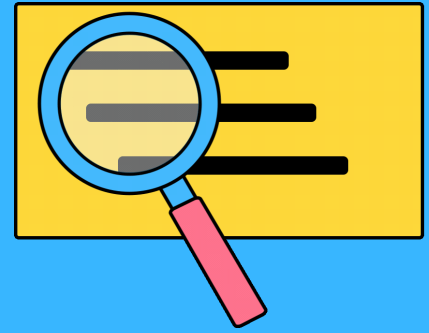


Havering's Local Offer for our care leavers



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Contents



3 Who are Leaving Care and what do we do?

4 What is a Pathway Plan

5 Leaving care before your 18th birthday

6-10 Financial support

11-13 Accommodation

14-19 Education, Employment and Training

20-21 Health & Wellbeing

22 Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

23-24 Getting involved

25 Your rights

26 -27 Useful contacts

Who are Leaving Care and what do we do?

As Corporate parents we take our responsibility seriously for children in our care and those who are care leavers. Our responsibility for you does not stop when you become an adult. We continue to offer support up to the age of 25, depending on your circumstances, wishes, feelings and assessed needs alongside the support that you might require. For some young adults, ongoing support is required post 25, and the Leaving Care Service will, in collaboration with Adult Services, Mental Health Service and Housing, amongst others to ensure that any ongoing support is agreed in advance of your 25th birthday.

This booklet will tell you about the support that we have for you in Havering as a care leaver. We want your journey to adulthood and full independence to be as supported and as easy as possible. We have consulted care leavers, children in care and foster carers when putting this information together. And we continue to consult on our offer with the young people and young adults who come to the Cocoon.

To be able to get the support set out in this guide, you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16th birthday) or 13 weeks after your 16th birthday. The aim of our service is to ensure you become independent as a young adult and have the skills and support required to do this. Successful independence means that you learn to manage your home, finances, health, lifestyle choices and your relationships to the best of your ability. This includes employment, further education or training opportunities that help you to achieve your potential.



Havering Council is a 'corporate parent' for looked after children and care leavers.

'Corporate Parent' is quite a strange phrase. In plain English, it means the Council should be just like a good parent to its children in care and care leavers. We want only the best for you. We want to ensure you have the best start as you transition into adulthood.

In everything we do, we are supporting you to be healthy, happy, safe and working towards your goals. Your worker will support you in this journey.

There may be times when we disagree over tough decisions that we believe are in your best interests. When this happens, we promise to listen to your opinions but we will always put your safety first. We will work hard to come up with solutions together to overcome difficult issues.

What is a Pathway Plan?

At Havering, you will be allocated a Pathway Co-ordinator (PC- equivalent of a YPA). A PC will support and work alongside you to achieve your aspirations. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 says that if you want the support of your PC, you can have one until the age of 25. Your PC will lead on planning the support you need with the relevant professionals. They will need from time to time to speak with some of the professionals supporting you such as: your university, college or school, your training provider, your employer, DWP, Home Office, Health colleagues, Housing officers etc. There might be times when meetings are held to make sure the right support is given to you. However, we will only share information that is necessary.

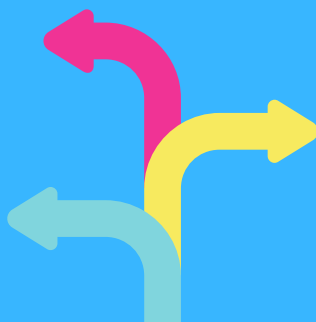
Your pathway plan is the document that identifies the areas of support you would like us to focus on. Alongside this, a risk assessment will be maintained to make sure we have the right safeguards in place in order to keep you safe.

The pathway plan is written with you and with important people in your life, so your feelings, wishes, views, comments and observations will be captured. We will review your pathway plan with you every 6 months, and in some instances earlier than 6 monthly. For example, if something significant was to happen. The amount of support that you receive from the service will depend on what you want, and your circumstances.

Leaving Care Staff will provide additional support as follows:

- If you have additional needs and they are clearly identified in your pathway plan
- If you have significant Mental Health needs
- If you are an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unresolved
- If you are in custody
- If you have or have had contact with the criminal justice system.
- If you are a young parent
- If you are going through a difficult time in your personal life
- If you are in an abusive relationship
- If you are being exploited (criminally or sexually)

The team works with other professionals, such as Health, Education, Housing, Adult Social Care, Mental Health Services and others so we can provide the right support at the right time for you.



Leaving care before your 18th birthday

Most young people remain in the care of their parents for longer periods because of financial challenges, expensive accommodation or in order to save for their own place to live. As a care leaver we will encourage you to stay in care until you are 18. However, if you decide you wish to leave care we can:

- Assist you with suitable accommodation, if you are not able to live with your family. The type of accommodation will be influenced by a number of things such as your level of independent living skills, budgeting skills, keeping yourself safe etc. This will be individual for each young person/ young adult.
- We will encourage you to make decisions for yourself which are safe and in your best interest. This may include rehabilitation back to family, or legally being cared for by a foster carer, friend or other family members before you turn 18
- If you remain with your family for 6 months before your 18th birthday, and we do not have a care order for you, you will no longer be considered a care leaver for the purposes of support as set out in this leaflet.
- If you are aged 16, we do not recommend that you are looked after within a semi-independent provision. Our preference is that you are supported in a family environment either within a fostering household or with family members of friends assessed as able to provide good enough care and support.
- As you get older we will consider semi-independent accommodation as a way to support you develop tenancy management skills.

