

Local offer



A guide for young people leaving care

Caring for people, our places and the planet



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1. Introduction

For many young people, we know that the idea of leaving care can seem frightening. We understand this and are committed to supporting you every step of the way.

Our Local Offer to you has been designed with the support of care experienced young people. Together we have created this offer which contains information and services you can access as a young person who has been looked after by Barnet Council. It is about the support available to you as you leave care and we will continue to listen to your views to ensure we offer services that you need.

We want to make sure that as you go through and leave care that you feel safe, supported and know where to go for advice and guidance. We know that entering the world of adulthood is a big step with many new opportunities and decisions and want you to know that we still care about you and are determined to support you as best we can.

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To be able to receive the support and services in this offer, you must have been in care for a period of at least 13 weeks (or periods amounting to 13 weeks) which began after you were 14 years old, and includes some time on and after your 16th birthday. Personal Advisors (PA) within the care leavers service, will share and promote the Barnet Local Offer and ensure young people are aware of what services are available and the services they are entitled to. The offer applies to all young people who have been in the care of Barnet Council, as outlined above, whether you are still living in Barnet or in another local authority area. At times we may need to make our support available to care leavers who are not from Barnet but live in the area.

If you are not sure whether you qualify for support, then ask your social worker or visit Barnet’s service for care experienced young people, known as Onwards and Upwards (O&U) based at:

O&U Young People’s Centre
34 – 36 Woodhouse Road
North Finchley
London
N12 0RG

Some information may change, so please make sure that you check this offer regularly. If you would prefer a paper copy of this information or require this in a different language or format, please let your social worker or Leaving Care Personal Advisor (PA) know.

Your Rights

- You will be involved in all decision-making processes about your plans to leave care.
- You will be offered access to an independent advocate if you’re not happy with the care we give you.
- You will be able to see the information we keep about you and the files and records written about you whilst in care.

The process

1. When you reach the age of 15 and a half O&U will begin working alongside your social worker and your carers to provide advice and assistance in helping you and them to begin building your Pathway Plan.
2. Around your 16th birthday, your social worker will begin to have conversations with you about your Pathway Plan, known in Barnet as the All About Me plan. This will support you to prepare for leaving care. Part of this process will include being matched a Leaving Care PA. Your Pathway Plan will replace your care plan and should consider all the very important points in your journey to growing up and becoming an adult.
3. At your last Looked After Child Review before your 18th birthday, the role and expectation of your PA will be written in your Pathway Plan with you. Your PA will work closely with your social worker until you turn 18 at which time your PA will be responsible for supporting you.
4. The PA's role is different to your social worker's. They are there to provide advice and support to you in relation to work, housing and study. They will probably visit you less frequently than your social worker and generally your relationship will not be as formal.
5. The amount of support that you receive from your PA will depend on what you both agree you need and your circumstances. The care leaver's service will consider with you what extra support you may need.



2. Advice and support

- **For care leavers aged 16 and 17 the local authority (in this case, Barnet Council) has a duty to support you (as well as providing you with personal advisor support), which continues to apply once a young person reaches the age of 18.**
 - **For care leavers aged 18–20 there is a proactive duty on local authorities to keep in touch with care leavers.**
 - **For care leavers aged 21–25 there is a duty on local authorities to assess care leavers' needs and develop and keep under review a pathway plan, only where a young person requests support.**
 - **As a care experienced young person, you can ask for support from Onwards and Upwards, up to the age of 25, no matter what your circumstance.**
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2.1. Getting advice from your Social Worker or Personal Advisor

Your PA will be in touch with you at least 6 times a year; or more often depending on your Pathway Plan, until you are 21 years of age. You can also contact your PA at any point if you need advice and support.

Support when you're aged 21 -25

In O&U we recognise that young people will have varying needs depending on their personal circumstances and our services are designed to taper away over time, in recognition of your growing maturity and need for independence. Therefore, after you have turned 21, your support is designed around your individual needs. This can be ongoing 1-1 support from an allocated PA, or support from the duty team.

After support has ended from the 1-1 service, if you think you might benefit from the additional support of an allocated PA, ask the duty team for more information.

Life-long support advice and guidance

For Care Leavers, O&U is family. We recognise that a care leaver is a care leaver for life. As with all young adults, care experienced adults sometimes need support and advice. O&U is committed to offering support beyond 25 to ensure that we're there to offer support and to advise when you need it throughout your life.

2.2. Your Pathway Plan

Your All About Me Pathway Plan is written with you in consultation with the important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals, and exactly what support you will receive from us. We review your Pathway Plan with you regularly so that it is kept up to date with your needs and wishes.

Things that your Pathway Plan will cover will include work experience, subjects you may need

to study if you want an apprenticeship, or to go to university and what job or career you want to pursue. It will also set out where you will live when you are over 18. This may be where you live prior to turning 18, but not always, and therefore we need to plan this with you before your 18th birthday.

Your Pathway Plan is important as it will look at the things important to you in moving to independence, such as being ready to leave care, money management, looking after yourself, health, employment, education and training issues. Your Pathway Plan is your record of the support that we agreed to provide to you, and needs to be reviewed at least once every six months.

2.3. On-site services offered at O&U

Onwards and Upwards is based at the Woodhouse Road Centre. Support is available, Monday to Friday from 9:15 – 16:45. The following services are available on-site, for more information, please discuss with your PA.

- In-house Therapeutic Support
- Department for Work & Pensions – Care Leaver Work Coach
- Barnet Education & Learning Services (BELS)
- Immigration Advice and Support
- In-person Duty Services – no appointment required
- Peer-led Strengths & Resilience Groups
- Housing & Tenancy Support
- Health & Wellbeing
- Support for Care Leaver Parents
- Substance Misuse Support
- Free to use Kitchen and Laundry Facilities
- Money Management and Budgeting Skills Support
- Free WIFI and ICT access
- Preparation for Independent Living Workshops
- Celebration Events throughout the year

The O&U Young People's Centre is your safe space: Come and talk to us about any worries in a safe and welcoming environment. Details will also be published on the children in care website - www.barnet.gov.uk/comingintocare

2.4. Refugee and Migrant young people

If you are under 18, have nowhere to live in the UK and no parents to look after you, we will look after you and a worker from the Onwards and Upwards Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers social work team will help you to get the support and advice you need. In the beginning we will find you somewhere safe to live and help with any urgent needs.

If you have family you can contact we will help you try and get in touch with them to let them know you are safe.

We will provide you with information on how to find a solicitor and help you to make your claim for asylum. We will help you attend education and look after your health while you wait for your decision.

It is important that you talk to your social worker about what is happening with your immigration status before you turn 18, and if you do not understand, we encourage you to tell us.

