**My Passport to Independence**

This is me!

This book can be adapted to suit individuals. It can also be translated into a language other than English.



**INTRODUCTION**

This is your **Passport to Independent Living** guidebook**.**

* This book will help you as you move on to develop the skills and knowledge to live independently.
* You can use the book to make your own notes as well.
* This book is to be used alongside your **Pathway Plan** and the information in the **Care Leavers’ App** that details your entitlements as a care leaver.
* This book will help you and us evidence that you are ready to take really important steps forward in your life. This will include evidencing when you are ready to have your own independent accommodation.
* There are many ways we can help you develop the skills and confidence to live well and to live independently. This could include tasks that your foster carer does with you; it could include completing “ASDAN” courses, or working with your PA or social worker

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**If you think there are things that we should add to the Passport then please let us know, we would like to hear your feedback.**

**Enjoy your new adventure into independence!**

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**Life quotes to remember**

**Things to help you through**

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined”.

**Henry David Thoreau**

“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass… It’s about learning to dance in the rain”. **Vivian Greene**

“Dwell on the beauty of life. Watch the stars and see yourself running with them”.

**Marcus Aurelius**

“The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one”. **Unknown**

“I don’t have any other message than don’t forget you are alive”.

**Joe Strummer**

 ***Add your own -What or who inspires you?***

**Section 1 – Personal Information & Identity**

This section will make sure you have all the right documents and information that you need to start your adult life.

You will need these documents and information to get access to a place to live, education, training and employment, health care, travel abroad, benefits and anything else where you need to prove who you are.

Your Pathway Plan should cover how you will be supported to do this and who can help.

As your corporate parent we help you to apply and will pay for your 1st adult passport, a copy of your birth certificate, and we will help to ensure that you have the right resources to make a claim for ‘leave to remain’/British Citizenship if necessary.

You should already have a bank account and we will make sure that you can access this as an adult.

Your checklist:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Documents** | √ |
| I have a copy of my birth certificate |  |
| I have my 10 years adult passport |  |
| I have my National Insurance Number |  |
| I have my NHS Number and medical card |  |
| I have my documents to show I have leave to remain/have British Citizenship |  |
| **My identity** |  |
| I have been supported to identify myself as I wish in respect of my sexuality, gender, religion and beliefs |  |
| I know where to get support and advice if I need this with any of the above |  |
| I know about my family and care history |  |
| I know how to request access to my personal records |  |
| I have been supported to have copies of photos, certificates and other important things I have collected through my childhood, and I have a safe place to put them |  |
| **Your Social worker or Personal Advisor (PA) will add details of any other documents that you might need below;** |  |
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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I have all the documents I need as a young adult. I know about my own history & I know how to access support to manage my identity, culture, religion and beliefs.  Signed  Date |  |
| I confirm that (name) has all the documents they need as listed in this section and/or additional documents where we are helping a young person with applying for leave to remain.    Signed (PA/SW)  Date |  |

**Section 2 – Looking After Myself**

This section is all about making sure you have the life skills to look after yourself or identify where you will need help and support as a young adult.

We understand that practical skills go hand in hand with feeling happy and that when our mood is low, we can struggle with completing practical tasks.

If you feel that you struggle with these every day skills needed to be independent because of your low mood, please talk to your social worker, PA, support worker or your doctor.

You can complete 1 or more of these with your foster carer or alongside your PA or with a support worker where you live.

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| --- | --- |
| **I know how to:** | √ |
| Manage my routine and my own time |  |
| Keep a diary/calendar for appointments |  |
| Look after my body to stay clean and healthy |  |
| Look after what I wear and keep clothes and footwear clean |  |
| Keep my personal space and spaces I share with others tidy and clean |  |
| Prepare basic drinks and meals and eat healthily on a budget |  |
| Shop for my basic needs |  |
| Know who to contact for help and how |  |
| Know my entitlements as a care leaver and how to use the Care Leavers App |  |
| Know what is ‘legal’ and understand the consequences of breaking the law |  |
| **Add anything else below that you would like ongoing support with and feel that you need in order to look after yourself as an adult?** |  |
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| --- | --- |
| I have worked on my life skills, and I am able to look after myself/I know what I need to help me look after myself.  Signed  Date |  |
| I confirm that (name) has the independence skills they need/there is a plan in place to support them with their identified independent living needs.  Signed (PA/SW)  Date |  |



**Section 3 – Keeping healthy**

This section will help you to know how to look after your health and where you can get help when you need it.

