



Royal Greenwich

Our Local Offer to Care leavers

Introduction

This leaflet tells you about the support we have in Royal Greenwich for you as a care leaver.

Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, it doesn't mean that we have stopped caring about you. We want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for help.



We will continue to keep the Royal Greenwich Promise.

Although each young person will be different, we would expect the support that you need to gradually reduce over time as you continue to mature.

Most young people, whether they have been in care or not, find it hard during their move to independent living. We will do our best to help you when you have problems or when things don't work out the way you expected, even if you have previously said that you don't want our support.

We have written this with the help of young people in care and care leavers. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we offer are what you need.

To be able to get the support set out in this leaflet, you must have been in care for a period of at least 13 weeks (or periods amounting to 13 weeks) which began after age 14 and included some time after your 16th birthday. If you are not sure whether you qualify for support, then ask a Personal Advisor.

This leaflet is available on the Royal Greenwich website, or you can ask your personal advisor to request another copy.

From time to time we update this offer, so we will ask for your address so that we can be sure that you have the newest version.

The Royal Greenwich

PROMISE

The Council as your Corporate parents, makes this promise* to you – the children, young people and care leavers we look after.

WE PROMISE TO:

Provide you with a safe and happy home

Respect you and your identity

Offer you support and guidance throughout your time in care

Make sure you get a good education and help you to achieve your aspirations

Involve you in decisions about your life

Support you to be active and stay healthy

Ensure you feel fully prepared for your transition into adulthood

*[We cannot promise to do everything you ask, but we will always explain the reasons why.]

Your rights



A pathway plan, advice and support from a personal advisor

Your personal advisor is there to help you prepare to live independently and offer advice and support after you leave care up to the age of 25.

Personal advisors should talk to you about what support you need, and up until you are 21, record this information on your pathway plan. Your pathway plan is written in consultation with you and the important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals and identifies exactly what support you will receive from us.

The amount of support you receive from your personal advisor will depend on what you want and your individual circumstances.

We will try to make sure you keep the same personal advisor though this will not always be possible.

A suitable place to live

You have the right to suitable accommodation. We will encourage you to stay in care until you are 18 since most young people still live at home with their families at that age.

However, if you choose to leave care after you are 16 but before you are 18, we will support you to ensure that you have a suitable place to live, which

could include with your family.

Support to engage in education and training

We want to make sure that you have the support to achieve your goals in life and we will provide help with expenses linked to employment, education and training.

Be heard and taken seriously

You should be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care.

If you want to challenge decisions about the support you receive, you have the right to an independent advocate.

An independent advocate can inform you about your rights and help you be heard in meetings. They are separate from Children's Services. You can contact them at advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk

If you want to complain, you can email childrens-complaints@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or call 020 8921 2057.

You have the right to see the information we keep about you, including the files and records written about you when you were in care. If you want to see your records, talk to your personal advisor.

Your housing

Your personal advisor will help you to find the best place to live.

If you and your foster carers agree that you would like to stay with them after you are 18, we will support you to remain with them. This can last until you're 21.

You might decide that semi-independent living is best for you. This means that you could be living in a house with several young people, a flat with support from someone who visits you or a house with staff on the site. You have priority access to supported accommodation in the borough and your personal advisor can help with the bidding process.

