
OUR LOCAL OFFER TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE CARE LEAVERS

This is our offer to you, so you know what to expect and what help and guidance we will support you with throughout your journey from care to adulthood



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18+ Care Leavers Service
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An introduction to our Local Offer and 18+ Care Leavers Service

What our Local Offer is to you

All Local Authorities have a legal obligation to support young people making the transition from care to independence. It is Kent County Council's responsibility to ensure that you know what services are available to you and what you can expect to receive whilst you are in care.

Eligible Young People

Eligible young people are aged 16 or 17, have been **looked after** for a period or periods totalling at least 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday and are still in care. (This total does not include a series of pre-planned short-term placements of up to four weeks where the child has returned to the parent). There is a duty to support these young people up to the age of 18, wherever they are living.

The statutory definition and requirements to undertake a needs assessment, prepare a Pathway Plan, keep the Pathway Plan under review and appoint a Personal Adviser are covered by Regulations 42, 43 and 44 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.

Relevant Young People

Relevant young people are aged 16 or 17 and are **no longer looked after**, having previously been in the category of Eligible young child when in care (that is, they have been Looked After for a period, or periods, totalling at least 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday and up to their 16th birthday). However, if after leaving care, a young adult returns home for a period of 6 months or more to be cared for by a parent and the return home has been formally agreed as successful, he or she will no longer be a "Relevant Young Person".

A young adult is also "Relevant" if, having been in care for three months or more, he or she is then detained after their 16th birthday either in a hospital, remand centre, young offenders' institution or secure training centre. There is a duty to support Relevant Young People up to the age of 18, wherever they are living.

The statutory definition and requirements to stay in touch with the young adult, undertake a needs assessment (unless this was done when the young adult was 'Eligible'), prepare and keep the Pathway Plan under review, appoint a Personal Adviser (unless this was done when the young adult was 'Eligible') and provide accommodation and assistance to meet his or her needs in relation to education, training or employment are now covered by Regulations 4 to 9 of the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010.

Former Relevant Young People

Former relevant young people are aged 18 to 25 and have left care having been previously either "Eligible", "Relevant" or both. There is a duty to consider the need to support these young people wherever they are living.

The statutory definition and requirements to stay in touch with the young adult, keep the Pathway Plan under review, continue the appointment of a Personal Adviser and provide financial assistance near where the young adult is employed or seeking employment/to enable the young adult to pursue education or training remain unchanged; they are now covered by Regulations 4 to 9 of the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010. These duties continue until the young adult becomes 21 or, where the Pathway Plan sets out a programme of education or training beyond 21, they continue so long as the young adult pursues the programme. The duty to pay a higher education bursary also continues, as before for those who started a course of higher education after 2008.

The duties of Local Authorities are extended in relation to **former relevant young people who inform the Local Authority of their wish to receive a service** after the age of 21 and under the age of 25. In relation to these young people, the Local authority has a duty to:

- Appoint a Personal Adviser.
- Carry out an assessment of the needs to determine what assistance (if any) it would be appropriate to provide.
- Prepare a Pathway Plan.
- Give assistance to the extent that the young adult's educational or training needs require it. The kinds of assistance are contributing to expenses incurred by the young adult in living near the place where s/he is, or will be, receiving education or training; or making a grant to enable the young adult to meet expenses connected with his education and training.
- For those in full-time education, aged 16-19, access to the bursary fund which came into place in 2011.
- The duties of the Local Authority subsist for as long as the young adult pursues the programme of education or training in accordance with the Pathway Plan, and the Local Authority may disregard any interruption in the education/training if it is satisfied that the young adult will resume it as soon as is reasonably practicable.

In each case where a care leaver requests this support, the Local Authority will need to assess the appropriateness of the course and how it will help the young adult to achieve his or her ambitions. The extent of the practical and financial assistance provided will reflect the type of course, whether full - or part-time, and the young adult's existing income.

Qualifying Young People

Qualifying young people are aged 16 and over and under the age of 21, and are:

- Subject to a special guardianship order (or were when they reached 18) and were looked after immediately before the making of that Order.
- At any time after 16 (but whilst still a child), were looked after, accommodated or fostered.

'Looked after, accommodated or fostered' includes:

- Looked After by a local authority.
- Accommodated by or on behalf of a voluntary organisation.
- Accommodated in a private children's home.
- Accommodated for a consecutive period of at least 3 months (including even before the child was 16) by a Health Authority, CCG or Local Authority (providing education), in:
 - A care home.
 - Independent hospital.
 - National Health Service trust or Foundation Trust.
 - Privately Fostered - but do not qualify as Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant.

Where a Local Authority looked after, accommodated or fostered a young adult, and they are deemed as Qualifying for advice and assistance, the local authority has a duty to take reasonable steps to contact them with a view to advising and assisting them.

They may receive support, advice and assistance (including, in exceptional circumstances, cash or accommodation) wherever they are living.

If in full-time further or higher education, this may include contributing financial assistance to living expenses relating to their education or training or making a grant towards meeting their education/training expenses - including in relation to securing vacation accommodation up to the age of 24.

Our local offer for care leavers has the objective to clearly provide in a single document outlining the support you can expect from us and what we can expect from you. This will assist you in making the most out of our services that are available to you and make the most of your independence; our local offer is available to all eligible care leavers, including disabled young people. Please read carefully to see what support is available when you are 18-21yrs and 22-25yrs.

We have consulted with the Young Adult Council that advised us their views and opinions on the content of our offer.

At the end of our local offer you will find there is a section for useful contact details, should you require these.

About our 18+ Care Leavers Service

Being a Corporate Parent, means that it is our responsibility to be good parents to all our young people in care and being a good parent means keeping our young people safe and providing them with the highest possible level of support to recognise and meet everyone's individual needs.

We can assist you in accessing housing, education, training, work experience and health services; whilst being here to support you to make the most of leaving our care,; we are also able to assist you by providing you advice, encouragement and financial advice to help you make the most of your journey through the care system.

Our care leavers 18+ service is based in West Malling and Dover; it is part of the specialist children's corporate parenting service and works closely with young people who are over the age of 18. Our care leavers 18+ service team is made up with Personal Advisers, who will support you with your journey to independent living. The Care Leavers 18+ service has a legal obligation to support you and provide you with assistance until you are at the age of 25.

Other teams working with Care Leavers

Care Leavers in the Young People's Teams or the Adult Social Care Teams are able to access the same support and assistance as those in the 18+ service and will be supported by Case workers in those teams, including Social Workers, Social Work Assistants or Case Officers who will carry out all the same tasks as Personal Advisers in the 18+ teams.

When reference is made to Personal Advisers or the 18+ Care Leavers Service in this document, this includes Social Work staff and Managers in other teams fulfilling the Personal Adviser duties. Or reference to the Children in Care teams or Social Workers may apply to Social Workers in the Disabled Children and Young People Service.

