





# Young Persons Guide to Leaving Care

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**What are my Rights when I  
leave Care?**

**What Support will I get?**

**Who will help me?**

Swindon Borough  
Council

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June 2016

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# **YOUNG PERSONS GUIDE TO LEAVING CARE**

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# **Our Pledge to Children and Young People in Care**

- We promise to do our best for children and young people in care
- We will provide carers that treat you kindly, with care and respect, and support you to achieve your goals.
- We will listen to your views, and try to give you choice about where you live and about which school you attend if you move home.
- We will involve you in decisions which affect you
- We will hold regular reviews, and listen to what you tell us about how to make your review work best for you in order to make good plans for you. We will help you to lead your review if that is what you choose to do.
- If we make a plan we will try very hard to keep it but if it has to be changed we will explain to you what has changed and why.

- We will make sure you can have as much contact as possible with your parent, brothers and sisters, and friends or explain why you can't
- We will make sure you have a named social worker and know how to contact him / her when you need to.
- We will make sure that your social worker can spend time building a relationship with you.
- We will always tell you why you are in care, and we will check with you first that you want to know, and are ready to hear.
- We will make sure that every one of you can talk to someone who is independent of your social worker and carer if you want to, including having someone to help you say what you want at your review.
- We will talk to you about your health and emotional needs and make sure you get the right support. We will recognise your right to confidentiality about your health.
- We will help you think and find out more about who you are and your place in the world.

- We will try to provide a place at a good school that can meet your educational, emotional and social needs.
- We promise to give you support and help at school if you require it. You will have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan.
- We will also help you if you get excluded from school or college.
- We will tell you what support you are entitled to when you go on to college or university.
- We will give you information and encourage and support you to take part in activities in your spare time that you enjoy.
- We will tell you how much pocket money you should get and ensure you get it.
- We will give you details of the support that is available when you move on from care.
- We will help you to move into training and work opportunities.
- We will not keep secrets from you.

## **1. Introduction**

This guide provides an introduction to the services that you will receive from Swindon's Care Leavers Team. The process of leaving care can be a challenging and confusing time. The aim of this guide is to describe the type of support that you will receive to enable you to make a successful transition to independence.

## **2. Who Will Receive a Service?**

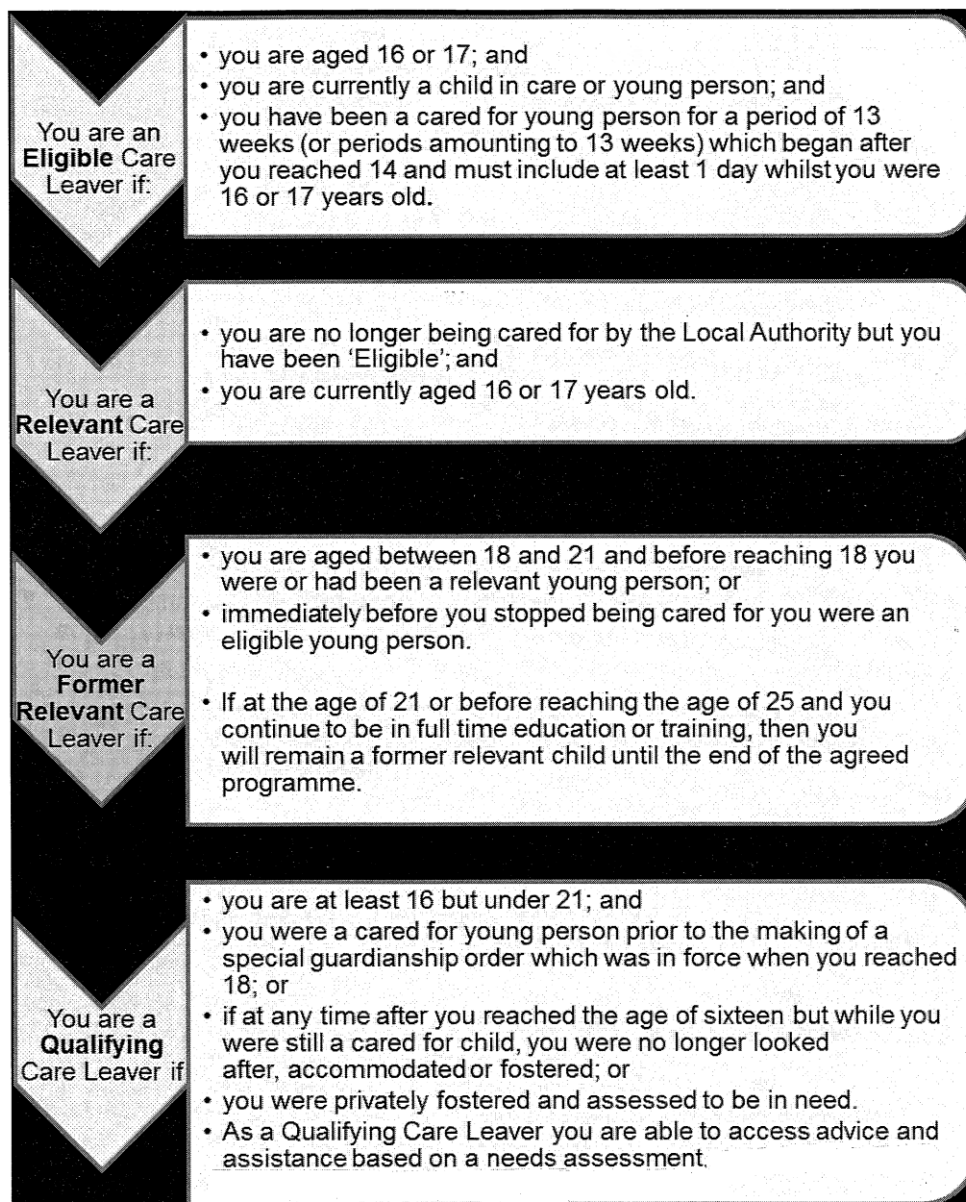
In order to understand the type of support that you will receive from the leaving care service you will need to understand some key words which are used to describe each category of care leaver. These key words and their definitions are described below: If when you have read the key words you still need help to explain them then you should discuss these with your social worker or Personal Adviser ( PA.)