You will have the opportunity for a final health assessment before you are 18 and this will inform your **Health Summary.** We will provide you with a copy of your Health Summary and we will also keep a copy ourselves so that we can replace it if necessary.

If you are already over 19, you can request a copy of the last health assessment you had before you were 18 and the information will be contained around where to get help if needed. Please ask your PA for this.

It is really important that you have your health history for when you change doctors or move. It will help your doctor, or other health professionals, know what they need to do in order to give you the health service that you need.

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| --- | --- |
| **I have:** | √ |
| Registered with a GP |  |
| Registered with a dentist |  |
| Registered with an optician |  |
| My NHS number and card |  |
| **I know:** |  |
| What a GP does and how to make an appointment by myself |  |
| What other services my GP surgery provides |  |
| What a Walk-In Service is for and how to use it |  |
| When to use A&E and where my local A&E is |  |
| How NHS dental charges work |  |
| How prescription charges work |  |
| **I know how to:** |  |
| Deal with minor ailments (e.g. headache; tummy upset; cuts and bruises, things I don’t need to see a doctor for) |  |
| Register with a GP or change my GP by myself |  |
| Get help with health costs |  |
| **I have had/know how to access to advice about:** |  |
| Staying healthy |  |
| My sexual health, including STIs, contraception and pregnancy. |  |
| My drug or alcohol use |  |
| Smoking |  |
| Managing stress/knowing my stress triggers |  |
| Dealing with past trauma and loss or anything else that is affecting my mental and emotional health |  |
| **Is there any other help or information that you need in order to look after your health?**  **Add anything else below that is important to you that you would like your PA and/or Social Worker to know.** |  |
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| I have all the information I need and am able to manage my health needs/I know what help I need to manage my health.  Signed  Date |  |
| I confirm that (name) has the information they need/there is a plan in place to support them with their identified health needs.  Signed (PA/SW)  Date |  |

**Section 4 – Somewhere to Live**

This section covers how to move on from the place where you have been living as a child and teenager into the place that best suits you as a young adult.

Sometimes you may stay longer with your foster family or return to live with your birth family.

You may move on to live in one of the supported independent living options before getting a place of your own or share with someone else in your life.

This section will enable you to be ‘ready’ to live as a young adult in a space/place of your own.

It will help you to stay in secure, stable and suitable accommodation.

It will also help you to know what to do if something goes wrong and you are at risk of being homeless.

We will use this section to help us evidence to landlords and housing associations that you are ready and able to manage a tenancy. We would encourage you to see this section as a “test” that you need to pass, before we can approve you as being ready to access your Homechoice entitlement to your own flat (The Care Leavers App and your PA will tell you more about your entitlements to your own flat).

