

LEAVING CARE ENTITLEMENTS



A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 2016-2017

TYPES OF CARE LEAVER

You are an
**Eligible Care
Leaver** if:

- you are currently looked after; and
- aged 16 or 17; and
- you have been looked after for a period of 13 weeks (or periods amounting to 13 weeks) which began after you reached 14 and ended after you reached 16.

You are a
**Relevant Care
Leaver** if:

- you are no longer being looked after by the Local Authority but you have been 'Eligible'; and
- aged 16 or 17 years old;
- immediately before being detailed or in hospital you were 'Eligible' OR
- lived for continuous period of 6 months or more with parent, someone with parental responsibility and where those arrangements break down

You are a
**Former
Relevant Care
Leaver** if:

- you are aged 18 years or above, and either have been a Relevant or Eligible child when under 18.
- If at the age of 21 or before reaching the age of 25 you are in education or training, then you will remain a former relevant child until the end of the agreed programme.
- If after 21 years you inform us that you want to pursue or are pursuing a programme of education or training

You are a
**Qualifying
Care Leaver** if:

- you are at least 16 but under 21; and
- you were looked after immediately prior to the making of a special guardianship order which was in force when you reached 18; or
- if at any time after you reached the age of 16 but while you were still a child was, but is no longer looked after, accommodated or fostered; or
- you were privately fostered and assessed to be in need.
- As a Qualifying Care Leaver you are able to access advice and assistance based on a needs assessment completed by the Leaving Care Team

SOCIAL WORKERS AND PERSONAL ADVISERS



As an **Eligible** Care Leaver you will be allocated a **Social Worker** from Stockport Council's **Children Social Care**. Your Social Worker will hold case responsibility and will be responsible for the preparation of your **Pathway Plan**. You will remain allocated to your Social Worker until you are 18 and become **Former Relevant**. At 16 years you will also be allocated a named **Personal Adviser** from the Leaving Care Team who will work alongside your Social Worker,

both of whom will be able to assist you in preparing for your transition to adult life. Your Personal Adviser will then take over your case management when you leave care at 18 years and become a **Former Relevant** Care Leaver or if you become a **Relevant** care leaver before 18years.

If you are a looked after child supported by the **Children with Disability Team** your Social Worker will support your transition to Adult Services. At 16 years the Leaving Care Team will allocate you a named **Personal Adviser** to work alongside your Social Worker. Your **Personal Adviser** will take over responsibility for the preparation of your Pathway Plan when you leave care at 18 years and become Former Relevant and will continue to work closely with Adult Services.



PATHWAY PLANNING

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

How will I be involved?

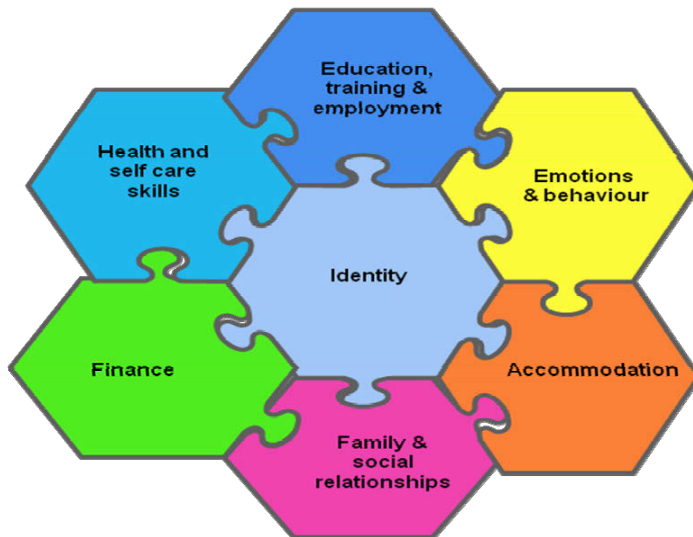
For your Pathway Plan to be effective it will be based on an up to date needs assessment; setting out the support that will be offered to you to achieve your aspirations. We aim to fully involve you in the development of your Pathway Plan. You will be offered support by your social worker/ personal adviser to express your wishes and views for your pathway plan review meeting.

Who else will be involved?

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

What will be included in my pathway plan?

The following diagram sets out some of the areas covered in your plan;



**family and social relationships includes contact with your brothers, sisters and family that are important to you*

When will my plan be completed?

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

What about changes to my plan?

Your Pathway plan will then be updated and reviewed at least within every 6 months or within 28 working days of any significant change to your plan such as a change of address or if you request a review meeting. Your Pathway Plan will be written and available at your review meeting chaired by your **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)**, a review must take place before making a decision to confirm that you are ready to leave care.

CARE LEAVER ENTITLEMENTS

The following figures are accurate as of 1st April 2016 and may be subject to change and will be reviewed annually. A copy of the 16+ financial policy is available on request.



