

# CARE LEAVERS LOCAL OFFER



Introduction  
to Leaving  
Care

Click **HERE**  
to get started



Education,  
Training and  
Employment

Important  
Documents



Getting your  
Voice Heard



Where you  
will live



Health



Financial  
Support



**“This is our offer to you, so you know what to expect and what help and guidance you will receive from us throughout your journey from care to adulthood”**  
*Hounslow Corporate Parenting Service*



**London Borough  
of Hounslow**

# INTRODUCTION TO LEAVING CARE

## THIS SECTION INCLUDES:

- » What does 'being a care leaver' mean?
- » Your Leaving Care Worker
- » Your Pathway Plan
- » Continuing Support 21 – 25
- » Eligibility – see Appendix

2

## WHAT DOES BEING A CARE LEAVER MEAN?

We're here to help you make your journey from care into adulthood as successful as possible. Our Care Leaver Offer is designed so that you can see what support we can provide to assist you in getting ready for adult life. For example, we will help you with educational support, finding suitable employment, housing, and managing your money.

## YOUR LEAVING CARE WORKER

Once you turn 18 you will be supported by a Personal Advisor (PA) from the Leaving Care Team. The level of support you receive from your leaving care worker will vary, depending on your individual circumstances.

## To contact the team:

Call: **020 8583 4580** (9am – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am – 4.45pm on Friday)

Email: [CFLeavingCare.Duty@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:CFLeavingCare.Duty@hounslow.gov.uk)

Address: **Leaving Care Team**, Hounslow House, 7 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW3 3EB

## YOUR PATHWAY PLAN

Here at the Leaving Care Team we want to help you achieve your goals. Your Pathway Plan will set out the individual package of support that we will provide whilst you get used to independent living. We will review your plan at least twice each year and meet with you regularly to check how your goals are going.





## CONTINUING SUPPORT AGES 21 - 25 – WHAT WE OFFER

Your PA will talk with you about whether you need to continue receiving their support after you turn 21. If you do, your Pathway Plan will be reviewed with you to record what support is needed at this time. Support from a PA will continue for as long as you need it, possibly up to your 25th birthday. If you are in higher education support will continue until you finish your course.

If you are 21-24 and not currently receiving support from a PA we will assess your need for one. You can request this support at any time up to your 25th birthday. You may want to request support if you are having difficulties with managing your independence or adjusting to adult life.

You may not need or want the same amount of support from a PA that you had when you were 18-20 years old, but you are still entitled to ask for your needs to be assessed to see if onward support would help you.



### You can make the request by;

@ [CFLeavingCare.Duty@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:CFLeavingCare.Duty@hounslow.gov.uk)

☎ 020 8583 4580

✉ **Leaving Care Team**  
Hounslow House  
7 Bath Road  
Hounslow TW3 3EB

# WHERE YOU WILL LIVE

## THIS SECTION INCLUDES:

- » Accommodation at 18 years of age
- » Permanent housing
- » Paying for rent and accommodation
- » Moving costs
- » Setting up Home Allowance
- » Council Tax Support

4

## ACCOMMODATION AT 18 YEARS OF AGE

Your accommodation needs should be planned with your social worker before you turn 18. This means you will have a pathway plan in place, which includes all options that best support your own situation.

### Semi-Independent accommodation

A home in a shared house or group of single flats with support workers who are available to support you during the day and at night, even if they are not based there.

If you are in **Foster Care** and it is agreed by you, your carer and your social worker that the best thing for you is to stay living with your foster carer after you turn 18, you will be given the option of **Staying Put** until you are 21.

A copy of the **Staying Put** policy is available from your PA or through the Care Leaver App. Please talk to your PA.

## Staying Close

Keeping in touch for support with making the transition to independent living may be possible with your children's home after you stop living there. This depends to some extent on your location after you leave.

## PERMANENT HOUSING

Care leavers can apply for permanent social housing in Hounslow. Each application is then assessed, and the young person will be placed on a list to await a direct offer of their own Council flat. It is unlikely that you will be offered your permanent accommodation before the age of 20 due to limited housing availability. Hounslow's housing team will work closely with your worker to make sure you are aware of all the housing options that are available to you.

Visit [www.hounslow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1239/housing\\_allocations\\_policy\\_2018.pdf](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1239/housing_allocations_policy_2018.pdf) to download Hounslow's housing allocation policy.

