



Local Offer

for young adults leaving our care



Children's Services – June 2022



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Foreword by Graham Farrant, Chief Executive, BCP Council



BCP Council has a clear vision that we want to ensure we have vibrant communities, with outstanding quality of life, where everyone plays an active role. We can only achieve that if we support everyone in the community to achieve their potential and create brighter futures for our young people.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a legal responsibility on local authorities to prepare and publish a list of services that all care experienced young people can access after they reach 18 years of age. This is called the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

We are pleased to launch our local offer which details the support we will offer young adults leaving the care of BCP Council.

Our offer is aspirational and ambitious and aims to provide all young people who are care experienced the best possible chance of success and security. BCP Council has supported our care experienced young people to develop our pledge

to our young people as a corporate parent. We take our responsibility as corporate parents very seriously and we wish only for the best for our children and young people.

This is a joint responsibility for every employee at BCP Council and I look forward to seeing positive outcomes for our young adults as they take up the support contained in this Local Offer.

Yours sincerely

Graham Farrant, Chief Executive, BCP Council



The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places a legal responsibility on all local authorities to write and publish a list of services that all care leavers will be able to access after they reach the age of 18. This is called the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

This offer sets out the principles and the process by which BCP Council, along with other agencies, aim to make sure that you are provided with personal support so that you achieve your potential as you make your transition to adulthood and independence.

It has been informed by the government's Care Leavers Strategy – "Keep on Caring" (July 2016).

We know that it is a big step when you move out of care and start to live independently. You can feel lonely and it can be scary. If you are leaving care, or have already left care, we want to make sure that you feel safe and supported, and that you know who to go to for advice.

Even when you have moved on, we will be

thinking about you, and you can always come back for advice and support.

We have talked to the Care Leavers Forum, Insight, and several of you about the Local Offer and we will continue to listen to your views to make sure we are offering you the services you need.

BCP Council's Local Offer covers the following areas:

- your entitlements
- information about finances
- accommodation and housing
- physical and emotional wellbeing
- keeping in contact with the people who are important to you
- education, employment and training
- being a parent
- participation in society
- who can help?

Your social worker or personal advisor can also advise you about the Local Offer for Care Leavers.

If you would prefer a printed copy of this information, please email us at

familyinformation@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

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Information about the support we must give you



You are entitled to receive support from the council up to the age of 25 if you have been in care for 13 weeks or more between the ages 14-16 (including your 16th birthday), or if you have been in care for 13 weeks after your 16th birthday.

Eligibility for a care leavers service can be explained by a social worker, personal advisor or a children's advocate who can help you understand whether you qualify for support and what level of support you are entitled to.

Understanding your rights

The law states that:

- for care leavers aged 16 and 17, the local authority is under an absolute duty to accommodate you, as well as providing you with a social worker or a personal advisor
- for care leavers aged 18-20, there is a proactive duty on local authorities to keep in touch with care leavers
- for care leavers aged 21-25, there is a duty on local authorities to assess care leavers' needs and develop and keep under review a Pathway Plan, only where a young person has requested support.

Your social worker or personal advisor

Your social worker or personal advisor is there to help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care. As a young adult, we are here to support you with your decisions and life choices, so the relationship may seem different to the one you had with your social worker when you were in care. We will always try to let you keep the same social worker or personal advisor, though this may not always be possible.

Your Independent Reviewing Officer

Your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will work with you and your social worker from your 16th birthday to ensure that your Pathway Plan meets your needs and that you have a say in how that plan looks. You can also choose for your IRO to carry on chairing your pathway planning reviews once you are 18, if you think it would be helpful to you. This will be voluntary and only for as long as you both feel it would support you.

Leaving care before turning 18

We will encourage you to stay in care until you are 18.

If you choose to leave care before you turn 18, including living with family members, the law says we must continue to ensure that you have the appropriate level of support in place, and this will be reviewed in your Pathway Plan.

Pathway Plans

All young people who are being looked after by BCP Council aged 16 and over have a Pathway Plan. Your Pathway Plan will replace your Care Plan from when you are 15 years and 9 months old.

Your current social worker and your personal advisor will support you to write and agree your Pathway Plan. They will work together so you can get to know each other. When you are 18 you will have a personal advisor who will support you until you are 25.

Your Pathway Plan is about your needs and what we all need to do to ensure you can achieve your dreams and ambitions and become a successful adult. It also includes things like accommodation,

budgeting, health and education, training and employment.

How will I be involved?

Your Pathway Plan will be based on an up-to-date needs assessment, setting out the support that will be offered to you to achieve your aspirations. We aim to fully involve you in the development and regular review 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, health services, The Youth Justice Service and other youth support services to ensure we all work together to provide you with clear and consistent advice and support. We will also involve your carers and family if it is appropriate.

What will be included in my Pathway Plan?

This diagram sets out some of the areas covered in your plan.



What about changes to my plan?

