

Making housing a home

A guide to understand and explore housing options for care leavers.



Introduction

Leaving care is a difficult time and is often seen as a confusing grey area by care leavers. This guide is to help you navigate what support is available as a care leaver around finding a home as well as your independence after care.

It is our duty as a corporate parent to ensure you are supported in all aspects detailed in our enhanced Local Offer. Being a corporate parent means that everything we do, or change, or develop must answer the question 'is that good enough for my child' placing you at the centre of those decisions.

Eligibility to care leaver support:

If you are to receive support as a care leaver you must be or have been a 'relevant' or 'former relevant' child. You can receive care leaver support up until the age of **21 years old**.

If you remain in full-time education, you can receive support until you are **25 years old**.

Eligible child:

- You must be at least 16 years old to leave care
- You must have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14
- 1 day of your time in care was at the age of 16 or 17.

Relevant child:

- A young person who is 16 or 17 and has left care
- You must have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.
- Including those detained (e.g. in custody or hospital) when they turned 16, immediately after being in care.

Former relevant:

- A young person who is over 18 years old and was previously an eligible or relevant child.

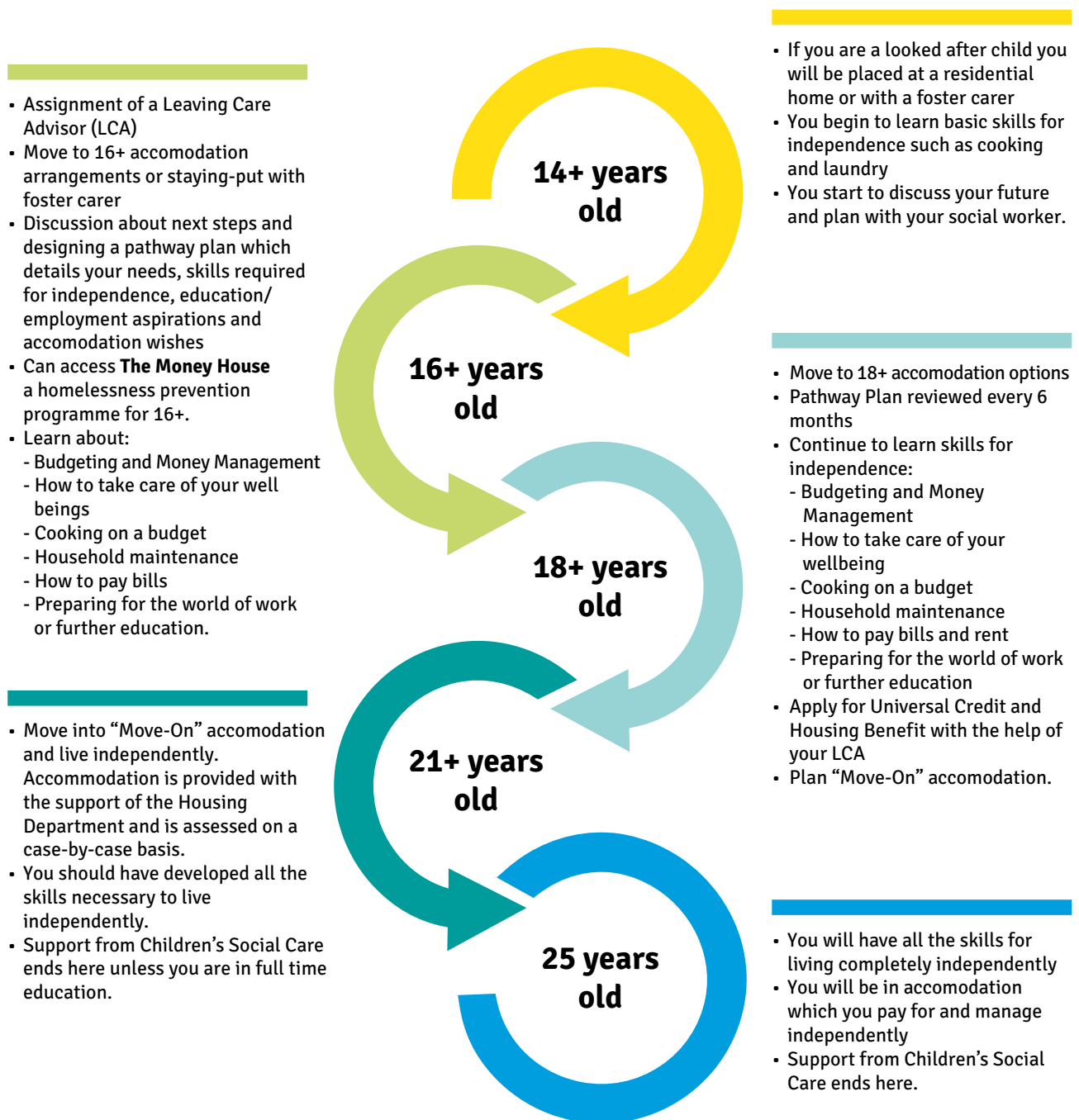
You can expect to get support and guidance with:

