

**CALDERDALE CARE LEAVER OFFER**

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**Acknowledgements**

Young people have been involved over several months in the review of our local offer and we would like to acknowledge them here. Without their voices, ideas and thoughts, we would not have achieved what we have. Their commitment and passion really inspired us to work harder to get the best deal for care leavers. We did not achieve everything we hoped to as a group, but the care leavers involved inspired us to keep knocking on doors to secure the very best offer for all Calderdale Care leavers. Whether this takes another month or another year we will continue to try and build a bigger and better offer in line with what care leavers have told us they want and need.

1. **Introduction: Pathway Leaving Care Team**

**Working together to support you into adulthood and beyond …**

Taking your first steps into adulthood is exciting but can also be a bit scary. How things work can be confusing and complicated, and we need people around us to guide us through it all. That’s our job, to be your guide, your support, your advocate, and a friendly face to share your worries and successes with. We will work hard for you, advocate for you, challenge you, and help you build a community of relationships that will support you when you need it. Here at Calderdale Pathways, we want you to know that you will never be alone on your journey to adulthood.

This booklet is our offer to you and contains all of the information about what support is available and who, when and where to go to for help and advice.

The local offer includes information about the law and your rights to advice and support, but also the projects and ideas we have created with, and for, care experienced young people in our area.

1. **What is leaving care and who are Calderdale Pathways Team**

We are team of people who are here to help care experienced young people to step into adulthood. We work hard to make sure you have a good plan, the right support and lots of positive opportunities. The team is made up of managers and pathways advisors. Every eligible care experienced young person aged 17 and 6 months to age 21 will have a Pathways Advisor (also known as a PA) allocated to them. If you still want support or would like to return to working with us after 21 you can, and we will support you until you’re 25 or in very specific circumstances for a little longer.

[Link to the leaving care guide]

* Phone (duty): 07774 123270 (mobile).
* Email: [PathwaysService@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:PathwaysService@calderdale.gov.uk).

**Am I a care leaver?**

You are a care leaver if you are under 25 years old and have spent time in care as a child or young person. The amount of support you can get will depend on your age and circumstances. To get our support automatically and in full, you must have been in care for 13 weeks between the ages of 14 to 16. If you’re not sure what support you are entitled to you can contact us on our Duty number 07774-123270.

You can also find this information at: <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/services-for-children-leaving-care/>

**Your Pathways Advisor**

When you reach 17 and 6 months old you will be allocated a Pathway Advisor. For 6 months before you turn 18 Your Pathway Advisor will work closely with you and your social worker to make sure that you have something called a pathway plan. This is a plan that covers the following areas:

* Accommodation and housing
* Money and finance
* Relationships
* Health and wellbeing
* Participation, voice and influence
* Education
* Employment and training

At 18, your social worker will stop working with you and your Pathway Advisor will become your main point of contact. Your Pathway Advisor will take time get to know you so we can begin building a relationship with you. Your Pathway Advisor could be a part of your life for up to 7 years providing advice, guidance and support when you need it. They will give you access to financial support from the local authority, help you access other services and more generally just be there for you.

**Your pathway plan**

A pathway plan is a document that you will complete with your Social Worker at 16. Every 6 months you and your social worker or pathway advisor will review this plan up to the age of 21 and if you need it up to 25. At 18, your Pathway Advisor will be the one who meets with you to review your pathway plan. Your pathway plan will set out your needs, your views, any future goals, and what support you will receive. The best pathway plans are the ones that young people have been most involved in completing, as they become a place to record your needs, goals and aspirations, set by you.

1. **Accommodation**

Your Pathway Advisor will help you to understand your accommodation options and work closely with you to find suitable housing so that you can begin building a home. Once you find somewhere, your Pathway Advisor will work with you to build your understanding and skills of how to manage your accommodation. This might be advice on bills, rent, benefits or setting up direct debits. There are several options available to you in terms of accommodation pre and post 18. Here are some examples:

**Staying put**

If you’re happy in your current fostering placement or feel you need a little longer before entering the world of adult accommodation, then **Staying Put** is great option. ‘**Staying Put’** allows you to stay with your foster carer up to the age of 21. You can start speaking with your social worker and foster carer about this option at 16. They will help you to put this in place before you turn 18 and come over to the Pathways team.

