



Our Offer to  
Cornwall's  
Care Leavers



## Our Offer to You

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## Foreword from young people

'You need to read this offer because it tells you what you are entitled to and who is there to help. Young people need to know what happens when they get to 16yrs and this offer will help you to understand more'

## Foreword from the Lead Member



The heart of this offer is about asking, "Would this be good enough for my own child".

Becoming an adult and leaving home is hard for all young people, even with the support of their parents and carers. We've listened to what you think is helpful to you and will continue to do so.

I am looking forward to developing the support we offer you to give you the best chance in life.

**Sally Hawken**

May 2018



## Introduction

This Offer sets out the principles and the process by which Cornwall Council, along with other agencies aims 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 think that improving how the Council and partner agencies support you is crucial to improving your life and your future.

You have told us that you want services that are personalised to you, integrated and easy to access. Our Offer concentrates on the following areas:

- People to support you
- Information, advice and guidance
- Making Plans for your Future
- Identity
- Health and Welfare
- Accommodation
- Independence
- Education or Training
- Apprenticeship or Employment
- Financial Assistance
- Staying in touch with people who are important to you and are good for you
- Ongoing support



## Your Rights

### Knowing your rights and knowing who can help you (locally and further afield) – our commitment to you

You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. If you want to challenge decisions about the support we give you Barnardo's can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. You have the right to see the information we keep about you including the files and records written about you in care.

In addition to the information set out in this offer. There are a number of places you can look to find out about and get support with your rights. Please see the links below:

#### Who can help locally?

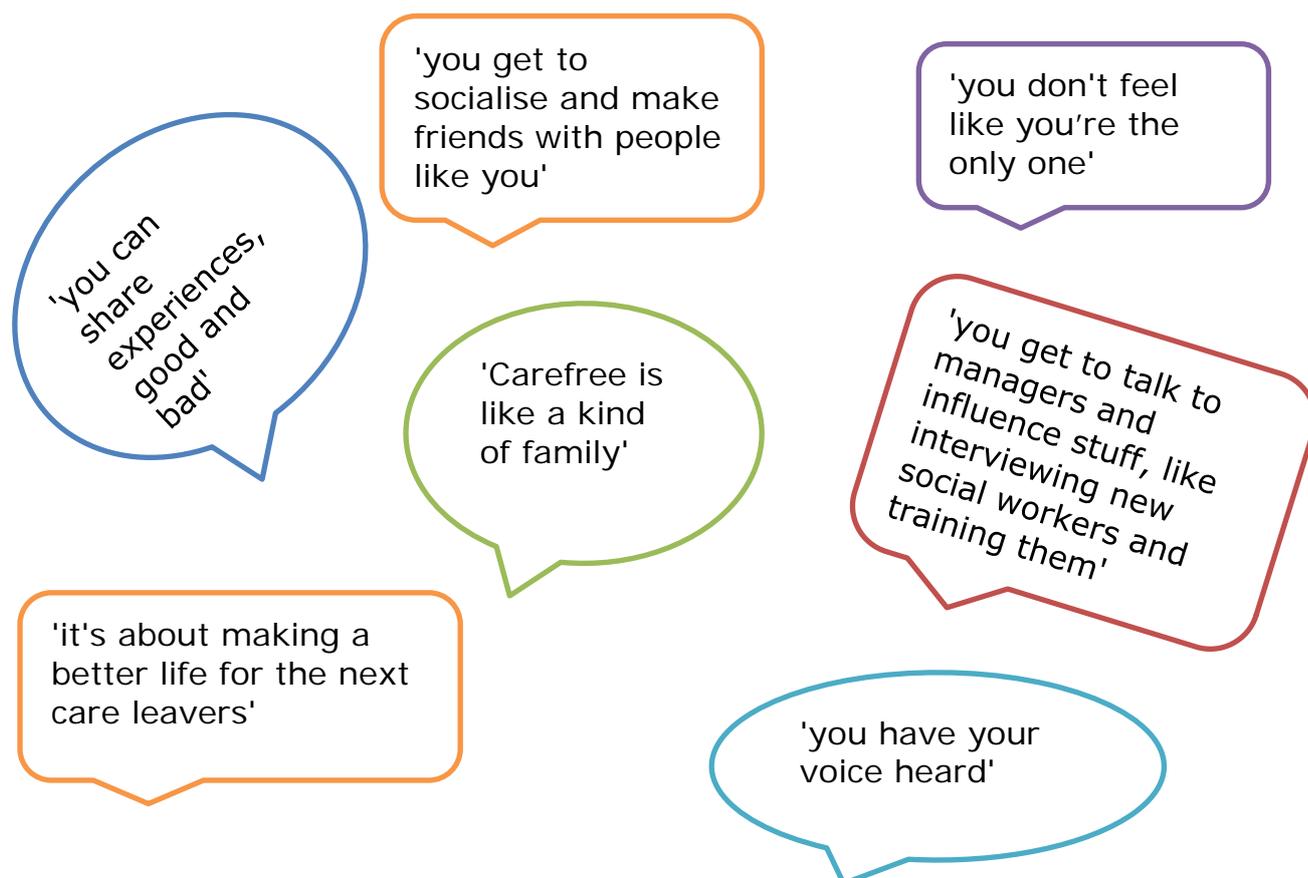
Key contact details for:

16+ Team	0300 1234 101	
Carefree	01209 204333	<a href="http://www.carefreecornwall.org.uk">www.carefreecornwall.org.uk</a>
Barnardos	01752 875934	<a href="mailto:civas@barnardos.org.uk">civas@barnardos.org.uk</a>
Housing Advice	0300 1234161	<a href="mailto:info@cornwallhousing.org.uk">info@cornwallhousing.org.uk</a>
Child in Care Nurses	01872 254523	
CSW (Careers advice)	08009755111	
Council Leadership	0300 1234 100	

## Carefree –

Carefree is an independent Cornish charity providing services to care leavers. It aims to help young people feel less isolated and have positive emotional health and wellbeing through working together. Carefree's services include the following:

- Personal advisors
- Children in Care and Care Leavers' Councils
- Groups and participation events where care leavers can have their say and influence decisions
- Positive, group activities which encourage friendship and increase self-esteem
- Support for young people who are not in education or work
- Opportunities to mentor or volunteer with other young people
- Apprenticeships
- And much more, just listen to what the young people say.....



## National organisations who can help

### Coram Voice –

<http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/young-peoples-zone/are-you-care-leaver?gclid=CMr2yans2NMCFUMo0wodTQOCEg>

### Shelter -

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/housing\\_for\\_young\\_people/help\\_and\\_housing\\_for\\_care\\_leavers](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/housing_for_young_people/help_and_housing_for_care_leavers)

**Become** – [www.becomecharity.org.uk](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk)

Our Offer is related to your age and needs. Our general principle is that 16-17 year old young people are likely to need the most help and that 21-25 year olds are likely to be more independent and need less help.

However, we will listen to you carefully so that we understand your individual needs.

Our Offer is set out below for 16-17 year olds, 18-20 year olds and 21-25 year olds



## The Principles of Our Commitment to you

The Children and Social Work Bill 2017 says that we should publish our Offer to you as care leavers. Our Offer must make clear what we will provide to you.

We are also extending our Offer to 21-25 year olds

The Principles of our Commitment to you is based on:

- ✓ We will listen to you and do what we can to help you to realise your ambitions from life, making our Offer personal to you.
- ✓ We will involve you in shaping services and how they are delivered through representation on the Corporate Parent Managers and Corporate Parenting Boards, which oversee our Offer.
- ✓ We will do everything we can so that your PA can form a long-term relationship with you.
- ✓ Part of your PA's job is to support you to improve your physical and emotional health and wellbeing.
- ✓ We will support you to feel safe and secure, including managing your money.
- ✓ We will support you to stay in touch with the people who are important to you and who have your wellbeing at heart.
- ✓ We will work with other agencies and the wider Council, such as our Housing colleagues, to improve their understanding of your needs and to ensure you are given appropriate priority.
- ✓ We will work with our Housing colleagues to support you to find suitable accommodation in your preferred area and support you to keep your accommodation.
- ✓ We will do everything we can to support you to access education, training and employment.
- ✓ We will keep in touch with you up to your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## When you are 16-17

The Leaving Care Act 2000 sets out the Council's duties to support you. Our primary duty is that of any parent, to help you have somewhere suitable to live and the support you need to get by.

