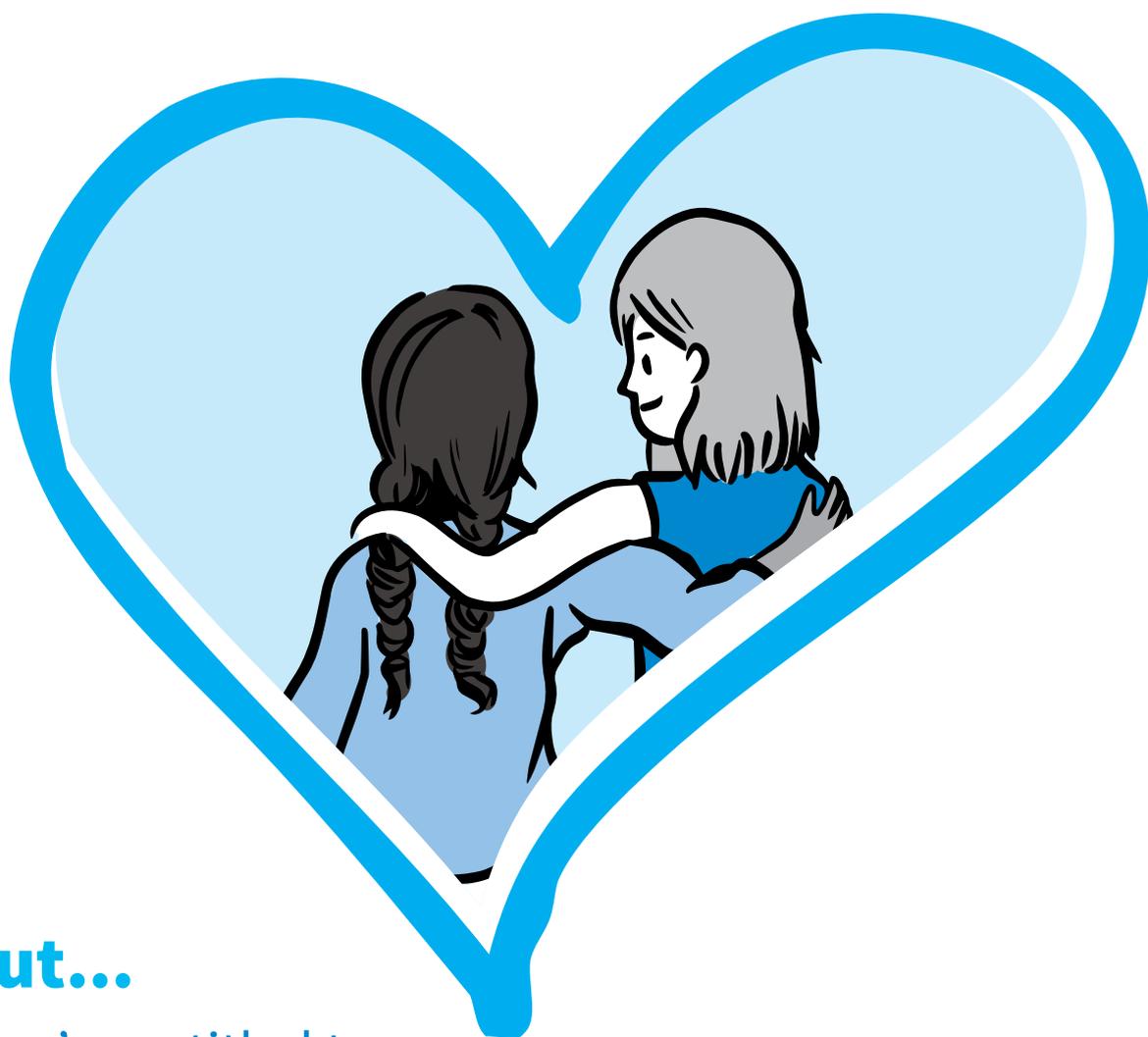


Our offer to Cornwall's care leavers

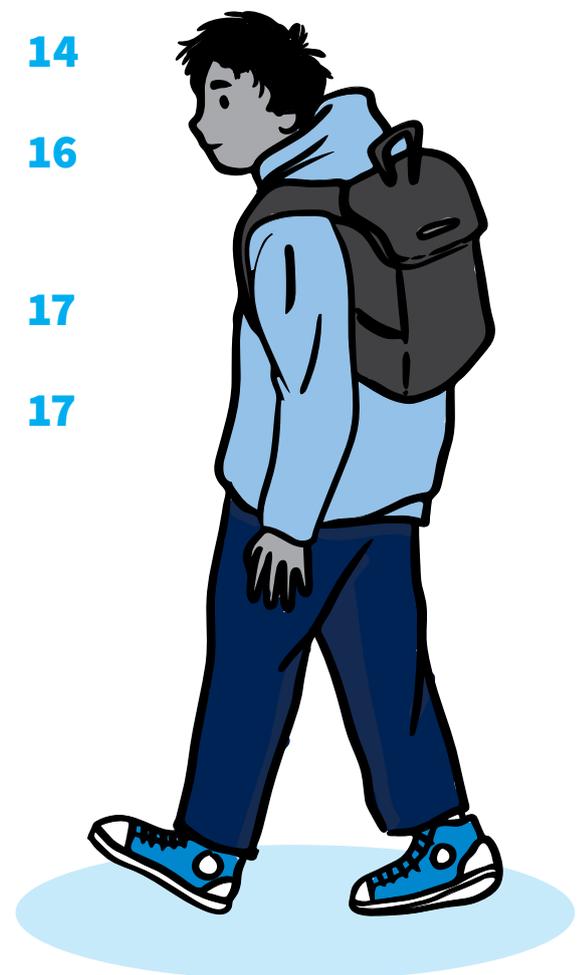


Find out...

- What you're entitled to
- Who's there to help

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Foreword

“ 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 16 yrs and this offer will help you to understand more... ”

A young person’s foreword

“ 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. ”

Councillor Sally Hawken, Lead Member
for Children and Wellbeing | May 2018

Introduction



We understand that leaving care can be a difficult time for many young people. It can be scary and feel like you're suddenly on your own.

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 you to know that you're not alone.

Leaving Care Personal Assistants (PAs) are available to you so you can ask questions, get advice and talk to someone who understands. We want you to feel supported and able to tell us if you feel that you're not.



**You are important to us.
Even when you've moved on, we'll still think of you and be there for you if you need us.**

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've 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

We are committed to helping you to understand your rights and who can help 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.**



Who can help?

There are a number of local and national organisations that can help you to understand your rights and make sure they're respected.

Local



16+ Team | 0300 1234 101



Carefree | 01209 204333
www.carefreecornwall.org.uk



Barnardos | 01752 875934
civas@barnardos.org.uk



Housing Advice | 0300 1234161
info@cornwallhousing.org.uk



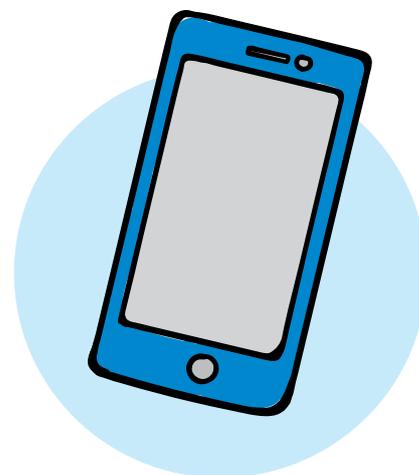
Child in Care Nurses | 01872 254523



CSW (Careers advice) | 08009755111
contact@cswgroup.co.uk



Council Leadership | 0300 1234 100



Carefree

Carefree is an independent Cornish charity that provides 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:

- 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...

You get to socialise and make friends with people like you

Carefree is like a kind of family

You don't feel like you're the only one

You can share experiences, good and bad

