



This leaflet tells you about the services and the support available to you as a care leaver in Bristol. We know that moving from care to living independently is a big change. We want to help you prepare for independence at a pace that is right for you and make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where to go for advice and help.

If you have additional needs, we will work with you to understand your views and give you information in a way that meets your needs. This could mean using Makaton, Picture Exchange Communication (PEC) or Sign Language (BSL).

Bristol has a Pledge to children in care and care Leavers. Our Pledge is a promise made by Bristol City Council and our partners to all children in care and care leavers. Bristol has also signed up to the Care Leavers Charter which was developed with care leavers from around the UK. The promises and principles included in the Pledge and Charter guide the development of our Local Offer for care leavers. You can read the Pledge and the Charter here: www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/plans-and-policy-for-children-in-or-leaving-care

We work closely with local care leavers to continually improve our Local Offer and to make sure that the information and activities we offer meet your needs and are of interest to you. We really value your input, so please get in touch with your personal adviser if you would like to get involved, or call the Duty Team on 0117 353 4176.

To be able to get the support included in this leaflet, you need to have been in care for at least 13 weeks (or periods of time amounting to 13 weeks) which began after age 14 and included some time after your 16th birthday. If you are not sure if you qualify for support please ask your personal adviser.

This leaflet and more information about what is available to you and what your entitlements is available online here: www.rvoice.co.uk

Advice and Support from a Personal Adviser or named Social Worker from the Preparing for Adulthood service

We will ensure you have a named personal adviser or social worker throughout your time as a care leaver. We know that young people will stop needing support at different points once they become an adult. Once you turn 21 you will continue to receive support and advice from your personal advisor if you need it. This may include support for a short period or for a longer period of time depending on what you need. This applies until you are 25. Your personal adviser is there to help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care.

If you have additional needs and need on-going support, we will work with you to link you in with adult services'.

More information about your entitlement to support from a personal adviser is available online here: www.rvoice.co.uk

Your Pathway Plan

Your Pathway Plan is a document developed with you while you are still in care to plan for the time when you leave care. You should be given a copy of your plan and feel that it is yours. You and your personal adviser will talk about what support you need and record this information in your pathway plan. Your personal adviser will also review your plan with you regularly and include time for you to think about any support you may need when you are no longer a care leaver.

Leaving care before you are 18

You can stay in care until you are 18, unless a return to your family is the right thing for you. Most young people still live at home with their families at this age. If you choose to leave before you are 18 and require housing we will work with Housing Services to ensure you have accommodation that meets your needs and will guide you through the support available to you in our Local Offer.

If you have additional needs we will work with you to ensure that your care and housing needs are met.

“Staying Put” with your former Foster Carer

If this is what you and your foster carer want, we will support you to remain with your foster carer under what is called a ‘Staying Put’ arrangement. This can last until you are age 21.

Health and Wellbeing

We want you to be as healthy as possible and know that independent living can include some challenges in terms of accessing health care and staying healthy. Below are some of the ways that your personal adviser can support you to stay healthy and look after yourself:

- Support you to register with a Doctor
- Give you information on getting help to pay for prescriptions, glasses and dental health costs
- Give you help with transport costs when attending health appointments
- Give you information about counselling services that are available locally, and support you to move from children’s services to adult services if you need to
- Give you information about health drop-in centres
- Your Child Looked After Nurse (CLAN) will work with you to develop a ‘health passport’ containing key information from your childhood (for example, when and if you have had immunisations) and your current health needs
- Give you information about exceptional clothing payments if you are in need of extra money for clothes such as a winter coat, shoes, warm clothing or maternity clothing

Education, Training and Employment

We hold high aspirations for you and want you to succeed. We will support you to find an education, employment or training opportunity that’s right for you. We will ask you how you are doing and be ready to celebrate your achievements with you. We will offer you the following:

- Information about opportunities for work experience, traineeships, apprenticeships, pre-engagement courses, voluntary opportunities and employment
- Support you to find relevant work experience where possible. We will help you with transport and lunch costs for work experience placements
- Information about opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and employment within the council, and will guarantee you an interview. You will get an extra £25 a week if you are doing an apprenticeship with the council. You are entitled to apply for any job advertised as internal, or allocated through ‘redeployment’ at Bristol City Council if you meet the essential criteria
- Careers information such as help to develop your CV, advice about job interviews, including what you might wear
- Support to buy tools, equipment, essential clothing, and books

