**Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service: Social Worker and Personal Adviser Support to Care Leavers between 16 and 18, Who Does What?**

# **Introduction**

Between the ages of 16 -18, your social worker will complete all legal work whilst you are a looked after child (under 18) and introduce you to your personal adviser (PA) in the care leavers service. Your social worker and PA will work with you together with your independent reviewing officer (IRO) to ensure you’re supported in the best way you can be.

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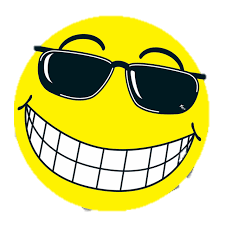
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# **Accommodation (where you live):**

* Your social worker should visit you every 6 - 12 weeks dependant on what has been agreed until you are 18 years old as required by the law.
* At 17 your social worker and personal adviser (PA) will work with you to find out where in the county you’d like to live and register you on the housing register. This will be done by contacting the housing team and making sure your plans for your accommodation post 18 are on track, this is called an accommodation panel. Your independent reviewing officer (IRO) will make sure this is done at your looked after child review.
* From 16 years old, your social worker will discuss with you the possibility to stay with your carers in a "staying put" arrangement when you turn 18. If agreed by all parties, then the IRO will confirm this at your looked after child review that takes place closest to your 17th birthday.
* You, your social worker, and PA will create an Independence Plan. This means you’ll all work together to make sure you’re ready for independence. This will be added to your Pathway Plan by your social worker.
* Whether you decide to stay with your carers or move into supported accommodation, your social worker will request the funding for this before you are 17.5 years old.
* Your social worker / PA will support you with understanding your roles and responsibilities when you leave / turn 18 years old, e.g. teaching you about different types of tenancies and licenses. We know from Care Leavers how important it is that this work starts early so we would really encourage all young people to work with their carers, social workers, and PAs to develop their skills as best as possible.

# **If we’re worried about your safety:**

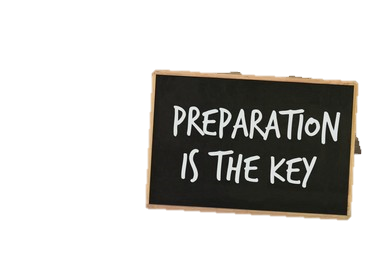
* Your social worker will create a Safety Plan and this will be shared with you. This plan will outline how you and services can work together to keep you safe.
* Your social worker will share this plan with all professionals working with you to ensure you get the best support you can.
* Your social worker or your PA may refer you to other services or experts to support your needs. They will discuss this with you.

# **Your education and employment:**

* If you have an educational and health care plan (EHCP), your social worker will make sure this is shared with your PA to ensure you’re supported in the best way you can be.
* Your social worker will discuss your plans for years 12 / 13 and will add this to your Pathway Plans.
* Your social worker will attend your personal education plan (PEP) meetings with you and will add any relevant information from the PEP to your Pathway Plan.
* Your PA will work with you to set long term goals and help you to achieve them throughout your transition to adulthood. These will be added and reviewed every 6 months in your Pathway Plan.



# **Planning your care:**

* From 15 years old your social worker will complete a Pathway Plan with you. This plan will detail all the support you will receive and anything you need to support you to reach your best potential. You will get a copy of this plan. Your IRO will make sure your pathway plans are completed at your looked after reviews.
* Your Pathway Plan will be reviewed and updated with you every 6 months from 16 years and 3 months old until you leave care. If there is a big change in your life, e.g. moving home, then your plan will be updated before 6 months.
* Between the ages of 16 - 17.5 years old, your social worker will make sure you have ID - this includes your birth certificate and a passport.
* Your social worker / PA will support you to get a provisional driving licence too.
* Your social worker will give you information on how you can access your records that are held on Surrey County Council systems if you want it.
* Your social worker will offer you a copy of your later life letter. This will also be shared with your PA and saved on your records.
* Your social worker will give you a copy of your health passport.
* If necessary, your PA will support you to claim universal credit to support you financially.



# **State Benefits:**

* If you have an additional need or disability, your social worker will find out if you’re entitled to a disability living allowance (DLA) from the state. If you are eligible for this benefit, your social worker will apply for this when you turn 16 years old. When you turn 18 years old, DLA changes to personal independence payments (PIP). Your social worker will ensure you’ve transferred to PIP, if appropriate.
* If you are entitled to any other state benefits or financial support, your PA or social worker will support you to claim these. If there is a waiting period to get these benefits, your PA will apply for some funding to support you during this time.

# **If you are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person:**

* Your social worker will confirm your immigration status with the Home Office and will add this to your file.
* If you are unable to access state benefits or to work because of your asylum status then your social worker will ensure you have a living allowance to cover everyday living costs.
* Your social worker and PA will check in regularly with the Home Office for any updates on your asylum status and inform you of any changes.
* Your social worker will work with legal teams and ensure you have a representative from the legal team if applicable.



# **Transition to adulthood (Children with disabilities / Looked After Children):**

* Your social worker will ensure your Pathway Plan is completed in conjunction with the transition to adulthood plan.
* Your social worker will ensure that a referral is sent to the Transitions Team and / or adult social care / mental health services for a Care Act Assessment, if a young person has any additional needs or disabilities.
* If you are a young person in residential care (including residential schools), at 17 years old your social worker will ensure a referral is done to Transitions / Adult Services to obtain post 18 funding.



