

Information for

care leavers

in Leicester



Leicester
City Council

A guide to services for care leavers

A guide to the local offer for

This booklet describes the support and financial help you should receive from Leicester City Council.

The support you are entitled to is outlined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. What you will receive will depend on how long you have been in care and how old you are but may include help with housing, education and training. In April 2017 the Children and Social Work Act became law and the provision for care leavers has been extended to include young people aged 22-25.

Who can we help?

The Leaving Care Act has defined three new categories of care leavers – eligible, relevant and former relevant.

- **Eligible child** – a child aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still looked after.
- **Relevant child** – a child aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (such as in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16 but immediately before that were looked after.
- **Former relevant child** – a Young person over 18 who was previously ‘eligible’ or ‘relevant’. Local authorities support this group at least until age 21, or up to age 25 where the young person requests support.
- **Qualifying child** – any young person under 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who ceases to be looked after or accommodated in a variety of other settings, or privately fostered, after the age of 16. This also includes young people who are under a special guardianship order.

The type of help you can expect to receive

	Eligible	Relevant	Former relevant (18-21)	Former relevant (21-25)	Qualifying
Advice and assistance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pathway assessment	✓	✓	✓	Where required	As appropriate and if assisted with education/training
Pathway plan (and review)	✓	✓	✓	Where required	
Personal advisor	✓	✓	✓	Where required	
Keep ‘in touch’	✓	✓	✓	✓	As appropriate and if assisted with education/training
Personal allowance	✓	✓			
Provide/maintain in suitable accommodation		✓			
Financial support to maintain education, training or employment placement	✓	✓	✓	*	*
Vacation accommodation (in higher education or residential further education courses)			✓	*	✓

*Discretionary subject to assessment.

Preparing for leaving care

Pathway assessment and pathway planning

We have a responsibility to help you prepare to leave care and this will start, formally, when you are 15 years and nine months. Your social worker will arrange a pathway planning meeting. You will have the opportunity to be fully involved in this process.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- agree an action plan for the pathway assessment and pathway plan
- prepare you for leaving care
- identify and allocate a personal advisor for you

The next step will be to agree your pathway plan. This is a plan about your future and should cover:

- your ambitions and goals
- your finances
- accommodation
- education, employment and training (EET) plans
- health
- family and friends
- identity
- independence skills

Your pathway plan will be reviewed at six-monthly intervals (or more frequently should the plan change).

We must review the plan until you are 21 (up to the age of 25 where you still require a pathway plan).

To make sure that the things agreed in your pathway plan are carried out, a personal advisor will be identified and allocated to you in addition to your social worker.

Information for you

What is the 16+ team?

The 16+ team provides a dedicated personal advisor role for looked after young people and care leavers in Leicester aged between 16 and 21 and up to 25 where the young person specifically requests support.

The 16+ team works closely with you, your social worker, your carers and other professionals to help ensure that you are ready and able to make a successful transition to adulthood.

What we do

The personal advisors in the team come with a range of skills and experiences, and will support and advocate on your behalf. This will include carrying out a six month pathway review meeting with you and other services including Connexions, health, housing, education and other organisations who may be supporting you.

16+ team drop-in service

We also offer a drop-in service for care leavers to access support from the duty worker each working day. This service is available at Connexions, 2 Wellington Street, 9am-4.30pm on Monday to Thursday, and 9am-4pm on Friday.

Care leavers are expected to contact their own personal advisor in the first instance. The duty worker is available for advice if your personal advisor is not available.

Pathway planning

Your personal advisor will get in touch with you around your 16th birthday to explain their role. They will remain involved with you whilst you are in care, and after you leave care, they will attend your pathway meetings along with other agencies. They will also take on some tasks for you, but most importantly they will advocate on your behalf.

Financial entitlements

The type of financial help you receive from us will depend on whether you are an eligible, relevant, former relevant or qualifying young person. The details below are a guide to the kind of help you might receive. Your personal advisor will help you to understand how Leicester's allowances and the benefits system work.

	Eligible	Relevant	Former relevant (18-21)	Former relevant (21-25)	Qualifying
Income maintenance					
Personal allowance	✓	✓			
Accommodation					
Semi-independent	✓	✓			
Independent	✓	✓			
Staying put			✓		
Higher education accommodation			✓	*	
Vacation accommodation (if in higher education or residential further education)			✓	*	✓
Informal accommodation arrangements (assessed on individual circumstances)	✓	✓			
Council tax exemption for young people living in Leicester	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	
Priority banding when ready for housing in your first tenancy in a Leicester property	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	

Financial entitlements

	Eligible	Relevant	Former relevant (18-21)	Former relevant (21-25)	Qualifying
Rent free period of two weeks when moving into your first independent tenancy in a Leicester property	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	
Standard grants					
Christmas/festival	✓	✓			
Birthday	✓	✓			
Leaving care grant/setting up home	✓	✓	✓		
Crisis grant/loans	✓	✓	✓		
ID such as a passport	✓	✓	✓		
Education, employment and training					
Fees, materials, special equipment, other associated costs	✓	✓	*	*	*
Travel costs	✓	✓	*	*	*
Higher education finance package (£2,000 bursary, travel costs, IT costs, book allowance, set-up costs, materials costs)			✓	*	

*Discretionary payment subject to assessment.

Financial support

Available where specific need has been identified through the pathway assessment and plan.

	Eligible	Relevant	Former relevant (18-21)	Former relevant (21-25)	Qualifying
Costs associated with special needs (dietary, disability, pregnancy)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cost of child care	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Clothing	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Contact with family/significant relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cultural/religious needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Counselling or therapeutic needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Hobbies and leisure	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Driving lessons/provisional licence (if agreed in pathway plan prior to leaving care)	✓	✓	✓		

How payments will be made

Payments will be made directly into your bank account in most circumstances. This will be discussed with you by your social worker or personal advisor.

Education, employment and training

Your personal advisor will help you to achieve the best possible opportunities for education, training and employment. They will liaise with Connexions and other services and agencies to do this.

Celebrating success

Each year we hold an event to celebrate the success and achievements of our children in care and care leavers. Your social worker or personal advisor will discuss this with you.

Complaints

It's your right to speak out. If you have a problem or complaint about our service for children and young people we want to know.

The first step to making things better is to talk to someone you trust about the problem. Talking to someone can often stop a small worry becoming a big one.

You could try talking to:

- your social worker
- your personal advisor
- a member of staff where you live
- someone who looks after you, such as a foster carer
- a children's rights officer. This person is employed by Leicester City Council and will make sure you know your rights and that you are treated fairly.

To contact a children's rights officer, call 0116 454 2420.

If you are still concerned you can contact the complaints manager by calling 0116 454 2430 or emailing youngpeople.complaints@leicester.gov.uk

Remember your rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says that children and young people have the right to tell people what their views are on all things that affect them, and to be listened to.

The 1989 Children Act says that children and young people's views about their care must be listened to.

Keeping in touch

All personal advisors have mobile phones and office phones, their numbers should be written in the back of this booklet.

For emergencies, including out of hours, you can contact the duty and assessment service on 0116 454 1004.

Other organisations

We work closely with other organisations that provide additional support. Find out more at leicester.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adoption-and-fostering/looked-after-children/leaving-care-support

Your personal advisor

Your personal advisor is:

.....

Their office telephone number is:

.....

Their mobile telephone number is:

.....

Their team manager's name is:

.....