What you can expect from your Corporate Parents

The government have introduced corporate parenting principles that requires all departments within a local authority to recognise their role as a corporate parent and encourage them to look at the support and services they provide. These principles require corporate parents:

- To act in the best interest and promote the physical, mental health and wellbeing of those children and young adults
- To encourage those children and young adults to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To consider the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young adults

- To help those children and young adults to gain access to, and make the best use of, the services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young adults
- To ensure those children and young adults are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships, education and/or workplace
- To prepare those children and young adults for adulthood and independent living

About our Personal Advisers in the 18+ Care Leavers Service and what their role is

When you turn 18-years old, your social worker will be replaced with a Personal Adviser. The role of your Personal Adviser is to become your main point of contact and continue supporting you at least until you turn 21, however, they can support you until you turn 25 if you need or want further support.

Your Personal Adviser will be identified for you after you become 17-years old; this is for you to build a relationship with them before they become your allocated worker, we refer to this as transition working.

Your Personal Adviser will keep in contact with you and arrange meetings, they will visit you at home, University and arrange out of county and community visits. You, as the young adult, are able to make the decisions and choices that help unfold your future as an adult; your Personal Adviser will provide you advice, information and guidance to help you make the best choices and decisions.

The relationship between yourself and your Personal Adviser is important to make the most of what you can access through the 18+ Care Leavers Service.

Understanding your Pathway Plan

Every young adult between 16 and 25-years of age that is in care or is a care leaver is provided with a Pathway Plan. Your Pathway Plan will be started by your Social Worker when you turn 16; this will be reviewed with your care plan twice per year and when you turn 18, your Personal Adviser will take over the duties in managing this for you.

Your first pathway plan meeting will be chaired by your independent review officer and evaluated with your care plan and personal education plan, should you have one. The Pathway Plan has information on the best way for us to support you in your transition to independence and adulthood. This can include other key professionals/agencies/support networks involved in your life.

Your Pathway Plan is written in such a way that should meet your individual needs and it will capture your hopes for the future, it will also include your views and key messages. Therefore, you are encouraged to lead your review as much as possible, it is your review. Your Pathway Plan will be regularly reviewed with you and this will take place at least every 6-months – these meetings will ensure that your goals and milestones are still correct and being met.

Your Money

This section will provide you with information on what financial assistance may be available to you. The amount of money that you will be provided with depends on your age and the accommodation that you stay in.

You will be provided with a Personal Adviser who you can ask for more information from. Remember, if you are not certain about anything you will need to ask a member of staff. If, following a Mental Capacity Assessment, you do not have capacity to manage your money, we will support you to identify who should look after it for you and support you to make the decisions you can.

There is a lot of information for care leavers on the *Kent Cares Town* website, for further information please go to this address <https://kentcares town.lea.kent.sch.uk/>

The Preparing for Adulthood website has a lot of ideas to support disabled young people. www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Welfare Benefits Your Social Worker will help you to start the application for benefits to which you may be entitled to a month before you turn 18yrs. Claims for Universal Credit can be started one month before your 18th birthday.</p> <p>If you have applied for benefits and are waiting to be paid, we expect you to apply for an 'advance payment.'</p> <p>Benefit Options Universal credit is the benefit that you may be eligible for. It is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work. There are two parts to it – a payment to you for your expenses and a payment to help you pay your rent. The rent part must be paid to your landlord.</p> <p>Disability Living Allowance (DLA)/Personal Independence Payment (PIP) If you are already receiving DLA you may receive a letter to change it to PIP, as DLA is gradually being phased out. If you apply after the age of 16 you will automatically be assessed for PIP.</p>	<p>We will help you with your claim for benefits. You need to help us to help you make your claim for benefits. You must attend all of your appointments at the Jobcentre and engage with your Work Coach. Failure to do so could lead to problems with your claim and benefits not being paid.</p> <p>You will need to provide your Personal Adviser with proof that you have applied for benefits.</p> <p>We will only be able to provide food vouchers the first time you are sanctioned, the second time we may refer you to a local food bank. You may not receive any further financial support from us if you are sanctioned again.</p> <p>Your Personal Adviser will be able to advise and support you with applying for benefits and for the duration of the claim.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Essential Living Allowance (ELA) - Kent Card</p> <p>We will support you to claim benefits if you are out of work, however if you are unable to claim benefits, then we will offer you a weekly essential living allowance.</p> <p>This payment will be the equivalent to state benefits, and you will be expected to use this for your living costs, including rent and household bills. These bills could include gas, electricity and water.</p> <p>How you will be paid</p> <p>If the Care Leaver has a Kent Card upon transfer because the Child in Care Social Worker has applied for this, then we can continue making payments on that. However, if the Care Leaver is already 18 and has no Kent Card then the ELA will need to be arranged by the 18+ Personal Adviser,</p> <p>Should you become 'Appeal Right Exhaust', your ELA payment will be changed to £40 per week.</p>	<p>You will need to spend your essential living allowance on day to day essentials and you should budget your money and pay for your essentials first, such as food.</p> <p>These payments are authorised by a Team Manager.</p> <p>ELA will only be paid to those young people not eligible to claim benefits.</p>
<p>Savings</p> <p>If you have been in care for a long period of time you will have a savings account that you are able to access once you turn 18. Further information about the savings scheme can be found on the website below, https://sharefound.org/</p> <p>Budgeting</p> <p>Being able to manage your money is important when moving to independence. If you are not aware how to budget and spend your money wisely then you may struggle when you live on your own. We can offer you support in how to do this.</p> <p>In some cases, you may have access to a key/support worker where you are living who has dedicated time to help you (this is called 'support hours'), this can include helping you to budget.</p>	<p>Depending on how long you have been in care your savings may be a substantial amount – use this money to help you with your future.</p> <p>Not being able to budget properly may affect you in the long-term and if you require budgeting support then speak to your Personal Adviser.</p> <p>If appropriate, you will need to engage in the support hours offered from your accommodation provider to help you develop independent living skills.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Setting up Home Allowances (SUHA) We will offer you a setting up home allowance up to the value of £2,000 to buy essential items for when you move into your own independent accommodation. SUHA is paid in instalments of up to £500 once receipts have been provided verifying previous payments.</p> <p>Wherever possible, we can order your items online which will help to ensure items are spent on quality goods. This way we can ensure that the money is spent on essential items needed to set up your home.</p> <p>If you are a parent and have care of the child, we can support you with an additional £200 on top of your SUHA as a one-off payment regardless of the number of children you have.</p> <p>At times you may need essential items of furniture before you move onto independent living; the 18+ Care Leavers Service Team Manager must agree costs and only essential items will be considered.</p> <p>We will support and promote you to progress into independent living in the community, we can provide additional financial support to cover accommodation deposit, 1 month rent in advance and holding fees in addition to the £2,000 setting up home allowance.</p> <p>We will hold back £500 of the £2000 SUHA to cover any rent arrears or payment for damages that occur before you reach the point of moving into your independent accommodation.</p>	<p>To choose items you really need from the essential items list and only essential items for your home may be purchased. This will need to be agreed in your Pathway Plan.</p> <p>You will need to provide receipts to show that only those essential items have been purchased.</p> <p>You must make agreed payments for rent and you must not damage property or properties deliberately.</p>
<p>Miscellaneous Payments We understand that everyone has their own individual circumstances.</p> <p>The 18+ Care Leavers Service will consider payments for 'unexpected items' and payments will need to be agreed by the 18+ Care Leavers Service Team Manager and an assessment of need will be carried out.</p>	

