

# Local Offer for Care Leavers 2019

## Corporate Parenting

### Our Vision

*“We are ambitious for our district’s children and young people. Our vision is for children and young people to tell us they are happy, healthy and safe and thriving in communities where families and services work together to help them achieve their potential and dreams”.*

Version 4: January 2019

Review: January 2020

## **Introducing the Local Offer**

Wakefield Council is committed through this offer to supporting children and young people looked after, or leaving care, to have positive experiences and achieve good outcomes in preparing for independence in adult life.

As corporate parents, services across the council fulfil this commitment through their contributions to this local offer for care leavers.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to publish a local offer for its care leavers. The local offer includes information about their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support that a local authority chooses to provide. The Act requires also that local authorities have regard to seven corporate parenting principles:

1. To act in the best interests of young people and promote your physical and mental health and wellbeing.
2. To encourage young people to express your views, wishes and feelings.

3. To take into account young people's views, wishes and feelings.
4. To help young people to gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and the organisations it works with.
5. To have high aspirations for young people and help them to achieve the best outcomes they can.
6. For young people to be safe, and to have stability in their home lives, relationships, education, work and financially.
7. To prepare young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Local Offer for Wakefield has been developed in consultation with children and young people representing the Children in Care Council and the Leaving Care Forum. In developing the offer, consideration was also given to the feedback from recent surveys of children and young people who looked after, including the Bright Spots survey from 2017.

The local offer includes details of the services and support that may assist care leavers in, or moving to, adulthood and independent living that the local authority provides in relation to:

- Independence Skills
- Health and well-being – including services that teach about, support and enable good health and well-being.
- Relationships – including services and support available to help develop and maintain positive social networks.
- Education and training – including support to help care leavers access appropriate education or training to enable them to fulfil their goals.
- Employment – including information about general employment support and links to Job Centre Plus.
- Accommodation – including support to access appropriate and suitable employment.
- Participation in society – including links to and information about activities, events or volunteering opportunities available in the local area.

This Local Offer includes both statutory entitlements and additional services and opportunities that will inform the packages of tailored support to meet the individual needs of each young person.

## **Role of the Leaving Care Team**

### **Personal Advisers**

The Leaving Care Team will appoint a Personal Adviser (PA) to each young person prior to them ceasing to be looked after and ensure that they know who that is and how to contact them.

The PA will ensure that young people are provided with the practical and emotional support they need to make a successful transition to adulthood, either directly or through helping the young person to build a positive social network around them.

The PA will liaise with partner agencies and providers to ensure that they are aware of the extended duty to care leavers including to, for example, Jobcentre Plus and local health, well-being and mental health teams.

The PA will undertake a needs assessment taking account of the issues for which a young person may need support. PAs will apply professional judgement when deciding what level of needs assessment is appropriate. Where a PA has concerns that care leavers may in fact require support on a broader range of issues than they initially report, they will carry out a full needs assessment to help to identify any additional needs.

Based on the needs assessment, the PA will provide and / or coordinate the support that a young person needs through their Pathway Plan. The PA is responsible for ensuring that the Pathway Plan is monitored and reviewed at least every 6 months.

The PA will keep full, accurate and up to date records of contacts with the young person and services provided.

The Leaving Care Team recognises care leavers growing stability and maturity between age 21 and 25, during which many care leavers are able to lead successful lives without PA support and may not want continuing contact with their local authority.

Therefore, for care leavers aged 18 to 20, the PA will keep in touch with those young people in line with statutory requirements and ensure that their needs are assessed and inform their Pathway Plan.

For care leavers aged 21 or over, the PA will assess care leavers' needs, and develop and keep under review a Pathway Plan where the young person requests support.

Where a PA considers that a young person needs support to avoid putting themselves at risk of harm, this offer will be re-issued, even where a young person may have refused it previously.

## **Pathway Plans**

Every young person will have a unique Pathway Plan that sets out how they will be supported and their assessed needs will be met.

The frequency of contact between PAs and care leavers will vary depending on the nature of each individual's circumstances and will be recorded in the Pathway Plan.

The Pathway Plan will include:

- Arrangements to support the young person in further education or employment.
- Arrangements to ensure the young person is living in suitable accommodation; including any 'Staying Put' arrangements.
- The young person's health needs and how these should be met.
- Arrangements to support the young person in sustaining and developing relationships, including with family.
- Arrangements to ensure the young person is properly equipped for taking greater responsibility towards their independence.
- An assessment of the young person's financial needs and capacity and any financial assistance provided.

The PA is responsible for ensuring that the Pathway Plan is monitored and reviewed at least every 6 months.