Your Pathway Plan will be updated and reviewed within every six months or 28 working days of any significant changes such as a change of address.

As a young person who is in care, your Pathway Plan will be written and available at your statutory review chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). A review must take place before you reach the age of 18 in order to make a decision to confirm that you are ready to live independently. Talk to your IRO if you wish to chair your own review!

For young people over 18, the review will be led by their personal advisor and team manager.

When you need extra support

Your social worker or personal advisor will consider with you what extra support you may need. You might, for example, need extra support because:

You have special educational needs or a disability

The transition to adulthood means change. We know this can be a difficult time for

our young people. In the BCP area lots of different services have been working together to make it better and easier for you. BCP's Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) Development Plan 2019-2022 outlines how education, health, social care and partners, support children and young people with SEND, to prepare for adult life. Depending on your assessed need you may be entitled to a Care Act assessment and ongoing support from the preparation for adulthood team.

Your social worker and personal advisor will talk to you about this in more detail.

You can read more here poolefamilyinformationdirectory.com

You are an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (UASC)

For those of our young people who are seeking Asylum here in the UK, we will support you in confirming your immigration as soon as possible and your personal advisor will support you with this. We will support you with language barriers. You will be supported in accessing specialist information from a legal representative where you will receive advice, guidance and support in completing forms and documents to support your Asylum Claim.

There may be uncertainty around your immigration status and your personal advisor will need to plan for three possible outcomes which will be reflected in your Pathway Plan.

1. Preparing for a future in the UK if you receive a form of leave to remain.
2. Preparing for a return to your country if your claim or extension to remain is refused.
3. Supporting you if you become 'all appeals rights exhausted' and you have been refused 'leave to remain' but have not been 'removed'.

You will receive financial support if you are unable to claim benefits whilst your claim for asylum is being processed. If you have no leave to remain or an outstanding claim, then a human rights assessment will be carried out in order to determine whether removing leaving care support would breach your human rights.

We know uncertainty can cause anxiety. You are not alone. Talk to your social worker or personal advisor if you feel you need extra support.

You are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with The Criminal Justice System

Whilst you are in prison, we will keep in touch with you by visits, phone calls, links with the safer custody team and the email a prisoner scheme. We will ensure applications for financial support and housing are completed before you are released.

You are a young parent

See more about what we can offer you in Section 7.

You are going through a difficult time in your personal life

We know that feeling safe is very important to you and we can help you achieve this by ensuring that your accommodation is suitable, you are receiving support from the right services, and we are keeping in touch.

You are experiencing domestic abuse

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, we can help you to be safe. We will link you with local services such as The Maple project, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and the Police Domestic Abuse Unit and work in partnership with lots of different services to keep you safe.

You are being exploited

If you are being exploited criminally, sexually or physically, we can help you by accessing support from the Complex Safeguarding Service. This team works intensively with children and care leavers who are at high risk of child exploitation. You will have a worker assigned to you and a Safety Plan that is reviewed regularly.

You need help with drug and alcohol abuse

We can link you with the local services who can help. For example, We Are With You, Essential Drug and Alcohol Service (EDAS) and Young Adults Drug & Alcohol Service (YADAS).

Information we keep about you

You have a right to see the information we keep about you, including the files and records written about you when you were in care. We aim to share this information with you at an appropriate time and help you to make sense of your individual experiences. We will make sure that a discussion takes place fully explaining this process before you access your

records. We recognise that sometimes you may want someone else to support you with this and you have a right to support from an independent advocate if you are thinking about challenging decisions or making a complaint about the care we give you.

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Information to help you manage your finances



We will try to help you financially, in a similar way that parents might support their own children. When you turn 18, you are no longer considered in care. You would be expected to support yourself financially through claiming benefits, paid work or if in further education, claiming grants and loans that you may be entitled to.

However, at certain times, there will be additional financial support available to you. For example, when you move or if you are in further education. We will discuss with you what your financial needs will be to help you achieve your goals. Any financial support packages will be clearly laid out in your Pathway Plan.

We will also be able to support you around understanding how to manage your money effectively and offering regular advice and guidance.

16 to 17 year olds

If you are 16 or 17, you may already be living in semi-independent accommodation. Since you will not be entitled to claim benefits yet, your social worker or personal advisor will provide you with subsistence (financial help) to cover your day to day living costs. This does not

apply if you are living with foster carers or in a residential school or accommodation.

- the local authority meets all accommodation costs
- the subsistence rate of £60 which is the equivalent to the current rate of Universal Credit
- Clothing allowance of £90 payable 4 times a year.
- if you are in a Young Offenders Institution or in prison, you will be supported with living expenses £20 per month.

Turning 18

When you become 18 you will be supported to apply for benefits as soon as possible. There is a specialist benefits advisor that your social worker can call to ensure that you claim everything you are entitled to. If you would like more detailed information, you can use GOV.UK Benefits calculators or speak to your social worker or personal advisor.