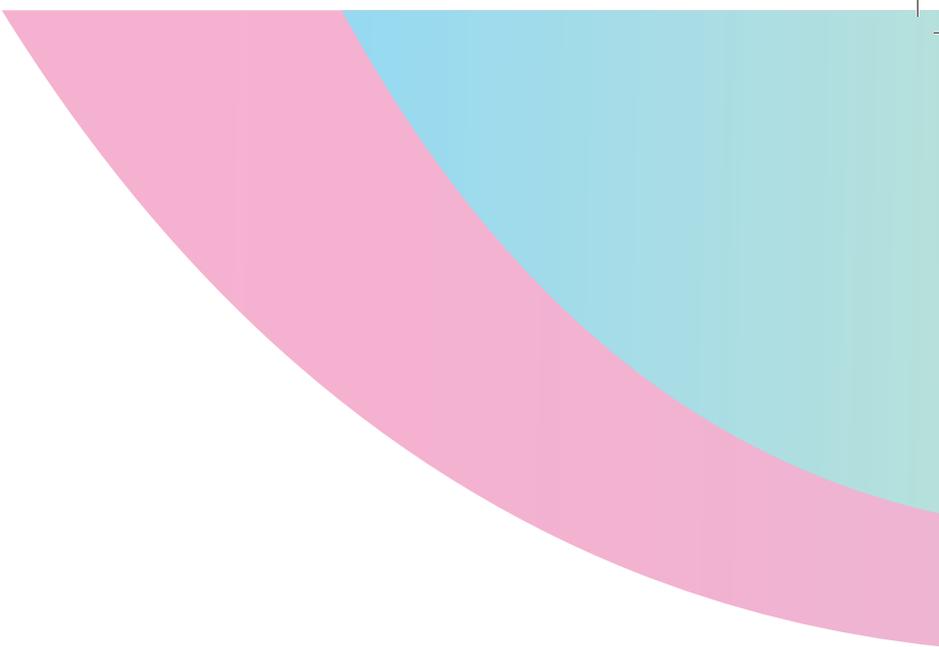
Many providers of semi independent living offer a start pack. If they don't, we can help you buy essential items up to £150.

If you want to live independently, we will work with Housing Services to come up with options for you. We will work with you to consider the location, safety, bills and rent to see if it's suitable.

We know it can be hard having your own place for the first time. We can offer help with your expenses:

- Help you to claim housing benefit/universal credit if you are entitled to them. Once your claim is in process we can give you up to £50 a week for up to eight weeks until your benefits start.
- If you have been in care to Greenwich and are living in Greenwich, you will not have to pay Council Tax until you are 25 years old
- Practical support with moving and furnishing your own home. We can provide you with a setting up grant of up to £2,000 to help you to set up your first home. We can go shopping with you and suggest ways to get the most for your money. You will be asked to provide receipts for anything you buy.

We will work with you to help you to settle in and maintain your tenancy. We know that sometimes things go wrong and there might be a time when you could be at risk of losing your tenancy. If this happens, you should contact your personal advisor as soon as possible who can help you.



Your

education, training

We want you to succeed in your education, training and employment whatever you choose to do. We will ask you how you are doing and be ready to celebrate your achievements with you or offer support when you need it.

We are committed to helping you achieve in education and training. Even after you have left care, the Virtual School will continue to support you until you complete your post 16 education. Depending upon your personal circumstances the Virtual School might be able to offer assistance until the age of 25 if you are still in education.

Your personal advisor can help with careers information and advice, such as help to develop your CV, work experience, advice about university, college and job interviews, including what you might wear.

University

If you want to go to university we can help you choose the right course and university that matches your talents and interests. We can help with travel costs to open days.

Many universities offer bursaries specifically for care leavers. The amounts vary and can be from £1,000 to £3,000 per year. You can see which universities offer

this kind of support by visiting Propel at <http://propel.org.uk>

We will provide you with a £2000 bursary for your first degree course. This will be paid over three years £667 in year 1 and £666 in years 2 and 3.

You must attend your course to receive this payment and we require proof from the university that you are attending and remaining on the course.

We will pay for your university accommodation; and provide you with travel costs where applicable at the start and end of the term to return to Greenwich. We can also advise you about living arrangements during the holidays. We can help you get where available tuition fees and maintenance loans.

Further Education

If you are 16 to 19 and in education, you should receive £1,200 each academic year from your college.

We can pay up to £20 a week for a bus pass to help you get to and from the college.

and employment

Apprenticeships and jobs

If you would rather do an apprenticeship you will receive a bursary of £1,000.

As a care leaver you are guaranteed an interview for an apprenticeship with the Royal Borough of Greenwich. If you want to know more, talk to your personal advisor.

We want to make sure that you don't receive less on an apprenticeship than you would if you were on benefits. We will make sure that you are £20 better off per month.

