

An introduction to the 18+ Care Leavers Service



**This welcome pack offers advice from the
18+ Care Leavers Service
to help you understand the support available.**

October 2020

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Section 1 – Introduction



What is our service and our duties to you?

The 18+ Care Leavers Service are here to support young people in making the transition from leaving care into independence.

We support up to the age of 25yrs but the support we provide will be different from ages 18-20, and then 21-up to 25. If you wish to leave the service support at any time this is possible and your choice, however you do have the option to come back to the service for support should you wish up until you turn 25yrs of age.

Please discuss this with your allocated Personal Adviser further to find out what support you will receive and what your options are.

Our Duties to you:

- **Appoint a Personal Advisor (PA)** – This is someone who will guide and support you. The PA will be your main point of contact to the service
- **Carry out an assessment of need to determine what assistance would be appropriate to provide, if needed**
- **Prepare a Pathway Plan** – this is a plan which is put into place to set individual goals, for your future moving forward as an independent adult.
- **Give assistance on education, employment, or training options**
- **For young people in education you will be supported to access funds such as a bursary**
- **Housing and accommodation support and guidance**
- **Assistance with finances and benefits**

What is a Personal Advisor?

When you turn 18 years old your Social Worker will then be changed to a Personal Advisor (PA) within the 18+ Care Leavers Service. The role of a PA is like a social worker in many ways. As a PA their role is to guide and support you with housing, health, emotional wellbeing (how you are feeling), finance, education, and employment.

Your PA is someone who will keep in contact and arrange visits to see you. They will support and guide you in the choices and decisions you want to make for your future as an adult. Therefore, the relationship between yourself and your PA is important for you to get the most out of the 18+ Service, which is provided for you.

If your PA is off work due to being unwell or on holiday, you may be supported by another PA on a temporary basis. This may be another PA in the same team or a PA from the duty team. The duty team are a team of 18+ Care Leavers staff available each day for emergency support.

As well as your PA, there are a wide range of other staff in the team to support you:



What is a Pathway Plan and why are they important?

A Pathway Plan will continue from when you were 16 years old. In the 18+ Service we review the Pathway Plan at least every 6 months. Within the Pathway Plan we will be including some of the following points: education, employment, independent living skills, housing situation, finance, health and wellbeing, parenting and family dynamics.

The purpose of the Pathway Plan is to ensure you have a clear direction of where you wish yourself to be and the individual goals which you need to achieve to get there. These include short term goals and long term. These goals will also be reviewed at the next Pathway Plan meeting to reflect on the progress you are making.

Pathway Plans are important as you can review and discuss with someone your journey to be where you want to be in your career and life to gather support in the areas which you seek it.

Here is just a brief overview of what the Pathway Plan covers:

- **How you are feeling** – with yourself, your PA, your family, your supportive network, surroundings, and the people who can help you
- **Your practical skills** – are you prepared for adult life, are you able to live independently
- **Family and social network** – do you have family/friends that you can turn to, who are those relationships and is there anything we can do to strengthen those relationships
- **Money** – financial support, your budget, and savings and this should include everything you are entitled to
- **Where you live** – is it suitable, do you have a housing plan going forward?
- **Identity** – supporting your language, religion, ethnicity, ensuring you have got the right ID documents, and knowing how to access your files

Our Local Offer

All Local Authorities have a legal obligation to support young people in making the transition from care into independence. It is Kent County Council's responsibility to ensure that you know what services and support are available to you and what you can expect to receive whilst you are a Care Leaver– this is what the '**Local Offer**' is.

Therefore, we have put together a document your PA can share with you as well as this welcome pack. They will be able to discuss in detail our 'Local Offer' so you are aware of what you can access from the service. The 'Local Offer' will be reviewed so please make sure you are looking at the latest version.

In this document you can expect to find out information on some of the topics below:

- An introduction to our local offer and 18+ Care Leavers Service
- Your Money
- Important Documents
- Housing options
- Your Safety
- Getting your voice heard
- Your health
- Your education, training, and employment
- Useful contact information

Section 2 – Finance

As a young person we understand that you are more likely to be on a lower income and sometimes it can be difficult to choose what you need over what you want. However, having careful organisational skills and knowing what the priorities are to live on will enable you to stay in control when you are on a tight budget.

