



Sheffield Local Offer for **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE**

This guide tells you what support you can expect from Sheffield City Council as you take your next steps to independence.

As Corporate Parents, we are delighted to share with you Sheffield's Local Offer for Care Leavers, setting out how we can support you to achieve your full potential.

We want you to have the stability and support you need to lead successful and fulfilling lives, and access to the opportunities and experiences that help you reach your goals. Moving into adulthood is never straightforward but we want you to know that we believe in you and will be here if times get tough.

Our Local Offer for Care Leavers will be continually developing as we strive to give you the best start possible to your adult life.



Cllr Jackie Drayton

Lead Member for
Children Young People
and Families



Jayne Ludlam

Executive Director of
People Services



John Mothersole

Chief Executive,
Sheffield City Council

Sheffield Local Offer for Children and Young People Leaving Care

Leaving care can be a worrying and challenging time for young people. This guide is designed to tell you what support you can expect from Sheffield City Council as you take your next steps to independence.

We want you to continue to feel safe and supported and know where or who to go to for advice and help on this journey. Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you wherever you are and whatever your situation. We will be by your side every step of the way, and will be there to pick you up if you fall down, or to celebrate with you when you reach your goals.

If you do not live in Sheffield, you will still be entitled to a Personal Advisor and financial support as outlined in the financial policy for care leavers. We can help you access support in your local area, however some support outlined in the Local Offer for Children and Young People Leaving Care may not be available outside Sheffield.

Local care leavers have helped make this leaflet. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we offer are what you need.

Relevant to you?

A Care Leaver is a Young Person aged between 16 and 25 who has previously been in care. The type of support we can offer you will depend on when and for how long you were in care, for further information please contact the leaving care service.

“The Leaving Care Service gave me the opportunity to have a positive future”

Advice and Support from a Personal Advisor (PA)

Your personal advisor will be there to support you when you leave care. You should meet them when you are 16 and you will be able to ask them for support until you are 25. Once you reach 16 your PA will contact you within two weeks to arrange to meet you. We will try and make sure you have the same PA during your time with the service, but if this does need to change we'll let you know as soon as we can.

Your personal advisor is there to:

- help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support as you leave care

- help you with access to:-
 - o housing,
 - o education,
 - o employment,
 - o training,
 - o health services and,
 - o financial support
- talk to you about what support you need and record this in your pathway plan

Pathway Plan

A pathway plan is completed following an assessment of all your skills, it looks at what your ambitions are for independent living and your future plans. It details any areas where you may need support to develop skills that will help you achieve your goals, and what help you will receive from the Leaving Care Service.

A pathway plan will be in place and regularly reviewed up until you turn 21; at which stage you can choose whether you need a pathway plan to help you plan your future.

The amount of support that you receive from your personal advisor will depend on what you want and your circumstances.

“My personal advisor prepared me for living independently”

Health, Wellbeing and Staying Safe

We want you to be healthy and stay safe. To help you do this, your personal advisor can advise and support you with:

- Discounted access to leisure activities in the city
- Joining a mountain biking group for care leavers starting in Spring 2019
- Information on healthy living
- Information on getting help to pay for prescriptions
- Registering with a GP/Dentist/Optician
- Moving from children’s to adult mental health services
- Accessing other mental health support in your area
- Information about counselling services that are available locally
- Information about health drop-in centres; sexual health clinics, or other, testing/ screening facilities

- Pregnancy and parenting help and support
- Access support with substance misuse
- Help with abusive situations
- Joining an emotional wellbeing programme
- Supporting you to access local leisure activities

When you are approaching 18, you will be given a 'care leaver health summary'. This contains important information about:

- What illnesses you had as a child,
- Immunisations you've had and
- Any health issues you may have

This is important information for your future health care. You can speak to your PA about how you are feeling or anything you need help with. They are there for you and want to support you.