Whatever your circumstances you can contact the service to confirm what support can be offered to you.



Financial Support

Subsistence (16 and 17 year olds)

Like any parent we will try and give you financial support. This will cover:

- Support to open a bank account
- Support to obtain identification documents like a passport or provisional driver's licence
- Support to start applying for benefits 6 weeks before your 18th birthday
- Support on how to access your savings or your junior ISA.

You are not eligible for certain benefits if you are living semi-independently, so we will provide you with a subsistence payment to cover your day to day living costs. It is never too late to start managing your money, but if you require support to budget your money we can help by spreading out the payments, supported shops, part cash and voucher payments to ensure you have enough money for food.

This applies to young people not living with foster carers or in a residential placement and some young people who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). We will pay you £60 per week. Young people who are in paid training will receive the equivalent or higher allowance from their training provider.

First benefits claim

In order to claim benefits, you must have the right form of identification (i.e. passport, Provisional driving licence, ARC card (if you are UASC). These benefits include Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit.

The Leaving Care Service will support you with up to 4 weeks' subsistence allowance payments to support yourself until your benefits are paid directly to yourself. Once your payment has been processed, and this is backdated from the date the initial claim was made, we will reach an agreement for this repayment to be made back to the Leaving Care Service. Your Pathway Coordinator will be able to provide you with further information about this.

Savings

All children who are in care for more than 12 months will have either a Child Trust Fund (if born between 1 September 2002 and January 2011) or a Junior ISA administered by an independent organisation called The Share Foundation on our behalf. You cannot remove the money from these accounts until you are aged 18. Full details of entitlement, amounts and how you can access your savings after you turn 18 are in our Looked after Children Saving Policy. Please ask your allocated worker for further details.

Financial Support

Bank Accounts

Every child in care is entitled to have a bank account set up for them, when you first come into care. Your Independent Reviewing Officer will check that this has been done for you during your LAC Reviews. If you do not have a bank account, your allocated worker can advise and support you to get one set up. A bank account is not only important to have for savings, but also to pay your wages or benefits, and potentially any financial support you receive from us. In some instances, a prepaid card will be given to you if you do not have access to a bank account.

Support with Housing Costs

We want every care leaver post 18 to feel safe, supported and happy in your home. Your pathway co-ordinator will work with you to find the most suitable accommodation to support your needs.

Once you turn 18, to help cover the cost of your rent, you will be entitled to claim Universal Credit (accommodation costs) or Housing Benefit (if you have no immigration restrictions) depending on the type of accommodation you are living in. You are able to apply for Housing Benefit 4-6 weeks before your 18th birthday, but it will come into effect once you turn 18 years old.

If you are in semi-independent accommodation your key worker will support you to attend any DWP (Housing Benefit or Universal credit) appointments. Once the Universal Credit (Housing Costs) or Housing Benefit entitlements are processed, LCT will cover the remaining cost of the rent. If you are in employment, it is expected that you will make some financial contribution towards your rent after a financial assessment has been completed.

Your Pathway Coordinator will be able to provide you with further information about this. Staff in the Cocoon staff will assist you to contact someone in Housing, Benefits or Council Tax in order to get any queries that you may have addressed, so you never need to feel alone if you are unsure of what to do.

Occupying Licence or Tenancy Agreements

If you are living semi-independently, you will need to sign an occupying licence/ tenancy agreement. This is important because it will help you understand the importance of managing a tenancy agreement when you are ready to move into your own council property. You will also need this agreement when making a Housing Benefit claim. The tenancy agreement should have your name, the Provider's details and the amount of rent to be paid weekly.

Financial Support

Help to Pay your Council Tax

If you are a care leaver and living in Havering aged between 18-25 years old, you can make an application for Council Tax Support. The application will have to be made supported by the Provider, or your Pathway Coordinator. The amount you receive will depend upon your income. All Havering care leavers can claim Council Tax Support and receive up to 100% relief from Council Tax. If their income is too high for Council Tax Support or the care leaver receives less than 100% relief, a Council Tax Discretionary payment can be made to reduce the balance to NIL. It is an application process (as that is required in law) and this creates an exemption for the care leaver.

Please note that any council tax payer resident in the borough including care leavers resident in Havering from other boroughs are entitled to claim Council Tax Support and Council Tax Discretionary payments. However, as a result of the above decision, the Council Tax Discretionary Policy allows Havering to focus on care leavers.

You can find out more council tax by visiting www.havering.gov.uk/counciltax or speak to your allocated worker.