There is a lot of support available to young people seeking asylum. If you wish to access support you should speak to your carer, Social Worker or PA.

If you are waiting for a decision on your asylum claim to stay in the UK, we can support you to plan for three possible outcomes after reaching 18 years. We will:

- prepare you if you receive a form of leave to stay in the UK
- prepare you to return to your country of origin if you are refused leave to remain in the UK at the end of the immigration consideration process, or decide to return yourself
- prepare you for a period of uncertainty if you remain in the UK without permanent status.

3. Money and financial support

We want you to feel financially secure. We will support you to feel confident in budgeting and generally looking after your money. This does not mean we will pay you money each week, but it does mean that we will support you to ensure you are getting all the financial support you need, whether you are at university, college and/ or working.

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Barnet has a [Financial Policy for Care Leavers](#) that sets out what financial support you will be eligible for when you leave care. A table of all available allowances can be found at the end of this document.

3.1. Opening a bank account

By the time you leave care, you will have a bank account, and payment of any finances, including wages, will be made directly into your bank account. Your PA or social worker will support you with this as needed.

If you find it difficult to maintain a bank account or are not able to open one, alternative arrangements will be made, supported by your PA.

We expect that at 18, you will either be working, in education, an apprenticeship or at university. On the rare occasions that you find yourself between jobs you may be able to claim benefits. In addition, you will be able to claim benefits whilst in full-time education.

There is a dedicated Universal Credit Work Coach based at the Onwards and Upwards Centre in Woodhouse Road, who can see you by appointment to assist with your benefits application.

3.2. Travel

Up to your 19th birthday, you would be expected to apply for a further education bursary fund which would cover your travel needs. After this, if you are in further education, you will be supported with travel costs based on an assessment of need. If you need to attend university or college during the holidays, any additional support for fares will be based on an assessment of need, confirmation from the university or college and outlined in your Pathway Plan.

If you are on an apprenticeship, then you need to speak to your PA to find out what support you can get with travel. This should be in your Pathway Plan.

Additionally, we may assist with some fares for family contact, leisure and cultural needs. This will be based on an assessment of need and outlined in your Pathway Plan.

3.3. Birthday Payments

A birthday gift will be arranged for you by Onwards and Upwards. The birthday allowance paid to all Care Leavers is as follows:

- 18th birthday - £100
- 19th birthday - £30
- 20th birthday - £30
- 21st birthday - £50

For young people in Young Offenders Institutions the birthday allowance is paid by postal order. You can indicate your preference for a voucher or cash to your PA who will arrange for the gift.

3.4. Live Unlimited / Imagination Unlimited fund and other charitable grants

Live Unlimited is a charity set up by Barnet Council to support looked after children and care leavers in the borough to have the best possible life chances through providing enrichment activities.

The Imagination Unlimited fund is the first charity scheme run by Live Unlimited. Imagination

Unlimited creates the opportunity for Barnet's looked after children and care leavers to apply for small grants to help them explore their passions and further their interests.

Whether you are a budding sports champ who wants to use the grant to pay for the cost of joining a football club, a wannabe chef who wants the grant to help contribute towards a chef's course or an aspiring entrepreneur and needs a little help with set-up costs, this scheme can provide you with help on the way. You can apply for a minimum of £25 and maximum of £250.

To apply, [complete an application form](#) which can be found on the Live Unlimited website; speak to your PA for any questions or help completing the application.

You are encouraged to access the [Live Unlimited website](#) to read up on their new initiatives and how to get involved with the charity.

3.5. Cost of key documents

It is important that all young people have a photographic form of identification (e.g., passport or driving licence) and their birth certificate when they leave care.

You will usually need formal identification of some kind, often a passport or driving licence, as well as your National Insurance number (if you are entitled to one) to start work with an employer, set up a bank account, prove you are who you say you are, claim benefits and to get into various venues.

When you leave care, where possible, you will have a birth certificate as well as a passport or at least a provisional driving licence. If for any reason you do not have a formal type of photographic identification when you leave care, we will support you to obtain formal identification.

If you are an unaccompanied young person and there are immigration issues to be resolved, your social worker or PA will help you to get the right advice to obtain documentation.

If you have lived here for more than 7 years but are not British or a European National, we will pay for you to be naturalised prior to your 18th birthday. You will need to discuss this with your social worker before you leave care.

It is important to keep all your documents safe as you will be responsible for paying for any replacements if they are lost or destroyed.

3.6. Supporting parents in and leaving care

As Corporate Parents, we are committed to supporting mothers and fathers who are in care, or in the process of leaving care. Before you become a parent, we will discuss sex and healthy relationships with you, and make sure you have access to family planning advice and contraception. We would like you to start a family at a time that is right for you. We can help you prepare for being a parent. This could involve opportunities to learn about caring for babies and children, mentoring and advice from parenting role models (such as foster carers or parent champions) and providing support to help you work through your thoughts and feelings about the parenting that you experienced in partnership with Barnet's Early Years Parenting Hub.

During pregnancy, the health and well-being of expectant mothers and babies is our priority. Alongside this, we are committed to supporting the well-being and inclusion of fathers and encourage all care leavers planning a family or expecting a child, to share this exciting news with their PA. We know that your individual needs and circumstances are different, some parents will need little support, while others will need more help. We promise to listen to you, to be honest with you and to work with you.

If you are pregnant, your PA or midwife will support you to claim a grant from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) if you are eligible for one. This is to buy essential items you need for when your baby is born.

Your PA may also be able to offer support to access funding from other organisations for you and your baby. Parenting can be rewarding but also challenging. Your PA will make sure you know who is available to support you and will help to contact local services for all parents and care experience parents.

If you and your child are referred to the safeguarding children social work teams, no matter the outcome of their investigations and assessments, we will not abandon you and will

never give up on you. O&U will support you to navigate the practical, financial and emotional implications of statutory social work involvement in your and your child's life.

3.7. Council tax exemption scheme

Barnet has renewed its commitment to care leavers and one way that we will be showing this commitment is with our Council Tax exemption policy. As a care leaver, regardless of your employment status, you may be eligible to access up to a 100% discount on Council Tax bills until the end of the financial year of your 25th birthday depending on your individual circumstances. Your PA will support you and answer any questions you may have in relation to your own personal circumstances and eligibility, but you will be responsible for making the claim for the care leaver council tax discount scheme. If you don't have an allocated PA but you think you may still be eligible to claim a discount, please contact the O&U duty service. If you have any questions or want to see a full copy of the policy, you can review it on the Local Offer website <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/children-and-families/care-leavers-local-offer> or please speak to your PA.

3.8. Setting up Home Allowance

When you leave care, and we all agree you are ready to live independently, you will receive a Setting Up Home Allowance of up to £2,000. The Department for Education has recommended this amount to increase to £3,000 and therefore this amount may increase in the future.

