The Peterborough Leaving Care Service Guide

For young people from 16-21 who are leaving Peterborough’s care
1. Respect
We will listen to you as individuals with an open mind, with your different needs, ideas and beliefs. We will tailor the service to fit you or make sure you have an explanation if we are not able to do something for you.

2. Helping you to do the best you can
We will value your strengths and talents, encouraging your aspirations. We will support you with education and employment. If we can’t meet your needs we will try and help you find a service that can. We will do our best to help you breakdown barriers you might encounter with other agencies, to ensure you reach your goals.

3. Health and well-being
We will support you to live a healthy lifestyle. It is important to look after all aspects of your health, including sexual, and emotional health, as well as physical health. We will do what we can to ensure you know what you can do to keep healthy and that you have the right information and know what to do if you have any concerns.

4. Clear Communication
We will stay in touch with you, and make sure you can contact your worker in a way that is best for you. We will let you know how to complain or access an advocate if you are not happy with the service you have. We will invite you to express your views on how the service can be improved.

5. Finding a home
We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into independent living. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation and furnishings that are right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times we may need to reconsider the plan depending on your differing needs.

6. Support
We will provide support set out in current Regulations and Guidance. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We recognise that you might change your mind about what you want to do. If we can’t meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can.
Respect

We are aware that there are many reasons why young people come in to the care of Peterborough City Council and that you are the only one who has lived your life. Whether you have been seeking asylum, working to manage a disability, or have experienced challenges within your family, we will recognise the journey you have already been on, and aim to support you through to the next stage.

As you move from a child to a young adult, it is a time to explore and experiment as you find your way. We will listen, and work to understand your perspective, your hopes and beliefs. We want to work with you to incorporate these in to your plans to increase the chances of you meeting your goals.

We are aware and respect that disabled care leavers must be afforded the same rights and protection as their non disabled peers in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Helping you do the best you can

Education and training and employment

We recognise that in your journey through care, you may experience some disruption with your education. It is important that you know we can support you to progress or return at a time that is right for you.

There are a number of routes available to you. If you stay in full time education after 16 you are entitled to a number of bursaries/grants. Your worker will write a letter confirming you are a care leaver which will ensure you receive the maximum allowance.

You may choose an apprenticeship which will give you a wage while you study. Visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk to find out about the types of apprenticeships available.

If you are under 18 and living independently with a weekly maintenance allowance from the council, and you get a job, you can earn up to £50 per week before it affects the amount of your personal allowance. Anything earned over £50 will be deducted from your personal allowance £1 for £1. So, if you earn £70 per week your personal allowance will be reduced by £20

If you are 18 to 21, living independently and studying full time you can claim benefits to cover your housing and maintenance costs.

We can assist with the costs of books, materials and equipment up to £300

Even if your contact with the service ends when you are 21, but you would like to return to education before you are 25, contact the team for an assessment to see how we could support you.

Job centres across the country offer advice, guidance and support to seek work. If you are a parent, or have a disability, you will be able to claim benefits to allow you to continue to study. ‘Care to Learn’ helps you with the cost of child care until you are 20.

The number of care leavers from Peterborough studying at university has been rising over the last years. In 2016 there are 7 undergraduates studying at universities across the country. You are entitled to £2000 Higher Education Bursary from us, spread across your course of study.

If you find yourself without any education, training or employment you can access advice from Peterborough’s NEET team, no matter where you are living. Call them on 01733 864484 and tell them you are a Peterborough care leaver.
Health and Well-being

Your Pathway Plan must take into account your health needs and will set out clearly how these will be met. This will include how you will be supported to take responsibility for your health and how to access appropriate services, including information and advice. This should include help to establish and access free prescriptions and other health benefits where appropriate.

Your Personal Adviser will support you in registering with a General Practitioner and dentist where necessary. NHS prescription, dental charges and sight tests are free to young people under 19 and undertaking full time education.

If you are aged 16 and 17 and not undertaking full time education, you will be fast-tracked to help through the NHS Low Income Scheme by completing the short claim HC1 (SC) or a full HC1 form. These certificates last for 12 months or until your 18th birthday, whichever is longer. HC1 forms can be obtained from Jobcentre Plus offices, NHS hospitals and from some doctors, dentists and opticians.

A form can also be obtained by contacting the NHS Forms order line on 0845 610 1112 or by email from the following address: nhsforms@spsl.uk.com

Mental Health

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services will prioritise the needs of children in care and young people leaving care.