Eligible and Relevant care leavers living independently will receive **16+ maintenance allowance of £57.90 per week** (Equivalent to JSA/Income Support benefit rate 2016/2017)

Your Social Worker will support you to access advice and claim benefits **up to 6 weeks before your 18th Birthday** to allow for your benefit claim to be processed (Adjusted if in employment or training)

Eligible care leavers will receive allowances for costs associated with corporate parenting; Birthdays, Festivals (Christmas/Eid), Clothing and Holidays from your carers.

Relevant and Former Relevant care leavers aged 18 21 years will receive a personal budget of £315.00 for the year for costs associated with corporate parenting; Birthdays, Festivals (Christmas/Eid), Clothing and Holidays.



This will be made up of £25 for birthday, £25 for christmas, and the remainder of the budget £265 will be planned with you by your Personal Adviser. This will be reduced to £50 or a gift/s to this value if you are in custody or not engaging with the support available to you. Your Personal Adviser will help you to budget this money.

Former Relevant care leavers in Education or Training aged 21-25 years will receive **£25 for Birthday and £25 for Festivals** (Christmas/Eid) whilst you are being supported by your Personal Adviser.



If you are an **Eligible or Relevant** care leaver aged 16 or 17 years old in custody or on remand you will receive **£10 per week**.



Eligible and Relevant care leavers will receive a **Maternity allowance of £150** as required.



Care Leavers attending University will receive a **Higher Education Bursary of £2000 per year for each year** of the course and assistance towards essential books and materials for your course.

You will receive **Vacation Payments of up to £100 per week** if you need accommodation due to your term time accommodation not being available.

On Graduation you will receive a **Graduation gift of £100.**

**this support is also extended to Postgraduate courses*



Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers may access a combined amount of **Setting up Home allowance up to £3000** to help furnish their independent accommodation.

Your Personal Adviser will support you to make an application to **Stockport Local Assistance Scheme (SLAS)** for white goods/ starter pack (RRP £1000) and request your setting up home grant from Children's Social Care **up to £2000.**

What is included in the Setting Up Home Grant?

Your **Setting Up Home Grant** will be held by the Leaving Care Team and your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will be able to support you to purchase items that you may need to live independently, for example;

- tv licence
- washing machine
- laundry basket (wet and dry)
- bin
- microwave
- pots and pans
- cutlery
- settee
- mirror
- bed base & mattress
- chest of drawers
- shower curtain
- tv
- fridge/fridge freezer
- tea, coffee & sugar pots
- sieve
- kettle
- plates
- tea towels
- coffee table
- clock
- bedside table
- pillow
- bath mat
- tv stand
- pyrex dishes
- mixing bowl & measuring jug
- cooker*
- dining table/chairs
- cups
- washing up bowl
- lamp
- curtains
- bedding x 2 incl fitted sheets
- quilt
- soap holder
- aerial / extension
- chopping boards
- iron & ironing board
- kitchen utensils
- toaster
- glasses
- dish drainer
- carpet
- curtain rails
- wardrobe
- bath towels
- Contents Insurance

*Gas or Electric with connection with a certified fitter

What help can I get for Education, Employment and Training ?



As a care leaver you will be allocated to a Young People's Education & Advice worker and have a Personal Education Plan if you are in Education, Employment or Training (EET). These will be regularly reviewed to meet your needs and update your Pathway Plan at least every 6 months.

If you have additional needs and have an Education, Health and Care plan this will continue to be reviewed annually and inform your pathway plan.

If you require a Laptop or specific equipment and materials then this should be recorded as a need in your plan and your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will then be able to request this support for you. Any specific requests will be considered on an individual basis.

From your 16th Birthday you will be sent a national insurance number and we will support you to obtain identification if you need it eg passport, birth certificate or from your 17th Birthday a provisional driving licence. You may also be entitled to a contribution of up to 10 driving lessons however this will be dependent on it being a recorded need in your Pathway Plan and on agreement being provided by the Senior Manager.

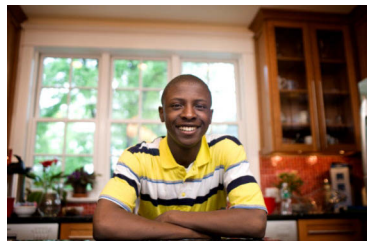
How can you financially support me with my further education?

As an Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant Care Leaver you may also be able to get financial support of £1200 a year direct from your School, Further Education College or Learning Provider. The **16-19 bursary** is guaranteed for care leavers aged 16-19, and discretionary learner support can support older students. With your permission, Stockport Council will confirm your care leaver status with your Education or Training provider but you may wish to talk to your School, College or learning provider to find out more. We will further support you with essential books or equipment to support you to complete your course.

How can you help me find somewhere to live?

As part of your preparation for adult life your accommodation options will be discussed with you. Your **Social Worker or Personal Adviser** will support you to complete any Housing Applications, attend Housing Interviews and 16+ accommodation panel in line with your wishes and your Pathway Plan. We will offer you support to make a housing benefit claim, or to access local housing allowance if in private rented accommodation.

It is important to note that Young People under 35 are normally only entitled to rent payments equivalent to the cost of a room in a shared house.



