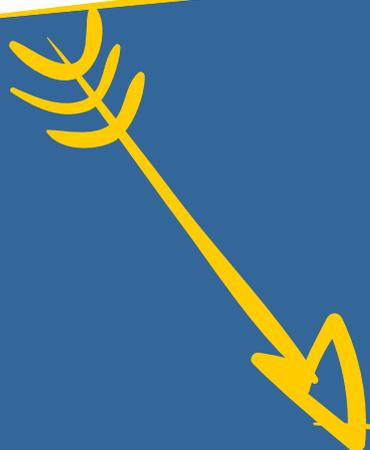


ARE YOU  
LEAVING CARE?



THEN THIS GUIDE  
IS FOR YOU



THE LONDON BOROUGH

Bromley Care Leavers Local Offer

[www.bromley.gov.uk/careleavers](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/careleavers)

# **THIS BOOKLET TELLS YOU ABOUT ALL THE SUPPORT THAT WE HAVE IN BROMLEY FOR YOU AS A CARE LEAVER.**

**We know that it is a big step when you move out of care and start living on your own or with friends.**

**Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you. We want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help.**

**We have spoken to care leavers about the contents of this booklet, getting their views about what should be in it, and what it should look like.**



## WHO IS A CARE LEAVER?

To be able to get the support set out in this booklet, you must have been:

- in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16th birthday) or
- in care for 13 weeks after your 16th birthday

If you are not sure whether you qualify for support, then ask your personal adviser.

We have produced a document called 'Sorted and Supported in Bromley' in partnership with a children's charity to set out your rights and entitlements. This document is available online at [www.bromley.gov.uk/careleavers](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/careleavers) or you can contact the Leaving Care Team to request a copy.



Your personal adviser will talk with you about the information in this booklet.

# THE SUPPORT WE WILL PROVIDE



**You will be able to ask to have support from your young person's adviser up to the age of 25 whether you are in education or training or not. This is to try to make sure care leavers receive similar support to young adults who live with their families.**

Your young person's adviser is there to help you to prepare to live more independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care. Young person's advisers get involved in discussions about your needs and your pathway plan.

Your pathway plan is written by the local authority after consultation with you and important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals, and exactly what support you will receive from us. We review your pathway plan with you regularly so that it is kept up-to-date. If there are major changes for you, we will review it more often.

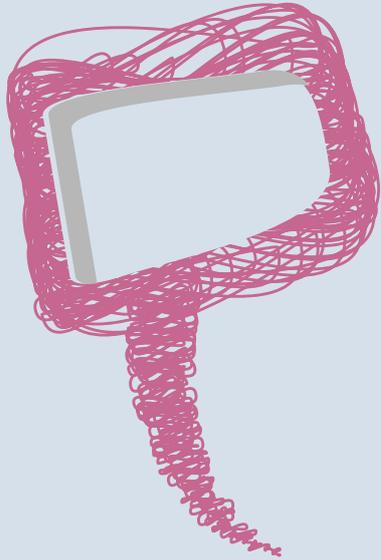
We will try to make sure you keep the same personal adviser, though this will not always be possible. The amount of support that you receive from your young person's adviser will depend on your circumstances.



Your leaving care team will consider with you what extra support you may need. You might, for example, need extra support because:

- You have special educational needs or a disability.
- You were an unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unclear.
- You are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with the criminal justice system;
- You are a young parent; or
- You are going through a difficult time in your personal life.

**YOUR RIGHT TO BE HEARD  
AND TAKEN SERIOUSLY**



**You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. You have a right to support from an independent advocate if you are thinking about challenging decisions about the care we give you.**

Independent advocates can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. They are separate from Children's Services.

In Bromley our **advocacy service** is independent from the council. It is an organisation called Advocacy For All. You do not need to arrange this contact through your worker. You can contact them by phone on **0345 310 1812** or visit **[www.advocacyforbromley.org](http://www.advocacyforbromley.org)**.

In Bromley there is a **Care Leavers Forum**, which meets regularly and helps us to improve our offer to young people. We will provide information about meetings and activities of this group so you can decide whether to get involved.

You have a right to **see the information we keep about you**, including the files and records written about you when you were in care. You can speak to your worker about how to access this information.

**We will encourage you to remain in care until you are 18. Most young people still live at home with their families at this age.**

If you choose to leave care before age 18, we will provide you with suitable accommodation.

