

NEXT STEPS

Our Offer to Care Leavers



wakefieldcouncil

WAKEFIELD COUNCIL'S OFFER TO CARE LEAVERS

We realise that everyone is different and each and every one of you has the right to a plan that is individual to you.

We are committed, as your 'corporate parents', to ensure that you get the right access to services and support that you may need to be more independent as you approach adulthood.

The local offer explains how we are going to do this.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL OFFER?

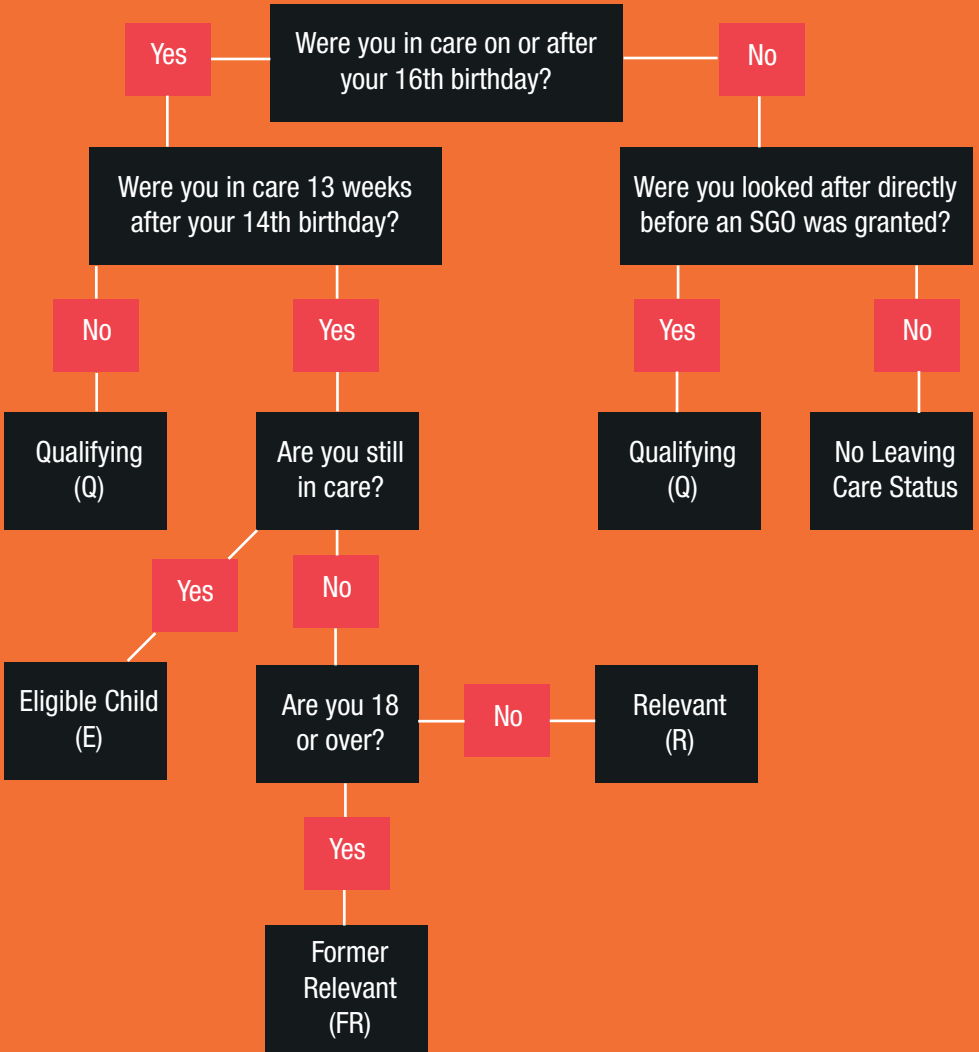
The local offer is what Wakefield Council will do to support you as a care leaver, it includes information about what support you can receive, who from and how to access this support.

A lot of this information is on the Care4Us website www.care4us.co.uk in more detail so please take a look at this.

We've asked our care leavers what is important to them and what they think about what we do. We have used this feedback to help us make the core offer for you, and we will continue to listen to your views to make sure the help we give you is the help you need, looking at how we can improve the offer to you.

HOW DO I KNOW I CAN RECEIVE THIS SUPPORT?

To be a care leaver you need to have been in care for 13 weeks from age 14 and including time when you were 16 or 17. Please refer to the diagram below.



CORPORATE PARENTS, WHAT THIS MEANS...

Wakefield Council are your corporate parents if you are a child in care, and when you are a care leaver. It is important we try to do the best we can for you, and the Government set out some guidance about how councils can do this, there are seven principles.

These are:

- Act in your best interests to promote your physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings and take those into account when making decisions with you.
- Help you to gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and the organisations it works with.
- Have high aspirations for you and help you to achieve the best outcomes you can.
- Make sure you are safe, and to have stability in your home life, relationships, education, work and financially.
- Prepare you for adulthood and independent living.



HOW DO WE DO THIS?

Near your 16th birthday your Social Worker will meet with you to write your Pathway Plan with you. At around the same time you will be introduced to Next Steps, which is the leaving care service in Wakefield.

Next Steps

The Next Steps service will be available to provide you with support up until you are 25 years old. Before you are 16, you will be invited to an introduction session about us and at around 16, you'll have a named worker who will work with your Social Worker and they will do what they can to prepare you for independence.

After 18 they will also review your pathway plan with you to ensure you are receiving the support you need.

Whilst you are with Next Steps you will be invited to drop ins and other activities, and there may come a time where you do not need a named worker because you are settled. We will still stay in contact with you and you are welcome to contact us and visit for a cuppa.