## **3. When will I leave Care?**

You should not be made to feel that you should leave care before you are ready. Before you leave care, you should have a statutory review chaired by your IRO. This review will discuss if you are ready to leave care and have the skills to live independently. It will also consider the support you need from all of the people involved in your move to independent living.



#### **4.CATEGORIES OF CARELEAVERS**



## **What are my Rights?**

### **5.YOUR RIGHTS AS A CARE LEAVER**

**Eligible Young People (if you are 16 or 17 and still looked after) you are entitled to :-**

- All the normal services provided to a looked after child.
- A Needs Assessment
- A Pathway Plan
- A Personal Adviser

**Relevant Young People (if you are 16 or 17 but have left care) you are entitled to :-**

- A Personal Adviser
- A Needs Assessment
- A Pathway Plan
- Unless the young person is living at home, the young person will be provided with somewhere suitable to live, a personal allowance and other financial support according to their circumstances.
- The Personal Adviser must keep in touch with the young person

**Former Relevant Young People (if you are over 18 and have left care) you will be entitled to:-**

- A Personal Adviser
- A Needs Assessment
- A Pathway Plan
- The Personal Adviser must keep in touch with the young person
- Assistance to achieve the goals set out in the pathway plan concerning:
  - o education
  - o training
  - o employment
  - o general advice support and assistance

Vacation accommodation for higher education or residential further education if needed.

**Qualifying young people (if you were over 16 when you became looked after) you will be entitled to:-**

- Advice and assistance, based on an assessment of your needs.
- The Care Leavers Team must keep in touch with you.
- The Care Leavers Team has the power to assist with education and training up to age 24 and with vacation accommodation where you are taking higher or further education courses.

## **6.The Role of Social Workers and Personal Advisers**

As an **Eligible** Care Leaver you will already be allocated a **Social Worker from one of Swindon's Community Teams**. Your Social Worker will hold case responsibility and will be responsible for the preparation of your **Pathway Plan**. If you are an eligible care leaver you will remain allocated to your Social Worker until you are 18 years old when you become **Former Relevant**.

Alongside your Social Worker you will also be allocated a **Personal Adviser (PA)**, when you reach **15 3/4 years old** who will assist you in preparing for your transition to adult life.

If you are a child in care who is supported by the **Children with Disability Service** your current Social Worker will continue to support you as a Care Leaver until your transition to Adult Services. The Care Leavers Team will allocate a **Personal Adviser** to work alongside your existing Social Worker who will be available to support your transition to Adult Services. Your Personal Adviser will take over responsibility for the preparation of your Pathway Plan when you reach 18 and achieve Former Relevant status.

### **Support from a Personal Adviser(PA)**

All eligible, relevant and former relevant care leavers will be allocated a Personal Adviser. Your Personal Adviser will assist you to develop skills that will assist you to live independently at time when you are ready to do so. A key role of the PA is to provide and coordinate the support that you will need to live in your own accommodation. Learning the necessary skills to live independently does not begin after you have left care, it begins when you are still in care and young people will be encouraged to develop

skills relating to such things as cooking, budgeting, and cleaning and self-care skills whilst they are living in care. Children in Care will also be encouraged to complete the Independent Living Skills Work Book.

This book will assist you to explore and develop important skills that will help prepare you for the transition to living independently. Your PA will provide you with support and advice on a range of issues relating to leaving care including:

- ☐ Access to training and employment opportunities
- ☐ The development of independence skills
- ☐ Finding and managing suitable accommodation
- ☐ Managing your finances and claiming benefits

Your PA can also help you to access specialist support when you need it, including counselling and advice on issues such as drugs and alcohol, sexual health and benefits, such as job seekers allowance and housing benefits.

Your PA will work with you to enable you put into place the things in your life that will enable you to live independently in your own accommodation.

## **Contacting Your PA**

Your PA will provide you with telephone and email contact details or you can visit your PA at Clarence House, Euclid Street, Swindon. If you need to contact your PA and he or she is not available you can contact the Leaving Care Team on **01793 466715** and a duty PA will provide you with assistance. If the duty PA is also busy when you telephone then we promise that they will return your call as soon as possible and that they will contact you on the same day. If the matter is really urgent you can ask to speak to either Tracie Copperthwaite (Team Manager) or Rachel Rowson (Assistant Team Manager Leaving care team). Both managers can be contacted on **01793 466891**

## **7.Your Pathway Plan**

We will prepare a pathway plan for all Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Young People. Your pathway plan will replace your care plan from the age of 16. Your Pathway Plan is about your needs and what we all need to do to ensure your successful move into adult life.