## LOCAL OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

### Independence Skills

#### Leaving Care Core Offer

- We will provide you with an initial pack from your social worker at the Leaving Care Introduction visit. This includes information about the service and the Children's Advocacy and Participation Service (CAPS).
- We offer a Skills Assessment. You will be provided with this when you initially come to the service as part of the support you will receive. We believe that further partnership working with both foster carers, residential units and the leaving care service would improve your chances when moving onto independence.
- We offer a skills assessment for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, based upon their experiences, for young people who are new to the UK.
- GRAL (Get Ready for Adult Life) is a programme we offer to support you in developing independence skills and other provisions.
- Earlier intervention in developing independence skills as we believe it would benefit you if you had opportunity to develop your independence skills at a younger age.
- A rolling programme of an accredited independence skills course to run in all of the semi-independent accommodation under leaving care services and beyond.
- Information around budgeting is provided in the initial pack and the independence skills packs also provide support. The Personal Advisers are involved in work to support you in this area.

**Health and well-being** – including services that teach about, support and enable good health and well-being.

**Leaving Care Core Offer**

- A health summary at 18 years of age so that you understand your health history.
- Continued support from your Personal Adviser in ensuring you have registered access to doctors, dentists and opticians.
- Information about health services in your local area.
- Health providers are invited to our 'Drop In' sessions for you to seek advice and support.

<b>Wider Council Offer</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Champion Council Directorate/Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drop-in sessions from Care Leavers which includes information and advice on keeping healthy and promoting well-being.</li> <li>• Provision of Leisure Card up to the age of 25 years, which provides free access to leisure facilities and hobby and development opportunities.</li> <li>• Access to the Live Well Wakefield' Service</li> </ul>	<p>Children in Care Health Team(s) through Leaving Care service.</p> <p>Leisure Services</p> <p>Public Health</p>	<p>Children in Care Health Team</p>



**Relationships** – including services and support available to help develop and maintain positive social networks.

**Leaving Care Core Offer**

- Your Personal Adviser will support you to establish and maintain safe and healthy relationships.
- The Leaving Care Service provides opportunities for young people to meet, socialise and seek support through drop in sessions.

**Wider Council Offer**

**Lead**

**Champion Council Directorate/Service**

- Flexible buddying/mentoring where young people are connected with officers across the Council and organisations from which services are commissioned.

Corporate Services - HR  
(coordination)

Corporate Services

**Education and Training** – including support to help care leavers access appropriate education or training to enable them to fulfil their goals.

**Leaving Care Core Offer**

- You will have a Personal Education Plans (PEPs) completed with you either within your Pathway Plan or by the REACH Education Support Team.
- We can support you and your retention at college. The Leaving Care Service, in partnership with the REACH team, has a Memorandum of Understanding and a positive working relationship with Wakefield College. This working practice extends throughout the college and there is a particularly positive relationship with the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) team.
- If you are planning to go to University or study a Higher Education course you will be given support to enable you to do this. There is a checklist in place to ensure that you are provided with clear support and guidance including linking in with the Universities and student finance.
- ‘Second chance learning’ through the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) gives you the opportunity to continue your learning at 19.

<b>Wider Council Offer</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Champion Council Directorate/Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to become ‘physical activity’ champions.</li> </ul>	Arts, Culture and Leisure Services	Regeneration and Economic Growth

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to learning programmes in Museums and Castles.</li> </ul>	Arts, Culture and Leisure Services	
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**Employment - including information about general employment support and links to Job Centre Plus..**

**Leaving Care Core Offer**

- You will have access to Connexions who provide web and telephone contact around Information, Advice and Guidance on work options. This is provided up to the age of 21.
- We provide ring fenced apprenticeship opportunities for Care Leavers. This opportunity is developing further with more apprenticeships becoming available in different departments.
- Access to opportunities within Wakefield for you to take part in traineeships.

<b>Wider Council Offer</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Champion Council Directorate/Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment preparation support, including CV writing and interview preparation.</li> <li>• Apprenticeships through the provision of placements across the Council.</li> <li>• Work experience/placements</li> </ul>	<p>Corporate Services - HR</p> <p>Corporate Services – HR</p> <p>Corporate Services – HR</p>	Regeneration and Economic Growth

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casual front line staffing opportunities (including Leisure, Libraries, Museums and Castles and Highways).</li> <li>• Business start-up advice.</li> <li>• Self-Employment and Employment support including 'Works better' and other programmes.</li> <li>• Provide introductions to businesses who may be wishing to find out more about working at specific sites or access work experience.</li> <li>• 'Get into Street Scene' programme apprentices or employment.</li> <li>• Support for care leavers with learning disabilities as part of wider approach to develop progression pathways.</li> <li>• Volunteering Opportunities including Arts, Culture, Leisure, Planning, Transport and Highways services</li> <li>• Work Taster opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</li> </ul>	<p>Corporate Services – HR</p> <p>Economic Growth &amp; Skills</p> <p>Economic Growth &amp; Skills</p> <p>Economic Growth &amp; Skills</p> <p>Street Scene</p> <p>Street Scene</p> <p>Street Scene</p>	
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**Accommodation** - including support to access appropriate and suitable employment.