You should already have a bank account but if you do not, your social worker or personal advisor will help you to set it up. This will be important so that if you are receiving benefits or subsistence or are

working, your money can go straight into this account.

21 to 25 year olds

It is hoped that you will have confidently developed the necessary independence skills to have secured final stage accommodation by the time you reach 21.

At this point many young people will feel that they no longer need support. Unless you are undertaking a significant further education course such as a university degree, it is unlikely that there will be any ongoing financial support available. However, there may be a one-off financial crisis that we can help you to resolve.

Some young people may want to continue the relationships they have developed with their social worker or personal advisor, to gain advice and support to help manage any difficulties that may arise. Whether you decide to end your involvement with us or not, you are able to come back and ask for assistance anytime up until age 25.

If we are not working with you, we will contact you on a yearly basis to check in that things are okay.

Identification Documents (ID)

Once you turn 16, you will need formal

documents to access things like benefits and employment. Your social worker or personal advisor will help you to obtain proof of identity such as a passport or driving license, birth certificate and national insurance card as soon as possible. We will pay for these.

Savings

When you become looked after, your social worker or personal advisor will have arranged for money to be saved for you. You will be able to access these savings when you turn 18. Any savings you have accrued will be discussed as part of the pathway planning process, so that when you turn 18 you will have thought about how you might wish to spend it.

Accommodation costs

Whatever type of accommodation you are living in or move into at 18, you will be expected to contribute through your earnings or benefits to help with accommodation costs. This also applies if the plan is 'Staying Put' in your foster placement (see section on accommodation).

You will be responsible for your rent and accommodation costs.

The decision about what type of accommodation you move into will have

been discussed with you earlier on in the pathway planning process, but by the age of 17 we will be exploring what housing options will be available to you as you turn 18. This will be clearly laid out in your Pathway Plan.

However, most of the accommodation available at this stage will have some level of support attached to it and the care part of the cost will be paid for by the team supporting you, if it is not covered by benefits.

Whether or not you are working, in education or on benefits you will need to pay a service charge on your accommodation. This amount will be decided at planning meeting for your placement or accommodation.

Moving costs

When you move into other accommodation, whether it is temporary, such as a semi-independent hostel, or to your final stage accommodation, your social worker or personal advisor will help you with the costs of things such as hiring a van.

Setting up home grant

When you move into your long-term accommodation you will receive a

setting up home grant of up to £2,000. Your worker will assess your needs to identify what essential furniture and services you will need and then arrange for how these items will be paid for. You might not automatically receive the full amount of the allowance, for example, if the accommodation you move into is partially furnished but your worker will discuss your needs with you.

If you are moving into semi-independent accommodation which is temporary, and you need some items to furnish it, you may be able to access small amounts from the setting up grant earlier. You can access up to £300 for necessary items, but this will come out of your total allowance. You will only be able to buy items once out of this allowance and requests for the same item (e.g. cutlery), cannot be covered when you move from one accommodation to another.

Support for Travel to access education Training or employment

If you need access to public transport or a bicycle for example for training or employment, we will discuss how we can help with this.

If you are ready to learn to drive, we will pay the cost of your provisional driving license and your theory and practical driving test. We will match fund 10 driving lessons and will review this as part of the pathway planning progress.

Council Tax

When you move into your final stage accommodation you will become responsible for all the utility bills, such as electricity and gas. Prior to this, you may have been living in semi-independent accommodation and paid a small service charge towards the general cost of utilities.

Managing budgets can be very challenging for young people adjusting to living independently. In order to help you manage your finances and relieve some of the financial burden, BCP Council wants to support our young people as they leave the Council's care. As a resident in the BCP area or resident in the Dorset Council or New Forest District Council areas, a discretionary discount will be granted to you of up to 100% of the Council Tax liability for eligible care experienced young people aged 18 to 23 and 50% of the Council Tax liability for eligible care experienced young people aged 24. The discount will end on your 25th birthday.

The reduced level of discount in place from age 24 is intended to prepare you for the reality of paying the Council Tax

yourself when you reach 25. Ask your personal advisor for more details about the exemption scheme.

Discretionary payments

There may be times when you need extra help for things that your income will not cover. For example, when first claiming benefits there may be a period before your first payment arrives and you may need more help. You should first look to see how much savings you have to draw on during this time. You might also be able to apply for discretionary payments with housing related costs.

From time to time there may be problems that arise where you are still struggling financially. In these cases, you can ask for help from your social worker or personal advisor. For emergencies, if you run short and need help with food, your social worker or personal advisor may be able to give you a food parcel or supermarket vouchers.

Life chances

As part of commitment to children in care and care experienced young people, we will support you to access essential equipment you might need to pursue your

education, such as a laptop.

However, we know that sometimes you may also need financial support to enable you to take up activities that you like, like joining a gym or taking lessons in something you enjoy, and which supports your education, training or overall wellbeing.

