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**SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL COUNCIL**

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**LEAVING CARE PRACTICE MANUAL**

**Jackie Chipping**

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**PRACTICE MANUAL CARELEAVERS**

A guide for all staff who are working with and supporting young people aged 16 to 21 (or 25 if in education/training) who are in care, preparing to leave care or who have left care.

**Introduction to Care Leavers Manual**

The intention of this manual is twofold. Firstly, to provide a reference point of key information for all staff working with and supporting those young people in care or who have left the care of Swindon Borough Council. Secondly, to increase the level of consistency in practice and delivery of services to young people leaving care.

**UNDER PINNING PRINCIPLES**

The guiding principles for working with young people within and leaving the care of Swindon Borough Council are:-

* That good corporate parenting will be an overarching factor in all work with young people and will be integral to service delivery.
* That young people will have choices and be actively involved in any decision making affecting them and their circumstances.
* Equity of access to good quality services for all care leavers
* That all staff working with care leavers will have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake the roles required in the discharge of our statutory duties to young people in care and who have left care.
* To ensure that young people will experience a smooth transition between services and teams.
* That care leavers skills are maximised to enable them to achieve their full potential
* To ensure that care leavers receive good quality advice and guidance about post 16 years education training and employment options.

These principles are also contained in the **Care Leavers Charter** see :-

[**http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/cl%20charter%20final%2025%20oct%202012.pdf**](http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/cl%20charter%20final%2025%20oct%202012.pdf)

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION,GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES**

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

Children and Young Persons Act 2008

The Children’s Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3 Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010(Revised 2015)

Further details can be found at:-

[**http://swindonchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\_leaving\_care.html**](http://swindonchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_leaving_care.html)

**CONTEXT FOR LEAVING CARE SERVICES**

Research prior to the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 clearly highlighted the vulnerability and poor outcomes of those young people leaving the care system. These young people when compared to their peers living at home were at greater risk of poverty, lower educational achievement, becoming a teenage parent, having poor mental health and physical health, being involved in crime and being street homeless.

The 2000 act was significant and instrumental in changing the statutory framework for the way local authorities supported and provided services to those young people preparing to leave care and enter early adulthood. The ethos of the Act was the focus on extending services to support care leavers with an emphasis on improving their outcomes and enhancing their life opportunities.

Alongside this support was the duty to financially support these young people especially in relation to them undertaking education and training.

Within The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 the **responsible local authority** is the one that last looked after an eligible or relevant young person. Under this legislation the local authority will retain the responsibility for supporting care leavers wherever the young person lives.

Duties placed on local authorities were further increased under the Children and Young Person’s Act 2008 with support being extended to those in education/training up to 25 years old and providing care leavers with an opportunity to return to the local authority requesting support post 21 years old, even if their case had been closed.

New Children Act Regulations and Guidance were implemented in 2011 which further strengthened the duties of local authorities to support young people leaving care. These Regulations were based on

research and practice which shows that young people who have been looked after, will have the best chance of success as adults if those providing transitional care and other support take the following principles into account in talking to the young person and when making any decision:

• Is this good enough for my own child?

• Providing a second chance if things don’t go as expected.

• Is this tailored to their individual needs?

Revised in 2015, these Regulations now include specifically that

**Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not considered to be suitable** other than for very exceptional emergency circumstances. Such

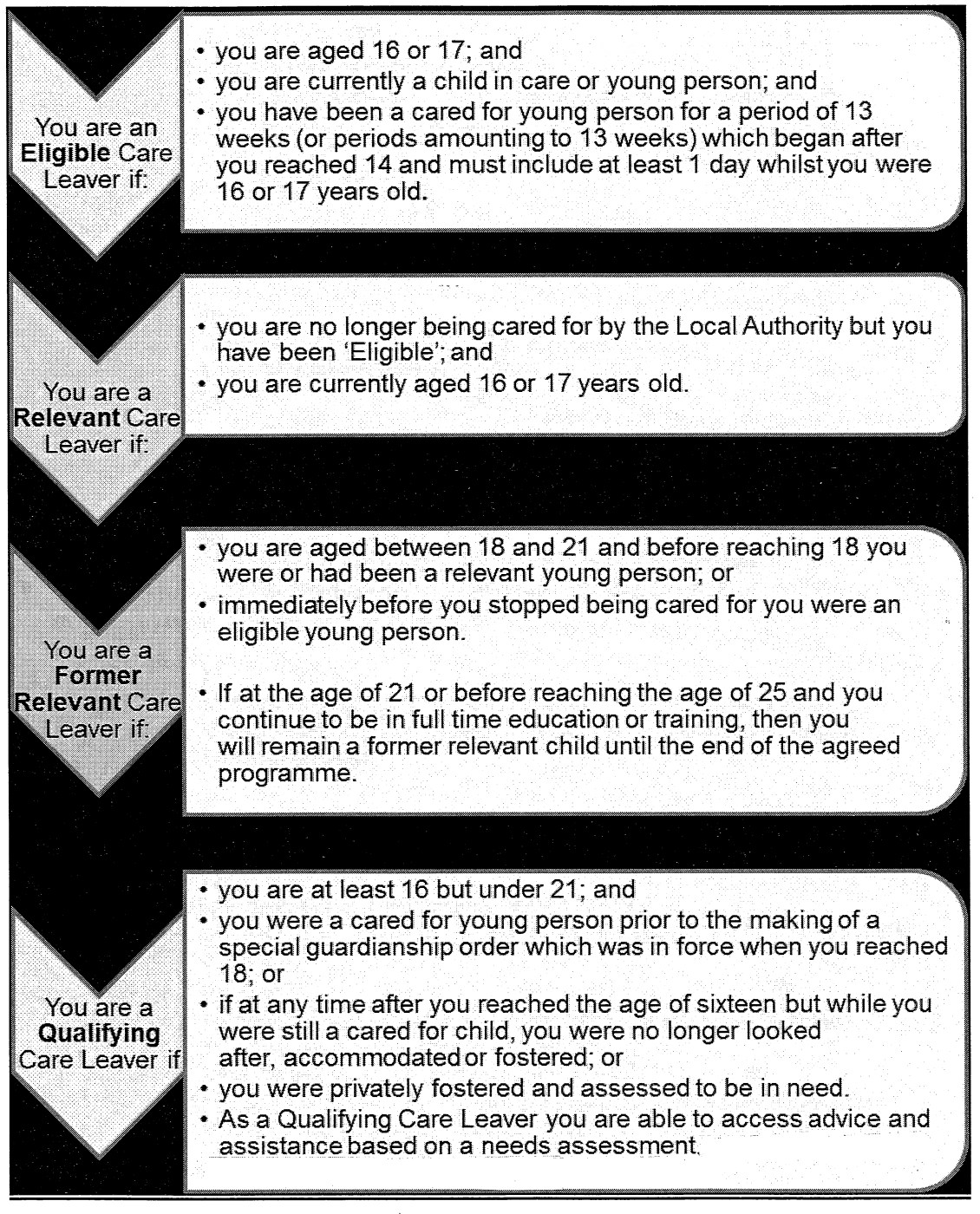
placements should be limited to a duration of no more than two

working days.

**Care Leavers Entitlements**

It is very important that young people are aware of their entitlements to leaving care services. This is dependent on the young person’s care leaving status detailed in the table below.