Where it is likely that you will require continuing support from Adult Mental Health Services, your social worker should, with the support of CAMHS, make a formal referral as early as possible, so that any agreements for this support is established in time for your 18th birthday.

Before you are 18 the child in care health team who have been involved with your annual assessments will prepare an individualised ‘health passport’ which will give you your health history and guidance about how to manage your health yourself after you have left care.
Clear Communication

We will stay in touch with you in a way that is best for you, whether this is by phone, email, text or letter. We will keep you informed about any decisions or changes being made, and we will do this as soon as possible rather than keeping you waiting. We will make sure you are able to contact your social worker or personal advisor by providing you with their phone number and email address. We will let you know in advance if we cannot keep an appointment we have made. We will keep you informed about activities that are going on in the service that you might want to get involved in.

We know we don't get it right for everybody all the time. If we let you down we would like you to make us aware of this. Speak to your worker to let them know how you feel. If this doesn’t make things right, you can speak to your workers manager or contact a NYAS advocate on 0800 616101. Further information is at the back of this booklet.

If you would like to make a formal complaint;

We are committed to listening to what you say to help us to improve what we do. That includes complaints when you are not happy about something and compliments when you feel that you have got something good to say about something or someone.

If you are unhappy about something, please let your Social Worker or Personal Adviser know. They may be able to sort the issue out for you and prevent the need to complain formally. If for any reason that is not the way you want to deal with it, please carry on reading.

Who can complain?

• You can, if you are in or leaving care
• Your parent, or someone with parental responsibility for you
• Your carer
• Anyone who the local authority accepts has a sufficient interest in a your welfare

Stage One - The best chance to put things right!

If you have tried to sort your complaint out informally or for any reason you do not want to discuss it with the your team, get in touch with Central Complaints team. They will:

• Listen to, or read your complaint
• Offer to provide you with an advocate to support you
• Pass your complaint to the team manager or the Head of Service who will investigate it
• Arrange for a written response to be sent to you within 10 working days. If your complaint is complicated, we might need more time, but will always let you know how much time is needed

Stages Two and Three - Independent Investigations -

Who does what

If you are not happy with the outcome at Stage 1, the Central Complaints team will ask an independent manager to investigate, overseen by a senior manager in Children's Services.

If you need to go to Stage 3, an independent panel will review the decisions and the Children’s Services Director will respond to you.

Compliments

We are equally happy to hear when you have been well supported and you are pleased with the service you have had.
Clear Communication

Contact Details
Central Complaints and Compliments Department
Customer Service Centre
Peterborough City Council,
Bayard Place, Broadway
Peterborough PE1 1FZ

Tel: 01733 296331
Email: ChildrensSocialCareComplaints@peterborough.gov.uk

National Youth Advocacy Services
0800 616101 / 01516 498700
Email: help@nyas.net

Participation and Consultation with you about service improvements
The Children in Care Council actively offers the opportunity for care leavers to have their say about service improvements and consults with them on policies and procedures. Members of the Children in Care Council sit on the Corporate Parenting Panel and represent the views of children and young people in care.

There is also a Care Leavers’ Group which meets monthly to discuss ways of improving services and to share experience.

If you are interested in getting involved, please tell your personal adviser or social worker.

Access to your files
You are entitled to view and to request a copy of your personal records. We have 40 days from the point that we receive the formal request for you to receive the information.

You will have to produce ID. This may be a passport, driving licence, or a letter with proof of address for example, a bill; bank statement; letter from college. You must be as specific as possible when making the request. Your leaving care social worker / personal adviser or an advocate may be required to share the files with you once processed.

When reading your information you can note any questions that you may have. You are entitled to have inaccurate information changed. If you feel you need counselling, your leaving care social worker / personal adviser will support a referral for counselling services.

Requests for access to personal records should be made in writing and sent to the Freedom of Information coordinator at the Town Hall. They can also be emailed at foi@peterborough.gov.uk
Accommodation

It is important to recognise that Childrens Services stop being responsible for providing, or funding, your accommodation in all but the most exceptional circumstances, when you are 18. You will be advised and supported to seek alternative accommodation.

Types of accommodation available

Semi Independence
If you are 16 or 17 you may move into supported accommodation provided by organisations we trust until you are 18. This could be shared houses, or self-contained flats. If necessary, there are staff available who sleep in at night.

Alternatively you could move in to rooms provided by organisations such as the Foyer or the YMCA. You will be provided with support by that organisation to help you learn how to live more independently. You can stay here beyond your 18th birthday.

