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East Sussex  
County Council



# Local Offer to care leavers 2019

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## Introduction

This leaflet tells you about all the support that is available in East Sussex to you as a care leaver.

Becoming an adult can be difficult. Things like leaving school, finding a job, starting a relationship, setting up home and becoming a parent don't always happen in a neat order. We know that it's a big step to move to living on your own and that it's normal for every young person to need help with that. We want to make sure that you feel supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help.

To be able to get the support detailed in this leaflet, you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday) or for 13 weeks after your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. If you're not sure whether you have, then ask your social worker or personal advisor.

As a local authority we are your corporate parents, this may seem like a strange term but it means that care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The East Sussex Through Care Service helps make sure that care leavers have the opportunities they need, including offering you more than one chance as you grapple with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood. We know that not everyone gets it right first time.

This leaflet is available online at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/13076/local-offer-for-care-leavers-2019-2020.pdf> or you can email [Care.LeaversService@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Care.LeaversService@eastsussex.gov.uk) to request more copies.

## Support we offer

### Personal advisor

- ❖ From April 2018 care leavers have the right to support from a Personal Advisor up to the age of 25
- ❖ The role of a personal advisor is to help care leavers prepare for independent living and to support them after they leave care.
- ❖ Personal advisors are responsible for ensuring that a Pathway Plan is developed and kept up to date for each care leaver until they reach 21.
- ❖ We will try and ensure that care leavers are able to work with the same personal advisor where possible.
- ❖ Until you reach 21 your personal advisor will see you regularly; at least every two months; and keep in touch with you between visits.

### Pathway Plan

- ❖ We will prepare a Pathway Plan for all young people leaving care that sets out the things you want to achieve and how we will help you to achieve them.
- ❖ We will start developing the Pathway Plan while you are still in care, around your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- ❖ We must review your Pathway Plan at least every six months until you reach 21.
- ❖ We will support you to be involved in preparing and reviewing the Pathway Plan.

## **Support to engage in education, employment or training**

We want to make sure every young person leaving care has the support to achieve their goals in life.

We are here to help you with your educational journey, if you have a query about this just ask us and we will help.

The Virtual School for Children in Care East Sussex works with Children and Young People (early years up to 25 if progressing in education) who are in, or have been in, the care of East Sussex. We will work closely with the Virtual School to ensure you are supported in all aspects of your education.

We have good links with Universities and opportunities for summer Schools from year 10 upwards.

We may be able to offer additional support post 16 with tutoring and funding equipment.

### **Financial Support at College**

If you are under 19 years and are in, or have been in, the care of East Sussex you will be entitled to a Bursary, we will assist you in applying for this.

### **PEP (Personal Education Plan)**

As a Looked After Child / Care leaver you are entitled to a Personal Education Plan (PEPs), these will be reviewed once a term until you finish at college.

### **Apprenticeships/Traineeships**

If you are living independently or in Supported Lodgings the Virtual School may be able to contribute towards the cost of travel and essential equipment, we will also support you by ensuring that you are not financially disadvantaged.

### **Work Experience**

East Sussex County Council may be able to offer work experience opportunities within different areas of the Council. The council has made a commitment to considering recruiting care leavers in to permanent roles within East Sussex County Council where appropriate.

### **Employment**

You will have access to the Youth Employability Service who will assist you in completing CV's, interview skills and finding employment. We will also support you to find and sustain employment. Depending on your circumstances we can assist you in purchasing interview clothes and with the cost of travel to interviews. We will also ensure that you have enough money to live on until you receive your first wages.

### Support offered in Higher Education:

- ❖ Once it is agreed that higher education is the right route for you, your accommodation will be paid for. This includes providing accommodation for you during the holidays where necessary.
- ❖ The University you have applied for may guarantee accommodation in the Universities halls of residence for your first year of study.
- ❖ You will receive a £2000 bursary.
- ❖ You will be supported in applying for additional finance and maintenance grants via student finance.
- ❖ Universities often provide additional bursaries. You are advised to link up with the named person at university and the widening participation teams. We will support you with this and will ask for your permission to stay in contact with your support network at university.
- ❖ If you get the opportunity to do an Internship as part of your University course, you will have accommodation paid and a contribution towards travel expenses can be considered on an individual need basis.
- ❖ The Virtual School will fund UCAS/CUCAS applications if school bursaries are not available.
- ❖ The Virtual School will support costs linked to interviews and we will support you in attending open days.

We hold an annual event to celebrate your successes in education, employment and training.

## Accommodation

If you are aged over 18, your personal advisor will help you to find suitable accommodation. This might involve:

- ❖ Working with housing services to explore suitable housing options for you, including supported accommodation if you are not ready to live independently or don't want to have your own tenancy.
- ❖ Supporting you to remain with your foster carers under what's called a 'Staying Put' arrangement if this is what you and your foster carers or supported lodgings providers want.
- ❖ Giving you high priority access to social housing in accordance with our housing allocation policy.
- ❖ Supporting you in a housing crisis, and ensuring that you will have somewhere to live up to the age of 21
- ❖ Supporting you to access your setting up home grant that can be used to furnish your first property, this is £2,000.
- ❖ Supporting you with moving in to your property, this includes with removals and getting your first week's shopping.
- ❖ We will provide advice about maintaining a tenancy, including avoiding rent arrears paying bills etc. This will be both through your personal advisor, placement support workers and independence courses run by the Through Care Service.
- ❖ We will exempt you from Council Tax until you are 25 if you are living in East Sussex
- ❖ Help to access charities and other schemes to support you furnishing and setting up your home.