Birthday and special day allowances

To mark your birthday, you will receive a birthday card from your personal advisor and a small allowance of £50 for gifts or contribution towards your celebrations will be given to you up until the age of 21. If you are 16-18 this allowance only applies if you are living in semi-independent accommodation. If you are living with foster carers, your carer will buy you a present instead.

We will also contribute £75 towards religious festivals once a year until you are 21 years old.

When you leave our service, your PA will mark the occasion with a goodbye card and a catch up, and will ensure you are fully aware of universal support in your area.

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Information about education, employment and training for care leavers



Training and employment

We want the best for you, and we really want you to succeed in your education, training and employment. We will ask you how you are doing, wish you luck and celebrate your achievements with you. We will create opportunities to attend and help organise celebration events when young people achieve education, training and employment milestones.

Following discussions at Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings we will provide information, advice and guidance to support you with moving forward with your education, training or employment.

We will offer support to ensure you are achieving the best of your ability, you are able to access appropriate resources to support you and we will liaise with your education or training provider to access additional support where necessary.

We will provide information and support for further education applications (colleges, sixth forms, adult education) and higher education applications (universities) and the corresponding finance/bursary applications as well as support with apprenticeship applications and with accessing the care leaver apprenticeship bursary.

We will support and encourage you to access volunteering/work experience opportunities and wish you luck on your first day!

We will help you to improve your employability skills and provide you with support to develop your CV and advice about jobs, applications and interviews.

Subject to a need's assessment, we will offer you:

- support to meet your transport costs when travelling to training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews
- support to buy tools, equipment, essential clothing, and books.

Finances for study

All young people aged 16-19 who are children in care and study full time are entitled to a bursary, which will be paid to you by your college, Sixth Form or training centre into the young person's bank account.

For more information, see the Advice for young people: 16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide.

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

If a young person over the age of 19 wishes to attend a full-time college course and cannot claim benefits the Local Authority will consider financial assistance to cover rent, personal allowance and up to £50 equivalent towards a bus pass for the duration of the course. This will be considered on an individual basis, in consultation with the team manager and service manager.

Young people who are attending college may be able to apply for a laptop. The decision for the allocation of a laptop rests with the service manager.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people who have left care may need additional financial support in relation to accessing education. This will be considered on an individual basis.

Financial support for care leavers attending university

- BCP Council will pay a bursary of £3,000 a year for the duration of the University Course. This is paid termly. It is expected that this additional funding will help towards the cost of books, travel and other sundry expenses. The Local Authority commits to support you for the duration of your course

Your university may also have its own bursary support for care leavers so make sure you ask about this.

- there is no financial support available for post graduate courses
- students who leave their course prematurely will not be required to repay the bursary but will not be offered further financial support

- students are required to pay for personal loans via the student loans system. The Local Authority will not repay any loans the student has incurred as a result of their studies
- the Local Authority will pay non-term time accommodation costs to support young people during the Christmas, Easter and summer breaks
- travel support for return to non-term time accommodation at the end of term, will also be paid
- students will be supported to seek employment during their summer vacation time, and this will be outlined in the Pathway Plan
- a young person's rail card will be considered where appropriate
- additional support for expenses incurred during a course of study (e.g. for equipment) will need to come via a personal advisor, be in the Pathway Plan and agreed by the team manager.

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Housing and accommodation available for care leavers



Housing

As you get closer to 18, we will talk to you about the different types of housing and accommodation available to you to best meet your needs. Part of our role is to ensure that you can be financially stable as you will be expected to pay for your accommodation. We will do everything we can to prevent homelessness and ensure that you have suitable and safe accommodation that meets your needs.

- we are clear that care leavers in the BCP area are offered a priority status for social housing and that you can move into your own home within 12 months of being nominated onto the register
- BCP Council housing landlord services and registered providers will work closely with you and your personal advisor to support you moving into social housing through the housing register. We will work together so things don't go wrong, however if they do, we will work with you to make sure you still have a home
- we will ensure each young person has access to a housing officer, who will work alongside you and your personal advisor to provide advice and a

personalised housing plan outlining all options for accommodation and support the Personal Housing Plan will be a document for you to take away which sets out what you need to do and what housing and other agencies will do to help you to reach the goal of moving into your own home

- housing and your personal advisor will provide support for care experienced young people to become “tenancy ready” through money and budgeting advice, including support to claim welfare benefits as needed
- in times of crisis including where a care leaver is at risk of becoming homeless, flexible housing related support will be provided to prevent homelessness, or where this is not possible will provide suitable emergency accommodation which is not a Bed & Breakfast and a move-on plan where necessary
- if you receive a negative decision regarding your housing situation, including where found intentionally homeless or otherwise ineligible for housing services, BCP will ensure it uses its powers to continue to provide accommodation and the support services you need. if you feel worried about making rent payments or being a good

neighbour, you should speak to your social worker or personal advisor. The sooner we begin supporting you, the easier it will be to get on top of things.

