



## Our offer for care leavers aged 21 and over.

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 and that there are lots of ways that you can reach out for support.

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](http://www.gcsw.co.uk).



## Support and planning.

- Depending on your care leaver status you may have been invited to be involved in creating your [digital pathway plan](#) when you turned 16, which was updated every six months or when there was a big change in your life. Now that you have turned 21, support will still be available to you, although this will be offered differently and you may not need or want a pathway plan.
- Our new 21+ service is run from our HUB in Orange Street, and you can access advice, support or just pop in for a chat and a cup of tea anytime during office hours. A duty personal adviser is available and there is a monthly timetable of social events and partner agency drop-in sessions available on the app. If you are at university, in custody or need some short term focussed work you can be allocated a named personal adviser.
- Please give us a call (0800 6940168) or drop in if you want to keep in touch, we would love to see you and hear about what is happening for you.

## Financial entitlements:

- You can still access your 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 \*

\* this is available if you did not access this entitlement before turning 21.

- 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.
- Support to access a local foodbank

## Relationships:

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

- To reconnect with the people that are important to you.
- With travel costs for up to three visits a year to family and friends in the UK up to the age of 25. These visits must be discussed and booked in advance through the Hub. It will be expected that you travel on the most cost-efficient form of 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.
- Reconstruct offer [independent visitors](#) who can spend time with you to visit new places, try activities, learn independence skills or be a listening ear or role model \*\*.

*\*\* Independent visitors are available to care leavers up to the age of 25 who did not receive this service as a child in care*

## Housing:

We want you to find housing and a home that best suits your needs, where you can feel safe and a sense of belonging. We can support with:

- Helping you to understand your housing options (e.g., supported accommodation or gaining your own tenancy through social or private housing) to agree the right one for you.
- Priority banding (Band 1) on Home Choice (Bristol's social housing list) as soon as you have been assessed as being ready for independence in your pathway plan.
- Advice and support to prepare for semi or independent living. This can include [independence training groups](#), advice about tenancies, how to avoid rent arrears, how to pay bills and budget.
- Help to claim your council tax exemption (if you live in Bristol), housing benefit or universal credit and support to apply for grants for essential items such as white goods.
- Once you are ready to move you can access your setting up home grant of £2000 (or £3000 if you turned 18 after 1 April 2023) to help furnish your new home.
- Our community skills team can offer support to help you move and store personal belongings, measure and put up curtains or blinds, measure and lay carpets, or offer advice on decorating, DIY and recycling.
- You can request a visit from a Hub worker once you have moved in to ensure you have settled and have everything you need.
- Sometimes things don't go as planned and we can offer support if you have a housing crisis or are faced with losing your tenancy. If you move to temporary accommodation we can

provide a hamper which will include, pots, pans, crockery, bedding etc so that you don't have to use your setting up home grant until you are in your own accommodation.

### 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. We can support with:

- Information about opportunities for work and learning.
- 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.
- Support in the form of a £50 [One4all](#) gift voucher is available if you need support to buy interview clothing.
- 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.
- We can provide small education grants. You can speak to your personal adviser or the duty service if you would like to discuss help with funding a course, support to buy tools, equipment or essential clothing or books.
- You can contact [The HOPE Virtual School](#) directly for more information and guidance on education: 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](mailto:Post16Participation@bristol.gov.uk). Phone number 0117 352 5750

### University:

Applying to university can feel like a big decision and it can be daunting. This may be the first time that you have thought about moving away from Bristol. We can support with:

- Comparing the different university offers, attending open days, helping you write your personal statement, applying for student finance and contacting the student support service.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 ~~
- A named personal adviser throughout your time at university and we will support you to get to and from your accommodation with your belongings.

- A starter pack in your first year which will include, pots, pans, crockery, bedding etc to set you up in your new accommodation.
- Your graduation ceremony and 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. The grant will be pro rata for part time courses.*

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

### Travel:

- If you are aged between 18-26 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 2026, or until your 26<sup>th</sup> 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 should have been given a [summary](#) of your health history when you turned 18 which is known as a 'health passport'.
- Help you register with a GP and give you information on local services that offer help with emotional and mental wellbeing or sexual health.
- The Integrated Care Board (ICB) offers [free prescriptions](#) to eligible care leavers aged 18 until their 25<sup>th</sup> 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](#), Lex Leisure who operate Hengrove Park Leisure Centre and ALM who operate Brunel Fitness Centre.
- 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 our participation group which young people named [Community](#).
- 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 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 and providing advice about targeted support available e.g., parenting programmes.
- Attend our monthly nurture group for parents and expecting parents called “Time for You”.
- 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.
- Support in the form of a £50 [One4all](#) gift voucher is available to buy maternity clothes. Please speak to your personal adviser or the duty worker to discuss this.

### 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 Housing Pathway or one of our specially commissioned homes for young people seeking asylum.
- We will pay for your first travel document and provisional UK Driving Licence.
- Help at the ARC– Asylum Seeker and Refugee Clinic with your feelings, emotions, and experiences.
- We will pay for your citizenship ceremony.

### 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 £25 supermarket voucher and £10 on either gas or electricity **or** a £10 contribution to your service charge each week (up to a maximum of six

weeks) following release from custody whilst you are waiting to receive your new benefit payment.

**Published July 2025.**