#### **Leaving Care Core Offer**

- The Leaving Care Service will ensure that Pathway Planning is focussed but realistic in relation to your accommodation needs and steps towards independence.
- We will provide you with a 'setting up home' allowance to buy the things you need to start off in your own accommodation.
- We will provide you with a guide about the different types of accommodation available in the Wakefield district and beyond.
- We will offer access to specific temporary semi-independent accommodation attached to the Leaving Care Service. The Leaving Care Service, in partnership with other council departments, we continue to work to extend our semi-independent accommodation portfolio.
- We offer access to Intensive Support Advisors who are available to work with you in the semi supported accommodation to develop independence skills and if you may need out of hours support.
- Act as 'Guarantor' where appropriate to assist in accessing accommodation.

<b>Wider Council Offer</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Champion Council Directorate/Service</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of Housing advice.</li> <li>• Provision of top priority 'Band 'A' for care leavers for allocation of social housing.</li> <li>• Provision of Home Maintenance (Basic DIY) training</li> <li>• Provision of a home maintenance handbook</li> <li>• Provision of a home maintenance DIY toolkit</li> </ul>	<p>Communities - Housing Needs Service and Economic Growth &amp; Skills</p> <p>Communities - Housing Needs Service/WDH</p> <p>Engie and Wakefield College</p> <p>Engie</p> <p>Engie</p>		Communities

**Participation in Society** - including links to and information about activities, events or volunteering opportunities available in the local area.

### **Leaving Care Core Offer**

- Through the Leaving Care Service you have access to the Leaving Care Forum that meets once a month to discuss issues that are important to you.
- The Leaving Care Service provides opportunities for you to meet, socialise and seek support through 'drop ins'. The drop ins also link in with various providers in the district from EET, health etc to develop the young people's skills set.
- The Leaving Care Service provides opportunities for you to meet and socialise at age appropriate Achievement Awards that are designed and hosted in venues that meet the expressed wishes of young people.
- You have opportunities to shape the future of leaving care services.
- You will be provided with The Leaving Care Information packs that include leaflets about:
  - The Service
  - Personal Adviser to 25
  - Education and Training
  - Employment
  - Accommodation
- We provide a dedicated website for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.
- You have access to a social media page designed and created in consultation with young people.

Wider Council Offer	Lead	Champion Council Directorate/Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteering opportunities across the Council with links to Nova.</li> </ul>	Communities – Area Development and Cohesion	Communities

## Finances and personal budgeting

### Leaving Care Core Offer

- We provide you with information in the initial welcome pack about your financial entitlements.
- We will ensure that you do not have to pay Council Tax up to your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday
- The Leaving Care Service has an established and effective protocol with DWP and a positive relationship with the local Job Centre. There is a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) who supports you with your initial claims, and who is available to give advice about other claims. The protocol includes making earlier claims, prior to your 18th birthday, and some information sharing that ensures that your working agreement is manageable.
- We provide weekly personal allowances, or support you to access benefit claims, to ensure that you have an appropriate level of financial independence.
- We will support you to access Discretionary Housing Payments for a shortfall in your rent costs. Some of our young people told us they felt this was really useful and some had already accessed it.
- You will receive a birthday and festival allowance each year.



- The Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA) is accessible when you move into semi-independent and independent accommodation. What you might need is based on work that is undertaken with you by your Personal Adviser. We will provide you with more information about what items this covers and what is available to you.
- We support all young people to have a savings account at the earliest opportunity and for those aged 16 and above to have a current account where you are eligible.
- We will explore ways to support you with family contact over the age of 18.
- We will make sure that you have a form of ID, carrying your photo ID and date of birth. This may be either a citizen card or a passport at the earliest opportunity available to you.
- We will provide a financial incentive (for meals) when doing volunteer work.

<b>Wider Council Offer</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Champion Council Directorate/Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of advice around personal budgeting and managing living costs and Welfare Benefits</li> </ul>	Corporate Services - Finance	Corporate Services