Prioritise and organisation

The most important thing when you are on a tight budget is to be organised and this will help you to **prioritise your money**.

- This does not happen with a click of your fingers. You are going to have to sit down and get everything together. If you find this difficult, talk to your PA, financial specialist or a friend and see if they can help you to get things organised.

What is important to you?

- Having a better understanding of what you need and what you want will enable you to look at what your priorities are. Is there something you can cut back on?



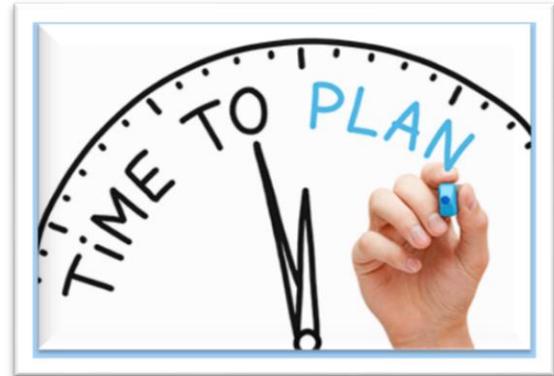
- Some of this will be common sense, like having food will always be a priority. However, you should ask yourself the following questions: **Which is more important to me, having data on my phone or having money for rent, gas & electric?**
- It will depend on your personal situation, spending habits and your budget as to what questions you will need to ask yourself. Working out your priorities will help you to know how you need to manage your money.

Making sure you are planning a head

When you are living on a tight budget, it is not always easy to plan.

However, it is important to be aware of what is coming up in your diary.

When is your next payday? When is the next date for bills and rent to come out? When will your car insurance need to be renewed?



You might want to avoid these questions, as it can be scary, but being aware of what is ahead will help you to budget correctly and avoid problems in the future.

Use Budgeting Sheets

You can easily find budgeting sheets online that are ready-made to help you to manage your money weekly or monthly for income and outgoings.

- You can find these by typing into google monthly budget sheets blank document and choosing one that is easy for you to follow and fill in.
- It is good to use a monthly one as most people's finances come in monthly. If you get paid weekly, you can also find weekly budget sheets.
- They are a great way to organise all your finances and track your spending.
- Make sure you are clear when you are going to get paid if you start a new job, sometimes you have to work a month in advance, or you may only get half for the first month as the pay cut off date was before you started.
- After creating your budgeting sheet, you will be able to see how much you currently spend on bills and similar monthly expenses.
- You can use this information to help you see where you may want to reduce spending or do you need to get a part time job alongside your studies to give you some more income?

18+ Care Leavers Service



INCOME

Monthly Expected Income	Date you will receive this	Amount
Work Salary		
Benefits		
Refunds		
Total amount of income for the month to budget		£

OUTGOINGS

Monthly Outgoings	Date of outgoing cost due to be paid on	Amount
Rent or Accommodation Costs		
Gas & Electric		
Food Shopping		
Essential Toiletries		
Travel to work or College		
Laundry		
Phone Bill		
Savings to put away		
Council Tax		
Total Monthly Spend		£

Total income:	Minus (-)	Total outgoings:	Equals (=)	Money left over once all bills are paid:
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Saving Money Tips



- **Mobile Phone Costs** - there are lots of options you can choose from, pay as you go, top up, contract, or sim only contract. Could you manage with less data and therefore get a cheaper deal on your phone? Check what you are using on your phone before getting a new one.
- **Compare** - make sure you take some time to compare the prices of different gas and electricity providers to see if you could switch to get a cheaper price. This could be a helpful way to save money when living on a tighter budget.
- **Making sure you are saving money** - saving money can be difficult if you are on a very tight budget, but if you can put anything aside then it can be helpful for the future. Even a small amount every week can make a big difference in the future for you. One of the best ways to save is to put some money aside to save as soon as you get paid and then you know how much you have left for the month to live on.
- **Using Online Banking** - staying organised with money is a lot easier if you have direct access to your bank account so you can easily see how much money you have and are able to look at your statement. Most banks have online banking systems and mobile banking apps, and this makes it a lot easier to feel in control. You can apply for these online or go into a branch to ask for help.
- **Shop around for food** - there are many supermarkets out there, so sometimes it can be hard to know where to shop for food and what to buy when. Supermarkets sell their own cheaper brands of branded items. These are just as good and will save you lots on your food bill each week. Some of the best supermarkets for savings are places such as Aldi, Lidl, Fulton Foods, Iceland, Cost Cutter, and many more. Almost every supermarket will have a reduced section where food that needs to be used that day, or in the next couple of days, is heavily discounted. You can often find these if you go later in the day - look for the different colour stickers!
- **Waste nothing** - avoid waste and you will save a lot of money. This applies to everything that you might throw away from eating leftover food to making sure you use all the shampoo in the bottle. If you cook more than you need, put it in the fridge or freezer and have it for lunch or dinner later in the week. You could always have a leftovers night once a week to use up any spare food. Get creative in the kitchen making up new dinners with the leftovers.