**CATEGORIES OF CARELEAVERS**



**AT A GLANCE GUIDE TO YOUNG PEOPLE’S ENTITLEMENTS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Duties** | **Finance** | **KEY TASKS** |
| **E**  **L**  **I**  **G**  **I**  **B**  **L**  **E** | All the provisions of the Looked after system  Personal Adviser  Needs Assessment  Pathway Plan | Personal Allowance  Accommodation costs  Care leavers can access 16-19 bursary from further education establishment  Assistance with costs associated with education/training | Personal Adviser at 15 ¾ years  Apply for NI no  Apply for passport if needed  Open bank account  If UASC apply for extension of leave to remain post 18 at 17.5 yrs  Complete consent to share information form  Inform College/training provider of young person with consent  Complete Needs assessment and Pathway Plan  Register on Housing list  Statutory visiting requirement |
| **R**  **E**  **L**  **E**  **V**  **A**  **N**  **T** | Personal Adviser  Pathway Plan  Review Pathway Plan  Secure Suitable accommodation | Personal Allowance  Accommodation and Support costs  Assistance with education/training costs  Apply for 16-19 bursary | Update leaving care status in ICS  Minimum of 2 monthly contact visits  Pathway Plan reviews minimum of 6 monthly or when change in young person’s situation. |
| **F**  **O**  **R**  **M**  **E**  **R**  **R**  **E**  **L**  **E**  **V**  **A**  **N**  **T** | Personal Adviser  Pathway Plan  Review Pathway Plan  Keep in touch  Assistance with training/education/employment  General Assistance | 16-19 bursary  Can access mainstream benefits  HE Bursary  University Funding may be available | Pathway Plan  Complete new consent to share form  If going to higher education ensure that applications made for relevant financial support inc HE Bursary  Liaise with Nominated support person at the University  Minimum 2 monthly visits  Ensure Benefit claims as appropriate  16-19 bursary application if appropriate  Cease Personal Allowance |
| **Q**  **U**  **A**  **L**  **I**  **F**  **Y**  **I**  **N**  **G** | To advise and assist  Can access financial support regardingeducation/training | Can access mainstream benefits  Support with training/education  /employment as appropriate | Undertake an assessment to agree if ongoing support needs  Develop support plan where required. |
|  |  |  |  |

It is the responsibility of the Social Worker and the Personal Adviser to go through these with the young person. The chair of the pathway plan meeting should also raise this in the meeting to ensure that the young person is aware.

A guide for young people leaving care has been developed and a copy should be given to young people to help explain their rights.

**Task Pathway**

* Apply for National Insurance no record on file

YP age 15 ¾

* Ensure Care Leavers Team invited to the next review and allocation of Personal Adviser

* Set up Bank Account if doesn’t have one

YP turns 16

* Passport to be applied for if doesn’t have one
* Make a housing application

* Needs assessment and Pathway Plan must be in place and recorded on file to be reviewed 6 monthly or following trigger event

YP 16 1/4

* If appropriate and not already done, refer to Adult Services transitions worker for assessment

YP 16+

* Set up Personal Allowance
* Ensure travel arrangements for training/college
* Provide support letter for 16/19 bursary

Stat Review nearest 17th birthday

* Continue Pathway Planning
* Start of discussions about plans and options for young person post 18 including Staying Put.
* Confirm plans for post 18

Stat Review at 17 ½

* Ensure Pathway Assessment and Plan review completed
* If young person is UASC apply for extension of leave to remain
* Draft university package in preparation for the start of the course
* Liaise with housing if accommodation required
* Change young person’s status to Former-Relevant –update system

YP 18

* Apply for benefits if required
* Close off personal allowance
* Raise financial form if interim financial support needed ie whilst Benefits claimed

YP

18/21-25

* Pathway Planning and Review process continue minimum of 6 months until age 21 or end of education/training
* Care Leaver visits every 2 months or as negotiated
* Arrange HE Bursary and agree vacation accommodation arrangements
* Liaise with HE establishment to explore funding available

**TRANSITION OF CASES**

In Swindon care leavers aged 16-18 years will be supported by their allocated social worker and a Personal Adviser allocated from the Care Leavers Team. The intended outcomes being that young people will receive enhanced support and there will be a smooth transition from a young person being case held in the Community Teams to the Care Leavers Team.

**Process for referral to Careleavers Team from Community Teams**

**Eligible young people aged 16 and 17 years**

Eligible young people will not have their cases transferred to the Care Leavers Team until their 18th birthday. However, it’s recognised that there are occasions when social workers will leave the organisation at an age where it would be in the interest of the young person to transfer the case earlier, if the young person is aged 17 and over, the case will be considered for transfer by the Care Leavers Team Manager.

As soon as it is known that a child is going to remain looked after at the time of their 16th birthday, the responsible Team Manager/ATM will notify the Care Leavers Team Manager of this by the age of 15½ years.

Arrangements will be made for a Personal Adviser to be appointed by the Care Leavers Team Manager by15 ¾ years. The Manager will also record on ICS who the allocated Personal Adviser is and also email the Social Worker, Personal Adviser and Care Leavers Assistant Team Manager to inform of the allocation.

The Personal Adviser and Social Worker should meet to discuss the young person and introductions should be arranged with the young person prior to the young person becoming 16 years old.

The young person’s Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan should be drawn up by the allocated Social Worker in consultation with the young person, the Personal Adviser, the young person’s carer and other involved parties.

The Person Adviser should attend the young person’s 16 year review with the consent of the young person. The Personal Adviser should attend any other relevant meetings regarding the young person as required.

The Personal Adviser will work alongside the allocated social worker, on the young person’s 16th birthday, and will have a key role in providing support to the young person after he/she leaves care.

The support to the allocated social worker for the young person will be to assist in the development, implementation and review of services as set out in the Pathway Plan which must be in place by the 16th birthday

The Pathway Plan should clarify the tasks that the Social Worker, the Personal Adviser, the young person, carers and other involved parties will complete with SMART outcomes.

The young person’s Pathway Plan should be reviewed every six months within the young person’s statutory review and amended to reflect any changes in the young person’s circumstances. The Pathway Plan can also be reviewed if there are significant changes in the young person’s circumstances.

**Relevant young people aged 16 and 17yrs**

Prior to any young person leaving care an amended Pathway Plan should be prepared by the Social Worker in consultation with the young person and their Personal Adviser and discussed at a statutory review chaired by the young person’s Independent Reviewing Officer .This is to ensure that an appropriate support package is in place for the young person.

The Care Leavers Team will then take on case responsibility for the young person

**POST 18 years Former relevant young people**

When a young person reaches the age of 18 years the Personal Adviser will take on full case responsibility for the young person’s support needs. They will also be responsible for reviewing and updating the Pathway Plan on a six monthly basis. The Personal Adviser’s Supervisor will be responsible for checking and countersigning the Pathway Plan

**Care leavers living out of Swindon**

For those young people who meet the criteria as a care leaver and live out of Swindon, they will continue to be supported by the Care Leavers Team until their case is formally closed.

It is good practice to inform in writing (with the young person’s consent) the local authority where the young person is living, giving details of the young person. This is helpful in case the young person ever needs to access a local office in which they are living. It is written in statute a duty on any local authority to provide emergency assistance and advice to any care leaver. It is important for the young person to be given contact details for their local children’s services in case of an emergency.

**Care leavers from other local authority areas**

If a care leaver from another local authority approaches Swindon children’s services then assistance should be provided as appropriate to avoid any emergency situation. This could mean facilitating a phone call between the young person and their responsible authority. If funding is required then this should only be provided after consultation with the responsible authority. Arrangements will need to be made to reclaim any monies provided.

**UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING YOUNG PEOPLE**

If an unaccompanied young person enters the country claiming asylum and is assessed to be under the age of 18 years old then they will be accommodated under Sec 20 of the Children’s Act 1989.Once accommodated these young people become subject to all the statutory processes as any other child in care. This includes achieving a care leaver status with all the associated support and processes.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are often involved in complex legal processes with regard to their claim for asylum. Many young people in this cohort are given discretionary Leave to Remain and need to lodge an application for an extension to remain at age 17 years and 6 months in order to have their case assessed and a decision made with regard to their status post 18 years.

Information regarding care leaving support available to UASC can be found:-

<http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/index.php?page=mcp_factsheets_support_children_care_leavers>

The Migrants Children Project also have an advice helpline

Tel: 0207 6368505

Further information can be found:-

[**http://swindonchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\_uasc.html**](http://swindonchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_uasc.html)

**YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY**

Those young people who meet the criteria for accessing leaving care services are entitled to the full range of entitlements as defined for their status. Within Swindon young people with a disability who meet who meet an eligibility criteria are most likely to be case held with the Children with Disabilities Team with the majority transitioning to Adult Services for the meeting of their needs post 18 years.

**Transitions from Children's to Adults' Services**

Children’s services must continue to be provided until adult provision has started or a decision is made that the young person’s needs do not meet the eligibility criteria for adult care and support following a Transition assessment.

The transition from children’s to adult services should take place at a time that is appropriate for the individual. This is particularly important where young people’s assessed needs do not meet eligibility criteria for adult services. Transition to adult services for those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC) should begin at an appropriate annual review and in many cases should be a staged process over several months or years.

Where young people aged 18 or over continue to have EHC plans under the Children and Families Act 2014, and they make the move to adult care and support, the care and support aspects of the EHC plan will be provided under the Care Act. The statutory care and support plan must form the basis of the ‘care’ element of the EHC plan

Under the Care Act 2014 all young people going through the transition process are entitled to independent advocacy.

For further information regarding young people with disabilities:-

<http://swindonchildcare.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_child_yp_disability.html>

A referral should be made by the Children with Disabilities Team to the Care Leavers Team as per the case transfer protocol (see section Transition of cases) for the allocation of a PA. There will need to be an individual case discussion between the Care Leavers Team and Adult Services regarding the level of involvement the PA has with the young person given their particular circumstances and needs.

**CONSENT TO SHARE INFORMATION FORM**

By the time the young person is being transferred to the Care Leavers Team there should already be a signed consent to share form completed onto their electronic record. However, as this may have been completed many years previously and as the young person becomes an adult at age 18 this form should be revisited.

See APPENDIX 1 Consent to Share Information Form

**KEEPING IN CONTACT**

For those young people who are eligible care leavers they are subject to statutory visits as they are looked after children. For those who are no longer looked after ie Relevant/Former Relevant young people they should have a care leaver visit on **a minimum of 2 monthly basis** until their case closes. Young people should also be visited **within 7 days** of any move in their accommodation.

Outside of this contact young people should be seen/contacted as often as required. The level of and type of contact between the PA and the young person should be clearly agreed and recorded in the young person’s Pathway Plan.

For those young people who have a **Qualifying** status the contact frequency should be based upon the need of the young person and is negotiable.

The purpose of the contact is to discuss with the young person their current situation, identify any support required and/or review support already in place. It **must** record activity (education, employment, training, accommodation and that this is suitable to the young person’s needs at the time.

When there has been a contact with a young person this should be recorded on their electronic file using the Recording Headings

**See APPENDIX 2 Recording Headings**

**Young people who do not want contact**

Sometimes despite a worker’s best efforts a young person may still request that the Department DO NOT maintain contact with them. It may be that the young person will agree to a telephone call, text or email rather than a face to face visit rather than ceasing all contact. The PA should continue to make efforts to engage with the young person and record all attempts made. The PA must write to the young person to advise that their case will remain open and that they can contact and resume support at any time until their case is closed.

If this situation occurs then the PA should discuss with the ATM/TM and a management record made on the young person’s file.

**Young People living out of area**

If a young person is looked after there are statutory visiting requirements where ever they live. For Relevant and Former Relevant young people contact should be at a minimum of 2 monthly visits or as required/requested by the young person.it is recognised that some young people over 18 years old may wish to negotiate the level and type of contact with their PA. Any arrangement agreed should be written into the Pathway Plan. For those living out of area it may be possible to negotiate a local service to visit on behalf of Swindon but the PA should also agree the frequency when they will visit.

For Eligible care leavers there is an established process for notifying other local authority, education, and health departments of a looked after child living in their area.

When a Relevant, Former Relevant or Qualifying care leaver moves to a different area the PA should advise the other authority in writing to inform that the young person is in their area. Consent should be obtained from the young person.

**PERSONAL ADVISERS and PATHWAY PLANNING**

The role of the Personal Adviser(PA)was created within the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.The functions of the PA are seen as being additional support for the young person and are not there to replace the role and functions of the social worker (for those under 18)

The importance of the PA role has been further strengthened by the Children Act Regulations and Guidance implemented in 2011 and updated in June 2014.

As an EligibleCare Leaver the young person will already be allocated a Social Worker from a Community Team in Swindon**.** The Social Worker will hold case responsibility and will be responsible for the preparation of the young person’s **Needs Assessment and** **Pathway Plan**. If the young person remains an Eligible care leaver they will continue to be allocated to a Social Worker until they reach 18 years old when they become a Former Relevant young person.

Alongside the Social Worker the young person will also be allocated a Personal Adviser (PA) from the Care Leavers Team**,** who will assist the young person in preparing for their transition to adult life.

If the young person is supported by the Disabled Children Team their allocated Social Worker will continue to support them as a Care Leaver until their transition to Adult Services. The Care Leavers Team will allocate a **Personal Adviser** to work alongside the existing Social Worker who will be available to support the transition to Adult Services. The Personal Adviser will take over responsibility for the preparation of their Pathway Plan when they reach 18 and achieve Former Relevant status

**The Pathway Plan**

The Pathway Plan should be a major part of young people's planning for the future. It should include their hopes and ambitions as well as smaller goals for them to reach along the way.

Each young person will be central to drawing up their own plan, setting out their own goals and identifying with their personal adviser how the local authority will help them. We will seek to ensure that at all times young people are consulted about their future and encouraged to be actively involved in the decision making process and implementation of the Pathway Plan.

We will work to ensure that the plan is owned by the young person and is able to respond to their changing needs and ambitions. It should look ahead at least as far as the young person’s 21st birthday and will be in place beyond that where the young person is in a programme of education or training which takes them past that age.

**See Appendix 3 Guidance for the completion of Pathway Plans**

**HEALTH**

For those young people who are still looked after there is a separate procedure outlining the expectations and processes to be undertaken in relation to health assessments and care.

The designated Looked After Children Nurse can undertake Health assessment reviews and provide general advice and guidance to young people on aspects of health care.

Young people who leave care have an individual Health Passport completed by the designated Looked After Children Nurse to ensure that they have their own record of their health history.

The young person’s Pathway Plan should include a plan to ensure that their health needs can be appropriately met.

**Prescriptions/dental/opticians**

Young people aged 16-19 years in education are entitled to free prescriptions, dental treatment, eye sight tests and assistance with the cost of glasses.

