

LEAVING CARE ENTITLEMENTS

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Types of Care Leaver

You are an **ELIGIBLE** Care leaver if;

- 🗨️ You are currently looked after Aged 16 or 17; and
- 🗨️ You have been looked after for a period of 13 weeks (or periods that add up to 13 weeks) which began after you reached 14 and ended after you reached 16.

You are a **RELEVANT** Care Leaver if;

- 🗨️ You are no longer being looked after by the Lo-cal Authority but you have been 'eligible' and Aged 16 or 17 years old
- 🗨️ Lived for a continuous period of six months or more with a parent, someone with parental responsibility and where those arrangements broke down.

You are a former **RELEVANT** Care Leaver if;

- 🗨️ You are aged 18 years or above, and either been a relevant or eligible child when under 18.
- 🗨️ At aged 21 you wish for the support you receive to continue up to the age of 25

or before reaching the age of 25 you are in education, training

You are a **QUALIFYING** Care Leaver if;

- 🗨️ You are at least 16 but under 21; and
- 🗨️ You were looked after immediately prior to the making of a special guardianship order which was in force when you reached 18, or
- 🗨️ At any time after you reached 16 but while you were still a child was, but is no longer looked after, accommodated, or
- 🗨️ You were privately fostered and assessed to be in need
- 🗨️ As a qualifying care leaver you are able to access advice and assistance based on a needs assessment completed by Children In Care and Care Leavers Teams.

Social Workers and Personal Advisors

As an **Eligible** Care Leaver you will be allocated a **Social Worker** from Wirral Council's **Children Social Care**. Your Social Worker will hold case responsibility and will be responsible for the preparation of your **Pathway Plan**. You will remain allocated to your Social Worker until you are 18 and become **Former Relevant**. At 16 years you will also be allocated a named **Personal Advisor** from the Leaving Care Team who will work alongside your Social Worker, both of whom will be able to assist you in preparing for your transition to adult life. Your Personal Advisor will then take over your case management when you leave care at 18 years and become a **Former Relevant** Care Leaver or if you become a **Relevant** care leaver before 18 years.

If you are a looked after child supported by the **Children with Disability Team** your Social Worker will support your transition to Adult Services. At 16 years you will be allocated a named **Personal Advisor** to work alongside your Social Worker. Your **Personal Advisor** will take over responsibility for the preparation of your Pathway Plan when you leave care at 18 years and become Former Relevant and will continue to work closely with Adult Services.

Pathway Planning

We will prepare a pathway plan for all **Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant** Young People. Your pathway plan will replace your care plan from the age of 16 years. Your Pathway Plan is about your needs and what we all need to do to ensure your successful transition to adult life.

How will I be involved?

For your Pathway Plan to be effective it will be based on an up to date needs assessment; setting out the support that will be offered to you to achieve your aspirations. We aim to fully involve you in the development of your Pathway Plan. You will be offered support by your social worker/ personal adviser to express your wishes and views for your pathway plan review meeting.

Who else will be involved?

With your agreement, we will seek the views of our partner agencies when completing your Pathway Plan. This may include Housing, Education, Training and Employment providers, Benefits, Health Services and Youth Offending Service to ensure we all work together to provide you with clear and consistent advice and support.

When will my plan be completed?

Your initial Pathway Plan will be completed before you are 16 years and 3 months old. If you are over 16 when first accommodated then this will be within 3 months of the date of you being accommodated.

What about changes to my plan?

Your Pathway plan will then be updated and reviewed at least within every 6 months or within 28 working days of any significant change to your plan such as a change of address or if you request a review meeting. Your Pathway Plan will be written and available at your review meeting chaired by your **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)**, a review must take place before making a decision to confirm that you are ready to leave care.

What will be included in my plan?

The diagram below will show you some of the areas covered in your pathway plan.



Care Leaver Entitlements

These amounts are correct from the 31st March 2017.

- ELIGIBLE and RELEVANT Care Leavers aged 16+ could receive a maintenance payment of up to £57.90 a week until your 18th birthday.
- Your worker will support you to claim benefits and support you until your claim is processed.
- ELIGIBLE Care Leavers will receive allowances for birthdays, festivals, clothing and holidays from your carers.
- Individuals who are in custody would be paid £5 per week up until the age of 18.
- ELIGIBLE and RELEVANT Care Leavers will receive an allowance of up to £150 to supplement the standard maternity allowance to purchase additional essential items.
- Care Leavers attending university will receive a Higher Education Bursary of £2000 towards essential books and materials for your course.
- You will receive vacation payments of up to £100 per week if you need accommodation due to your term time accommodation not being available.
- On graduation you will receive a graduation gift of £100.
- Eligible, Relevant and former relevant care leavers can access a setting up home allowance up to £2000 to help furnish your first accommodation.
- A payment of up to £10 per week to compensate for additional expenses associated with attending education, employment or training.
- On your 18th birthday you will receive £100 and on your 19th and 20th birthdays you will receive £50 each.