Staying Put

There may be the opportunity to continue living with your foster carers beyond your 18th birthday and up until you are 21 years old. This will no longer be a foster placement but a Staying Put arrangement.

If you are staying put with your carer you will be expected to contribute to the costs of your room in the same way that you would if you were living in a shared house or your own accommodation. Your social worker or personal advisor will be able to advise you further about this, or you can ask for a copy of the Staying Put Policy.

Setting up home grant

When you move into your long-term accommodation you will receive a setting up home grant of up to £2,000. Your worker will assess your needs to identify what essential furniture and services you will need and then arrange for how these items will be paid for. You might not automatically receive the full amount of the allowance, for example, if the accommodation you move into is partially furnished but your worker will discuss your needs with you.

If you are moving into semi-independent accommodation which is temporary, and you need some items to furnish it, you may be able to access small amounts from the setting up grant earlier. You can access up to £300 for necessary items, but this will come out of your total allowance. You will only be able to buy items once out of this allowance and requests for the same item (e.g. cutlery), cannot be covered when you move from one accommodation to another.

Staying close

We will work with you to ensure that you are able to secure suitable and safe accommodation in the area that you have lived for a long time. We will enable you to keep in touch with your previous home or special adults from your placement should you chose to.

Supported lodgings carers

Supported lodgings carers offer young people (aged from 18 to 24 years old) the opportunity to live within a home environment where you will become a member of the household. The carers are assessed, trained and approved for the role by the Local Authority.

The aim of the carers is to provide a support home environment, develop confidence, build support networks and capability to live independently. When you are living with a 'supported lodgings carer' you will have your own bedroom and front door key with access to a kitchen, bathroom, sitting room etc. You will be expected to contribute to the cost of your room, food and utilities. You will get support to help claim benefits or to help you budget your income to cover these payments.

You can find out more about our Supported Lodgings scheme here bcpcouncil.gov.uk/supportedlodgings

Semi-independent accommodation

There is a range of accommodation and support services available for young people aged between 16 and 21 years old.

The accommodation is varied and offered by a range of service providers, it is their role to ensure that every young person has an allocated key worker and an agreed support plan. The plan will be devised together and will include realistic aims, life skills training, options for developing independence skills and will detail the role of the support worker along with their responsibilities. The service role is to prepare young people to progress towards

living in their own accommodation.

When you live in semi-independent accommodation you will have your own, lockable room but may have to share other facilities such as a kitchen and bathroom. Your social worker or personal advisor will be able to advise you further about this.

Independent living Experience independence flats

These flats are designed to give a first experience of living independently, where young people will need to cook, clean, and pay bills as they would in their own property. This independence living experience is designed as a stepping stone towards other independence options.

Move on accommodation

You may feel that you would like to live totally independently but know support is available if needed. Within BCP there are some self-contained flats which young people can make their home. Tenants are able to sign a license with housing and use a 'setting up home' grant to furnish the property. This provides the opportunity to develop your independence skills and move on when you are ready. The properties are specifically allocated to 18 to 24 year olds.

On 'Moving in Day' we will make sure that the right person is there to support you and make sure everything goes smoothly. We realise this can be an exciting but also scary time. We will help you settle in and make sure all practical things are in place such as water, gas and electricity.

Allocation of Gold Band Status

When you are ready, we will support you to secure independent accommodation. Usually, this will be a studio or one bedroom flat whereby you have signed a tenancy or license agreement meaning that you are responsible for paying rent,

being a good neighbour and keeping the accommodation clean, tidy and in a good condition.

When this decision is made you can apply to be included on BCP Council's Housing Register, you will be offered 'Gold Band Status' which means you can bid for properties included on the register

AQA: Unit Award Scheme (UAS)

In order to help prepare for independence alongside group training activities such as cooking and budgeting, you will have the opportunity to learn new skills and have them formally recognised with a certificate issued by AQA. You will learn the 21 government recognised life skills

to prepare for independent living. You and your carer will work together to achieve the skills required and you will have access to an assigned UAS Representative from the supported lodgings and fostering team.



6

Health and emotional wellbeing for care leavers



Health and selfcare

We recognise how important it is to stay healthy, both physically and emotionally. Below are some of the ways we can support you to stay healthy and look after your physical and mental health.

Your social worker or personal advisor can:

- give information on healthy living
- give information on getting help to pay for prescriptions
- give information on intimacy and healthy relationships
- give information about LGBTI support services
- give information about health drop-in centres
- support you to register with a GP
- support you to register with a dentist
- support you to move from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to adult services
- give information about counselling services that are available locally

- support you to access appropriate services for your children, if you are a young parent
- provide you with advice, guidance or support in accessing services that are available in your area
- go with you to appointments or meetings if you are unsure or need support.
- there is a mental health pathway practitioner available

The Care Leaver Nurse can:

- ensure you have a rising 18 health assessment the month before you turn 18, this will include you receiving a summary of your health whilst in care – sometimes known as a health passport (for example, any birth information we may have) and information on accessing the health records held about you
- support you to access services for your emotional health and wellbeing if you need them
- help you maintain a healthy lifestyle through advice and support on a range of topics

- when you turn 18, the care leaver nurse service is available – just ask for details through your personal advisor. They will be available to support you with any health queries and can offer a 1-1 meeting at a weekly drop in
- support you to access adult mental health services including counselling; attend hospital and community clinic appointments including sexual health services.

