Barking & Dagenham









This brochure outlines what we can and will do to support and guide you, so you know what to expect on your journey from care to adulthood. ??





What is the Enhanced Local Offer to Care Leavers?

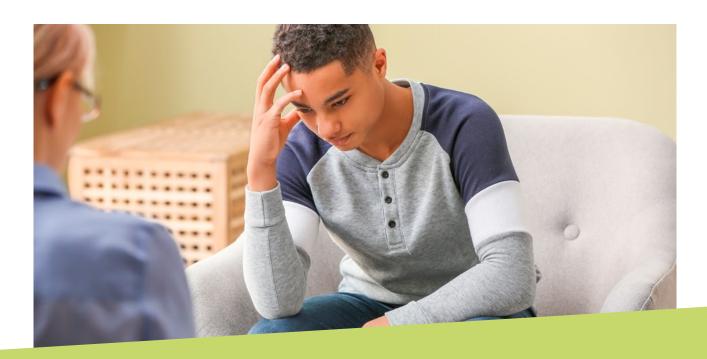
We believe that everyone in society has a responsibility to help those who have been in care to overcome the difficulties that they experienced in their childhoods, so that they can lead successful lives.

More than anything else we recognise that the help and support that you receive from the local authority Corporate Parenting Service is critical to whether you make the transition from care to independence successfully.

We take this responsibility very seriously. For our Looked After Children and Care Leavers we strive to be excellent Corporate Parents, having high aspirations for you and encouraging you to achieve your goals and potential. A good parent means keeping you safe and providing you with the best support to meet your individual needs. We can help you to access housing, education and training, work experience, health services and we are here to support you to make the most of leaving care.

Our professionals working with you share high aspirations for you and make sure that all our looked after children and care leavers have all the opportunities we would give our own children through good access to high quality education, health and social care services.

This offer focuses on how we work across the partnership to meet your needs to achieve the best of outcomes.



What does the Barking and Dagenham Corporate Parenting Team do?

We are your 'Corporate Parents' which means, it is our responsibility to be good parents to all young people in our care.

Our team is made up of Leaving Care Advisors (LCA) and Social Workers (SW) who will support you with your journey to independent living. We have a legal duty to support you and provide you with assistance until you are 21, or 25 if you are in education, or you wish to have an ongoing service.

The Corporate Parenting Service is based in The Vibe in Dagenham. It is part of the Children's Care and Support Directorate.

The contact details of the Corporate Parenting Service are;

Address: Corporate Parenting Service, The Vibe, 195-211 Becontree Avenue, RM8 2UT.

Telephone: 020 8227 3886

Email Address: careleavers@lbbd.gov.uk



What is my Pathway Plan?

Every young person between the ages of 16 and 21 in care or a Care Leaver has a pathway plan and up to 25 if you are in education or wish to continue to receive a service from us.

Your first pathway plan will be based on and will include your Care Plan and any Personal Education Plan (PEP) you have. It will be written with you by your Social Worker or Leaving Care Advisor.

The pathway plan has information on the best way to support you towards full independence and adulthood. It will cover your education, employment, health, finance, social needs, relationships and housing.

Your plan will be written in a way that should meet your individual needs, it will capture your hopes for the future and include your views. It will be regularly reviewed with you, at least every six months, to check that your goals and milestones are still right and are being met.

What is the role of my Social Worker?

Regularly visits children in care and care leavers.		
Makes sure you have annual medicals and can attend with you if wish.		
Makes sure you have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP).		
Contributes to your Looked After Child Reviews.		
Contributes to the transition planning process prior to your switch over to the support		
of a Leaving Care Advisor at the age of 18.		
Makes sure that the six-monthly Pathway Plans are in place post 16.		
Conducts Age Assessments for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).		
Completes and updates Risk Assessments, if required.		
Speaks with appropriate services on your behalf.		
Can provide finances for travel, education, trips, food, clothing, exam fees and college		
enrolment, for example.		

What is the role of my Leaving Care Advisor (LCA)?

Supports you leaving care to develop a strong sense of yourself and your identity,
your background and history.
Builds on your family and significant positive relationships in preparation for adulthood.
Enables you to hold a sense of belonging to the community where you live and connection
to society in general.
Helps you to understand what support is available, so that you can make informed choices.
Encourage you to develop confidence and self-esteem, and the ability to voice your
opinions and thoughts on key issues that affect you.
Support me to develop the necessary skills to live independently.

