you need to have a sense that you belong and are valued. We will help other people in the Council understand this when you may need their support, for example with housing or other services.

Our relationship together

- We will always help you dream and aspire to be better than you are today.
- We will help you to believe that you will continue to grow and to succeed.
- Your pathway plan will be something that inspires you to achieve great things in your life, whatever that means for you.
- We will always listen to you, even when we don't agree with one another.
- We will hear you out and help you to speak your mind in a way that helps you be heard by others who need to listen.
- We will include you in all of the important decisions that need to be made about your life and your future.
- We will respect the times when you need some personal space or may not be ready to see or speak with us. We will always leave the door open so that you know you can seek us out when you are ready to receive our help or advice. You will receive help and support from us up until the age of 25.
- We will make sure that your current social worker or Personal Adviser does not leave you without saying goodbye and introducing you to the new adult who will be supporting you. All our new Personal Advisers will understand that getting to know you and to earn your trust will take time.



- We will help you identify the triggers that may lead you to become angry, lash out, hurt yourself or turn to drugs or alcohol to cope. We will help you plan for these situations and identify who you can turn to for help when you need it. If it is helpful, we will help you to make a safety plan so that you have some control at times when you feel vulnerable and worried.
- We will not make commitments to you unless we know we can honour them. We know that our honesty will be important if you are to trust and work with us. That may mean that sometimes we have to say things to you even when it may not be what you want or like to hear.
- We will help you to understand your history and how it is you came to be in our care. We recognise that having your life story book, pictures and mementoes are all important to your recalling important people and events in your life. We will support you if you find this upsetting and if you want to see your case files, we will make sure that your Personal Adviser is available to help you read through papers and to ask questions.
- We will make sure that you understand your rights and your responsibilities. This will include knowing who else can help you to express your views if you want to make a complaint because you feel you have been treated unfairly. If we are not able to keep these commitments to you, we understand that this will mean you may need to complain.
- We will always offer you a hug or a shoulder to cry on if that will help. It's ok for you to say no though!
- Listen to and think about our advice and guidance, even if you don't always follow it.
- Let us know if you feel we are treating you unfairly or if we have made a mistake. We would like a chance to make things right.
- Accept our support, and let us know when you don't want or need our help.
- Understand that we have to make decisions about your safety when the law says we must or when you are in danger.
- Apologise and take responsibility for your actions when you make mistakes.
- Keep working hard on your goals, dreams and ambitions to the best of your ability.
- Be open and honest with us as much as possible.
- Tell us what your views, wishes and feelings are on anything we do to help.
- Let us know if you are in trouble or making decisions that are not good for you.

Your commitments to us

So that we can have the best relationship together through these commitments, we ask that you try your very best to:

- Treat us with respect, even when you don't agree with suggestions we are making.
- Keep in touch with us as much as you can or feel comfortable with.



Summary - What should I expect?

You can expect the following support:

1. Your Personal Adviser will listen to you and help you with decisions that will affect your future - you will be provided with the information and support required to help you make decisions about where you are going to live, what you are going to do and how we are going to support you to look after yourself.

This means:

2. You will have a Personal Adviser by the time you are 16½ years old and you will have decided with them and your social worker how they will support you on your journey to young adulthood and beyond.
3. We will, together with you, develop an individual Pathway Plan which clearly sets out what you need, your aspirations, goals, including where you will live, study and work.
4. Provide you with somewhere safe to live and help you make it your home.
5. Offer you a clear financial plan setting out the money you will have to spend on everything, including rent, bills, travel, food and your well-being.
6. Support you with education, training and employment opportunities.
7. Help you to be healthy.
8. Provide you with a health passport which will include your health history and health needs.
9. Ensure you have a passport, national insurance number and birth certificate.
10. Ensure we listen to you and share with you clearly what you can do if you are not happy about something.
11. We will help you with contact with your family if you want this and it is safe for this to happen. Obviously as an adult, you are free to make your own choices, but we will help you to think about what will work or not.

Who will support you?

Bexley's Leaving Care Service is here to help support you as you learn to live more independently. Your Personal Adviser will help to make positive and ambitious plans for your future.

As a young adult leaving care you will have an allocated Personal Adviser (PA) from the Leaving Care Team from the age of 16 ½ years. Your Social Worker, your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and your Personal Adviser will start to talk with you about a new plan for your future, called 'a pathway plan'. This plan will set out the things you need as you prepare to live your life independently when you are 18 years old. Your pathway plan must be an important part of your journey to leaving our care and we will help you write it so that you understand the support you have as you make decisions about where you will live, the job you do or the education and training you want to continue.

