Local Offer for Care Leavers 2019-20

Enfield Council Leaving Care Service

020 8379 3418

www.enfield.gov.uk
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Local offer to Enfield care leavers

Welcome from Councillor Achilleas Georgiou, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

Welcome to Enfield’s Local Offer for Care Leavers, which sets out the support that you are entitled to when you leave care. We will update this information regularly as new services and entitlements are agreed. Your Personal Advisor will talk to you about the local offer and if English is not your first language, or if you have communication difficulties, we will arrange for you to have a copy of this information in a format you can access. A link to the local offer will be accessible through the new Enfield Council Children’s Services Portal when it goes live in spring 2019.

You are an Enfield care leaver if you have been looked after by Enfield Council for a period of 13 weeks after your 14th birthday with at least one day of this being after your 16th birthday. Many young people legally ‘leave care’ when they reach 18 but others may ‘leave care’ any time after their 16th birthday if they stop being looked after. In some circumstances you may also get support from the leaving care team if you were in care in Enfield for shorter periods of time between 14 and 18 years of age.

You are also a care leaver if you were an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child who is in the process of seeking to remain in the country.

If you are unsure about whether you qualify for leaving care support, please contact our service on 020 8379 3418 for advice.

We know that the transition to adulthood can be a challenging time. You will be acquiring the practical skills to prepare you for independent living, for example cooking, laundry, budgeting and looking after your health. However, it will be just as important for you to be able to manage emotionally with all the changes and challenges that adult life brings.

You will have been involved in developing your regular Pathway Plans. These are an important part of your preparation for independence and will consider a range of areas which are important to you. Each plan sets out the goals you agreed you want to meet and the support that we will provide to help you fulfil these.

If you require further support between the ages of 21 and 25, then we will undertake an assessment with you to consider what type of assistance you need. There may be a further period of pathway planning with an allocated Personal Advisor or one-off support to deal with a specific issue.
Support we must give you by law

- You can ask to have support from the Leaving Care Service until you are 25 years old
- Your pathway plan will be written by your Personal Advisor after consultation with you and the people important to you. This will be reviewed regularly so that it is kept up to date
- You will be involved in all decisions about your plan for leaving care and you have the right to support from an independent advocate if you are thinking of challenging the decisions about the care we give you
- You can make a complaint or give a compliment about the service you have received.
- We must provide you with suitable accommodation until you are 18 years old
- You can continue to live with your foster carer for up to three years from the age of 18 if this is what you and your carer want and the service agrees it is the right thing for you

Further Support Enfield offers you

Over the next few pages we have outlined the support we can provide you in addition to the above support we must provide by law when you leave care
Local offer to Enfield care leavers

While you are under the age of 18, if you are in semi-independent accommodation, we will support you by providing living expenses at the same level as you would receive if you were on benefits. We will also pay for your accommodation costs.

Once you turn 18 you will pay for, or contribute towards, the costs of your accommodation and other expenses and if you are not working then your Personal Advisor will help you to apply for the relevant benefits. If you are working, then they will support you to work out what benefits you may be able to apply for if you are on a low income. You will receive assistance in sorting out your post 18 finances from your Personal Advisor, key worker of foster carer.

We will continue to financially support you for up to 4 weeks whilst your benefits claim is assessed, and we will help you to work with the benefits team to claim hardship payments if you need them. We can also provide you with exceptional financial support in emergencies.

We will also help you open a bank account and invite you to attend one of the money management courses regularly run by KRATOS, the Enfield Children in Care Council.

Birthday allowances
Up until the age of 21 we will give you money for gifts and celebrations for as long as you are engaging with the Leaving Care Service. If you are in foster care, then your foster carer will buy you a present.

Documents
It is very important that you have proper identification available when you become an adult and we will ensure that you have a passport, or other form of identification, by the time you leave care. We will also make sure that you have any other documents including your birth certificate, and your national insurance number so that you can prove who you are when you are applying for jobs or if you claim any benefits.

Setting up home allowance
We will provide you with a setting up home allowance of up to £2,100 when you first move into your own independent accommodation. Your Personal Advisor will help you to think about what you need and how to make the best use of the money. In some circumstances you may be able to use some of the setting up home entitlement when you move into Semi-independent accommodation.
**Education**

If you want to go into training or education, then we will support you to find the right course and to buy any essential equipment you need.

