Royal Borough of Greenwich

Your future Your journey

Royal Greenwich Local Offer for Care Leavers 2026







Supporting you every step of the way

Leaving care is a big milestone, and we're here to help you build the future you want.

Whether you're looking for somewhere to live, applying for university, starting work, managing your money, looking after your wellbeing, or simply need advice, support is available to you until the age of 25.

You don't have to do this on your own.

- Housing and accommodation
- Health and wellbeing
- Education, training and work
- Advice and support
- Money and finances

ROYAL borough of GREENWICH

A Message About Your Local Offer

This Local Offer is here to help you as you move towards independence and adulthood. It sets out the support, opportunities and advice available to you as a care leaver in Royal Greenwich, so you know where to turn when you need help, guidance or someone to talk to.

We know that everyone's journey is different. Whether you're thinking about where to live, looking for a job, studying, managing your money, looking after your wellbeing or planning for your future, we want you to have access to the right support at the right time.

This Local Offer is dynamic and evolving, helping to ensure that the support available to you continues to reflect your needs and keeps pace with new opportunities, services and national developments. As a result, the support, services and opportunities available across areas such as housing, education, employment, health and wellbeing will continue to grow and develop.

We're also creating a new online version of the Local Offer, which will make it even easier for you to find information, access support and stay up to date with what's available.

Most importantly, this is your Local Offer. It is designed to help you understand what support you can access, what you can expect from us as your Corporate Parent, and how we can help you achieve your goals, build your independence and create the future you want for yourself.



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Leaving care is an important step in your journey to adulthood. It can be an exciting time, bringing new opportunities, greater independence and the chance to shape your future. It can also sometimes feel challenging, and that's why we're here to support you.

As your Corporate Parent, Royal Greenwich wants you to have the same support, encouragement and opportunities that any young person would expect from a caring family. We want you to feel confident about your future and know where to turn for help, advice and guidance when you need it.

This Local Offer has been designed to help you understand the support available to you up to the age of 25. Whether you're thinking about housing, education, employment, managing your finances, relationships, health and wellbeing, or becoming more independent, there are people and services ready to support you.

Every young person's journey is different. Whatever your goals and ambitions may be, we want to work alongside you to help you achieve them.

We believe in your potential, we are ambitious for your future, and we are committed to helping you succeed.

Who does this offer apply to?

Many young people would have had experience of being in the care of the local authority and would therefore be care experienced. The term Care experience covers the full range of young people who have been in our care. The legal term of care leaver means:

- Eligible children
- Relevant Children
- Former Relevant children under 25
- Persons qualifying for advice and assistance (as defined in section 24, Children act 1989).

This Local Offer applies to care-experienced young people in Royal Greenwich who are classified as Relevant or Former Relevant under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

To be able to get the support set out in this local offer, you must have been in care for a period of at least 13 weeks (or periods amounting to 13 weeks) which began after age 14 and included some time after your 16th birthday. If you are not sure whether you qualify for leaving care support, then ask your personal advisor.

If you are between the ages of 21 and 25 we will continue to work with you as detailed in the law Children and Social Work Act 2017 – Section 3. This means you can ask for support from us up until you turn 25, whether you are in education or not. Even if you choose not to be involved with us, you can still return to us before your 25th birthday to ask for more support.

Persons qualifying for advice and assistance (Qualifying young people) are eligible for support as outlined in Section24 where, if requested, are entitled to an assessment of need. If eligible, the local authority has a duty to advise, befriend, and provide assistance (which can include cash, in-kind help, or accommodation support dependent on the assessed need).

OUR PROMISE

Royal Greenwich has a duty to make sure that young people who have been children in our care continue to have the support you need to make a smooth transition into an independent adult life. We want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for help.

To do this we will continue to keep the Royal Greenwich Care Leavers Promise.

The Council as your corporate parent, makes this promise* to you.



*[We will do our best to support you. We cannot promise to do everything you ask, but we will always explain the reasons why.]

CORPORATE PARENTING

The Children and Social Work act 2017, outlines the duty for local authorities to act as Corporate parents to all children who are looked after by the local authority, all Relevant young people and all Former Relevant young people under 25.

There are 7 Corporate Parenting Principles:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of children and young people in our care and care leavers.
2. To encourage those children and young people in our care and care leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To take the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people in our care and care leavers into account.
4. To help those children and young people in our care and care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people in our care and care leavers.

6. For those children and young people in our care and care leavers to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare those children and young people in our care and care leavers for adulthood and independent living.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 extends statutory corporate parenting responsibilities to a wide range of public bodies including schools, further education, health services and Youth Justice Boards. These public bodies are committed to/tasked with having regard for the needs of all children in care and care leavers and we will work collaboratively with all our partners in this regard.

Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic

We want all care leavers in Greenwich to feel valued, respected and treated fairly.

You may have heard of something called a *protected characteristic*. These are characteristics that are protected by law under the Equality Act 2010, helping to make sure people are not treated unfairly because of who they are. While being a care leaver is not currently a protected characteristic in law, we recognise that care experience can have a lifelong impact on young people.

As part of our commitment through the **Pan-London Care Leavers Compact (See Appendix 3)**, the Royal Borough of Greenwich has pledged to:

- **Treat care experience as though it were a protected characteristic.**

This means we will work to ensure that your experiences as a care leaver are recognised and considered when we design services, make decisions, and support you. We are committed to challenging disadvantage, reducing barriers, and helping you access the opportunities and support you need to thrive.

Our aim is to make sure that care-experienced young people are listened to, respected, and given the best possible chance to succeed in adulthood.

PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

In order for you to meet your full potential, we cannot provide support to you on our own. As your Corporate Parents, we will work with our partners to provide high-quality guidance and support to you.

Our partners include: carers; our Virtual School and education partners; community services; health partners; the police; care experienced children and young people's local communities; our senior leadership; elected members and council officers.

YOUR RIGHTS

You have rights when you leave care. The next sections will explain your rights when you leave care. Including:

Support and Advice from your Personal Advisor

You have the right to a pathway plan, information, advice and support from a personal advisor. Your personal advisor can provide support, including support with healthy relationships and supporting your physical and mental health.

Be Heard and Taken Seriously

You should be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. If you want to challenge decisions about the support you receive, you have the right to an independent advocate. An independent advocate can inform you about your rights and help you be heard in meetings. They are separate from Children's Services.

You have the right to see the information we keep about you, including the files and records written about you when you were in care. If you want to see you records, talk to your personal advisor.

YOUR PERSONAL ADVISOR AND PATHWAY PLAN

The Role of Your Personal Advisor

Once you turn 18, in most cases, you'll no longer have a social worker. Instead, you will have a personal advisor. Your personal advisor will make sure you get the services you need and help co-ordinate your pathway plan and reviews. However, to strengthen the support to you during the transition from care to independence, a Personal Advisor will be allocated to you by or soon after your 16th birthday.

Your personal advisor will:

- help you to think about your future, what you are studying, your independence skills.
- talk to you and other people who are important to you to find out more about you and your needs.
- be involved in understanding your needs and preparing your pathway plan so that you can get a good idea of what you want to do with your life.
- review your pathway plan at least every six months to help you to stay on track and achieve the things you want from life.
- with your agreement, seek the views of our partner agencies when completing your pathway plan. This may include housing, education, training and employment providers, benefits, and health services.
- liaise with youth offending services and probation if needed.

Even if your case has been closed you can still get in touch with us before your 25th birthday and we will assess what help or assistance we may be able to give you.

If you are a disabled care leaver and have been assessed to have eligible needs under the Care Act 2014, a social worker will regularly review your care and support plan to ensure that the right support is in place to meet your assessed needs. The care and support plan must be reviewed at least once a year.

Your Pathway Plan

Your pathway plan is written in consultation with you and the important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals and identifies exactly what support you will receive from us.

We recognise that as a 21- to 25-year-old, it is likely you will want to be a lot more independent than someone younger. So, as you approach your 21st birthday, your Personal Advisor will sit down with you and work out the following:

- Whether you still need our support.
- If you do need support, what tasks you need support with.
- If you do need support, how often we will keep in touch and how we will keep in touch.
- The amount of support you receive from your personal advisor will depend on your views and your individual circumstances.

Personal Advisor Service Hours

We are open Monday to Thursday 9:00am to 5:30pm and on a Friday from 9am to 4.30pm; and generally work around those hours. However, depending on your needs and in agreement with your social worker or personal advisor, we shall visit you outside these hours as required.

A duty personal advisor is also available between these hours and will be contactable via telephone 0208 921 8708

If you require support outside of these hours please contact our children's out of hours emergency duty line 0208 8548 888

YOUR HOUSING

A suitable place to live

Your personal advisor will help you to find suitable accommodation.

You might decide that supported accommodation is best for you. This means that you could be living in a house with other young people, a flat with support from someone who visits you or a house with staff on the site.