Young women who are pregnant or have given birth in the last 12 months are also entitled to free prescriptions, dental care and opticians.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are entitled to free health care services up to the point they are refused recourse to public funds. After this point they may not they may not be entitled to free secondary health services, although there are exceptions. When interviewed by the UKBA they can arrange to be given a HC2 form to be able to access free prescriptions etc.

Further details can be found at

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

**IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

All young people should be supported in acquiring the following documentation to ensure they have evidence of their identity which they will require when applying for housing,benefits, employment, training and opening a bank account.

These documents are required at various times but should all be in place by the time a young person is 18 years old.

**National Insurance Numbers**

A National Insurance number is an individual’s personal account number; it is unique to them and remains the same throughout their life. The number makes sure that the National Insurance contributions and tax paid properly recorded on an account. It also acts a reference number when communicating with the DWP and HMRC.

Usually young people receive their number before their 16th birthday. For a looked after child this has to be applied for by the allocated social worker when the young person is 15 years 9 months.

For young people who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (USAC) the process is different in that at they will be given a NI number at their first Reporting Event (FRE) if it is agreed that they will be given leave to remain for a designated period of time. At the same time they will be given a NHS number.

A National Insurance helpline can be contacted on 0300 200 3502

The application process can be found on the link below

[**https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-number-applying-for-a-number-for-a-looked-after-child**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-insurance-number-applying-for-a-number-for-a-looked-after-child)

**Birth Certificate**

This document is required when applying for a passport or accessing public funds. A parent, carer or family member may hold the young person’s birth certificate. It is important that it is recorded who has the safe keeping of the document and when a young person leaves care or reaches 18 years arrangements will need to be made for transferring this over the young person themselves. If a duplicate birth certificate is required this can be purchased from the Registry office where the young person was born.

**Passports**

Formal identification documents are becoming increasingly essential for activities such as opening a bank account. Therefore, if a young person does not have a passport by age 16 years it is crucial to support them in applying for one. Children’s Services will be responsible for meeting the cost. If a passport is due to expire between the ages of 16-18 years the cost of renewal will also be met. Any renewal costs post 18 years will generally be met by the young person.

Passport application forms can be obtained from the Post Office. Information relating to passports can be found at [**www.direct.gov.uk**](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

**SUPPORTING EDUCATION,TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**

There are clear duties and responsibilities to support care leavers in education, training and employment which can last up until the young person’s 25th birthday. This extended period of support is in recognition that care leavers may not fully participate in the educational opportunities available at the time for a number of reasons and hence may return to education when they are slightly older.

**Principles of support**

* It is important that all who are involved with the young person’s care hold high aspirations for young people both in care and who have left care and young people’s achievements are celebrated.
* It is recognised that the value of education and training as a stepping stone to help young people achieve their potential and make an economic contribution to their community. A range of learning and vocational opportunities are available to young people thus allowing for individuals to have a choice in the path they take and the level to which they develop their own potential.
* Young people often require emotional and financial support to sustain a course of education/training.
* It is recognised that some young people returning to education/training may face challenges due to previous experiences and absences from an education setting
* There are some occasions when young people make poor choices or their circumstances change in such a way that they may need to reconsider continuing on the course/training programme they have chosen. In these situations the local authority must exercise discretion to allow support to be offered for a new course/career path, a “second chance”

**Pathway Planning**

A young person’s Pathway Plan should incorporate information from their Personal Education Plan and clearly set out goals for future education/training. The post 16 Personal Education Plan has been introduced in Swindon to ensure that there is specific emphasis on education/training.

### Further information about Education, Training and Career opportunities is available at:-

[www.**swindon**.gov.uk/.../**routes\_to\_employment**](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/.../routes_to_employment)

<https://learningpathway.wordpress.com/>

**Sharing information with colleges**

Colleges have a Designated Tutor /Student Support which mirrors the role of the Designated Teacher. By notifying the college of a care leaver attending there is an opportunity to discuss any additional support needs the young person may have in order to help them settle in and maintain their course.

In preparation for starting a college course the allocated Social Worker/Personal Adviser should advise the young person of the intention to inform the college of their attendance and explain the reasons behind this. In order to do this the young person’s consent MUST be obtained via the consent to share form.

The worker must send a letter to the Designated Tutor at the college advising them that (Name of the young person) is attending the college and give details of their leaving care status and contact details of their allocated worker. This letter should be placed on the young person’s file. With the introduction of the 16-19 bursary it is even more important that young people identify themselves to the college to access this source of funding.

**Sources of Funding**

For eligible and relevant young people aged 16/17 years old the local authority will be responsible for providing a Personal Allowance and meeting accommodation costs as mainstream benefits cannot be accessed, exception being lone parents and disabled young people.

Qualifying young people are able to access mainstream benefits.

**16-19 Bursary**

Funding for these bursaries goes directly to the college. Children in care and care leavers will automatically be entitled to a bursary of £ 1,200 per year. Each college has discretion as to how they administer the bursary. It is advisable to seek details from the individual college via it’s website.

[**www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/16-19%20Bursary%20Fund%202012-13%20Guide.pdf**](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/16-19%20Bursary%20Fund%202012-13%20Guide.pdf)

**Care leavers aged 18+**

Care leavers over the age of 18 years who are studying fulltime non advances education ( up to A Level or equivalent) can claim Income Support and Housing Benefit on the grounds of being estranged from family. They can enrol at any time up to their 21st birthday and can receive these benefits up to the end of the course or the end of the academic year whichever is earlier.

**Help with the Cost of Going to University**

If a young person is a relevant or former relevant care leaver and they enter a higher education or university degree course, then the Care Leavers Team will provide the following support:

* A bursary of £2000 per academic year
* Help and support with vacation accommodation up to £ 3000
* Liaise with Nominated support worker at the University to ensure all necessary support is accessed.

Information regarding the financial support available to care leavers can be found via The Student Finance website which can be accessed through [**www.direct.gov.uk**](http://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.

The young person’s Personal Adviser should support the young person with their applications and ensure that they receive their full entitlements.

The financial arrangements and vacation accommodation should be clearly recorded in the young person’s Pathway Plan.

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**](https://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university)

**Propel**

Propel is a new website created to help inspire more care leavers to into higher education. It provides full information regarding each education establishment’s support to care leavers and ensures that young people get the support they are entitled to. Propel can be accessed via [**www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk**](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

More information about learning /work opportunities and funding sources can be found at :-<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-leavers-skills-support>

**Young people returning to education/training post 21 years old**

If a former relevant care leaver contacts the Care Leavers Team post 21 years to discuss support to attend a further education course a Personal Adviser 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 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.

**ACCOMMODATION**

The Children (Leaving Care) 2000 placed a duty on local authorities to provide and fund suitable accommodation for care leavers aged 16 and 17 years old.

**It is important to note that a young person’s status is based on need rather than accommodation.**

Therefore, if a young person is Section 20 accommodated and decides to move to supported lodgings this does not automatically mean that they cease to be looked after. If a young person is subject to a Care Order they will remain looked after until their 18th birthday or the discharge of the Order at court, whichever is sooner.

If a young person accommodated under section 20 expresses a wish to cease to be in the care of the local authority and understands the full implications of this decision then such a change can only take place following a statutory review where the decision is discussed and ongoing support agreed.