Care Leavers between 18 and 21 can get the rate for 1-bedroom accommodation instead but once you turn 22 you can only get the shared accommodation amount. Bear this in mind if you are moving into a new home and think that you will continue to claim benefits after 22 years old.

As a care leaver you may be entitled to Council Tax rebate, reduction or exemption. Your personal adviser will be able to give you more information about this.

All your benefit entitlements will need to be confirmed with the benefits agency and your Personal Adviser will be available to support you to attend appointments as required. You may wish to visit our drop in session held every Thursday afternoon at the office to speak to our Job Centre Plus Adviser or visit the Job Centre Plus Website www.jobseekers.direct.gov.uk for further information.

What if I need to claim benefits?



Up to 6 weeks before your 18th Birthday, your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will be available to support you to access welfare benefit advice and to make a claim for benefits according to your specific circumstances. This may be **Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support or Universal Credit**. You can apply online at www.direct.gov.uk or ask at your Job Centre to make a paper claim.

If you are in Full Time further education, your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will assist you to claim **Income Support** you will need to be able to provide confirmation of your attendance from your education provider.

Universal Credit is a new benefit for people living on a low income or who are out of work. It will make it easier to start a new job or work more hours, so will be better off in a job than you will be on benefits. You can check if you can get Universal Credit by going to www.gov.uk/universalcredit . If you don't have a computer at your home you can use the computer in your local Jobcentre or at our office with our Personal Adviser duty worker. When you have made your claim you will be invited to an interview with your Work Coach in your local Jobcentre. At your interview you will sign a *Claimant Commitment* which sets out your responsibilities that you have agreed to carry out in return for receiving Universal Credit.

If you are ill or disabled your social worker or personal adviser will be able to support you to make a claim for **Employment and Support Allowance** you can find out more by calling 0800 0556688. If you wish to apply for **Personal Independence Payment** call 0800 9172222.

If you are a parent your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will be able to support you to claim **Income Support, Maternity Allowance** (dependent on previous employment), **Healthy Start Vouchers, Child Benefit** and **Child Tax Credits**.

What if I still need financial advice and assistance?

As a Former Relevant Care Leaver you can also apply to **Stockport Local Assistance Scheme (SLAS)** when experiencing hardship by calling 0161 474 2101 or completing the on-line application at www.stockport.gov.uk/slas (*Support will not include cash*).

You can access further advice and assistance by requesting an appointment at your local **Citizen's Advice Bureau**. You can visit enquiry@cabline.org or Tel: 0844 826 9800.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Leaving Care Team

Stockport Family
Grand Central Office,
48-52 Wellington Road South
Stockport, SK1 3SS
☎ Tel: 0161 474 2300

Out of Hours Service: ☎ Tel: 0161 718 2118 (emergencies out of hours)

Independent Reviewing Officer:

Children's Safeguarding Unit
Bird Hall Lane,
Stockport
☎ Tel: 0161 474 5657

Stockport Children's Rights Service ☎ Tel: 07800 618911

Housing: Stockport Home HomeChoice Team ☎ Tel: 0161 474 2975

Benefit Enquiry Line:

Calling from a landline: ☎ Tel: 0345 6088545
Calling from a mobile: ☎ Tel: 0845 6088545
Or online at www.gov.uk

Job Seekers Allowance Online Application: www.dwpe-services.direct.gov.uk/portal/page/portal/jsaol/lp ☎ Tel: 0800 0556688

Advice about getting ready for Universal Credit www.gov.uk/universalcredit

Child and Working Tax Credits: ☎ Tel: 0345 3003900

Child Benefit : ☎ Tel: 0300 200 3100

(for enquires on existing claims only, new applications need to be downloaded from internet or Child benefit packs are issued in the bounty bag by the midwife or while on the maternity unit)

Money Advice Service for help with budgeting www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau: www.cecab.org.uk

National Care Advisory Service: www.leavingcare.org, email: ncas@catch-22.org.uk ☎ Tel: 020 7336 4800

Shelter: www.shelter.org.uk ☎ Tel: 0808 8004444

Refugee Action Manchester: ☎ Tel: 0161 831 5420

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We want to know what you think about our services so that we can improve them. Your comments, good or bad, will help us to know how to change things for the better.

What if I want to make a compliment or complaint?

If you have something to say about leaving care services or if you are unhappy about something that is happening to you, this can usually be sorted out by speaking to someone you trust like your Social Worker, Personal Adviser, Key Worker or Carer. But, if they cannot put things right for you, then you can make a complaint in one of the following ways:

- Contact the Children's Rights Service on ☎Tel: 0161 474 5657/2564
- Or write to us at;

Complaints Resolution Service
Services for People
3rd Floor Stopford House
Stockport
SK1 3XE
Tel 0161 474 3895
talktous@stockport.gov.uk

LEGISLATION, GUIDANCE AND REGULATIONS

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and Regulations
- The Children Act 2004 and 2008
- National Standards for Leaving Care (March 2004)
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Children Act 1989 Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers Regulations 2010 revised January 2015
- The Special Guardianship (Amendment) Regulations 2016