Knowing your Benefits

Knowing how benefits work can be difficult as the system can be complicated. The government advice and benefit information can change regularly but remember, you are not alone, and you can always ask people to help you to have a better understanding. Your Social Worker, Personal Adviser and you can always book appointment with your local job centre for discussion.

Notice: The benefit system exists to provide practical help and financial support for those who are not employed and looking for work. The benefits should be for a short period of time.

Turning 18 and claiming benefits?

- If you know that you will need to be claiming benefits once you turn 18yrs, you are now able to start this application before you turn 18yrs. Your Social Worker must support you to do this from 17yrs and a half onwards. This will help you to reduce delays in payments and make sure that everything is set up as quick as possible after turning 18yrs.
- Adam Smith pictured is our Benefits Specialist working with our young people in the service.



How do you make a benefit claim?

- Universal Credit is the benefit that you may be eligible for. It is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work. There are two parts to it – a payment to you for your expenses and a payment to help you pay your rent. The rent part must be paid direct to your landlord.
- Before your 18th birthday your Social Worker will help you claim Universal Credit. Payment will be made into your bank account 5 weeks after your 18th birthday. We will ask for the help with your rent to be paid directly to your landlord. When claiming Universal Credit, you will be assigned a work coach to help with your claim and a log in – keep your log on details somewhere safe.

Your Social Worker / Personal Adviser should help you with your initial claim and the below:

- Helping you with phone calls
- Registering the initial claim
- Coming along to Jobcentre appointment
- Completing online forms
- Providing supporting documents and letters

Notice: You will need identification documents and a bank account for the benefits to be paid into. Your Social Worker or Personal Adviser should help you to get these if needed. You may have to agree certain commitments - failure to agree these or attend appointments could lead to you losing benefit.

How will you be paid?

- Under Universal Credit (UC), you will have to learn to budget your money because you will be paid once a month into your personal bank account. If the rent part is paid to you, you will be expected to pay your landlord yourself. If you do not you will end up in debt and may lose your accommodation.
- It is your responsibility to claim the rent element where possible and to then pay this for your accommodation. If you do not pay this, then you are misusing public money.

Notice: However, if you think you will struggle to manage your UC payments, you can ask your Jobcentre for help to be able manage your money. To be able to get this support you will need to tell the Jobcentre that you are a care leaver, they should give you priority for the support.

The job centre can help you with:

- **Personal budgeting support**
- **Have your rent paid straight to your landlord**
- **Have payments split between members of the household**
- **Have two-monthly, rather than monthly, payments**

Universal Credit (UC)



Universal Credit is a means-tested benefit that was introduced in the UK in April 2013 to support working age people, so those under State Pension age.

If you're entitled to claim, Universal Credit needs to be applied for and managed online using the [Apply for Universal Credit website](#). For more information on claiming Universal Credit, visit the [Gov.uk your claim journey website](#).

Housing Benefit



Housing benefit is available to assist with rental costs for people who are on a low income. You can be employed or unemployed. This benefit is means tested and takes into consideration income and capital.

Council Tax Support/Reduction



This benefit is administered by your local Council and designed to assist people with their Council Tax bill if they are on a low income. You can be employed or unemployed. This benefit can vary depending on where you live. It is means tested and takes into consideration your income and capital.

Financial Support from the 18+ Care Leavers Service

As a Care Leaver we can help to support you with your finances in some cases. The amount of financial support you will receive depends on your individual circumstance such as your age and the accommodation you will be staying in. Remember, if you are not sure about something, you can ask your PA or any other member of staff from the service for support.

For further financial support please refer to the Local Offer.