Setting up Home Allowance (SUHA)

There will come a time, when you are ready to live independently, you can request a Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA) which is up to £2,000 to help you set up your home. You can access the allowance when you are clear what items you need to help you furnish your first accommodation. The purpose of the SUHA is to provide you with adequate furniture or equipment when moving into your permanent tenancy, and this will be written into your Pathway Plan. The SUHA will only be used to buy essential items for permanent accommodation. However, in some cases you may also be able to use the money as a deposit to rent private accommodation, if this is your preferred option. You will need to discuss this with your Young Person Advisor or Pathway Coordinator

Birthday Money

We will not forget your birthday and you will receive a birthday allowance from us up until you are 21 years old. Please note that you will only receive this allowance if you remain in contact with us. If you are in foster care, your carer will buy you a birthday present for your 17th and 18th birthdays. Payments are as follows:

16th and 17th Birthdays = £25.00

18th to 21st Birthdays = £50.00



Financial Support

Religious Celebrations

Whatever your religion, faith or belief, we will give you a cash payment of £52 once a year to contribute towards any religious/ faith celebration you may wish to make. We can pay for one celebration per year.

Clothing Allowance

If you are aged 16 or 17 and in foster care, your foster carer will support you to purchase the right clothing items for you. If you are in semi-independent accommodation your social worker will work with you to ensure you have the range of clothing items required for all weathers. A clothing allowance of £100 will be considered depending on individual circumstances, if you are under 18 years old and not in foster care.

Travel

If you are in education or training you will be given financial support with travel costs during term-time only to cover up to zone 1-6 or the equivalent based on an assessment of need. We will not provide you with travel costs to your place of work. You will need to have a current education contract signed by the Virtual School and apply for a student Oyster Card if eligible.

If you are 18 and above, and are claiming Universal Credit, Income Support, Job Seekers' Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance, the work coach at Job Centre Plus will support with travel costs if you can evidence that you are looking for work.

Cost of key documents

Having identification documentation is an important part of your identity and pathway to full independence. It is therefore, important that all young people/ young adults have a photographic form of identification (e.g. driving licence or passport) and their birth certificate when they start their journey as adults. These should be in place before their 18th birthday and the Milestone LAC review should confirm young people have been supported with the relevant documents necessary for them to exercise their citizenship rights (i.e. apply for benefits, access work, vote etc)

In addition, to having formal identification, you will also need your National Insurance Number, to start work with an employer, to set up a bank account, to claim benefits and so on.

Prior to leaving care, it is expected that you should already have a birth certificate, as well as, a renewed passport or a provisional driving licence.

- Havering council will in principle assist with the first 5 driving lessons
- Havering Council will in principle assist with the driving theory tests
- Havering council will assist with 1 driving test

This is subject to positive engagement, risk assessment and pathway planning for each young person.

Financial Support

School/University Holiday Accommodation

If you are a student in full time residential education or in higher education, we will ensure that you have suitable accommodation, if you need it, during the holiday periods. We will provide advice and support with sourcing suitable accommodation for you and contribute to any additional rental costs.

Support during pregnancy

If you are pregnant and aged 16 or 17 years old we will pay a one-off maternity grant 11 weeks before the birth of the baby. The current amount is £150 per baby.

In addition your Worker or Midwife will support you to claim a grant of £500 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if you are eligible for one. Your Worker may also be able to offer support to access funding from other organisations for you and your baby.

We will help you access funded childcare offers for 2,3 and 4 year olds www.havering.gov.uk/earlyyears - we will also signpost you to services from our Children Centres www.havering.gov.uk/childrenscentres

Young people in custody

Being in custody can be a very difficult time, as your freedom is restricted. Significant people in your life may not be able to visit or support you for various reasons. We hope that custody may give you an opportunity to reflect on your life and options available.

Visits will be monthly wherever possible to check on your welfare and explore opportunities for when you are released.

If you are 18 and over, and do not have family supporting you, we will provide you £20 per month allowance to cover basic necessities. We would encourage you to take up employment in prison to support you

If you are aged 16 and 17 years old, you will receive £10 per week as there are no work opportunities within the system to enable you to maintain contact with your family and also purchase basic necessities.

We will plan with you, your youth offending officer or Probation Officer as to what support will be most helpful to you upon your release, including accommodation options, unless you are returning to family.



Accommodation

Our responsibility to you is to ensure that once you leave our care you are living in suitable accommodation that meets your needs and skills for independent living, emotional maturity and ability to keep yourself safe. If you are a young care leaver parent, and require bigger family home, LCT will liaise directly with the housing department to support your application for alternative accommodation. Furthermore, our commitment to you is to help equip you with the essential skills required to live independently.

We are aware that not all young people will be able to live independently once they reach adulthood, but you will be supported to consider alternative accommodation tailored to support your needs. Plans for your accommodation will be agreed and written within your Pathway Plan and supported by your risk assessment.

In line with extended duties, we have to offer support to care leavers up to the age of 25 (if you want this support). Your final LAC review or Milestone LAC review prior to your 18th birthday will ensure that your Pathway Plan confirms where you will live, confirm that you have a photo ID, immigration status is clear, bank account, savings (and the amount) and that arrangements for you to submit your application for relevant benefits are in place at least 6-8 weeks prior to your 18th birthday. This Milestone LAC review will detail your health passport, which you will receive after you are 18. It should be clear at this point the arrangements in place should support any additional or emerging needs you may have.

Whilst we know that every case is different, we will not prematurely promote you into accessing council tenancy to reduce risk of eviction which has a lifelong implication. Transition to council accommodation has been phased to allow an authentic evaluation of your life skills and ability to manage your finances and pay bills. This is to ensure that you are prepared to effectively manage a tenancy agreement, without risk of potentially becoming homeless, exploited or becoming too isolated. Havering has taken feedback from older care experienced young adults who, with hindsight, would have benefited from a slower transition to council accommodation.