## Health and Wellbeing

We will support you in getting the support you need around your physical and mental health by offering:

- ❖ A health passport for you when you leave care which will give your health history.
- ❖ Support for you to register at health services when moving home.
- ❖ Ongoing mental health support provided by a nurse specialist within the Through Care Service who will support you to access appropriate support
- ❖ Transport costs when you are attending hospital or doctors' appointments.
- ❖ Additional support to you if you are a young parent.
- ❖ Ongoing support beyond your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and involving Adult Social Care if this is needed.
- ❖ Information about counselling and health drop in services available locally.
- ❖ Give advice about healthy living
- ❖ Give advice about getting help to pay for prescriptions.

## Money / Finances

We will offer:

- ❖ A living allowance of £60 per week from age 16 to 18 if you are living in supported lodgings or semi-independent accommodation.
- ❖ A clothing allowance of £200 per year if you're not living in foster care.
- ❖ Support with budgeting
- ❖ Support to access relevant money management courses.
- ❖ Support to access your Junior ISA savings account.
- ❖ Support to open a bank account.
- ❖ Support to get a National Insurance number.
- ❖ Exceptional financial support in emergencies up to the age of 21
- ❖ Support to make a claim for Universal Credit
- ❖ Financial support for all UASC who are unable to claim benefits whilst their claim for asylum is being processed.
- ❖ A gift on your birthday, at Christmas or the significant religious festival that you celebrate.

## Relationships

As well as support from your social worker and your personal advisor, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, such as through:

- ❖ Providing you with a placement support worker
- ❖ Where appropriate, continuing to support contact with the 'Independent Visitor' service and an advocate if you want one.
- ❖ Help to maintain or regain contact with people special to you, or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers, residential staff or social workers.
- ❖ Support to reconnect with family members where it is what you want and in your best interest. If you are an unaccompanied young person this can include support to find your family through the Red Cross.

## Important Documents

We know that it is important that you have the correct documents in order to confirm your identity we will:

- ❖ Support you to apply for documents such as your Passport, Provisional Driving Licence and Birth Certificate, we will fund these documents.
- ❖ Support you to get your immigration documentation if you are an unaccompanied young person

## Participation and being involved

We want our care leavers to be active members of society, and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have. We can help you participate in society in the following ways:

- ❖ Support from a dedicated Participation Personal Advisor
- ❖ Providing information on groups and clubs you may wish to join.
- ❖ Informing you about relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your talents and interests.
- ❖ Encouraging and helping you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can vote in elections.
- ❖ Informing you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in.
- ❖ Informing you of, and possibly helping out with, the cost of leisure activities.
- ❖ Giving you advice and helping you to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver.

As a Local Authority we want our commitment to you to apply to everything we do, therefore, as well as specific support set out above we commit to:

- ❖ Ensuring any changes to policy that could affect care leavers are evaluated for impact on care leavers.
- ❖ Making sure that everybody who works for, or on behalf of, the council understands what it means to be a corporate parent and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion, prioritising care leavers for opportunities and encouraging them.

## Key contacts or websites

### East Sussex Care leavers service

These are the contact details for the Care leavers team at East Sussex County Council

T: 01273 335150

Email: [Care.Leavers@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:Care.Leavers@eastsussex.gov.uk)

### C360

This link will take you to the East Sussex County Council website for young people:

<https://www.c360.org.uk/>

### Coram Voice

This link will help you figure out your rights and entitlements as a Care Leaver. They also have other advice and information.

<http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/young-peoples-zone/am-i-care-leaver>

### National Care Advisory Service (NCAS)

Part of Catch22, the national advice, support and development service focusing on young people's transition from care.

T: 020 7336 4846

<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/>

## **Voice**

Offers advocacy support to care leavers and children in care, including a national helpline.

T: 0808 8005792

[www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

## **Become (Previously called The Who Cares? Trust)**

Their mission is to provide help, support and advice to children in care and young care leavers.

<http://www.becomecharity.org.uk>

## **Care Leavers' Foundation**

Small grants scheme for care leavers aged up to 29.

[www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/grants.php](http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/grants.php)

## **Discretionary Learner Support**

Help for 19 year olds or over who are having trouble with meeting the costs of participating in further education at college.

<http://bit.ly/fhngna>

## **The Care Leavers' Association**

National Charity run by care leavers offering support and advice

T: 0161 236 1980

[www.careleavers.com](http://www.careleavers.com)

## **Homeworks housing support and advice**

T: 01273 898 700

<https://www.southdown.org/housing-support/home-works-east-sussex>

## **ESCC Complaints link**

<https://escchildrenscomplaints.freshdesk.com/support/tickets/new>