



Sheffield Local Offer for **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE**

This guide tells you what support you can expect from Sheffield City Council as you take your next steps to independence.

Covid Foreword

During the current coronavirus pandemic the Leaving Care Service is carrying out all its normal functions as much as possible, however some things may need to be done in different ways with the support of technology.

The Government have set out guidance for Children and Young Peoples Social Care services during Covid these can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-childrens-social-care#care-leavers>

or search Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for children's social care services.

During the pandemic you will still have access to your Personal Advisor and they will continue to help and support you, where possible they will still meet you face to face, if this is not possible they will either call you or arrange a facetime type meeting.

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer face to face contact or a drop in at Star House as the building is closed to visitors.

There is a duty worker available to talk to you by contacting 0114 203 9060 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.45pm.

If you require any of the services previously available at Star House for example Door 43, please contact your Personal Advisor and they will be able to point you in the right direction for support.

The Leaving Care service are making sure that we maintain our links with other services e.g. job centre, DWP, health services and housing. If you are struggling in any area contact your PA and they will be able to help you.

These changes are for a temporary period until the Government advise that it is safe to revert to pre-Covid 19 regulations and practice. We will continue to review how we deliver our services throughout this period.

Introduction

As Corporate Parents, we are delighted to share with you Sheffield's Local Offer for Care Leavers, setting out how we can support you to achieve your full potential.

We want you to have the stability and support you need to lead successful and fulfilling lives, and access to the opportunities and experiences that will help you reach your goals.

Moving into adulthood is never straightforward but we want you to know that we believe in you and will be here if times get tough.

Our Local Offer for Care Leavers will continue to develop as we work with you on your aspirations for the future and we strive to give you the best start possible to your adult life.

Sheffield Local Offer for Children and Young People Leaving Care

Leaving care can be a worrying and challenging time for young people. This guide is designed to tell you what support you can expect from Sheffield City Council as you take your next steps to independence.

We want you to continue to feel safe and supported and know where or who to go to for advice and help on this journey.

Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you wherever you are and whatever your situation. We will be by your side every step of the way,

and will be there to pick you up if you fall down, or to celebrate with you when you reach your goals.

If you do not live in Sheffield, you will still be entitled to a personal advisor and financial support as outlined in the financial policy for care leavers.

We can help you access support in your local area, however some support outlined in the Local Offer for Children and Young People Leaving Care may not be available outside Sheffield.

Local care leavers have helped make this leaflet. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we offer are what you need.

Is this for you?

A care leaver is a young person aged between 16 and 25 who has previously been in care.

The type of support we can offer you will depend on when and for how long you were in care, for further information please contact the Leaving Care Service.

“The Leaving Care Service gave me the opportunity to have a positive future”

Advice and Support from a Personal Advisor (PA)

Your personal advisor will be there to support you on your journey to leaving care. You should meet them when you are 16 and you will be able to ask them for support until you are 25.

Once you reach 16 your PA will contact you within two weeks to arrange to meet you.

We will try and make sure you have the same PA during your time with the service, but if this does need to change, we'll let you know as soon as we can.

Your personal advisor is there to:

- Provide advice and support to you on a regular basis
- Talk to you about what support you need and record this in your pathway plan
- Help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support as you leave care
- Help you with access to:-

- Housing,
- Education,
- Employment,
- Training,
- Health services and, Financial support

Pathway Plan

Your Pathway Plan will look at what your goals and ambitions are for when you leave care and live independently and set out the support that you will be given once you have left care.

Your personal advisor will work with you to assess your needs and skills to make sure your plan includes areas you need help with to achieve your goals.

Your Pathway Plan will include details of:

- Support to develop practical and other skills to live independently.
- Support for your physical, emotional and mental health needs.
- Support for your further education or employment.
- Information on your ability to control your money and any money you might need
- Arrangements to provide you with suitable accommodation
- Support to stay in contact with family and friends.