What you need to do:

When you turn 18 you will get a Leaving Care Advisor (LCA) allocated to you, although you will have had the opportunity to meet your LCA prior to turning 18. It is their job to keep in contact and arrange meetings with you, at home or somewhere local to you. Your LCA will give you advice, information and guidance to help you make the best decisions. You will have your social worker or LCA's mobile number and email so you can contact them within office hours, and you will be told who you can speak to if they are not available.

You need to:

Be there when we visit.
Share your news; we are there to support you and can only do that if you speak to us
openly about what is going on in your life.
Talk to us about any problems you may have, so we can help.
Understand that you can request to change your social worker or LCA in exceptional
circumstances.
Attend workshops. The workshops are an opportunity for you to learn additional skills
that you will need to live more independently in the community.

Our promise to you

To make sure you are supported, we will:

Support you to make a complaint if you need to.

	Give you your own allocated worker and make sure you know who you can contact if		
	they are not available.		
	Talk to you about when you and your family can see or contact each other and support		
	travel arrangements and if you can't, we'll explain why.		
	Keep brothers and sisters together, wherever possible.		
	Regularly review how well we are keeping our promises to you.		
	Make sure that adults, such as carers and workers, get the right training to understand		
	the issues that affect children in care and care leavers, so that you get the best care		
	possible.		
To	guide you and treat you well, we will:		
	Make sure your allocated worker stays in touch and visits you regularly to see how you are.		
_	Write a Pathway Plan alongside you and will make sure your wishes and feelings and		
-	aspirations are captured.		
	Talk to you about why decisions are made and explain this clearly in a way you can		
	understand.		
	Make sure your allocated worker doesn't change unless there is a good reason for it.		
	Make sure you meet with an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) before your looked after		
-	child reviews, so you can share your thoughts about your care.		
	Share the good things that you have done in your review and discuss issues you feel are		
	important.		
	•		

To	help you be healthy, we will:
	Make sure you receive information and support to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
ā	Respect your right to confidentiality.
ā	Make sure you recognise the importance of wellbeing and have access to appropriate
	health and support services.
	Ensure you have access to a dedicated Emotional Health and Wellbeing Practitioner and
	access to group work and individual support.
	Ensure you have access to Health workshops which include sexual health and
	contraception, dental health and emotional wellbeing.
	Ensure that you have access to New Town Culture arts and drama programme opportunities.
ā	Provide training to our Leaving Care Advisors on condom distribution.
ā	Provide access to free gym and swimming.
	Provide you with dedicated substance misuse support from Subwize.
	Provide you with your health history information.
	Consider funding (on an individual basis) any reasonable health related costs which
	impact on your day to day life such as transport costs to receive treatment.
	Explore funding options for non-essential treatment such as cosmetic dentistry if you
	have no recourse to public funds.
	Assist you to sign up with a local GP when you move accommodation.
To	help you find and sustain suitable accommodation, we will:
	Ensure a dedicated Housing Officer works jointly with you and your social worker to
	identify appropriate housing offers.
	Help you set up a rent account, to assist you in getting used to managing a tenancy.
	Provide you with opportunities to drop in for housing advice with our dedicated Housing
	Officer.
	Provide you with our Accommodations Options brochure which will explain what you are
	entitled to and key provisions available to you.
	Provide you with access to ongoing workshops/groups to develop and improve your
	independent living skills.
	Provide you with information on how to access our enhanced leaving care grant (£2,500)
	and a further discretionary grant of up to £1,000 (subject to assessment) to help you
	furnish your move on accommodation.

To	help you to get the best education and training, we will:				
	Work with your school and designated teacher to help you do your best by having a Personal Education Plan (PEP).				
	Help you to get on the courses you want to study.				
	Offer you opportunities to speak directly to employers and education providers about your future.				
	Support you on your pathway to university and higher education.				
	Provide you with taster pre-apprenticeship training opportunities.				
	Provide a defined careers advice offer from our Virtual School (even if you're not studying A levels) and LBBD Job Shop whilst you are in care and after you turn 18.				
	Ensure you have someone of your choice attend all university open day visits and have their travel costs paid. This could be your Leaving Care Advisor, foster carer or friend.				
	Ensure an adult of your choice (your Leaving Care Advisor, foster carer etc) takes you				
	to university on day 1 and that a 'big shop' is done to make sure you have all basic foods and cleaning items.				
	Ensure that whilst you are at university, your holiday accommodation and travel costs				
	are arranged in advance and paid for by a grant of up to £1,500 during the summer of				
	year 1 and year 2.				
To	help you find employment, we will:				
	Provide you with a careers mentor from a diverse range of personal and professional backgrounds within the council and its partners if you would like this.				
	Support you through our Job Shop to prepare a CV, complete job applications and prepare				
	for interviews through a 24 hour response agreement.				
	Provide you with a financial payment to assist you with interviews e.g. travel costs and clothing.				
	Provide you with travel costs to attend work or university until your first pay cheque or				

