

THROUGH CARE LOCAL OFFER BOOKLET



INTRODUCTION

This booklet tells you about all the support that is available to you as a care leaver in Coventry.

Becoming an adult can be a tricky time. Things like leaving school, finding a job, starting a relationship, setting up home and becoming a parent don't always happen in order. We know that it's a big step to move to living on your own. We want to make sure that you feel supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help.



**CARE LEAVERS
HELPED US
DESIGN THIS
OFFER.**

THE SUPPORT WE MUST GIVE YOU BY LAW.

PERSONAL ADVISER

You as a Care leaver have the right to Personal Adviser support up to the age of 25.

- The role of a Personal Adviser is to help care leavers prepare for independent living and to support them after they leave care.
- Personal Advisers are responsible for ensuring that a Pathway Plan is developed and kept up to date for each care leaver until they reach 21.
- We will try and ensure that care leavers keep the same Personal Adviser where possible.
- Until you reach 21 your Personal Adviser will see you at least once every two months and keep in touch with you between visits.
- After the age of 21 what the support looks like is based on what you want from a Personal Adviser.

PATHWAY PLAN

We will prepare a Pathway Plan for all young people leaving care that sets out how we will help you to achieve the things you want to.

- We will start developing the Pathway Plan while you are still in care – around your 16th birthday.
- We must review your Pathway Plan at least every six months until you reach 21.
- We will ensure you are involved in preparing and reviewing the Pathway Plan.



LEAVING CARE BEFORE TURNING 18

- You can choose to leave care before you turn 18 but we do not encourage this due to you losing some of the benefits you are entitled to whilst in care. The Director of Children's Services must sign off all decisions to allow a 16 or 17 year old to leave care.
- If you do choose to leave care before you are 18, we will ensure that you are in suitable accommodation and provide you with assistance to meet your needs in relation to education, training or employment as set out in your Pathway Plan.

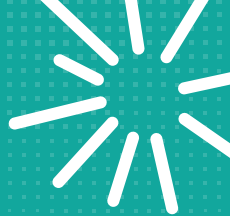
OTHER SUPPORT WE OFFER

As a Council we want our commitment to you to run through everything we do, therefore, as well as specific support set out below we commit to:

- Ensuring any changes to policy that could affect care leavers are evaluated for impact on care4. leavers.
- Making sure that everybody who works for, or on behalf of, the council are directed to our equality, diversity and inclusion policy which promotes the importance of prioritising care leavers for opportunities and encourages them to sign up to the national Care Leavers' Covenant and National Leaving Care Benchmarking forum events.
- Providing mentoring opportunities for care leavers from directors and senior managers within the council.



ACCOMMODATION



When you are aged over 18, your Personal Advisor will help you to find suitable accommodation. This will involve a continuation of the support you have had when you were under 18.

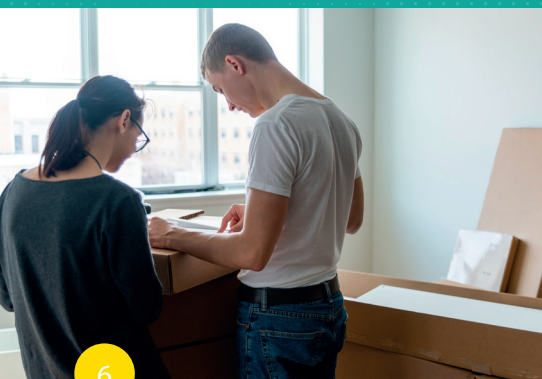
We have the House Project who will continue to work with you in your own home post 18, you can still attend sessions and they can support you for as long as you want this. You will have your own key worker who will know all about you.

- If this is what you and your foster carers want, supporting you to remain with your foster carers under what's called a 'Staying Put' arrangement.
- If you have moved from one of our residential homes, we offer support from our residential staff as part of our 'Staying Close' offer. Staff members from the home can help you settle into your new home, decorate if you wish and offer other practical and emotional support that you might want.



- If you are living in supported accommodation you can continue to receive support and visits when you move into your new home by your key worker from your previous accommodation to help you settle in.
- We will also work with housing services and Coventry's Youth Hub to come up with suitable housing options for you, including
- All young people preparing to live independently will have the opportunity to spend time in a training flat.
- You will have access to supported living options if you are not ready or don't want to have your own tenancy.
- You will have high priority access to social housing in accordance with our housing allocation policy.
- There is an opportunity for you to access a Guarantor scheme to help you secure your own property.
- We will support you in a housing crisis, including offering a 'second chance' if your first move to independence does not work out for you, backdating this to your 16th birthday.
- We will support you to access your setting up home grant that can be used to furnish your first property, this is £3,000.