The local offer includes both information about what we have to do to support you and what young people wanted from us and other departments in Wakefield Council.



THE OFFER!

INDEPENDENCE SKILLS

- When you are 16, you will receive an initial welcome pack about Next Steps Leaving Care Service. This will tell you about leaving care and hopefully reduce any worries you may have about what is happening in the future. There is lots of useful information in there such as a leaflet about finance and a budget plan so you can practice and a Skills Assessment 'Do you know your stuff' to complete with the people who know you well, such as foster carers or key workers.
- Your Social Worker, Personal Advisor and the people who support you at home will work together with you to develop your skills so you are ready for independence.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Knowing what you want to do as a future career and making that decision can sometimes feel tough. Wakefield Council want to support you by ensuring you know what choices are available to you. You will have Personal Education Plan until you are 18 and will have continued support through your pathway plan and opportunity to attend our EET clinic where you can meet different EET providers to discuss what you would like to do.

DID YOU KNOW?

- There is support to access work/apprenticeships or college through Connexions until you are 25, or the Employment Hub including careers guidance and information about what is available.
- There are a number of opportunities for you as a care leaver at Wakefield Council including apprenticeships.
- If you are planning to go to University or study a Higher Education course there is support available to enable you to do this.
- Wakefield Council also have a number of opportunities to support you with your future career. This can be CV support and interview preparation, work experience or work placement. Please see the leaflets about this.

ACCOMMODATION

When you are 16, you will work with your Social Worker to write your Pathway Plan, in the plan you will begin to look at the different accommodation options and which is the best option for you.

- We have a range of 16+ accommodation to give you a taste of independence.
- We support you to live with your previous foster carers in a Staying Put arrangement, if this is possible.
- We offer access to Intensive Support Advisors who are available to work with you in 16+ accommodation to develop independence skills, and out of hours support if needed.
- Your PA will provide you with housing advice about what kind of accommodation is available locally and support you in finding out more about what is available in other areas if you don't live in the local area.
- We have an agreement with WDH to support you to gain priority housing as a care leaver up to the age of 21* and if you are going to University, or you move into a private rented accommodation, we will act as 'Guarantor' where we can to enable to access this accommodation.
- We will provide you with a guide about the area you are moving into so you know what is available.
- When you do move into the accommodation you will be supported to understand how to set up your home and you will be given a starter moving in pack which includes items such as a torch and a sewing kit, things you might not think to buy but will come in handy.
- We have a specialist ISA who works for the tenancy ready team, they support with move ons into WDH accommodation and support to prevent homelessness.



THE OFFER!

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Before you are 18, we will meet you with CIC Health to discuss your Health Summary and any outstanding health issues. This will ensure you have a good understanding of your health history.
- If you're not registered with a doctors or other medical services, your PA will support you with this.
- We will make sure you know what is available in your local area.
- We will also provide you with a leisure card until you are 25 years old which gives you free access to Wakefield Council Leisure facilities, you can take a friend with you too.
- You are able to access Live Well Wakefield Service who provide support around health and well-being.
- We now have a Emotional Well-being worker for 18-25 year olds who will support you to access the support you need.
- We will access support through CAMHS or other services to support you around your emotional well- being, including counselling.



RELATIONSHIPS

- We will organise opportunities for you to meet with other young people through drop in sessions.
- Your Personal Adviser will want to ensure you are safe and well and they will support you to establish and maintain safe and healthy relationships.
- We will provide opportunities for meetings called 'My People', which is about the network of support around you, for you, by those who support you in everyday life.

PARTICIPATION

We want to ensure your voice is heard through the forum, consultations, the website and other events.

- The website Care4Us has a lot of information about how you can get involved. Please check the site for more information. There is also a section that where you can share what is important to you.
- There is a 16+ Forum every month where you can have a chat, help shape the Next Steps Service and discuss issues that are important to you.
- We have a Connect Cafe at Next Steps, where you can access computers, refreshments and groups.
- We are proud of you and we provide opportunities for your achievements to be recognised and celebrated through Achievement Awards that are designed by you!
- If you need advocacy support, CAP can provide this up to age 25.
- We also have a Facebook page to ensure that you are up to date with what's happening at Next Steps.



FINANCE

It is important that you know what money you can receive so we provide you with a leaflet about this in the initial welcome pack.

- We will support you to open a bank account if you don't have one already.
- We will ensure you have the ID you need that includes your photo and date of birth.
- We will provide you with a money weekly to live on until you become 18 and we will ensure you know where to get money from if you are not working. We will support you to claim this through the Job Centre.
- You will not need to pay Council Tax until your 25th birthday, if you live out of Wakefield, we will look at how we can support you with Council Tax in the place you live.
- You will receive a birthday and festival money every year until you are 21 and we will provide 'setting up home' allowance (SUHA) to enable you to have the things you need when you move into your own place. We can give you more information about the kind of items you will need to buy with your PA.



- We know too how important it is for you to remain in contact with your support network, and your PA will look at ways to support you with contact once you have turned 18.
- You will have access to the ISA that the government set up on your behalf when you were a child in care. You can decide what you would prefer to do with the ISA once you are 18.
- We will ensure you have means to access the internet, this may be through WIFI, mobile data, SMART phones or accessing the internet through WF Connect.
- We will also pay for your driving licence, test, theory, and 50% of your lessons to a maximum of 20, if this is agreed in your pathway plan and you are EET, some conditions apply.*
- We will provide some financial support to you when you are doing volunteer work or work placement.

Please check out the [care4us](#) website for more information.