- We will encourage you to work through the national ASDAN Living Independently Award, to help you gain skills for independent living
- If you have additional needs we will work with you to support you to access learning opportunities and increase your independence skills
- We will provide support to apply to university – identifying which to apply to, help with your personal statement, attending interviews and applicant days, and applying to student finance (for tuition fees and maintenance loans)
- We will provide a grant of £2,000 per year to each care leaver at university and support you with accommodation costs during term time and holidays
- Where possible we will connect you with your university's Welfare Officer before you start university but we can also provide support if you have any problems whilst you're at university
- We will help you get references and support you with your the next steps. If things don't work out, we will support you to try again.

You can contact The HOPE Virtual School directly for more information and guidance on education:
The HOPE: www.bristol.gov.uk/web/the-hope/home

For information on employment, work experience, traineeships, volunteering, training and pre-engagement courses you can contact the Post 16 Participation Team: Post16Participation@bristol.gov.uk

Phone number 0117 352 5750

Managing Money and Financial Support

We will try to help you financially and work with you while you are a care leaver to manage your money. This will include a range of practical and financial support and access to your savings:

- You can apply for up to 100% relief from council tax until your 25th birthday if you remain living in Bristol. You still need to register for Council Tax but indicate the care leaver discount on the form. More information is online here: www.bristol.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-and-exemptions
- We will support you to open a bank account and give you information on accessing your Junior ISA or Child Trust Fund if you have one
- We will support you to gain important identity documents such as a passport, and/ or driving license
- We will support you to get your National Insurance number

Housing

Your personal adviser and Housing Services will help you find somewhere safe and suitable to live. This might include:

- Working with Housing Options to come up with housing options for you
- Advice about tenancies and avoiding rent arrears, paying bills and budgeting
- Helping you to claim your council tax exemption. You still need to register for Council Tax but you can indicate you meet the exemption criteria on the form. More information is online here: www.bristol.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-and-exemptions
- Help to claim housing benefits or universal credit
- Helping make sure your housing needs are met if you are a disabled young person.
- Practical support for moving into and furnishing your home
- Support if you have a housing crisis or are faced with losing a tenancy
- Visits from your personal adviser once you have moved in to ensure you have settled and have everything you need
- You are entitled to a grant of up to £2,000 when you set up your own home, the amount will depend on your circumstances

Supported to be a Parent

If you are a young parent or if you are expecting a baby, we will support you to do the best for them;

- Your GP and midwife can talk to you about the health services available to you
- Your personal adviser can give you information about financial support and schemes in place to support you
- We will help you arrange childcare, if this is what you want

Relationships

As well as support from a personal adviser, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, such as through:

- Help to maintain or regain contact with people special to you or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers, independent visitors or social workers
- Support to re-connect with family where it is in your best interests
- Providing information on groups and clubs you might want to join, and schemes and competitions you can enter
- Inviting you to our regular group events and holiday activities where you can keep in touch with other care leavers
- We will give you a financial gift at birthdays and Christmas, or other celebrations up to the age of 21

Your Rights

You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. You have a right to see all information about you; this includes your files from when you were in care.

You have a right to an independent advocate if you want to challenge decisions about the support we give you, information is available here: www.youngpeople.nyas.net/index.php/about-us/advocacy

You have a right to let us know how you feel about the services you are receiving or about progress with your pathway plan for example. You can give feedback or make a complaint. Please contact the Care Leaver Ambassador at Bristol City Council or use the information online here: www.bristol.gov.uk/complaints-and-feedback

We want our care leavers to be active members of society. We will encourage and help you to enrol on the Electoral Register so that you can vote in elections.

Our Local Offer is reviewed annually and we will encourage you to have a say in what support is available through the Care Leavers Group but you can also share your views with your personal adviser or the Care Leaver Ambassador at any time, or by coming to a regular supper club.

Further Information

Bristol City Council works with a range of organisations in Bristol to deliver this Local Offer. More information about how to access the support included here is available on the webpage below, where there are also links to information about services offered to you by other organisations in Bristol: www.rvoice.co.uk

You can also contact your personal adviser directly or call the Team Phone Number: **0117 353 4176**

Emergency Duty Team (out of hours): **01454 615 165**