3.9. Savings accounts and ISAs

When you leave care, you should have a short-term savings account, with savings you have accumulated while you were in care. Some of this may be used to buy things before you moved to living independently.

It is important when you leave care to try and continue to save in case of emergencies or for special treats.

It is expected that you will already have a bank account set up by the time you turn 18, unless you are unable to open a bank account due to your immigration status. A bank account is not only important to have for savings, but also to pay

your wages or benefits into and potentially any financial support you receive from us.

If you were in care for more than 12 months you will have a Junior ISA which was set up with £200 initially. When you become 18 years of age, these accounts will become Adult ISAs and you will be able to access this money. Your social worker and PA will be able to give you information about the money in your account and advise on how to access this money. From 1 April 2019 the weekly savings, previously held for you at your placement when you were looked after, was paid directly into your Junior ISA account and you will have access to the savings at the age of 18.

Remember

Your savings are there to support you in your move to independence and adulthood. This may include buying items for your own place, driving lessons and supplementing the financial support available to you if you continue in education or training.

It is important that you think before you spend your savings, as once the money has been spent, it may be a long time before you are able to add to them again. For more information, please refer to Barnet's Saving Policy.

3.10. Savings over £16,000

Some young people may have a lot of savings. This includes money in bank accounts, ISAs but can also include inheritance or compensation given by the courts.

If you have savings of £16,000 or more you may not be eligible for some means tested benefits. However, advice and support to understand your eligibility is available from the DWP work coach and your PA.

If you have a lot of savings, it is important to get appropriate financial advice. Your PA will be able to help you to get appropriate independent financial advice.

3.11. Emergency support

If you find yourself experiencing financial hardship and struggling, we encourage you to speak to your PA in the first instance. O&U will support you to navigate your way through the sources of help available, these can include an application to the Barnet Residents fund.

Barnet's Residents fund policies are available on the [Child Poverty Action Group's \(CPAG\)](#) website.

The grant helps people who:

- need extra help in an emergency
- are working but are on a low income; and
- have a pending Council Tax support or Housing Benefit claim. If you need to apply, your PA can help you with an application.

Discretionary Housing Payments

As a care leaver, you are also able to apply and have priority status for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) if you experienced housing related payment issues.

A DHP claim can provide extra money to young people or their landlord if you already receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit rent element, and if there is a shortfall between the rent you must pay and the Housing Benefit or Universal credit you receive.

DHPs are usually paid for a few months to help applicants through a crisis or short-term problem, but can pay for longer periods in exceptional circumstances. These payments are helpful if you experience financial difficulties. Your PA will support you to apply for DHPs.

Essential items

Sometimes young people run out of essential things and are unable to afford to buy them. In these situations, it is important that you contact your social worker or PA for advice. Young people based in Barnet can also collect hygiene products such as toiletries, sanitary products, and food from Woodhouse Road, if they are in immediate need. We can also tell you about local services such as food banks.



4. Housing and Accommodation

4.1. How we support you with house and accommodation

We are committed to making sure that once you leave our care, we will help you find suitable accommodation that best meets your needs. We know not all young people will be ready to live unsupported in their own accommodation straight away. Your Children in Care social worker and your PA will have worked with you to agree plans for when you are no longer in care. This will include plans for your accommodation and will be written into your Pathway Plan.

[Barnet's care leaver's joint housing protocol](#) provides step by step information about the housing options and how you can progress towards independence. It also includes details about the financial and other support that is available to young people along this journey.

In Barnet, your social worker and PA will work together with you to help you to find suitable accommodation.

This will involve:

- advice about maintaining a tenancy, including avoiding rent or Council Tax arrears, paying bills and budgeting. We know it can be very hard having your own place for the first time. We will do whatever we can to offer support and to ease the pressures on you
- helping you to claim housing benefit/universal credit
- practical and financial support with moving into and furnishing your new home;
- support to maintain your tenancy and to be a good neighbour, and
- supporting you if you have a housing crisis, including helping if you become at risk of eviction or loss of a tenancy.

These are the accommodation options available to care leavers in Barnet:

4.2. Staying Put

Staying with your foster carers after you turn 18 is called a 'Staying Put' arrangement. This can last at least until you are 21. 'Staying Put' aims to help you gradually progress to living independently, as many young people leaving home at 18 may not

be ready to live alone. You, your carers and Barnet Council will sign an agreement that sets out the terms of this arrangement, and it will be reviewed annually.

Staying Put gives you the opportunity to be in education, training and employment without the disruption of having to move into 'independence' during this important period of your life.

Because you are no longer in care at age 18, being in Staying Put is different to foster care, and there are some changes that take place to help you prepare for your own home. There is an expectation that you will do more chores around the house, for example cooking and cleaning. You will manage your own money and make a regular contribution to your rent, as determined in the Living Together Agreement.

For more information, please refer to Barnet's Staying Put Policy.

4.3. Supported Lodgings

This is similar to 'Staying Put' but is not with your foster carers. It means you move somewhere new to live but you remain living in a family home and have the additional support that comes with being part of a family. The support will be different to a 'Staying Put' arrangement, as you will be living in a private house with a landlord (someone you did not live with previously). You will have responsibilities such as paying weekly contributions, making your own meals and managing a budget. The level of support you receive in this accommodation will be based on your individual needs.

4.4. Social housing

This is accommodation managed by the Council or a Housing Association and is where you have a room or property (such as a studio or flat) and are given a tenancy and the responsibility of managing this property yourself. Usually an offer can only be made once the Council or Housing Association are sure that the rent for the property is affordable to a young person, not just now but in the future also. They will look at things like your finances, education, employment or training situation and feedback from your personal advisor regarding independent living skills. They will also

need to evidence that you have completed the steps to independent living programme via O&U. Ask your PA for more information about how to enrol and complete the programme as you won't be able to be nominated for long-term social housing until you have completed the course.

Temporary accommodation

This is studio accommodation provided by Barnet Homes housing department. This is not a long-term option but is transitional accommodation while waiting for long term accommodation to become available to you. You will be expected to sign a license agreement which explains your rights and responsibilities which will include paying the rent.

The responsibility for paying the rent will either be yours or Onwards and Upwards depending on your circumstances, for example your entitlements to work or access to benefits and is subject to an assessment of need completed by your PA.

4.5. Private rented accommodation

This is where you rent a room or property (such as a studio or flat) and where you are a tenant and have the responsibility of managing this property yourself. If you want to rent a private property, it is likely your landlord will require a deposit and rent in advance before they will agree to a tenancy. In some circumstances, we can support you to access a rent deposit scheme.

If you want or need to access private rented accommodation, you do not give up your priority entitlement to social housing as a care leaver. Ask your PA for more information about this.

