



**Barking &
Dagenham**

CARES



Enhanced Local Offer to Care Leavers

November 2025 – November 2026



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.

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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 Children in Care 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 children in care 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 and provide you with assistance until you are 21, and up to 25 if you are in education, or continue to need our help. The enhanced local offer outlines the services and support you can access.

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**

Nothing about you, without you



Who is entitled to support?

If you are a care leaver between 16-25 years, to qualify for support, you must be:



Eligible

- ❑ Aged 16 or 17 and currently in care, either on care order (Section 31) or accommodated on Section 20
- ❑ Must have been 13 weeks in care or periods amounting to 13 weeks (which began after 14th birthday and ended on 16th birthday)

Relevant

- ❑ Aged 16 or 17 and left care, previously in the category of 'eligible child' and for a maximum period of 6 months after which become Qualifying
- ❑ This could also apply to the time that follows being remanded in custody (having been in care, immediately before)

Former Relevant

- ❑ Aged between 18 to 21 who has left care having previously been either 'Eligible', 'Relevant' or both
- ❑ Or if aged between 21 to 25 and in full time education, or requested support from a Leaving Care Advisor based on specific need(s)

Qualifying

- ❑ Aged 16-21 (or up to 25th birthday if in higher education)
- ❑ Left care on or after 16th birthday, and were in care for 13 weeks, since the age of 14
- ❑ Or were in Special Guardianship Order when reached the age of 18, having been in care immediately before the making of the order, and while applying the same rules for children in care
- ❑ As qualifying, you are entitled to advice and support, you will be entitled to an assessment of need & support plan. This means you will not be allocated to LCA or have a Pathway Plan or have access to the Setting up Home Grant

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 have a need for our service/support.

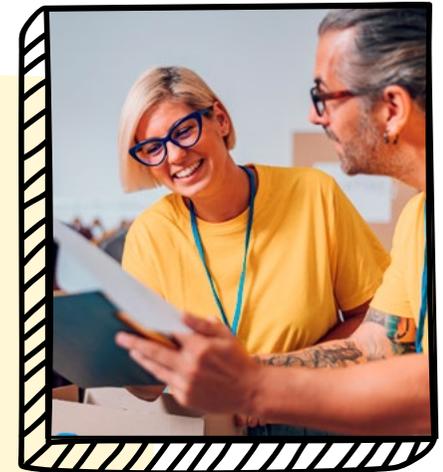
Your first pathway plan will be based on and will include your Care Plan and any Personal Education Plan (PEP) you have. It will be written with you by your Social Worker.

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. (SW will meet with children in care at least every 6 weeks and a care leaver at least every 8 weeks). When you are 18 years, your SW will step back and you will have a Leaving Care Advisor as your worker
- Makes sure you have annual medicals and can attend with you if you wish
- Makes sure you have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Contributes to your Child in Care 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
- 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)?

When you reach 17.5 years, you will have a Leaving Care Advisor (LCA) co-allocated to you, who will work alongside your Social Worker to help you prepare for leaving care and will attend your final child in care review.

When you turn 18 years, your LCA will become your main worker and meet with you every 8 weeks and they will also help you to review your Pathway Plan every 6 months.



A Leaving Care Advisor:

- ❑ 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 with you. You can also be provided with information on services to support you with this. We have a dedicated service called Lifelong Links that supports children in care and care leavers in connecting with people who they can rely on during their time in care and into 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
- ❑ Supports you to develop the necessary skills to live independently
- ❑ Will help you to understand your tenancy, applying for relevant benefits such as Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, support in ordering items from your Setting Up Home Grant, and applying for council tax exemption

If you are over 21, you can still get help from us until you are 25 years. 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 will be able to contact the leaving care duty service in the event you are not able to reach your LCA.