- **Setting Up Home Allowance** - We will offer you a setting up home allowance up to the value of £2,000 to buy essential items for your own home, such as white goods, kitchen appliances or a bed. These will be paid in instalments upon proof of receipt of items you have bought, or we will pay directly for the goods from our service once approved.



- **Food Vouchers** - We will help provide you with emergency food vouchers should you require them as part of an education package, unable to claim benefits, waiting for your benefits claim to complete or in an emergency. Please speak with your PA about these circumstances. These will be for supermarkets such as Tesco's, ASDA & Morrisons.



- **Rent Guarantor** – Kent County Council can act as a corporate rent guarantor on behalf of a young person, where there is no family member willing/able to do so. This can only be used for young people aged over 18. Please ask for more guidance and information from your PA on how this would work. This will be by a case by case allocation and approved by management.



- **Essential Living Allowance** - ELA is financial support for you if you are unable to claim benefits. ELA payments are the same as state benefits and are for your living costs. This money is for your day to day essentials which you need to budget to ensure it lasts. You will be supplied with a Kent Card for the ELA to be loaded onto fortnightly.

Section 3 – Accommodation options

When you turn 16yrs old there are different options available when looking at a housing plan. Here are the different types of accommodation which are available. Speak to your Social Worker, Personal Adviser, or housing specialist for more advice for what type of accommodation suits your needs. Remember your needs may change over time so keep discussing this with your Personal Adviser.

Accommodation & Description	Suitable for
<p>Staying Put</p> <p>Staying Put is where you stay in your current foster home past the age of 17 and half. You will also continue to develop your independent living skills so it will be different going forward – you will need to do more for yourself in the home.</p>	<p>Young people aged between 18-25yrs, continuing to build on independence skills.</p>
<p>Supported Lodgings / Supported Accommodation in a Family Environment (SAiFE) -</p> <p>This is where you live within a family environment with adults who can offer advice/guidance to build your independent living skills.</p>	<p>Young people who enjoy routine and structure within a family environment.</p> <p>Young people who have additional or complex needs and would like to live in a family environment can be referred for this form of accommodation.</p>
<p>KCC Shared Accommodation</p> <p>These are houses currently sourced and managed by an external organisation, in which you will share communal spaces but have your own bedrooms, alongside other Care Leavers.</p> <p>This is 'Time Limited' accommodation, which means that you will only have a fixed period within this accommodation and will move on at the end of the agreed period.</p>	<p>Aged 16- 20 years.</p> <p>Young people who are ready or almost ready to live independently, but who may still require some small level of occasional support around independent living skills.</p> <p>Young people who are willing and able to engage in ongoing discussion around securing their own accommodation beyond this provision, as part of their Pathway Plan.</p>
<p>Private Rented Sector</p> <p>These are privately rented properties / rooms within properties which the young person agrees to rent privately.</p> <p>The young person is responsible for paying all rent for any private rented accommodation they access but can access the provisions of the Local</p>	<p>Young people who have the required level of Independent Living Skills to manage and sustain a tenancy including personal care, maintaining a clean environment, and budgeting.</p> <p>Young people who are not able to access any other form of accommodation and are willing to be supported by their Personal Adviser to learn</p>

<p>Offer in support of this.</p>	<p>new skills in order to sustain a tenancy.</p>
<p>Young Person Supported Accommodation</p> <p>YPSA is focussed independence support to young people. These could be flats or rooms in a building with communal areas or other types of accommodation.</p>	<p>Young people aged between 18 and 25</p> <p>For people who require ongoing support and are improving their independence skills.</p>
<p>Social Housing</p> <p>These can be properties or rooms within a property and the property itself could be a flat or house.</p> <p>These provisions are accessed via the Housing Register via the Kent Home Choice website (inside Kent). They are not always provided by the district council, but instead in many instances, provided by a Housing Association; an organisation which provides properties to the council for them to access, but who charge and manage the building/property independently.</p> <p>The local district councils organise and manage this, not the 18+ Care Leavers Service.</p>	<p>Young people who are vulnerable due to significant physical, psychological or emotional difficulties, who require and engage with support and who have limited options available to them to improve their current situation.</p>

Tips and important information when looking for accommodation

- If you have an income, it is easier to rent privately, especially if this is full-time work. Employment will help you to a more stable future.
- Sharing is a good way of keeping rent costs low and avoiding loneliness.
- Many people share for a while (private rent) to save money so that they can then afford to move out on their own.
- Who you share with can be important, especially if you struggle to share space with strangers?
- Speak to friends to find out if they would like to share the property and costs with you so you can both save more money for the future.