student loan is available.

To be successful in life, we will:

- Celebrate your achievements and successes with you.
- Make sure that you are asked about important decisions which affect your life.
- Provide you with support to live independently when you're ready.
- Help you leave care with your savings, learn to budget and manage your finances well.
- Help you get ready for the world of work, find a job or training placement.
- Make sure that if you move from one service to another or leave our care, that there is a plan in place that is suitable for you.
- ☐ If you are assessed for an ongoing care need then you may be eligible for further support.

No expiry date for advice and support



Help and support: Our enhanced Local Offer

Local authorities have a legal duty to support you to make the transition from care to adulthood. It is our responsibility to make sure you know what services are available to you, and what you can expect to receive when you are in care.

This Enhanced Local Offer for Care Leavers aims to clearly set out in one document what you are entitled to and what we expect from you and help you to make the most of your independence. Over the following pages, you will be able to learn more about:

- Your money and official documents
- Where you live
- Your education, employment and training opportunities
- Your health and safety
- Care Leavers who are Parents
- Care Leavers who are over 21
- Care Leavers who are over 25
- Care Leavers in Custody
- How to get your voice heard



Your money and official documents

This section gives you information on what financial help you can expect from the Corporate Parenting Team.

We provide financial advice and support to help you prepare for living independently and manage your money. To do this we will:

ч.	make sure that you have the advice you need to learn how to manage your money and
	that this is written out in your Pathway Plan, whether you are in full time education, or
	ready to live independently.
	Help you to open your own bank account and how to manage your money, so that you
	avoid getting into debt.
	Help you to get identification documents, (important pieces of paper about you) such as
	a passport, birth certificate and provisional driving licence.
	Help you to get your National Insurance (NI) number. Every adult in the country has their
	own NI number, so that records about their benefits, taxes and pensions are kept. Your
	worker might write a letter or help you fill in a form to apply for it before you leave care.
	Help you to access our DWP Drop In for advice.
	Help you when you make your first claim for benefits at 18, by supporting you with a
	personal allowance for up to six weeks while your benefits claim is being processed.
	You are allowed to claim benefits up to one month before you turn 18 and will be
	supported to do so.
	Help you if you are unable to claim benefits by supporting you financially for a longer
	period while your entitlements are being established, as set out in your Pathway Plan.
	Help you to purchase furniture and white goods, such as washing machines and fridges,
	when you are setting up your home through a Leaving Care Grant.
	Where necessary, we give young people financial assistance with the cost of health,
	dental or optician services.

The amount of money you will get depends on your age and what type of accommodation you are in. There is a lot of information for Care Leavers online and you will have YPAs, support workers and key workers who you can ask for more information. Remember if you are not sure about anything, just ask a member of staff.

The table below describes the range of financial support that is available for when

Item	Amount	Regularity	Comments
Health support	Subject to assessment	Subject to assessment	To put towards the cost of glasses and optician appointments, dentists and dental treatment, subject to written quotes
Clothing for job interview	Up to £100	One off payment	Request submitted by Leaving Care Advisor for clothing and travel to interview/s.
Passport/travel documents/Birth Certificate/Provisional Driving license	Rates will be set for each document	Relevant ID documents as required	For young person between 16 and 21 years.
Apprenticeship, Internship, Traineeship top up allowance	£50 per week subject to attendance	Quarterly	
Discretionary loan for unforeseen circumstances e.g. food, utilities	Subject to assessment	Depending on each individual case	The balance will be taken from the young person's savings held by the Local Authority.
Travel costs		Festive period only	For young person over the age of 18 that have been placed out of borough who need to visit immediate family. This also includes university students
Leaving Care Grant Setting up allowance: Furniture and equipment	£2000	Based on need	When young people move into independent or semi-independent accommodation to help with the purchase of white goods, bed, kitchen equipment, bedding and bath towels, for example
TV and other connection charges	£250		torrets, for example
Setting up allowance in semi-independent accommodation, if required	£250		
Subsistence 18+ EET/ NEET		Three payments per claim	Not available if not in education, employment or training. Deducted from savings until Income Support claim is completed.
Travel	Will vary according to location	If not reasonably covered by education bursary	When attending education or training only.
18th and 21st birthdays			Financial gift or activity depending on the young person's preference

Where you live

There are different types of housing with support, and you will have some options in where you want to live.