Many providers of semi-independent living and supported accommodation offer a starter pack which usually includes bedding, pots and pans, cutlery, crockery and other essential household items. If they don't, we can help you buy essential items up to £150.

We want you to build and maintain your secure relationships throughout your life. If you would like to remain with your foster carer for longer speak to your social worker/Personal Advisor about a Staying Put arrangement, or to be able to benefit from a Staying Close scheme if you are in an alternative provision. If you and your foster carers agree that you would like to stay with them after you are 18, we will support you to remain with them. This can last until you're 21.

For care leavers with disabilities, we also offer the opportunity to reside with carers in our Shared Lives Scheme or Supported Accommodation Scheme please see our SEND Local Offer for more details.

Living independently

If you want to live independently, when you are ready, we will work with Housing Services to explore options for you. We will work with you to consider the location, safety, bills and rent to see if it's suitable.

You have priority access to accommodation in the borough and your personal advisor can help with the bidding process.

We know it can be hard having your own place for the first time. We can offer help with your expenses.

We can help you to claim housing benefit/universal credit if you are entitled to them.

Once your claim is in process, we can give you financial support for up to eight weeks until your benefit payments start.

You will get help and advice to prepare for independent living by learning key skills as well as practical advice from Housing Services and the Leaving Care team on holding down your own **tenancy. You must** show evidence that you have learnt these skills before you can move to your own tenancy.

If you are living in your own independent accommodation and are a Royal Greenwich care leaver, you will not have to pay Council Tax until you are 25 years old. Speak to your personal advisor to apply for support with Council Tax dispensation for care leavers.

Leaving Care Allowance/Grant (otherwise known as Setting Up Home Allowance)

When you are allocated your own permanent tenancy, we will provide you with a setting up home allowance of up to £3,000 to help you to set up your first home. We can go shopping with you and suggest ways to get the most for your money. Your PA will work with you to consider what household furniture and items you need for your new home. You will receive the money in instalments of £500.You will be asked to provide receipts for anything you buy i.e. before the next instalment is issued to you. This is so that we are able to account for the money issued to you.

The Setting up Home Allowance can be used to buy your white goods such as your cooker, fridge/freezer, washing machine, your bed, wardrobe and sofa as well as other essential household items like a microwave, toaster, curtains and bedding.

We will always tell you if we purchase items for you using your Setting up Home Allowance. This decision will be made by a team manager only when necessary.

We will also support you with moving from your current accommodation to your new home. The cost of moving you is not included in the Setting Up Home Allowance.

Maintaining your tenancy

We will work with you to help you to settle in and maintain your tenancy.

We know that sometimes things go wrong and there might be a time when you could be at risk of losing your tenancy. If this happens, you should contact your personal advisor as soon as possible.

HOW WE PLAN FOR THE HOUSING NEEDS OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Support available including help to access private rented accommodation, rent guarantor schemes and other measures to reduce barriers to accessing housing

The Housing Inclusion Service works closely with young people to identify their housing needs at the earliest opportunity and provide tailored support to help them secure and sustain suitable accommodation. Our approach prioritises preventing homelessness through housing advice, mediation where appropriate and support to access a range of housing options, including social housing, supported accommodation and the private rented sector. To reduce barriers to accessing private rented accommodation, we offer assistance through rent deposit and rent-in-advance schemes and dedicated support to help young people engage with landlords and letting agents. We also work in partnership with specialist support services, employment agencies and welfare benefit teams to help young people develop the financial stability, life skills and support networks needed to maintain successful tenancies and achieve long-term housing independence.

Renting privately from a landlord allows more flexibility regarding location and can often be the quickest way to secure alternative housing. Accommodation can be found either directly through a letting agent, with a landlord or via a 1st Base referral to RBG's Procurement Team. Housing officers will offer the YP support and assistance to secure a private tenancy. This includes information on tenancy management and affordability.

Care leavers are eligible for the one-bedroom local housing allowance rate until their 25th birthday, after which point the allowance reduces to the shared-room rate. If the young person remains in RBG, they are exempt from council tax until they become 25.

ACCOMMODATION PLANNING FOR THOSE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

YOUNG PARENTS

Part of the supported accommodation pathway consist of placements where couples, young expectant mothers and young mothers/fathers and their

children are accommodated. They also receive the floating support service as part of this arrangement.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Greenwich recognises that disabled care leavers may require alternatives to fully independent living, and they are supported through a combination of leaving care services, housing support, adult social care, and specialist accommodation options to help them move safely into adulthood. The support is personalised through the young person's Pathway Plan and, where applicable, their Care and Support Plan.

THOSE IN EDUCATION (FURTHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION)

PAs will assist YP with university applications and placements. This includes support with completing applications for university, funding for accommodation and financial support.

The local authority remains the corporate parent for all care leavers including those attending university. Young people at university will be registered for housing and also have priority Band B status. They will retain this status for the duration of their university course.

Some young people may choose to remain living in the borough and may choose to take up their own council tenancies. Others may take up a university placement outside of London and will live in university Halls of Residence or other student accommodation Those taking up university placements in halls of residents or other student accommodation are encouraged to take up 365 day accommodation where available. This is to reduce disruption to their accommodation whilst at university. Those who require vacation accommodation, as our corporate children, they will be supported by the local authority to secure accommodation. As corporate parents, Children's Services and 1st Base will work together to support the young person with securing vacation accommodation.

For those under 25 who are due to leave university without accommodation to move to, the allocated PA should raise this with 1st Base at the earliest opportunity to ensure housing options are explored as early as possible.

LIVING OUTSIDE OF GREENWICH/THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA/OUT OF BOROUGH

In some instances, it may be beneficial or in line with the wishes and feelings of the care leaver to move to another local authority area. This may be due to several reasons such as their care placement being out of area, to escape a risk of violence, family connections to another local authority or to attend education or employment. Housing officers can make enquires about the housing options in the preferred area/s alongside the PA's discussions with the Leaving Care Team of the other authority.

THOSE VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION, GROOMING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Duty to refer: The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA), places a duty on public services to refer people who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to the local authority's homelessness service. When a care leaver's PA, or any other professional, becomes aware that a care leaver is in this situation, they should be referred to 1st Base without delay.

How accommodation and housing needs are considered as part of local commissioning and sufficiency planning

We work collaboratively across Children's Services, Housing Inclusion and Support Services and Commissioning to plan for and respond to the housing needs of young people leaving care.

Housing needs are identified at an early stage through pathway planning, needs assessments, transition planning and regular reviews undertaken by Personal Advisers / Social Workers and Housing Inclusion Officers. We have a Joint Protocol that helps us assess each young person's current and future accommodation requirements, support needs, aspirations, vulnerabilities and readiness for independent living.

Alongside individual planning, information about the needs of care leavers is analysed collectively to understand emerging demand, trends and future accommodation requirements. This enables the Council and its statutory partners to anticipate the number and type of housing options likely to be required, including supported accommodation, floating support, independent

accommodation, social housing accommodation and private rented sector options.

The intelligence gathered through the Care Leaving Service informs wider housing sufficiency and commissioning arrangements. We use information on current demand, projected need, tenancy outcomes and accommodation gaps to support service planning, market engagement and the commissioning of accommodation and support services where required.

Forecasting demand for care placements and supported accommodation

Local authorities use population data, trends in children entering care, homelessness presentations, and care leaver projections to estimate future accommodation needs. This informs commissioning plans by identifying:

- The number and types of placements likely to be required.
- Demand for supported accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds.
- Future housing requirements for care leavers aged 18+.
- Gaps in local provision that may lead to out-of-area placements.

An example of this is where the council identifies increasing numbers of young people leaving care and commissions additional supported accommodation or supported lodgings provisions in the borough.

Joint commissioning between Children's Services and Housing

Accommodation needs are incorporated into joint strategic planning between housing departments and children's services to ensure vulnerable young people can access suitable housing pathways.

This includes:

- A Joint Protocol for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds.
- Priority housing pathways for care leavers.
- Joint funding arrangements for supported accommodation.
- Integrated transition planning from care into adulthood.

An example of how we do this is where Children's services and Housing jointly fund 4 bed spaces in supported accommodation specifically for 16 and 17 year old children in our care. This provides 16 and 17 year old children in our care

with the opportunity to live semi-independently in supported accommodation with support to develop the necessary skills for independent living. This also provides a seamless transition into the supported housing pathway for 18 to 25 year olds.

Transition planning for care leavers

Accommodation is a core element of local offer and leaving care strategies.

Commissioning arrangements often include:

- Supported lodgings.
- Supported accommodation schemes.
- Floating support services.
- Housing First for Young People

The Council's young people supported housing pathway which supports care leavers' transition from care to supported accommodation. Social Care Teams for children in our care work closely with the Leaving Care Teams to identify children and young people who will require supported accommodation. Referrals are made to the Housing Inclusion Service when a young person reaches 17.5 years old for an assessment of their housing needs which forms a view on the best pathway for a young person in relation to post 18 accommodation.