If you want to go to university and have been able to get the grades you need, we will provide you with financial support in addition to your student loan and bursary. The financial support we provide is usually paid termly to help towards your accommodation costs.

If you are engaging with training and need financial support to pay for specialist equipment or clothing, we can provide funding to help with the cost. Your Personal Advisor will discuss this with you.

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**Supporting your health and well-being**

Enfield’s Health and Education Access and Resource Team (HEART) promotes the health, wellbeing and education of children and young people in care. We have specialist nurses who focus on our looked after children and young people and you will have had annual medical assessments to make sure that all your health needs were identified and met. A Health Passport has been designed with the help of the Children in Care Council, to record all your health-related information and contacts in one easy to reference location. This will be given to you when you leave care so that you always have a copy of your health history to use whenever you need it. The Passport also includes contact details for services you may find helpful in the future. If you have specific health needs then, once you have left care, your Personal Advisor will give you help and advice on how to access the necessary health services for any ongoing health issues.

Enfield has a dedicated clinical therapeutic service (HEART CAMHS) for looked after young people up to the age of 18. If you need therapeutic support with your emotional wellbeing once you have left care, then your Personal Advisor can assist you to access community services through your GP or the local voluntary sector.

If you have more significant health or emotional wellbeing problems, and need ongoing support from a specialist team, you will receive this from the Council’s adult services. You will be supported through this transition to adult services by your leaving care worker who will continue to work alongside you and adult services until you reach at least 21 years old, or until you are 25 years old if you request this.
**Relationships and networks**

**Support networks**
It is important for you to develop a strong support network before you leave care as this will stop you feeling isolated when you move to your own accommodation. Your Personal Advisor will be happy to talk with you about your family, your friendships and your personal relationships and can help you to try and maintain or resume contact with people who are special to you.

Many of the members of KRATOS, the Children in Care Council have found belonging to this group an excellent way to make lasting friendships which have supported them long after they have left care.

**Sexual health clinics**
Confidential sexual health advice from the Sexual Health Outreach Nurse is available to you at Triangle House up to age 19. Sessions can include advice on contraception, sexual transmitted infections, pregnancy and other sexual health matters. Your Personal Advisor can tell you when the next session is due to take place and how you can make an appointment to see the nurse. When you are over 19, you can be supported to access universal sexual health services.

**Immigration and Asylum**
You may have come into care as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child or young person. If so, there are a range of additional support services available to you. These include English classes (ESOL), interpreters, help with your immigration claim and support groups. You will be entitled to the same support as any other care leaver, but this will be tailored to acknowledge that your circumstances when you are 18 and over are unlikely to be clear. As you will have made a claim for asylum/leave to remain at the Home Office, we will work with you to plan for all the different possible outcomes of your asylum or immigration application.

We will ensure that you receive the full range of leaving care support if you have been granted any form of leave to remain in the UK. We will also work with you to make sure that you are prepared for a return to your country of origin if you have exhausted your appeal rights to stay here. The laws surrounding young people who have exhausted all their rights of appeal are under review. Currently, if you are over 18 and under 21, with no legal right to be in the country and no outstanding application at the Home Office, then a Human Rights Assessment will be completed to determine if you are still eligible for financial support from the leaving care service. If not, then you will be referred for support from the National Asylum Support Service.

**Becoming a parent**
If you or your partner become pregnant, your Personal Advisor will undertake a pre-birth assessment alongside a social work colleague from the team. The assessment will look at what support you may benefit from to care for your baby such as access to the family nurse partnership or local services for young children.
Supporting you into education, training or employment

The leaving care service works closely with the Virtual School for looked after children and young people to offer a range of services to support you into education, employment and training. Many young people aged between 16-18 are engaged in full time education. If you prefer to pursue a different pathway than there are many other opportunities available. These include literacy and numeracy courses, short courses in a range of additional subjects, apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational college courses. A large number of the options available to you as a care leaver have been specifically designed to provide a more supportive introduction to the world of adult learning and employment. If you have special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) additional support, advice and guidance is available.