Your social worker and LCA will be visiting you, and where you live will be agreed in your Pathway Plan. Staying on with foster carers is called 'Staying Put', you can stay with your foster carer until you are 21 years old, if this is agreed. This will not affect your long term move or plans.

When you turn 16, a dedicated Housing Officer will become involved with you to begin discussions about your housing options post 18 as part of the pathway planning process. There will be reviews of your housing options until an 18+ accommodation offer is agreed.

Our aim is to encourage early joint planning to avoid the need for young people to be assessed as homeless. We will continue to provide advice and information to assist with housing within Barking and Dagenham as well as explore other options for young people who cannot be rehoused in the borough. However, it is important that young people are aware that there is a very limited supply of Council Social Housing Accommodation and our duty is to provide suitable accommodation, not Permanent Council Social Housing Accommodation.

We are also able to help with housing applications which can then be put on hold for young people who are not quite ready to transition into independent living. This means that the Housing Department are notified of the request for housing well in advance.

Where there are concerns that young people are not going to manage independent living, bespoke packages of support can be implemented to support this transition.

These include:

Young people remaining in semi-independent provision post 18 year until they are more
able to manage independent living.

Outreach support packages from a variety of external providers, focussing on Health,
Education, Employment and Self Care Skills.

These packages can vary enormously in terms of how many hours of support per week are offered to young people in their own accommodation. The Corporate Parenting Team will liaise with Adults' Services and other departments within the council where young people meet their criteria, to seek appropriate adult accommodation and support services.

Where young people want to remain in a different borough; we try to work in conjunction with other local authority housing departments to advocate on their behalf for entitlement to apply for social housing in that locality.

Types of accommodation

There are a range of accommodation options post 18 that are outlined in a brochure for Care Leavers (Making Housing a Home) which is on our website - see brochure here

Туре	Description	Detail
16+ 24 Hour Unit	For young people who are being prepared for semi-independent living	Usually, a large house with up to five young people sharing. You will have your own room but share the kitchen, bathroom and lounge. You will still have an allocated key worker who works within the service but has responsibility of overseeing your pathway plan and making sure you can demonstrate you can look after yourself. There will always be a member of staff in the house including sleep-in staff overnight.
16+ Lower Support Unit	This service is for young people who already have demonstrated that they have some semi-independent skills and are enrolled at college or working	You will have your own room but share the kitchen, bathroom and lounge. You will still have an allocated key worker who works within the service but has responsibility of overseeing your pathway plan and making sure you can demonstrate you can look after yourself.
Foster Placement	Young people are placed in a family home with carers, often sharing with other young people or the carers' children	Foster Carers will continue to support you through education employment and training up until you reach the age of 18.
Staying Put	This is an extension of your foster placement.	This arrangement is for young people who have requested to remain with their carers post 18 and the carers agree to this.
18+ Shared House This accommodation is for young people 18+ that continue to require a level of support and guidance to successfully achieve independence		You will have your own room and share a kitchen, bathroom and lounge area. You are expected to keep the accommodation clean and adhere to the house expectations. You will have a key worker that will come to the house to see you and offer support where required.
Shared Transitional Accomodation (STA) These are for young people that have become settled in education or employment		To be considered for this accommodation you will need to have demonstrated your ability to be responsible and live in a one or two-bedroom accommodation with a licence agreement. Licence agreements are reviewed regularly with your allocated worker and the Housing Department.

Education, employment and training

Education is essential for you to gain the academic qualifications you will need when looking for employment. However, college and university are not the only options. Apprenticeships and training schemes are very popular and can be a good way to learn practical work skills and earn!

Volunteering is another excellent option to help you gain 'work ready' skills and get that all important work experience that employers want.