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 a preliminary meeting with the Housing Officer, LCA and/or social worker, to complete the necessary paperwork to set up a rent account prior to your 18th birthday
- You will need to pay rent for your accommodation. If you are earning no income, your rent will be covered by Housing Benefit, if you have completed the necessary paperwork. Paying your rent is one of your main responsibilities as not paying can lead to debt or losing your home and we do not want that to happen. If you are worried about paying your rent or have rent arrears, it is important to speak to your LCA as soon as possible and they may be able to help you set up a manageable repayment plan
- If you are attending university, you will need to apply for student finance, and you will pay for your accommodation costs from the student finance you will receive. Your LCA will support you in applying for your student finance
- You will need to attend your universal credit appointments and keep your universal credit journal up to date, you can reach out to your LCA for support with this if needed
- Attend workshops. The workshops are an opportunity for you to learn additional skills that you will need to live more independently in the community. For example financial literacy, fostering healthy mindset and workshops focused on preparation for employment



Our promise to you

To make sure you are supported, we will:

- 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
- 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 child in care 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
- Support you to make a complaint if you need to

To help you be healthy, we will:

- Make sure you receive information and support to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Respect your right to confidentiality.
- 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.
- Ensure you have access to Health workshops which include sexual health, contraception and emotional wellbeing.
- Ensure that you have access to New Town Culture arts and drama programme opportunities. Provide training to our Leaving Care Advisors on condom distribution and link you with the C-Card programme if you wish.
- Provide access to free gym with 'Everyone Active' and for those out borough an equivalent contribution.
- 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.
- 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 your Setting up Home Grant (to the value of £3,000)

To help you to get the best education and training, we will:

- ❑ Work with your school/college 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
- ❑ Support you on your pathway to university and higher education
- ❑ 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
- ❑ Refer you to our Education, Employment, and Training Coordinator for advice and guidance in terms of re-entering education and preparing for employment
- ❑ 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, if university halls are not an option for you in the summer term, we can support you in accessing an allowance of up to £1500 (summer rent- Year 1 and Year 2). This will be paid directly to the accommodation provider
- ❑ Ensure that whilst you are at university we provide you with a travel warrant between your university and summer accommodation

To help you find employment, we will:

- ❑ Refer you to our Education Employment, and Training Coordinator who can help you create a CV and apply for jobs
- ❑ Refer you to external organisation who can support you with employment such as the Job Shop
- ❑ 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 via public transportation until your first pay cheque or student loan is available



Enhanced Local Offer to Care Leavers

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 (you can access your full savings at 21 years), learn to budget and manage your finances well, this may be through direct work or referral to specific workshops
- ❑ Help you get ready for the world of work
- ❑ If you and your Leaving Care Advisor believe you require additional support above and beyond the Leaving Care Service, your Leaving Care Advisor can refer you to Adult Social Care so your needs can be assessed

**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 wellbeing (including access to leisure and activities)
- Refugee and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Young People
- 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:

- ❑ Make sure that you have the advice you need to learn how to manage your money and that this is written 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, provisional driving licence, deed poll (if required), travel document, e-Visa and a share code
- ❑ Help you to get your National Insurance (NI) number. Your worker may write a letter or help you fill in a form to apply for it before you leave care
- ❑ Help you when you make your first claim for benefits prior to your 18th birthday, supporting you with a personal allowance for up to six weeks while your benefits claim is being processed. You are allowed to make an application 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 (due to your status in the UK), 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 fridge, when you are setting up your home through a Setting Up Home Grant
- ❑ Where necessary, we give young people financial assistance with the cost of health, dental or optician services.
- ❑ Help you access discounted travel if this applies, e.g post 16 in full time education or training living in London are entitled to either 16-25 rail card or an 18 plus student oyster card, which offers 30% off cost of adult travel fare. Transport for London has introduced half-price travel on buses and trams for London care leavers aged 18-25, you can speak to your LCA to check if you can access this

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 an LCA 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 you leave care:

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/ Deed poll certificate (if required)	Rates will be set for each document	Relevant ID documents as required	For young person between 16 and 21 years. Leaving care cover the cost of one adult passport and one provisional licence.
Apprenticeship, Internship, Traineeship top up allowance	£50 per week subject to attendance	Monthly	Young people need to consent to LCA contacting their employer to confirm attendance.
Discretionary payment 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.
Setting up Home Grant: Furniture and equipment	£3000	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.
Setting up allowance in semi-independent accommodation (16+), if required	Up to £500 from £3,000 SUHG balance		For essential items that are not already provided by the semi-independent provision such as TV and/or personal fridge.
Travel	Will vary according to location	If not reasonably covered by education bursary	When attending education or training only.
18th and 21st birthdays	£125		Voucher of your choice
17th birthday for YP in semi-independent	£125		Voucher of your choice
Festivity payment for YP 16 plus in semi-independent placement (one payment EID or Christmas)	£125		
Clothing allowance for YP in 16 plus semi-independent provision	£150	Quarterly	

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 or your 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.