For young people who have become parents, we have identified training providers that offer free childcare to young people who want to get back into employment. The Virtual School will provide additional advice and guidance from the specialist education psychologist if this is required. If you have difficulties with your communication skills, you can be assessed and supported by a speech and language specialist.

If you are over the age of 18 and in education and training you can apply for a student oyster card. The service is constantly expanding the menu of education and training options available to care leavers as we are committed to offering you a career pathway which can be tailored to your own interests and abilities.
Supporting care leavers with accommodation

Up until you reach 18, if you are still looked after, you will be provided with somewhere suitable to live, a foster placement, a residential unit or semi-independent supported accommodation. If you are still in foster care when you reach 18, you may be supported to stay on in your placement if you, your carer(s) and the service feel this is the best option for you. A foster placement for a young person age 18 and over is called a Staying Put arrangement and can last for between 1 and 3 years.

If you feel you are ready to move into your own tenancy before the age of 21, your circumstances will be discussed at the leaving care housing tenancy nomination panel and you are very welcome to attend the meeting where this happens. Agreeing to nominate you for your own Council property will be the Panel’s decision, based on your readiness to manage your own tenancy. The panel will consider your ability to budget, to sustain a regular income and to refrain from anti-social behaviour.

If you are living in a placement outside the Enfield area, you may not be able to get priority access to the local Housing Services for Council accommodation in that area. If this is the case your Personal Advisor will discuss your options, which could include being supported into local privately rented accommodation or a return to Enfield where you could access local council housing.

Enfield care leavers on a low income are exempt from contributing to their Enfield council tax until the age of 25. If you are living out of the borough then your Personal Advisor will be able to arrange for you to have the funding to cover the cost of Council tax.

We will work hard to prevent any care leaver from becoming homeless, but if the local support arrangements are not able to prevent this, we will refer you to the housing department in the relevant Local Authority so that further assistance can be provided.
Participation in society

Many care leavers are members of KRATOS - Enfield’s Children in Care Council. There are fortnightly sessions to support care leavers in areas including money management, cooking, budgeting and health. This group gives feedback about services and participates in consultations on a wide range of issues. Older members of the group also get involved in peer mentoring the younger members and act as really important role models.

Some members take part in interviews for people applying to work in Children's Services. These participation opportunities make sure that the views of children and young people, both in and leaving care, help shape the strategies and services that affect them. The group is supported by a dedicated participation consultation officer who is part of the Virtual School. Group members attend cross London children in care council meetings and contribute to the ongoing dialogue around corporate parenting both locally and nationally.

The group also runs lots of social activities and recent events have included theatre trips and a ‘chef school’ training course. You do not need to be a member of KRATOS to get involved in participation. Speak to your Personal Advisor about other opportunities to have your say.

We encourage all our care leavers to be active members of society and experience opportunities in life that other young adults have. We can help you participate in your community in the following ways:

• Provide information on groups and clubs you may wish to join to take your interests further
• Inform you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in.
• Inform you about relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter based on your talents and interests.

Help you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can get involved in voting at forthcoming elections.

• Get you on unique personal development opportunities such a LIFE - an interactive experience for young people run by the London Fire Brigade to learn transferable skills through firefighting activities.
Support if you have additional needs (SEND)

Enfield’s Local Offer for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) can be found at www.enfield.gov.uk/SEND. It includes provision for young people up to the age of 25. The Joint Service for Disabled Children works with children and young people up to the age of 17 years inclusive. Young people with complex and severe disabilities may be eligible for services from adult social care based on the criteria set under the Care Act 2014.

The Moving On pathway explains what the process is for young people aged 14 to 18 years and 19 to 25 years with disabilities. Both pathways show the options and support provided to young people (who meet the Care Act 2014 eligibility criteria) as you move from childhood to adulthood.

Pathways to employment
You can access various pathways to employment from age 16. These include routes to further education, apprenticeships, vocational training and employment.

Young people with SEND can also access supported internship programmes that recognise you are able to work but need extra support to do so.

Moving On pathway for young people aged 14 to 18 years

Moving On pathway for young people aged 19 to 25 years
Enfield Council Leaving Care Team
Triangle House
305-313 Green Lanes
Palmers Green N13 4YB

Tel: 020 8379 3418
www.enfield.gov.uk