## How will I be involved?

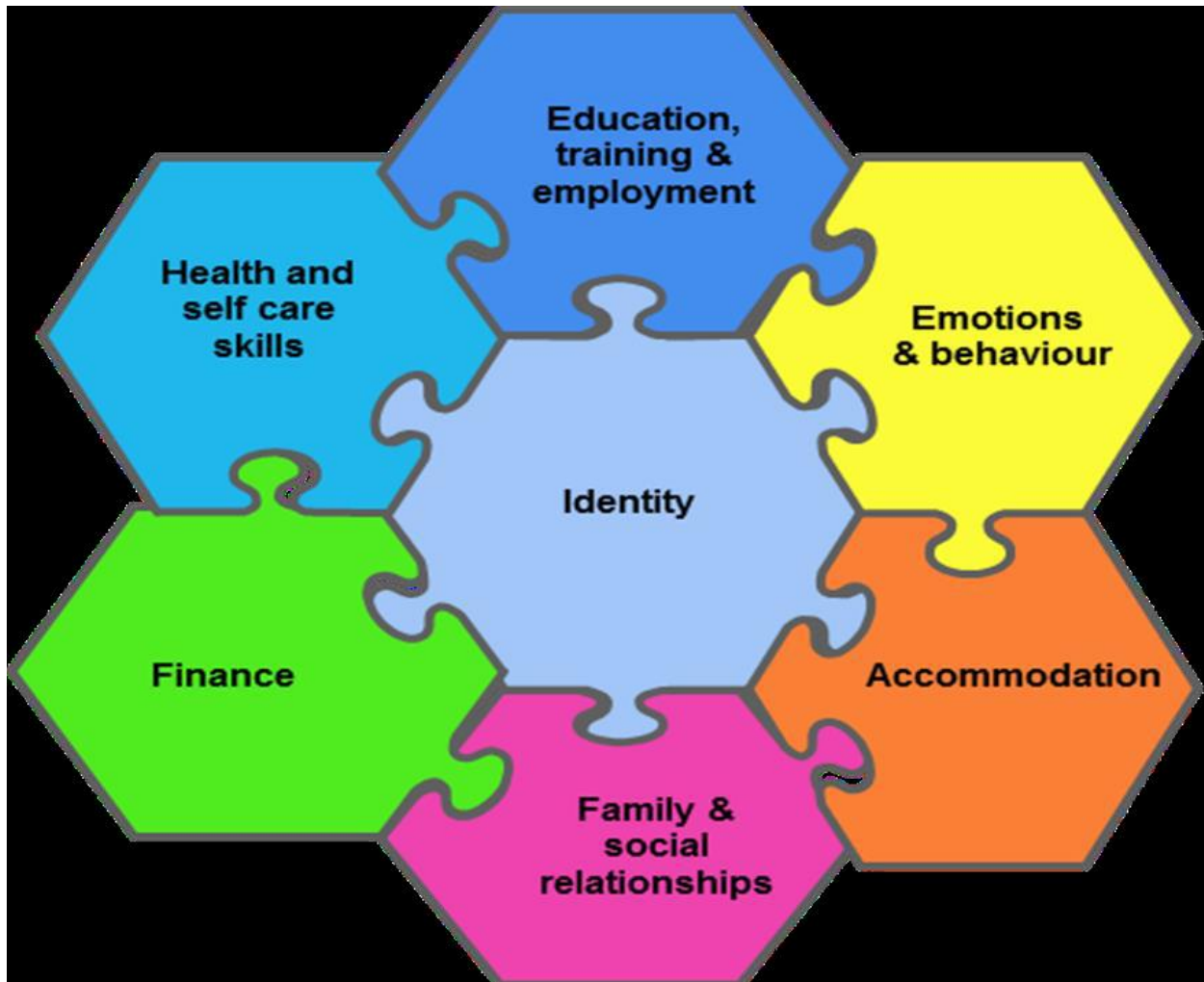
For your Pathway Plan to be effective it will be based on an up to date **needs assessment** which sets out what you need to move into independent living successfully. Your Pathway Plan will tell you the support that will be offered to you to achieve your aspirations. We aim to fully involve you in the development of your Pathway Plan. Your views must be fully recorded and you must get a copy of your Plan.

## Who else will be involved?

With your agreement, we will seek the views of our partner agencies when completing your Pathway Plan. This may include Housing, Education, Training and Employment providers, Benefits, Health Services and The Youth Offending Service to ensure we all work together to provide you with clear and consistent advice and support.



The following diagram sets out some of the areas covered in your plan:



**When will my Plan be completed?**

Your initial Pathway Plan will be completed before you are 16 years and 3 months old. If you are over 16 when first accommodated then this will be within 3 months of the date of you being accommodated.

**What about changes to my plan?**

Your Pathway plan will then be updated and reviewed within every 6 months or within 28 working days of any significant change to your plan such as a change of address.

As an Eligible Care Leaver your Pathway Plan will be written and available at your statutory review which will be chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer.

A review must take place before making a decision to confirm you are ready to leave care.