In semi independence you are provided with a weekly allowance from your social worker to pay for all your weekly expenses such as food, toiletries and entertainment. You can also have £100 in April and September to spend on clothes.

Staying Put
If you are in foster care and you and your carers would like you to stay there after you reach age 18, you may do so up until you reach age 21. This is called “Staying Put.” As you will be an adult, you will no longer be in foster care and the new arrangements will be agreed between you and your former foster carer.

We will support the arrangement financially, but you will be expected to pay rent and to contribute £30 per week towards the cost of living there, including the cost of bills. You will support yourself for your day to day needs and if you are eligible for benefits, will claim Housing Benefit for the rent which should be paid direct to your former foster carer.

Planning for this should start as soon as possible after you reach age 16. The arrangement will come to an end if either you or your former foster carers decide to end it or the ‘living together agreement’ is broken. Full details are in our Staying Put policy.

Social Housing
If you are ready to manage your own accommodation, and you want to live in Peterborough, you will have priority access to Peterborough City Council’s housing stock, which is provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSL). Your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will support you to register by the time you reach age 17 and encourage you to bid for accommodation before you reach age 18.

Private rented
If you are living away from Peterborough, or there are good reasons why social housing is not the option for you, you may be assisted to move in to private rented accommodation

If you have a disability and are receiving support from Adult Social Care, an assessment will be carried out to see if you are eligible for Supported Living. This would provide you with accommodation and the support you need to remain safe, healthy and as independent as possible.

Shared lives
The Shared Lives Scheme recruits, assesses and approves families who are willing to care for adults with a physical disability, learning disability or the elderly. This can be on a short-term (respite) basis or long-term basis and the families offer care within their own home.
Accommodation

What happens if you become Homeless?
If you become homeless and are aged 18+, you will need to present as homeless to Bayard Place, where our housing staff will be able to provide you with temporary accommodation for a short period of time. You should let your personal advisor or social worker know straight away. You should be aware that if you do not keep to the agreements set up by your housing provider you might be considered to have made yourself intentionally homeless which could limit the support you are able to get. If you are not living in Peterborough you should present at your local housing office.

Setting Up Home Allowance
We will provide you with a setting up home allowance when you leave care and move into independent accommodation, before or after your 18th birthday and up until the age of 25 years. The grant will be held by your personal advisor or social worker and will be used to ensure that you have the appropriate equipment and household items to set up safe, secure and stable accommodation.

You will be able to choose the essential items that you need within this overall budget. These will include essential items of furniture, furnishings, bedding, and kitchen equipment, the installation of gas / electrical appliances as necessary and removal costs. The allowance is based on what we agree you’ll need and consists of the following:

- Up to £1500
- The first television licence fee. Any subsequent licences will be the responsibility of the young person.
- A full adult passport
- A birth certificate
- A provisional driving licence

If you are in the Peterborough area you can access the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme (PCAS).

We will assist you to apply for vouchers via the Citizens Advice Bureau towards the cost of a fridge freezer, kettle, toaster and microwave. The vouchers are accepted at We Re Use for the fridge freezer and Care Zone for the kettle, toaster and microwave.
Support

What the Law Says; The Children Act 1989 and Leaving Care Act 2000, place a duty on local authorities to do certain things to prepare you for leaving care and to support you once you have left care. For the details, copy this link into your browser:
http://resources.leavingcare.org/uploads/dd7b04a3af00c1e201a2fd9cec1558c27.pdf

Needs Assessment:
Just before your 16th birthday, you and your Social Worker must look at what your needs are now and what will be done in the future, by writing an assessment and then a plan called a “Pathway Plan.”

Pathway plan:
A detailed Pathway Plan must be put together outlining what sort of support you will need and where it will come from. The plan will look at your support networks; education, training and employment; independent living skills; finance; health and development; and identity. The Pathway Plan will be reviewed every six months until you are 21, or longer if you are in education. A Pathway Plan can be reviewed prior to six months if you or your Personal Advisor request this, or if you change where you live. We will give you a copy of your Pathway Plan and always ensure that your views are clear within it.

Personal Advisor and Social Worker:
We will provide you with a social worker until you are 18. You should be introduced to the personal advisor who will be continuing to work with until you are at least 21, before you are 18. They will help to write the Pathway Plan, and ensure that it works for you. We will be in contact with you at least every six weeks while you are still in care and every two months after you have left care.