4.6. Supported Housing

Supported or semi-independent housing, as it is sometimes known, is often run by a charity organisation. This accommodation usually includes a range of teams and resources for young people. Centrepoint Foyer is an example of this type of accommodation. This is shared accommodation where you have your own room and share a kitchen and bathroom with other young people.

Supported accommodation services can be very different from each other, but generally will have a staffed office on the bottom floor with key workers who can help you to plan out this phase of your life, and possibly connect you to relevant activities

through its parent organisation such as work experience, advocacy and more.

The Moving Forward Project

This is a supported accommodation project managed by Barnet Family Services and consists of 2 properties. One is a 4 bedroom flat with 2 shared kitchens and bathrooms. The other is a single studio flat.

This accommodation is solely for care leavers and does not have staff on site. Each young person in this accommodation receives 4 hours per week of floating support to enable them to develop their independence skills.

Remember

On completion of the independence skills programme Onwards and Upwards can request Barnet Homes to prioritise the young person's nomination for long term social housing.

4.7. Student Holiday Accommodation

If you are a student over 18 in full time residential education or in higher education, we will ensure that you have suitable accommodation, if you need it, during the holiday period. For young people in higher education who are able to access student finance, the financial support we provide includes support towards your rent out of term-time, subsistence support and advice and support with finding accommodation and additional costs, where appropriate.

4.8. Shared Lives Scheme

If you are a care leaver with a disability and care needs, under the shared lives scheme, you can be matched to live with an approved shared lives carer. These carers share their home, family, and community life, and give you care and support with your needs.

Some people live with their shared lives carer, while others might be daytime visitors or stay for shorter periods of time. Carers are carefully vetted and trained, and their homes thoroughly inspected before they are approved as Shared Lives carers. As part of your Pathway Plan you can consider Shared Lives as one of your options for when you turn 18. For more information, please see <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sharedlives>

5. Education, Employment and Training

5.1. Information, advice and guidance

We want you to feel settled and successful when you leave our care, and we want you to succeed in your education, training and employment.

You're expected to stay in education, training or employment with training until you're 18 years old to gain qualifications. After 18, we can look at the support you may need and you'll be able to access advice and guidance about your options at any age. We will ask you how you're doing and we'll record this in your Personal Education Plan (PEP) or your Pathway Plan, or both.

Specialist advisers from our partner agencies will make sure you have full and up-to-date advice about:

- courses
- apprenticeships and traineeships
- employment
- volunteering
- work experience; we're working with a number of providers to support you in exploring this option, so speak to your social worker or PA
- what you can do if you have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Virtual School

Like many other local authorities, we have a Virtual School in our Education department. The Virtual School is a small team of people who ensure you get all the help you need to make informed decisions about what you want to do next in education, taking into account your aspirations, skills and potential. If you are 16, 17 or 18 you can expect to have an individual Personal Education Plan (PEP). They also make sure there are termly PEP review meetings until the end of Year 13.

The team's experienced education caseworkers will support you to find up-to-date information about careers, jobs, education courses, volunteering and training opportunities. On top of this they will be there to advocate for you

within education or training to make sure you can achieve as highly as you can!

Education Psychology Service

If you have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), we can be part of the review process and advise you on what educational placements meet your needs. We are normally only involved if you need to change placement or if your needs have changed. The EHCP can stay with you until you're 25 if you continue in education and continue to have special educational needs and disability. You can request an EHCP from the age of 16. There are professionals and carers who can help you to do this or do it for you.

5.2. Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Not sure what to do with your future? We can help you access projects that are for young people up to the age of 25 who are not in education, employment or training:

The BELs Service

The Barnet Education and Learning Service - (BELs) delivers the Care Leavers programme to care leavers in Barnet. This was re-launched in April 2021. Since then, there has been targeted specialist support in place such as:

A Coordinator - assigned to coordinate and oversee the performance of the care leavers and monitor outcomes.

A Mentor - provides mentoring support for care leavers who are furthest from the job market - builds confidence, motivation, clarity around identity, and self-worth.

Employment advisors - support care leavers in identifying and utilising their skills, assess their readiness for employment, discuss and provide solutions which may include direct access to the employment market by ensuring each young person has an updated CV, an action plan and provide interview support.

Drop-in Clinics – Five days per week members of the team are based at Onwards and Upwards to provide one-to-one support to care leavers. This also includes looking at routes into employment by providing access to short employability programmes and traineeships.

ESOL Course – provide training support to asylum seeking young people who would benefit from additional support. The programme assists you in the process of becoming familiar with life in the UK and is available on-site from the Leaving Care Building, in Woodhouse Road.

Feedback from Care Experienced young people:

“The challenge I faced before joining the programme was that I lacked motivation. I was not in any form of education, employment, or training, I was at a place where I felt stuck. I am now more self-aware; I have now broken through certain barriers that seemed insurmountable.” AH

“The changes that I have made since engaging on the programme are, I am now setting goals and I am chasing my dreams. I am now able to wake up early and get things done, not procrastinate. I am staying positive; I now believe in myself even when things get tough. This programme has changed my life.” DC

Boost

This project is focusing on two of the most deprived areas of the borough, with the highest number of NEET young people. One member of the team is based in Burnt Oak Library and another in Childs Hill.

It helps unemployed residents from the Childs Hill Ward (and also the Whitefields area near Brent Cross) to find work, but will also help the wider community with housing support, benefits advice and training opportunities to help them achieve their goals.

If you are over 21 and want to go back into education or training, you will be given advice and support to consider your options through Onwards and Upwards. This will include exploring:

- suitability of the course
- using savings to support you during the period of training or education
- combining work and study

- applying for financial support from charities and trusts; and
- considering if you are eligible for funding from your employer.

5.3. Continuing your education

If you're still in secondary education you will have support from:

- your subject teachers, pastoral care and your form teacher
- The Virtual School - They will help you with any school work issues, problems with attendance or anything else connected to your study and the school you attend
- Personal Education Plans (PEP) - To look at what further support is needed as well as celebrate your achievements. Meetings are attended by your social worker, form teacher, head of year and virtual support worker. If you attend college, your PEP will continue to look at your educational needs and the support available until your 18th birthday.

If you wish to continue in education after school and go to college or university you will be entitled to the [16-19 bursary](#) from the government, and moving on to university you can get a Higher Education Bursary from us and will be eligible for student finances. There are a range of schools and colleges in Barnet, you can search for them on the [Barnet Website](#).

Your virtual school support worker, social worker and personal advisor can offer you some really good advice about higher education and help you fulfil your ambitions. Please speak to us if you have any queries about continuing your education or support available to you.

5.4. Getting some training

If you are aged between 16-25 years, Barnet offers a lot of support to help you develop your skills and find a job.