If you are Former Relevant your Pathway Plan review meeting will be chaired by yourself, your Personal Adviser or a Manager from the Care Leavers Team depending on your circumstances.

**8. Who can I contact in an emergency?**

Personal Advisers generally only work day time office hours between 8.30 am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. However, the Care Leavers Team do provide a duty system if needed to complete agreed work with young people. If you need to speak to someone urgently outside of these hours you should contact the Emergency Duty Team on 01793 534542

**9. How Long Will I Receive a Leaving Care Service for?**

You will receive a Leaving Care service until your 21st birthday or if you are in full-time education or training until you have completed the training programme or until your 25th birthday.

## 10. Where Will I Live After I Leave Care?



This depends on your individual circumstances and needs. There are a range of accommodation options that are available to meet the individual needs of care leavers. The Care Leavers Team works in close partnership with Housing Options Service in Swindon and your PA will assist you in registering for social housing if appropriate.

Some care leavers live in individual flats or houses, totally independently and require only very limited support from their PAs. Many young people, however, in the early stages of leaving care, require additional support to live in their own tenancies and are provided with support staff who visit them on a regular basis or who are based on the same site as the tenant. Some young people live in Supported Lodgings placements. In Supported Lodgings placement you would live in someone's home and the home owner would provide you with individual support.

The level of support that you require and the accommodation that will be provided to you will be agreed with you by your social worker and PA who will discuss and consult with you about the arrangements that will be put in place for the provision of leaving care accommodation. There are many different leaving care accommodation options that you can choose from and your social worker and PA will work with you to find a type of leaving care accommodation that suits you and which you feel comfortable with.

The support that you require and the accommodation that you choose will be detailed in your Pathway Plan. Your PA or social worker will inform you about organisations that provide support services that match your needs. Your PA and/or social worker will explore in detail with you the type of leaving care accommodation options that are available to you.



## 11. Staying Put Placements

Once you have reached the age of 18 years you will not technically be in care but in some cases, especially where you are living in a foster placement, it may be possible for you to remain in your care placement for a period of time after your 18th birthday. If you want to remain in your current placement for a period after your 18th birthday you should discuss this with your social worker or PA.

## 12. Jobs, Careers and Training Opportunities



Working or training to work is an important part of both becoming an adult and living successfully in your own home. Working or training to work not only gives you more money in your pocket, but it enables you to meet people and to live a full and rounded life.

Your social worker or PA will advise you about employment education and training opportunities and you can speak to a specialist youth engagement worker. Your PA can arrange for you to meet the worker

**Further information about Education, Training and Career opportunities is available at:-**

[www.swindon.gov.uk/.../routes\\_to\\_employment](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/.../routes_to_employment)

<https://learningpathway.wordpress.com/>

### **13. A Guide to the Financial Support That Care Leavers Will Receive**



#### **Who will be eligible for Financial Support?**

Relevant and Former Relevant young people will be entitled to financial support from the leaving care service. Qualifying young people will be eligible for financial support subject to an individual assessment.

Where a young person has been looked after or supported briefly, or where they return successfully to their families, it is expected that the families themselves resume responsibility for their welfare and support. This is in line with the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

#### **What Kind of Financial Support is Available?**

All of Swindon's careleavers aged 16-21 years will receive financial support as below:-

- Birthday allowance of £ 50 per year
- Christmas/Festival allowance of £100 per year
- Leaving Care Grant £ 2000
- A Provisional Driving Licence
- Driving lessons up to the value of £500 if young person requires this for work/education training
- Passport cost
- Cost of Birth Certificate if needed

Apart from the above the amount of financial support that you will receive will in part be affected by whether you are a Relevant or Former Relevant Care Leaver.

#### **14. Financial Support to Relevant Young People/Care leavers aged 16-17 years Old**

Relevant young people (16/17 year-olds), in many cases, will not be entitled to claim the major means-tested benefits income such as Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance, therefore if you are 16 or 17 yrs old and a relevant care leaver (i.e. you have left care) and are in some form of education, employment or training you will receive the equivalent of Job Seekers allowance. The Care Leavers team will also provide an incentive payment each week of up to £30.00 depending on your college course/training, hours of attendance and your employment salary/wages. This will be assessed on an individual basis.

You may also be entitled to claim an Education Bursary through your education provider. More information about the bursary can be found in Section 16 of this guide - **Help with going to college and the 16 plus Bursary**). Your PA will assist you to claim the bursary from the college provider. We will also pay the cost of special clothes or expenses associated in maintaining your education, employment or training.

If you are Relevant Care leaver (i.e. you have left care and are 16 years or 17 years old) and you are not engaged in employment, education or training, then the level of financial support that you will receive will be less than the amount of money that you would receive if you were in education, training or employment. In such circumstances you will only receive the equivalent of Job Seekers allowance and if you're actively seeking work or training opportunities then an additional weekly payment of £3 per week will be paid to you.

The Care Leavers team will also pay:

- ☐ Your rent until you reach 18 years old
- ☐ Any costs associated with transport to and from interviews
- ☐ The cost of special clothes or expenses associated with attending interviews or associated with starting a job or a training course (e.g. special clothes or equipment). Your PA will help you to claim any benefits that you are entitled to inclusive of the education bursary

Your PA will provide you with a copy of your Pathway Plan which will include in it a description of the financial support you will receive from the

Care Leavers Team. Your PA will provide you with advice on how to manage your money and you will be encouraged to complete an individual budget plan which will help you to ensure that you manage your money effectively and do not get into debt. The Pathway Plan will be reviewed regularly so it can be adapted to any change of circumstance you experience.