**Supported Lodgings**

If you are leaving foster care or a children’s home, supported lodgings are a great way to transition from care to something a little more focused on building the skills to manage your own home later. You can move into supported lodgings between the ages of 16-18. You will live with an adult, or a family, who can assist you in developing skills for adulthood, while giving you a bit of support when needed. Supported lodgings are currently provided by Young Persons Prevention and Support Service (YPASS).

**Supported accommodation**

Staying with foster carers is not always an option, and for some young people moving into Supported Accommodation is a better fit. Supported accommodation is a great option if you and your Pathway Advisor think you need a bit of extra support when you move into your own accommodation. It gives you a sense of independence, but in a really supported way. There will be a staff team of people who can provide support, advice and guidance based at the accommodation, but you will have your own flat. It’s a really safe and secure way to practice the skills you will need to manage your own tenancy later on.

**Local Authority housing**

At 18 you are entitled to apply for local authority housing. Calderdale give all care leavers priority status for housing, which makes securing a property much easier to do. Your Pathway Advisor will talk you through the process and help you to work out the system. Taking on a tenancy is a big step and it’s important you feel ready for this.

**Young people housing support team**

The young persons housing support team provide support to you when accessing local authority housing. A housing support worker from this team sits with Pathways one day a week and works closely with young people to help them look at all their housing options. Your pathway advisor or social worker can set meetings up with this worker as early as 17 and 6 months old.

**YPASS**

The YPASS service offers accommodation and support for young people, aged between 16 and 21, who are experiencing homelessness in Calderdale. Should you ever need their support your Pathway Advisor can arrange a referral. YPASS also run drop-in sessions for young people aged 16 to 25 years about housing, education, health and more. This runs from 11.30am to 1.30pm at YPASS, 56 Hopwood Lane, Halifax. HX1 5ER. They are a great service and have helped many young people get ready to take on their own tenancies.

**Former UASC**

If you are former unaccompanied asylum-seeking child, arrangements for accommodation are different while you are waiting for a decision from the Home Office about your *Leave To Remain*. Pathways will continue to ensure you have suitable accommodation for the duration of this process. If *Leave To Remain* is granted, then all of the housing options discussed in this local offer will be open to you. If you have any questions or worries about your housing then contact your Pathways advisor or speak with our duty worker.

**Setting up your home**

Once you are in your house, you want to start making it a home. Pathways provide you with something called a **Setting Up Home Allowance**. This is an allowance that is given to you to purchase everything you need for your home. You access this through your Pathways Advisor. Your pathway advisor will also support you with making decisions about what you might need. This allowance is currently £2000. You only get one Setting up home allowance so it’s important to plan how you will spend this with your Pathway Advisor.

**What if there is a problem with your accommodation?**

When you encounter a problem with your accommodation, you should contact your Pathway Advisor or the Duty phone number and we will do everything we can to help. We might support you to contact your landlord and discuss the issues relating to your tenancy, help you find new accommodation or even emergency accommodation. The Pathway Adviser/ duty worker will support you to try to resolve any issues you are experiencing. If you are still at risk of being made homeless then we will submit a ‘housing portal’ referral to the Adult Homeless team (over 21) and they will carry out an assessment of your needs.

The Pathway Service and its partners operate under the 'second chance principle' which recognises that it can be really tough to take on and manage your own accommodation. If it does not work out the first time, we can support you to build the skills to try again.

[**Housing advice**](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offers/leaving-care/accommodation#housing-advice) **and additional support**

* [YPASS Housing options one stop shop](https://hortonhousing.co.uk/services-directory/ypass-young-persons-prevention-support-service/).
* [Calderdale housing Options](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/housing/find-home).
* [Housing Associations](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/housing/find-home/housing-associations).
* [Right Home for young people 11-25 years](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/health-and-social-care/children-and-family-care/children-looked-after#right-home).
* [Fusion Housing](https://www.facebook.com/FusionHousing1).
* [Money Saving Expert's 50+ Tips For Renters](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/mortgages/rent-a-property/)
* [Calderdale Smart move](https://www.calderdalesmartmove.org.uk/).
* [National Homelessness Advice Service](https://www.nhas.org.uk/).
* [Tips for keeping your house clean](https://www.mollymaid.co.uk/cleaning-tips/).
* [Living on a budget](https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/living-on-a-low-income-tips).
* [Basic cooking skills and online recipes](https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/25-skills-every-cook-should-know).