Your social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who know you well, will remain responsible, with you, for your pathway plan until you are 18. In the year and a half whilst we support you to prepare for your 18th birthday, we really hope that a new and important relationship will develop with your Personal Adviser. They will become an important adult in your life until you are 25 years old. Please do think of your pathway plan as being so important as a guide for you, that you have a shorter copy on your fridge or somewhere you can see it regularly so that you stay hopeful about your future!

How will I be involved?

For your Pathway Plan to be effective it will be based on your current needs, setting out the support that will be offered to you to achieve your aspirations.

As already mentioned, you will be fully involved in the development of the Plan and you will be offered support from your PA, your Social Worker and your IRO to express your wishes and views for your pathway plan review meetings as well.

What will be included in my pathway plan?

- Relationships and Support
- Accommodation arrangements
- Education, Training and Employment
- Health and Development
- Independent Living Skills
- Family and Social Networks

Your Personal Adviser will help you to develop and work with a support network which may include family, friends, cultural or religious organisations, and other support services or professionals.

Your Personal Adviser will visit you as frequently as you need to give you the maximum amount of support. At a minimum, your Personal Adviser will always visit when you move in to a new house, or when your PA is new to you, within 3 weeks. However, you can request to see your PA more frequently.

Your pathway plan is important for you and for us so that we can agree goals that support your future needs and aspirations. We have high ambitions for you; therefore it is important that you are involved in the writing of your plan.

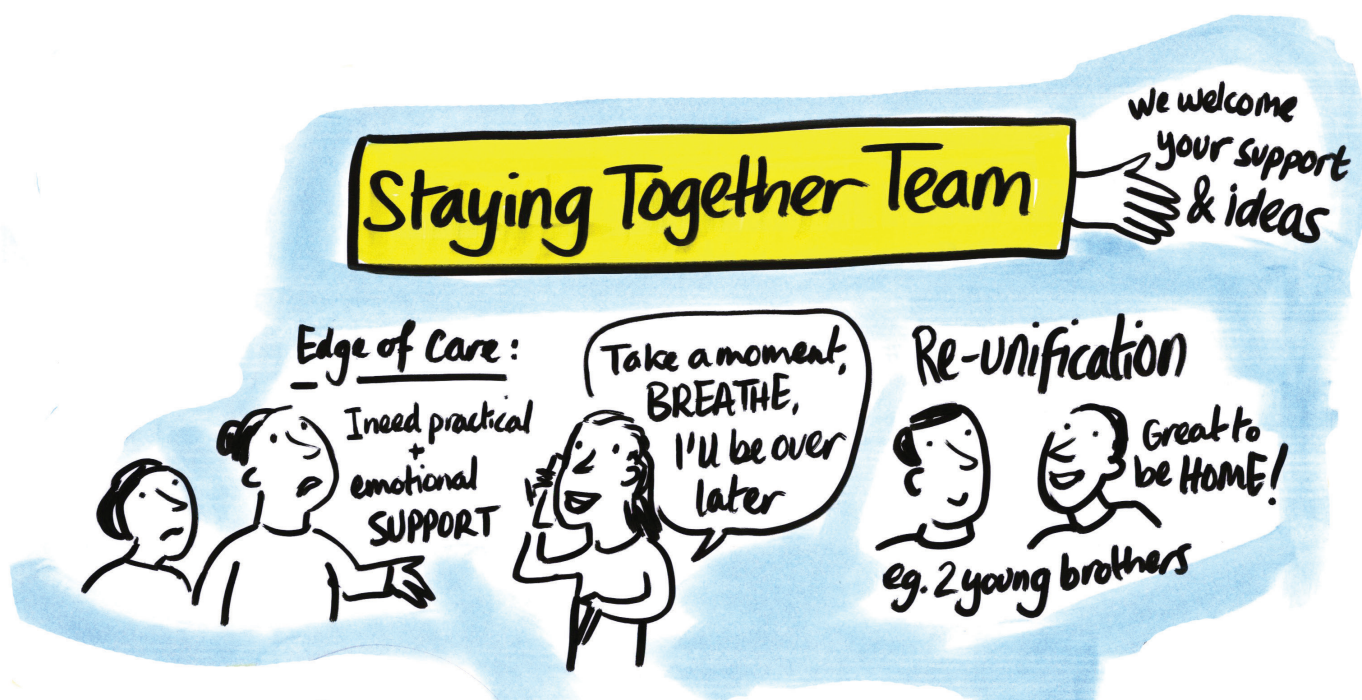
When writing your plan, we will focus on what is working well, what you may be worried about, and what practical things need to happen to make your plan work for you. We must check what is working with your plan at least every 6 months, but life changes happen so often that it would usually be more regular. Remember, your plan belongs to you. If you want us to look at it at any time and make changes, please ask. This is your life, you are in control of much of it, and we are here to make it a happy and safe one.