Other health services

You can use [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) to locate services local to you; your nurse, social worker or personal advisor can offer support with this too.

- you can contact Dorset Sexual Health services for advice and appointments on **0300 3031948**
- GPs provide some contraception and sexual health screening
- pharmacies provide Emergency Hormonal Contraception (EHC)
- there is an online provision for contraceptive pills and STI screening for over 16s who have a Dorset postcode called SH:24. This can be accessed online at sh24.org.uk
- dental Health is important however even with NHS dentists can still be expensive, you can get help if you are pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months or are still in full time education between the ages of 16-18. The NHS dental health charges change each year; you can find an NHS dentist near you on the NHS website at [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

- you are eligible for free eye tests and vouchers towards glasses/contact lenses if you are still in full time education between the ages of 16-18
- you can get help paying for prescriptions if you are still in full time education between the ages of 16-18
- if you are on a low income or in receipt of benefits you can apply for a Health Credit Certificate (HC2 or HC3) to support free dental care, eye care and prescriptions.

We recognise how important making friends and developing relationships is to your overall wellbeing. As well as support from a social worker or personal advisor, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, such as:

- providing you with a matched volunteer mentor
- continuing to support contact with the 'Independent Visitor' you had while you were in care

- help you to maintain or regain contact with people special to you or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers or social workers
- provide you with information about regular groups that take place within the service, where you can meet and interact with other care leavers.

7

Becoming a parent



Being a new parent can be both a very happy experience and very scary at the same time. As with all new parents, you will have access to a full range of services from the NHS. This includes your GP, a midwifery service and health visiting service who will support you while you are pregnant, and after your baby is born.

Our Family Resource Service will offer a robust support package before baby arrives offering advice, guidance and support over a period of months.

If you would like extra support and if you and your personal advisor agree, we will be able to allocate support at an early stage of your pregnancy to offer practical support about caring for a baby alongside the importance of a good attachment and what that looks like.

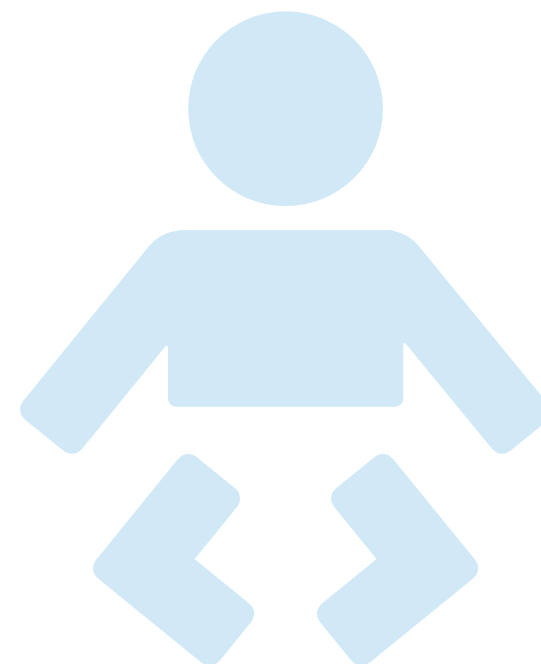
Alongside this, there are additional services that we can offer through our early help services which can include groups where you meet other young mothers and fathers and groups where you can learn more about being a parent. Young fathers can feel left out, and our services are geared up to supporting them as much as we support young mothers.

When you do become a parent, we will prioritise our assistance to you with accessing children centres and networks of support, so you don't feel isolated. We will also help you to access 15 hours of free childcare when your child reaches two, and 30 hours when they turn three years old.

We can assign you a link worker in the Children's Centre to offer you and your child the best start in life.

We will put you in touch with an organisation called Safer Families who have volunteers who will befriend and support you and provide practical help such as baby sitting.

For more information, please speak with your doctor, midwife, health visitor, personal advisor or social worker.



8

Information regarding participation in society



At BCP we want our care leavers to be active members of society and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have. Your opinions matter to us; they help influence how services are delivered to you and how Children's Services can further develop their practice.