- We will support you with moving into your property, this includes with removals and getting your first week's shopping.
- You will have access to a Severn Trent offer a 70% discount on your water bills if you are aged 18-25 and are the named tenant. This is also included if you do not live in Coventry but do reside in a Severn Trent area. Severn Trent also have a employability skills offer you can access.
- We will provide advice about maintaining a tenancy, including avoiding rent or Council Tax arrears, paying bills etc. This will be both through your personal advisor and independence courses run by Through Care.
- We will exempt you from Council Tax until you are 21 if you are living in Coventry. Or we will pay your Council Tax until you are 21 if we have placed you out of city.
- Coventry will not find any care leavers who are working with us to resolve their situation intentionally homeless.
- Access from support from Fab Lab in Coventry who can support with decorating skills for your new home.



HOUSE PROJECT:

THE HOUSE PROJECT Coventry

The House project approach has been developed by young people. It offers a flexible approach of co-production that meets the needs of young people in our care as they move towards adulthood. Coventry signed up to the House Project in 2021, to provide a wider range of peer support and accommodation options. There are two existing House Project facilitators within our Through Care Team, who have worked with 12 young people to support them to move to their own properties. Of the 12 young people on the project, 3 previously lived in a residential children's home, one within the city.

The project helps young people to transition into independence and is a partnership project with Citizen housing in Coventry. The project creates a peer community for young people and enables them to develop the practical and emotional resilience that they need to live independently. They work on houses which become their homes to live in for as long as they want. The key elements of the framework include:

Corporate and political support and engagement

- Dedicated staff team
- An agreement with a Housing Provider to secure properties for young people
- A trauma-informed approach using groupwork, the ORCHIDS Practice Framework and the House Project Programme
- A dedicated base, shared by staff and young people
- Psychological support to ensure that projects are run safely

STAYING CLOSE:

Each of Coventry's four children's homes will have a designated Staying Close lead, who will become the 'expert' in supporting you as you move towards independence. They will work directly with you in your homes to meet and understand your needs and what ongoing support you may need.

The team of residential carers will support you and other young people through the transition and beyond and our flexible approach means that you will be able to identify who they want support from, which can be adjusted to the needs over time. The project enhances our Family Valued approach, working with young people through relationship-based practice. By embedding the whole team, whole service approach, increasing our capacity and support, trusted adults will always be available from their former children's home and/or a staying close lead.





EDUCATION

We want you to succeed in your education, training and employment. We will ask you how you are doing and be ready to celebrate your achievements with you.

We will support you to access and maintain education, training and employment by offering:

- Careers advisors to provide specialist advice and support with accessing education, training and employment.
- Support to attend a university open day if you wish
- Support with transport costs when travelling to training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews.
- Support to access your Further Education Bursary.
- Support to buy equipment, essential clothing, and books.
- Support with getting smart clothing and interview prep when you get a job interview.
- Ring-fenced opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and employment in the local authority for you.
- Care leavers doing apprenticeships within Coventry City Council the National Living Wage.
- We will do what we can to ensure apprentices secure a permanent role at the end of their apprenticeship.
- Support should you choose to go to university e.g. accessing tuition fees and maintenance loans, travel costs at the start and end of term, paying you a higher education bursary of £2,000 and ensuring that you have suitable accommodation during vacations which we will pay for.
- An annual celebration event where all your achievements will be celebrated.
- A celebration if your individual achievements in a personal way, for example by taking you out for a meal when you complete significant qualifications.
- Money based incentives for attendance in education or training.
- Support in learning to drive to increase your employment opportunities.
- We have regular panels where we discuss opportunities around employment, education and training where your Personal Adviser can meet with services who can get you into the area that you want.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING



We will support you in getting the support you need around your physical and mental health by offering:

- A health passport for you when you leave care which will give your health history.
- Access to 'Ask Jan' membership for all of our care leavers which offers 24 hours helpline access to counselling as well as other benefits.
- Signposting to where you can get help to pay for prescription costs.
- Support for you to register at health services when moving home.
- Ongoing mental health advice/support until you reach the age of 25.
- You and a guest free access to sports facilities in the city.
- Transport costs when you are attending hospital or doctors' appointments.
- Additional support to you if you are a young parent. We have our own specific local offer for young parents.
- Support beyond your 18th birthday, and involving Adult Social Care if it is needed.