### **15. Financial Support to Former Relevant Young People (Care Leavers aged 18-25 years old)**

Former relevant young people who are aged 18 to 21 and have left care (or up to 25 if in full-time further or higher education) are entitled to claim benefits. Where a young person is not in education or employment then they are expected to maximise the take up of these benefits. If you are a former relevant care leaver and you are in education or training you will be eligible to apply for Income Support. You will also be entitled to apply for Housing Benefit to cover your rent. The Care Leavers Team can assist with financial support until these claims are processed, but you will be expected to apply for these benefits. We will also pay the cost of special clothes or expenses associated in maintaining your education, employment or training.

If you are 18 years old and you are not in employment, education or training, then the level of financial support that you will receive will be less than the amount of money that you would receive if you were in education, training or employment. In such circumstances you will only receive Job Seekers allowance. You will be entitled to Housing Benefit to cover your rent. We may also pay the cost of special clothes or expenses associated with attending an interview.

**See Appendix 1 for further information regarding financial support available to you**

### **Benefits**

Care leavers may be able to apply for a range of state benefits and allowances. Some benefits, but not all of them such as DLA, will be taken into account when calculating the level of financial support that you receive from the Leaving Care service. Your PA will help you to claim any benefits and allowances that you are entitled to receive.

Additional Information about the benefits that care leavers can claim can be found at:  
[www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/assets/documents/CareLeavers.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/assets/documents/CareLeavers.pdf)

## **16. Help with going to college and the 16 plus Bursary**



If you are a looked after child or have left care and are above school age and you are completing a further period of study, then you will be entitled to claim from your place of study, e.g. the college that you attend, a 16+ Bursary. The 16+ Bursar is administered by the college to support you in your studies.

Young people should get in touch with their education provider (e.g. school or college) to find out how to claim the bursary. For further advice about the bursary you can speak to your social worker, student support services or your tutor. Your PA will also assist in claiming the Bursary.

A 16 to 19 guide to Bursaries can be found by clicking on the link below –  
<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/eligibility>

## 17. Help with the Cost of Going to University



Going to university provides an exciting but challenging opportunity to improve your future career prospects. Your PA can help and advise you about your decision to go to university. If you are a relevant or former relevant care leaver and you enter a higher education or university degree course, then the Leaving Care team will provide you with the following support:

- A bursary of £2000 per academic year
- Help and support with vacation accommodation up to £ 3,000
- Liaise with Nominated support worker at the University to ensure all necessary support is accessed.

The Student Finance website can be accessed through [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

This has lots of information as well as being the place to apply. There are downloadable guides that are very good and are easy to understand.

A searchable website, [Propel](#) provides full information about each educational institution's provision for care leavers, as well as inspirational stories from care-experienced students.

Your Personal Adviser should support you with your applications and ensure that you receive your full entitlements.

The financial arrangements and vacation accommodation should be clearly recorded in your Pathway Plan.

### **University and college hardship funds**

If you are a parent with a dependent child you may be able to apply for additional help for childcare costs. The Student Finance website and guides will let you know what you can apply for.

Universities and Colleges also have hardship funds and young people could be entitled to extra money from their university/college. Contact should be made with the student services department at the education establishment to find out if you are eligible for these funds. If you are experiencing financial hardship because you have been in care, have a disability or are a student with children you could receive additional financial support.

Whether students are given anything from this is the decision of the university /college. They can give money as either a grant or a loan and in a lump sum or in instalments. Students need to apply to the Student Services Department for these funds.

If you are a disabled student you can claim additional allowances. These are to cover such things as special equipment or a helper. These are known as Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs) and an individual assessment has to be undertaken before any money is awarded. These allowances are grants not loans

In addition to the above many universities provide additional bursaries to care leavers. More information about bursary payments can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university>

## 18. Leaving Care Grants



All Relevant and Former relevant young people who are eligible for a Leaving Care service will receive a Leaving Care Grant which is currently £2000 after young people become eligible for a leaving care service. The Leaving Care Grant is issued to you so that you can purchase furniture and equipment associated with setting up your own home. There is a great deal of flexibility in planning how you spend your grant. The grant can be partially spent whilst you are in care in preparation for when you move into your own accommodation. The grant is usually provided in instalments, so that it can be spent as and when you need it.

Your PA will work with you to help you decide the best way to spend the grant and together you should develop a spending plan for the use of the grant.

Setting up a new home is an expensive business. Your PA will advise you and support you to spend your money carefully and appropriately.

All individual spends from your grant expenditures must be approved by your PA.



## **19. Crisis Payments**

Living independently can at times be challenging and sometimes things do go wrong. If you require financial support in a crisis then, under certain circumstances, the leaving care team can make emergency financial payments to all care leavers up to the age of 25 years. Each individual request for a crisis payment will be assessed by a PA and will be subject to approval by a Manager from the Care Leavers Team.

**Other areas where financial support can be considered include payments for:**

- Additional needs relating to such things as cultural events, Counselling, Preparation for interviews, emergency payments.
- Contact with family or other significant relationships
- Incentive payments for participating in training or employment programmes
- Special circumstance where you may need additional funds

These payments will be subject to an individual assessment.