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| **I know my options and what they look like:** | √ |
| Returning to live with my birth family |  |
| Staying Put with my foster family |  |
| “Crash Pads” and emergency accommodation |  |
| Supported Lodgings |  |
| Supported accommodation |  |
| High Support flats |  |
| Being ready for my own Home Choice tenancy |  |
| **I know how to:** | √ |
| Live by shared ‘rules of the house’ when sharing your home with others |  |
| Be a good neighbour |  |
| Understand & sign a tenancy agreement |  |
| Choose gas/electricity/water supplier and register |  |
| Budget and pay my bills |  |
| Use basic DIY skills- change a light bulb/put up flat pack furniture/paint a wall |  |
| Turn on/off my electricity/gas/water |  |
| Read & submit my gas/electricity/water meters |  |
| Dispose of rubbish properly |  |
| Use the shared spaces (e.g. bin areas/smoking areas) |  |
| Find and how to ask for help with maintenance if something goes wrong |  |
| Keep safe/raise the alarm if there is a fire |  |
| Raise a complaint about accommodation if it is unsafe/unsuitable |  |
| Raise a complaint about a neighbour if you are being threatened, harassed or disturbed |  |
| Ask for help at the earliest opportunity if worried about paying rent or bills |  |
| Set up home for the first time- access my Setting Up Home Grant |  |
| Insure my belongings |  |
| Get a TV License |  |
| Register for Home Choice |  |
| Avoid eviction/ask for help if you are at risk of being homeless |  |
| Link in with others if you feel lonely or alone, anxious or unsafe |  |
| **Add in below anything else you think you are going to need support with, or are going to need to know, to help you manage your accommodation.** |  |
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| *I know about my accommodation options and how to be ‘tenancy ready’/I know what help I will need to live in my own place/space as a young adult*  *Signed*  *Date* |  |
| *I confirm that (name) knows about their options and has had information and help to live in their own place/space. There is a plan in place to support them to live in their own place/space.*  *Signed (PA/SW)*  *Date* |  |

**Section 5- Money & benefits**

This section will help you to know what your entitlements are as a care leaver and how to access benefits if you need them.

It also enables you to work on managing your money and to know where to get help.

You can work on this section with your PA, foster carer or support worker.

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| **I have:** | √ |
| Opened a bank account with a debit card |  |
| Got the up-to-date documents I need to prove my identity and residence |  |
| **I know what I am entitled to-including:** | √ |
| Care leaver’s entitlements-Your Local Offer (it’s all written down in the Care Leavers App. Your Social worker will show you how to access it). |  |
| When I am entitled to a weekly allowance |  |
| What welfare benefits I am entitled to |  |
| **I know what my responsibilities are:** | √ |
| Paying bills on time |  |
| Budgeting |  |
| **I know how to:** | √ |
| Shop on a budget |  |
| Keep money aside for my rent and bills |  |
| Keep track of my spending |  |
| Understand my bills/bank statement |  |
| Set up a direct debit/standing order to pay a regular bill |  |
| Avoid debt and rent arrears |  |
| Apply for Universal Credit/Housing Benefit/other welfare benefits |  |
| **I know where to get help:** | √ |
| Managing debts |  |
| Managing savings |  |
| Before signing a credit agreement/contract |  |
| Choosing/changing my bank/utility supplier |  |
| **Is there anything else that you need support with or need to know about in relation to managing money? Please add below.** |  |
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| I know about my entitlements and responsibilities, how to manage my money and how to ask for help/I know what help I will need to manage my money.  Signed  Date |  |
| I confirm that (name) has had the advice, support and information needed to manage their money/there is a plan in place to support them.  Signed (PA/SW)  Date |  |

**Section 6- Education, employment & training**

This section will help you to know what all your options are to help you access and complete the right training and education for you to gain the job you want and be able to support yourself as a young adult.

Our Virtual School/College will have helped you to look at your career pathway and we hope this section helps you to see what is possible in your future.

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| **I know my options:** | √ |
| Work Experience |  |
| Going to College |  |
| Traineeships |  |
| Apprenticeships |  |
| Going to University |  |
| Getting a job |  |
| **I know what the Local Offer entitles me to be helped with, including:** | √ |
| Getting qualifications |  |
| Writing an application/CV |  |
| Preparing for an interview |  |
| Attending an interview |  |
| Attending work experience days |  |
| Support from the Virtual School/College |  |
| Bursaries to attend college |  |
| Travel options |  |
| Support costs at university |  |
| Set up with any special work clothes/equipment |  |
| Support to access training, education, or work as a young parent |  |
| **Is there anything else that you need support with or need to know about in relation to education, employment, or training? Please add below.** |  |
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| --- | --- |
| I know what my options are for education, employment, and training and what I am entitled to receive support with  Signed  Date |  |
| I confirm that (name) has had the advice, support and information needed to understand and choose their career pathway/there is a plan in place to support them.  Signed (PA/SW)  Date |  |

**Section 7- Making & keeping safe relationships.**

Many care leavers find this a helpful section as you move from being a young person living in a family setting or with others on to your own space as a young adult.