1. **Money and Finance**

Our goal is to help our young people learn about, understand and manage their finances successfully. This takes time, patience and practice, but we are here to help you in lots of different ways with this area of adult life. If you make mistakes that’s okay too, we all do, because there is so much to learn about money. It’s always important to talk to us about things when you are struggling.

[**Care leaver entitlements**](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offers/leaving-care/money#entitled)

There are certain areas in which we can provide you with financial support and help, and you have a right to this support. Below is a link to your entitlements and our finance policy, containing all of the financial support you are entitled to. Your Pathways Advisor or someone close to you can help you to understand these in more detail. You don’t need to know everything in these documents, but it is important that you and your PA work out which parts of the policy are relevant to you and your circumstances.

[Your entitlements [PDF 91KB]](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/sites/default/files/Your-entitlements-June-2019.pdf) (from June 2019)

[Finance Policy 2021/22 [PDF 279KB]](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/sites/default/files/CMBC-financial-policy-2021-2022.pdf). Your Pathway Adviser can talk you through this.

**Money support**

* You will receive help and support from our Pathway Advisors so that you can learn to manage your money. Your Pathway Advisor will provide you with advice and information about what you are entitled to, as well as practical support around paying bills and budgeting.
* We will support you with things like opening a bank account or savings account, setting up direct debits for things like energy bills orthe internet.
* We can assist you in obtaining your National Insurance number if you don’t already have this.
* If you get into financial trouble or need our help in an emergency, we will do everything we can to help you through this.
* We also help when there are gaps between employment or benefits and can provide up to 4 weeks payments, equivalent to the amount received from universal credit, as of April each year.

[**Budgeting, Debt, and Managing Your Money**](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offers/leaving-care/money#budgeting)

There are several organisations that support people who require advice and guidance in relation to budgeting, debt advice and general management of their finances. Here are a few which you may find handy if you have a problem with your finances:

* [Citizens Advice](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/budgeting). Specialise with offering independent debt advice and working with you to develop budgeting skills so you can manage your bills.
* [Money Advice Service](https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner). Help for you to stay in control when you are on a tight budget
* [Eating on a budget with Lifehacker UK](http://www.lifehacker.co.uk/2014/07/18/eat-just-10-per-week-healthy-recipes-budget-meals). Advice on how you can live better by eating more healthily, staying fitter and improving your home life when on a strict budget
* [NHS Eat Well](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/20-tips-to-eat-well-for-less). 20 tips to eat well for less
* [Prince's Trust](https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/tools-resources/money-management/debt-advice). The charity offers general advice on debt issues.
* [Noah's Ark Centre](http://www.noahsarkcentre.org.uk/money.html). A specialist debt advice charity that can support care leavers to resolve any debt issues
* Money advice and support | Calderdale Council

1. **Health and wellbeing**

Health is not just about your body, it’s also about your mind and Pathways are here to support you with both. Your PA will work with you to think about the support you need and how this will look. Some of the things we can offer you include:

**Health registrations and appointments**

We can support you to:

* Find and register with a GP and dentist
* Make phone calls for you or with you about your health
* Get to appointments
* Attend appointments with you
* Practice the skills you will need as an adult to manage your health
* Make referrals to wellbeing or mental health services

We know that health appointments can cause all of us some worry or anxiety and so even if all you need is some encouragement, we will be there for you.

**Care leaver health drop in clinic**

If you have a health need, or worry that isn’t an emergency, but are nervous about going to your GP, we have two nurses that offer monthly drop-in sessions for care leavers up to the age of 25. Drop ins are held at the Orange Box in a private room. The drop-in sessions will be run by the same nurses each month so you can get to know them. They can offer advice and help getting the support you need, but most of all they offer a friendly and familiar face when you’re worried about your health.

To access the drop-in all you need to do is speak with your PA.

**Access to leisure facilities**

As a care leaver, you can access free swimming, fitness classes and gyms across all Calderdale run leisure facilities, up to the age of 25.

Here is a list of venues and services <https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/sports-and-fitness>

**Health passports**

We can provide you with a ‘health passport which details your personal health and family health history. This will also include details of services available for you to access. This is really useful if you have or intend to move GPs.