Ask your PA if this is the case.

## **20. Bank Accounts**

Where ever possible payments made to care leavers will be paid directly into your bank account. If you do not already have a bank account your PA will help you to open an account.

In exceptional circumstances where a young person is assessed as not being able to maintain a bank account, direct payments can be made on an agreed basis

## **21. Spending Plans**

Making ends meet on a limited budget is a challenging task. Spending plans are a useful way of making sure that you budget carefully and don't overspend. Your PA will help you to produce a spending plan which can be used to balance your incoming funds with your outgoing costs. Making a spending plan can help you to ensure that you have enough money left over to pay fuel bills and food costs. Completing the Spending plan with your PA is a useful way of discussing and planning how you will budget.

## **22. If you are over 21 and want to return to Education, Training or Employment**

If a former relevant care leaver contacts the service post 21 to discuss support to attend a further education course a PA will be appointed to assess this request. They will also ask the young person what activities they have been involved in since their case closure. An assessment and plan will then be formulated from the meeting which will then be presented to the team manager. The Manager will consider the request taking into account the following:

- Assessment/Plan
- Young person's commitment and understanding of the course
- Past involvement in EET
- Length of course
- Financial implications
- Overall support needs of the young person

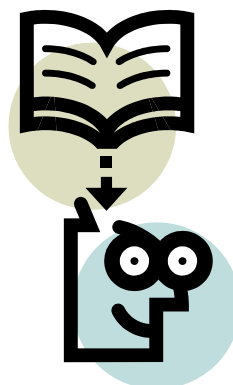
They will make a decision and will ensure that this is explained to you and that the decision is confirmed in writing. Should a decision be made not to support the request, you will be given details of the complaints process and offered assistance to access this.

The extent of practical and financial assistance provided will depend on the assessment of your needs and will reflect the type of course, whether it is full or part-time and your existing income.

## **23. Access to your Records.**

### **Viewing your case file**

#### **Why do we keep records about you?**



Your social worker needs to keep a record of your health, education, family members, foster placements etc. so that in future they can look back and see what has happened to you and have a record of your time in care. If there is a change of social worker your new social worker can look on your file and find out about you. The social worker also keeps notes of visits with you and of meetings about you. We also collect information about how we work with you so we can see where we need to improve. In Swindon all of your records are kept on an electronic case file. Access to these records is restricted to a limited number of professionals. Only professionals who have been given a secure password can access your files and this means that your records are kept confidential and secure.

#### **Can I see my file?**

Yes, the law says you have a right to see personal information held about you unless we think it would be emotionally harmful to you. If we decide you cannot see your records then your social worker will explain why to you. When you are 18 you will be able to see all of the records kept on you, and your social worker/personal adviser will talk to you about what support you will need to read and understand the papers.

## **How can I get to see my file?**

If you would like to see your social care file records you must submit a written and signed request saying that you are requesting access to your records under the Data Protection Act 1998.

This request can be given or posted to your Social Worker/Personal Adviser or you can send the request to the Data Protection Officer. The contact details are provided below:

Swindon Borough Council's Data Protection Officer is responsible for dealing with all formal requests for access to personal information, but young people can express an interest to see their personal information to any council officer or direct to the Data Protection Officer. The council officer will give the young people the information and forms that they require to make an application and provide them with any further assistance that they may need.

If you are unable, or do not wish, to make a request yourself, you can ask someone else to do this on their behalf, e.g.: Personal Adviser

Please send the completed form and the proof of your ID to:-

Anna Marzec

Data Protection Officer

Swindon Borough Council

Civic Offices

Euclid Street

Swindon SN1 2JH

You should be given access to your file within 40 calendar days although it can sometimes take a longer time to organise this. If it takes longer than 40 calendar days we will contact you and provide you and inform you of the delay.

If people other than your social worker or people who work for Swindon Borough Council have written things about you then we have to ask their permission to show these documents to you. If they say no, then we will tell you and explain to you what you can do if you want to complain about this. If there is information on your file about other people, for example about your parents or other members of your family then we must ask them for their permission to tell you. We will ask you if you want us to do this.

### **Who else can see my file?**

Other people who believe there may be information about them in your file may ask to see anything on the file that relates specifically to them, for example sometimes parents want to see information that is contained on files about them. If your parents ask to see your file; if you are old enough we will ask you whether you agree to this and we will take your views into account. We may allow them to see parts of your file if we believe it is in your best interests. If there is information on your file which is just about them then the law says they are allowed to see it

### **Can I see my file after I have left care?**

Yes if you have been looked after by us we have to keep our records about you until you are 75 years old! You have the right to see your records even if you are no longer under a Care Order or if you are no longer receiving a service from the Care Leavers Team.

## **24. Your Rights: What the Government say you are entitled to as a Looked after Child**

The Department of Education are responsible for developing plans and policies for services to children in care and care leavers. They recently published a guide for children in care which describes the services that children in care are entitled to receive.

You can find the document by visiting the DfE website by clicking on the following link –

[http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/20120514\\_care%20leavers%20entitlements%20leaflet.pdf](http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/20120514_care%20leavers%20entitlements%20leaflet.pdf)

## **25. How do I make a complaint?**

Local authorities must allow for the involvement of independent people when they consider representations, so that young people can recognise that the process is both transparent and fair. As corporate parents for looked after children and care leavers, local authorities should listen to young people and act on what they say.