We can help you participate in society in the following ways:

- INSIGHT also known as the 'Care Leavers Forum' gives you the opportunity to have your voice heard and make suggestions on the services you receive
- INSIGHT meet bi-weekly for a two-hour session and you will have an opportunity to be involved in activities such as participation and research, staff recruitment and delivering training to staff, volunteers, foster carers and counsellors
- our care leavers have told us that they really appreciate the support that meeting as a group can provide, so BCP has pledged to provide ongoing INSIGHT
- access until you are 25 years old as needed

- you can meet the Council Leadership team and speak to them about how to improve things for children and young people in care or care experienced young people
- take part in interview panels

We will communicate with you by sending out a quarterly newsletter and for information and news such as:

- groups and events, you may wish to join including events at Christmas and in the summer
- national care leavers celebrations and a big celebration of our care leavers achievements and accomplishments
- relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your talents and interests
- work experience offers within BCP Council departments
- voluntary work that we think you may be interested in
- advice and help to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver.

As a young adult, you will have your own opinions and views which might differ to ours. Whilst we may not always agree, we will listen to you and try to resolve any differences so we can move forward in a mutually respectful way. We will also help you when you feel you have been treated unfairly and support you to challenge this.

The Advocacy Service, commissioned from **Action for Children**, is there to support you to speak-up and take part in decisions that affect your life. They are here to tell you about your rights and entitlements and help you understand things clearly. This service is separate from

your social worker or personal advisor and conversations remain confidential, provided it does not put yourself or others at risk of harm.

Please see below some of the ways an advocate can help you:

- if you are confused by why certain decisions have been made about you
- if you would like an Advocate to come with you to important meetings such as your 'looked after children' (LAC) reviews or pathway planning meetings
- if you need help to write a wishes and feelings statement to help you say what you want to say and make sure people listen to you
- if you need information or advice about your rights
- if you are unhappy about the way children's services are treating you
- if you are worried about plans being made for you
- if you need support in making a formal complaint.

We happy to come and meet with you wherever you feel comfortable. You can email us directly if you wish at: ACComplaint@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Complaints

Children's social care is part of the children's services. We accept that things can go wrong, but we want to get them right. If you are not happy about the way you have been treated, we encourage you to speak to the team/worker who are supporting you to see if they can work with you to sort things out. If you are still unhappy, you have a right to complain, and your complaint may help improve services for everyone.

We will always ask if you want independent support in bringing your complaint and then signpost you to the service to make a referral for an advocate.

If you're not happy with the service you've had from us, please let us know within one year of the event you want to tell us about. It is helpful if you can also tell us what you would like to happen as a result of your complaint.

The information here explains how to complain about one of our services. If your complaint is about a residential school or a children's home you will need to contact Ofsted.

How to comment or complain about children's social care services

If you're unhappy about the service you are receiving, make sure you tell the staff that are providing the service, so that they can correct the problem quickly.

If your problem is not solved, you can ask for your complaint to be formally registered. All complaints must follow our complaints procedure.

You can see our complaints procedure here [bournemouth.gov.uk/ContactUs/CommentsandComplaints/FeedbackforChildrensSocialCare.aspx](https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/ContactUs/CommentsandComplaints/FeedbackforChildrensSocialCare.aspx)

9

Who can help?



Education, employment and training

- **UCAS** offer information about courses available and help applying to university
0371 4680468
ucas.com
- **Government website** gives advice about financial support available to students
gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance
- **Job Centre Plus** website for support with finding work and making benefit claim. Find your local branch here
gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus
- **Princes Trust** offer 12-week Personal Development Programmes
0800 842 842
princes-trust.org.uk
- **National apprenticeship Service** information to support with apprenticeship applications
0800 015 0400
gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

- **Government Job Help** website lists jobs and offers tips including which sectors are recruiting
jobhelp.campaign.gov.uk
- **The National Careers Service** offers help and support with careers, learning and training choices
0800 100 900
nationalcareers.service.gov.uk
- **16-19 Bursary Fund** website has information on access to extra funding for 16-19 year olds
gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund
- **Student Finance** information about student loans for higher education
0300 100 0607
gov.uk/student-finance
- **Apprenticeships Website** contains information on what you need to do to become an apprentice
apprenticeships.gov.uk

Money and finance

- **Step Change** offer free, impartial and confidential debt advice
0800 138 1111
stepchange.org

- **Citizens Advice** can support you with issues around debt and money, including help with debt, budgeting, rent arrears, banking
01202 290967
citizensadvicebcp.org.uk
- **Turn2us** helps people access the money available to them through welfare benefits, grants and other help
0808 802 2000
turn2us.org.uk
- **Money Saving Expert Website** has general advice and tips on how to save money
moneysavingexpert.com
- **Rees Foundation and Crisis Fund** offer financial support for care leavers in emergency situations **0330 094 5645**
reesfoundation.org/our-services/financial-support
- **Unaccompanied asylum seekers Asylum Aid** assists refugees on their applications for asylum in the UK and offers advice
020 7354 9264
asylumaid.org.uk

- **Asylum Support Tribunal** considers appeals against decisions made by the UK Border Agency
020 7538 6171
gov.uk/appeal-first-tier-asylum-support-tribunal
- **Refugee Council** is for refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK
refugeecouncil.org.uk