- Best Traineeship is a sixteen-week course (2 days per week). All young people who attend receive a financial reward based on weekly attendance. They can work on a nationally recognised qualification, English and Maths qualification, CV writing and interview skills and work experience placements.

- New Adult Project: Skills Escalator project specialises in support for adults in low paid employment. It provides advice and guidance to enable adults to access training provision to support them into better paid employment (this could be with a current or new employer).
- An apprenticeship is a full-time job which combines training and study - you'll learn as you earn. You can study for many qualifications across Levels 2, 3 or 4. Apprenticeship training takes place for a minimum of a year but can last for up to four years depending on the qualification you take. You usually spend around 20% of your time studying, which is only one day a week, with the rest of the time spent working to get experience to help start your future career.
- The BEET Service is in communication with organisations including Tottenham Hotspur Foundation and Ultra Education to widen current employment and training opportunities.
- Volunteer to get work experience - Get an insight into the world of work.

To find out more speak to your PA or the Virtual School.

5.5. Finding a job

To help you develop your skills and access employment, training or volunteering opportunities, your Virtual School worker or personal advisor will support you in making an informed decision about your future career path.

To find a job you can visit:

- [Council jobs](#) - See vacancies at Barnet Council
- [Find a Job \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [Apprenticeships](#).

5.6. Get involved in your community and shape how things work in Barnet

We would like all our care leavers to contribute to the local community and society in general and we understand that leaving care and beginning to live independently can be lonely for some people. With our support, we encourage you to:

- [Share your views](#) - Find out how you can share your views and play an active role in shaping our service
- Attend Onwards and Upwards and/or [Community events in Barnet](#) - a list to help



you explore and connect with local events and activities taking place across Barnet borough.

- [Volunteer](#) - Improve your employment skills and give back to your community.
- [Enrol on the electoral register](#) - We will support you to do this so you can vote in the elections and have your say in who represents your community.

5.7. Help paying for education and work

Everyone should be given access to education. Your PA will help you get bursaries and grants to continue with your education.

If you go into higher education, we'll help you get student finance, Higher Education Bursary and access to accommodation, textbooks and tools you might need.

If you have a learning difficulty, health problems or a disability, you may be able to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance to help with the cost during your studies.

Find out more about the [Disabled Students Allowance on GOV.UK](#)

There is a range of financial support available for care leavers in education, employment or training, however what a young person is entitled to depends on what they are doing.

Information about the financial support available from the Council and other organisations, such as Student Finance and the Job Centre, is explained in [our financial policy for care leavers](#). Ask your PA to help you with accessing and understanding your entitlements and support available.

Whilst you are in education, employment or training, you will also receive the following support:

- the support with choosing the right course and/or training and making the application
- assistance with some expenses for travel or accessing education, training and employment if needed; and
- Income Support or Housing Benefit should be available if you have been in care, remain separated from your family and are in:

- full time further/non-advanced education (this is up to A-level standard or equivalent) OR
- in direct training for 12 hours a week or more.

Income Support or Housing Benefit should continue to be paid until the end of the academic year that you turn 21.

In exceptional circumstances, and based on an assessment of need, we may be able to contribute towards course textbooks, field trips, special equipment or materials, clothing for work experience or job interviews.

5.8. Support for parents with childcare costs

If you want to access training or education you should find out what childcare support is on offer from your employer, training provider, college or university.

All 3-year olds are entitled to free nursery hours. Some may also be eligible for free hours for 2-year olds. You can find more information at www.barnet.gov.uk/children-and-families/childcare

If you would like to speak to somebody about free childcare or would like help in finding a Nursery, please contact the Early Years Brokerage team on 020 83593052 or email earlyyears@barnet.gov.uk

You can also access our Children's Centres who have a wide range of stay and plays as well as other programmes and services. For more information and current timetables visit

www.barnet.gov.uk/childrencentres

Information about Early Help services can be obtained from our Early help Hubs.

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-help-children-young-people-and-families/child-and-family-early-help>

5.9. Support when your circumstances change during your programme of study?

If your circumstances change or if you are considering leaving your current programme of study, please speak to your PA who can provide you with support and advocate for you when focusing on the next steps.

6. Staying healthy

Until your 18th birthday you will have annual health assessments. Your health and wellbeing is very important and as a council we want to ensure services are in place to support you.

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If you have specific health needs, the Named Nurse and your PA will discuss with you how these can be met as part of your Pathway Plan and offer you advice and support on how to access health services as you prepare to turn 18.

From the age of 14 you can ask for a copy of your health assessment from the LAC Health Team. You can either request this form from your Named Nurse at the time of your health assessment or contact the team at CLCHT. LACHealthTeamBarnet@nhs.net

After your final health assessment, before you turn 18, you will be sent a health summary which will include your immunisation record, a copy of your last health assessment, how to access a GP, dentist or optician and where to go for health advice and information. This summary is an important document that your GP or any health practitioner will want to see and needs to be kept safe.

You will also be supported to access the NHS app on your mobile phone to enable you to access your medical records.

For young people with a disability, Barnet's Children and Young People's Disability Service provide a service for children and young people whose disability substantially affects their every-day lives. The service works with disabled children and young people from 0-18 years. From the age of 18, you will transition to adult services who work with disabled young people who have been looked after to ensure their smooth transition and a successful move to independence.

For young people with a disability, adult services will be the lead professionals however, as a care experienced young person, you remain entitled to services from O&U Care Leavers Service as appropriate.

6.1. Mental Health Support

There is a range of support available if you need support with your emotional or mental health. These are some of the options available:

- KOOOTH.com – Online counselling support service available during evenings and weekends
- In-house 1-1 therapeutic support for care leavers at O&U. 1:1 appointments with trainee psychotherapists from Terapia are available for young people in need of emotional support. They are based at the Onwards and Upwards centre. To access this support or to find out more about it, please ask your social worker or PA; and
- Voluntary Community Sector – Range of support lines available such as Childline (0800 11 11) and the Samaritans (116 123).

Please speak to your PA for more information about options available to you as support services can change over time.

6.2. Dental Care

You may be eligible for some financial support towards dental checks/treatment if you are:

- aged 16 to 18 years in full time education
- pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months
- having treatment as an in-patient or out-patient at an NHS hospital
- receiving Income Support, Income Based Employment and Support, or Job Seekers Allowance; and
- on a low income and have a Health Credit Certificate (known as HC2 or HC3 certificate).

6.3. General practitioner (GP)

We will support you to make sure you are registered with a doctor (GP) local to where you live.

6.4. Eye care

You may be eligible for free eye tests and vouchers towards glasses/contact lenses if you are:

- aged 16 to 18 and in full time education
- receiving Income Support, Income Based Employment and Support, or Job Seekers Allowance; and
- on a low income and have a Health Credit Certificate (known as HC2 or HC3 certificate).