We encourage and plan young people's education, training and leisure activities based on a comprehensive assessment of your needs and this is recorded in detail in your pathway plans. These proposals build on information that is already included in your personal education plan (PEP).

Some young people will not be able to access formal education and training straight away but may be working towards these opportunities, that is English as A Second Language (ESOL) classes or volunteering. It is important that these engagements are recognised.

The council is committed to also giving priority for apprenticeships to Care Leavers.

We work together with the LBBD Jobshop to make sure that young people receive appropriate careers advice and guidance up to the age of 21 year (or 25 years if required). If you are a care leaver you will receive priority access from the point of referral (a 24 hours response guaranteed). The Jobshop and our partners can also help with practical tasks such as CV building, interview preparation and practising and work readiness preparation.

We work in partnership with over 20 education and employment trainers who specialise in either one to one intensive work to build up confidence, motivation and the self-esteem of young people who wish to further their goals in connection with education, employment training.

University students

We will work hard to support you with your education, if you decide to go to university you will receive up to a three-year financial support package. Further education is essential for you to gain academic qualifications you will need when looking for employment.

The financial support you could receive includes:

Title Amount		Detail	
University Higher Education Bursary	£2,100 per course	This is a government incentive to assist all care leavers to go onto Higher Education. The payment is a total of £2,100 and is paid over the duration of the course. A payment is made directly into your bank account twice a year, December £350 and April £350.	
Laptops	Will depend on course and the need for specific IT equipment	A request will be made by your LCA if equipment is required.	
University Holiday Accommodation and Travel costs	Dependent on location	The Corporate Parenting Service will assist you to source holiday accommodation during the summer and Christmas periods if required. You must make sure we are aware of your plans at least four weeks in advance. Your worker will also assist with a return travel costs.	
University Leaving Care Accommodation Bursary	£1,500 annually	This is paid annually to assist in the payment of your rent/deposit. Payment will be paid directly to your landlord. To qualify for this payment, we will require a confirmation letter from you with your landlord's details and authority to pay this money directly to them on your behalf.	
University Graduation Equipment	£150	We will give assistance to you when you reach your final graduation ceremony. We will assist in the hiring of the gown and photo opportunities on the day of your graduation events.	
University Student Applications directly to universities		This is dependent on the University and further discussion will need to take place with each individual University.	

Should you decide to stop attending university please make sure that you inform your allocated worker as soon as possible.

Your health and safety

Your health and well-being are very important to us. Being healthy doesn't just mean eating vegetables, exercising regularly and keeping your teeth clean. It also means feeling strong and well emotionally, being sexually healthy and safe and not smoking, doing drugs or drinking alcohol.

There are lots of services and support you can access and we will do our very best to keep you

safe. We will support and encourage you to be healthy by: Encouraging you to speak up if you are struggling with anything so we can get you the support that you need. Don't bottle it up! Providing a Health Passport as you reach 18 years old. This is a summary of all your health information. Helping you to register at a doctor's surgery and at other health services when you move home. Helping you to manage your emotional well-being – this may include Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or supporting you to get services as an adult. Helping you to attend hospital or doctors' appointments. Providing help and support if you are a parent. Your allocated worker will help or a special support service for young parents which offers advice, help and sometimes support with accommodation. Organising free access or discounted access to the Barking and Dagenham's leisure centres to help you enjoy regular exercise. ☐ Making sure you have an adult you can trust with you, should you get into trouble with the police.

Care leavers who are parents

Being a parent for the first time can be challenging. We want to make sure that you get the support you need when you are pregnant and during your first year of being a parent.

We can support you in the following ways:

- Provide you with a gift hamper in addition to the maternity grant. The hamper is also available to prospective fathers.
- Ensure that you have essential items for baby by accessing correct benefits, grants, charities and consideration of a discretionary grant up to £100 if required.
- Offer prospective mothers a birthing partner and someone to accompany them to pre and post-natal health appointments e.g. their Leaving Care Advisor, ex foster carer, if you would like this.
- Support travel costs for a friend/family member to accompany you to appointments and the hospital for the birth.
- Provide you with the opportunity to have a Family Group Conference during pregnancy to identify support within friends and family network.
- ☐ Ensure all prospective mothers have a birth plan which includes a 6 week after care plan where we will support you with your new baby.
- Provide automatic entitlement for all mothers and fathers to 6 to 8 sessions with a Family Support Worker during the first year of the baby's life for parenting skills, support and advice.
- Provide access to support to assist with claiming relevant benefits and registering the birth of the baby.