When you turn 17.5, 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.

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.

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.

This includes:

- ❑ Outreach support packages from a variety of external providers, focusing 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. If the Leaving Care Service believes you require more support than what can be offered by the Leaving Care Service, your Leaving Care Advisor can refer you to Adult Social Care with your consent. If your accommodation is provided by Adults' Social Care, any concerns regarding your accommodation pathway needs to be addressed to Adults' Social Care.



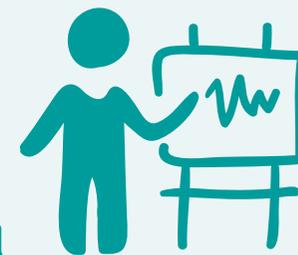
Types of accommodation



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](#).

Type	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. A Staying Put meeting needs to be convened and Staying Put agreement signed.
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 Accommodation (STA)	These are for young people that have become settled in education or employment or former UASC	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). These take place termly through the academic year cycle of your 18th birthday.

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. It is important that these engagements are recognised.

The Council is committed to creating opportunities to care leavers as part of the LBBD Care Leaver Pledge.

The Education, Employment, and interviews, apply for jobs, and learn

Training Coordinator is available to support care leavers to create CVs, prepare for about apprenticeships, work experiences, and other opportunities.

We work in partnership with external the community.

organisations to ensure our Care Leavers are connected to positive opportunities within



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/Festive Travel cost	Dependent on location	Corporate parenting will provide a travel warrant to cover the cost of travel for summer/festive periods.
University Summer Accommodation	£1,500 summer rent (12 weeks) for Year 1 and Year 2	The Corporate Parenting Service will assist you to source holiday accommodation during the summer period if required. You must make sure we are aware of your plans at least four weeks in advance. Payment will be paid directly to your accommodation provider. To qualify for this payment, we will require a confirmation letter from you with your accommodation provider details and authority to pay this money directly to the accommodation provider on your behalf.
University Graduation Equipment	£150	This will be provided to you to cover the costs related to graduation such as your gown, photographer, and other related expenses.
University Student Bursary	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 wellbeing (including leisure and activities)

Your health and wellbeing 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 Care Leaver Health Summary 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
- ❑ 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
- ❑ Refer you to mentoring schemes.
- ❑ Provide you with dedicated substance misuse support from via Subwize
- ❑ Organising free access or discounted access to the Everyone Active in Barking and Dagenham to help you enjoy regular exercise (or equivalent contribution for those living out of borough)
- ❑ Help you to apply for free prescriptions for care leavers, you will need to contact your LCA, they will help you to fill in a form and apply on your behalf for the prescription prepayment certificate. You will need an email address that you can access and be registered with a GP. Once your application has been received, checks will be made to ensure you are entitled to the prescription prepayment certificate. Where you are already eligible for free prescriptions through existing national exemptions, you will be supported to access that entitlement
- ❑ You will be eligible for some financial support towards dental checks/treatment especially if you are aged 16 to 18 years in full time education, pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months, accessing specific benefits. Your LCA/SW can help you complete a HC1 form to establish eligibility. If you are on a low income, you can apply for a Health Credit Certificate, known as HC2 or HC3. This will give you reduced cost or free dental and eye checks as well as prescription charges
- ❑ Give you opportunities to work on interview panels in recruitment of staff to the service
- ❑ Help you challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver
- ❑ Help you enrol on the electoral register, so you can vote in elections
- ❑ Invite you on trips and to events organised by the Leaving Care Service
- ❑ Be involved in celebration events for children in care and care leavers
- ❑ Tell you about groups and clubs



Refugee and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Young People



Your Social Worker/Leaving Care Advisor will help you think about your status options. Your entitlement to support can be impacted by your immigration status and this will be set out in your Pathway plan.

We will help you in planning for a successful application to remain in the UK. We will also help you to make plans for what happens if your asylum application is refused.