6.5. Prescriptions for medication

We can give you advice and support about paying for prescriptions but we are not able to pay for the costs of prescriptions for medication. You are eligible for free prescriptions if you are:

- aged 16 to 18 and in full time education
- receiving Income Support, Income Based Employment and Support, or Job Seekers Allowance
- pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months (you will need an exemption certificate from your GP); and
- receiving treatment in hospital.

Some people with specific health conditions will also be eligible for free prescriptions, such as epilepsy. You will need to ask for an exemption certificate from your GP. If you need regular prescriptions, it may work out cheaper to buy a yearly certificate. Talk to your doctor about what will work best for you.

6.6. Support for people on a low income

If you are on a low income you can apply for a Health Credit Certificate known as HC2 or HC3. This will give you reduced cost, or free dental and eye checks/treatment as well as prescription charges. This is dependent on your income and needs at the time you apply for support. A certificate can last from 6 months to 5 years depending on your circumstances.

To find out more, ask your GP, dentist or optician, or ask your PA to help you apply.

6.7. Health, Leisure and Fitness

Building physical activity into your day keeps your heart healthy, reduces your risk of serious illness and strengthens muscles and bones!

We sometimes hear from young people that they feel down and lonely, being active can also be a great way of reducing your stress levels and lifting your mood if you're feeling down. You can become a member at Uritas Youth Zone for £5.00 a year and attend their drop-in activity sessions for £0.50 a session. See here for more details.

[Become a Member | Uritas Youth Zone](#)

Fit & Active Barnet

We encourage all young people to take part in health, leisure and fitness activities. If you are 16 or 17 years old or a care leaver you are eligible to apply for a local leisure card called a 'Fit & Active Barnet (FAB) Carers Pass' as a concession. The pass is a FREE annual membership available to Barnet residents, giving access to a range of benefits across all five of the Barnet Leisure Centres and beyond, like:

- up to 50% discounts off activity price
- care leavers swim for ONLY £1
- access to a wide range of activities like badminton, street dance, football, gymnastics, tennis and more!
- access to courses and other member only activities and facilities.

You can apply for your FAB pass on better.org.uk.

If you live outside Barnet, your PA will assist in obtaining an equivalent card from the authority where you live. Depending on an assessment of need, we may pay for a hobby or fee for a club, if a leisure card is not available, provided you can demonstrate commitment to the activity.

Activities for young people in Barnet

There are a variety of things for young people to do in Barnet including sports, music, art, after school clubs, holiday schemes and the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme. Throughout the year, a range of exciting and challenging activities are offered for young people in Barnet. More information can be found on the [Barnet Youth Website](#).

6.8. Support with Drugs and Alcohol

Sometimes young people need support to help reduce or stop their use of drugs and alcohol. There are a range of local and national services that can help with this, which is different in each local area. If you need support, you can talk to your PA or doctor, who will help you to access the right service to meet your needs. Some services are listed below.

Change Grow Live (CGL)

This is a charity that provides drug and alcohol treatment and recovery. CGLs drug and alcohol service (YPDAS) offers support for young people who may be affected by drug or alcohol problems. They offer personalised services to meet your individual needs, and work across Barnet so that they can come and meet you at a venue which suits you. If you need support, you can request it on their [website](#).

Talk to Frank

Frank is free drug and alcohol service that provides local and telephone support. To find out about their counselling and treatment services in your area, you can use the [search tool](#) on the Talk to Frank website. You can also call their helpline for friendly, confidential advice on 0300 1236600.

6.9. Sexual health

The following sexual health services are available to young people living in Barnet:

- testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- HIV testing and diagnosis
- contraception
- health promotion
- sexual health outreach for young people

To find out details of the Barnet service locations, visit this [website](#). If you don't live in Barnet, you can find out details of your local services from your GP. Your PA can also help you look up your local services.



7. Having your say

7.1. Barnet on Point (#BOP)

#BOP is the Council for Looked After Children in Barnet. It is a group of young people aged 12–25 who are in care or have experienced care, who aim to represent the voice of young people in care, to raise ideas or concerns about how to improve services. The group meet regularly, participate in consultations, and research and deliver events to young people in care to gather their views and raise their voice. The group also attends Pan London Children in Care Council meetings and contributes to ongoing dialogue around corporate parenting both locally and nationally.

The group have monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of every month, 5.30-8pm at the Onwards and Upwards Centre. All young people in care or who are care leavers are invited to attend. As a young person who has experienced care, we would welcome your input and invite you to come along and get involved. There are opportunities for training, work, and to make positive change that will help other young people.

To find out more, please go to: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/young-people/coming-care/barnet-point-children-care-council>

7.2. Children in Care Survey

The children in care survey is carried out every year and gives children in care and care leavers a chance to share their views about their experience in care and provide input into improving services for you and all other children and young people in care. We like to gather your views and opinions so that we can tell decision makers what needs to improve and what is currently good within the service.

7.3. Corporate Parenting Officer's Group (CPOG)

This meeting takes place every quarter and is where the key services and partner agencies who support children in care and care leavers meet to discuss the work we are doing and progress against our Corporate Parenting Plan. At the meeting decisions are made about how we deliver services, young people's feedback is shared and issues are raised so that solutions can be

discussed. Young people are invited to attend once a year. If you would like to attend, please let your social worker or PA know.

7.4. What if I do not get the support I need?

Sometimes we may not be able to provide you with the support you feel you need, or we may not agree to provide you with a particular piece of funding or service you have requested.

There may be several reasons for this so it is important you understand the reasons for you not getting the support you feel you need.

Your PA will:

- record any decision made not to provide you with a service or funding and the reasons why; and
- tell you about the reasons for this decision and give you details of the complaints and appeals processes.

If you are unhappy about a decision, firstly you need to try to talk to your PA before making a complaint, as they may be able to help you understand more about why this decision has been made or why the support is not available.

7.5. Advocacy

The Council has a statutory duty to provide an advocacy service for children and young people aged 0-25 who are residents in the local borough of Barnet and are in care or receiving a leaving care service to support them to be able to express their wishes, views, secure their rights and represent their interests.

This may involve making a complaint or putting forward a representation for a change to be made in the service they receive or the placement they live in.

Barnet care leavers are currently able to access advocacy through two organisations who provide such support:

- Action for Children - who deliver our independent visitors scheme which has been extended to include advocacy for care leavers.

- Information on services within Barnet or in the area where you live can be obtained through the organisation [Coramvoice](#).

An advocate can help with understanding rights and entitlements, submitting a complaint, understanding the response and dealing with any issues that come up along the way.