If you have a complaint you can telephone, write or email the manager of your allocated social worker or personal adviser and explain why you want to make a complaint. Your allocated worker will provide you with the contact details of the relevant manager and a copy of the Complaints procedure. Your complaint should be put in writing and the relevant

manager should try to resolve your complaint with you within 14 days .This is called the Informal resolution stage.

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive you should send your complaint to the address below:

The Complaints Manager  
Children, Families and Community Health  
Wat Tyler West Floor 3  
Beckhampton Street  
Swindon  
SN1 2JH

Tel:01793 463302

Email:childrensfamilies&communityhealthcomplaints@swindon.gov.uk

Whilst some young people may already have an advocate before they reach the stage of making a formal complaint, the complaints officer must check that a young person has been put in touch with an advocate and is happy with the level of support they are receiving. If this is not the case, the complaints officer must inform the young person about their rights to advocacy, establish whether they would like an advocate, and, if so, make sure that they are put in touch with advocacy services.

### **Complaints to Ofsted**

Ofsted regulate social care services in England, such as children's homes, residential family centres and fostering and adoption services. If you feel that you want to make a complaint directly to Ofsted then the details of how to contact them are provided below–

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231 Ofsted National Business Unit Piccadilly Gate Store Street 26 Manchester M1 2WD

Enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted have produced a guide about how to register concerns and complaints which can be found by clicking on the following link –

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/concerns-and-complaints-about-social-careproviders](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/concerns-and-complaints-about-social-careproviders)

### **Swindon's Commitment to The Department for Education Charter for Care Leavers**

The Department of Education have produced a charter for care leavers and they have asked Local Authorities to sign up to this charter. Swindon have

agreed to sign up to the charter and to adhere to the principles contained within it. A copy of the charter is printed below. If you want to view the charter on the DfE website follow the link below-

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/cl%20charter%20final%2025%20oct%202012.pdf>

## **26. The Care Leavers Charter**

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. Promises and principles help in decision making and do not replace laws; they give guidance to show how laws are designed to be interpreted.

The Charter for Care Leavers is a promise from Swindon Borough Council to Swindon Care Leavers. The Terms of the charter are described below

### **We promise:**

**To respect and honour your identity**

**To believe in you**

**To listen to you**

**To inform you**

**To support you**

**To find you a home**

**To be a lifelong champion**

.

## **27. Useful Contacts, Resources and Sources of Support**



The list below provides the contact details of organisations that you might want to contact for support or advice.

This link provides information and a useful guide to your rights written by young people who have been in care.

<http://www.careleavers.com/cla-lcg>

### **Ann Longfield is the Children's Commissioner for England.**

She has a legal duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England with a particular focus on children and young people with difficulties or challenges in their lives, and in particular those living away from home, in or leaving care, or receiving social care services.

Her work focuses on making sure that adults in charge, or making decisions, listen to what children and young people say about things that affect them. She encourages adults, including the people making decisions about children's lives, always to take their rights, views and interests into account. She brings matters that affect children and young people's rights to the attention of Parliament, local government and others.

### **What to do if you would like advice, guidance and assistance:**

If you are child or young person who lives away from home or who receives social care, who needs advice or assistance, you can call us on the free phone number 0800 528 0731 or email to

[advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Adults representing children or young people who need advice or assistance and who live away from home or who receive social care services can also get in touch using these contact details.

### **ChildLine**

Childline is the free national 24 hour telephone help line for any child in trouble or danger. It is a confidential counselling service which offers information and help to children and young people. You can email Childline, go on-line and chat and also text them,

Telephone: 0800 1111 (24 hour Freephone)

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **NSPCC (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children)**

The NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000 is a service for anyone concerned about the safety or welfare of a child. You can contact the helpline 24 hours a day, seven days a week by phone, email or online.



### **National Youth Advocacy Service**

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) is a UK charity providing children's rights and socio-legal services. NYAS offer information, advocacy, legal representation and advice to children and young people up to the age of **25** through a network of advocates throughout England and Wales.

If you are a child, young person or ringing on behalf of a child, young person or vulnerable adult and need help, information or advice, please contact the freephone helpline on 0300 330 3131 or send an email to [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

If you would like to speak with someone about a legal matter relating to an individual please call our legal team on 0151 649 8700 or email [legal@nyas.net](mailto:legal@nyas.net)

### **Who Cares Trust**

The Trust provides help and advice to young people in care and care leavers regarding their rights, housing issues, money worries, education, health and provides information regarding national and local support services.

Contact the Advice Line on 020 7017 8901

Email [advice@whocarestrust.org.uk](mailto:advice@whocarestrust.org.uk)

Or follow the link

[www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

### **Career Pilot**

Website for young people detailing choices available to them regarding education training and employment.

Can be accessed via [www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk)

### **Propel**

Propel is a new website created to help inspire more care leavers to into higher education. It provides full information regarding each education establishments support to care leavers and ensures that young people get the support they are entitled to.

Propel can be accessed via [www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

### **Shelter**

Shelter provides housing advice regarding all aspects of housing.