HOME

You will only receive one offer of permanent accommodation and if you choose to reject this you will then be considered to be intentionally homeless and we will be unable to support you further in securing social housing. Housing support will be offered when you sign your new tenancy.

### PAYING FOR RENT AND ACCOMMODATION

- » When you turn 18 you are expected to pay towards your own rent and accommodation whether you are a student, working or claiming benefits
- » If you are receiving Universal Credit, you can be assisted by your PA to apply for your rent to be paid from your Universal Credit payment direct to your landlord without it coming to you first. This will help you manage this payment better.

In some special circumstances the Leaving Care Team might be able to pay towards your accommodation costs. **Contact us to find out more.**

### MOVING COSTS

The Leaving Care Team will support with the cost of moving home whilst you are in semi-independent accommodation and also with your move to your permanent home.

### SETTING UP HOME ALLOWANCE

You will receive £3,000 to buy furniture and appliances for your home.

### COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

All care leavers are exempt from paying council tax up to age 21. Visit [www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20020/council\\_tax\\_discounts](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20020/council_tax_discounts) to find out more.



## FINANCIAL SUPPORT



For full information on Hounslow's financial support package for care leavers, including costs related to your education, you can ask your PA to send you the '*Care Leavers Financial Support Guide*'.

A copy of the Care Leavers Financial Support Guide policy is available through the **Care Leavers' App**.

Your financial support payments will also be set out in your Pathway Plan.

# EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

## THIS SECTION INCLUDES:

- » Virtual College
- » Further Education Bursaries
- » Higher Education
- » Financial Support for Higher Education
- » Disabled Student Allowances
- » Apprenticeships
- » Learning to drive

6

◀ HOME ▶



For full information on Hounslow's financial support package for care leavers, including costs related to your education, please ask your worker for the 'Care Leaver's Financial Support Policy'.

## VIRTUAL COLLEGE

The Virtual College young leavers programme is here to help you with everything to do with your education, employment and training. The team will support you to stay in education including help with any training or apprenticeship programmes that might be available in your local area.

### Contact Virtual College

If you need information or have any worries about your education and training, please contact the Virtual College:

Email: [natasha.woolman@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.woolman@hounslow.gov.uk) or call **020 8583 2745/3559/2787** or ask your PA to put you in touch.

## FURTHER EDUCATION BURSARIES

Care leavers attending college will get the college's 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary entitlement, which will cover your essential study expenses such as travel and course equipment.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Hounslow is committed to supporting care leavers and young people to achieve their full potential. We offer plenty of practical assistance for care leavers who want to go to university for up to four years:

- » A Higher Education Bursary is made up of weekly subsistence, payment of rent in vacations and an annual payment towards your course equipment such as laptop, books etc.



- » Support to visit universities before you choose which universities to apply to.
- » Help with the initial costs of moving to and from university.
- » Financial support outside of term time with your utility costs (eg energy bills, broadband etc if you do not live in university halls)

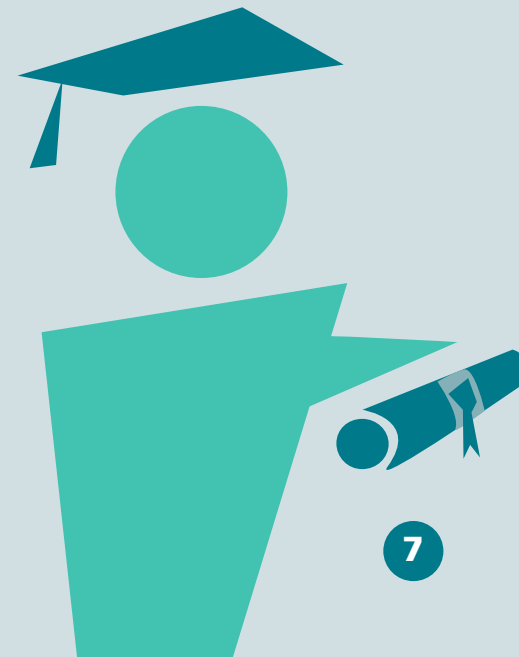
Please contact the Virtual College for advice if you are thinking about applying for university.



## FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

More information about higher education, funding and opportunities can be found at:

- » [www.propel.org.uk](http://www.propel.org.uk)
- » To find out more about care leaver support available from universities and colleges in the UK, you can access a named university adviser for each university and details of the available bursaries. Certain universities offer more to care leavers than others so it is worth finding out what their specific support is. If you wish to you can identify yourself as a care leaver on your UCAS application form.
- » [www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/student-advice/applying-to-uni/applying-to-university-as-a-care-leaver](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/student-advice/applying-to-uni/applying-to-university-as-a-care-leaver)
- » [www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university](http://www.gov.uk/extra-money-pay-university)
- » [www.prospects.ac.uk/](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/)





### **DISABLED STUDENT ALLOWANCES**

Disabled students can claim additional allowances to pay for things like equipment or a helper. This money does not need to be paid back.

**More information can be found at**  
[www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa](http://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa)

### **APPRENTICESHIPS**

Speak to your PA about financial help when doing an apprenticeship or traineeship.

**Further information can be found here:**  
[www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship](http://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship)

### **LEARNING TO DRIVE**

We will help you with the cost of learning to drive from the age of 17.

- » To get the funding we will look at your ability to learn how to drive safely, such as being able to pass your theory and practical test.
- » You will also have to show you are in education, training, or employment. If in education, you need to have an attendance of at least 85% and driving lessons can be withdrawn if attendance falls below 85%.

If funding is agreed, it will cover the cost of;

- » A provisional driving licence
- » Up to 10 hours of driving lessons (additional lessons could be funded, if e.g., a licence is needed for your job)



- » The theory test and one retake
- » The driving test and one retake
- » A full licence once you have passed the test

You will not be able to apply for funding when learning to drive or continue lessons if you;

- » Have any driving related convictions, charges or charges pending in the last 18 months
- » Have any convictions, charges or charges pending related to violence or drugs or alcohol in the last 6 months
- » Behave in a way the driving instructor considers unacceptable

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Speak to your personal advisor if you need to apply for any of the following:

- » **Birth Certificate**  
[www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate](http://www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate)
- » **Passport** [www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport](http://www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport)
- » **British Citizenship** [www.gov.uk/browse/citizenship/citizenship](http://www.gov.uk/browse/citizenship/citizenship)
- » **National Insurance Number**  
[www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number](http://www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number)
- » **Driving Licence** [www.gov.uk/browse/driving/driving-licences](http://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/driving-licences)
- » **Accessing your personal information held by Hounslow Council**  
[www.hounslow.gov.uk/sarform](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/sarform)
- » **Leave to remain extension**



# HEALTH

## THIS SECTION INCLUDES:

- » Your Health Passport
- » Registering with a GP/ Doctor
- » Dentists and Opticians
- » Mental Health
- » Sexual Health
- » Drug and Alcohol Support
- » Gym Membership

## YOUR HEALTH PASSPORT

When you reach the age of 18, you will receive a copy of your health passport. The health passport contains a summary of your medical history. It is a great way for any healthcare service provider to see the care you received as a looked after child, for example a list of immunisations you have had. You can also access your medical record through your GP.

## REGISTERING WITH A GP/DOCTOR

If you are not already registered with a doctor near you, you can ask your PA or support worker to help you register or visit [www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/how-can-we-help/how-do-i-choose-and-register-with-a-gp/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/how-can-we-help/how-do-i-choose-and-register-with-a-gp/)

## DENTISTS AND OPTICIANS

If you are receiving benefits or you are age 19 or under in full time education at school or college (not university), you will have access to free dental and eye care.

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/>

## MENTAL HEALTH

If you are feeling anxious, stressed, depressed, angry or upset please speak to someone who can help you refer yourself for counselling. You can also speak to your GP. Please see links below:

[www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20115/supporting-you-through-difficulty/1150/mental-health-support](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20115/supporting-you-through-difficulty/1150/mental-health-support)

[Kooth.com](http://Kooth.com)

Online mental health support and access to individual counsellors for 18-25 year olds.



## SEXUAL HEALTH

Information about contraception, family planning and sexual health services for the London Borough of Hounslow can be found at:

[https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20049/health\\_and\\_well\\_being/1923/sexual\\_health\\_advice\\_and\\_treatment](https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20049/health_and_well_being/1923/sexual_health_advice_and_treatment)

If you do not live in Hounslow, please see <https://www.brook.org.uk/>

## DRUGS AND ALCOHOL SUPPORT

We will offer support and counselling if you need help with smoking, drugs and alcohol issues.