**Suitability of accommodation**

The appropriateness and suitability of accommodation to meet a care leaver’s needs are defined in the Care Leavers Regulations Reg 9(2) as follows:-

**‘Suitable accommodation’**.

is accommodation:

• Which, so far as reasonably practicable, is suitable for the child in light of his needs, including his health needs;

• In respect of which the responsible authority has satisfied itself as to the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider;

• Complies with health and safety requirements related to rented accommodation; and

• In respect of which the responsible authority has, so far as reasonably practicable, taken into account the child’s

• wishes and feelings; and

education, training or employment needs

The allocated workers for the young person **must** ensure that the proposed property is checked prior to the young person moving into the property.

**Bed and Breakfast accommodation**

The Care Leavers Regulations revised 2015 now include specifically that

**Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not considered to be suitable** other than for very exceptional emergency circumstances. Such placements should be limited to **no more than two working days**.

**Staying Put**

The Children & Young Persons Act 2008 and Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 (Regulations and Guidance) require a Local Authority to have a Staying Put Policy that sets out arrangements which enable young people to remain in their foster care placements beyond their eighteenth birthday.

From the age of eighteen, young people are no longer legally ‘in care’ or ‘looked after’ and so fostering arrangements and legislation relating to those placed with foster carers no longer apply. Following the young person’s eighteenth birthday, the legal basis on which they remain with their foster carer changes and they become part of a Staying Put arrangement.

Swindon Borough Council’s Staying Put Policy sets out to improve care leavers’ transition to adulthood within a supported family environment. The intention is to ensure young people can remain with their former foster carers until they are prepared for adulthood. The young person can experience a transition similar to their peers, avoid social exclusion and be more likely to manage the move to independence.

The Council is committed to achieving best outcomes for care leavers and will extend a former foster care placement beyond a young person’s eighteenth birthday if appropriate for the young person’s needs

Joint Housing protocol currently being updated regarding care leavers

**YOUNG PEOPLE RETURNING HOME**

If the plan following a statutory review is for a young person ‘accommodated’ under. Section 20 of the 1989 Act by arrangement with their parents is to return home the young person will cease to be looked after and be a ‘**relevant’** child. On returning home the young person’s parent/s are able to claim child benefit as long as the young person is undertaking full time education and training.

**After six months**, and following a review that these arrangements are successful, the young person will become a **qualifying** child; and if they are undertaking full time education and training and their parent/s meet the criteria for Child Tax Credits, the parent may be eligible for the Child Element; and if the young person is the only child in the family, the Family Element of Child Tax Credits.

**FINANCE**

Care leavers between the age of 16-18years old cannot claim benefits Exceptions to this are:-

* Young people post 16years who have been looked after for less than 13 weeks(Qualifying)
* Young people who have been privately fostered or subject to a Special Guardianship Order to their 16th birthday(Qualifying)
* Pregnant young women who can claim Income Support from 27/29 weeks. However ,financial responsibility for accommodation remains with the local authority.
* Disabled young people are able to claim Income Support/Employment and Support Allowance but financial responsibility for accommodation remains with the local authority.

**Personal Allowance**

In lieu of benefits there is a statutory duty to financially support care leavers in the form of a Personal Allowance. This is set at the same rate of Jobseekers Allowance and is updated every April.

**Leaving Care Grants**

All Relevant and Former relevant young people who are eligible for a Leaving Care service will receive a Leaving Care Grant which is currently £2000 after young people become eligible for a leaving care service. The Leaving Care Grant is issued to you so that you can purchase furniture and equipment associated with setting up your own home. There is a great deal of flexibility in planning how you spend your grant. The grant can be partially spent whilst you are in care in preparation for when you move into your own accommodation. The grant is usually provided in instalments, so that it can be spent as and when you need it.

**Crisis Payments**

Living independently can at times be challenging and sometimes things do go wrong. If a young person requires financial support in a crisis then, under certain circumstances, the Care Leavers 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 PA and will be subject to approval by a Manager from the Care Leavers Team.

**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
* Special circumstance where a young person may need additional funds

These payments will be subject to an individual assessment.

**20. Bank Accounts**

Where ever possible payments made to care leavers will be paid directly into their bank account. If they do not already have a bank account their PA will help them 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

**21. Spending Plans**

Making ends meet on a limited budget is a challenging task. Spending plans are a useful way of making sure that the young person budgets carefully and doesn’t overspend. PA will help young people to produce a spending plan which can be used to balance their incoming funds with their outgoing costs .Completing the Spending plan with a young person is a useful way for the PA to discuss and plan how the young person will budget.

**SEE APPENDIX 3 Financial Support**

**COMPLAINTS**

Local authorities must allow for the involvement of independent people when they consider representations, so that young people can recognise that the process is both transparent and fair. As corporate parents for looked after children and care leavers, local authorities should listen to young people and act on what they say.

If a young person has a complaint they can telephone, write or email the manager of their allocated social worker or personal adviser and explain why they want to make a complaint. The allocated worker will provide the young person with the contact details of the relevant manager and a copy of the Complaints procedure. Their complaint should be put in writing and the relevant manager should try to resolve the complaint with the young person within 14 days .This is called the Informal resolution stage.

If the young person is not satisfied with the response received the complaint should be sent to the address below:

The Complaints Manager

Children,Families and Community Health

Wat Tyler West Floor 3

Beckhampton Street

Swindon

SN1 2JH

Tel:01793 463302

Email:childrensfamilies&communityhealthcomplaints@swindon.gov.uk

Whilst some young people may already have an advocate before they reach the stage of making a formal complaint, the complaints officer must check that a young person has been put in touch with an advocate and is happy with the level of support they are receiving. If this is not the case, the complaints officer must inform the young person about their rights to advocacy.

**ACCESS TO RECORDS**

If a young person would like to see their social care file records a written and signed request must be submitted saying that they are requesting access to their records under the Data Protection Act 1998. This request can be given or posted to their Social Worker/Personal Adviser or the young person can send the request to the Data Protection Officer. The contact details are provided below:

Swindon Borough Council’s Data Protection Officer is responsible for dealing with all formal requests for access to personal information, but young people can express an interest to see their personal information to any council officer or direct to the Data Protection Officer.  The Officer will give the young people the information and forms that they require to make an application and provide them with any further assistance that they may need.

If the young person is unable, or does not wish, to make a request them self, they can ask someone else (an 'agent') to do this on their behalf, e.g.: Personal Adviser

Please send the completed form, the proof of ID to:-

Anna Marzec  
Data Protection Officer  
Swindon Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Euclid Street  
Swindon SN1 2JH

The young person’s social worker, PA, foster carer or key worker should help them to complete this written request.

Young people should be given access to their file within 40 calendar days although it can sometimes take a longer time to organise this. If it takes longer than 40 calendar days the young person will be contacted by the Data Protection Officer to inform of the delay.