This section helps you to think about your relationships and how to make and maintain them whilst respecting and valuing yourself and others.

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| --- | --- |
| **Know your history** | √ |
| I have the information I need about my family and care history |  |
| **Staying in touch-I have talked through how to:** | √ |
| Keep in touch with people who are important to me |  |
| Stay in touch or find family if I have lost touch with, or who live in another country |  |
| Think about what life is like living on my own/away from family, and plan for this |  |
| Manage changes in my relationships |  |
| **Respecting myself and others-I have talked through how to:** | √ |
| Stay safe online and in the community |  |
| Value myself |  |
| Show respect for others |  |
| Share my personal information safely |  |
| Take and manage risks |  |
| Recognise when I may be exploited or abused |  |
| **Making new friends and relationships- I have talked through how to:** | √ |
| Make new connections |  |
| Find new relationships safely |  |
| Access the Drop-in on Wednesdays |  |
| Access Stay and Play on Wednesdays if I am a young parent |  |
| **I know how to access help:** | √ |
| To manage my feelings and behaviours that affect my relationships |  |
| If I find myself in an unsafe relationship |  |
| If I have difficulties making new friendships |  |
| If I would like help to manage my relationships with my family |  |
| **Is there anything else that you need support with or need to know about in relation to making and keeping safe relationships? Please add below.** |  |
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| --- | --- |
| I have talked through how I can keep and make relationships and life-long links. I know how to get help when I need it.  Signed  Date |  |
| I confirm that (name) has had the advice, support and information needed to keep and make safe and respectful relationships /there is a plan in place to support them.  Signed (PA/SW)  Date |  |

**Section 8- Living in the community & staying connected**

This section will help you and us think about what else you might need to know and what else you might want to access. This could be about accessing religious and cultural activities, exercising your legal right to vote, knowing what resources are available to young parents and their children (and much more).

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| --- | --- |
| **My religion, culture and beliefs** | √ |
| I have access to the right information and support to practice my religion and follow my beliefs in my community |  |
| I know how to make links with and/or explore my cultural heritage and history. I know how to get help with this |  |
| **Know your rights** | √ |
| I know how to get legal advice |  |
| I know what to do if I am being treated unfairly at work or college |  |
| I know about my consumer rights and how to make a complaint |  |
| I know what age I can drive/vote/drink alcohol/get married/join the armed forces |  |
| **Being an Active Citizen** | √ |
| I have been supported to register to vote/chosen not to register to vote, after receiving advice on how to do this |  |
| I know how to vote in an election and am on the electoral register |  |
| I have been given advice on how to access information to make choices about my political views |  |
| **Being Connected** | √ |
| I have had access to advice about how to use and share my personal information on social media safely |  |
| I know how to use the media to find out about national issues or meet other people with the same interests as me across the UK and beyond |  |
| I know how to use local facilities like a library or community centre and the media to find out about activities/groups/clubs in my community where I can volunteer, or join in with something that I am interested in |  |
| I know about the Wednesday Drop-In and (if I am a parent), the Wednesday Stay and Play session |  |
| I know about other local support groups where I can meet other people who have shared the same experiences as me if I want to |  |
| I know how to contact public or council services if I need to |  |
| If I am a parent, or about to be a parent, I know where my local Children’s Centre is and have been given the opportunity to visit with someone to support me if I want this |  |
| **Is there anything else that you need support with or need to know about in relation to living in the community and staying connected? Please add below.** |  |
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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I have talked through how I can live in my community and stay connected. I know how to get help when I need it.  Signed  Date |  |
| I confirm that (name) has had the advice, support and information needed to live in their community and stay connected/there is a plan in place to support them.  Signed (PA/SW)  Date |  |