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Bursaries for Education Bursaries or money for your education and training can be provided.</p> <p>Higher Education - Bursary for Care Leavers in higher education is up to a maximum of £4000 provided over 4 years of study (£1000 per academic year, paid in 3 instalments in mid-November, mid-February and mid-May each academic year upon evidence received of attendance and progress being made.</p> <p>We can provide financial assistance to help purchase IT equipment and laptops for Care Leavers up to the age of 21 (unless in Higher Education, up to the age of 25yrs) who are in full time further or higher education where there is a need. This will be assessed on a case by case basis and be for a maximum of £300 to help towards these costs.</p> <p>We will assess, on a case by case basis, support and financial assistance for college travel fare up to age of 25.</p>	<p>We need you to work in partnership with us and your education/training provider to ensure you are supported and receiving all the support you need from them. This will involve you taking part in discussions about your progress and attendance before bursary payments are issued.</p>
<p>Subsistence and Emergency Food Vouchers We will pay for day to day <u>essential</u> items and food vouchers to provide to Care Leavers for the following reasons for those up to 21yrs of age for a limited period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of an education package • If you are unable to claim benefits • If you are waiting for your benefits to start • In an emergency as agreed by the 18+ service Team Manager <p>We will support you to access food banks for emergencies, however, please remember there may be a limit on how many times you can access a food bank.</p>	<p>Speak to your Personal Adviser if you think you think you need this additional support.</p> <p>If you have applied for Universal Credit, we expect you to apply for an advance payment.</p> <p>We will ask for proof of your situation and we fully understand that emergencies do happen. However, it is our expectation that if you are claiming your benefits or receiving money from employment, that you budget for emergencies.</p>
<p>Clothing Allowance For young people aged 18-21 years in receipt of benefits or on a minimum wage income we will pay £120 per year, paid in two separate amounts of £50 in the summer and £70 paid in the winter seasons.</p> <p>To receive the clothing allowance, young people would need to be claiming all eligible</p>	<p>Young person will need to provide receipts for proof of purchase. The 18+ Service can order clothing online for you.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>benefits and engaging with the service.</p> <p>For young people aged 21-25 years Clothing Allowance will only be paid in exceptional circumstances, at times of extreme hardship.</p> <p>Payments will be made during the months of May (summer £50) and September (winter £70).</p>	
<p>Birthday Money Allowance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £30 paid on 17th birthday • £60 paid on 18th birthday <p>This is arranged by the Children in Care Team and your Social Worker.</p>	<p>Please speak to your Social Worker about this before you turn 18yrs old.</p>
<p>TV Licence and Contents Insurance</p> <p>For young people aged 18-21 years in receipt of benefits, on a minimum wage income or in receipt of ELA, we will pay their full cost of the TV licence (2020 it is £157.50). The amount can increase each year.</p> <p>For young people aged 18-21 years in receipt of benefits or on a low income, we will pay Contents Insurance of up to £100 per year.</p>	<p>Young people will need to be claiming all eligible benefits to receive this payment.</p>
<p>Other Sources of Funding</p> <p>Some organisations help Care Leavers by awarding grants that do not need to be repaid.</p> <p>Some grants help with university, moving into independent accommodation and financial support to help you train.</p> <p>Contact the Catch22 advice line on: 0207 017 8901 www.catch-22.org.uk</p>	<p>Speak to your Personal Adviser and support worker about what other funds you may be able to access or try a Google search to investigate and find out what other financial support is out there for Care Leavers; you may apply to charities and organisations for additional grant funding if you meet their criteria.</p>

Important Documents

We all need important documents because without them we are unable to do simple things such as applying for a course, claim benefits or open a bank account.

We will ensure you have the important documents that you require in adulthood, such as a passport and a birth certificate. We will also keep copies of your important documents safely on our files and you will be responsible for keeping the original documents safe.

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Your National Insurance Number</p> <p>When you are 15-years and 9-months old, your Children in Care Social Worker, will apply for you to have a National Insurance Number.</p>	<p>Ask your Social Worker if you do not receive this. You no longer receive a NI Card, so you need to keep your number safe.</p>
<p>Passport</p> <p>For those aged 18-25yrs we will support you with an application for a 10-year passport, if you have not already had one through the Children in Care Team. This will be your main source of identification.</p> <p>We will fund application for a Travel Document for our Asylum Care Leavers. We will contribute £75 towards your travel documents for former UASC with Refugee Status or with Humanitarian Protection Status.</p> <p>This will be a one-off payment for both passport and travel documents.</p>	<p>Do not lose this or you will have to apply and pay for a new one. If you do lose this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will not be allowed to leave the country or travel • You may be at risk of identity theft <p>You must keep this in a safe place.</p>
<p>Provisional Driving Licence</p> <p>For those aged 18-21yrs, if you need to learn to drive because you have a job or have been offered a job that requires a driving licence, we will pay 50% towards your provisional driving licence and your theory and practical driving tests.</p> <p>We will contribute up to a maximum of £300 towards your driving lessons following an assessment of your affordability to continue with the lessons and tests.</p>	<p>You are unable to drive without a provisional driving licence.</p> <p>If you lose your licence you will have to pay for a new one and if you do not turn up for driving lessons, we will discontinue our contribution.</p> <p>Once you have passed your tests, you must ensure you are insured to drive and have a road worthy car.</p>
<p>Birth Certificate</p> <p>If you do not have a birth certificate, we will apply for you to get one.</p>	<p>If you lose this document, you will have to pay for a new copy.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Keeping Documents Safe We will keep copies of all your documents safe for you and you will keep the original documents.</p>	<p>At certain times you will need your original documents and copies of documents will not be accepted; for example, opening a bank account.</p>
<p>British Citizenship If you are able to apply for British citizenship before the age of 18, then we will support you in how to complete the application.</p>	<p>To tell us you want to apply.</p>

Housing Options

There are different kinds of housing with support and you will have a large say on where you wish to live. Your Social Worker and Personal Adviser will be visiting you and where you choose to live will be agreed in your Pathway Plan.

If you are at university and require help with the cost of accommodation during vacation time, we will support you with this.

Staying on with foster carers is referred to as 'Staying Put' and you can stay with your foster carer until the age of 21, if agreed. This will not affect you on obtaining permanent tenancy and we have a range of different kind of supported housing options that are available depending on your need.