Housing needs of care leavers will continue to be considered jointly by Children's Services and Housing as part of the Council's broader accommodation sufficiency planning processes, helping to ensure that appropriate housing pathways are available and that accommodation provision continues to meet the changing needs of young people leaving care. We maintain a partnership approach between Children's Services, Housing Inclusion Services, Registered Providers and commissioned accommodation providers to review demand, monitor outcomes and identify opportunities to improve housing provision and support for care-experienced young people.

Through this collaborative approach, the Council seeks to ensure that care leavers have access to safe, suitable and sustainable accommodation that meets their individual needs and supports their successful transition to adulthood.

Housing Application processes, eligibility criteria and sources of advice and support

The Housing Inclusion Support and Service are responsible for assessing applications from young people. This Service will have obtained all the relevant supporting evidence and undertaken checks as part of this process.

List required by 1st Base:

1 – MOAF form signed by PA and their manager.

2 – Area of choice form.

3 – Full 6 months' rent statement – when YP are claiming housing benefit, are on a tenancy/licence agreement or privately renting

4 – ID either passport or driving licence / birth certificate/ immigration status

5 – Latest 3 months full bank statements showing incomings and outgoings for all bank accounts

6 – Proof of income - when YPs are on benefits then will need benefit letters or screen shots. If they are working will require the latest 3 months wage slips.

7 – Tenancy/license agreement if applicable.

The eligibility criteria for housing:

Housing legislation includes provisions that make certain young people from abroad ineligible for housing assistance on immigration grounds and Housing officers will need to satisfy themselves that they are eligible before providing housing assistance. The provisions on eligibility are complex and Housing authorities working together with the Leaving Care team will ensure that there are procedures in place to carry out the appropriate checks on YP's immigration status.

Housing Inclusion would only refer cases to the Allocations Services once the young person has been approved for permanent accommodation. The Allocations Service will review the information and if all is satisfactory, the young person will be awarded Band B1 Rehousing Priority.

The young person with be able to bid for suitable accommodation on the Council Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

The 'ready for move on' decision will be made based on the care leaver's progress and engagement throughout their time on the pathway. When the YP's support worker decides they are ready for move on, they will initiate a 'Move On' meeting with the 1st Base caseworker and the PA if it is a non-pathway accommodation, if it is a pathway accommodation this will be with the HIS commissioning team and the PA. The professionals will need to agree that the young person is ready to live independently.

The YP, their supported accommodation support worker, PA, 1st Base and the HIS Commissioning team will discuss the decision for move on. The PA's Team Leader will then be required to sign off the Move On Application Form (MOAF) if they are satisfied that the YP is ready to move on after all the necessary checks have been completed and documents provided. This is to ensure everyone has the latest information on the care leaver's needs/progress and risks.

If applicable, the YP will be asked to complete an Areas of Choice form to enable their suspended Choice Based Lettings registration to be activated and both forms will be reviewed and signed by the 1st Base Team Leader and HIS Commissioning team before they are sent to Allocations, who will activate the application from the move-on priority registration date applicable to the young person.

YP should be supported to fully understand how the Choice Based Lettings scheme works, including how to bid for properties. They should also understand that they will be assisted with viewings and sign ups wherever possible. It is also important to remind YP that it is likely to take a long time to secure accommodation, despite the priority, and that in most cases only one offer of accommodation will be made.

Consideration of Safeguarding, Vulnerability and Support Needs

Prior to identifying and confirming accommodation, a comprehensive assessment is undertaken to ensure that the placement is suitable, safe and able to meet the young person's individual needs. This assessment considers the young person's safeguarding risks, vulnerabilities, support requirements, health needs, education, employment and training arrangements, social networks, and any factors that may impact their safety or wellbeing.

As part of the accommodation matching process, consideration is given not only to the property itself but also to the surrounding local area. This includes assessing any known risks within the community such as criminal exploitation, gang activity, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, county lines activity, risks associated with missing episodes, or the presence of individuals who may pose a threat to the young person's safety and welfare.

Where appropriate, consultation takes place with local police, community safety partners and other relevant agencies to obtain intelligence regarding known risks within the area and to ensure the proposed accommodation is suitable for the young person's circumstances. Information gathered through these consultations is used to inform decision-making and risk management planning.

The views and wishes of the young person are also considered alongside professional assessments. Where risks are identified, additional support, safeguarding measures or alternative accommodation options will be explored to ensure the placement promotes the young person's safety, stability, independence and positive outcomes. Accommodation will only be agreed where there is confidence that any identified risks can be effectively managed and that the placement is appropriate to the young person's assessed needs.

Housing and Leaving Care team work together to complete YP's Needs Assessments and issue a Personalised Housing Plan, advising about the way we will work together with the Young Person including showing the steps that we will take to resolve the housing issue.

We carefully consider the following: circumstances leading to homelessness, background family or address history, independent living skills, education and training, benefits and support network. In addition, we consider health issues and emotional wellbeing or disability, safeguarding issues, domestic violence,

drug misuse, gang affiliation etc, including offending history, if any, or risk areas.

We also identify together the main support needs and provide support for any outstanding debts or rent arrears, draft payment plans and complete a thorough risk assessment. Also, we work jointly with other agencies such as benefits office, Probation, Police, YOS, Housing providers.

JOINT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure that care experienced young people receive the most joined-up and effective support, we have joint protocols in place. A joint protocol sets out how two or more services work together to address a specific area of need, ensuring a shared responsibility for supporting care experienced young people. One such protocol exists between the Housing and Inclusion Service and the Corporate Parenting Service, which supports Children in Care and Care Leavers.

Understanding and managing your rent

When you sign up for your new council home, we will explain your tenancy, how much rent you need to pay, how to make payments and other important information about your home. You will also be given the name and contact details of your Income Officer, who can help you with any questions or concerns about your rent.

Your Income Officer will contact you shortly after your tenancy starts. They will explain your introductory tenancy and help you understand your responsibilities as a tenant, including paying your rent and what help with your housing costs you may be entitled to.

We understand that managing a tenancy and household finances can sometimes feel challenging, particularly when you are setting up your first home. You do not have to manage this on your own.

Your Income Officer can offer advice and support with things such as:

- understanding your rent and rent account
- setting up and making rent payments
- Understanding universal credit and housing costs support

- budgeting and managing your money
- accessing help with housing costs and benefits
- getting additional support if you are experiencing financial difficulties
- referring you to specialist services where you need additional help.

Your Income Officer will also talk to you about any individual needs or circumstances that may affect how you manage your tenancy. This could include a disability, physical or mental health needs or other vulnerabilities. We will consider how we can adapt the way we communicate with and support you to best meet your needs.

If you are finding it difficult to pay your rent, please speak to your Income Officer as early as possible. The sooner we know there is a problem, the sooner we can work with you to find a solution.

If you fall behind with your rent, your Income Officer will contact you and work with you to understand what has happened, agree how to repay this and help you access any additional support you may need.

Our aim is to work with you to keep your rent account on track, address any problems early and help you sustain your tenancy and keep your home.

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS

The Joint Protocol between Housing Inclusion and Corporate Parenting outlines how we work together to identify and respond to housing needs, including housing instability and the risk of homelessness. It sets out a coordinated approach to ensuring that support is provided promptly, safely, and collaboratively, enabling young people to access the right help at the right time.

If you are living in your own independent tenancy, whether with the Council or a Housing Association, your Personal Adviser (PA) will work closely with your Income Officer or Tenancy Officer to help prevent tenancy breakdown.

Tenancy breakdown can happen for a variety of reasons, including rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. If concerns arise, your PA will meet with you and your Income Officer or Tenancy Officer to discuss the issues and agree on the best way forward.

This may include helping you set up a repayment plan to clear any rent arrears, providing support to manage your tenancy effectively, or working with you to address and prevent further incidents of anti-social behaviour.

You can get advice about tenancies, rent, budgeting and avoiding eviction at this link:

Introductory tenancy Your rights and responsibilities as a council tenant | Your rights in the first 12 months | Royal Borough of Greenwich

Paying your rent Pay your council housing rent and charges | Royal Borough of Greenwich

Help with money - Help with money | Royal Borough of Greenwich

Greenwich supports leaflet - Greenwich Supports Booklet 2025.pdf

Intentional Homelessness

We know that sometimes things can go wrong with a tenancy or living arrangement. If you become homeless, it is important that you get the right support.

From **30 September 2026,** some care leavers aged under 25 can no longer **be considered intentionally homeless**. This means that if you become homeless on or after this date, the council cannot decide that you made yourself homeless and refuse support on that basis.

This applies if you are:

- **A relevant child** (a young person who is still entitled to leaving care support), or
- **A former relevant child** aged **under 25**.