APPENDIX 1

Consent for information to be passed to and/or collected from (delete as appropriate) another organisation

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Information held | **Young Person Name:** | | | |
| College has the following information about you: | | | | |
| Name: | | 🞎 | Address: | 🞎 |
| Telephone: | | 🞎 | Date of Birth: | 🞎 |
| Ethnicity: | | 🞎 | School attended: | 🞎 |
| *Other Information* including names of family members held or to be gathered (please specify, for example referral or assessment information): | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **Agencies and Partners** |  | | | |
| College would like your permission to share with and/or gather (delete as appropriate) the above information (please tick all that apply): | | | | |
| Group Directorate: Children, Swindon Borough Council | | 🞎 | Job Centre: | 🞎 |
| Parents/Guardians | | 🞎 | Youth Offending Team: | 🞎 |
| Swindon Primary Care Trust: | | 🞎 | Probation: | 🞎 |
| School or College: | | 🞎 | Police: | 🞎 |
| Training Provider: | | 🞎 | Connexions: | 🞎 |
| *Other Agency/Partner* (please specify): | | | | |
| Home Office | | | | |
| **Signatures** | | | | |
| This information is being passed to and/or collected from other agencies so that we can help you. I give permission for this information to be passed onto and/or gathered from others | | | | |
| **Signed:**  (young person)  **Date:** | **Signed:**  (professional)  **Date:** | | | |
| **Date when consent will be reviewed:** | | | | |

**Appendix 2**

**Recording Headings**

Recording should follow:-

1.Type of contact ie phone call

2. Issues discussed

3. Analysis

4. Actions agreed

Workers to use headings below when recording contacts with young people and explicitly record their views.

* Health and Development
* Safeguarding issues
* Education, Training and Employment
* Identity
* Family and Social Relationships
* Personal Support
* Accommodation
* Independent Living Skills
* Rights and Citizenship
* Finance/Money

**Appendix 3**

**PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR THE COMPLETION OF PATHWAY PLANS**

The Pathway Plan should follow from the Needs Assessment of the young person. It will clearly explain how the young person’s identified needs will be met. It is intended that the Plan will be an agreed action plan between the young person, the Social Worker, the Personal advisor and other involved people named in the Plan.

The Plan should include long term overarching plans as well as short term and medium term actions to ensure that an aim is achieved.

However there is an acknowledgement that ambitions, plans and aims change and the Plan is intended to be as flexible as necessary to respond to the individual young person’s changing needs.

The racial, cultural, religious, linguistic and any special needs of the young person should be considered in all sections of the Pathway Plan. The sections are:-

* Health and Development
* Education, Training and Employment
* Identity
* Family and Social Relationships
* Personal Support
* Accommodation
* Independent Living Skills
* Rights and Citizenship
* Finance/Money
* Contingency Plans

**GOOD PRACTICE**

It is the responsibility of the social worker to ensure that the Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan are completed within the statutory deadline ie by the maximum of 3 months following the young person’s 16th birthday.

The Plan must be updated as part of every looked after child review and signed by all parties.

The Plan must be completed in a way that maximises the young person’s involvement. It is essential that the young person has ownership of their Plan.

If the young person chooses not to engage in the process, the Plan should still be completed within the statutory timescales. The Plan should clearly note that the young person did not want to engage in the Planning process. The Plan should include steps taken to engage the young person and contain information gathered from carers, keyworkers involved, family members and information from case files.

Primary carers such as foster carers and residential keyworkers must be involved in creating the Plan and their commitment to the Plan clearly recorded.

Other significant people in the young person’s support network such as family members and other involved professionals should also be involved in the planning process.

The Plan is intended to be a living document that can be referred to frequently.

Outcomes hoped for must be clearly stated by each action.

The Plan should clearly reflect the young person’s hopes and aspirations.

The person/people with responsibility for completing an action and timescales must be clearly stated. The young person should be encouraged to complete actions as much as possible to encourage independence.

The young person should be encouraged to comment on each section. If the young person chooses not to comment this should be clearly recorded.

The Plan should only be circulated to relevant people and in consultation with the young person.

The Initial section of the Plan should record when the Plan began and concluded; including the number of visits/sessions with the young person and others contributing to the Plan.

The extent to which the young person has been involved with the creation of the Plan.

The people consulted during the course of the Plan.

**Health and Development**

This section aims to promote the quality of life for the young person, taking into account general and specialist health/therapeutic services and the growth and development of the young person as well as physical and mental well-being.

In addition to the young person and in consultation with the young person, where appropriate the following people should be consulted in preparing for this section.

* The young person’s parent/person with parental responsibility.
* The young person’s carer(s).
* Any professionals providing health services including specialist services i.e. CAMHS.

**This section should include plans to address the needs identified in the young person’s Needs Assessment and Health Plan. For example**

* Registration with a GP.
* Arrangements regarding the annual health assessment.
* Arrangements to undertake an eye sight test and a dental check.
* Arrangements for managing any medical condition - physical or emotional that the young person might be experiencing.
* Arrangements to assist the young person to stay healthy i.e. healthy eating, exercise etc.
* Arrangements to ensure the young person is aware of, and able to, access local health services.
* Arrangements to address any issues with substance misuse including referral to specialist services.
* Arrangements to address any mental health issues.
* Arrangements to provide support around any additional needs such as learning or physical disability.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is aware of sexual health services and how to access them.

**Education, Training and Employment**

This section aims to ensure that the young person has access to all opportunities for employment, further/higher education and training according to their individual needs.

**This section should address the needs identified in the Needs Assessment/Personal Education Plan. For example**

* Long term plans and aspirations for the young person.
* Arrangements to address any special educational needs.
* Acknowledgement of educational/training/employment achievements.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person has access to information and support to achieve their aspirations.

**Identity**

This section aims to ensure that the young person has a growing sense of self as a separate and valued person and that they have a positive sense of their individuality, including such factors as race, religion, gender, sexuality and disability.

**This section should address the needs identified in the Needs Assessment. For example**

* Arrangements to address issues of self-confidence and self-esteem.
* Arrangements to address questions the young person has about their past e.g. access to records, life story work etc.
* Arrangements to address specific cultural needs e.g. race, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender etc.

**Family and Social Relationships**

This section aims to identify the young person’s support systems and through subsequent planning to assist the young person in maintaining and developing these and other community ties.

**This section should address :-**

* Arrangements for contact with family members.
* Arrangements to maintain other important contacts.
* Arrangements for developing their support networks.

**Personal Support**

This section records the contact methods and frequency of visits to the young person by their social worker/personal advisor. For example whether the contact will be by text, phone or email as well as how often the social worker/personal adviser will visit the young person.

**Independent Living Skills**

This section aims to ensure that the young person acquires a range of skills (practical and interpersonal) which prepares them for independent living.

**This section should address:**

* Arrangements to assist the young person in self-care.
* Arrangements to support the young person with key skills such as shopping, cooking, laundry, paying bills etc.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person has access to relevant information and materials aimed at supporting the development of independent living skills.
* Arrangements to attend training courses/group work to support the development of independent living skills.

**Accommodation**

This section aims to ensure that accommodation provided for the young person meets their identified needs and wishes.

**This section should include:-**

* The full range of housing options available to the young person.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is registered with the relevant housing department.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person will move into suitable accommodation.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person has information that will inform them of their rights and responsibilities in relation to housing.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is aware of the Independent Living Grant and the process to access it.

**Rights and Citizenship**

This section aims to ensure that the young person has access to a range of information regarding statutory and community based services and that they are aware of their rights as UK citizens or as people with indefinite leave to remain.

**This section should include:-**

* Arrangements to ensure that the young person has access to information about services that provide advocacy such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Refugee Council.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person has a copy of their birth certificate, National Insurance no, passport etc. if they do not have them already.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is aware of their changing rights and responsibilities as they reach adulthood.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is aware of their right to vote and how to register where appropriate.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is aware of relevant employment law/minimum wage.

**Finance**

This section aims to ensure that the young person is aware of their entitlement for financial assistance from the Department, statutory agencies, student grants/loans etc.

**This section should include:-**

* Arrangements to ensure that the young person receives support with budgeting skills and money management.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is supported in setting up a bank account.
* Arrangements to pursue criminal injuries compensation where appropriate.
* Arrangements to ensure that the young person is aware of the financial support available to them according to their individual circumstances.