7.6. Accessing your local authority care history

You can request to access your personal data and relevant supplementary information Barnet Council holds about you by submitting a subject access request (SAR Request). For information about how to make a SAR request please refer to our website: [Subject access request | Barnet Council](#)

7.7. Complaints

You are able to contact the Complaints Officer by:

- Email: FSComplaints@barnet.gov.uk
- online: www.barnet.gov.uk/complaints
- paper form – available from Onwards and Upwards
- telephone – 020 8359 7008
- in writing – Family Services Complaint Officer, Barnet Council, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale N11 1NP

If you want to tell us your views on policies or anything that relates to the support and services available or any ideas/innovations you may have to improve services, [write to us](#).

7.8. What if I want to give positive feedback?

If you want to let us know about something we have done well, you can send us an email to fscompliments@barnet.gov.uk or let your worker know directly. It is important that we hear about the good things too, so we can make sure we keep doing them!



8. Our Pledge

As Corporate Parents we want to support you to achieve the best in your childhood, adolescence and adulthood. As with all parents we know we will not always get things right but we pledge to do our best.

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A Pledge is a document which tells you what Barnet Children's Service will do for you during your time in care, and what we need from you.

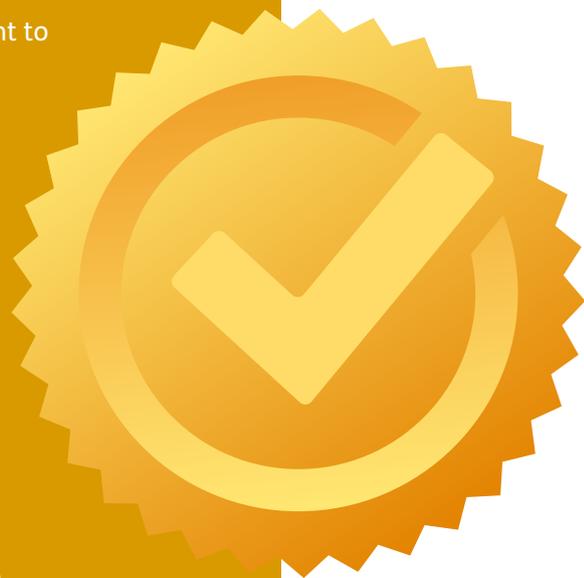
Barnet's Pledge was produced alongside our Children in Care Council and it includes '5 Priorities' which we were told was important to children and young people.

- a good education
- feeling a sense of belonging
- keeping healthy
- staying safe
- championing your needs

We, your Corporate Parents, pledge to:

- Support you to fulfil your dreams
- Be there for you, when you need us
- Support your mental and physical health
- Listen, communicate and make decisions together with you
- Support you to become independent and prepare for adulthood
- Celebrate you, your achievements, identity and culture

To find out more about each key priority and what services are available to you click on each area of the Pledge or ask your PA for a copy of the Pledge or view our [Corporate Parenting Strategy](#).



9. Useful information and contacts

If you need any help and support, you can directly contact:

- your personal advisor (make sure you have their number saved)
- a social worker in the Children in Care team on 020 8359 6001
- a social worker or personal advisor at Onwards and Upwards on 020 8359 6220
- an advisor within the Virtual School on 020 8359 4534

Support for care leavers

- Become: freephone advice line for care leavers. Call 0800 023 2033, Monday to Friday, 10.30am–5pm, or visit www.becomecharity.org.uk
- Capstone Care Leavers Trust: provides grants for care leavers aged 17–25. Visit www.capstonecareleaverstrust.org
- Rees: The Care Leavers' Foundation: gives advice, and financial and community support. Visit www.reesfoundation.org
- Sir William Boreman's Foundation: provides grants to help people under 25, who live in Greenwich and Lewisham, access education. Visit www.thedrapers.co.uk
- The Skinner's Company: provides grants and helps to access training. Visit www.skinner.org.uk
- The Spark Foundation: provides grants up to £600 for young people in care and care leavers. Visit www.sparkfoundation.org.uk
- Turn2us: helps people see what grants and benefits they can get. Visit www.turn2us.org.uk
- National Care Advisory Service (NCAS) Web: www.leavingcare.org The latest news and information on all issues relating to transitions from care and care leavers are available of the NCAS website.
- Benefits information Web: www.gov.uk The latest news and information on benefits will be available on this national website. You

can search for individual benefits and use the 'benefits calculator' interactive tool that can help you find out what benefits you may be entitled to.

Employment and education

- Drive Forward Foundation: helps care leavers to get into work. Visit <https://driveforwardfoundation.org/>
- Princes Trust: provides support for jobs, training and education. Visit www.england.nhs.uk/urgent-emergency-care
- The Unite Foundation scholarship covers accommodation costs and bills for up to three years of study for successful applicants. To find out more about the eligibility criteria and how to apply, visit: <https://thisisusatuni.org/unite-foundation-scholarship/>

Finance

- The Money House: helps young people learn budgeting skills. Visit www.mybnk.org

Health

- My Health London: Visit www.myhealth.london.nhs.uk for information about NHS services.
- NHS 111: 24-hour urgent care phone line on 111 (in emergency call 999). You can also visit www.nhs.uk to find urgent emergency care services
- Mind: mental health charity which offers advice and support. Visit www.mind.org.uk
- Samaritans: call the free 24-hour helpline on 116 123. Visit www.samaritans.org

Parenting

- Find your local children's centre in Barnet at <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/directories/childrens-centres>
- The range of support for Barnet parents and carers can be found at: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/children-and-families/support-parents-and-carers>

- A menu of Barnet support services can be found at: <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-help-children-young-people-and-families/child-and-family-early-help>
- For advice on all aspects of family life, from bonding with your new baby, dealing with tantrums, discipline and communicating, contact Family lives on 0808 800 2222 or email them for support on askus@familylives.org.uk. You can visit their website at: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/>

Housing

- Emergency repair contact information for Barnet Homes tenants: <https://thebarnetgroup.org/bh/repairs/>
- Information on the Right to Buy Scheme to purchase your council home. Visit: <https://www.gov.uk/right-to-buy-buying-your-council-home>

LGBTQ

- METRO: services to support young LGBT people. Visit www.metrocentreonline.org
- Mosaic LGTBQ advice and support visit www.mosaicyouth.org.uk

Immigration

- Refugee Council: support for refugees. Call 020 7346 1134, email mytime@refugeecouncil.org.uk or visit www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
- Migrant Children's Project: call 0207 636 8505, Tuesday to Thursday, 10am–12 noon, email mcpadvice@coramclc.org.uk or visit www.coram.org.uk
- Red Cross: support, advocacy and family-finding service. Visit www.redcross.org.uk
- Afghanistan and Central Asian Association: 24 Deptford Broadway, Deptford SE8 4PA. Email info@acaa.org.uk or visit <https://acaa.org.uk/>