Please note that this change only applies if the circumstances that led to your homelessness happen **on or after 30 September 2026**. If you became homeless before this date, different rules may apply.

Despite this, we will always encourage you to pay your rent and service charges, look after your accommodation to the best of your ability, and follow the terms of your licence or tenancy agreement. This will help you build positive habits and set you up for future success with your housing arrangements after you turn 26. Please let us know if you are ever struggling to pay your housing costs or manage your home, as we can help. Although councils can no longer find those covered by this change to be intentionally homeless, you could still lose your accommodation if the terms of your licence or tenancy agreement are not followed. This can be a very stressful experience and is best avoided wherever possible.

If you are worried about your housing or are at risk of losing your accommodation, speak to your Personal Adviser (PA) as soon as possible. We can help you understand your options and access support to keep you safe and securely housed.

Emergency accommodation and crisis support arrangements available to young people

The Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers sets out the support available to care leavers who become homeless as follows:

6.1 Homelessness assessments

The HRA places new legal duties on local authorities to ensure those who are eligible under homelessness legislation and homeless or at risk of homelessness receive access to meaningful help. The Act aims to reduce homelessness by promoting better joint working between services, to provide better support for groups at increased risk of homelessness, including care leavers.

1st Base will allocate a HIO who will offer an appointment at the earliest possible opportunity, preferably on the same day, to the care leaver, to obtain information for an assessment. During the appointment, the HIO will:

- Talk to the care leaver about their situation
- Determine homelessness
- Commence enquiries (home visits will be carried out as necessary)

- Determine if there are any concerns or outstanding issues, which will need to be raised with the care leaver's PA within RBG or the relevant authority.

As part of the homelessness assessment and following any further enquiries, the HIO will be required to accept a Prevention or Relief Duty and to complete a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) with the applicant Young Person. The PHP will outline the reasonable steps that the local authority and the applicant Young Person will take to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

The HIO may consider aligning this with the Pathway Plan and will discuss/share information about the PHP with the PA as required. The PA will be included in ongoing reviews of the PHP.

Prevention/Relief Duty work may include:

- collaborative working alongside the PA, other Council agencies or external agencies
- conciliation and mediation
- providing support to sustain a tenancy
- help with accessing suitable alternative accommodation including within RBG's commissioned pathway for Young People

Under section 189(1) of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002, the following categories are relevant to care leavers and determine whether the applicant has a priority need for accommodation:

- (f) a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student')
- (g) a person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a 'relevant student')

However, in most cases, it is hoped that homelessness can be prevented or relieved before a main housing duty is reached, particularly if there is any risk that the assessment may lead to a negative decision.

Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and Housing Out of Hours - (out of office hours only) - 020 8854 8888 - can discuss and provide housing assistance if needed during the out of hours. In addition, young people can contact their landlords, tenancy officers, support workers, foster parents or family and friends.

During the working hours young people can contact the Leaving Care team and their PAs to discuss their circumstances. Your PA can liaise with Housing colleagues to obtain advice and seek assistance.

During working hours young people can contact 1st Base Duty line to obtain advice and homeless assistance

YOUR EDUCATION TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Support To Engage in Education and Training

Helping You Achieve Your Goals

We are committed to helping you achieve your ambitions and build a positive future. Whether you choose to continue your education, develop new skills, start an apprenticeship or enter employment, we will work alongside you to help you succeed.

We recognise that everyone's journey is different. We will celebrate your achievements, support you through challenges, and help you access the advice, opportunities and financial support you may need to reach your goals.

Support for Care Leavers with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

If you are aged 16 to 25 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you can access information, advice and support through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). Your Personal Advisor (PA) can help you access this service.

If you have additional care and support needs as you move into adulthood, you may be entitled to a Care Act Assessment. This looks at the support you may

need to achieve your goals, maintain your wellbeing and live as independently as possible.

If you are aged 14 to 17, you can contact the Disabled Children and Young People's Service (DCYPS) to discuss your support needs and future plans. If you are aged 18 or over, you can contact Health and Adult Services (HAS) to request a Care Act Assessment or discuss adult social care support. Your PA can support you throughout this process.

If you have an EHCP and are considering changing your education setting, moving into training, or starting an apprenticeship, please speak to your PA or the Virtual School as early as possible. This will help ensure the right support is in place to make your transition successful.

Virtual School Support

As a care-experienced young adult, the Virtual School is committed to supporting you wherever you are on your education, training or employment journey.

We offer personalised Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) support to help you explore your options and make informed decisions about your future. We can advise on:

- Further education and college courses
- Apprenticeships and traineeships
- Employment opportunities
- Internships and work experience
- Training programmes
- Careers planning and progression

We can also signpost you to charities and organisations that provide specialist support for care-experienced young people.

Your PA can help you prepare for employment by supporting you with CV writing, job applications, interview preparation and identifying opportunities to gain experience and develop your skills.

Further Education

If you are aged 16 to 19 and attending college, you may be eligible for a bursary of up to £1,200 per academic year. Colleges administer this funding differently, but it is usually intended to help with course-related costs such as books, equipment, meals and travel.

We can help you understand your eligibility and support you to apply. We can also help you apply for a free 16 to 19 Oyster card to assist with travel costs.

Please note that some specialist providers may not offer bursary funding where additional educational support is already included within the placement funding.

Learner Support and Childcare Funding

If you are aged 19 or over and undertaking further education or training, you may be eligible for additional learner support or childcare funding.

For information on available funding and career pathways, visit:

National Careers Service https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/

Adult Skills and Community Learning

If you are aged 19 or over, you can access education and vocational training through the Royal Borough of Greenwich Adult and Community Learning Service.

A wide range of courses are available, many of which are free. Programmes range from Entry Level to Level 3 qualifications and can help you:

- Access employment opportunities
- Develop career skills
- Improve your health and wellbeing
- Progress within your chosen profession
- Build confidence and independence

Courses are available in areas such as construction, digital skills, IT, health and social care, business development and independent living skills.

For further information visit:

https://greenwichlearns.org.uk/

Choosing the Right Course

The Virtual School can help you identify the education or training pathway that best suits your strengths, interests and career aspirations. We can advise on entry requirements, progression routes and the qualifications available, including:

- **Vocational Technical Qualifications (VTQs)** such as BTECs and City & Guilds.
- **T Levels**, which combine classroom learning with substantial industry placements.
- **Apprenticeships**, allowing you to earn while you learn.
- **Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs)** at Levels 4 and 5, designed in partnership with employers.

UNIVERSITY

Considering University

If university is the right option for you, we will support you throughout your journey.

We can help you explore courses and universities that match your interests, strengths and future aspirations. We may also be able to assist with travel costs to university open days and support you to use the UCAS and Propel websites to research courses and opportunities.

Applying to University

Applying to university can feel overwhelming, but you do not need to navigate the process alone.

We can support you with:

- Researching courses and universities

- Understanding entry requirements
- Completing UCAS applications
- Accessing support available to care-experienced students
- Exploring flexible study options, including part-time learning

Where appropriate, we may be able to advocate on your behalf and ask universities to consider contextual admissions, reasonable adjustments or additional support arrangements that reflect your individual circumstances.

We can also help you identify scholarships, bursaries and other financial support available through your chosen university.

University Funding

Many universities offer bursaries specifically for care-experienced students, often ranging from £1,000 to £3,000 per year. Details can be found through Propel:

http://propel.org.uk

In addition, the Royal Borough of Greenwich provides a **£2,000 Higher Education Bursary** for eligible care leavers undertaking their first undergraduate degree.

This bursary is paid over three years as follows:

- Year 1: £667
- Year 2: £666
- Year 3: £667

Payments are subject to confirmation from the university that you are enrolled and regularly attending your course.

Accommodation Support While at University

We understand that having safe and stable accommodation is essential to your success at university.

For eligible care leavers undertaking their first undergraduate degree, we will provide a contribution towards term-time accommodation costs for up to three academic years.

Currently, support is available for up to 40 weeks of accommodation per academic year, based on average student rental costs identified by your university, up to a maximum contribution of £200 per week.

This support does not normally apply where:

1. Your course provides a significant income or maintenance support, such as:
    a. Nursing degrees with maintenance support
    b. Medical degrees with NHS bursary entitlement
    c. Social Work degrees receiving a Social Work Bursary
    d. Degree apprenticeships
    e. Employer-sponsored degree programmes
2. You receive scholarships, bursaries or other financial support exceeding £5,000 per year.
3. You undertake a placement year, year abroad, industrial placement or gap year.
4. You are eligible for Housing Benefit or other housing-related support and are expected to make the appropriate claim.

Where there is clear evidence of financial hardship or exceptional circumstances, the Royal Borough of Greenwich may consider additional support. Any contribution will normally be limited to a maximum of 12 weeks within a 12-month period.