Homelessness is a real concern

- It is important that you have a housing plan in place in advance to avoid homelessness.
- Follow tenancy agreements and house rules to avoid being served a notice to vacate.
- Seek advice from your PA if you feel at risk of homelessness and ask for homelessness support if available.
- Look into housing charities.
- Approach your local council.

Social Housing

- Social housing is classed as a 'needs-based' housing – this is not 'for everyone'
- It is limited, there is not enough social housing available for those that need it so there is no guarantee you can access this. You will have to discuss your options with your PA.
- It is not permanent – you will have to move on at some point in the future.
- It is more restrictive than private renting.
- You must make sure you plan early – we never know what is going to happen with our accommodation, so the sooner you have plans in place for your accommodation (i.e. where I want to be in a year / 2 years), then the less vulnerable you are if things change.

Useful links:

Spare Room - <https://www.spareroom.co.uk/>

Right Move - <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/>

Gum Tree – <https://www.gumtree.com/>

Homeless Link site - www.homeless.org.uk

Shelter site -
http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness

National Homelessness Advice Service site –
www.nhas.org.uk

Centrepoint site – www.centrepoint.org.uk

De Paul charity site - www.depaulcharity.org



Personal Housing Plan

- When you turn 18 you will have access to support from the 18+ Care Leavers Service and specialist housing roles. With them and your PA we will be able to provide you with a meeting with a housing specialist for a housing plan – this will be helpful to make plans for your accommodation and future steps into independent living.

Section 4 – Education, Employment and Training

We currently have a team to support you with your education, training or employment plans. The team can assist you with, job applications, CV's, course applications, employment forms, employability skills, and university applications.

We can offer careers advice to support your journey, where you would like your future career to be. We have a drop-in service once a week which we can offer in a wide range of locations in Kent. We are also able to visit you with your PA, if you find this more helpful or if you are unable to attend the drop-ins.

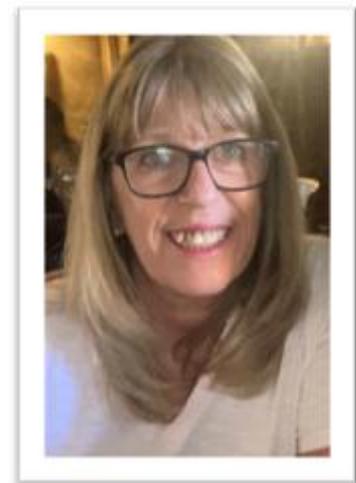


Throughout this section we have included all the important information which you should consider when thinking about your current career, education and training options.

It is important to know that when you finish your GCSEs in year 11, you then have around 3 academic years left of 'free' education and training. Once you turn 19yrs of age, many college courses are no longer free and can cost thousands of pounds. There can sometimes be support available from the education provider or the government but not always, so it is good to check all of this out before you apply or start any courses.

The 18+ Care Leavers service are not able to pay for courses.

Pictured right is Carol Moyler our senior EET Support Officer who you may work with when receiving support with your options for education, employment and training.



Employment Top Tips

- Always be on time; for interviews and for work.
- First impressions count – make sure you show yourself in a positive way.
- Avoid being absent unless you are genuinely unwell; unauthorised absences can quickly become a problem.
- Be courteous and respectful to your colleagues and anyone else you come in to contact with during work
- Make sure you dress appropriately for the environment you are working in; uniforms should be clean and ironed.
- Read your contract carefully, do not be afraid to ask questions if you are not sure about something.
- Know your rights (check out; www.gov.uk/browse/working)
- Take full advantage of any training schemes offered in your workplace.

Apprenticeships: An Apprenticeship is getting paid while completing a qualification and being employed. This is a good option if you do not want to go to university and you know what area you would like to progress your career in. The wage when taking up an apprenticeship is not always a large amount however you would still be entitled to income support/ universal credits if this is the case. There are different levels of apprenticeships and they will include English and Maths where necessary. Care Leavers may also be entitled to a bursary from the training provider to help with costs.

Employment: It is always good to be employed however it is also good to think about what you would like to do for work long term.