“My personal advisor made sure I was financially supported and she helped me sort out accommodation to stay at”

Aspirations

We are also trying to:

- Offer care leavers help with their communication needs if necessary

Relationships

Your personal advisor will be your main link to the Leaving Care Service and can continue to support you up until you are 25, they will also help you with other relationships as you become an adult:

- A Social Worker will continue to support you until you turn 18 if you remain in care
- We will support you to regain or maintain contact with people who are special to you
- We will help you develop social networks
- We will work with adult social care for care leavers with disabilities
- We will agree with you how often you would like contact from us
- If you're at university we will invite you to a vacation group with other Sheffield care leavers attending university

- We will continue to support you to access your cultural heritage
- We will offer weekly drop in sessions alongside academic holiday and weekend activities to develop your networks, help you socialise as well as developing mentoring and Young Person Leadership skills if this is what you want
- We will help Care leavers who identify LGBT and access to SAYit and any other relevant support
- We will help care leavers who are asylum seekers to access a drop in service at Victoria Hall
- We will help you to understand your time in care and build relationships to support your future
- Should you become parents we will offer parenting skills and support
- On your 18th birthday we will get you a personalised birthday cake to celebrate you becoming an adult

Your relationship with the Leaving Care service will be an important source of support during your move to living on your own. Consultation with care leavers has shown us our communication with you has not been good enough and needs to improve. This guidance should help make clear what you can expect from the service, but we are also making a commitment to explore other ways of making sure you know what is happening.

“The support received meant that I was less stressed and anxious, which meant I could focus on my studies”

Education, Employment and Training

Sheffield City Council has the ambition that every child and young person in and leaving care achieves their full potential. We will work hard on your behalf to secure and promote opportunities that meet your needs.

Your personal advisor will support you to apply for the range of services on offer:

- Apprenticeships within the council and with other organisations within the city
- Opportunities to gain work experience, and volunteering in a variety of roles
- Practical guidance, along with financial support for young people wanting to attend university
- Project Apollo - a scheme designed to support care leavers who are not engaged in education, employment or training gain skills and/or employment

- Sheffield Futures offer information, advice and guidance in relation to all aspects of employment and training and can help you with developing employability skills such as C.V. writing, applying for jobs and details of training courses and other opportunities
- Help you to access support from university outreach workers
- If you start an apprenticeship you are entitled to a £1000 bursary

“I am in a much better place because of my personal advisor’s hard work and commitment”

Your Home

We will help you up until the age of 25 to access suitable social housing. Your PA will support you to set up home and visit you at your accommodation if you want, to check that you are OK.

Some of the accommodation options available:

- Council tenancy - when you are ready to manage a tenancy, as a care leaver you will receive **priority status** for suitable social housing and we work with housing colleagues to support you
- Staying Put - remain living with your foster carer past the age of 18 up to the age of 21
- Supported accommodation/semi-independent living - This is accommodation where you are provided with independent accommodation but are able to get extra help and support from staff
- Supported lodgings - You can choose to rent a room in a house of a ‘host’ family. Similar to Staying Put, this means that you would be a lodger in the home
- Trainer flats - the opportunity to practice independent living skills in a property with support
- Shared accommodation - You will usually get the 1-bed self-contained local housing allowance rate if you’re a care leaver under the age of 22
- Private accommodation - If you choose to enter privately rented accommodation, we will offer you advice and support
- If you are at university we will help you secure accommodation during holiday periods
- We will also support you to do the Resettlement Passport tenancy ready course to give you the best chance of maintaining a tenancy

- Shared Lives - If you need extra support with independent living, Shared Lives provides trained carers who offer extra help and support in different ways to meet specific needs

If you are a tenant in a council property we also provide housing support clinics to support your tenancy. We can also pre-register you for council properties in the lead up to your 18th birthday, if that is what is best suited to your needs.

Money Matters

Leaving care and transitioning to independent living will bring with it many challenges; one of these will be managing your own money. Your personal advisor will be able to support you manage your finances including, learning to budget, managing an effective budget, opening a savings account and claiming any benefits that you are entitled to. Dependent on your circumstances, the Leaving Care Service are able to offer varying additional financial support:

- Setting up home allowance of £2000, plus, where you are eligible, support from the Local Assistance Scheme to purchase white goods and furniture
- The Money for Life Project delivered by Sheffield Futures provides advice and support on managing finances, including budgeting, banking, debt advice.
- Support to prevent housing arrears
- Council tax reduction scheme - care leavers will be supported to access all schemes aimed at reducing council tax, where that is appropriate
- We have close links with the Department for Work and Pensions (Job Centre) so are able to support you to deal with benefits problems and sanctions.
- Income maintenance if you are living independently but are too young to claim benefits
- We can support with debt advice and are linked with the Illegal Moneylending Team if you are in debt to loan sharks
- Your personal advisor can share with you the finance policy for care leavers

“I am in a much better place because of my personal advisor’s hard work and commitment”

Aspirations

We are also trying to secure travel subsidies that will enable to you access public transport at a discounted rate.