Housing and accommodation

- **Citizens Advice** offers a range of housing advice on areas including renting, repairs, council tax, rent arrears, discrimination, moving and improving your home and problems where you live
01202 290967
citizensadvicebcp.org.uk
- **Shelter** offers advice and guidance on housing matters
0808 800 4444
shelter.org

- **The Albert Kennedy Trust** helps young people up to the age of 25 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex and are homeless or at risk of homelessness
020 7831 6562
akt.org.uk

Health and Wellbeing

- **Talk to Frank** for information on drugs and alcohol
0300 123 6600
talktofrank.com
- **We are with you** offer an online chat service for support on drug, alcohol and mental health issues
wearewithyou.org.uk
- **Samaritans** offers a safe place for you to talk any time you like about what is getting to you
116 123
samaritans.org

- **Brook** provide online information and advice on sexual health or relationships and can help you find the right sexual health services near you
brook.org.uk
- **Young Stonewall** supports and empowers young lesbian, gay, bi and trans people to live free from discrimination and fulfil their potential
youngstonewall.org.uk
- **Children's Commissioner** promotes and protects the rights of children, especially the most vulnerable, and stands up for their views and interests
020 7783 8330
childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
- **Help at Hand** offer advice and help for children in care or living away from home
0800 528 0731
childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand
- **Coram Voice** support children and young people in care and care leavers
0808 800 5792
coramvoice.org.uk

- **Become Care Advice Line** for those in care or care leavers
0800 023 2033
becomecharity.org.uk/contact
- **Up In Poole** is dedicated to supporting children and young people in Poole about their future and finding their voice
01202 262291
upinpoole.co.uk

Domestic violence and sexual abuse

- **Bournemouth Community Support and Women's Refuge helpline** for someone living in a violent or abusive relationship and who needs to access information or accommodation
01202 547755
bcha.org.uk/our-services/supported-housing/domestic-abuse/finding-support
- **Citizen Advice Bureau** can offer you advice and information to access help and support
01202 290967
citizensadvicebcp.org.uk

- **STARS Sexual Trauma and Recovery Service Dorset** charity that offers one to one support for anyone in Dorset who has experienced any form of sexual violence at any time in their lives
01202 308855
starsdorset.org
- **Victim Support** offer support and advice to people who are victims of crime
0300 303 0163 (Dorset)
0808 168 9111 (National)
victimsupport.org.uk
- **National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV)** a free, fast and supportive service to help those experiencing domestic violence and abuse
0800 970 2070
ncdv.org.uk
- **Refuge Domestic Violence Helpline** support women and children who have experienced violence and abuse
0808 2000 247 (open 24/7)
refuge.org.uk
- **Mankind Initiative** for men experiencing/have experienced domestic abuse
01823 334244
mankind.org.uk

- **Survivors UK** for men who have been raped or sexually abused
0845 122 1201
survivorsuk.org

Forced marriage and honour-based abuse or crimes

- **Forced Marriage Unit** for anyone who believes they are going to be forced to marry as well as anyone who wants to leave a forced marriage
020 7008 0151
gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage
- **Karma Nirvana** for those experiencing so called 'honour' based abuse and/or forced marriage
0800 5999 247
karmanirvana.org.uk
- **Southall Black Sisters** advises those experiencing domestic abuse, honour crimes and forced marriage
020 8571 0800
southallblacksisters.org.uk

Young People

- **Childline** has a useful website and helpline for children and young people seeking help and support
0800 1111
childline.org.uk
- **The Hideout Website** helps young people understand domestic abuse, and how to take positive action if it's happening to you
thehideout.org.uk
- **The Mix** is a confidential helpline for people under 25
0808 808 4994
themix.org.uk
- **Respect Not Fear** is a website for young people with information on healthy relationships and where to get help if you are in an abusive relationship
respectnotfear.co.uk

Stalking














- **The National Stalking Helpline** run by the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, provides information and guidance to anyone who has been affected by stalking.
0808 802 0300
suzylamplugh.org
- **Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service** provides advise and advocacy services to victims of stalking
020 7840 8960
paladinservice.co.uk
- **You Trust Dorset** domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking specialist services for the South Coast
0800 032 5204
theyoustrust.org.uk/service/you-first/domestic-abuse-services

People who identify as abusers and want to stop

- **Respect** for people who identify they are abusive to their partners and want to stop
0808 802 4040
respectphoneline.org.uk



BCP Pledges to care experienced young people:

	BCP Council pledges		#1. You will have use of a computer or tablet.		
#2. You will receive information about where you live before you move there.		#3. Time with your family will be led by your wishes and feelings.		#4. You will be supported to make friends and have new experiences.	
	#5. You will have a bank account.		#6. You will have one (or more) personal objects that are comforting and important to you.		
#7. You will feel listened to and involved in making plans about your own life.		#8. Social workers will make the change from one worker to another as smooth as possible for you.		#9. You will be offered a minimum of one social or physical activity per week.	