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Independent Housing (private renting) It is important to know that you are likely to have a greater range of choices for accessing private rented accommodation if you are in education, training or employment, and can access the KCC Rent Guarantor Scheme, but without these in place, your choices are likely to be limited. You will also need to be able to budget, cook and keep your home tidy. If you are living out of county, we will inform you about your housing options.</p> <p>When you are in independent accommodation you are responsible for yourself and for paying your bills, such as gas, electricity, council tax and water.</p> <p>If you have particular needs which mean you require Social Housing, you can attempt to access the local housing authority's housing register. This is a long process and should</p>	<p>To keep on top of your bills and to abide by your tenancy agreement, you can work with your Personal Adviser to help you with this as if you do not keep to your tenancy agreement, you may be at risk of eviction and homelessness.</p> <p>Find out about your bills such as water, gas, council tax and electricity. These can all be paid for monthly through your bank and this is a much better option than running up bills.</p> <p>Make sure you know how your rent is being paid as it is your responsibility, whether you are working or on benefits, to ensure that your rent is paid to avoid eviction.</p> <p>If you are a Care Leaver who is claiming rent payments via Universal Credit and are not confident that you will be able to manage the responsibility of paying your rent to your</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>not be relied upon, in all but a few cases. In most cases, you should be able to access work, or benefits to pay for your rent in a private rented property. There is no guarantee that because you want social housing, that you will be eligible or able to access this.</p>	<p>landlord initially, you can speak to your DWP Work Coach and arrange for this to be paid directly to them, avoiding you needing to be responsible for this to be completed. Please speak to them (or your Personal Adviser) about 'direct payments to landlords'.</p>
<p>Council Tax Council tax is a payment for local services and many people over 18 are liable to pay it. We will support you to claim all eligible council tax benefits and reductions.</p> <p>From 1st April 2020, KCC will fund the council tax payments for young people aged 18 years old up to their 21st birthday (aged 18 to 20 inclusive) who have been in Kent Local Authority Care and are eligible for a Kent Care Leavers Service. Only those Care Leavers who are named on a tenancy agreement, are able to access this payment. For more information and to obtain the form contact your Personal Advisor.</p>	<p>All young people will be expected to claim any applicable council tax discount/benefit entitlement such as Council Tax Support, single person discount, student exemption etc.</p> <p>A large number of young people who are Care Leavers will already have their council tax funded through these entitlements, which should continue and will not be affected by the scheme.</p>
<p>Staying Put If you and your carer agree, you can keep living in your foster placement until you reach 21, your placement is then called 'Staying Put'.</p> <p>You will be a lodger in their home, in that you will be renting a room from them and you will be expected to pay a contribution for your keep. Whilst here, you will be supported to develop your independent living skills further with your carer.</p> <p>This will mean that you continue to receive that extra care and support you might need before taking on your own independent accommodation. Many young people are not ready to move into their own accommodation at 18 and this can be a nice way of remaining part of a family and making sure you are confident in taking your next step towards independence.</p> <p>Shared Lives If you are disabled and/or need more</p>	<p>Staying Put will help you maintain a supportive relationship with your carers and, if you decide to do this, we will still help you apply for independent accommodation after you are 21.</p> <p>Do not be in a rush to get your own property as independent living is hard, so make sure you make the right choice for you.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>support than can be offered through Staying Put, then Shared Lives might be a possible option for you, either with your current carers if they apply to become Shared Lives carers or another. Shared Lives can only be accessed via the Disabled Young People's Team or one of the Adult Services Teams of KCC and should be considered by the Children in Care or the Young People's teams before you turn 18yrs of age.</p>	
<p>Personal Adviser Support For a period, you will have the support of your Personal Adviser when you get your permanent home, to help you settle in.</p> <p>We will undertake a Pathway Plan Review when you have been in your home for 28-days and at least every 6-months after that.</p> <p>We will provide you with a Personal Adviser who visits within a week of you moving into your new home, and then visit at least every 2 months after that.</p>	<p>Make sure you use the support from your keyworker in your accommodation if you have one as they are there to help and support you and speak to your Personal Adviser if you feel you are not getting the support you need.</p>
<p>Young Person's Supported Accommodation and Floating Support Service This is a supportive accommodation package for Care Leavers who are ready for independent accommodation but require or would like extra help and support.</p> <p>In Kent there is a range of housing with support, for example some accommodation might be in shared houses or single flats.</p> <p>The key purpose for supported accommodation is there will be staff on hand to support and guide you and they might be there for certain parts of the day or 24 hours.</p> <p>Supported Living If you are disabled, you may have your housing needs met by a Supported Living provider (and exceptionally in a Residential Provision). The level of support you require from the Provider will be detailed in your Pathway Plan.</p>	<p>Engage with your support worker as they will help you access local services and connect with your local community and, if you have any problems with settling in, your support worker will help you.</p> <p>You will be expected to abide by the house rules.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>University accommodation in holiday periods You will need to apply to Student Finance England to receive a student loan to cover the cost of your university rent. Whilst you are at university, we can pay your holiday accommodation rent if there is a need. You are responsible for your rent during term time.</p> <p>The amount paid will be agreed by the Head of the 18+ Care Leavers Service up to a maximum of £140 per week in line with the Staying Put standard rate and the Local Housing Allowance Rate.</p>	<p>You must apply to Student Finance England to access financial support. https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/apply</p> <p>If you do not use your accommodation, then you may be at risk of losing it.</p>
<p>Moving placement and school/college We will aim to keep you safe in one place and if you do move, we will try to make this planned.</p> <p>If you must change school/college, we will make sure you are well supported with this transition and we will seek to adhere to the principles of staying close.</p>	<p>If you are unhappy in your placement speak to your Social Worker or Personal Adviser and they will be able to guide you.</p> <p>Attend your Looked After Children Review and pathway planning meetings so you can talk about your placement and any plans to move you. You will be fully involved in any housing decisions.</p>
<p>Ongoing housing support Your Personal Adviser will assist and guide you with housing issues and if you live in supported housing you will have a support worker who will work with you to help you build your independence skills.</p> <p>Your Personal Adviser may refer you to a floating support worker if you live in your own flat who will help with your personal life and practical life skills, such as budgeting.</p> <p>Rent Guarantor Scheme We have a rent deposit and rent guarantee scheme that can be accessed by care leavers, enabling them to seek housing in the private rented sector. You must be in employment or in higher education to ensure you can afford to pay the rent to be eligible for the Rent Guarantor Scheme. The scheme is available for those aged 18-25yrs and will cease on your 25th birthday. This is called a 'corporate rent guarantor scheme'</p>	<p>If you are allocated a worker and you do not go to meetings the support may stop, so try to engage with your workers and get the maximum benefit from them as they are there to support you.</p> <p>You must be able to show you can manage the rent payments and not get into debt.</p> <p>You must let your Personal Adviser know as soon as possible if your financial circumstances change and this impacts on being able to pay your rent.</p> <p>Once you turn 25yrs, you will be responsible for all of your rent payments as the corporate rent guarantor scheme will end at this point.</p>

Your Safety

As your corporate parent - your safety is at our utmost priority and we will do our very best to keep you safe and ensure you have a safe place to live.

We will work with outside agencies to support you to ensure your safety, this may include the Police, Health and Housing.