Getting my Voice Heard

As a care leaver your experiences are the best to help us shape the services that you and future care leavers need. We want to hear from you about your experiences and to help us understand what we can do, as corporate parents, to continually develop services.

We want you to feel part of society; and to ensure that you have opportunities to ensure that your voice is heard, there are some things we can help you with:

- Supporting you to enrol on the electoral register, so that you can vote
- Providing information about groups and activities in your area that are of interest to you
- Sheffield Care Leavers' Union - an independent group of care leavers supporting the voice of care leavers in the city, contact them to have your say or join.
- You can access an independent advocate who will support you get your voice heard

“My personal advisor had faith and belief in me and supported me through difficult times”

You contact us with feedback, good or bad, at:
leavingcareservice@sheffield.gov.uk

The office is based in Sheffield City Centre at
Star House, 43 Division Street, S1 4GE

Tel. 0114 203 9060

There is always a duty worker available to talk to you on the above number 8.45am to 5.00pm Monday - Friday or in person at Star House if your allocated worker is unavailable.

Eligible Young Person

(Young people aged 16 or 17 who have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and were in care on their 16th birthday and who are still in care)

- A personal advisor
- A needs assessment
- A pathway plan
- All the care and support they normally receive until they leave care

Relevant Young Person

(Young people aged 16 or 17 who have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who have left care)

- A personal advisor
- A needs assessment
- A pathway plan
- Suitable accommodation and maintenance
- Financial support to meet education, employment and training needs (see financial policy for care leavers)

Former Relevant Young Person

(Young people aged 18-25 who have been 'Eligible' or 'Relevant' young people)

- A personal advisor
- A needs assessment
- A pathway plan
- Assistance with education, employment and training
- Suitable accommodation
- Help with living costs (see financial policy for care leavers)

Qualifying Young Person

(Any young person aged between 16 and 25 who has left care but who was in care on or after their 16th birthday and had spent less than 13 weeks in care since the age of 14)

- Advice and support if needed

Useful Organisations

Safety, Happiness & Health and wellbeing

The Corner	Supports young people up to 18 with substance misuse problems Tel. 0114 275 2051 thecorner.sheffield@cgl.org.uk
Door 43 @ Sheffield Futures	Emotional, mental and sexual health support up to age 25 Tel. 0114 201 2800
Sexual Health Sheffield	Signpost you to places you can access advice and guidance on contraception, STI screening and pregnancy choices. http://www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk/
Adult Drug and Alcohol Services	Tel. 0114 305 0500
Health Visitors Service	Support young parents and signpost to further support and guidance
Sheffield Helpline for Mental Health	Tel. 0808 801 0440
Samaritans	Tel 116 123 www.samaritans.org.uk
Mind	Tel. 0114 258 4489 www.sheffieldmind.co.uk
LGBT Foundation	Tel. 0345 330 3030 https://lgbt.foundation/
SAYit	Supporting LGBT sexual health in Sheffield Tel. 0114 241 2728 http://sayit.org.uk/

Your Home contacts

Council Housing Service **Tel. 0114 293 0000**

Money Matters contacts

Stop Loan Sharks hotline **Tel. 0300 555 2222**

Job Seeker Allowance **Tel. 0800 055 6688**
www.direct.gov.uk/jsaonline

Citizens Advice Bureau They can tell you about specialist resources in your area that are not on this list, they also offer specialist debt counselling

Tel. 03444 113 111
[www.citizensadvicesheffield.org.uk /](http://www.citizensadvicesheffield.org.uk/)
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Getting my voice heard contacts

Sheffield Advocacy Service **Tel. 0114 228 8553**

Sheffield Care Leavers' Union www.sclu.life

Care Leavers' Association **Tel. 0161 236 1980**
info@careleavers.com
www.careleavers.com

Action for Children **Tel. 01635 873 739**
(You'll have to pay your usual rate for this call)

National Care Advisory Service (NCAC) **Tel. 020 7336 4846**
www.leavingcare.org

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please contact 0114 203 9060

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www.sheffield.gov.uk



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