Being employed helps to build on your social skills, managing money, confidence and well being. Having a part time job whilst studying is also a good thing, but make sure it allows you time to complete your studies. If you are working full time, think about how you can progress in the company over time to increase your earnings.

Make sure you have a contract.

Your Career Path Options

University: University can be required for certain careers, e.g teaching, nursing, or for creative subjects or computer gaming. You can study locally or move away.

You have to complete an online application form to apply to university. We can help you with this. You may also get a bursary of £1000 for every year of Uni which you complete, for up to 4 years.

Traineeship: This is a course which is preparing you for paid work. These courses vary from 6 weeks to 6 months. This is a good option to take if you are unable to get a paid job, as this will help you to gather more employability skills and more chance of having a paid employment. This does give you a certificate at the end and you can add this to your CV. The traineeship can also lead onto an apprenticeship.

College/Sixth Form: There are multiple college and sixth form choices available and is a good option when finishing your GCSEs in year 11. You can study courses at different levels depending on your GCSE results. Courses vary, it is advisable to look on the website for the courses and attend the open days. Colleges offer a new environment to study in and meet new friends. Sixth forms may be somewhere familiar to you and can be more structured. Think about how best you like to learn and in what kind of environment.

Section 5 – Health, Wellbeing & Mindfulness

Throughout life we may all at some point in time experience difficulties with our mental health and wellbeing. Everyone experiences these in different ways/forms as lifestyle and circumstances are not the same for all.



The question is, how do we deal with it? It is extremely important to be able to have support for your mental health and wellbeing to live and function day to day.

The 18+ Care Leavers Service want to make it a priority to provide you with all the information you need to access support. Whether this be from your PA, specialist mental health roles or wellbeing practitioners, as well as links to external charity organisations in Kent and across the UK.

- Below is a list of resources available to access for free through charities and organisations, all of which can help with a wide range of wellbeing and mental health support needs.
- If you are in emotional distress, need urgent support or any other issues with your mental health, please contact the organisations below. How they support might be different from one to another.



10 WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

- Talk about your feelings
- Keep active
- Eat well
- Take a break
- Drink sensibly
- Keep in touch
- Do something you're good at
- Accept who you are
- Ask for help
- Care for others

Mental Health Foundation
mentalhealth.org.uk

Support Charities and Organisations



Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust.

Single Point of Access (SPA) 0300 222 0123 – referral line for NHS Mental Health Services

<https://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/>



Samaritans

Samaritans offer free telephone mental health support for any mental health concern including addiction, depression, work related stress, loss, bereavement and loneliness.

Get in touch :116 123 (free phone number) 24/7 support line



Release the Pressure

Release the pressure is mental health support line and they have a highly trained and experienced team available 24/7 to provide expert support no matter what you are going through.

Contact number :0800 107 0160

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/release-the-pressure>



'Shout' 24-hour Text Service

Shout offers free support to people 24/7. You can contact them if you are struggling with your mental health, such as having suicidal thoughts, self-harming, relationship troubles, being bullied or abused and more. They are there for you if you feel that need someone to talk.

Texting the Texting the word "Kent" or "Medway" to 85258.

<https://www.giveusashout.org/give-us-a-shout/>



Children and Young People's Mental Health Services

www.headstartkent.org.uk

Tel 0300 123 4496



Live Well Kent

Free integrated service for Kent residents to improve their mental and physical well-being.

<https://livewellkent.org.uk>



We are with you

If you live in Kent or Surrey, We Are with You provides free, confidential support to people who have issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health.

We work with people on their own goals, whether that's staying safe and healthy, making small changes or stopping an unwanted habit altogether.

www.thinkaction.org.uk/contact-us/thinkaction-west-kent/



West Kent Mind

If you live in west Kent West Kent Mind is your local mental health charity. They there to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn for advice and support.

www.westkentmind.org.uk/



Maidstone and Mid Kent Mind

Maidstone and Mid Kent Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing mental ill health. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding www.maidstonemind.org/

Your Sexual Health



We understand that it is not always easy to think or talk about your sexual health but it is important to take care of yourself and others.

One of the easiest ways to do this is to:

- Always practice safe sex
- Have regular check-ups if sexually active and understand your options.
- Having information on safe sex can contribute to making safe and informed decisions that contribute to positive sex-related outcomes and minimises the risk of unintended pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).
- Speak to your PA about any concerns you have when it comes to your sexual health, they will help you access the correct information and external links.