A pathway plan will be in place and regularly reviewed up until you turn 21; at which stage you can choose whether you need a pathway plan to help you with your future.

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

“My personal advisor prepared me for living independently”

Health, Wellbeing and Staying Safe

We want you to be healthy and stay safe. To help you do this, your personal advisor can advise and support you with:

- Supporting you to access local leisure activities
- Joining a mountain biking group for care leavers starting in Spring 2021
- Information on healthy living
- Information on getting help to pay for prescriptions
- Registering with a GP/Dentist/Optician
- Moving from children's to adult mental health services
- Accessing other mental health support in your area
- Information about counselling services that are available locally
- Information about health drop-in centres; sexual health clinics, or other, testing/screening facilities
- Pregnancy and parenting help and support
- Access support with substance misuse
- Help with abusive situations

- Joining an emotional wellbeing programme
- Help you access Door 43 which offers an emotional wellbeing service for young people aged 13-25, including one to one drop in sessions and is based at Star House, for more information speak to your PA or see the contact details at the end of this guide
- Sexual health drop in sessions at Star House, times available from your PA
- Help access 'Open Doors sexual health support
- Access to Kooth an online mental wellbeing service.

Up to the age of 19 you can access support for physical, emotional and sexual health needs from the Leaving Care Nurse.

They will also provide you with a care leaver health summary when you are approaching 18.

This contains important information about:

- What illnesses you had as a child,
- Immunisations you've had and
- Any health issues you may have

This is important information for your future health care.

You can speak to your PA about how you are feeling or anything you need help with. They are there for you and want to support you.

“My personal advisor made sure I was financially supported and she helped me sort out accommodation to stay at”

Relationships

Your personal advisor will be your main link to the Leaving Care Service and can continue to support you up until you are 25, they will also help you with other relationships as you become an adult:

- A Social Worker will continue to support you until you turn 18 if you remain in care
- We will support you to rebuild or maintain contact with people who are special to you
- We will help you develop social networks
- We will work with adult social care for care leavers with disabilities
- We will agree with you how often you would like contact from us
- If you're at university we will invite you to a vacation group with other Sheffield care leavers attending university
- We will continue to support you to access your cultural heritage
- We will offer weekly drop-in sessions alongside academic holiday and weekend activities to develop your networks, help you socialise as well as developing mentoring and Young Person Leadership skills if this is what you want
- We will help care leavers who identify as LGBT access SAYit and any other relevant support
- We will help care leavers who are asylum seekers to access a drop in service at Victoria Hall
- Should you need support with language we can help you access language support

- We will help you to understand your time in care and build relationships for your future, including support to access your social care records (subject access requests)
- Should you become parents we will offer help with parenting skills and support
- On your 18th birthday we will get you a personalised birthday cake to celebrate you becoming an adult

Your relationship with the Leaving Care Service will be an important source of support during your move to living on your own. Consultation has shown that our communication with you has not always been good enough and we will try to improve this.

This guidance should help make clear what you can expect from the service, but we are also making a commitment to explore other ways of making sure, you know what is happening.

"The support received meant that I was less stressed and anxious, which meant I could focus on my studies"

Education, Employment and Training

Sheffield City Council has the ambition that every child and young person in and leaving care achieves their full potential. We will work hard on your behalf to secure and promote opportunities that meet your needs.

Your personal advisor will support you to apply for the range of services on offer including access to:-

- 16 to 19 Study Programmes,
- Traineeships

- Apprenticeships
- Community Learning (Adult Provision):
- English, Mathematics and Digital Skills,
- Adult Education providers
- Building Block – employment and training programme specifically for the construction industry
- Pathways – employment programmes based in the community to support people on a journey into work
- Opportunities to gain work experience, and volunteering in a variety of roles

As well as:-

- Practical guidance, along with financial support for young people wanting to attend university
- Project Apollo which will continue to support young people already registered on the programme into education, training and employment opportunities until September 2021
- Offer information, advice and guidance and referral to specialist workers who can help you with developing employability skills such as C.V. writing, applying for jobs and details of training courses and other opportunities.
- Support from university outreach workers
- £1,000 bursary if you start an apprenticeship, we will also top up your salary to National Minimum Wage.
- South Yorkshire Transport Executive can offer limited travel passes when

you start your first job or course. Your PA can check if you are eligible.