We expect all of our care experienced young adults who are entitled, to make a Universal Credit, or Housing Benefit claim to cover the housing allowance element of the rent. The Local Authority will be responsible for covering the shortfall and any support costs for commissioned semi-independent accommodation. You will be able to:

- Feedback to the service on your experiences with each accommodation Provider
- Be informed of the monitoring arrangements in respect of that Provider
- Supported to evidence your skills for independent living
- Complete a financial assessment and help with budgeting skills
- Supported to move into your own property

If you are in employment, as part of demonstrating your independent living skills, consideration will be given into you making a contribution towards the cost of your rent. Your allocated worker will discuss this with you.

Accommodation

Staying Put Arrangement

A Staying Put Arrangement will mean that you can remain with your foster carer beyond your 18th birthday. This can be until you have finished education or reached other goals that will help you transition into adulthood.

If you and your Foster Carer(s) are in agreement to enter into a Staying Put Arrangement, and we think it is appropriate, we will support you with this and provide advice and guidance to draw up an agreement.

Your allocated worker will support you to access all the benefits you are entitled to while you are in a Staying Put Arrangement, including claiming Universal Credit, Housing Benefit and so on. You will as part of Staying Put arrangement be expected to make some contribution to the household finances as you develop your skills around managing a tenancy.

Renting Private Accommodation

If you move into private rented accommodation and you are assessed as being ready for a tenancy agreement, it is possible that your landlord will require a deposit and rent in advance before they will agree to a tenancy.

We will support you to access rent deposit schemes. It is important to note that your landlord or agency, could agree for your Housing costs to be paid directly to them.

Did you know?

It is important to keep up with your housing benefit claims as this will help make sure you don't get into debt. If you get into debt with your rent payments this could mean you are evicted



Accommodation

Shared Lives (or alternative housing options)

If you want to stay in a family type arrangement, we can support you to live in supported lodgings where you can live with a family or another adult. You will be expected to make some contribution to the household finances as you develop your skills around managing a tenancy.

Some young adults may still find it difficult to manage independently even at the age of 24. In such cases referrals will be made to the Adults' Service or Adult Mental Health Service in order that provisions are in place for you post 25.

Advice, guidance and support is available in the Cocoon, and via your YPA.

You will be invited and encouraged to attend workshops to help you develop necessary skills to hold down a tenancy.

We are unable to provide accommodation for you and your partners, therefore it is really important that you understand the terms of your tenancy.

If you have decided to return home or to live with a family member, we will continue to visit, support and assess your needs in getting you ready to live independently when the time comes.

Additional support

Talk to your YPA if you are falling behind with your rent, or your circumstances have changed, leaving you financially compromised. You will need to engage with a detailed financial assessment.

Mentor and support from tenancy sustainability officer

Increased visits in the first three months of moving into your own tenancy (longer if requested)

Practical support with moving into your own home and a small housewarming gift



Education, Employment & Training

In Havering, we have great aspirations for the children and young people we care for. Being in education, employment or training is good for your health, confidence, self-esteem and general wellbeing. This can be an opportunity to meet new people, gain new skills and re-evaluate your potential. We want you to achieve to the best of your ability, so if you require support with education, employment or training courses, you will be eligible for the following support as provided by the Virtual School and Leaving Care Service.

Zip Card (support with public transport costs)

If you are 16 and 17 years old and are travelling around London, you can get a 16+ Zip Oyster photo card. If you are now 16, but were 15 on 31 August, you can still apply for and use an 11-15 Zip Oyster photo card. If you live in a London borough and were 18 on 31 August and in full-time education, you can apply for a 16+ Zip Oyster photo card to get free travel on buses and trams. For more information please visit the transport for London website www.tfl.gov.uk

Education Bursary (16-19 year olds)

A bursary is money that you, or your education or training provider, can use to pay for things like clothing, books and other equipment for your course. It can also include cost towards transport and lunch on days you study or train.

If you are a care leaver in education or training you will receive £1,200 per year. This bursary is available in all Colleges and some training providers. The bursary will be managed by the provider. In order to access this bursary, you will need to get a form from your chosen College and complete it as soon as possible. You will need a letter of proof of your care status from your Social Worker or Leaving Care Worker. You will need a bank account for the money to be paid into, however, if you do not have a bank account we will help you to consider alternatives

If you make a late application for the bursary it might not be back dated. It is best to apply as soon as possible. For more information please speak with your Social Worker, Havering Virtual School or visit www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

Going to College

Your allocated worker will keep in touch with you and review your Pathway Plan to ensure you are getting the support you need. You may be provided with assistance with some expenses for education, training and employment if needed. In some circumstances, we may be able to make a contribution towards course workbooks, field trips, special equipment or materials, or clothing for work experience.

Going to University

In Havering, we want to support any young person thinking of going to University. We will provide you with a bursary of £2,000 a year while you are studying. For some people it will be best to pay the bursary in smaller amounts over the year. This includes, if needed, an advance to pay for your rent upfront. You will also get another grant while you are at University but this doesn't affect the amount of money you will get from the Council.