Support During Your Studies

In addition to accommodation support, we can provide:

- Assistance with Student Finance applications
- Advice on living arrangements during university holidays
- Support to access charitable grants and additional funding
- Travel costs, where appropriate, at the start and end of term

For information about Student Finance:

https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance

Pastoral and Wellbeing Support

Your wellbeing is important to us.

Most universities have dedicated support services and named contacts for care-experienced students. Your PA and the Virtual School can help you access these services and ensure you are receiving the support available to you.

Some courses are delivered through partner colleges or other organisations and may offer different levels of student support. If you are considering one of these programmes, we can help you understand what support is available before you enrol.

After Graduation

Completing university is a significant achievement, and we are committed to supporting your transition into the next stage of adulthood.

When your studies end and your university accommodation comes to an end, we can help with the cost of returning to London and transporting your belongings.

We can also support you to access suitable accommodation, including a council tenancy where appropriate, to help you establish a stable home and make a confident transition into independent living.

Eligibility

This offer is available to care-experienced young people undertaking their first undergraduate degree up to the age of 25.

The Local Offer does not extend to postgraduate study. Where a degree continues beyond your 25th birthday, accommodation support will end when you turn 25. However, you may continue to receive support from your Personal Advisor beyond this point if you wish to remain engaged with the service.

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a paid job that combines working and learning. You are employed by an organisation while studying towards a recognised qualification, allowing you to gain practical experience and develop skills in a real work environment and can improve long term career and earnings prospects..

An apprenticeship typically involves

Paid employment

- You have a job and receive a salary.
- You work alongside experienced colleagues.

Formal training

- Part of your time is dedicated to structured learning, usually through a college, university, or training provider.
- This learning relates directly to your role.

Off-the-job learning

- At least a portion of your working hours is protected for training and development activities.
- This might include workshops, online learning, assignments, shadowing, mentoring, or project work.

Assessment

- You complete coursework, practical assessments, and evidence portfolios.
- Most apprenticeships end with an assessment to d

Age eligibility has been extended for some apprenticeships (for care leavers) including foundation and level 7 from age 16 to 21 and 16 to 24.

If the apprenticeship pathway is more appropriate for you, you will receive a bursary of £3,000 from August 2023 from your apprenticeship provider. This bursary is tax free, not treated as income for Universal Credit purposes and

paid through the apprenticeship training provider. As a care leaver you are guaranteed an interview for an apprenticeship with the Royal Borough of Greenwich. If you want to know more, talk to your personal advisor. Depending on what is in your pathway plan we can provide support to buy tools, equipment, essential clothing and books.

If your apprenticeship is not a Greenwich Direct apprenticeship, your Personal Advisor (PA) can provide confirmation that you are a care leaver. Please be reassured that you do not have to disclose your care leaver status to your employer if you do not wish to do so.

Employment

Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) can help care leavers get into training and match you with local job opportunities. It provides free careers information, advice and guidance, employment support, training, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities including with the Council.

GLLaB works in partnership with a range of organisations to assist care leavers finding the best chance of a job in Royal Greenwich and wider area. (See Useful Contacts) education, training and employment.

Care experienced young people can benefit from the National Care Leaver Covenant, through which more than 700 public, private and voluntary sector organisations provide tailored opportunities for care experienced young people, broadening the range of employment and skills pathways available and complementing the support offered locally.

Key contact details

Service	Email	Website
Virtual School	looked-after-children-education@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	Our Team |
Adult Skills and Community Learning	Greenwich.Learns@royalgreenwich.gov.uk	https://greenwichlearns.org.uk/

http://propel.org.uk/https://www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-financehttps://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/https://www.gov.uk/guidance/free-courses-for-jobs

YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Your physical and mental health are important. In our care, you will continue to have health assessments each year until your 18th birthday. These will be carried out by the health nurse. If you have specific health needs your personal advisor will discuss with you how these can be met, and this will be included in your Pathway Plan.

After your final health assessment before you turn 18 we will give you your health discharge summary with your medical history and any outstanding health issues, which will include:

- immunisation record,
- a copy of your last medical history and any outstanding health issues.
- any relevant information about your family's health history if this may affect your long-term health.
- offer of advice on your health and signpost you to where you can get help for health issues such as contraception, sexual health, mental health, or substance misuse.
- necessary transfers to adult health services.
- support with registration with a GP and dentist when you leave care.

Becoming an adult can be a tough time for everyone and you may feel excited, uncertain, frustrated, angry, or upset, especially during the first few months after leaving care. Talk to your personal advisor if you are feeling unhappy and they will help you to work through these problems or put you in touch with someone who can help. You may be able to get support from our Leaving Care Mental Health Clinicians. They can work directly with you, provide advice and guidance to your Personal Adviser, and help you access mental health support and services that are right for you.

If you need help with substance misuse or access to sexual health or mental health services, your personal advisor can signpost you to the right services and come with you if that is what you want.

You may be entitled to free prescriptions, please discuss this with your personal advisor if you need assistance. Your personal advisor can tell you if you are eligible for free prescriptions, dental care and glasses and help you with any forms that have to be completed.

Regular exercise is good for your physical and mental health. You can apply to the Health and Wellbeing panel for a bursary of up to £150 a year or a local gym membership to help you to keep fit. All care leavers, up to the age of 25 are entitled to apply to the Health and Wellbeing bursary for gym membership in the borough. Talk to your personal advisor for details**.**

Local area services that educate on, support and enable good health and wellbeing

Make Every Opportunity Count in Greenwich (MEOC) e-learning Training is for Anyone working or volunteering in Greenwich can complete this free Make Every Opportunity Count Training written by staff from the Royal Borough of Greenwich Public Health and Wellbeing Team

Also Live Well Greenwich Line & Hub is A free advice and referral service providing guidance on physical and mental health, healthy eating, quitting smoking, money/debt advice, housing, and reducing social isolation

Universal health services

Care-experienced young people in Royal Greenwich can access a range of universal and specialist health and wellbeing services. These services can support young people as they move towards independence and help them access advice, assessment and treatment when needed.

Greenwich Mental Health Hub

The Greenwich Mental Health Hub provides support for adults experiencing mental health difficulties. The multidisciplinary team assesses individual needs and helps people access the most appropriate mental health support. The service works collaboratively with Oxleas, Bridge Support and SEL Mind and aims to ensure that individuals are directed to suitable support rather than being passed between services.

Information: https://mentalhealthhubs.org.uk/greenwich/home

SEL Mind – Greenwich Peer Support

Peer Support is available to adults who have experience of mental health difficulties. It provides opportunities to attend activity-based groups that promote emotional wellbeing, social connection and recovery. Groups are supported by staff and volunteers with lived experience of mental health challenges, which can be particularly valuable for care-experienced young people who may benefit from connecting with others and reducing feelings of isolation.

Information: https://selmind.org.uk/

Sexual Health Services

Care-experienced young people can access local sexual and reproductive health services, including walk-in services. Support can include confidential advice about contraception, sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment, healthy relationships and wider sexual health concerns. Young people should be supported to understand how and where they can access these services independently when required.

Drug and Alcohol Support / OK Rehab

Young people who are concerned about drug or alcohol use, dependency or addiction can access information about specialist treatment and rehabilitation

services. OK Rehab provides information about support available to people living in Greenwich who are experiencing difficulties with addiction and can help individuals identify appropriate treatment options.

Information: https://greenwichcommunitydirectory.org.uk/services/ok-rehab

Support services available:

NHS 111 • For medical advice • The helpline is open 24 hours a day.	Dial 111 NHS111 online
NHS Provides a comprehensive health information service with thousands of articles, videos and tools, helping your to make the best choices about your health and lifestyle	www.nhs.uk
General health information for young people	NHS Go app www.themix.org.uk 0808 808 4994
Refugee Council	www.refugeecouncil.org.uk 020 7346 6700
Healthy eating	See Change4Life website for ideas regarding diet and activity www.nhs.uk/change4life
Daily Vitamin A, C & D supplements recommended for children 0-5 years	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/vitamins-for-children/?tabname=babies-and-toddlers
Daily Vitamin D 10mcgs supplementation as advised in Recommendation 8; NICE Guidelines (PH56) August 2017 for: • People with dark skin (Africa, Afro-Caribbean, South Asia) • People who cover up their skin • People who do not go outside (housebound)	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/