Depending on what is in your Pathway Plan we can provide support to buy tools, equipment, essential clothing and books.

Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) can help care leavers get training and matches with local job opportunities. It provides free careers information, advice and guidance, employment support, training, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities including with the Council.

GLLaB works in partnership with a range of organisations to assist care leavers finding the best chance of a job in Royal Greenwich and wider area. (see Useful Contacts)



Your

health and identity



Health and development

Your physical and mental health are important. You will continue to have health assessments each year until your 18th birthday. These will be carried out by the LAC health nurse. If you have specific health needs your personal advisor will discuss with you how these can be met and this will be included in your Pathway Plan.

After your final health assessment before you turn 18 we will give you your health summary which will include your immunisation record, a copy of your last health assessment and where to go for health advice and information.

Your personal advisor will work with you to ensure that you are registered with a GP and dentist when you leave care.

Becoming an adult can be a tough time for everyone and you may feel frustrated, angry or upset, especially during the first few months after leaving care. Talk to your personal advisor if you are feeling unhappy and they will help you to work through these problems or put you in touch with someone who can help.

If you need help with substance misuse or access to sexual health or mental health services, your personal advisor can signpost you to the right services and come

with you if that is what you want.

Your personal advisor can tell you if you are eligible for free prescriptions, dental care and glasses and help you with any forms that have to be filled out.

Regular exercise is good for your physical and mental health. You can apply to the Health and Wellbeing panel for a bursary of up to £150 a year or local gym membership to help you to keep fit. Talk to your personal advisor for details.

Documents and identity

You will usually need formal identification of some kind to start work, to claim benefits, to set up a bank account and to prove you are who you are.

When you move to be independent, it is important that you have the right documents.

When you leave care to become independent, you should already have a National Insurance Number, a birth certificate and a passport.

If you are an unaccompanied young person and there are immigration issues to be resolved, your Personal Advisor will help you get seek the right documentation required to prove you are who you say you are.



Your money



Keeping track of money, living within your means and keeping out of problem debt are important skills for living independently.

We will support you to develop these through one to one work or your personal advisor can help you to access the Money Project where you will learn how to manage your money and earn a Level 1 Certificate before you are considered for a priority housing bid.

If you were in care for more than 12 months you should have a Junior ISA or a Child Trust Fund, which was set up with £200. When you become 16 you can make decisions about how you want this money invested but you cannot access this money until you are 18. Your personal advisor will be able to give you information about the money in your account and tell you how to access it.

Some young people may also have other savings. Those savings are there to support you as you move towards adulthood, so you should think carefully before spending this money.

You will need a bank account to pay in wages, grants and any bursaries and so that you can access your money. If you do not have a bank account, your personal advisor can advise and support you to get one set up.

Even when things are going well, emergencies can arise. Your Pathway Plan should always contain arrangements

to help you deal with these.

Arrangements may be made to assist in an emergency. This could involve a small cash payment or payment in kind. This should not be relied upon and therefore your personal advisor will work to encourage you to manage without making this a regular occurrence.

Your relationships

As well as support from your personal advisor, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support if you want it.

This might include:

- Supporting you to find a mentor/peer mentor.
- Helping you to maintain or regain contact with people special to you or who cared for you in the past, like members of your family, former foster carers, independent visitors or social workers.

Your

participation



We want you to be an active member of society, and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have. We will encourage and help you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can vote in local and national elections.

If you want to volunteer in the community, your personal advisor can help you to find opportunities.

Royal Greenwich has a range of groups, events and

forums that allow you to raise awareness of specific issues that affect young people to help to improve services, gain new skills and meet new people.

As a care leaver you can make your voice heard through our Care Leavers' Forum. Your personal advisor can give you more information or you can email greenwich@participationpeople.com.

Care leavers:

Special circumstances

Becoming a parent

If you become a parent, you might need some additional support. In Greenwich the Family Nurse Partnership provides a home visiting service to support young first time parents (aged 22 years and under) from early pregnancy until your child is two years old.