Education, Employment & Training

Student Funding Overview

There are a variety of additional funding options that you should consider for financial support, including part-time employment.

The majority of eligible students use a Student Finance Tuition Fee Loan to cover costs. This loan is paid directly to the University from Student Finance.

A Maintenance Loan from Student Finance is there to help with living costs and is available to UK undergraduates. The maximum amount available for students not living at home starting in 2019/20 is £11,672. This loan is 'means tested'. Everyone can get the basic amount (£5,812), then the lower your household income below £69,860, the larger the loan given to you. Unlike the tuition fee loan, the maintenance loan is paid directly to you in three termly instalments.

Other student finance funding available:

- Care Leaver Bursary (£1,000 per year)
- Adult Dependents' Grant (up to £2,925)
- Childcare Grant (based on 85% of actual childcare costs, subject to a maximum grant of £164.70 per week for 1 child or £282.36 per week for 2 or more children)
- Parents' Learning Allowance (up to £1,669)

Support after University

We are committed to providing you with support, guidance and advice up until your 25th birthday for information around education, employment or training. However, after the completion of your university course, in the event that you do not have paid work, you will be expected to claim benefits, unless you are considering going on to a post graduate course.

In the event that you do go on to complete a post graduate course, we will offer you guidance, advice and support to help identify financial support for you to continue your education and will advise you how to access this. Please note that we are not able to pay your fees or living expenses.



Education, Employment & Training

Support for parents with childcare costs

We understand that sometimes child care costs can be a barrier to you seeking employment or training. If you would like to access employment or education you should find out what child care support is on offer from your local Children's Centre, [Family Information Service](#), your employer, Department of Work and Pensions (Job Centre Plus), training provider, College or University.

2 Year Old Funding (15 Hour Offer)

Some parents of two year olds can get 15 hours a week of free early education and childcare. To access the 15 hours you must be getting benefits and earn an income below a certain level. You are also entitled if your child had diagnosed special educational needs and/or a disability.

3 and 4 year old funding

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to a minimum of 15 hours a week early education and childcare. This is extended to 30 hours a week for working parents.

Information on all the childcare options, and how to apply for nursery or pre-school places can be found on the Havering Family Information Service website www.havering.gov.uk/earlyyears or you can email fsd@havering.gov.uk

Routes to education, employment or training

In Havering, we pride ourselves in creating opportunities for our care experienced young adults. This involves working closely with you to help identify your needs and what educational courses, employment or training opportunities you might wish to embark on. These will be written in partnership with you in your Pathway Plan. Information on all the options open to you is available in The Cocoon and the Job Centre Plus Work Coach can advise you on training and/or employment opportunities.

Training or employment support if detained in a Youth Offending Institute or Prison

If you are detained in prison or young offenders Institutions you will continue to receive support from Leaving Care. Your allocated worker will maintain contact with you, by letter and will visit you once per month. We will explore opportunities for training or employment whilst in prison in order to build your skill set for when you are released.

Your allocated worker will want to keep in touch with you and will maintain your Pathway Plan, including holding regular reviews of your plan. Before you are due to be released we will assist with making arrangements with you, your probation officer and the prison, that clarifies what will happen upon your release, where you will live and what assistance we will offer you.

Education, Employment & Training

The Havering Apprenticeship Programme

The Havering Apprenticeship Programme offers an opportunity to start an exciting new career, whether it is your first job, returning to work after a career break, or a change in career direction.

Apprenticeships at Havering may include, Business Administration, Social Care, Accounting, ICT, and Planning. All available apprenticeships are advertised on the jobs page on the Havering website. From the job page you are able to register for job alerts so you are aware as soon as apprenticeship opportunities are advertised.

Applications for apprenticeships can only be made via this process. If you have an enquiry about Havering Apprenticeships the HR Learning and Organisational Development Team can be contacted at apprenticeships@onesource.co.uk

Havering Works

Havering Works is an innovative Employment and Skills service, provided by London Borough of Havering and part funded by the European Social Fund. It offers free support for local residents over 19+ looking to get back to work or to explore future career opportunities.

We can offer help if you are living in Havering and are;

unemployed and looking to start work or training

working but want to improve your prospects or even change careers

interested in talking through career options

starting out in or returning to the job market.

Our services include: confidential one-to-one assessment of your skills and training development needs; guidance from a qualified personal mentor to help you develop an Action Plan with steps towards achieving your work/training/Further or Higher Education aims; job coaching and mentoring; bespoke employer-led training like sector based training and work experience opportunities; information on specialist agencies and other provision that offers additional and/or more specialist support; matching your transferable skills and experience to the job vacancies; job search support and CV review; help with job applications and interview preparation; and support once you are in work.

To find out more speak to your allocated worker or our Pathway Coordinator who leads on employment and training



Education, Employment & Training

The STC Group

The STC Group is a multi-award winning training and employment company based in Essex, catering for young people and adults looking for further education training throughout London and the South East.

Our range of vocational training courses range from construction training including painting and decorating, tiling and bricklaying through to health and beauty, social care and professional services including business, admin and finance.

More than just a training provider, we offer comprehensive support from embarking upon your chosen training course to successfully finding a job or setting up as self-employed in your chosen field. Not only are our fully qualified and experienced trainers on hand to give you advice about working in your chosen field, but our specialist recruitment services can help you find a job or set yourself up as self-employed.