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>A safe place to live If your placement is unsafe, we will work with you to move you to somewhere that is.</p>	<p>Make sure you tell us when you are worried about something and do not allow strangers into your home. Report incidences to your Personal Adviser or the Police if you feel you are in danger.</p>
<p>Keeping safe We will provide you with guidance and practical advice on how to keep yourself practically and emotionally safe and we may refer you to a counsellor or mentor to enable this.</p>	<p>You must work with us and other organisations to keep you safe and ensure you attend appointments.</p>
<p>Keeping you in touch Where appropriate, Personal Advisers can help you to keep in contact with relatives and friends that you have met whilst in care.</p> <p>If you are in custody We will offer you support if you are detained in custody. We work closely with prisons and probation service to monitor and support you as you enter or leave custody.</p> <p>We will establish close working partnerships with the resettlement officers and the local prisons.</p> <p>Financial payment of £10 per week for those aged 18 - up to 21yrs for those Care Leavers described as Former Relevant while they are in Custody who are engaging in positive activities whilst in prison (e.g. training/education).</p> <p>Personal Advisers will continue to visit 6-8 weekly and communicate with your supporting network.</p> <p>During the final sentence over a 12-week period your Children in Care Social Worker or Personal Adviser will be exploring your</p>	<p>It is important for you to tell us who you wish to be in touch with, you might have lost touch with friends or family, and we will need your help to support you in finding these people.</p> <p>You need to engage in positive activities whilst in custody in order to receive the £10 per week payment. For example, a form of training or education programme.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>housing and support options before you are released.</p> <p>The discharge plan will be formulated into the Pathway Plan. We will work with Probation, NACRO and OMU.</p>	

Getting your Voice Heard

Having a voice and knowing that your rights are important when you are a care leaver. As a service, we really want to hear your views, and there are a lot of ways that this can be done. By allowing your voice to be heard you can help us improve our services and the care system, your workers have a duty to listen to you and involve you in decisions that are made. If you use alternative methods of communication, we will ensure that you can still express your views and wishes.

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Young Inspector Scheme Kent County Council's Care Leaver Young Inspectors are put at the front line of services that impact their experiences daily. Our Young Inspectors help to improve services offered to them by the council. Young Inspectors make changes that benefit not just themselves, but other young people and organisations.</p> <p>This would be something good for yourself to be involved in as you will receive a voucher for your contribution with the young inspectors. This will also look good on your CV and for future job applications.</p> <p>Due to the COVID pandemic, this project is currently on hold. However, we will restart this once it is safe to do so.</p>	<p>Volunteer to become a Young Inspector and engage in the scheme.</p>

<p>Leaving Care Charter</p> <p>We know that leaving care can be a difficult and uncertain time with lots of changes to consider. Kent County Council, as your 'Corporate Parent', can be there to guide and support you through it.</p> <p>The Leaving Care Charter explains exactly what you should expect in terms of the help and support Kent County Council will give you as you leave care. It follows on from the Kent Pledge made to children and young people in the care of Kent County Council. The Charter says that you must be asked about important decisions that affect you and that your opinions should be listened to.</p> <p>The Charter explains what you can do if things are not going well or you feel you are not receiving the support you should. It also tells you how you can have an input into the services Kent County Council provides for Children in Care and Care Leavers.</p>	<p>If you do not have a copy of the Leaving Care Charter, please ask your Personal Adviser for one.</p> <p>You can also find it by visiting www.kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk/.</p>
<p>Young Adult Council (YAC)</p> <p>YAC is a group of Young People in Care and Care Leavers aged 16 and over. They meet regularly to have their say about issues that affect them and others in care or those who have left care, so they can make positive changes both in their own lives and for others. Elected Members, senior leaders and key professionals at Kent County Council regularly come to meet with the members of YAC to hear their views on a variety of topics affecting Young People in Care and Care Leavers and take their advice before making significant changes or introducing new policies or procedures.</p> <p>The group also like to have fun. They regularly go on trips, take part in activities and fundraise for charity too.</p>	<p>YAC allows you to have your say and make sure your voice is heard by decision makers in Kent County Council. It is also a great way to meet new people, build confidence and boost your CV.</p> <p>If you are interested in becoming a member of YAC, please contact VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk.</p>

<p>Challenge Cards</p> <p>Challenge Cards are a formal way for you to express your views about issues faced by Children in Care or Care Leavers and challenge the way Kent County Council does things. Once a challenge is received, it is taken to one of the Children in Care (CiC) Councils where it is discussed. If the CiC Council feels that the challenge should be taken forward, it is discussed at a meeting of senior officers. It is the officers at this meeting who have the responsibility to decide on actions to meet the challenge and who will carry out these actions. It is also reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Virtual School Kent Participation Team will keep you updated about the progress of your challenge.</p>	<p>Challenges should be about issues that affect many children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers. Challenge Cards that are related to personal issues are passed to relevant professionals who can help with the issue raised.</p> <p>Contact the VSK Participation Team to find out more about making a challenge to your corporate parents: VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk.</p>
<p>Recruit Crew</p> <p>Kent County Council believes that it is important to include young people, who have had experience of the care system, when they are recruiting new staff who are going to be working with children and young people. This means that when Personal Advisers or Social Workers, for example, are interviewed there is often a young adult on the panel too asking questions about the things they feel are important.</p> <p>The 'Recruit Crew' is a group of care experienced young people who regularly support these recruitment activities.</p>	<p>If you would like to sit on an interview panel, please contact VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk.</p> <p>The VSK Participation Team also offer a one-day Level Two course in 'Interviewing Skills for Service Users' which helps prepare you for taking part.</p> <p>Both this course and any interview panel experience you have can be added to your CV. The experience can also help you when you are interviewed yourself as it gives you a good insight into the recruitment process.</p> <p>You will often receive vouchers as a thank you for attending and will have your travel expenses paid for.</p>

<p>Your Personal Adviser</p> <p>When you turn 18 you will be allocated with a Personal Adviser as opposed to a Social Worker.</p> <p>Your Personal Adviser will keep in contact and arrange meetings with you, they will visit you at home but can also arrange to see you in the community.</p> <p>Your Personal Adviser will give you advice, information and guidance to help you make the right decisions for you.</p>	<p>The visits from your Personal Adviser is your chance to allow your voice to be heard, speak to them about any problems you have as we do not want things to happen that you do not want.</p>
<p>Changing your Personal Adviser</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances you can request to have your Personal Adviser changed. It is important to try and resolve any issues first.</p> <p>To request a new PA, you will need to speak to the 18+ Care Leavers Service Team Manager to discuss this.</p>	<p>Speak to your Personal Adviser to work out any issues that you may have.</p>
<p>Contacting your Personal Adviser</p> <p>You will be provided with your Personal Adviser's mobile number and email address. They work from 09:00-17:00, Monday to Friday and can offer you support during that time. The Out of Hours number is 03000 419191.</p> <p>Occasionally Personal Advisers leave, if this does happen then your Personal Adviser will say goodbye to you at least 2-weeks before this. If this does not happen, we will explain to you why.</p>	<p>Contact your Personal Adviser when you need them and agree who you can contact if you require them outside of their working hours.</p>
<p>Participation Service</p> <p>You will have access to Kent's participation service where you can get involved in making changes to the care system, going on trips and much more.</p> <p>Kent County Council offers regular forums, drop-ins and various media platforms for young people to access information and to voice their views, wishes and feelings and share their experience.</p> <p>We will also promote volunteering opportunities for Care Leavers where they can give back to the community and at the same time the society can have a different</p>	<p>Get in touch with the service as getting involved in group activities, forums and training will help to boost your self-esteem, develop new skills and help you to build your curriculum vitae.</p>