Accommodation:
We must provide you with suitable accommodation and maintenance payments if you leave foster or residential care at 16 or 17. We must listen to your views about the accommodation you would like. Where we have arranged accommodation for you, we must review it after 28 days and every six months after that. Before you leave care we will help you to find safe, secure accommodation as a young adult. If you are in a foster placement at age 18, you may be able to stay there until you are 21 as a Staying Put arrangement.
Support

Education and Employment:
We will support you to return or continue, including help with costs including travel and clothing for interview or any equipment you may need.

If you are aged between 21 and 25 and wish to return to education and training, please let us know. We will carry out an assessment and if you need support, we’ll complete a Pathway Plan which describes how we will help you.

Complaints and Advocates:
We will make it easy for you to complain about, or compliment services and, if you would like, provide you with an independent advocate to support you through this process.

Emergency Support
When you reach your 18th birthday, your personal allowance from the Leaving Care Service will end. If you are entitled to benefits, you need to ensure that you make a claim in good time, provide the information and documents that are required to complete your claim and attend any appointments that are required as part of the benefit claiming process. Your personal advisor will provide with advice about this and, if you have a disability, your Adult Social Care worker will make sure financial assessments are made.

We may provide financial support for up to two weeks if you have no other resources whilst waiting for your benefit claim to be processed once you turn 18.

This support is limited to £32 per week and will be for £20 food and £12 towards fuel if required for your accommodation. Emergency gas and electric are also available from Peterborough Citizens Advice bureau paid directly to pre-payment meters where available.

If you need urgent help, you should initially contact your personal advisor or in their absence, the duty worker on 01733 864 371. If an emergency occurs out of office hours then the Emergency Duty Service can be contacted on 01733 234724. They are open 365 days a year, Monday to Friday 5pm to 9am, and 24 hours Saturday and Sunday.

Benefits
In 2015 the government began a significant change to the benefits system that provides for housing and maintenance costs for those with no wage or a low wage.

This is Universal Credit and is starting in different places around the country at different times. If Universal Credit is not available, you may be entitled to:

Income Support
If you are not available for work, for example because you are continuing to study. The rate in 2016/17 is £57.90 a week. You will need to provide proof that you are studying. You can make an application up to 6 weeks before your 18th birthday.

Job Seekers Allowance
If you are 18+, unable to find a job, available for and actively seeking work. You will need to apply for Job Seeker’s Allowance. The first thing to do is to go to your local job centre, let them know that you are currently not in work and need some financial help until you find a job.

The job centre can also help you look for jobs. You will need to provide evidence that you are applying for jobs in order to keep your claim going. You will need to show identification documents and a bank account for the benefits to be paid into. Your personal adviser will help you to get these if needed.

Personal Independence Payments
Personal Independence Payment (PIP) helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term ill-health or a disability if you’re aged 16 to 64. You could get between £21.80 and £139.75 a week. The rate depends on how your condition affects you, not the condition itself. You’ll need an assessment to work out the level of help you get. Your rate will be regularly reassessed to make sure you’re getting the right support.
Employment Support Allowance
Is a benefit for people who are unable to work due to illness or disability. You can apply online at www.direct.gov.uk/jsaonline; by phoning 0800 055 6688 or ask at your Jobcentre to make a paper claim.

For more about the wide range of benefits for all care leavers, go to: http://resources.leavingcare.org/uploads/d3594e3253fd70c10cc775851aad823c.pdf and visit www.gov.uk and search for benefits.

Benefit sanctions:
Young people who cannot evidence that they are applying for jobs, who leave a job without a good reason, or are fired may be subject to a benefit sanction. This means that during that time your Jobseeker’s Allowance will be stopped, but you may be able to claim hardship payments.

Housing Benefit
If you are over 18, unemployed, or studying part-time or on a low wage, then you may be entitled to Housing Benefit. This can help pay for some or all of your rent. Housing Benefit is now determined by Local Housing Allowance Rates based upon the area in which you live. Housing Benefit can be claimed from the local council where you have to pay rent. Housing Benefit is means tested so the amount you will get will depend upon the level of your income.

You will be supported to make your claim. In Peterborough, it should be submitted up to 13 weeks before your 18th birthday. Local Housing Authorities vary regarding their procedures, so your personal advisor or social worker will make whatever enquiries are necessary to enable you to submit your claim in good time.

If you are 16 or 17 you are unable to claim Housing Benefit until you are 18. Where you have to pay rent, your Social Worker will organise payment.

Housing Benefit for social housing will be paid directly to the landlord. Privately rented accommodation, for example a flat with private landlord, will be paid to you and you will be responsible for paying your rent.