What is included in the Setting Up Home Grant?

Your Setting Up Home Grant will be held by the Leaving Care Team and your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be able to purchase items with you from the following list:



TV
Kettle
Table and Chairs
TV stand
Pots and pans
Cups
Washing machine
Sofa Bed
Cooker
Curtains
Carpets
Fridge freezer
Bedding
Wardrobe
Aerial
Chest of drawers

Quilt
Dishes
Bath towels
Pillows
Chopping boards
Bedside table
Curtain rails
Laundry basket
Bath Mat
Shower Curtain
Iron
Ironing board
Bin
Kitchen utensils
Microwave

Help with Employment, Education and Training

As a care leaver you will be provided with a Services for Young People (SfYP) Action Plan or you may have a 16+ Personal Education Plan if you are in Further Education. These will be regularly reviewed to meet your needs and update your Pathway Plan at least every 6 months.

If you have additional needs and have an Education, Health and Care plan this will continue to be reviewed annually and inform your pathway plan. If you require a Laptop or specific equipment and materials then this should be recorded as a need in your plan and your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will then be able to request this support for you. Any specific requests will be considered on an individual basis.

From your 17th Birthday you may be entitled to a contribution of up to 10 driving lessons however this will be dependent on it being a recorded need in your Pathway Plan and on agreement being provided by the Service Manager.

How can you financially support me with my education?

As an Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant Care Leaver you may also be able to get financial support of £1200 a year direct from your School, Further Education College or Learning Provider. The 16-19 bursary is guaranteed for care leavers aged 16-19, and discretionary learner support can support older students. With your permission, Wirral Council will confirm your care leaver status with your Education or Training provider but you may wish to talk to your School, College or learning provider to find out more. We will further support you with essential books or equipment to support you to complete your course.

How can you help me with somewhere to live?

As part of your preparation for adult life your accommodation options will be discussed with you. Your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will support you to complete any Housing Application and attend any Housing Interviews in line with your wishes and your Pathway Plan. We will offer you support to make a housing benefit claim, or to access local housing allowance if in private rented accommodation.

It is important to note that Young People under 35 are normally only entitled to rent payments equivalent to the cost of a room in a shared house. Care Leavers between 18 and 21 can get the rate for 1-bedroom accommodation instead but once you turn 22 you can only get the shared accommodation amount. Bear this in mind if you are moving into a new home and think that you will continue to claim benefits after 22.

As a care leaver you may be entitled to Council Tax rebate or a reduction in council tax through Second Adult Rebate. Like Housing Benefit you can qualify for Council Tax Benefit if you are not working or on a low income. If you have savings of over £16,000 you can't normally get Council Tax Benefit.

All your benefit entitlements will need to be confirmed with the benefits agency and your Personal Adviser will be available to support you to attend appointments as required. You may wish to visit our drop in session held every Thursday afternoon at the office to speak to our Job Centre Plus Adviser or visit the Job Centre Plus Website www.jobseekers.direct.gov.uk for further information.

What if I need to claim benefits?

Up to 4 weeks before your 18th Birthday, your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will be available to support you to make a claim for Job Seekers Allowance, or if applying for Universal Credit this can only be done once you have already reached the age of 18. You can apply online at www.direct.gov.uk/jsaonline or ask at your Job Centre to make a paper claim.

We will ensure that all Care Leavers will have a copy of their birth certificate, a National insurance number and a passport.

If you are in Full Time further education, your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will assist you to claim Income Support you will need to be able to provide confirmation of your attendance from your education provider. If you are ill or disabled your social worker or personal advisor will be able to support you to make a claim for Employment and Support Allowance you can find out more by calling **0800 0556688**. If you wish to apply for Personal Independence Payment call **0800 9172222**.

If you are a parent your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be able to support you to claim Income Support, Maternity Allowance (dependent on previous employment), Healthy Start Vouchers, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits.

Please note that as Universal Credit is being rolled out by the Job Centre Plus this will impact on the benefits you claim, your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be available to support you through these changes. You may wish to visit www.direct.gov.uk for more information. You can access further advice and assistance by requesting an appointment at your local Citizen's Advice Bureau. You can email enquiry@cabline.org or Tel: **0870 8408080**.

Useful Contacts

CHILDLINE

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

BULLYBUSTERS

0800 169 6928

www.bullybusters.org.uk

CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR ENGLAND

020 7783 8330

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

OFSTED

0300 123 1231

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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Mob: 07799861764

WIRRAL COUNCIL CENTRAL ADVICE AND DUTY TEAM (CADT)

0151 606 1008

CHILDREN'S COMPLAINTS OFFICER

0151 666 5677

Freephone: 0800 328 7770

WIRRAL COUNCIL EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM

0151 677 6557