Your SW/LCA will support you to seek advice on the merit of an appeal or fresh claim. In the event this is not an option, we will arrange for a Human Rights Assessment to take place, this will consider all aspects of your life in the UK and any barriers to return to your home country.

We will assist you with a voluntary return application, if this is your wish.

In addition to all the support included in the enhanced local offer, we will provide you with support for your needs. We will be alongside you throughout your journey.

- Giving you information and supporting you to access legal advice around your immigration. Support you in communications with your solicitor and attend Home Office meetings with you
- Support you with access to an interpreter
- We will respect your cultural, religious and dietary needs
- Support you to access appropriate educational courses such as ESOL (English for speakers of other languages)
- Help with accessing emotional and mental health support
- Support you to connect with local organisations and community groups, where you can meet others in similar situations
- Provide you with financial assistance while you are awaiting a decision from the Home Office
- Support you with the cost of your first travel document (if you are granted status in the UK)

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. 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
- ❑ Provide a travel warrant 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
- ❑ Support mothers and fathers to access support through Barking and Dagenham Family Hubs and Start for Life programme
- ❑ Provide access to support to assist with claiming relevant benefits and registering the birth of the baby
- ❑ If you return to education, training or apprenticeship, your LCA can help you access costs for childcare



Care Leavers who are over 21

We can continue to offer support to Care Leavers aged over 21 years until they turn 25. If you step back from involvement with us at age 21 years but want to come back for support, you can contact our Duty Leaving Care Service. An LCA can assess your needs and can either restart the relevant area of your pathway plan or signpost you to other services.

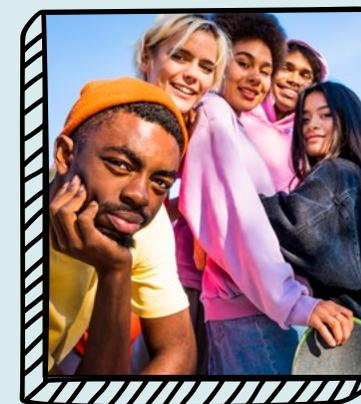
The support we will provide includes:

- ❑ 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 setting up home 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 we will explore your accommodation options. We will stay in touch by visiting you.

We will also:

- ❑ Provide you with a payment of £25 per month until you are 21 years old, unless agreed otherwise
- ❑ Providing you with subsistence upon release for up to 6 weeks while you UC claim is being processed (this applies to Care Leavers under 21 years)
- ❑ 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.	07968 511822 tracey.clarke@lbbd.gov.uk
Housing Emergency Duty Team	Advice and help if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness.	020 8724 8323
Corporate Parenting Duty Team	Responds to crisis situations in the absence of an allocated worker.	020 8227 3886
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

We hear you

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.

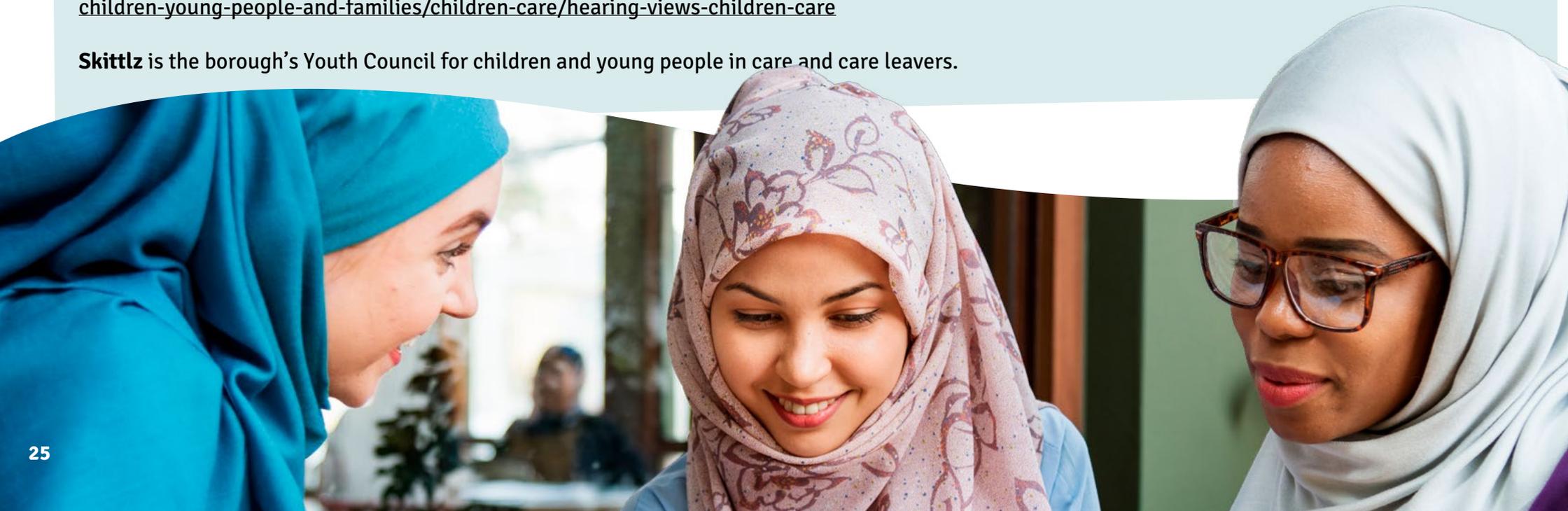
We really want to hear your views, wishes and feelings so you can help us to improve your experience of being in care. We will listen to you and will treat you fairly and with respect, which is what is expected of you, too.