Their free advice line is 0808 800 4444

Website

[www.england.shelter.org.uk](http://www.england.shelter.org.uk)

**Direct Gov.Uk**

Provides a range of useful information about your rights and entitlements as a care leaver. DirectGov.Uk can be found by clicking on the link below

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Housing/DG\\_181382](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Housing/DG_181382)

**The Care leavers Association.**

The Association provides advice and information and a range of useful information about leaving care and your rights and entitlements.

<http://www.careleavers.com/leavingcare>

**The Care Leavers Foundation**

Offers support, encouragement and financial help via grants to care leavers who want to take control of their lives.

Tel 016785 540598

Website [www.thecareleaversfoundation.org](http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org)

**Young Minds**

Young Minds is committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people and empowering their parents and carers.

Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/)

**Catch 22**

Catch 22 works with young people who are in or leaving custody, involved in or on the fringes of crime, out of work, struggling at school, homeless or facing young parenthood without the safety net of a supportive family.

Catch 22 offer practical support services which are flexible, highly personalised and often intensive. This enables young people to reach their full potential and achieve lasting change.

Website: [www.catch-22.org.uk](http://www.catch-22.org.uk)

**Need2know**

Need2know provide information on:

- Health
- Money
- Work and leisure
- Sex and relationships
- Housing and much more

Email: [www.need2know.co.uk/need2know/contactus.html](http://www.need2know.co.uk/need2know/contactus.html)

Website: [www.need2know.co.uk](http://www.need2know.co.uk)

**Information regarding care leaving support available to UASC** can be found at:-

[http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/index.php?page=mcp\\_factsheets\\_support\\_children\\_care\\_leavers](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com/index.php?page=mcp_factsheets_support_children_care_leavers)

**The Migrants Children Project** also have an advice helpline

Tel: 0207 6368505

### **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

The CAB helps people to resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice. Some branches can provide legal advice on immigration and asylum cases.

Telephone: 08708 408 0808

Email: [enquiry@cabline.org](mailto:enquiry@cabline.org)

Advice visit: [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Citizen advice website for under25s:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me.html](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me.html)

### **Runaways**

This is a free phone confidential service for anyone who has run away from home or care, or been forced to leave home.

Freephone: 0800 800 7070

Text: 80234

Email: [runaways@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:runaways@missingpeople.org.uk)

Website: [www.missingpeople.org.uk/runaways/](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/runaways/)

### **Missing people**

Missing People is a charity that works with young people runaways, missing and unidentified people, their families and other people who care for them.

Address: Missing people, Roebuck House, 284 Upper Richmond Road West, London, SW14 7JE

Telephone: 0208 392 4521

Email: [supporters@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:supporters@missingpeople.org.uk)

Website: [www.missingpeople.org.uk/](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/)

## **Howard League**

Free, independent and confidential advice, assistance and representation on a wide range of issues to young people under 21 in custody.

Telephone: 020 7249 7373

Email: [info@howardleague.org](mailto:info@howardleague.org)

Website: <http://www.howardleague.org/>

## **Community Legal Advice line**

Community Legal Advice (CLA) is a free and confidential advice service in paid for by legal aid. If you are living on a low income or benefits, you may be eligible for free specialist advice from legal advisers on issues including:

- Benefits and tax credits
- Debt
- Education
- Housing
- Employment
- Family problems

The advice is independent and confidential. Community Legal Advice will ask you questions about your problem and find out what help you need..

Community Legal Advice has a free translation service available in 170 languages. Telephone: 0845 345 4345

Website: <http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/>

## Appendix 1 MY CONTACTS

You may want to keep a record of key contacts in the table below



	Name	Contact Details
<b>Social Worker</b>		
<b>Personal Adviser</b>		
<b>IRO</b>		
<b>Doctor</b>		
<b>Dentist</b>		
<b>Optician</b>		
<b>Housing Provider</b>		
<b>School/College</b>		
<b>Training Provider</b>		
<b>Employer</b>		

## Appendix 2

### Financial Support to Care Leavers

What money am I entitled to?  
What for?



**All care leavers aged 16-21 years will receive :-**

- Birthday allowance of £50 per year
- Festival allowance of £100 per year
- A provisional Driving Licence
- Driving Lessons up to the value of £500 If associated with employment/education/training
- One passport cost
- Birth Certificate if needed
- Leaving Care Grant of £2,000

Young person may also receive up to £200 per annum for leisure /cultural activities if there are not any other funding options available.

#### **Young People not in employment/training or employment**

Relevant young people **not engaged in employment, education or training** will receive a Personal Allowance equivalent to Jobseekers Allowance per week.

#### **Incentive payments**

Relevant young people **engaged in education, employment or training** will receive an incentive payment of up to £ 30 per week assessed on an individual basis.

Relevant young people **not engaged in education ,employment** or training but actively seeking employment will receive an incentive payment of £ 5 per week.

### **Further Education and Training**

Young people will receive assistance with the cost of:

- Course Fees, within reasonable limits
- Travel costs to attend Education or Training, within reasonable limits
- Course related materials, (for example Health and Safety clothing/ equipment)

### **Prison Allowance**

Young people in custody will receive £15 per month

### **University Students**

Students will receive up to £ 3,000 per annum for vacation accommodation costs.

University students are entitled to financial support in the form of a bursary of £2,000 this can be paid in a lump sum or in three instalments of £666.66p, the young person's Personal Adviser will discuss these arrangements and agree these arrangements.