Did you know that up to the age 24yrs you are entitled to register for a C-card which allows you to get free condoms, please visit this website www.c.card.areyounggettingit.com

There are many local sexual health clinics which you can visit for advice and book appointments if you feel you need medical advice or treatment. You can find this online or via your local GP / PA. For more medical information and advice on sexual health you can visit the NHS service to find your local family planning and sexual health clinic www.nhs.uk/service/sexual-health

Have you registered with your Local GP?

- Staying healthy should always be a priority, therefore its extremely important to ensure you are registered with a local GP. You will need to re-register with a new GP should you move area for them to support you.
- Visits to your GP are free and if you are a young person claiming benefit support, you are eligible to get help with prescriptions costs.
- Make sure you have given your GP and your Social Worker/Personal Adviser the details of who to contact in an emergency -your 'Next of Kin' - this is really important.

Have you registered with an NHS Dental Practice?

- Looking after your dental health is extremely important to avoid medical emergencies and large bills should something happen to your teeth or oral hygiene.
- Ask for help from your PA if you need help locating your local dentist.
- Visits to the dentist are not free and any dental treatment will also cost you. However, if you are in a low income you may be eligible for help with the dental costs, you can find more information about this by calling 08456101112(NHS Low Income Scheme.)

Section 6 – UASC Information

It is important to know where to go for services to support Refugees, Asylum Seekers & Migrants. We have put together a list of some key support charities and organisations below which you can access yourself or with the help of your PA should you wish to explore further support outside the 18+ Care Leavers Service.

	<p>KRAN is an independent charity in Canterbury and Folkestone Kent that provides help and support to asylum seekers and refugees. This includes minors who have arrived in the United Kingdom unaccompanied by an adult.</p> <p>Their mission is to work with young refugee and asylum seekers (RAS) who are striving to live fulfilled, independent and successful lives in our communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://kran.org.uk/
	<p>British Red Cross</p> <p>BRC offer support to young refugees ages 15-25 residing in England. This is achieved with one to one support with understanding the asylum process, preparing documents, health, education and social care support and more.</p> <p>For advice and information if you feel they can support you please visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-young-refugee-or-• www.redcross.org.uk/get-help/get-help-as-a-refugee
	<p>Refugee Women's Connect</p> <p>RWC works with asylum seeker and refugee women and their children including victims of trafficking, sexual violence, domestic servitude, other forms of gender-based violence and human rights abuses.</p> <p>If you feel their service can help support you, please visit the below to contact them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.refugeewomenconnect.org.uk/
	<p>IAS is a nationwide immigration law firm that conducts both private and public funded work on a full range of immigration, asylum and citizenship cases, detention, bail and appeal cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.iasservices.org.uk

	<p>Migrant Help UK – Asylum Service</p> <p>MH provides confidential and impartial advice on how to claim asylum and offers financial, accommodation support, and health assessment.</p> <p>The website resource centre provides and enables you to download advice in a variety of languages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.migranthelpuk.org/about-asylum-services
	<p>Refugee Action</p> <p>RA provides support system, housing and legal assistance and outreach and crisis help and training programmes for newly arrived asylum seekers. As well as aiding those already settled or those considering assisted voluntary return.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.refugee-action.org.uk
	<p>Eritrean Community in the UK provides advice, support and advocacy support groups for women and older people, culturally based counselling, supplementary schools, cultural and social activities for the Eritrean community including refugees and asylum seekers in Islington, Haringey, Camden and Hackney.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.ericomuk.org.uk
	<p>Refugee Council's, My View Children's Therapy Service has been providing therapeutic support specifically tailored for separated child refugees and asylum seekers. The service is based in the Children's Services in Croydon and receives clients in their Stratford Offices alongside their Adult Therapeutic Services.</p> <p>This service is also available in Birmingham, Leeds, and Luton. Please visit the below for more help and information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/myview
	<p>Migrant Voice is a migrant led organisation set up to develop the skills and confidence of members of migrant communities, including refugees and asylum seekers to strengthen their voice and representation in the media and at a policy making level. To find out more information on their services please see the below website link.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• www.migrantvoice.org

Section 7 – Other support links



Please find other support and useful links in this section. They will be able to support you in specific areas which you may need when becoming independent. These links are here to support you. Please speak with your PA if you need help in accessing any of the below information or service links.