You get to talk to managers and influence stuff, like interviewing new social workers and training them

You have your voice heard

It's about making a better life for the next care leavers



Who can help?

There are a number of local and national organisations that can help you to understand your rights and make sure they're respected.

National



Children's Commissioner

[childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/get-advice/questions/what-are-my-rights-and-entitlements-care-leaver)/get-advice/questions/
what-are-my-rights-and-entitlements-care-leaver



Coram Voice

[coramvoice.org.uk](https://coramvoice.org.uk/young-peoples-zone/are-you-care-leaver)/young-peoples-zone/are-you-care-
leaver



Shelter

[england.shelter.org.uk](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/housing_for_young_people/help_and_housing_for_care_leavers)/housing_advice/housing_for_
young_people/help_and_housing_for_care_leavers



Rees Care Leavers Foundation

[reesfoundation.org](https://reesfoundation.org/our-services)/our-services



Become

www.becomecharity.org.uk



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.

These are the principles of our commitment to you:

- We'll listen to you and do what we can to help you to realise your ambitions in life, making our offer personal to you.
- We'll 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'll do everything we can to help you and your Personal Adviser (PA) form a long-term relationship, so they can support you to improve your physical and emotional health and wellbeing.
- We'll support you to feel safe and secure, including helping you learn to manage your money.
- We'll support you to stay in touch with the people who are important to you and who have your wellbeing at heart.
- We'll work with other agencies and the wider Council, such as the Housing team, to improve their understanding of your needs and make sure you get the help you need from them.
- We'll work with the Housing team to help you find suitable accommodation in your preferred area, and support you to keep your accommodation.
- We'll do everything we can to help you access education, training and employment.
- We'll keep in touch with you up until your 25th birthday.