Please talk to your worker or someone else you trust if you would like help. You can also contact these organisations:

- » <https://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/services/mental-health-services/addictions-and-substance-misuse/hype-hounslow-young-people-engaged>
- » <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

## GYM MEMBERSHIP

We will support you with gym membership up to £25 a month. Please speak to your PA or call one of the Participation Officer for more details.

**Call: 07432 594 042**

# GETTING YOUR VOICE HEARD

## THIS SECTION INCLUDES:

- » An independent Advocate
- » How to make a Complaint
- » The Participation Service

Making sure you are safe and confident with the support that is provided for you as a care leaver is hugely important to us. Any questions or concerns you have are welcomed, so please come and speak to us if anything doesn't feel right. There are three different services available.

### AN INDEPENDENT ADVOCATE

We have commissioned independent children and young people's Advocates to listen and help you decide what you want to do next. They can help you build up the confidence to say "that's not working for me!"

To speak to an advocate from **Action for Children** call **020 7254 9408**.

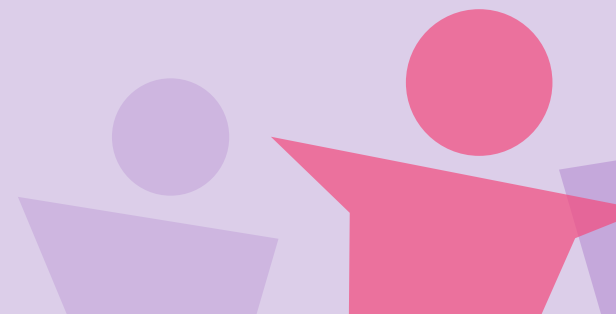
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-we-can-help/our-local-services/find-our-services-near-you/london-independent-visitors-service/>

### HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

You have the right to make a complaint if there is a problem you are experiencing that isn't being solved by your worker or their manager.

You can contact the **Hounslow Council Complaints Team on 020 8583 3333** or email [complaints.crt@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.crt@hounslow.gov.uk)

◀ HOME ▶



## THE PARTICIPATION SERVICE

You can have your voice heard through Hounslow's Participation Service. The service offers opportunities to have fun and learn new things and contribute ideas for change for care experienced children and young people.

The service run projects, trips and activities to help young people develop new skills, build confidence and meet others who are also care experienced. Some of the things you can get involved in include:

- » Care Leavers Forum, which takes place once a month and all care leavers are welcome to attend.

- » There is a weekly drop in for young people 16+ where you can get info on all sorts of issues including education, training, housing, health issues and employment, or just come and have a chat.
- » Taking part in surveys and events to give your views.

**Call:** 020 8583 2317

**Text/WhatsApp:** 07432 594042

**In person** – Ask your PA for exact times and the venue.



## NEW HOUNSLOW CARE LEAVERS APP

Download our new Hounslow Care Leavers app from the [Google Play Store](#) or the [Apple App Store](#)

# APPENDIX

## YOUR ELIGIBILITY

### **YOU ARE AN ELIGIBLE YOUNG PERSON IF:**

- » you are 16 or 17 years old, you have been looked after for at least 13 weeks before your 14th birthday or if you are still in care.

### **YOU ARE A RELEVANT YOUNG PERSON IF:**

- » you are 16 or 17 years old, you are no longer looked after but were previously an Eligible young person.

### **YOU ARE A FORMER RELEVANT YOUNG PERSON IF:**

- » you are 18 years old, you have left care and were previously eligible or relevant or both for the support set out in this leaflet, you must have been in care for at 16th birthday.

### **YOU ARE A QUALIFYING YOUNG PERSON IF:**

- » You are aged between 16 and 25,
- » You are Looked after by children's services on, or after, their 16th birthday and no longer looked after
- » You spent less than 13 weeks in care since 14th birthday, i.e. do not fulfil criteria for eligible or relevant child

### **UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN**

You are eligible for the same level of support given to young people who were previously looked after children but, as for all young people, the level of support does depend on when the period of care started and for how long.

- » We will give you information and support to access legal advice.
- » We will offer advice and support to access appropriate educational courses.
- » You will receive financial support (subsistence allowance) while you are waiting for a decision from the Home Office.

◀ HOME



◀ HOME



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**Leaving Care Team**

London Borough of Hounslow  
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7 Bath Road, Hounslow TW3 3EB  
Telephone: **020 8583 4580**

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