**Dentists**

In West Yorkshire there is an agreement across many dentists to offer care leavers access to flexible dental appointments. If you need dental treatment, we can help you to access this even if you are not living in Calderdale or registered with a dentist.

**Drama therapy group**

We have been working hard to think of ways to support your wellbeing and help you with the bigger feelings that can sometimes be experienced when you start to move into the adult world. In partnership with the CAMHS and the NHS we have created a group for care leavers that we hope will support you to make sense of the changes happening in your life. This is a weekly group run by a drama therapist and supported by a Pathways Advisor and a therapeutic worker.

If you are feeling lonely, disconnected or struggling a bit to make sense of the world around you, speak with your PA and they can discuss the group with you in more detail.

**Walk and talk group**

Our physical health is as important as our emotional wellbeing so why not do both together. It can be easy in the modern world to spend lots of time indoors on our own. Sometimes everyone just needs a walk and a talk. We meet monthly and the group is open to all care leavers and pathways advisors. We pick a different walk each time, and head out into the countryside for a few hours. We clear our heads, talk a little, walk a little, laugh a lot and everyone feels a little lighter by the end. We sometimes have guest walkers from other services too, so you can get to know them informally.

Your pathways advisor can give you the details or you can ring the duty phone number for details.

**Key services in health and wellbeing**

**Health services**

* [Our member GP practices - NHS Calderdale Clinical …](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=9b74b452a47f3526JmltdHM9MTY4MDEzNDQwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTYyNmJlMS0yZjBhLTZhZmEtMWU3MC03YTQ3MmU3NTZiMDkmaW5zaWQ9NTIwMQ&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=3a626be1-2f0a-6afa-1e70-7a472e756b09&psq=list+of+GPs+surgeries+in+Calderdale&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuY2FsZGVyZGFsZWNjZy5uaHMudWsvb3VyLW1lbWJlci1ncC1wcmFjdGljZXMv&ntb=1)
* [Calderdale Royal Hospital - CHFT](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=efdd654107fb53aeJmltdHM9MTY4MDEzNDQwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTYyNmJlMS0yZjBhLTZhZmEtMWU3MC03YTQ3MmU3NTZiMDkmaW5zaWQ9NTE4NQ&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=3a626be1-2f0a-6afa-1e70-7a472e756b09&psq=calderdale+royal+hospital&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuY2h0Lm5ocy51ay9wYXRpZW50cy12aXNpdG9ycy9vdXItaG9zcGl0YWxzL2NhbGRlcmRhbGUtcm95YWwtaG9zcGl0YWwv&ntb=1)
* [Sexual Health Calderdale and Huddersfield](http://sexualhealth.cht.nhs.uk/think-sexual-health/).

**Mental health services in Calderdale**

* [Mental health services | Calderdale Council](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=1879df4f6b13cf0fJmltdHM9MTY4MDEzNDQwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTYyNmJlMS0yZjBhLTZhZmEtMWU3MC03YTQ3MmU3NTZiMDkmaW5zaWQ9NTIwMQ&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=3a626be1-2f0a-6afa-1e70-7a472e756b09&psq=calderdale+community+mental+health+team&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9jYWxkZXJkYWxlLmdvdi51ay92Mi9yZXNpZGVudHMvaGVhbHRoLWFuZC1zb2NpYWwtY2FyZS9tZW50YWwtaGVhbHRoL3NlcnZpY2Vz&ntb=1)
* [Where to get urgent help for mental health - NHS](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=961ae37feea58900JmltdHM9MTY4MDEzNDQwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTYyNmJlMS0yZjBhLTZhZmEtMWU3MC03YTQ3MmU3NTZiMDkmaW5zaWQ9NTE2OQ&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=3a626be1-2f0a-6afa-1e70-7a472e756b09&psq=mental+health+crisis+team+number&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cubmhzLnVrL25ocy1zZXJ2aWNlcy9tZW50YWwtaGVhbHRoLXNlcnZpY2VzL3doZXJlLXRvLWdldC11cmdlbnQtaGVscC1mb3ItbWVudGFsLWhlYWx0aC8&ntb=1)
* Crisis Support - South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust [**0800 183 0558**](tel:08001830558)
* Invictus wellbeing - <https://www.invictuswellbeing.com>
* [Unmasked Mental Health & Wellbeing](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=bc48f297a4cee9f7JmltdHM9MTY4MDEzNDQwMCZpZ3VpZD0zYTYyNmJlMS0yZjBhLTZhZmEtMWU3MC03YTQ3MmU3NTZiMDkmaW5zaWQ9NTQxNw&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=3a626be1-2f0a-6afa-1e70-7a472e756b09&psq=UNmasked+halifax&u=a1aHR0cDovL3VubWFza2Vkd29ya3BsYWNlLmNvLnVrLw&ntb=1)
* Mind - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

