

LOCAL OFFER

FOR BRISTOL CARE LEAVERS

As Corporate Parents we are committed to doing everything we can to make sure you are set up for life. We strive to be ambitious for all our care leavers and we work alongside “[Community](#)” our care leaver participation group to keep our local offer under review so that we can be responsive to your changing needs. We know that preparing for and leaving care can be a difficult time and we want you to know that we are here when you need us.

This leaflet summarises the key messages in our local offer. For our full offer, you can scan the QR code to take you to our care leaver App or visit the website www.gcsw.co.uk.



Your entitlements and our offer will vary depending on your age and care leaver status. If you are unsure you can speak to your personal adviser or a duty worker on 0800 6940168. Many of these entitlements (especially the financial ones) are available to former relevant care leavers up to their 21st birthday. There is a separate leaflet summarising our offer if you are a [Qualifying](#) care leaver or the full Qualifying Offer can be found alongside our [21+ offer](#) on the website or care leaver app.

Support and planning.

- You will be invited to be involved in creating your pathway plan when you turn 16, which will be updated every six months or when there is a big change in your life.
- You will be allocated a personal adviser when you are 17 who can support you until you are 21. Once you turn 21 we can still access support for as long as you need it through our [21+ service](#).

Financial entitlements: *(available to former relevant care leavers up to and including their 21st birthday).*

- £25 birthday voucher*
- £25 festival voucher * (you can request this at either Christmas, Eid; Hanukah; Diwali)
- Setting up home grant of £2000 (or £3000 if you turned 18 after 1 April 2023).
- Cost of one adult passport
- Cost of a birth certificate
- Cost of a provisional driving licence
- Cost of one driving theory test.
- Cost of your first television licence
- You will be exempt from paying council tax until you are 25 if you live in Bristol (you must complete an application form to get this entitlement).
- When you turn 18 if you have made your benefit application on time we will pay you a personal allowance of £70 a week (up to a maximum of six weeks) until your first benefit payment is received. If the application is not made you will be offered a £15 supermarket voucher and £10 added onto your electricity or gas account (up to a maximum of 4 weeks) to give you chance to make the application.

- Financial support may be offered if you lose your employment or your benefits are sanctioned please discuss this with your personal adviser or the duty worker.

* vouchers are usually Amazon or Love 2 shop others can be requested.

Preparing to leave care:

We want to support you to be as prepared as you can be when you turn eighteen and start living more independently. Our support can include:

- Help to apply for your national insurance letter and identification e.g., passport and a provisional driving licence and to set up a bank account.
- Help to complete your Universal Credit six weeks before you turn 18.
- Making an application on your behalf for supported accommodation. This needs to be done when you are 17½ if you are not going to be staying put or living with family and friends when you turn 18.
- Help to register with your local GP.
- Making a referral to adult social care (from 14 years old) if we think you will need extra support once you turn 18. You will need to consent to this referral.

Relationships:

We understand the importance of making and maintaining family and friendships links and connections and we can offer help in the following ways:

- To reconnect with the people that are important to you.
- Link you to the befriender service to help you develop confidence in accessing community support, groups, or hobbies.
- With travel costs for up to three visits a year to family and friends in the UK. These visits must be discussed with your personal adviser and booked in advance. It will be expected that you travel on the most cost-efficient transport e.g., coach.
- Support to understand your journey into and through care. This can include life story conversations or [access to your records](#).
- Opportunities to connect with other care experienced young people through our [social events](#), groups, and activities.

Work and learning entitlements:

We hold high aspirations for you and want you to succeed. We will support you to find a work or learning opportunity that's right for you and will be ready to celebrate your achievements with you. We can support you with:

- Priority access to [work experience](#) opportunities within Bristol City Council.
- Guaranteed interview for a [Bristol City Council job](#) if you meet the essential criteria and tick on the application form that you are a care leaver.
- If you undertake an apprenticeship with Bristol City Council, you will receive the £3,000 care leaver bursary from the government. We will also give you £25 per week and top up your salary to the National Minimum Wage.
- If you are aged 16-19 and in full time education you may be entitled to a £1,200 [bursary](#) from your school, college, or training provider.