**LEAVING CARE BEFORE  
TURNING 18**



**SUPPORT TO ENGAGE IN EDUCATION,  
EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING**

**We want to make sure every young person leaving care has the support to achieve their goals in life.**

We will provide you with assistance with expenses linked with employment, education and training. In particular:

- Our higher education offer includes a bursary of £2,000 per year, and a further contribution of £6,000 per year for books, rent and course materials.
- We will provide somewhere for you to stay during University holidays (or funding for this if you would prefer to make your own arrangements) if you are in HE or in residential further education.
- We work closely with others to promote opportunities and will encourage you to work with us, and our partners such as the Job Centre, Bromley Enterprise Business Partnership, and the Targeted Youth Support Service.



## ACCOMMODATION

**If you are aged over 18, your personal adviser will help you to find suitable accommodation.**

This might involve:



Making sure that you are registered with Bromley's housing team or another local authority if your circumstances allow you to be eligible for housing elsewhere

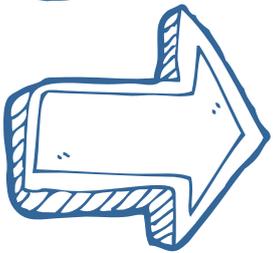


Working closely with Bromley's housing team to come up with suitable housing options for you, including supported accommodation if you are not ready to live independently or don't want to have your own tenancy



If this is what you and your foster carers want, supporting you to remain with your foster carers under what's called a 'Staying Put' arrangement. This can last until you are 21. Our Staying Put policy is available to your foster carer and you. We will visit you and your carers to explain what this means to you before your 18th birthday

**OTHER SUPPORT  
WE OFFER**



-  Support to access different housing options including arrangements such as 'trainer' type accommodation with staff support, and social housing (this is accommodation managed by a housing association)
-  Advice about holding down a tenancy, including avoiding rent or Council Tax arrears, paying bills and budgeting. We know it can be very hard having your own place for the first time. We will do whatever we can to ease the pressures on you
-  Helping you to claim universal credit and other benefits if you are eligible
-  Practical support with moving into and furnishing your new home
-  Supporting you if you have a housing crisis, including helping if you are threatened with losing, or actually lose, your tenancy



## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

**We want you to succeed in your education, training and employment. We will ask you how you are doing and be ready to celebrate your achievements with you.**

We will offer you:



Careers information and advice



If you attend University, a bursary of £2,000 to help with the cost of books and materials and considerable additional financial support



Help to apply to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, which provides support for you to attend college



Support to meet your transport costs when travelling to training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews



Support to buy tools, equipment, essential clothing, and books



Support if you choose to go to university, such as helping you obtain tuition fees and maintenance loans, travel costs at the start and end of term, and making sure you have somewhere to live during the holidays. We will help you choose the right course and university that matches your talents and interests



Opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and employment within the council and information about opportunities with a wide range of other employers in Bromley and elsewhere



The chance to attend and help organise celebration events when young people achieve milestones in education, training, employment or their personal life



## FINANCES

**We will try to help you financially, in a similar way to how parents would support their own children.**

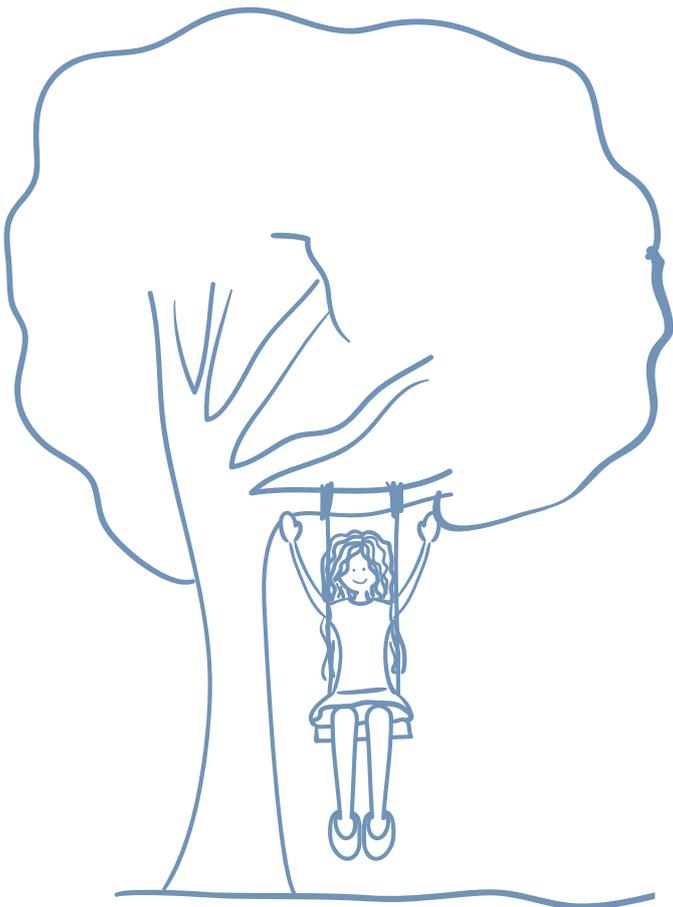
Our help includes:

-  Providing a leaving care grant to help you buy essential things when moving into your own home, of up to £2,500
-  Providing you with access to our budgeting programme and information about money management courses where you live and online
-  Information on how to access your savings, if you have them
-  Support to open a bank account
-  Making sure you get the right type of discounts for public transport in London through an Oyster or Zip Card
-  Support to obtain important identification documents, such as a passport and/or provisional driving licence, before your 18th birthday
-  Support to get your National Insurance number
-  Exceptional financial support in emergencies
-  Providing a financial gift at birthdays and Christmas or other celebrations

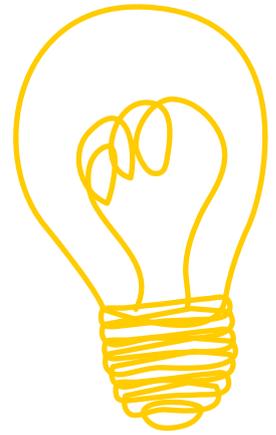


**As well as support from a Personal Adviser, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, such as:**

-  Providing you with a mentor/peer mentor from Bromley's mentoring service
-  Where appropriate, continuing to support contact with the 'Independent Visitor' you had while you were in care
-  Helping you to maintain or regain contact with people special to you or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers or social workers
-  Supporting you to find and make contact with family members if you have come from another country



## 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 can help by:



Providing information on groups and clubs you may wish to join, or interests that you enjoy



Informing you about relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your talents and interests



Encouraging and helping you to enrol on the Electoral Register, so you can vote in elections



Offering a tailor made career pathway that could include work experience, apprenticeship, training or education



Informing you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in and benefit from



Informing you about, and possibly helping with the cost of, leisure activities



Giving you advice and helping you to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver

# WHO CAN HELP?

## YOUR YOUNG PERSON'S ADVISER

Your worker will provide their mobile number to you, and explain how to reach another member of staff if they are not available

### LEAVING CARE TEAM

020 8313 4108

### HEALTH TEAM

Our health team can provide support and advice about your records

### CARE LEAVERS' FORUM

020 8313 4259

### HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION TEAM

020 8461 7721

### EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING SUPPORT

020 8313 4108

### DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SENIOR MANAGERS

Ask your worker for the best way to get in touch

There are many other places you can go for help and these are a few organisations that help care leavers:

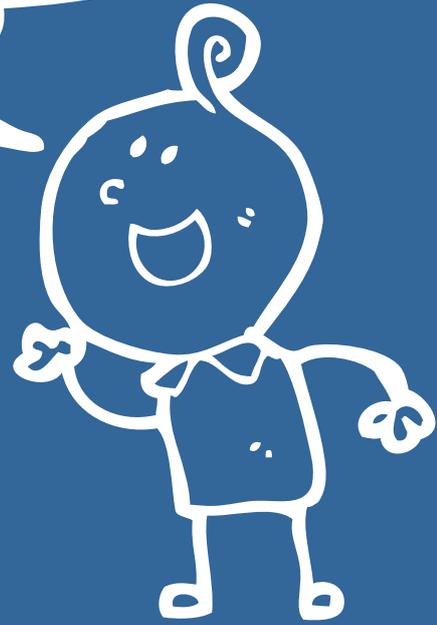
- **Princes Trust**  
[www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)
- **Care Leavers' Foundation**  
[www.thecareleaversfoundation.org](http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org)
- **Become**  
[www.becomecharity.org.uk](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk)  
0800 023 2033

### Other services contact details

- **For support with drugs/alcohol:**  
[www.changegrowlive.org/young-people/bromley-changes](http://www.changegrowlive.org/young-people/bromley-changes)
- **For support with sexual health:**  
[www.sexualhealthbromley.co.uk](http://www.sexualhealthbromley.co.uk)
- **Bromley Children Project:**  
[www.bromley.gov.uk/bromleychildrenproject](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bromleychildrenproject)
- **For advice and support:**  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- **Refugee Council:**  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)



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*Produced by:*

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**LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY**  
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