- Financial support at university, including allowance to pay your accommodation costs plus weekly income maintenance payments.

"I am in a much better place because of my personal advisor's hard work and commitment"

Your Home

As you become an adult we will help you up until the age of 25 to access suitable accommodation or social housing.

Your PA will support you to set up home and visit you at your accommodation if you want, to check that you are OK.

Some of the accommodation options available are:

- **Council tenancy** - when you are ready to manage a tenancy, as a care leaver you will receive priority status for suitable social housing and we work with housing colleagues to support you this includes former unaccompanied asylum seeking children despite not having leave to remain in the UK.
- **Staying Put** - remain living with your foster carer past the age of 18 up to the age of 21, this includes support if you go to university or into the armed forces.

As you will be living with your foster carer as an adult we will help you develop a staying put agreement which details how you will contribute to household expenses etc.

- **Supported accommodation/ semi-independent living** - This is accommodation where you are provided with independent accommodation but are able to get extra help and support from staff
- **Supported lodgings** - You can choose to rent a room in a house of a 'host' family. Similar to Staying Put, this means that you would be a lodger in the home
- **Trainer flats** - the opportunity to practice independent living skills in a property with support
- **Shared accommodation** - You will usually get the 1-bed self-contained local housing allowance rate if you're a care leaver under the age of 22
- **Private accommodation** - If you choose to enter privately rented accommodation, we will offer you advice and support
- **Shared Lives** - If you need extra support with independent living, Shared Lives provides trained carers, or it may be your foster carer who offer extra help and support in different ways to meet specific needs. This arrangement could continue indefinitely or until you feel ready to live in independent or other supported accommodation.
- We will also support you to become tenancy ready giving you the best chance of maintaining a tenancy
- If you are at university we will help you secure accommodation during holiday periods

If you are a tenant in a council property we also provide housing support clinics to support your tenancy. We can also

pre-register you for council properties in the lead up to your 18th birthday, if that is what is best suited to your needs.

Money Matters

Leaving care and transitioning to independent living will bring with it many challenges; one of these will be managing your own money.

Your personal advisor will be able to support you manage your finances including, learning to budget, managing an effective budget, opening a savings account and claiming any benefits that you are entitled to.

Dependent on your circumstances, the Leaving Care Service are able to offer varying additional financial support:

- Setting up home allowance of up to £2,000, plus, where you are eligible, support from the Local Assistance Scheme to purchase white goods and furniture
- Support to prevent housing arrears
- Council tax reduction scheme - care leavers will be supported to access all schemes aimed at reducing council tax, where that is appropriate
- We have close links with the Department for Work and Pensions, with dedicated workers in each Job Centre to help you deal with benefits, problems and sanctions.
- Income maintenance if you are living independently but are too young to claim benefits
- We can support with debt advice and are linked with the Illegal Money lending
- Team if you are in debt to loan sharks

- We have close links with the Citizen's Advice Bureau who can offer one to one support with debt and financial issues. Your PA can help you set up an appointment.
- You may be eligible for a Junior ISA if you have been in care for more than a year and do not have a child trust fund. Speak to your PA to find out more.
- Your personal advisor can share with you the finance policy for care leavers
- We may be able to support you learn to drive and will pay for up to 10 driving lessons.

"I am in a much better place because of my personal advisor's hard work and commitment"

Getting my Voice Heard

As a care leaver your experiences are the best to help us shape the services that you and future care leavers need.