In the target group for 10mcgs Vitamin D supplement between October to April as advised on NHS Choices- www.nhs.uk	
Emotional health and well-being.	Self- help emotional health and well-being website for young people: http://headscapegreenwich.co.uk http://headscapebexley.co.uk https://www.kooth.com www.youngminds.org.uk www.themix.org.uk 0808 808 4994 https://www.childline.org.uk 0800 11 11 www.samaritans.org 116 123 https://papyrus-uk.org
Support for self- harm	Calm harm app https://calmharm.co.uk
Advocacy for you- Coram Voice • You want help to say what you need to those making decisions about you. • You want information or advice about your rights. • You need an advocate who can help you understand what people are saying and help you say what you want to say and make sure people listen to you.	www.coramvoice.org.uk 0808 800 5792
Relationships information	www.disrespectnobody.co.uk www.relate.org.uk
Sexual Health	www.nhs.uk (put in sexual health to search bar) www.brook.org.uk www.fpa.org.uk https://www.greenwichsexualhealth.org/ (external link)

Think you are pregnant and don't know what to do? It is important to make the right decision for you and part of this is having all the information you need. Talk to someone you trust and get health advice from one of the following as soon as possible:	www.brook.org.uk www.fpa.org.uk www.mariestopes.org.uk 0345 300 8090 www.bpas.org 03457 30 40 30
Concerned about a sexual assault	www.thesurvivorstrust.org https://www.thehavens.org.uk/ https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/not-sure-where-to-start/im-not-sure-what-happened/
Smoking cessation support	www.nhs.uk/smokefree 0300 123 1044
Drugs support	www.talktofrank.org.uk https://youngminds.org.uk
Immunisations	www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations
Medicines support for Carers Provides information about individual drugs, how to administer	www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk
Support for allergies and anaphylaxis	www.allergyuk.org www.anaphylaxis.org.uk
Support for Asthma	https://www.asthma.org.uk
Support for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	www.adhdfoundation.org.uk
Support for bedwetting	https://www.eric.org.uk
Support for bereavement	https://griefencounter.org.uk 0808 802 0111 https://childbereavementuk.org/for-families

	0800 02 888 40 https://www.winstonswish.org/
Support for Coeliac disease	https://www.coeliac.org.uk/home https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coeliac-disease
Support for Diabetes	www.diabetes.org.uk www.childrenwithdiabetes.org.uk https://jdrf.org.uk
Support for Epilepsy	https://www.epilepsy.org.uk https://www.epilepsysociety.org.uk/epilepsy-childhood
Support for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	www.nofas-uk.org
Support for Sickle Cell Disease	www.sicklecellsociety.org
Support for skin problems	https://knowyourskin.britishskinfoundation.org.uk

DOCUMENTS AND IDENTITY

You will usually need formal identification of some kind to start work, to claim benefits, to set up a bank account and to prove you are who you are.

When you move to be independent, it is important that you have the right documents. When you leave care, you should already have a National Insurance Number, a birth certificate, and a passport to which you are entitled. If you leave care and some of these are not all in place, your PA will support you to obtain these.

YOUR FINANCES: FINANCIAL LITERACY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Managing money, living within your means, and avoiding problem debt are important skills for independent living. We will support you to develop these skills through one-to-one work with your Personal Adviser (PA), including creating a monthly budget plan (see Appendix 1: Monthly Budgeting Sheet).

Your Personal Adviser, Social Worker, Foster Carer, or Key Worker can also support you to complete the Independent Living Toolkit (see Appendix 2: Independent Living Toolkit), which helps you develop the knowledge and skills needed to live independently, including managing your finances.

Completion of the Independent Living Toolkit is required before you can be considered for a priority housing bid.

If you were in care for more than 12 months you should have a Junior ISA or a Child Trust Fund, which was set up with £200. When you become 16 you can make decisions about how you want this money invested but you cannot access this money until you are 18.

Your social worker will be able to give you information about the money in your account and tell you how to access it. Some young people may also have other savings. Those savings are there to support you as you move towards adulthood, so you should think carefully before spending this money.

You will need a bank account to pay in wages, grants, and any bursaries so that you can access your money. If you do not have a bank account, your personal advisor can advise and support you.

Even when things are going well, emergencies can arise. Your pathway plan should always contain arrangements to help you deal with this. Arrangements may be made to assist in an emergency. This could involve a small cash payment. This should not be relied upon and therefore your personal advisor

will work to encourage you to manage without making this a regular occurrence.

Financial literacy services in the borough

We want you to feel confident managing your rent and other household expenses. If you are experiencing rent arrears, your Tenancy Income Officer can arrange support from the Money Advice Team. They can work with you to review your finances and identify options to help resolve any money concerns.

Learn more about what support is on offer in Royal Greenwich at: https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/help-money

Support available during the early stages of your tenancy

It is important to get off to a good start when you move into your own tenancy. Your Personal Adviser (PA) will attend the tenancy sign-up appointment with you when you are allocated a property. During this appointment, your PA will encourage you to allow the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to pay the housing element of your Universal Credit directly to your landlord. This can help prevent rent arrears from building up and support you to maintain your tenancy successfully during the early stages of living independently.
Your Personal Adviser (PA) can help you review your monthly budget to make sure you can manage your tenancy on the income you receive. They will also support you in setting up utility accounts and accessing any discounts or concessions available to care-experienced young people.

Understanding your first pay/wage/salary

Once you start working, you will receive a payslip every month, week or fortnight, depending on how often your employer pays you. Your payslip explains how much you have earned, what has been deducted for tax and National Insurance, and how much money you will receive in your bank account.

If you're unsure about anything on your first payslip, your Personal Adviser (PA) can help explain it. However, your pay information is private, and it is completely your choice whether you share it with your PA.

You can find out more about how to understand your pay here: https://www.gov.uk/understanding-your-pay

Opening and managing bank accounts, online banking and avoiding scams

You will usually have a bank account before you leave care. If you do not have a bank account after leaving care, your Personal Adviser (PA) can help you open one.

It is important to manage your bank account responsibly. Try to avoid going into an overdraft, as this means you will have less money available each month because any money paid into your account may be used to repay the overdraft.

You should also be careful not to allow other people to use your bank account. Doing so could put you at risk of becoming involved in fraudulent activity, such as money laundering.

Be aware of online scams. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Always take time to check that an offer, message, or request is genuine before responding or sharing any personal information.

Understanding your credit score and how to build credit safely

As adults, we all build credit scores. Your credit score is a 3-digit number that tells lenders how safe it is to lend money to you. This is done by a credit reference agency. You don't just have one credit score as there are three different credit reference agencies. Lenders will look at your full credit record and decide on whether to lend money to you or not. Paying your bills on time, not accumulating rent arrears, registering on the electoral roll are all positive steps to take in regards to building your credit score. Missing payments, going into an unarranged overdraft, and applying for too much credit in a short time will negatively affect your credit score.

Borrowing, debt and avoiding high risk lenders

Avoid high-risk lenders and be aware of warning signs, such as missing paperwork, requests for your bank card, or intimidating phone calls about missed payments. To help prevent debt, maintain a financial buffer or emergency fund that can be used for unexpected expenses. You should also think about your longer-term financial goals and where you would like to see yourself over the next few years. Planning for buying your own home is one example of long term financial planning. Speak to your bank for help with making your longer-term financial plans.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme or other legal settlements

Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to make a claim, or a claim may have been made on your behalf, through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS). This is a government-funded scheme that provides compensation to victims of violent crime in Great Britain.

While no amount of money can fully compensate for the harm and suffering experienced, awards are assessed according to the nature, severity and impact of the injuries sustained.

If you receive compensation through the CICS or another legal settlement, your social worker will support you in understanding your options for managing this money. In most cases, the funds are released to you when you reach the age of 18. Compensation payments can sometimes be substantial, so it is important to think carefully about how the money is used.

Once you turn 18, you may wish to seek independent financial advice on the best way to manage or invest your compensation. For example, you could discuss savings and long-term investment options with your bank or a qualified financial adviser.

Benefits, Universal Credit and other entitlements

A Joint Working Protocol is in place with Woolwich Jobcentre Plus, enabling the Leaving Care Service and Jobcentre Plus to work more closely together in their role as corporate parents.

When you leave care, you may be entitled to claim benefits depending on your individual circumstances. These may include Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, and, if you have a disability or additional support needs, Personal Independence Payment (PIP). There may also be other benefits available to you. For more information and advice about what you can claim, speak to your Personal Adviser or your local Jobcentre work coach.
Before you leave care, your Personal Adviser (PA) and Social Worker will support you to make a Universal Credit claim. They will help you set up your application before your 18th birthday so that it is ready to be activated once you turn 18. Your PA or Social Worker will also accompany you to your first Universal Credit appointment.

While you are waiting for your first Universal Credit payment, your Personal Adviser (PA) will provide a weekly bridging payment (subsistence allowance) of £65 for up to eight weeks. This support will be reviewed after the eight-week period. You will not be required to repay these payments.

If you comply with the benefits application process, your Universal Credit entitlement will usually be backdated to the date on which you submitted your claim.