We will offer you:

### Support to plan for your future

1. An allocated Social Worker and Personal Advisor (PA).
2. A Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan drawn up **with** you, which will be reviewed every 6 months, unless there is a significant change in your circumstances and your Plan needs to be reviewed sooner. Specific support to meet your cultural / identity / religious needs.
3. Support with developing your individual identity, including understanding your life story.
4. Peer mentoring and access to Independent Visitor and Advocacy services.
5. An opportunity to join the Children in Care or Care Leavers' Council.

### Support with your health and wellbeing

6. Information on clubs and groups you may wish to join. Help with the cost of leisure activities.
7. Annual Health Assessments if you are in care. A Health Passport if you leave care. We will give you advice about healthy living and make sure you are registered with a GP and dentist and give you information about how to pay for prescriptions. Support to maintain good sexual health and advice about contraception.
8. Access to Community Adolescent Mental Health Service through a priority referral process. If appropriate, access to person-centred counselling.

### Support to find somewhere to live and become independent

9. Accommodation that could be foster care, residential care, or moving on to supported lodgings when you're more independent.

10. Independence training from your foster carers and semi-independence landlords. Make sure you have the right identity documents including your National Insurance Number.
11. Support to open a bank account. Advice and training about how to manage your money.
12. Help to enrol on the electoral register so you can vote in elections.
13. Support if you get into trouble, such as debt, risk of alcohol or drug problems, or offending.

### **Support to stay in education or move on to training or work**

14. Support from Children In Care Education Services, including support moving from school to college through a Personal Education Plan. Financial support for necessary/essential equipment for your education. Protocols with local colleges to support you and access to a bursary where available. Careers advice and help with developing your CV through Careers South West.
15. Apprenticeships – it is our aim to expand opportunities for you both through opportunities in the Council and with our partners
16. The opportunity to attend celebration events when you do well in education, training and employment.

### **Support with money**

17. A Birthday and Festival Grant. Setting up home grants of up to £2000 (between 16 and 25 years old). A weekly living allowance if you are living independently. Access to 10 driving lessons.
18. Financial support for contact with your family/significant people who have your best interests at heart up to 6 times per year in recognition of the benefits of this in improving your emotional health and wellbeing and reducing the risk of feeling isolated.
19. An assessment for support if you become a parent. A £250 maternity grant to support you with equipment ready for the birth of your child.

## When you are 18 – 20

It is important to recognise that when you become an adult our Offer changes because your primary source of financial and welfare support is provided in the same way as other young adults. However, you will still have the additional support from the 16+ Leaving Care Service.

We will offer you:

### Support to plan for your future

1. The same PA where possible as when you were 16/17 years old.
2. Continued pathway planning process 6 monthly or more frequently if your situation changes significantly. Specific support to meet your cultural/identity/religious needs.
3. Support with developing your individual identity including understanding your life story.
4. Group activities to reduce the risk of feeling isolated and increase your well-being.
5. An opportunity to join the Care Leavers' Council.
6. Offer you an assessment for support if you become a parent.
7. Provide specific support to unaccompanied asylum seeking young people who cannot access benefits.

### Support with your health and wellbeing

7. Information on clubs, leisure activities and groups you may wish to join.
8. Access to person centred counselling to help you deal with challenges in your life.
9. Support to help you access Adult Social Care or Adult Mental Health services if you need these.
10. Help to maintain your registration with a GP and dentist and support to maintain good sexual health and access to advice about contraception.

## **Support to find somewhere to live and become independent**

11. An opportunity to remain with your foster carers up to age 21. An opportunity to remain in supported lodgings to end of Year 14 (19 years old).
12. Support in identifying suitable accommodation prior to your 18th birthday; work with Housing colleagues and providers to find you suitable accommodation. Provide you with a deposit and rent in advance for a suitable affordable rental property. Removal costs and fees for letting agencies when you move to a new tenancy.
13. Advice and training about how to manage your money.
14. Help to enrol on the Electoral Register so you can vote in elections.
15. Support if you get into trouble, such as debt, risk of alcohol or drug problems, or offending.