1. **Education**

**Further education**

If you begin to live independently during your college course we can provide a tenancy top-up that will help with some of the additional costs that come with this.

If you are at a local college you will be eligible for further education bursary payments if your college offers this. Your Pathway Advisor can help you enquire about this with your college or sixth form.

**Higher education**

If you plan to attend or are attending university, we can help you with everything from understanding the process to paying your accommodation costs. We will keep in touch with you throughout and make sure that you have the support you need to complete your degree. Some of the things we can help with include:

* Paying you a bursary of £2000. This is broken down into termly payments for the three years of your degree
* Helping you with equipment for your course if this is needed
* Planning your holiday accommodation
* Including contingency plans in your pathway plan in case university is not for you
* Planning for when you finish university
* If you are on a staying put arrangement with your previous foster carers we can pay a retainer to them so you can return in the holidays
* Regular keeping in touch meetings to check in and make sure you’re okay
* Support to find employment when you finish university

**Postgraduate study**

If you intend to start postgraduate study before you turn 25 then get in touch with us and we will think with you about how we can support you to achieve this. This might be support with loan applications, funding accommodation or considering any requests for financial support.

**Equipment**

If you need laptops and other tech to enable you to complete courses, we can help to source or if needed fund technical equipment for your course should you need this.

1. **Employment and Training**

**Seeking work and training**

Your Pathways Advisor can support you to access the right support to find employment or training, purchase travel passes or clothing for interviews. They will also be there to encourage you, build your confidence and help you to develop some of the skills you will need for the workplace. Pathways Advisors know a lot about the opportunities available to young people and will share these with you often.

**Employment support and the job centre**

When we spoke to care leavers about employment and training, one of the things that came up was how difficult going to the job centre could be. No young person wants to be in a position where they need to claim benefits, but it’s sometimes the best or only option. We listened to this and spent time building a relationship with the Calderdale employment hub.

We now an employment hub advisor who supports care leavers when they attend the job centre. This advisor builds a relationship with you and will be patient and supportive when you need to access their support to find work or claim benefits.

**Calderdale Care Leaver Friendly Employer charter**

Calderdale is in the process of becoming a Care Leaver Friendly employer. The charter makes it easier for all organisations to offer employment opportunities to vulnerable young people leaving care. The Care Leaver Friendly Employer Charter provides a set of criteria to work towards to support you thrive in the workplace and at Pathways we are working hard to make this a reality. Some of the developments in this area include:

* + **Guaranteed interview scheme**

If you identify yourself as a care leaver on any applications for Calderdale apprenticeships or jobs, and you meet the minimum criteria for the post, you will be guaranteed an interview.

* + **Apprenticeship support in the council**

Calderdale Council is your family business and we are currently working on how we increase your access to quality jobs and apprenticeships with us. We meet with our recruitment team regularly to make sure we are working hard to offer you the best opportunities within the council.

When you start an apprenticeship with Calderdale, the workforce development team, your new manager and your PA can meet with you to develop an Apprenticeship Support Plan (ASP). This plan would include any reasonable adjustments you might need, how much or little involvement you want from Pathways, and how to address difficulties if they come up. You might feel this is not needed and that is fine too, but it’s important you know that the offer is there.

**CK careers**

Pathways work closely with CK careers, who can offer young people information, advice and guidance about employment, training and education.

You can find out more here on their website

[C+K Careers | High quality careers services for young people and adults](https://www.ckcareers.co.uk/)

1. **Participation, Voice and Influence**

Your voice matters and we want your help to continue developing our service in ways that make your experience of support better. You can make real change by getting involved and we have tried to create different spaces for you to share your views, ideas and thoughts on the support you get or might want in the future.