<p>experience and view of Care Leavers</p> <p>Participation in Society We offer the Duke of Edinburgh award to Care Leavers. We believe that the Duke of Edinburgh award would help young people to integrate in the community.</p> <p>The award is for young people between 14 to 24, including those who are disabled, and helps young people stand out from the crowd when they apply for college, university or jobs.</p> <p>If you do not know much about the award, here is a link https://www.dofe.org/</p>	
<p>Advocacy Support If you would prefer to talk to someone independent of Kent County Council or feel like you need additional support to resolve a problem, you can talk to an advocate. Their role is to listen to your concerns and support you to find solutions. They make sure you understand your rights and what you are entitled to as a young person in care or care leaver in Kent. With your agreement, they can attend meetings with you and contact people who work with you on your behalf. Kent County Council have an independent Advocacy Service with the Young Lives Foundation.</p>	<p>You can contact Young Lives Foundation on the following details: (free phone) 0808 1640096 or you can email advocacy@ylf.org.uk, www.ylf.org.uk https://ylf.org.uk/how-we-help/young-people/</p>
<p>How to Complain You have the right to complain if you cannot solve a problem with your Personal Adviser or their manager.</p> <p>You can contact our complaints department on: CScomplaints@kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Try to find a solution with your Personal Adviser or 18+ Care Leavers Service Team Manager. If this cannot be resolved, the Team Manager will inform the Service Manager or Head of Service. If this still cannot be resolved, please then contact the complaint or advocacy services.</p>
<p>Advice and help for Care Leavers There are lots of services for Care Leavers should you require additional support and guidance.</p> <p>There are lots of national organisations campaigning for better services for Care Leavers and they run national consultation events, to hear your views.</p>	

<p>Contact <i>become charity</i>: Freephone 0800 023 2033 advice@becomecharity.org.uk</p> <p>The BeYou Project connects young people in Kent who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary or are questioning their sexual orientation and / or gender identity. We offer a safe, welcoming and non-judgemental space where young LGBT+ people can meet to socialise, have fun and help each other.</p> <p>Want to find out more? Contact our team by emailing beyou@porchlight.org.uk.</p>	
<p>Young Parents</p> <p>We will support Care Leavers who become parents. This would include young fathers; those parents who need just a bit of support; those parents where there are child protection concerns; those parents who might have had their children removed. We will offer a Mentor as well as practical support through drop-ins and essential packs of baby essentials.</p>	

Your health

Your health matters to us, being healthy does not only mean being physically healthy, but it also is defined by your mental and sexual health. There are a lot of services that are provided to ensure all aspects of *being healthy* are met.

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Your Doctor</p> <p>It is important to register with a GP; your Personal Adviser can help you, should you need help.</p> <p>A General Practitioner (GP) treats common medical conditions and can refer to other services.</p> <p>You must provide details of your 'Next of Kin' to your doctors and other key health services that you access. It is important to keep this up to date, for example, if you become a parent, who would be contacted in an emergency.</p>	<p>If you move homes, it will be your responsibility to inform your GP and sign up with a different one.</p> <p>You need to keep your Personal Adviser up to date with your GP and your next of kin details.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Find a GP: https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/GP/LocationSearch/4</p> <p>Emotional Wellbeing If you need someone to talk to about any concerns that you do not feel comfortable to share with your Personal Adviser or a trusted person, then we can signpost you to relevant services, that may be able to provide support.</p> <p>There are services available that can provide support in several life events that may present with difficulties:</p> <p>Mind: https://www.mind.org.uk/ or call 0300 123 3393 or text 86463</p> <p>Samaritans: https://www.samaritans.org/ or call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org (24hr response).</p> <p>Every Mind Matters: https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/</p> <p>Papyrus: https://papyrus-uk.org/ Or call 0800 068 41 41 or text 07786 209 697</p> <p>Sane: http://www.sane.org.uk/ Or call 0300 304 7000</p> <p>Live Well Kent: https://livewellkent.org.uk/ Or call 0800 567 7699</p>	<p>If you are struggling, speak up. There are a lot of people who are here to help you.</p> <p>To help you with your emotional wellbeing, it is important for you to engage with the services offered within KCC and the community.</p>
<p>Leisure Facilities For those aged 18-25yrs, if you would like help to access leisure care, sport or fitness activities then speak to your Personal Adviser who can help you to see what is available in your local area for free leisure facilities. There are many free fitness facilities in local parks, beach fronts you can access.</p> <p>Kent Sport has information about sport</p>	<p>We will help you to explore access to free leisure facilities in your local area. If you are accessing education, you may be able to access facilities from them or receive discounted rates.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>opportunities, including disability clubs and activities in Kent and Medway https://www.kentsport.org/get-active/sport-disability/</p>	
<p>Sexual Health If you need help and support with sexual health, you will be referred by your Personal Adviser to the right services for you. Your support worker or key worker may also give you advice and guidance.</p> <p>If you are having sex or thinking about having sex it is important that you protect yourself against sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy by using condom and planned contraception. If you do not feel comfortable in discussing this with personal adviser, please see information provided.</p> <p><i>Gum:</i> https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/sexual-health/</p> <p><i>Your Sexual Health Matters:</i> https://www.yoursexualhealthmatters.org.uk/ Or call 0800 328 3383</p>	<p>Keep yourself safe, if you do not use a condom you will be at risk of becoming a young parent and catching sexually transmitted infections.</p> <p>There are services that provide you with free condoms, contraception, pregnancy tests and much more.</p> <p>Please click on the link for some services http://www.kentcares town.lea.kent.sch.uk/vsk/health-centre</p>
<p>Dentist and Opticians If you are receiving benefits you should be able to access free dental and optician care. They are also free if you are under 18 or are in full-time education.</p> <p>If you are awaiting asylum / ARE we can support you to complete a HC2 certificate for help with health costs. https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme/hc2-certificates-full-help-health-costs</p> <p>If you apply to the NHS Low Income Scheme and receive an HC2 certificate for help with health costs, you are entitled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free NHS prescriptions • free NHS dental treatment • free NHS sight tests • help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses • help with the cost of travelling to receive 	<p>It is important you attend health appointments, otherwise you could be at risk of being taken off the list of patients.</p> <p>It is important to check if your circumstances change if this impacts on receiving free health care support.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>NHS treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free NHS wigs and fabric supports 	
<p>Drug and Alcohol Support</p> <p>There are services that can help with drug and alcohol treatment, including advice, information, drop-in-services, structured treatment, counselling, harm reduction techniques.</p> <p><i>East Kent:</i> https://www.forwardtrust.org.uk/ Or call 0300 123 1186</p> <p><i>West Kent:</i> https://www.changegrowlive.org/ Or call 0844 225 0652</p> <p><i>Alcoholics Anonymous:</i> https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/ Or call 0800 917 7690</p> <p><i>Frank:</i> https://www.talktofrank.com/ Or call 0300 123 6600</p>	<p>If you want help and support, you need to be able to speak up and let us know.</p>
<p>Health Passports</p> <p>When you become a Care Leaver you will be given a health passport by the looked after children nurse at your last statutory health check, which will contain all your health information. Your health history will be a summary of your overall health and will be provided just before your 18th birthday.</p> <p>This will be useful to use when you access health services and adult services. If you have a Learning Disability you are entitled to have a free Annual Health Check with your GP from the age of 14.</p>	<p>It is important that you keep this information safe and it could be important to you at any time in the future.</p>