Care leavers who are over 21

The support we will provide includes:

We can continue to offer to support to Care Leavers aged over 21 years until they turn 25. If at any point you no longer require a service from us, you can ask multiple times to have a service reinstated up until the age of 25.

Access to a quarterly newsletter outlining education opportunities, traineeships,
apprenticeships, internships, help with CV etc.
If you go to university and will not be finishing your course until you are over 25 we can
keep working with you after you turn 25 if you would like us to.
Access to the University Bursary and all other aspects of a university package including
financial assistance and general support.
Council Tax discount until 25 wherever you live in the country.
Access to your leaving care grant if you haven't accessed it before the age of 25.
Leaving Care Advisor and Pathway Plan: If you want this, we will agree with you how often
we see you and what we will help you with.

Care leavers who are over 25

At Barking and Dagenham, we understand that parents do not stop being parents when a young person turns 25 years-old and do not believe that this should happen for care leavers. Therefore there will be no age limit on our service provision. From 25 onwards;

You can still come to us for information, advice and guidance and we will help in any way
we can.
There will be no more pathway plans (but we can help you plan your life).
We won't chase you but we will be here if you need us.
We would love to hear how you are getting on so please do call or write in with your news
or just for a catch-up.

Care leavers in custody

We will be there for any of our young people in custody. This will include making arrangements to collect you when you are released and make arrangements so that you have somewhere to go. We will stay in touch by visiting or writing to you depending on what you want.

We will also:

- Provide you with a payment of £25 per month until you are 21 years old, unless agreed otherwise.
- Ensure your Leaving Care Advisor will make a case for any additional funding for hardship support you may need.
- Be actively involved in any resettlement planning for you.
- Assist you with keeping in touch with friends and family if you want this.

Numbers to contact if things go wrong:

Service	Description	Contact
Childrens Care and Support Out of Hours (EDT)	An emergency social care service outside of normal office hours. The service is designed to deal only with emergency situations that cannot wait until the next working day.	020 8594 8356
Barking & Dagenham Childrens Rights / Advocacy	Support you to explore any issues you may have regarding your pathway plan accommodation.	07968 511822
Housing Emergency Duty Team	Advice and help if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness.	020 8215 3000
Corporate Parenting Duty Team	Responds to crisis situations in the absence of an allocated worker.	020 8227 5496
The Mix Helpline	They can help you take on any challenge you're facing - from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs.	0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk
Sexual Health Services	Sexual Health Advice & Support. C – card scheme for 13 to 24-year-olds.	020 8970 5724 www.facebook.com/LBBDCondoms www.comecorrect.org.uk www.tht.org.uk/hiv-and-sexual -health/sexual-health/improving -your-sexual-health/condoms/ how-use-condom

Getting your voice heard

Having a voice and knowing your rights are important when you are a Care Leaver and this document will hopefully help you to understand what support and advice is available to you.

We really want to hear your views, wishes and feelings so you can help us to improve your experience of being in care. We have a duty to listen to you and will treat you fairly and with respect, which is what is expected of you, too.

It is important for you to know what to do if you feel you are not being listened to. Children's Services are obliged to protect you from harm and provide you with support and services that meet your needs. The Children's Rights Service wants to make sure that everyone who uses the service is treated fairly and with respect.

Service	What they do/how they help	Contact number	Email/Website
Corporate Parenting Service	Leaving Care support & Guidance	020 8227 5496	careleavers@lbbd.gov.uk
Children and Young People in Care and Care Leaver Council (Skittlz)	Skittlz youth group gives care leavers the opportunity to discuss care related issues, e.g. health, education, housing and finance. We meet with Councillors and Directors to share your views to make the service better for all children and young people in care and care leavers.	07971 542684	AnnM.McDonnell@lbbd.gov.uk Sally.Allen-Clarke@lbbd.gov.uk
Children's Rights Service	Support you to explore any issues you may have regarding your Pathway Plan Accommodation.	07968 511822	Tracey.clarke@lbbd.gov.uk

Sometimes problems do happen and when they do, we have a policy of trying to sort things out as soon as we can. If you feel you have been treated unfairly or discriminated against in any way, or if you are unhappy about the support or service you have received, an advocate will help you to address your concerns.

Enhanced Local Offer to Care Leavers

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