**Voice and influence team**

Calderdale have a voice and influence service whose role it is to support young people to share their thoughts, wishes, feelings and ideas about the support they get. A big part of their work is with children in care and care leavers.

* + **Upwards and onwards (UNO) group**

This is a care leaver led group, supported and facilitated by the voice and influence team. The group meets fortnightly on a Tuesday from 4pm-6pm at the Orange Box to discuss all sorts of issues, challenges and ideas related to being a care experienced young person or adult. If you want your voice heard or if you want to have an impact on the quality of services and support for care leavers, come along and have your say.

* + **Young person’s Service development group**

We set up a group that was about working with a small number of young people who have an interest in helping us to complete specific projects. The first project this group has worked with is this local offer. We looked at each section, reviewed it and then attempted to get additional support in the areas identified. We also looked at and agreed the parts of the offer that were working well already. This group has developed strong links with the corporate parenting board and regularly has their ideas, thoughts and request shared at board meetings. This group differs from others because it is run and led by pathways managers, who bring projects to the group. We work on one project until it is complete and this can sometimes take months. If you would like to join, please speak to your PA or ring the duty number. **Calderdale children’s rights and Advocacy service**

This service is for children and young people who are Looked After by Calderdale Council and also Care Leavers up to 25 years old. The service can help you make sure you know what your rights are, tell you about services you may find useful and help you sort out disagreements. They can help make sure your voice is heard and that you are being treated fairly and can support you in meetings if you want advocacy.

Details can be found here [Children's Rights and Advocacy Service (Calderdale Council)](https://www.calderdalechildcare.org.uk/kb5/calderdale/fsd/service.page?id=JEyOD9dTgLU)

**Space for care leavers**

Pathways are based at the Orange Box, a large building we share with lots of other services that are for young people. Many of the other services that might offer you support are based with us. This means that you can come to the Orange Box and see lots of people that can support you all in the same place. The Orange Box is a friendly building with a café, climbing wall, pool tables, music rehearsal rooms, a recording studio and a skate park.

[Orange Box young people's centre, Halifax, Calderdale (orangeboxhalifax.org)](https://orangeboxhalifax.org/default.asp)

**Social media**

We have created a Facebook page and hope to create a twitter page soon. We use social media so that we can keep in touch with you as you get older or if you lose touch with us. We also provide regular updates for events and activities. It also means that you can get in touch with us easily if your need support or want to reconnect with our team.

If you want to check our page out on Facebook, search for **Calderdale Pathways PAs** and our page will come up.

**Identity documents**

Your Pathways Advisor can support you apply for identity documents like a passport, driving licence or national insurance number. You should already have these before you start working with our team, but if you haven’t, or have lost something we can pay for this and support you with the applications and processes.

1. **Relationships**

**Meet the team days**

Pathways have started to organise regular meet the team days for young people who have not yet left care and for those who are already working with us. These will be arranged a few times a year where the pathways team come together introduce themselves and explain a bit about what we do. We will also share this local offer with young people and updates from the service about any new or exciting projects we have running.

For those of you new to us, this is an opportunity to meet us in a relaxed setting and learn about how we work before your move into adulthood begins. For those who already work with us, this is a great opportunity to reconnect with us and meet other care leavers.

If that doesn’t appeal then we always have tasty food and snacks!

**Care leavers week**

Once a year we get a planning group together made up of young people, Pathway Advisors, pathways managers and foster carers to plan care leavers week. Together we come up with ideas for how we want to celebrate this important event. This is often a week full of small activities, trips or even a celebration event.

Care leavers week is an important time to raise awareness and create a space for the celebration of your amazing achievements. Care leavers week falls at the end of October each year and our planning group starts to meet in June. Pathways Advisors will invite you to these planning meetings close to the time, we hope to see you there!

**Maintaining Family Links**

We know the importance of maintaining links with important people. We can fund travel so you can spend time with key people and family members or help you to reconnect with supportive people from your past. All you need to do is speak with your Pathways Advisor to work out what support you need.

**Social care records**

You have the right to access the records held by Children’s Services about you. Reading your records may be a positive experience, however, there may be information that you could find upsetting. Talk this through with your PA and others who support you. Your PA will offer you support if you want this when reading your records. For more information on your rights when accessing your records see:

* [The REES Foundation](https://www.reesfoundation.org/).
* [The Care Leavers Association](https://www.careleavers.com/).