Your Education, Employment & Training

Being engaged in education, employment or training will help you with your chosen career path and move towards independence. Further education is essential for you to gain academic qualifications that you will need when searching for employment later. However, college and university are not the only options and there are training and apprenticeship schemes that are very popular and can be a good way to learn whilst you earn an income.

We have a dedicated team to support you with understanding and accessing education, employment or training.

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>18+ Education, Employment & Training Team We will offer support to ensure that you are achieving the best of your ability. The Team are in place to assist you with your career journey and access provision.</p> <p>We can support you by providing 1:1 private tuition for maths and English GCSE retakes and will discuss with you and your Personal Adviser to put this in place if required.</p> <p>Designated Member of Staff If you are in education (college and university), we will liaise with your education provider's 'Designated Member of Staff' (a key contact specifically for Care Leavers) to access additional support where necessary including financial support.</p> <p>University We will provide additional information to support you in your university applications and be on hand if you have concerns or worries. This includes help with your university application form, understanding the financial support and accepting your offers. Some universities offer all year-round accommodation for care leavers and bursaries.</p>	<p>It might not be possible to find a provider for all interests and courses, so you might need to be flexible. It is important that you do attend your training, education or employment placement to avoid being asked to leave or not being able to progress if attendance is below % or you have not met the entry requirements of the next level course.</p> <p>Speak to your PA or the EET Team for help, especially if you are not happy on your course/job to see if they can help you to resolve this.</p> <p>Speak to the Designated Members of Staff at the university to find out what additional support they offer care leavers. Whilst at university, you may wish to become an 'Ambassador' where you help to show potential students about university life – and get paid to do so!</p>
<p>Apprenticeships An apprenticeship can be a great way to learn a new skill, achieve a qualification and get paid at the same time. Apprenticeships</p>	<p>Please speak to your Personal Adviser or the EET team if you would like to find out</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>can also be another way of achieving higher education without accruing the university debt as they are available in several levels, from level 2 up (GCSE) to level 7 (Master's degree).</p> <p>If you are aged 18-21yrs and get an apprenticeship, we will provide you with travel money and assist you until you receive your first salary payment.</p> <p>Care leavers who choose to start an apprenticeship will receive a £1000 bursary to help the transition into the workplace. Bursaries will be paid once to each Care Leaver in the eligible age range (16-24yrs) starting an apprenticeship after 1st August 2018, via their training provider. This new bursary scheme is part of a wider reform of apprenticeship funding by the UK Government.</p> <p>Kent County Council also offer many apprenticeships that Care Leavers can access.</p>	<p>more information on apprenticeships.</p>
<p>Finding work and our Interview Allowance</p> <p>We will provide you with a one-off payment of £50 to purchase interview clothes for an interview for those aged 18-21yrs.</p> <p>We will also help by providing you with interview practice, assisting with applying for jobs and with creating your curriculum vitae and personal statement.</p> <p>The job centre plus will support you to look and apply for work if you are not in education or employment and adult learning can support you, ask to speak to the 'Work Coach' at the job centre for help.</p> <p>Kent Supported Employment Service</p> <p>They can help people with physical/learning difficulties, autism and other barriers to gain and keep a job. They offer a service of direct delivery through the supported employment model, job coaching and travel training.</p> <p>Contact them direct.</p>	<p>Please contact your Personal Adviser or support worker about help with getting ready for an interview and with applying for jobs, they can help you with this.</p> <p>If you are claiming Universal Credit you will be expected to work with the DWP to find a job.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>kentsupportedemployment@kent.gov.uk or 03000 421552</p> <p>Kent County Council also now guarantees Care Leavers the opportunity to be interviewed for any jobs applied for where the minimum entry requirement has been met.</p>	
<p>Exam Rewards</p> <p>If you provide your Personal Adviser with images of certificates when you complete a qualification, we reward results from ESOL/GCSE to degree level. This would be up to a maximum of £50 in vouchers per academic year for those aged 18-21yrs (£25 per qualification).</p> <p>£100 reward</p> <p>If you complete your undergraduate degree, we will reward you with £100 in vouchers (aged 18-25yrs).</p>	<p>Please make sure you let us know when you do achieve some success, we would like to celebrate this with you.</p>
<p>University</p> <p>If you decide to go to university, we will assist you with your housing during holiday periods and provide you with extra financial support.</p> <p>Long-term funding for higher education will be agreed by our management team if necessary.</p> <p>We will support you for a maximum of 4-years of university study (£1000 per academic year). This support is available for Care Leavers studying on 3/4year undergraduate programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be eligible to apply for a student loan from Student Finance England • We will support you to visit universities prior to acceptance by covering travel costs • We will assist you with the initial costs of moving to & from university up to £200 <p>You may also be able to access additional support from the university who often have additional funds and grants for care leavers.</p>	<p>If you are thinking about applying for university, please speak to your Personal Adviser as they will be able to assist with applying for your Student Finance Loan to cover tuition fees and living costs.</p> <p>If you are attending University you are able to use some of your Setting Up Home Allowance to cover the costs of duvets, pots and pans etc. up to a maximum of £200.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Support for Students with Disabilities Universities and higher education colleges must make provision for students with disabilities, including long-term conditions and specific learning difficulties. Every university or college has a disability adviser or learning support coordinator to help you get the most out of your time in higher education, who can tell you about the support available to help you with access to accommodation and your academic course.</p>	
<p>Propel Propel is a fully searchable website for Care Leavers providing information on the support available to you at colleges and universities across the UK. Find out about all year-round accommodation, bursaries and grants and key contacts. https://propel.org.uk/UK/</p>	
<p>University support for Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Care Leaver You may study at university if you are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person. However, you may not be entitled to pay home fees and you may not be eligible for student finance. Some universities use their discretionary powers to allow unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people to study as home students. Discretionary leave to remain You may be able to access university support if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You live in England ▪ You have lived in England for 3-years Indefinite leave to remain You may be entitled to home fees and student finance.</p>	<p>If you are interested in applying for university it will depend on your immigration status, please contact your Personal Adviser who can assist you with this. Check with the individual university BEFORE making any commitments to join a course.</p>
<p>Further education You will be supported if you are in further education and there are several funds available to you, however this can change each new academic year:</p>	<p>If you are not in employment, on a training programme or in education you will have to claim benefits.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>16-19yr bursary for Children in Care & Care Leavers Please apply for the bursary from your Student Services Adviser at college or school before you start the course. The bursary is to support you with educational related costs (including travel) and is administered by the education provider.</p> <p>Discretionary Learner Support Fund This comes from the educational provider. If you are advised that support is not available immediately discuss this with your Personal Adviser who can assist you.</p> <p>Care to Learn For young parents, aged 20 and under, there is government funding to support in place to assist with nursery and childminder costs for young parents. Speak to your education provider.</p>	<p>For the 16-19 Bursary, you need to ensure you are clear of the educational providers requirements for receiving the bursary, e.g. 95% attendance, good behaviour. Your attendance and behaviour will be monitored.</p> <p>If you are a young parent, then please contact your Personal Adviser about what extra support is available for you.</p> <p>Speak to the education provider about this before starting any course.</p> <p>Speak to the education provider about this before starting any course.</p>
<p>Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) If you have an Education, Health and Care Plan this may continue up to the age of 25 if you are in school or a further education placement and it is agreed that it is required to meet your educational outcomes. This will be reviewed annually by the school or college and the SEN department. If you go to University or Higher Education, your EHCP will cease.</p>	<p>We will continue to support you with your Education and attend your EHCP annual review for as long you stay in school or college.</p>
<p>Volunteering We will support and encourage you to access volunteering opportunities to increase on your work experience and develop skills. Kent County Council offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities and information:</p> <p>https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/volunteering</p>	<p>Volunteer placements can be great fun, you can earn accreditation and receive a small allowance for travel and lunch.</p>
<p>Travel costs If you live in Kent, we will provide you with a 'KCC 16+ travel card (care)' which you can use up until the age of 21 years (subject to the travel pass offer and application criteria set by transport service at the time of application).</p>	<p>If you are under 19 and in full-time education, please apply for the 16+ oyster card (not 18+) as you are eligible for free travel.</p> <p>We will pay a £10 administration cost for you to get an oyster card or equivalent for the</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>In exceptional circumstances consideration will be given to additional payments if having to travel outside of Kent in the UK (to be agreed by 18+ Service Manager/Head of Service).</p> <p>We can support with travel costs for returning to Kent during university holidays' – to help with any anxiety and settling in. We can offer 3 additional trips to cover travel costs for visits back 'home' outside of the holiday times.</p> <p>If you are in full time education, training and living and learning in London, you are able to access one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16+ student oyster card- this offers free travel on buses and trams across London • 18+ student oyster card – this offers 30% off the cost of adult travel fare. 	<p>area you live in.</p>
<p>Studying away from home</p> <p>Funding may be available for those who would like to access specialist courses outside of the local area.</p> <p>This would have to be agreed by the 18+ Care Leavers Service Team Manager before the course is agreed. The 2 main types of funding are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential bursaries from the college • Residential support schemes. 	<p>Please let us know how we can support your study.</p> <p>You will need to share progress on your achievement for the support to continue.</p>
<p>Additional education payments</p> <p>For those aged 18-21yrs, we can contribute towards additional alternative educational programmes. This has to be discussed with the EET team to confirm the appropriateness of the course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will pay up to a maximum of £200 towards the registration and/or exam fees for your agreed course (once per academic year) • We will support you with essential equipment and books as agreed on an individual basis. • We will assist you in paying for graduation tickets, photos, and robes, etc. up to £100. 	<p>You will need to discuss possible courses with us before any applications are made. If agreed, you will need to share updates on your progress.</p> <p>Please contact us if you feel things are going wrong and you are struggling with the course – we can help to support you.</p>