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.

Participation and engagement are a small team of workers that work to improve your experiences whilst being in care and leaving care. We run groups, events and often seek your views to help shape the way that services are delivered, this can be using surveys and polls. We have a dedicated Instagram page **@thecarenet** for updates and giveaways.

Keep up to date with the service and any freebies, events and opportunities in our newsletters which you can find at <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/children-care/hearing-views-children-care>

Skittlz is the borough's Youth Council for children and young people in care and care leavers.



Service	What they do/how they help	Contact number	Email/Website
Corporate Parenting Service	Leaving Care support & Guidance	020 8227 3886	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	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	
Complaints and Compliments	How to raise a complaint or compliment with children's care and support.	020 8227 2405 or 020 8227 2111	Socialcarecomplaintsand information@lbbd.gov.uk
Access to Records	You are entitled to view your case files when you turn 18. The children's rights officer can support you in this process. You can contact your SW/LCA or children's right officer to help with this request.	As above	As above

Sometimes problems do happen and when they do, our approach is 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.



Useful Contacts:

Lifelong Links: Lifelong Links is for young people in care, leaving care or care experienced young adults (up to the age of 25 years). The service can help to reconnect you with important people in your life who you may have lost contact with, in a safe way. This could be a family member, previous carer, teacher, or anyone who has had a positive influence on your life. The aim is to bring everyone together who you want to continue to have in your life, who you could turn to for support as you grow older. You could also learn more about your family history and identity.

For more information you can access this link and watch a brief video

[Lifelong Links | London Borough of Barking and Dagenham \(lbbd.gov.uk\)](https://www.lbbd.gov.uk)

Or contact the Lifelong Links Lead on Email: lifelonglinks@lbbd.gov.uk Call or WhatsApp: 07976 121039

Flipside youth group – safe space for LGBTQ+ young people

Flipside@lbbd.gov.uk Become – freephone advice line for care leavers. Call 0800 0232 033

Capstone Care Leavers Trust – provides grants for care leavers aged 17-25 www.capstonecareleaverstrust.org

Coram Voice – offers support and information for children and young people in care, on the edge of care and care leavers www.coram.gov.uk

Children’s Commissioner – offers a “help at hand” service to provide children with free, impartial advice and support, particularly those in care or leaving care www.childrencommissioner.gov.uk

Homes and Money Hub (support through BEAM) – Support in managing finances and deal with issues such as rent arrears homesandmoneyhub@lbbd.gov.uk

Rees – the Care Leavers foundation gives advice, financial and community support www.reesfoundation.org

Refugee Council – works with refugees and asylum seekers www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Migrant help – advice and support to asylum seekers, refugees and victim of human trafficking and modern slavery. www.migranthelpuk.org

Red Cross – support, advocacy and family finding service www.redcross.org.uk