Our courses integrate functional skills including English, maths and ICT skills, and our employability courses can help enhance your communication, team working, CV writing and other skills which are considered highly valuable by employers. The STC group is best placed to help you kick start your career.

Our courses are open to anybody aged over 16 years old, so whether you are considering sixth form or college or are an adult looking to enhance your skills, gain qualifications or change your career path, STC has something for you.

To find out more speak to your allocated worker, the Virtual School or go to www.thestcgroup.co.uk



Education, Employment & Training

DABD 16-24 NEET programme

DABD is an organisation based in Dagenham that works to provide services that give people opportunities to achieve what they want in life.

When you sign-up for one of their programmes, you'll be given a dedicated adviser who will talk to you about your individual needs, goals and skills. They will then work with you to build your confidence and help you get to grips with essential skills such as CV writing, interview techniques and completing job applications as well as supporting you with training, job searches and work placements.

You may also be able to gain recognised qualifications such as Maths, English, ICT and Employability skills which can help you gain the skills and confidence to prepare you for the world of work. Once you have found a job or training opportunity, they will continue to support you. To find out more speak to your allocated worker, the Virtual School or the Leaving Care Service or go to www.dabd.org.uk.

Havering College Apprenticeship

Havering College offers a strong range of Apprenticeships in a wide variety of sectors. Once the right job comes up, you can simply register on the website and follow the step by step instructions to apply for the role.

For more information you can call them on 01708 462787 or email apprenticeships@havering-college.ac.uk

National Career Service (NCS)

Everyone has the ability and potential to develop and grow in their life and career but sometimes things can get in the way and could hold you back. The National Career Service aims to;

- help you plan your career
- support you to review your skills and develop new goals
- motivate you to implement you plan of action
- enable you to make the best use of high quality career related tools.

For more information you can call them on 0800 100 900 or visit their website www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk



Health & Wellbeing

Whilst you are in care you will continue to have a health assessment every year until your 18th birthday. This will be undertaken by the Specialist Nurse in the Looked after Children's Health Team. If you have specific health needs, your social worker will discuss with you, how these can be met as part of your Pathway Plan and offer you advice and support on how to access health services.

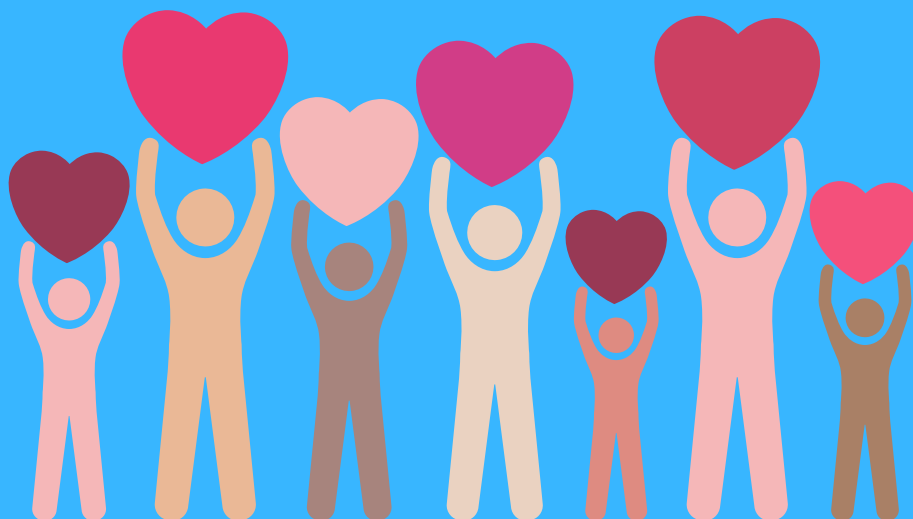
Before you turn 18, you will have a final health assessment all of which will be recorded in your personal Health Record. Your Health Record will have information about your immunisations, how to access a GP, Dentist or Optician and where to go for further health advice. A copy of your record will be given to your Social Worker to complete with you.

You will also be given a copy of your Health Passport. This is an important document that gives you all the relevant information regarding your medical history (for example, when, and if you have had your immunisations and your current health needs). We will keep a copy of your Health Passport in the event that you misplace the one you are given. Some of this information may be important later on life. Please discuss your Health Passport next time you meet with your worker or a health professional.

You will also be provided with health information that you may find useful including Havering sexual health services, Havering emotional health websites and apps and immunisation leaflets. For further information please liaise with your Social Worker; a health professional or the Leaving Care Service.

If you are aged 16-18 and in full-time education; in receipt of certain benefits; low income; pregnant or had a baby in the last 12 months, you may be entitled to free prescriptions, dental care and eye care. To find out more, ask your GP, dentist or optician, or ask your social worker to help you find out more.

To confirm if you are entitled to free prescriptions – please discuss with your YPA or visit the Cocoon.