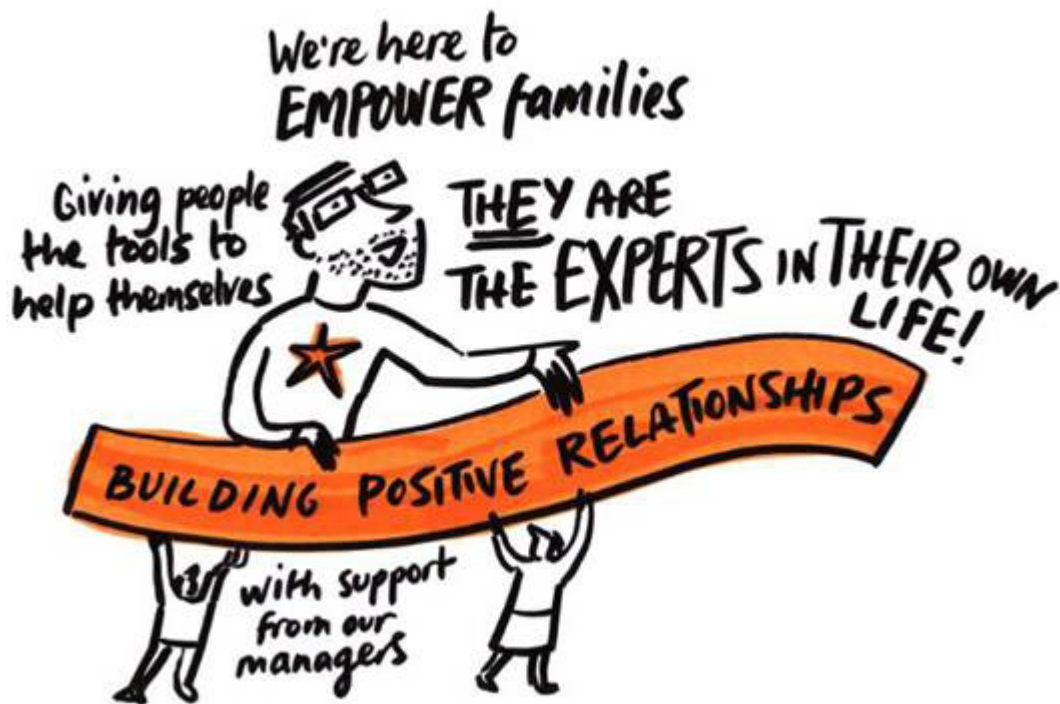
Birthdays, festivals and other significant moments in life

All young adults leaving care will receive a birthday card from their PA, a good luck phone call ahead of exams, and communication on the first day of a new job. Please see the young adults leaving care guide for full details.

What if I need immigration support?

You may be a young adult leaving our care who was or is an unaccompanied asylum seeking child and have an application with the Home Office which is under consideration for asylum and refugee status.





Sometimes, these applications can take a long time, sometimes years, to process during which time you will not have permanent status in the UK nor be able to work or receive regular benefits. However, you will be entitled to support from the care leavers service including funding for housing, subsistence, healthcare and prescriptions.

It will be important that these considerations are planned with you as much in advance as possible before you reach 18 years of age. You can ask your Personal Adviser for further information on what support you are entitled to and how to appeal decisions.

If your leave to remain status is approved, this will normally last for five years and be subject to review. It will also grant you the right to work and possibly claim benefits during this period. Further discretionary periods of leave to remain can also be granted and you will be assisted to make an application for further leave to remain.

As part of your pathway plan, it will be important to talk about what happens if application for leave to remain in the UK is denied.

The Personal Adviser will explore the appeals routes as well as what happens if you are facing removal from the UK and how this may need to be planned.

If your appeal rights are exhausted, we can continue to financially support you until it is time for you to leave the UK and we will support you emotionally and practically to consider your options. The important thing to remember is that we will not abandon you!

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