We want to hear from you about your experiences and to help us understand what we can do, as corporate parents, to continually develop services. We want you to feel part of society; and to ensure that you have opportunities to ensure that your voice is heard, there are some things we can help you with:

- Supporting you to enrol on the electoral register, so that you can vote
- Providing information about groups and activities in your area that are of interest to you
- Sheffield Care Leavers' Union – is an independent group of care leavers supporting the voice of care leavers in the city, contact them to have your say or join.
- You can access an independent advocate who will support you to get your voice heard

"My personal advisor had faith and belief in me and supported me through difficult times"

You can contact us with feedback, good or bad, at:

The office is based in Sheffield City Centre at Star House, 43 Division Street, S1 4GE

leavingcareservice@sheffield.gov.uk

Tel. 0114 203 9060

There is always a duty worker available to talk to you on the above number

8.45am to 5.15pm Monday - Thursday and 8.45 – 4.45 on Friday or in person at Star House if your allocated worker is unavailable. Access to Star House not currently available to young people.

Eligible Young Person

(Young people aged 16 or 17 who have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and were in care on their 16th birthday and who are still in care)

A Personal Advisor
A needs assessment
A pathway plan
All the care and support they normally receive until they leave care

Relevant Young Person

(Young people aged 16 or 17 who have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who have left care)

A Personal Advisor
A needs assessment
A pathway plan
Suitable accommodation and maintainance
Financial support to meet education, employment and training needs (see financial policy for care leavers)

Former Relevant Young Person

(Young people aged 18-25 who have been 'Eligible' or 'Relevant' young people)

A Personal Advisor
A needs assessment
A pathway plan
Assistance with education, employment and training
Suitable accommodation
Help with living costs (see financial policy for care leavers)

Qualifying Young Person

(Any young person aged between 16 and 25 who has left care but who was in care on or after their 16th birthday and had spent less than 13 weeks in care since the age of 14)

Advice and support if needed

Useful Organisations

Safety, Happiness & Health and wellbeing

The Corner Supports young people up to 18 with substance misuse problems

Tel: 0114 275 2051
thecorner.sheffield@cgl.org.uk

Door 43 @ Sheffield Futures Emotional, mental and sexual health support up to age 25

Tel: 0114 201 2800

Sexual Health Sheffield

Signpost you to places you can access advice and guidance on contraception, STI screening and pregnancy choices.

<http://www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk/>

Adult Drug

Tel. 0114 305 0500

Alcohol Services

Health Visitors Service Support young parents and signpost to further support and guidance

Sheffield Helpline for
Tel. 0808 801 0440

Mental Health

Samaritans

Tel: 116 123 • www.samaritans.org.uk

Mind

Tel: 0114 258 4489
www.sheffieldmind.co.uk

LGBT Foundation

Tel. 0345 330 3030 • <https://lgbt.foundation/>

SAYit

Supporting LGBT sexual health in Sheffield
Tel: 0114 241 2728 • <http://sayit.org.uk/>

Your Home contacts

Council Housing Service

Tel: 0114 293 0000

Money Matters contacts

Stop Loan Sharks hotline

Tel: 0300 555 2222

Job Seeker Allowance

Tel: 0800 055 6688
www.direct.gov.uk/jsaonline

Citizens Advice Bureau

They can tell you about specialist resources in your area that are not on this list, they also offer specialist debt counselling

Tel: 03444 113 111
www.citizensadvice.org.uk /
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Getting my voice heard contacts

Sheffield Advocacy Service

Tel: 0114 228 8553

Sheffield Care Leavers' Union

www.sclu.life

Care Leavers' Association

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

Action for Children

(You'll have to pay your usual rate for this call)
Tel: 01635 873 739

National Care Advisory

Tel: 020 7336 4846

Service (NCAC)

www.leavingcare.org

This document can be supplied in alternative formats,
please contact 07920 361 590

Sheffield City Council
Children and Families • 07920 361590 • www.sheffield.gov.uk