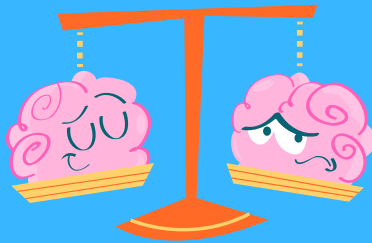


Health & Wellbeing

Mental Health Practitioner

In the Leaving Care Service, we have a Mental Health Practitioner who is based at The Cocoon three days per week. The practitioner aims to promote emotional/mental well-being of care experienced young adults within the service. This practitioner is able to undertake some of the mental health assessments within The Cocoon, in your home or within the community in order for the right support to be accessible.

With your permission and consent the mental health practitioner can fast track access to services into the mental health teams. There is no appointment required as the mental health practitioner runs drop in sessions within The Cocoon.



Family Therapists

A systemic family therapist works within the Leaving Care Service and is in the Cocoon every Friday afternoon. The systemic therapist will be able to work with you to address any concerns that you have in the context of your relationships with significant people in your life and your social networks.

For more information, please speak with your allocated worker.

Additional support:

- Support to access different health services within the community (including universal services)
- Support with registering with a GP
- Support with transitions from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health Services if required
- Provide information about counselling services that are available locally
- Support to get you to and from health appointments (in accordance with pathway plan/ risk assessment)
- If you are pregnant, we will offer support and advice as well as support from specialist services, i.e. Family Nurse Partnership
- Give you information about health drop-in centres
- If you are under 18 years old and not in residential or foster care, we will support you with a contribution of £100 per year towards glasses of NHS dental treatment, in addition to the NHS funding available.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children - UASC

The London Borough of Havering recognises that achieving settled immigration status is very important to building your life in the UK.

Unresolved immigration status can affect your ability to access further education, work, housing and welfare benefits. The Leaving Care Service is committed to helping you understand what your immigration status means and entitlements available to you.

We can only provide you a service if you have an active application for asylum, or if you are appealing a decision made not to grant you status. We cannot provide a service to you, if you are in breach of Immigration Law as we would be breaking the law too.

Our support to you is as follows:

- Explain the process that can be taken to achieve settled status i.e. appeal processes, Indefinite Leave to Remain and British Citizenship.
- Your social worker or YPA will assist you with finding and accessing regulated and specialist legal immigration advice to help achieve this
- We will work with you to ensure you have a financial plan around your savings to enable you to make an application for settled status. This will be recorded in your pathway plan from the point you receive limited leave to remain status.
- We acknowledge that this period of uncertainty can be distressing for you to go through and your social worker or YPA will help you plan for all possible outcomes. This will be recorded in your pathway plan.
- If you have received a negative immigration decision, we will assist you to obtain legal immigration advice on the merits of any appeal/ fresh claim by supporting you to access organisations that assist with immigration for care leavers
- If an appeal or fresh claim does not have merit, you will be given a Human Rights Assessment, taking into account all aspects of your life in the UK and any barriers to return to your home country.
- We will assist with any Voluntary Return applications. You will receive assistance with making safe travel plans back to your country of origin and receive help to plan your life in your home country. This will be reflected in your pathway plan.
- We cannot offer you a service if you do not have an active immigration application and are in breach of immigration rules.

*If you are not able to obtain your settled status via the use of legal aid, we will support you with making this application. However, in order to do so, we need to evidence that you have worked in partnership with your YPA on a financial savings plan for your status ahead of this application, and not able to obtain any support around this.

To claim allowance in relation to your immigration, you need to provide us consent to liaise with relevant professionals.

Getting involved

Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council (CiCC) gives children in care an opportunity to meet other young people with the same sort of backgrounds and experiences. Children will be able to voice their opinions and give us ways to improve Havering and the services for them, to make their lives better. It is a way of making sure that the people who make decisions about looked after children and care leavers know what the issues are for the children and young people themselves. For further information you can email: participation@havering.gov.uk or phone 01708 434 813

Youth Management Team

The Youth Management Team (YMT) is the forum for care experienced young people in Havering. It is a group of young people/adults aged 16-25 who are in care or have experienced care. The YMT represents the voice of care experienced young adults. Young adults present their ideas, experiences, proposals through this forum. Membership is fluid as there is an acceptance that young adults may not always be available for meetings.

The YMT have monthly meetings on the first Thursday of every month between 3:30pm-5:00pm. This is held at the Cocoon. You are also paid £10 per hour for full attendance and punctuality. All young people in care or who are care leavers are invited to attend. You have the potential to shape the service for yourself and others. The YMT also present to the corporate parenting panel via participation and formal meetings. This improves communication, level of challenge and the understanding of young people in care lived experiences.



The Cocoon

The Cocoon was officially launched in October 2017. The Cocoon is a safe space for young adults who are care experienced. It is also a place which fosters imaginative practice; supports and cultivates friendships between young people; supports and provides peer mentoring; and develops and offers true co-production.

The Cocoon brings partner agencies together to develop working relationships with care experienced young adults. The Cocoon supports partner agencies to deliver services in a singular and accessible environment, as well as, flexible resources that support young people dropping in and sessions by appointments.

The Cocoon has had a positive impact on our young people including the co-production of:

- The Youth Management Team (please see above)
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Director's surgery (see next page)

Getting involved

The Cocoon is open Monday to Friday from 9:00am -5:00pm, and Saturdays 10:00am-3:00pm. This will enable you to access support from staff members within this period of time. There is always a member of staff at hand and available to support you, particularly in the event of an emergency.