FINANCES

We have a full financial support package for young people leaving care which is set out in Money Matters www.coventry.gov.uk/careleavermoneymatters.

- In addition to financial support, we will also offer: Support with budgeting Support to access relevant money management courses. Support to access your Junior ISA.
- Support to open a bank account.
- Support to gain appropriate identification documents, such as a passport and/ or provisional driving licence.
- Support to get a National Insurance number.
- Exceptional financial support in emergencies.
- When most young people leave home to live independently, they cannot always everything they need straight away and cannot always afford everything new. Your savings are there for you to use in your transition to independence. Your Personal Adviser can support you to get access to your savings when you turn 18.



RELATIONSHIPS

As well as support from a Personal Adviser, we are able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, such as through:

- You could if you want have access to a mentor/peer mentor;
- Where appropriate, continuing to support contact with the 'Independent Visitor' you had while you were in care;
- Help to maintain or regain contact with people special to you, or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers, residential staff or social workers via Lifelong Links which is offered to all children and care leavers in Coventry.
- There is an opportunity for you to have continued contact with your Independent Reviewing Officer post 18 if you would like this.



IDENTITY

People are sometimes treated differently or unfairly because of the way they look, talk, what they believe in and how they live. We believe this is wrong and will not stop anyone from using services or working here, as long as their behaviour does not hurt or offend anyone.

- We will not tolerate any racial, sexual, or other harassment by young people or by staff and we treat everyone fairly in everything we do.
- We will make sure the service is a place where everyone can achieve their potential free from prejudice, discrimination and harassment as we value the differences between people and do not want anyone to feel left out.
- We will support you to purchase religious items.
- As a service support and celebrate all festivals and celebrations with our young people.



Diversity

- We celebrate all of our young people's differences and will support you to attend any events that would recognise your diversity like Pride, religious events, black history month as well as other events throughout the year to recognise different needs of our young people.
- We support our young people to ensure that their views are heard in respect of their experiences. We hold a regular care leaver forum so you can talk about what changes you would like to see.
- Providing you will opportunities to attend/be part of and represent Coventry at National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum events.
- If you choose to access your records, we will give you emotional and practical support for this.

PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

We want our care leavers to be active members of society, and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have. We can help you participate in society in the following ways:

- Providing information on groups and clubs you may wish to join.
- Informing you about relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your talents and interests.
- Encouraging and helping you to enrol on the Electoral Register and supporting you to get appropriate identification so you can vote in elections.
- Informing you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in.
- Giving you advice and helping you to challenge any discrimination you may

BE THE CHANGE!



We are passionate about young people guiding the service and we would love for you to attend our care leaver forums. These are held six times a year and please ask your allocated worker for specific details.

Coventry City Council uses Mind Of My Own and Barnardo's Advocacy services as a way for care leavers to prepare for meetings, raise problems or ask for something.

Mind of My Own:

You can download the Mind Of My Own an App for Android or Apple devices or use it on any internet browser device such as a tablet or Xbox.

You can ask for the information you put in to go to a worker of your choice, for example your social worker, personal advisor, or the complaints team.

Mind Of My Own is not an instant messaging service and you will not receive a response back through the App. The information gets passed on to the worker during normal working hours, Monday to Friday. The worker will then contact you back.

For more information see the Mind Of My Own website.

Barnardo's Independent Advocacy Services

Brooklands, Great Cornbow, Halesowen,
West Midlands, B63 3AB
0121 550 5271

CEAdmin.Halesowen@barnardos.org.uk

Young people are also supported to access:

Coram Voice – National support
Coram Voice Always Heard on
0808 800 5792 or
www.coramvoice.org.uk/alwaysheard



Useful Contacts:

Rees Foundation (AskJan Support)
03300945645

Life long links

lifelonglinks@coventry.gov.uk
Coventry and Warwickshire Mind (Peer
mentor)
02476631835
My PAs Number

Through Care Duty

02476 787808

Emergency Duty Team

02476 832222

Coventry Housing

024 7683 4025

Citizen's advice Bureau

024 7622 3284

Social media:

✉ ThroughCareCov

📷 throughcarecc

📘 ThroughCare Coventry

Office Hours:

08:30am - 17:00pm
(Monday - Thursday)

08:30am - 16:30pm
(Friday)

Drop-in Days:

Mondays - 13:00pm-17:00pm

Thursdays - 13:00pm-17:00pm