**Contingency Plans**

This section should suggest alternatives to all areas of the plan if the plan does not work.

**Appendix 4**

**Schedule of Payments to Care Leavers for 2016/7**

All care leavers aged 16-21years will receive:-

* Birthday allowance of £50 per year
* Christmas/Festival allowance of £100 per year
* A provisional Driving Licence
* Driving Lessons up to the value of £500 If associated with employment/education/training
* One passport cost
* Birth Certificate if needed
* Leaving Care Grant of £2.000

Relevant young people not engaged in employment, education or training will receive a Personal Allowance equivalent to Jobseekers Allowance per week.

Incentive payments

Relevant young people engaged in education, employment or training will receive an incentive payment of up to £30.00 per week assessed on an individual basis.

Relevant young people not engaged in education, employment or training but actively seeking employment will receive an incentive payment of £5.00 per week.

Further Education and Training

Young people will receive assistance with the cost of:

* Course Fees, within reasonable limits
* Travel costs to attend Education or Training, within reasonable limits
* Course related materials, (for example Health and Safety clothing/ equipment)

Prison allowance

Young people in custody will receive £15.00 per month

University Students

Students will receive up to £3,000 per annum for vacation accommodation costs.

University students are entitled to financial support in the form of a bursary of £2,000 this can be paid in a lump sum or in three instalments of £666.66; the young person’s Personal Adviser will discuss these arrangements and agree these arrangements.

**All enquiries will be dealt with by the Care Leavers Team on 01793 466715**

**Appendix 5**

**Why do we need Minimum Standards for the Care Leavers Team?**

The Swindon Borough Council Care Leavers Team will meet the minimum standards for assessing and meeting young people’s accommodation, social, emotional, employment, health and educational support needs and identify the partner organisations and individuals with whom the plan will be implemented, including young people themselves, paying due regard to the need for confidential information

There is clarity on what is expected of Personal Advisers and managers that they can measure themselves against

* We provide a confident, professional service that is respected by care leavers and professionals.
* We champion the needs of young adult care leavers and advocate on their behalf to promote their welfare where necessary.
* Personal Advisers are enabled to exercise professional judgement which in turn improves their expertise
* Multi-agency meetings are convened to agree the best outcomes for the young person wherever necessary

**We will ensure that:**

* All managers and Personal Advisors have clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities as professionals

**Key Messages from the Swindon’s Care Leavers Team Minimum Standards:**

* The young person’s wishes and feelings are heard, recorded and impact on decisions
* We will advise and assist care leavers safely into adulthood and independence.
* The care leavers we work with are treated with respect and honesty and kept informed about progress
* The strengths of young people will be assessed and used to develop their independence skills and achieve their potential as adults.
* Our work will be based on Pathway Plans and outcomes that are measurable so that the young person can see their progress into adulthood and beyond.

**Every Personal Adviser should know the answer to:**

* How does the young person feel?
* Is our intervention improving the outcomes for the young person?
* How do we know?

**My responsibilities:**

As a Personal Adviser, if at any time during my involvement with the young person, I am uncertain of what to do, or am concerned about any aspect of the young person’s safety, I must discuss this immediately with my manager and agree the way forward. I must then record the analysis and decision.

1. **Allocation of a Personal Adviser**
   1. I have clearly explained to the young person the purpose of my involvement and what the likely outcomes will be.
   2. I have seen the young person alone or with their social worker and listened to/observed (age and stage of development appropriate) their views and recorded their wishes and feelings.
   3. I have contributed to assessments of the young person’s needs when required to do so.
   4. I have ensured that the young person’s Pathway Plan reflects their wishes and feelings, cultural, religious and language needs, any protective factors, risks and other issues/concerns that the young person considers relevant.
   5. I have ensured that the young person understands that they can be registered for Housing at the earliest opportunity after their 16th birthday and the young person is advised when the registration has been actioned.
   6. I have reassessed the young person’s readiness for a tenancy at regular intervals and submitted the relevant paperwork to Housing.
   7. I have attended LAC reviews by agreement with the young person or contributed my observations and views by other means.
   8. I have accompanied the young person to Job Centre Plus, College or Department for Work and Pensions when requested to do so by the young person.
   9. I have assisted the young person to access their prime documents (where they do not already have them)eg passport, birth certificate, NI number
   10. I have ensured that the young person has been given information about how to make a complaint and access their records.
   11. I have ensured that the young person has been given a copy of the Leaving Care Guide.

**2. Progressing the Pathway Plan**

2.1 I have ensured the young person’s Pathway Plan is up to date by liaising with the young person’s social worker in preparation for the young person leaving care.

2.2 I have ensured the Pathway Plan complies with the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Transitions Regulations and Guidance 2015.

2.3 I have encouraged the young person to engage with relevant services to progress the identified pathway to independence.

2.4 I have ensured that a risk assessment of all issues relating to the young person has been undertaken and updated as necessary

2.5 I have encouraged the young person to become a confident and independent member of society.

2.6 I have supported the young person in finding suitable accommodation and living independently.

2.7 I have supported the young person to complete their chosen programme of education or training including work experience, apprenticeships and /or higher or further education.

2.8 I have provided information and signposted the young person to relevant agencies and supported them to secure and maintain employment.

2.9 I have supported and advocated where the young person has a disability or additional needs to ensure that they reach their full potential.

2.10 I have supported the young person to maintain or improve their family relationships where appropriate and when requested

2.11 I have supported the young person to access leisure activities if requested.

**3.0 Supporting to Independence**

3.1 I have ensured that the young person’s Pathway Plan and reviews are up to date and include an assessment of their physical and emotional health needs and how these needs will be met.

3.2 I have ensured that the young person has information about and knowledge of how to access a range of health services including sexual health, counselling and mental health services where appropriate.

3.3 I have ensured that the young person who is a parent or prospective parent has been given appropriate support and information about healthcare for themselves and their child.

3.4 I have liaised with the relevant professionals regarding the unborn baby of the young person if there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

3.5 I have supported the young person to explore all suitable accommodation options for their transition to adulthood.

3.6 I have ensured that the young person has been given information in a timely way regarding ‘Staying Put’ arrangements.

3.7 I have ensured that the young person has been provided with education and training that meet their needs.

3.8 I have ensured that the young person’s Pathway Assessment and Plan includes a comprehensive assessment of financial needs and how these will be met.

3.9 I have ensured that the young person has received information about Welfare Benefits including Housing Benefit.

3.10 I have ensured that the young person has been given information about funding streams for continuing their education/training.

3.11 I have liaised with relevant professionals including the Police and Housing department regarding concerns about the welfare of the care leaver.

3.12 I have liaised with multiagency partners including the Home Office, immigration solicitors and advocacy services to ensure the young person if an asylum seeking young person understands the process and all possible outcomes.

3.13 I have engaged with interpreters (where appropriate) to ensure that the young person understands leaving care support and have their wishes and feelings heard.

**4. Case Recording**

4.1 I have recorded what the young person has told me in their own words or expressions about their wishes and feelings and this has influenced their Pathway Plan.

4.2 My recording has evidenced when I have seen the young person and the reasons why if this has not taken place.

4.3 If a young person declines leaving care support my recording details my attempts to re-engage the young person.

4.4 I have ensured that my records cover all of the recording headings which include accommodation and the EET status of the young person.