**Holiday and festival celebrations and allowances**

At Christmas we hold events and activities at the Orange Box with some of the other services. This includes Christmas lunch and often a Christmas film. If you don’t live near the Orange Box we can make arrangements to get you to the celebration.

We also offer payments at Christmas or equivalent festivals and on your birthday up to the age of 21. The rates of these payments depend on your age so check it out with your Pathway Advisor.

1. **Other Support we offer**

**Being or becoming a parent**

Being pregnant or having a child is a huge adventure, but it’s something that is always tough - everyone needs support, reassurance, information and advice as a new parent. There is lots of support out in the community to help you with this, but Calderdale Pathways wanted to go a step further and develop something just for you.

In partnership with *Calderdale Independent Visitor & Volunteer Service* we have created a project that will recruit and train volunteers from the community to become parenting mentors. They are experienced parents who care and want to help out during those challenging but wonderful early years of your child’s life. They will be independent of children’s services and social care and are there for you and your baby. They will come and have a cup of tea with you, attend baby groups with you, give you tips from their experience, and listen when you need to talk. We are in the early stages of developing this but it’s an exciting new development.

*Parenting grant*

We also provide up to £200 to spend on furnishings and additional equipment needed for when your first child arrives. If this is not enough for your particular situation, then please speak with your PA and they can discuss with the management team to look at additional financial support.

Other organisations across Halifax also offer lots of support, groups and help when it is needed.

*Positive choices*

The Positive Choices programme starts with the belief that, with the right support, our young people can be safe, successful parents now and in the future. The programme supports young parents who are care or social care-experienced to prevent their children coming into care.

Your PA can make a referral for you should you need this extra form of support.

[Positive Choices](https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/parental-support/early-intervention-support/positive-choices)

Some other useful links include

* [Family Services Directory](https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offer/send/parents#fsd)
* [Family Support Teams at your local Children's Centre](https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offer/send/parents#childrens-centres)
* [Healthy Futures Calderdale](https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offer/send/parents#healthy-futures)
* [Calderdale Public Health Early Years' Service (PHEYS)](https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offer/send/parents#pheys)
* [Healthy Early Years Calderdale](https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offer/send/parents#hey)
* [The Max Card](https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offer/send/parents#max-card)
* [Family Voice Calderdale](https://calderdale.gov.uk/v2/residents/education-and-learning/local-offer/send/parents#family-voice)

**Custody**

If for any reason you are in custody or serving time in prison, your support from us will not stop. We will keep in touch, visit and complete pathway plan reviews with you up to 21. If requested, we can continue to do this up to 25. We will work the prison to plan for your release and when this happens, if you are under 25, and eligible, you will be able to access all the support in this local offer.

Calderdale also offer financial support to you while in custody and your PA can give you details of this.

**Disability or additional needs**

If you have a disability, learning difficulty or an additional need that means you require more support than what is in this offer, we will do our best to help you. We have good links with adult services, and we regularly support young people who also have an adult social worker. If you don’t have support from adult services and need it, we will make a referral for you. We will help you to find the support you need from other agencies and will advocate on your behalf if you want us to.

We also have an adult ‘transitions panel’, where we work with the Children Looked After teams and adult services, to identify those people who might need an adult service, before they turn 18. It is our hope that if you do need additional support, this is identified before you turn 18.

**Qualifying care leavers**

If you are aged between 16 and 21 OR between 16 and 25 and still in full-time education, you were looked after by children’s services on, or after, their 16th birthday and no longer looked after, or spent less than 13 weeks in care since 14th birthday, you may be a ‘qualifying’ care leaver.

Qualifying care leavers can access support from us to, but you won’t necessarily have access to the full support offered by our service.

If you think you are a qualifying care leaver you should make contact with our duty team. We will complete a needs assessment with you and provide advice and assistance. Sometimes this will lead to a brief period of support from a Pathways Advisor, other times this might go on for a little longer. We work on a needs basis and will try and give you the support you request or find someone who can.

**Special Guardianship**

If you were in the care of the local authority before a Special Guardianship Order was made for you, you are automatically a ‘qualifying’ care leaver. If these are your circumstances, you are entitled to advice and assistance from our team. Call our duty number and have a conversation with one of our advisors to see if we can help.