Duty Number

This is a number which you can call if you are unable to contact your PA, this could be when they are off sick or on Annual Leave, in an emergency or to speak to someone else in the service:

- **Please call – 03000 421124 for the North West teams (based at West Malling)**
- **Please call - 03000 410701 for the South East teams (based at Dover)**
- **Out of Hours - 03000 419191**

Young Inspectors Scheme

- We are currently running a new project called the Young Inspectors Scheme. This is where we have gathered volunteers, who are care leavers themselves – to work with our colleagues, inspecting Ready Homes properties to improve the condition of their home to a 'good' standard. This is to put you, our care leavers, at the heart of the inspections and improvement for the service you use.
- These inspections are not about checking the cleanliness of property but if they are in a suitable area, close to a supermarket, local transport links and other locational factors to help 18-21-year olds in their journey to independence. Making sure the accommodation provided by us is suitable for your needs.
- In return for participating in the Young Inspectors Project we give out a voucher for every project which is completed. If you are interested or would like to volunteer yourself, please inform your PA who can put you in touch with the YIS Team or alternatively please Email the team on:
- younginspectorsscheme@kent.gov.uk if you wish to take part.

Kent Cares Town

- The Kent Cares Town website is for all young people who are or who have been in the care of Kent County Council. On this website you can find support links and information for helping you in your journey through the care system.
- There is information on all aspects of the Care Leavers Service and what we can support you with as well as links to VSK and the Young Adult Council.
- Find out more at: <https://kentcares town.lea.kent.sch.uk/>

Compliments or Complaints

- If you wish to share some positive feedback with us, please share it with your PA's manager. We need to know what we are doing well to ensure we do more of it!
- You have the right to complain if you can't solve a problem with your PA, ask to speak to their manager and if it is still not resolved then you can contact our complaints department on: CScomplaints@kent.gov.uk

Young Adult Council

Come along to **Young Adult Council** to have your say on things that affect Children in Care and Care Leavers to help make positive changes.

We meet up on the 1st Thursday of each month in different locations in the county.

We always have food and we will pay your travel costs to get to the meetings too.

We do lots of fun activities too... we have:

- **Had BBQs**
- **Been bowling**
- **Learnt first aid**
- **Done taste testing**
- **We have even been gliding!**

We also have our '**Recruit Crew**' which is for young people to help interview potential social workers, foster carers, PAs and senior Kent County Council staff.



Speak Up, Be Heard
Get involved by contacting:
Rob: 07815 603329 or
Robert.Barton@kent.gov.uk
Brad: 07795 951459 or
Bradley.Aves@kent.gov.uk

If you have any questions about other ways to participate and have your say or want to find out more about the work of the VSK Participation Team, please contact VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk or go to our website <https://kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk/>



Thank you & Welcome

We hope that this introduction pack has helped to answer some of the questions you may have about our service and what it means to become a care leaver.

Please let us know if there are things you would like to see added to this pack in the future.

We look forward to welcoming you to our service and supporting you to move into independence.

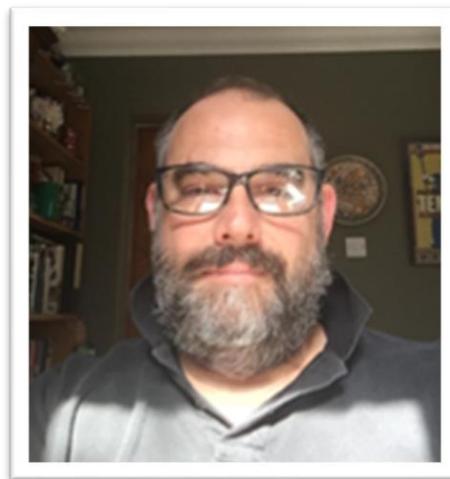
If you would like to contact us for advice, help and further information on anything mentioned in this welcome pack we would love to hear from you, just email with your questions and feedback:

18+yourvoice@kent.gov.uk

From Luwam your 18+ Apprentice

Nimesh Patel and Mark Weinel Head of Services

Thank you to Skye, previous 18+ apprentice for your work on developing this pack for the service.



If you have any questions you would like to discuss with your Social Worker or Personal Adviser, make a note of them on the next page.