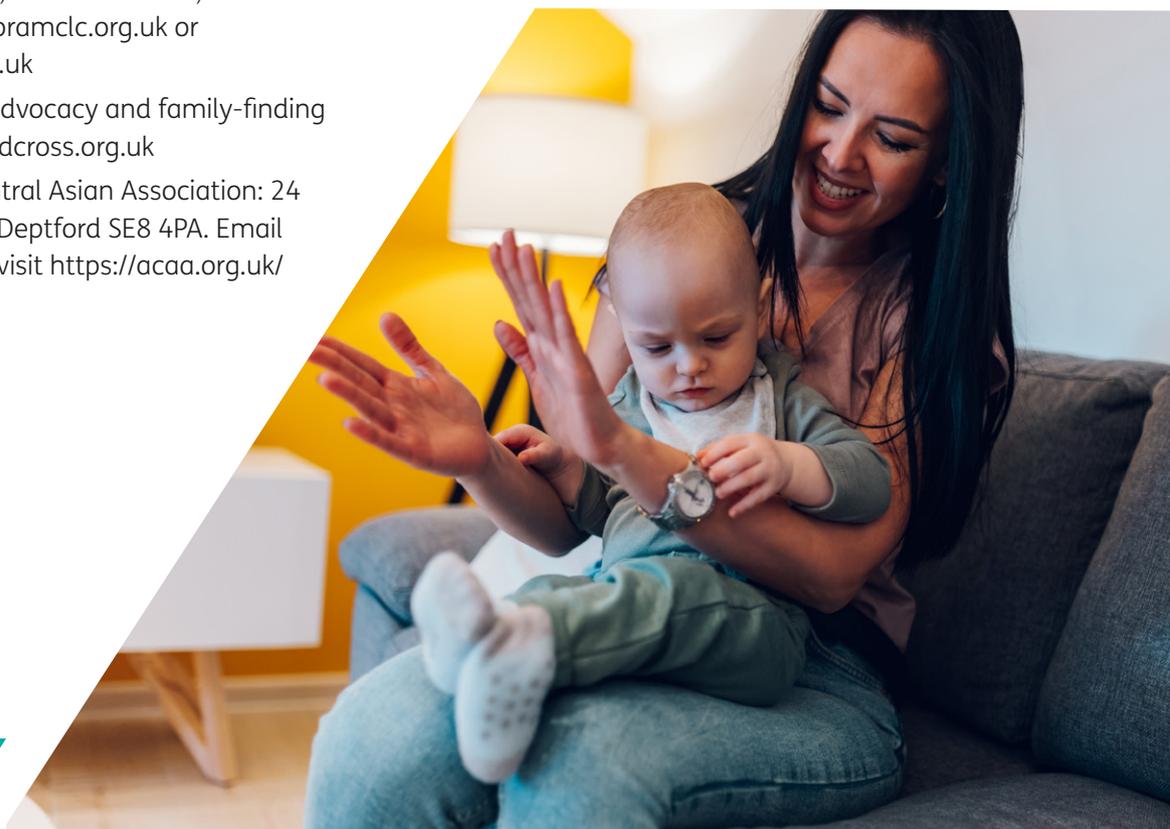
- Migrant Help: Free asylum helpline 0808 801 0503 – asylum guide translated into 15 languages; <https://www.migranhelpuk.org/Pages/Category/asylum>
- Refugee Action:– Help and advice for refugees and asylum seekers on issues, including the asylum process and how to access support
- [Leaving care support for migrant children and young people – factsheet](#)
- More [advice about immigration, asylum and nationality](#) – the migrant children's project

Call Asylum Support Application UK if you're an asylum seeker and can't support yourself financially and want to apply for asylum support.

- Asylum Support Application UK
- Telephone: 0808 801 0503
- Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm
- (24-hour service for emergencies)
- Find out about call charges

Call Children's Panel if you're a child in the UK on your own and applying for asylum.

- Children's Panel (England only)
- Telephone: 020 7346 1134
- Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm
- (limited service at other times)



Appendix 1 - Table of Allowances

2017-18 Allowance	16-17 year olds	Frequency	18+ year olds	Frequency
Subsistence	£67.20	Weekly	N/A	N/A
Birthday 16	£176.50	Once on birthday	N/A	N/A
Birthday 17	£176.50	Once on birthday	N/A	N/A
Birthday 18	N/A	N/A	£100.00	Once on birthday
Birthday 19-20	N/A	N/A	£30.00	Once on birthday
Birthday 21	N/A	N/A	£50.00	Once on birthday
Birthday 21-24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Clothing Allowance	£168.00	Twice a year	N/A	N/A
Council Tax support / arrears	N/A	N/A	-	Varies
Festival Allowance	£176.50	Annually	N/A	N/A
Passports	£72.50	Once	£72.50	Once
Birth Certificates	£46.00	Once	£46.00	Once
Travel Documents	£72.00	Once	£72.00	Once
Glasses	£0.00		0.00	
Outreach	-	Varies	-	Varies
Young People in secure settings	£10.00	Weekly	£10.00	Weekly
Leisure activities	-	Varies	-	Varies
Savings	-	Varies	-	Varies
Accommodation costs	-	Varies	-	Manager's discretion Varies
Setting Up Home Allowance	N/A	N/A	£2,000.00	One off
18+ in foster placement (Staying Put)	N/A	N/A	£181.00	Weekly
Travel while learning - TFL area	-	Varies	-	Varies
Travel while learning - outside london	-	Varies	-	Varies
University vacation	N/A	N/A	-	Varies
Graduation	N/A	N/A	£850.00	Once on graduation
HE Bursary	N/A	N/A	£2,000.00	Academic year
UASC 18+	N/A	N/A	£57.90	Weekly
UASC ARE 18+	N/A	N/A	£57.90	Manager's discretion
UASC temporary accommodation starter pack	N/A	N/A	£85.00	
Apprenticeships, benefits or low wages bridging	£57.90	Weekly	£57.90	Weekly
Apprenticeships/low wages top up	-	Varies	-	Varies
Crisis payments/financial support	-	Varies	-	Varies
Rent and Deposit loan	N/A	N/A	-	

2017-18 Allowance	16-17 year olds	Frequency	18+ year olds	Frequency
Moving costs	-	Varies	-	Manager's discretion: Once per care leaver Maximum of twice per academic year for those at university Other reasons considered, such as safety.
Citizenship applications	£0.00	Varies Manager's discretion (means tested) Legal fees: Vary	£0.00	
Indefinite Leave to Remain Applications	-	Assessment of Need	-	
Qualifying Young Person support	-	Assessment of Need	-	Assessment of Need
Other circumstances	-		-	Manager's discretion