- We will provide an Education Grant* of £2,000 per academic year if you are studying an access to university course and you are not entitled to benefits during this period of study.
- We will provide an Education Grant* of £4,000 per academic year (up to a maximum of four years) if you are studying a foundation or undergraduate degree to support you with accommodation costs. Financial support for holiday accommodation will be offered to both qualifying and former relevant young people if university accommodation is term time only. Please discuss with your personal adviser in advance.
- We will provide an Education Grant* of £2,000 per academic year (up to a maximum of two years) if you are studying a Post graduate masters / PHD study **
- Education Grants are available for other courses, you can speak to your personal adviser or the duty service if you would like to discuss help with funding a course.
- We will support you to get to and from university with your belongings and will provide you with a starter pack at the start the autumn term. This will include, pots, pans, crockery, bedding etc to set you up in your new accommodation.
- When you complete your university course we will pay for your graduation cap and gown and the basic photograph package to capture memories of your special day.

** Education grants are available to former relevant care leavers if your course starts before your 25th birthday. Grant will be pro rata for part time courses.*

*** this is available for young people who have been on the new Education Grant offer introduced in September 2020.*

Travel:

- If you are aged between 18-21 and live in the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority or North Somerset Council region you can apply for a [WESTpass](#). This will entitle you to free bus travel until the end of March 2025, or until your 22nd birthday (whichever comes first).

Health and wellbeing:

We want you to be as healthy as possible and know that this can be challenging when you're living independently. Below are some of the ways that your personal adviser can support you to stay healthy and look after yourself:

- You will be given a [summary](#) of your health history when you turn 18 which is known as a 'health passport'.
- The Integrated Care Board (ICB) offers [free prescriptions](#) to eligible care leavers aged 18 until their 25th birthday. You can find details of eligibility and the application form on the care leaver app.
- Free membership to Bristol City Council [Everyone Active gyms](#).
- You can also get [50% off a Pure Gym](#) membership through the Care Leaver Covenant.

Using your voice:

We want to hear from you to help shape the service we offer. If you help us with consultation, interviews, or other engagement activities you will be paid in the form of vouchers at a rate of **£10 p/hr**. Ways to get involved and have your voice heard include:

- Opportunity to join [Community](#) Participation group or Corporate Parenting [Shadow Board](#).
- You have a right to an independent advocate if you want to challenge decisions about the support we give you, information can be found at [Reconstruct Advocacy Service](#).

- You have the right to request [access to the records](#) that we hold about you.

Preparing for or being a parent:

If you are a parent or if you are expecting a baby, we will support you to do the best for them. Support can include:

- Review your pathway plan with you to make sure we give you all the support you need and make a plan for the next steps, including any key dates or appointments that you might want support to attend.
- Introducing you to universal support e.g., family hubs, children's centre
- Referral to family nurse partnership* for support.
- Advice about applying for a Sure Start maternity grant or Healthy Start scheme.
- We will give you a hamper of goodies to celebrate the arrival of your new baby.

** For first time Mums up to the age of 20.*

Young people seeking asylum:

Bristol is a City of Sanctuary and we will do our best to support you as a care leaver through your asylum claim. Support we can offer includes:

- Complete a triple pathway plan with you, to make a short-term plan whilst your claim is being considered and medium / longer term plans should you be given permission to remain or if you were to return to your country of origin.
- We will provide you with a personal allowance of £70 per week until your asylum claim is completed and you have recourse to public funds (and are allowed to apply for Universal Credit) or you become Appeals Right Exhausted.
- We will provide and pay for your accommodation until you have recourse to public funds or you become Appeals Right Exhausted. It is expected that this accommodation will be within the Youth Housing Pathway or one of our specially commissioned homes for young people seeking asylum.
- We will pay for your first UK Passport and provisional UK Driving Licence.
- Help at the ARC– Asylum Seeker and Refugee Clinic with your feelings, emotions, and experiences.

Custody entitlements:

We will continue to offer you the support of a personal adviser up to the age of 25, who will visit you to review your pathway plan and prepare for your release from custody. For young people who engage in this support you will be offered the following financial support:

- £40 per month so that you can pay for food and toiletries.
- A £50 annual clothing allowance (this is not offered as cash but clothes that you request will be ordered and sent to you).
- £50 on release from custody for initial expenses (this is offered once per sentence and is not available if you are recalled to custody).
- Financial support in the form of a £15 supermarket voucher and £45 cash each week (up to a maximum of six weeks) following release from custody to allow you to make a fresh benefit claim and receive your first payment.

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