4.5 I have ensured that the records are respectful of the young person, including their education, communication, language, cultural, gender, sexuality ,disability and any other diversity needs.

4.6 As far as possible I have recorded the information as I go along but as a maximum within 5 days.

4.7 I have distinguished between fact and opinion in the recording and have included relevant research in the analysis of needs.

4.8 I have included information provided by other professionals or family/friends which is clearly identified and recorded.

**Appendix 6**

**Practice Standards/ Tasks for the PA. Q.A / Tasks for supervisor.**

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| **1.** | The pathway plan will be reviewed at least every 6 months -182 days  **NB a pathway plan review is only completed when it is signed off and recorded on the IT system.** | Supervisors will check that the date for the next review is within the 6 month timescale. |
| **2.** | The PA should book the next review date at the current pathway plan review meeting.  It should be 5 months ahead to  allow time for the meeting to be  re-scheduled and to obtain signing off. | Any rescheduling of a pathway plan review will be discussed by the PA with their manager and  their agreement sought.  Consideration will be given to alternative arrangements should there be a risk of the review going overdue. |
| **3.** | If a worker is on sick leave the review must go ahead so it remains within timescales. | The manager of the worker will arrange for another worker or the duty officer to undertake the review. |
| **4.** | There will be rare occasions when a pathway plan review has to go overdue. | This can only be agreed by a senior manager.. |
| **5.** | An early review should be called:-  If there are events which have a  serious implication for a young  person’s future such as:-   * Being charged with an offence which could lead to a custodial sentence. * Eviction from their accommodation or homelessness * Concerns about the parenting capacity of the care leaver which means their baby may become subject to a child protection plan. * The young person requests an early review | The situation should be discussed by the PA with their manager and the date of the review should be reported to the manager. |
| **6.** | Pathway planning will continue whilst a young person is in custody.    At least 28 days before their release there must be a  review of the pathway plan and agreement by 14 days prior to release as to who is collecting them, where they are going to be living, reporting and support  arrangements, EET and health  arrangements,financial support and contact with their PA and other professionals. | Young people in custody should be discussed on a regular basis in supervision.  A review date should be no later than 28 days prior to their release. |
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**Appendix 7 The quality of the pathway plan. Information to be included.**

**NB. A PATHWAY PLAN REVIEW IS A PROCESS AND NOT AN EVENT.**

**Q. A. /Tasks for supervisor.**

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| **Practice Standards/ Tasks for the PA.** | **Q. A. /Tasks for supervisor.** |

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| **7.** | Prior to undertaking the review the PA should have:-   * Read the previous plan, needs assessment, and any other assessments that have taken place in the review period. * Obtained the views of others i.e.   a.Any body holding Parental  Responsibility and relevant family members .  b.The carer.  c.Significant others, educational  and medical staff, Probation etc.   * Updated the chronology and   genogram.   * Spent time reflecting on   developments since the last review, the learning from these  developments.   * Considered whether the current plan has worked, and any changes to the plan that have been made. * Understand the views and   experience of the young person. | In the supervision session there will be a discussion to consider:-   * The progress since the last review. * Has the plan worked? * The views of others. * An analysis of the developments the young person has made in the review period. What worked well, even better if…What has gone badly, what needs to be changed? * Discussion who should attend the review meeting and whether any further information is required. * Identifying SMART goals for the   forthcoming review including  contingency plans. |
| **8.** | The pathway plan should address the following points   * Health and development.   Education, employment and  training.   * Emotional and behavioural   development.   * Identity * Family and social relationships. * Practical skills necessary for   independent living.   * Financial arrangements. * Suitability of accommodation. | Using the information from the supervision session the PA should identify the key areas of concerns for the plan to focus on.  The manager when signing off the plan will use the supervision notes and the prompt questions to determine if all the relevant areas have been covered, and SMART targets/ goals sets.  **NB All these must be covered otherwise the manager can not sign the plan off.** |
| **9.** | The goals set should be SMART | As above manager to check. |
| **10.** | There should be a clear contingency plan  – Not call another review meeting | As above manager to check. |
| **11.** | The plan is signed by the young person  the PA and other involved parties | As above manager to check. |
| **12.** | There is a date for the next pathway plan review in 5 months time. | As above manager to check. |

**Appendix 8 Managers Audit Form for Pathway Plan Reviews**

**Practice area Evidence**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Is there evidence that the young person views and experiences are recorded in the PPR? |  |
|  | Has the PPR been completed within timescales? |  |
|  | Is there evidence the views of key others have been recorded in the PPR? |  |
|  | Has the young person been seen at the required frequency in review period? |  |
|  | **Accommodation**  Has suitability and stability been reviewed and where inappropriate, alternative plans made? |  |
|  | **Financial Arrangements**  Have these been reviewed as satisfactory and if necessary alternative plans made? |  |
|  | **Education, Training & Employment**  Has EET status been reviewed and where NEET, plans have been made? |  |
|  | **Health & Leisure**  Have these needs been reviewed and where not met, plans are in place? |  |
| 9. | **Family and Social Relationships**  Have these been reviewed and appropriate plans made? |  |
| 10. | **Identity**  Have these needs been reviewed and actions implemented where required? |  |
| 11. | **Emotional Wellbeing**  Have these needs been reviewed and actions implemented where required? |  |
| 12. | **Independent Living Skills** Have they been reviewed and where further input is required, plans have been made? |  |
| 13. | Is there evidence of contingencies in place if plans or required actions are not achieved? |  |
| 14. | Is there evidence of analysis of needs in PPR? |  |
| 15. | Are the decisions agreed at the PPR  SMART ? |  |

**Appendix 9**

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

**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 freephone 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](mailto:legal@nyas.net)

**Who Cares Trust**

The Trust provides help and advice to young people in care and careleavers regarding their rights, housing issues, money worries, education, health and provides information regarding national and local support services.

Contact the Advice Line on 020 7017 8901

Email advice@whocarestrust.org.uk

Or follow the link

[**www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk**](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

**Career Pilot**

Website for young people detailing choices available to them regarding education, training and employment.

Can be accessed via [www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk)

**Propel**

Propel is a new website created to help inspire more care leavers to into higher education. It provides full information regarding each education establishments support to care leavers and ensures that young people get the support they are entitled to.

Propel can be accessed via [**www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk**](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

**Shelter**

Shelter provides housing advice regarding all aspects of housing.

Their free advice line is 0808 800 4444

Website [www.england.shelter.org.uk](http://www.england.shelter.org.uk)

**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 Association provides advice and information and a range of useful information about leaving care and your rights and entitlements.

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

**The Care Leavers Foundation**

Offers support, encouragement and financial help via grants to care leavers who want to take control of their lives.

Tel 016785 540598

Website [www.thecareleaversfoundation.org](http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org)

**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/**](http://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. Thisenables young people to reach their full potential and achieve lasting change**.**

**Website:** [**www.catch-22.org.uk**](http://www.catch-22.org.uk)

**Need2know**

Need2know provide 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](http://www.need2know.co.uk)

**Information regarding care leaving support available to** **UASC** can be found at:-

<http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/index.php?page=mcp_factsheets_support_children_care_leavers>

**The Migrants Children Project** also have an advice helpline

Tel: 0207 6368505

**Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

The CAB helps people to resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice 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](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Citizen advice website for under25s:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me.html](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me.html)

**Missing people**

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/](http://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 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.. Community Legal Advice has a free translation service available in 170 languages. Telephone: 0845 345 4345

Website: <http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/>