You can find out more about benefit claims here:
https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/eligibility

Festivals and celebrations

We will provide a £20 a year allowance for one festival celebration (e.g., Christmas, Eid, Diwali) and a birthday allowance of £20 a year up to your 21st birthday. We will also recognise your education achievements as part of nominations for the annual Education Awards by the Virtual School. Where you have done particularly well in a certain aspect, your Personal Advisor may celebrate this with you in another way e.g. by taking you out for a special meal or by purchasing a special gift for you to the value of £50.

YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

As you move on to become an independent adult the positive relationships you have maintained should be there to catch you when you need help. Every young adult needs a secure base from which they can go off and explore the world, and which they can retreat to when things get tough. The same should be true for every child who lives in care. We want you to know that there will still be someone to, support and care about you.

Your Personal Adviser (PA) plays an important role in supporting your wellbeing and development. Building a positive relationship with you helps them understand your needs and provide the right support. Your PA is there to talk with you, help you make decisions, and ensure your voice is heard. If you are under 21, they will visit you every eight weeks and can support you at meetings and appointments.

We want you to maintain your secure relationships through life, through a Staying Put arrangement, or to be able to benefit from a Staying Close scheme. Your PA can also help you reconnect with former carers, relatives, or other important adults where it is safe, appropriate, and in your best interests to do so. This support can be provided through the Networks for Life Coordinator.

For care leavers, understanding your history can be important as it can help you come to terms with difficult topics and get a clear perspective on what has happened to you.

Your personal advisor should be able to help you find out about your pre- care life and how you can go about accessing your file.

In addition to support from your Personal Adviser (PA), we may be able to offer you extra practical and emotional support if you would like it. This could be particularly helpful following a bereavement or any another difficult experience in your life.

Your PA can refer you to our in-house mental health practitioners for additional support, or signpost you to specialist organisations that provide bereavement and loss support.

We can also help you to maintain meaningful memories of a loved one, such as creating a photo album or memory book. If you wish, your PA may also be able to support you to attend a funeral or memorial service.

Care Leaver Hub

A Care Leaver Hub is being developed to enhance the support and services available to you. As well as providing a welcoming space where you can meet with your Personal Adviser (PA) and other professionals, the hub will offer a range of group activities, workshops, and social opportunities. These activities will give you the chance to meet and connect with other young people in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment, helping you to build friendships, develop skills, and access the support you need.

PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

We want you to be an active member of society, and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have.
We will encourage and help you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can vote in local and national elections.

Royal Greenwich has a range of groups, events and forums that allow you to raise awareness of specific issues that affect young people to help to improve services, gain new skills and meet new people.

We are committed to ensuring that children and young people have a voice in decision-making, planning, commissioning, design and delivery of services.

The Council's Young Greenwich Insight and Influence Team will work with children and young people including Care Leavers to support you to help us to shape services and influence decisions that affect you and other young people. You also have the opportunity to join one of our Youth Voice forums such as the Care Leaver Forum.

If you want to volunteer in the community, your personal advisor can help you to find opportunities. Your personal advisor can also advise you on how you can take up volunteering opportunities so you can make a difference to your local neighbourhood environment and help other people. Your personal advisor may be able to put you in touch with a mentor or organisation who can provide extra one-to-one support. We will support you with the reasonable cost of travel (bus fares) to and from the volunteering opportunity if the voluntary organisation is not able to provide travel support to you or if you are over 19 and do not have access to the free 16-19 bus pass.
To contact the Young Greenwich Insight and Influence Team directly please email youthvoice@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

BECOMING A PARENT

If you become a parent, you might need some additional support. You may wish to access support from the Best Beginning Midwives. Speak to your personal advisor for further assistance.

CUSTODY

If you are in custody, your Personal Adviser will stay in touch with you until the age of 25 if you would like ongoing support. While you are in custody, we can provide £10 per week pocket money to help with small personal purchases until you reach the age of 21.

If you are released from custody before the age of 25, we will work with you and other relevant agencies to support your transition back into the community, should you wish to receive this support.

There is a Joint Protocol between the National Probation Service (Greenwich and Bexley) and the Leaving Care Service. This sets out how both services work together to support care-experienced young people who are involved with the

criminal justice system, whether they are in custody or living in the community.

The protocol ensures that appropriate support arrangements are identified and put in place at an early stage before release from custody. It also outlines how the Leaving Care Service and Probation Service will work together to support young people in the community, helping them to access the services and assistance they need to achieve positive outcomes.

Release from custody

If you are in custody, release planning will begin while you are still in custody to help ensure a smooth transition back into the community. Wherever possible, this planning will start through a monthly Resettlement Panel attended by the Leaving Care Service and the Probation Service, where arrangements for your release will be discussed.

Release planning will also form part of your Pathway Plan and will consider your accommodation, education, training and employment needs, substance misuse support requirements, and any needs associated with risk management.

Your Personal Adviser (PA) and Probation Officer will work with Housing Services to help you access suitable accommodation. Your PA will also support you to apply for any benefits you are entitled to and will arrange financial support while you are waiting for your first benefit payment.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If you need money in an emergency, you need to contact your social worker or personal advisor. They will carry out an assessment before any payment is made and it is more likely you will receive vouchers rather than cash.

If you are about to be evicted or cannot return to your accommodation for any reason you should contact your social worker or personal advisor (or the

Children's out of hours service) so that arrangements can be made for alternative accommodation to be found

Royal Greenwich Leaving Care duty number is 0208 921 8708.

Outside of office hours you can contact the Emergency Duty team on 0208 8548 888

USEFUL CONTACTS

DWP/ Universal Credit application: www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit
Universal Credit Helpline: 08003285644

Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB): royalgreenwich.gov.uk/gllab
The Old Library, Calderwood Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6QW
Contact number: 02089212440

Royal Greenwich Virtual School: https://www.virtualschoolgreenwich.org.uk

Duty Line: 02089215029

1st Base Housing Options:
https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200187/homelessness/2454/young_people_and_care_leavers

Contact number: 02089212863

Moving to Adulthood for Disabled Care Leavers:

https://greenwichcommunitydirectory.org.uk/kb5/greenwich/directory/advice.page?id=v6SLTdgVYTg
Contact number:02089212599

Shared Lives Scheme

https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200274/carers/1102/shared_lives

Contact number:02089216120

Supported Accommodation Scheme:

https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200271/support_to_live_at_home/678/helping_independent_living

Contact number: 02039077696

Royal Greenwich Leaving Care duty number is 0208 921 8708.

Outside of office hours you can contact the Children's Out of Hours Service on 0208 8548 888

APPENDIX 1: MONTHLY BUDGETING SHEET

Monthly Budgeting Sheet									
Money coming in:				**Money going out:**				**Everyday Spending:**	
	£				**£**				**£**
Wages:				Rent:				Food & drink:	
UC personal Element:				Gas:				Toiletries:	
UC Housing Element:				Electricity:				Travel:	
PIP:				Mobile phone:				Socialising:	
Other:				TV licence:				Clothing:	
TOTAL:	**£0.00**			Service Charge:				Sport/Fitness:	
				Debt repayment:				Tobacco:	
				Other:				Alcohol/Drugs:	
				TOTAL:	**£0.00**			Car maintenance & petrol	
								Child Care:	
								Entertainment:	
								Other:	
								TOTAL:	**£0.00**
		£							
Total Money coming in	£0.00	£0.00							
Total going out + everyday spending £0.00		£0.00							
Balance	**£0.00**	£0.00							

APPENDIX 2: INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS TOOL KIT

INTRODUCTION

This tool kit should be used by Foster carers and semi-independent living and supported housing key workers to support young people in their development of independent living skills.

This tool kit covers a range of tasks informing the skills young people will need when living independently.

This should be used to record what has been achieved and what young people can do successfully to provide a visual tool for young people to demonstrate their achievements including areas where more support is required.

Recording achievements

The foster carer or key worker should introduce the tool kit to the young person and explain how it works. Each task or ability is scored using 1, 2 and 3:

3 = Good understanding / can complete independently

2 = Some understanding

1 = Little or no understanding

In each area:

Mostly 1's: indicates significant work to be done to make progress – plan should be in place to support with development,

Mostly 2's: on a track and working towards independence

Mostly 3's: on a good trajectory to become independent by 18

Some tasks can be observed and others will need to be planned.

Some items on the assessment that relate more to an understanding of issues rather than practical tasks can be given a score of 3, 2 or 1 based on a discussion between the foster carer/keyworker and the young person together with a brief outline of the discussion showing the young person's understanding.