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Care Leaver Covenant The Covenant is a promise made by private, public or voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently. You can search to see what is being offered in your local area or nationally which can include work placements, mentoring, job opportunities, discount on activities.</p> <p>https://mycovenant.org.uk/</p>	

Identity and Social Relationships

Having a supportive network of friends and family around you can help as you make the transition from care to independence.

Our offer to you	Your responsibilities and our advice
<p>Relationships with family and friends Contact with younger siblings (under 18) or own children can be discussed with your Personal Adviser.</p> <p>For those aged 18-21yrs we can support with travel up to 4 times a year to see the family/friends that are important to you if they live outside of the county (e.g. Kent) and they cannot visit by bus (living in the UK), we can purchase the most cost effective train tickets for you (purchased on-line).</p> <p>If you have lost contact with your family from your country of origin, we will support you by linking you with agencies who help to trace families (for example British Red Cross)</p>	<p>You will need to let your Personal Adviser know who is important to you, giving you positive support so that we can help you to make contact with them.</p> <p>You need to let us know who you would like to have as your next of kin for emergency issues.</p>
<p>Visiting places of worship For those aged 18-21yrs, if you wish to attend a specific place of worship, we will support your travel costs on special occasions (for example during festive periods). We will fund up to £100 for the year and we will purchase the train tickets for you.</p>	<p>If you need support in finding a safe place of worship closest to you, please speak to your Personal Adviser.</p>

Useful contact information

Our 18+ Care Leavers Team offices	
Worrall House 03000 421 124	30 Kings Hill Avenue West Malling Kent ME19 4AE
Thistley Hill 03000 410 701	Melbourne Avenue Dover Kent CT16 2JH
Adult Social Care teams and Young People's teams from age 18 Young People's teams 16-17	social.services@kent.gov.uk 03000 41 61 61 03000 41 11 11
The Sunlight Centre <i>Drop-in</i>	105 Richmond Road Gillingham Kent ME7 1LX
Information zone	3 Palace Avenue Maidstone Kent ME26 6NF

Feedback or suggestions about Virtual School Kent?

The Young Adult Council Vsk_participation@kent.gov.uk 03000 419163

Websites with helpful information regarding training providers in Kent and apprenticeships:

<https://www.readytoworkkent.co.uk/>

<http://www.apprenticekent.com/home>

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/college-sixth-form-employment-and-training>

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/volunteering>

You may also find useful...

Benefits www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/entitlement

Solicitor www.lawsociety.org.uk/find-a-solicitor

Care Leavers Association www.careleavers.com 0161 826 0214

Care Leavers Foundation www.thecareleaversfoundation.org 01678 540 598

Refugee Council www.refugeecouncil.org.uk 02073466700

New Horizon Youth Centre	www.nhyouthcentre.org.uk	020 7388 5580
Citizens Advice Bureau	www.citizensadvice.org.uk	03444 111 444
Shelter	www.shelter.org.uk	0808 800 4444
Become	www.becomecharity.org.uk	0800 023 2033
Coram - Voice	www.voiceyp.org	0808 800 5792
Young Lives Foundation	www.ylf.org.uk	0808 1640096