- Learning skills to become more independent
- Becoming a parent
- Emotional and physical health needs
- Advice on housing and financial issues
- Starting further education, work or going back to education
- Support around leaving the criminal justice system if applicable
- Domestic abuse or any form of exploitation.

The pathway to independence

The support you can access depends on a lot of factors such as age, employment, support needs and most importantly if you feel ready to be independent. There are lot's of options available for each step you take towards living independently, and these can be explored with the support of your Leaving Care Advisor (LCA) and/or Social Worker (SW).

All situations are looked at on an individual basis. This diagram outlines the pathways for most situations but are changeable based on circumstances.



Your housing options

We know that leaving home, having a family, or finding a job do not always happen in order so we have a range of options to reflect these different circumstances, so **no one will be left behind**.

We want your wishes and desires to be heard, we want to find the right accommodation in the right environment for you.

It is important to note that these are temporary housing options and are to support you to live independently.

Need level	Low	Medium	High	Specialist
14 to 16 years old	Residential Care	Residential Care	Residential Care Secure Unit	Residential Care Residential Specialist Schools
16+ years old	Foster Care Semi-Independent Provision: No-one can stay overnight 5-12 hours of support per week Expected: - Own cooking - Shopping - Laundry - Cleaning 24-hour Supported Accomodation: This can be in the form of bedrooms with shared facilities, bedsits or self-contained flats. There is onsite support 24/7.	Foster Care Semi-Independent Provision: No-one can stay overnight 5-12 hours of support per week Expected: - Own cooking - Shopping - Laundry - Cleaning 24-hour Supported Accomodation: This can be in the form of bedrooms with shared facilities, bedsits or self-contained flats. There is onsite support 24/7.	Foster Care Semi-Independent Provision: No-one can stay overnight 5-12 hours of support per week. Expected: - Own cooking - Shopping - Laundry - Cleaning 24-hour Supported Accomodation: This can be in the form of bedrooms with shared facilities, bedsits or self-contained flats. There is onsite support 24/7.	Foster Care Residential Specialist Schools 24-hour Supported Accomodation: 2:1 support Shared house with a shared bathroom, kitchen and living space.
18+ years old	Staying put - Remaining with your Foster Carer until either 18 or 21 if you and your carer want to. You will carry on living in the household in the same way with support to develop life skills. 18+ Semi-Independent Provision: No-one can stay overnight 5-12 hours of support per week Expected: - Own cooking - Shopping - Laundry - Cleaning Houseshare Self-contained flats managed by the Corporate Parenting team. This option is available if you are an asylum seeker, employed or in fulltime education YMCA Private Rented	Staying put - Remaining with your Foster Carer until either 18 or 21 if you and your carer want to. You will carry on living in the household in the same way with support to develop life skills. 18+ Semi-Independent Provision: No-one can stay overnight 5-12 hours of support per week Expected: - Own cooking - Shopping - Laundry - Cleaning Houseshare Self-contained flats managed by the Corporate Parenting team. If you are an asylum seeker, employed or in fulltime education	Staying put - Remaining with your Foster Carer until either 18 or 21. 18+ Semi-Independent Provision: No-one can stay overnight 5-12 hours of support per week Expected: - Own cooking - Shopping - Laundry - Cleaning 18+ 24-hour Supported Accomodation: This can be in the form of bedrooms with shared facilities, bedsits or self-contained flats. There is onsite support 24/7.	Residential Specialist Schools 24-hour Supported Accomodation: 2:1 support Shared house with a shared bathroom, kitchen and living space.