YOUNG PERSON'S NAME: DATE INDEPENDENCE TRAINING STARTED:

CARER OR KEY WORKER'S NAME:

SECTION 1 - HEALTH

Recognising the importance of caring for health	3	2	1
Seeking medical attention when necessary	3	2	1
Maintaining a balanced diet	3	2	1
5 portions of fruit / vegetables a day	3	2	1
Reasonable level of exercise	3	2	1
Recognising stress and the effects of stress	3	2	1
Recognising effects of smoking tobacco / drugs	3	2	1
Making and attending a GP appointment	3	2	1
Family planning / sexual health	3	2	1
Making and attending a Dentist appointment	3	2	1
Using a pharmacist	3	2	1
Using a local hospital	3	2	1
Getting repeat prescriptions (if applicable)	3	2	1
Coping with minor illness / injuries	3	2	1
Using appropriate medication / dressing	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 2 - SAFETY AND SECURITY

Who to contact in an emergency: Using 999 services appropriately	3	2	1
Contacting emergency GP	3	2	1

FIRE SAFETY

Understanding of fire procedure	3	2	1
Location of fire equipment	3	2	1
Use of fire equipment	3	2	1
Dealing with small fires	3	2	1
Knowledge of electrical fires	3	2	1
Awareness of hazards of smoking tobacco / drugs	3	2	1
Basic First Aid knowledge	3	2	1

SECURITY

Locking windows and doors	3	2	1
Looking after money / valuables (a) Inside house	3	2	1
(b) Outside house	3	2	1
Visitors to the house: (a) Asking officials for identity cards	3	2	1
(b) The number of friends in at any one time	3	2	1
Not leaving people alone in the house	3	2	1
Personal safety outside the home: (a) Avoiding lonely places at night	3	2	1
Carrying emergency money and information	3	2	1
Coping with unwanted attention from others	3	2	1
Safe transport home in the evening	3	2	1
Importance of taking out Contents Insurance	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 3 - FOOD

SHOPPING

Budgeting for food	3	2	1
Planning what to buy and how much to buy	3	2	1
Buying good quality food	3	2	1
Checking sell by dates	3	2	1
Avoiding running out of food	3	2	1

KITCHEN KNOWLEDGE

Kitchen hygiene	3	2	1
Kitchen safety (Handling knives etc)	3	2	1

FOOD STORAGE

What goes where	3	2	1
Sell by dates	3	2	1
Using a fridge	3	2	1
Using freezer	3	2	1

COOKING

Using cooker and grill	3	2	1
Oven	3	2	1
Microwave	3	2	1
Using Recipes	3	2	1
General cooking skills	3	2	1

CARE OF KITCHEN EQUIPMENTS

General washing up	3	2	1

Hard to clean items	3	2	1
Storage of kitchen items	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 4 - CLOTHING AND LAUNDERING

Buying clothes	3	2	1
Dressing appropriately e.g. for the weather	3	2	1
General care of clothing	3	2	1
Sorting of laundry	3	2	1
Reading clothes labels	3	2	1

NON MACHINE LAUNDRY

Removal of stains	3	2	1
Hand washing	3	2	1
Arranging of dry cleaning	3	2	1

MACHINE LAUNDRY

Which programme to use	3	2	1
Soap powders and conditioners	3	2	1
Spinning	3	2	1
Using a tumble drier	3	2	1

IRONING

General ironing skills	3	2	1

Awareness of safety issues	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 5 - PERSONAL HYGIENE:

Showering / bathing	3	2	1
General personal cleanliness	3	2	1
Washing bed linen, towels etc	3	2	1
Dental care	3	2	1
Opticians	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 6 - HOUSEHOLD

CLEANING

Showers, baths, sinks, toilets	3	2	1
Kitchen surfaces	3	2	1
Oven, microwave, fridge and freezer	3	2	1
Floors	3	2	1
Furnishing (upholstery, curtains)	3	2	1
Dustbin areas	3	2	1

USE OF CLEANING ITEMS

Hoover (changing bags)	3	2	1
Mops	3	2	1
General cleaning materials	3	2	1
Hazardous materials	3	2	1
Garden maintenance	3	2	1

MINOR HOUSEHOLD REPAIRS

Checking fuses	3	2	1
Changing light bulbs	3	2	1
Unblocking sinks	3	2	1
Wiring a plug	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 7 - MONEY

BUDGETING

Awareness of essential expenses	3	2	1
Weekly budgeting	3	2	1
Budgeting for large items	3	2	1
Saving	3	2	1
Avoiding debt	3	2	1

UNDERSTANDING BENEFITS

Address / phone number of relevant offices	3	2	1
Who to ask for help with benefits	3	2	1
Who to ask for help with money problems	3	2	1
Working with the DWP	3	2	1
How / Where would you pay your rent	3	2	1
Payments of other bills	3	2	1

USING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Post office	3	2	1
Filling out forms	3	2	1
Using postal orders	3	2	1
Using Banks	3	2	1
Using Cash point	3	2	1
Understanding insurance	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 8 - ORIENTATION:

Knowing essential places [GP, Job Centre, Hospital]	3	2	1
Using Public transport, including Tube	3	2	1
Understanding time tables	3	2	1

LETTER WRITING

Personal letters	3	2	1
Official letters	3	2	1
Making appointments	3	2	1

ORGANISATION

Forward planning, next week, fortnight, month	3	2	1
Importance of keeping appointments	3	2	1
Punctuality	3	2	1
Using a diary / calendar	3	2	1
Informing others of changes in plan	3	2	1
Keeping important papers/documents safely	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 9 – COLLEGE / TRAINING / EMPLOYMENT

Importance of attending college / training	3	2	1
Importance of engaging with the Job Centre	3	2	1
Job seeking where to look for work	3	2	1
Filing in application forms	3	2	1
Writing a CV	3	2	1
Dealing with interviews	3	2	1
Presentation Skills including – clothing	3	2	1
Where to find information on college courses	3	2	1
Financial support while doing college courses	3	2	1
Career planning/relevant courses	3	2	1
Voluntary work	3	2	1
Getting a reference	3	2	1

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK e.g

Union /not being exploited /wrongful dismissal	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 10 - LEISURE TIME

Understanding importance of personal space and privacy	3	2	1
Being safe when socialising	3	2	1
Meeting people e.g new groups	3	2	1
Using community facilities	3	2	1
Developing an interest / leisure activity	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 11 - PERSONAL SKILLS

Awareness of consequences of action and behaviour	3	2	1
Self esteem/self confidence	3	2	1
Being realistic about future options	3	2	1
Having personal goals to work towards	3	2	1
Ability to use time spent alone	3	2	1
Coping with stress	3	2	1
Coping with anxiety	3	2	1
Coping with frustration	3	2	1
Coping with disappointments	3	2	1
Accepting support when necessary	3	2	1
Accepting constructive feedback	3	2	1
Understanding of where to go for support with problems	3	2	1
Ability to negotiate appropriately	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 12 - SOCIAL SKILLS

Respect for others privacy	3	2	1
Understanding of equality	3	2	1
Understanding of being assertive	3	2	1
Ability to speak up if problems occur	3	2	1
Ability to listen to others point of view	3	2	1
Consideration for others if necessary	3	2	1
Ability to help others if necessary	3	2	1
Co-operating with reasonable requests	3	2	1
Avoiding being involved with others conflict	3	2	1
Behaving appropriately to the opposite sex	3	2	1
Maintaining friendship	3	2	1
Ability to resolve disagreements with friends / others	3	2	1
Relating appropriately to peers/colleagues	3	2	1
Relating appropriately to people in authority	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 13 - YOUR RIGHTS / LEGAL ISSUES

Awareness of legal rights if arrested	3	2	1
Where to go for legal representation	3	2	1
Your rights in care	3	2	1
Knowing how and when to use the complaints procedure	3	2	1
Consumer rights (eg: purchasing goods / tenant rights)	3	2	1
Knowing where to go for advice / support	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 14 - CULTURAL IDENTITY

Means of ID and awareness of its importance	3	2	1
Awareness of own culture and race	3	2	1
Awareness of own culture community centres / groups	3	2	1
Knowledge of own religion places of faith	3	2	1
Awareness of and respect for different cultures and races	3	2	1
Understanding of equal opportunities	3	2	1
Awareness of personal history and where to go for more information	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

SECTION 15 - PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Knowledge and use of contraception	3	2	1
Awareness of how / where to obtain contraception	3	2	1
Awareness of safe sex / HIV / AIDS	3	2	1
Awareness of drug issues	3	2	1
Awareness of alcohol abuse	3	2	1
Awareness of sexuality / gender	3	2	1
Using family and friends for support	3	2	1
Awareness of the implications of mother / fatherhood	3	2	1

Identify where the young person is at in this area.

Summary of achievement in this area:

Further actions:

INDEPENDENCE SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

YOUNG PERSON'S NAME: **DATE INDEPENDENCE TRAINING COMPLETED:**

SECTION	ACTIVITY DETAILS BEING OBSERVED	OUTCOME AND PLAN FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

INDEPENDENCE SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS CONTINUED.

SECTION	ACTIVITY DETAILS BEING OBSERVED	OUTCOME AND PLAN FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX 3: PAN LONDON CARE LEAVERS COMPACT

The-Pan-London-Care-Leavers-Compact-Briefing-February-23-FINAL.pdf