If you think it would be difficult to manage your rent payments, you can request to have it paid direct to your landlord by explaining why you are unable to pay it yourself.

Care leavers between 18 and 21 can get the higher rate, for 1-bedroom accommodation 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 age 22.
Support
If You Are Seeking Asylum

Care leavers seeking asylum usually have equal access to financial support. However this depends on your immigration status. You may have differing entitlements to public funds which could affect your entitlement to claim welfare benefits and access to education related funding.

You will be able to claim benefits once you have been granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave. You will then cease to be an asylum seeker. Many young people leaving care who have come to the UK on their own seeking asylum get ‘discretionary leave to remain’ up to three years or until they are 17, whichever comes first.

When this expires it affects rights to benefits. You must apply for an ‘in-time application’. This is an extension of discretionary leave to remain and is needed in order to be able to claim benefits. Talk to your personal adviser or a benefit specialist to make sure your claim is ok. If the decision on your asylum claim is negative, but you make an appeal in time, you will have access to public funds until all your asylum appeal rights have been exhausted.

If you are refused asylum and have exhausted all your appeal rights, your entitlement to public funds, including welfare benefits, would usually end. At this point, your worker will work in partnership with the UK Border Agency and the National Asylum Support Service to provide financial support to you while we are waiting for instructions and assistance for you to leave the country.

If you have the right of permanent residence you will be eligible for home fees and Student Support for a higher education course in England.

For more detail, a helpful benefits guide for care leavers can be found at: www.resourcesleavingcare.org/uploads/e3253fd70c10cc775b51aad823c.pdf

Other Financial Support

We will ensure you have documents to prove your identity, usually, birth certificate, passport, provisional driving licence. As well as accommodation and education support, we like to mark your birthday and an important festival with you every year, to the value of at least £10. Where you have particular cultural and/or religious needs, funding can be made available.
Useful contacts:

National contacts

Health:
National dental helpline: 01788 539780
NHS Direct: 111 or 999 in an emergency.
Sexual health advice: 01733 673278

Sexuality Advice
Call: 0800 585858

Education and employment:
Care to learn: 0800 121 8989
www.indeed.co.uk
www.totaljobs.com
www.monster.co.uk
www.do-it.org
www.volunteering.org

Support:
Emergency Duty Service peterborough childrens services 01733 234724
Police: 999 or 112 from a mobile
Samaritans: 116 123
National Rail Enquiries: 08457 484950.
Driving Licence Application: 01792 782170
National housing enquires: 0808 800 4444

Peterborough contacts:

Health:
Dental Walk in centre: Address: 5 Midgate, Peterborough PE1 1TN 01733 295854

Dentists
57 Dental Group 01733 655238
Mace Dental Practice 01733 566203
Park Road Medical 164 Park Rd, Peterborough 01733 552801
Old Fletton Surgery, Rectory Gardens 0844 477 3919

Hospital
Peterborough City Hospital 01733 678000

Young People & Family Support
Peterborough 01733 567998

Drink And Drug Sense
Young Peoples Service: 79 East field Road 01733 567998.

Drink And Drug Advice
Frank, 169 London Road 01733 551575

Sexual Health: clinic
ICASH 39-41 Priestgate, Peterborough PE1 1JL 0300 300 3030

Child Sexual Exploitation
Confidential advice line: 01733- 864180

Samaritans:
32-34 St John’s St, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 5DD 01733 312727

Education and employment:
Peterborough Regional College: 01733 762203
City College Peterborough, Brook Street, Peterborough PE1 1TU 01733 555197

Rights resolutions
info@nenevalleycaretrust.co.uk

- Email: choices@citycollegepeterborough.ac.uk or call into the Youth Access Hub at City College Peterborough, Brook Street 1-5pm on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays
- Discover what jobs are available at your local Job Centre or Peterborough Job Seekers Centre: Clifton House, 84 Broadway, Peterborough, PE1 1QZ, Tel: 0845 6060 234.
- Look in the job section in the Peterborough Telegraph every Thursday.

Support
Citizens Advice Bureau
St Marks Street, Peterborough 0844 4994120
Your contacts

Health

Education

Support
Diamonds are not grown in flower nurseries but developed through years of pressure underground. Young people surviving care are diamonds.

And diamonds do not appear all polished and shiny. You see a glint and then the task is to polish it. That way you will see the glint turn into a sparkle and the sparkle into a jewel.”

Phil Frampton, Care leaver and journalist.