Move-On accommodation

Move-On is accommodation in which you independently manage yourself to pay rent and bills. In most situations you will be in Move-On accommodation by the age of 21 unless you are in full time education.

Acting on offers: You have 30 days to respond to your offer of Move-On accommodation. Failure to engage with your offer of Move-On accommodation may result in eviction from your current accommodation (if council managed) or termination of placement.

<p>'Move-On' 21+</p>	<p>Private Rented in a HMO property where you share living space, bathrooms and kitchen. This is income dependent.</p> <p>BD Reside Property If you are earning the amount required. https://bdreside.org/</p> <p>Homefinder Scheme to find social housing outside of the borough</p> <p>Housing Managed Flats Can pay using Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.</p>	<p>YMCA If you are unemployed, this becomes unaffordable if in low-paid employment</p> <p>You have a room however share amenities and eat in a canteen, the YMCA also help you to learn skills for independence</p> <p>Homefinder Scheme to find social housing outside of the borough</p> <p>Housing Managed Flats Can pay using Housing Benefit or Universal Credit</p> <p>Private Rented in a HMO property where you share living space, bathrooms and kitchen. This is income dependent.</p>	<p>Social Housing Offer In borough based on Social Care need decided at Adult Social Care assessment panel</p> <p>Homefinder Scheme to find social housing outside of the borough</p> <p>Social housing is unlikely due to demand pressures.</p> <p>YMCA If you are unemployed, this becomes unaffordable if in low-paid employment</p> <p>You have a room however; share amenities and eat in a canteen, the YMCA also help you to learn skills for independence</p> <p>Housing Managed Flats Can pay using Housing Benefit or Universal Credit</p>	<p>Specialist Residential Placement</p> <p>Care Package in place from Adult Social Care</p>
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Process of accommodation allocation



After allocation onto accommodation



Move-On up



Paying your rent in Move-On Accommodation

It is expected that once you have left care that you will be able to manage paying your rent independently, there will be no reminders to pay your rent. You will be issued quarterly rent account statements which will highlight any missed payments.

Missing payments may result in:



Financing your future

Up until your 18th Birthday the council provides you with an allowance to cover food, clothes, and transport. It is your LCA's duty to ensure you are receiving the correct amount of financial support through a financial assessment and they will help you to apply at your sign-up appointment.

Care leavers are also **exempt from paying Council Tax** if you are living within Barking and Dagenham.

If you are living out of the borough – speak to your local authority Citizen's Advice Bureau or check their website for further guidance.

The level of financial support depends on your income, number of dependents, savings and any other income entering your household.

If you are a student: <https://propel.org.uk/UK/support/funding/> offers further financial guidance.



Housing Benefit – to help pay your accommodation:

Housing Benefit usually funds your accommodation before you are 21 years old, unless you are not eligible, you earn a high amount which means you do not qualify, or you are a student and your student finances cover the cost of your accommodation.

You can apply for Housing Benefit to cover your rent if you are:

- **Living in temporary accommodation**
- **Living in supported accommodation**

Your LCA and Housing Officer will assist you to make a claim when you move into 18+ accommodation. You apply for Housing Benefit through your local authority. Housing Benefit is the local housing allowance rate for the area, this varies dependent on the size of the property and whether you share with others. **You can claim Housing Benefit as well as Universal Credit.**

Universal Credit – to help pay your way:

As a care leaver you can apply for Universal Credit if you are unemployed, on a low-income or a student.

You apply directly online or at the library to the Department of Work and Pension.

Universal Credit is made up of several parts, some are:

- Standard Allowance
- Housing element – you cannot get this if you are claiming Housing Benefit, you will claim this in 21+ accommodation
- Child element – if you have dependents

The Citizens Advice Bureau can help provide further guidance.

Useful links and contact:

Children's Social Care:

020 8227 3811

childrenss@lbbd.gov.uk

Homelessness Prevention Service:

020 8724 8323

housingadvice@lbbd.gov.uk

Local Offer to Care Leavers:

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/Local-offer-to-care-leavers.pdf>

Housing Benefit Information:

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/housing-benefit>

Universal Credit Information:

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/universal-credit>

The Citizens Advice Bureau:

0300 3309 038

Barking Learning Centre, 2 Town Square,
Barking, IG11 7NB

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/>

TURN2US – further financial guidance:

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk/Your-Situation/a-young-person-aged-16-18/>