Custody

If you are in custody, your Personal Advisor will keep in touch with you until you are 21 and after that up until age 25 if you request it. If you leave prison before you are 25, we can work with others to help you with the transition if you want that support.

When you are in custody, we can offer you pocket money to help with small purchases up to when you reach 21.

Useful contacts

Leaving Care Organisations

Care Leavers' Association

www.careleavers.com
info@careleavers.com
0161 236 1980

Care Leavers' Foundation

www.thecareleaversfoundation.org
01678 540 598

Housing

1st Base Housing

020 8921 8825
The Point, 47 Woolwich New Road
Woolwich SE18 6EW

Housing Options & Support Service

020 8921 2863
020 8854 8888 (out of hours)
housing-options-support@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Shelter

www.shelter.org.uk
0808 800 4444

Education, Employment and Training

GLLaB (Greenwich Local Labour and Business)

The Old Library, Calderwood Street,
Woolwich SE18 6QW
020 8921 2440

UCAS

www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/individual-needs/ucas-undergraduate-support-care-leavers

Propel - Information about Universities' offer to Care Leavers

www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/universities/applying-to-university-as-a-care-leaver

National Careers Service

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/home

Not going to Uni

www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

Complaints

Children's Services

The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street,
Woolwich SE18 6HQ
020 8921 2057
childrens-complaints@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Emergency/ Crisis

Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

(out of office hours only)
020 8854 8888

The Point

47 Woolwich New Road
Woolwich SE18 6EW
020 8921 8224

Health and Well-being

Addaction

www.addaction.org.uk/services/young-addaction-greenwich
greenwichyps@kca.org.uk
020 8921 6907

Time to Talk

www.oxleas.nhs.uk/services/service/greenwich-time-to-talk
oxl-tr.greenwichtimetotalk@nhs.net
020 3260 1100

Greenwich Sexual Health

www.greenwichsexualhealth.org
0208 305 5005

Advice

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Refugee Council

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
0808 808 0500

Catch 22

www.catch-22.org.uk/offers/looked-after-children-and-care-leavers/

Become (previously the Who Cares Trust)

www.becomecharity.org.uk

Advocacy and Participation

Barnado's

Akwaaba Centre, Grinling Place, London SE8 5HG
0800 169 3762
advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk

Care Leavers' Forum,

Participation People, The Point, 47 Woolwich New Road, Woolwich, SE18 6EW.
020 8921 6054
greenwich@participationpeople.com



Grants

Some organisations help young people in need by awarding grants. Usually grants are only made if you've tried all the other options.

Problems with utility bills? Some major providers have debt relief funds. See which ones, and how to apply at charisgrants.com/application-forms

Care Leavers' Foundation awards grants of up to £400 to care leavers aged 18-29 for things like household items, emergency living expenses, education costs, medical needs, training and employment. thecareleaversfoundation.org

Capstone Care Leavers Trust awards grants of £300- £2,000 to care leavers aged 17-25, for education courses and equipment (including travel), driving lessons/tests and household items. capstonecareleaverstrust.org

Buttle UK awards grants of up to £2,000 to estranged young people aged 16-20 for support with education, employment and training, setting up home, and improving emotional and physical wellbeing. Applications should be made by statutory or voluntary organisations on your behalf. buttleUK.org

The Spark Foundation awards grants of up to £600 to care leavers up to age 25 for setting up home, education/ employment, skills and interests. sparkfoundation.org.uk

Lawrence Atwell's Charity awards grants of £100-£1,500 to young people aged 16-26 to help with training courses, including buying equipment, living expenses during the course and fees for tuition, enrolment or exams. theskinnerscompany.org.uk/grants-and-trusts/lawrence-atwells-charity

The Prince's Trust awards grants for young people aged 17-25, working fewer than 16 hours, or in education for fewer than 14 hours per week, to help with getting into work, education or training; loans are also on offer to help you start a business. princes-trust.org.uk

Turn2Us have a grant search tool. Enter your postcode for info on grants you could apply for. turn2us.org.uk



Approved