## **Support to stay in education or move on to training or work**

16. Financial support for equipment for your education.
17. University support of £4,000 per year to enable you to study for an Undergraduate Degree plus financial support for your vacation accommodation.
18. Help to prepare for interviews and financial support for clothing, plus costs in attending interviews.
19. Apprenticeships – it is our aim to expand opportunities for you both through the Council and with our partners

## **Support with money**

20. A Birthday Grant, Setting up Home Grant up to £2000 and access to 10 driving lessons.
21. Financial support for contact with your family/significant people who have your best interests at heart, up to 6 times per year in recognition of the benefits of this increasing your emotional health and wellbeing and reducing isolation.
22. A priority benefit claim and provide you with emergency payments if needed.
23. Exemption from any Council Tax payable after benefits have been applied. <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-tax/get-money-off-your-council-tax-bill/>

## When you are 21 – 25

Under this duty you will have less contact from us unless you need it. Regular Pathway Planning is not continued. It is important to recognise the change in duties to you and recognise that your primary source of financial and welfare support is provided in the same way as your peers with additional support from the 16+ Leaving Care Service. Support is designed to be a 'lighter touch' but meet your needs if you need help.

We will also encourage other agencies to contact the 16+ Team when they feel that you need assistance.

We will offer you:

### People to support you to plan for your future

1. We will try to contact you 3 times a year including your birthday; try to speak to you at least once a year to understand your current situation and see if you need help. But you don't need to wait for us to contact you, if you need help, contact us.
2. Advice and assistance through a Personal Advisor and support in accordance with your Pathway Plan with you if needed.
3. An opportunity to join the Care Leavers' Council
4. An assessment for support if you become a parent

### Support with your health and wellbeing

5. Information on clubs, leisure activities and groups you may wish to join
6. Access to person centred counselling to help you with the challenges you are facing.
7. Support to help you access Adult Social Care, Adult Mental Health, drug and alcohol services if you need these.

8. Help to maintain your registration with a GP and dentist and support to maintain good sexual health and advice about contraception.

### **Support to find somewhere to live and become independent**

9. Help you keep your home. Provide you with a deposit and rent in advance for a suitable affordable rental property.
10. Help to enrol on the Electoral Register so you can vote in elections.
11. Support if you get into trouble, such as debt, risk of alcohol or drug problems, or offending.

### **Support to stay in education or move on to training or work**

12. University support of £4,000 per year to enable you to study for an Undergraduate Degree plus vacation accommodation. Financial support for Postgraduate study of £2000 per year.
13. Apprenticeships – it is our aim to expand opportunities for you both through the Council and with our partners.
14. Help when you are in Further Education and benefits are not payable.

### **Support with money**

7. Setting Up Home Grant up to £2000.
8. Exemption from any Council tax payable after benefits have been applied.  
<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-tax/get-money-off-your-council-tax-bill/>

## When you are 16-21 and 'qualify' for support

The Council Will:

### Support you to plan your future

1. Allocate you a named Personal Advisor
2. Provide you with information, advice and assistance; signpost you to relevant resources to access the support you need.
3. Contact you 4 times a year to ensure you know the name of your Personal Advisor and how to contact them if you need assistance.

## Who is the Offer for?

### Definitions of Care Leavers under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

An **Eligible** care leaver is someone who is 16/17 years old and has been in care for 13 weeks since their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday although this does not have to be a single continuous period of care. They also have been in care after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and are still in care.

A **Relevant** care leaver is someone who has previously been Eligible; is 16/17 years old but has left care.

A **Former Relevant** care leaver is someone who at 18-21 years old was previously Eligible or Relevant.

The extended duty applies to a Former Relevant person who is continuing / returning to the service and is 21-25 years old.

A **Qualifying** young person is someone who has not been in care for 13 weeks since their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday but has been in care aged 16/17 years old. Qualifying also applies to specific groups e.g. previously private fostered until 16 years old.

## Have your say

You have a right to have your say if you are not happy about something. Although you have left care you are still entitled to let children's social services know if you are not happy and, if necessary, to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the support you are getting, or feel that you have not been listened to. You also have the right to have an advocate who can help you do this.

We know and understand that leaving care is a difficult time for many young people. It can be scary and feel like you are now all alone. Through this offer we are trying to make sure that you feel more prepared and have been helped to get into a situation where you feel supported, stable and independent enough to manage your life.

We want to tell you that you are not alone. Leaving Care PAs are available to you so you can ask questions, get advice and talk to someone that understands. We want you to feel supported and able to tell us if you feel that you are not.

You are important to us. Even when you have moved on we will still think of you and be there for you if you need us.

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11 May 2018