The following activities take place within The Cocoon:

- Healthy Minds
- Baby and Toddler Group
- Youth Management Team
- Independent skills training e.g. Friday 'fry up'
- Cooking Club
- Sexual Health Drop In
- See Change Films
- The Learning Zone

In addition, The Cocoon is supported by a number of partner agencies including, Havering Employment Skills; Housing Service; DWP; Intervention Support Service; Youth Service; Virtual School; Systemic Family Therapist; Director/Assistant Director drop in surgery.

Director's Surgery (for children in care and care leavers)

The Director's Surgery is an opportunity for you to meet the Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Director of Children's Services. They would like to hear your views and experiences of being in care. The Surgery takes place at the Cocoon every first Tuesday of the month between 5:30pm-6:30pm. The Surgery is alternated between the Director and Assistant Director. Young people and young adults can attend on their own or supported by their carer.

For further information about joining the YMT, participating in the activities held at The Cocoon or attending the Director's Surgery, please speak with your allocated worker.



Your rights

Making a Complaint

Sometimes we may not be able to provide you with the support you feel you need, or we may not agree to provide you with a particular piece of funding or service you have requested. There may be a number of reasons for this so it is important you understand the reasons for you not getting the support you feel you need.

Your allocated worker should:

- Record any decision not to provide you with a service or funding and the reasons why.
- Tell you about the reasons for this decision (and give you details of the complaints and appeals process if you would like this).

If you are unhappy about a decision, you need to firstly try to talk to your allocated worker before making a complaint as they may be able to help you understand more about why this decision has been made or why the support is not available.

The Social Care Complaints Team can be contacted on:

Tel: 01708 431029

Email: SCCI@havering.gov.uk

Post: Complaints & Information Team

London Borough of Havering

Mercury House, Mercury Gardens,

Romford, RM1 3SL

If you decide you want to make a complaint, you may want to have an advocate to support you in making the complaint. The Havering Children's Rights Advocacy Service is run by the Early Help Service, to ensure it is separate from Children's Social Care. This avoids conflict of interest. You can contact the service directly by emailing earlyhelpvolunteer@havering.gov.uk or calling 01708 432321.

Access to Records

Children's Services must keep all of your case records such as reviews, assessments and pathway plans. You can ask to access your records. Once you have requested access to your records they will be prepared and some information (about other people) may be removed. Your allocated worker will be able to explain more about this and support you with applying for access. You may want to consider having someone with you when you read through your records to provide support.



Useful contacts

Leaving Care Managers

Kemi Akosile Team Manager kemi.akosile@havering.gov.uk 01708 434137

Nuala Harrington Team Manager nuala.harrington@havering.gov.uk 01708 434128

Dean Gordon The Cocoon Manager dean.gordon@havering.gov.uk 01708 746088

Tendai Dooley Head of Service tendai.dooley@havering.gov.uk 01708 431980

Teresa Milanzi-Papaya Group Manager teresa.milanzi-papaya@havering.gov.uk 01708 433926

Havering Children's Services

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person under 18, you should report this to the Havering Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Telephone: 01708 433222 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday) 01708 433999 (out of hours)

In an emergency you should call 999

Havering Family Information Service

Information on services, organisations and activities for children and families, as well as information on childcare and early education

Website: www.havering.gov.uk/fsh

Telephone: 01708 431782

Email: fsd@havering.gov.uk

Job Centre Plus

For information and support around employment, training and processing of claims for benefits such as Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance

Website: www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

NHS Direct

For advice and guidance on medical issues, locating services near you and speak to a nurse in a non-emergency situation

Website: www.nhs.uk

Telephone: 111

Catch 22

An organisation offering holistic support to looked after children and care leavers whilst in care and once they have left care to improve their life chances. Extended support includes employment and apprenticeships work, whilst their justice provision supports those who become involved in gangs towards positive lifestyle choices and behaviours.

Website: www.catch-22.org.uk

Useful contacts

Benefits Information

The latest news and information on benefits will be available on this national website. You can search for individual benefits and use the 'benefits calculator' (www.gov.uk/benefits-calculator) to help you find out what benefits you may be entitled to. For information and advice specific to Havering you can visit www.havering.gov.uk Website: www.gov.uk/welfare

Turn2us

Helps people access the money available to them through welfare benefits, grants and other help. Website: www.turn2us.org.uk Telephone: 0808 802 2000 (9am to 8pm Monday to Friday)

Citizens Advice

A network of independent charities offering confidential and impartial advice for free. This can be accessed online, over the phone or in person. They offer support on a number of issues, including;

- Money (including benefits and debt)
- Employment
- Housing
- Immigration
- Law and courts

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk Telephone: 03444 111 444

Romford Citizens Advice: First Floor, Romford Central Library, Romford, RM1 3AR

Samaritans

A helpline for anybody who is having a difficult time, is feeling low or isolated or would like somebody to talk to. The service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can also call if you are worried about someone else. The Samaritans are there to listen with no judgement or pressure. They will help you work through what is troubling you but won't tell you what to do.

Telephone: 116 123 Website: www.samaritans.org

Email: jo@samaritans.org (response time 24 hours)

Romford Samaritans: 107 North Street, Romford, RM1 1ER

Become

the charity for care leavers offering support and advice <https://becomecharity.org.uk/>