Our offer is related to your age and needs. Our general principle is that 16-17 year olds are likely to need the most support, while 21-25 year olds will probably be more independent and need less help.

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

How we'll help when you're...

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 make sure you have somewhere suitable to live and the help you need to get by.

Support to plan for your future



- An allocated Social Worker and Personal Advisor (PA).
- 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.
- Support with developing your individual identity, including understanding your life story.
- Peer mentoring and access to Independent Visitor and Advocacy services.
- An opportunity to join the Children in Care or Care Leavers' Council.

Support with your health and wellbeing



- Information on clubs and groups you may wish to join. Help with the cost of leisure activities.
- 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.
- 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



- Accommodation that could be foster care, residential care, or moving on to supported lodgings when you're more independent.
- Independence training from your foster carers and semi-independence landlords. Make sure you have the right identity documents including your National Insurance Number.
- Support to open a bank account. Advice and training about how to manage your money.
- Help to enrol on the electoral register so you can vote in elections.
- 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



- 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.
- Apprenticeships – it is our aim to expand opportunities for you both through opportunities in the Council and with our partners
- The opportunity to attend celebration events when you do well in education, training and employment.

Support with money



- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

How we'll help when you're...

18-20

It's important you understand that when you become an adult, our offer changes. This is because your main source of financial and welfare support is now provided in the same way as it is to other young adults. However, the 16+ Leaving Care Service will still be there to support you.

Support to plan for your future



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

Support with your health and wellbeing



- Information on clubs, leisure activities and groups you may wish to join.
- Access to person centred counselling to help you deal with challenges in your life.
- Support to help you access Adult Social Care or Adult Mental Health services if you need these.
- 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



- 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).
- 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.
- Advice and training about how to manage your money.
- Help to enrol on the Electoral Register so you can vote in elections.
- 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



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

Support with money



- A Birthday Grant for your 18th and 19th birthdays, Setting up Home Grant up to £2000 and access to 10 driving lessons.
- 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.
- Exemption from any Council Tax payable after benefits have been applied. Find out more online at www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-tax/get-money-off-your-council-tax-bill/

How we'll help when you're...

21-25

At this point, you'll probably have less contact with us. So while your Regular Pathway Planning won't continue and your main source of financial and welfare support is now provided in the same way as it is to other young adults, you can still ask us for help if you need it.

We'll also encourage other agencies to contact the 16+ Team if they feel that you need support.

Support to plan for your future



- 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 get in touch. If you need help, contact us.
- Advice and assistance through a Personal Advisor and support in accordance with your Pathway Plan with you if needed.
- An opportunity to join the Care Leavers' Council
- An assessment for support if you become a parent

Support with your health and wellbeing



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



- Help you keep your home. Provide you with a deposit and rent in advance for a suitable affordable rental property.
- Help to enrol on the Electoral Register so you can vote in elections.
- 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



- 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.
- Apprenticeships – it is our aim to expand opportunities for you both through the Council and with our partners.
- Help when you are in Further Education and benefits are not payable.

Support with money



- Setting Up Home Grant up to £2000.
- Exemption from any Council tax payable after benefits have been applied. Find out more online at www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-tax/get-money-off-your-council-tax-bill/

How we'll help when you're...

16-21 and you 'qualify' for support

You qualify for support if you've been in care for less than 13 weeks since your 14th birthday, but you have been in care aged 16 and/or 17 years old. Qualifying also applies to specific groups, e.g. you were previously privately fostered before the age of 16.

Support to plan for your future



- We'll allocate you a named Personal Advisor
- We'll provide you with information, advice and assistance, and guide you to relevant resources to access the support you need.
- We'll contact you 4 times a year to ensure you know the name of your Personal Advisor and how to contact them if you need support.



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 14th birthday although this does not have to be a single continuous period of care. They also have been in care after their 16th 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 been in care for fewer than 13 weeks since their 14th 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.



For more information

For more information please contact us:

E-mail: togetherforfamilies@cornwall.gov.uk

Telephone: **01872 327536**

This guide was prepared by:

David Roose

Head of Service | Children in Care and
Care Leavers | Children and Family Service

Joss Wills

Team Manager | 16 Plus Team | Children
and Family Service

Carefree

Care Leavers' Council

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall,
Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY

e: equality@cornwall.gov.uk
t: **0300 1234 100**

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