

Our Local Offer for care leavers

Wokingham Borough Council

2018



Q: What's a 'Local Offer'?

A: Services and support that your council and others will provide for you as a care leaver.

What does it mean to be a care leaver?

- To be able to get the help and support in this document you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16th birthday) or for 13 weeks after your 16th birthday. If you're not sure, your social worker or personal advisor can help you work this out.
- If you've lived or are living with a family member, relative or friend, under a Special Guardianship Order, you'll also receive our support.
- If you were adopted and you've come back into care for at least 13 weeks you'll also receive our support.
- Or if you've been looked after by Wokingham Borough Council as an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, you'll also receive our support.

Q: What's in the Local Offer?

A: Support with your accommodation; education, training & employment; health & wellbeing; relationships and participation in society.

Housing – the basics

- Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) believes that you should always have a roof over your head and somewhere safe and suitable to live, in or out of the area.
- If you're between 16-17 years old we'll make sure you have a suitable place to live. This could mean with a foster carer or in a home with support on hand. When you reach 18, you can continue to live with your foster carer, under what is called a 'Staying Put' arrangement.
- If you're over 18 years old we'll give you advice and support in helping you find a suitable place to live. Don't worry as you'll have a Personal Advisor to help you every step of the way.
- You will only be offered a place to live independently when you can prove you're ready to live alone as it's a big step to take and we want you to succeed.

Housing – what our support for you includes

- We'll make sure you know how to apply for any benefits you're entitled to so you can pay for food, rent and bills.
- A Leaving Care Grant of up to £2,000 will also be provided which is used to set up your home so you can afford basics like furniture, a bed, washing machine and furnishings.
- We'll give you practical support in helping you to move in, look after and maintain your home.
- Advice and support will be given about managing your money and your tenancy (the agreement between you and your landlord).
- You'll be invited to workshops so that you know more about being able to live independently successfully.

Housing – what support for you includes

- In June 2018, a decision was made that all care leavers living in the Wokingham Borough Council area aged between 18-21, do not have to pay council tax.
- This offer is just for care leavers as we know it can be hard paying lots of different bills and we know that council tax debt can build up for our young people.
- Your Personal Advisor will support you to manage your money so that when the time comes for you to pay council tax after your 21st birthday, you'll feel confident and ready.

Education, Training & Employment

- We'll encourage and support you to be able to study, train or work.
- We can help you seek career's advice, prepare a CV and find a job and we offer monthly drop-in sessions with 'Elevate'- a service to help you find a job, training or an apprenticeship.
- If you've got the dream to go to University we'll help you with University fees, travel and make sure you have some where to live both at University and during the holidays.
- We'll help you build the confidence to be able to attend job interviews or start a new course.

Q: What does 'being independent' mean?

A: Not having to rely on others for your needs
but knowing where to turn to when you do need support.

Independence

- Care leavers will be invited to our tailor made Independent Life Skills Workshops which will teach you the skills to be able to live independently.
- We know you can spend money, but can you save?
- Do you know what a 'tenancy' is?
- What happens if you can't afford to pay your rent?
- Who can I turn to in an emergency?
- What are my rights as a tenant?

Health & Wellbeing

- Your Personal Advisor can advise and support you with:
 - Information on healthy living.
 - Registering with a GP and Dentist.
 - Moving on from CAMHS to adult services.
 - Accessing other mental health support in the area.
 - Providing you information about counselling services that are available in your area.
 - Provide information about health drop-in centers and sexual health clinics.
 - Provide information and support in relation to LGTBOQ matters

Q: What's a Personal Advisor?

A: Someone there to help you make the best decisions for you as you move from being a young person to an adult.

Relationships

- You've come into care for a reason which would have involved some loss and difficult times. You could be finding day to day life difficult as your past experience can still have an effect on you as you become a young adult.
- This means the relationships you have with yourself and with others could look different to what you may see on other young people's Instagram and Facebook feeds.
- As your Personal Advisor gets to know you better they'll be able to not only support you emotionally but also point you in the right direction for getting the right help at the right time.
- We'll be patient and supportive, but also gently challenge you and share how you can change your relationships with yourself and others for the better.

Participation in society

- This basically means being able to take part in the wider world and not feel isolated and alone.
- We'll give you information about groups and activities in your area. This includes weekly workshops and sessions, an annual BBQ and an outdoor activity event.
- Support you to access education, training and/or employment.
- Support you to access local leisure and gym activities; including a free gym pass.
- Support you to take part in activities that you've got an interest in.

Keeping Safe

- We'll support and encourage you to make safe lifestyle choices.
- If you have got into trouble with the law, we'll continue to support you. If you've gone to prison we'll visit you and support you to make the changes you need to make sure you live a healthy, happy and safe life.
- If you're struggling with drug and/or alcohol use, we'll work closely with other agencies who can support you with this.

Our promise to you as Care Leavers

We will:

- Support you to find a home where you belong.
- Make sure you get an excellent education.
- Help you have a healthy lifestyle.
- Make sure you have fun.
- Respect you, listen to you and take what you say seriously.
- Help and support you as you become young adults.
- We will not forget about you.

A Thank You

Some of Wokingham's care leavers were given the chance to tell us what and how they need help, to make becoming an adult easier.

Their feedback has shaped our local offer and we'd like to thank them all for taking part and giving us their views.

We want to continue to listen to our care leavers views to make sure our services meet your needs, rather than our views of what you need, so we'd love to hear from you if you have any ideas of your own.

Please ring Here4U on 0118 9088386 or

Email xxx@wokingham.gov.uk

Copies of this document can be provided in large print, easy read, Braille or in other languages. Please telephone 0118 9088386 and ask to speak with a Personal Advisor for an alternative format.





This presentation
has been produced
by Here4U.

Here4U is Wokingham's Children in
Care service and we:

- Act as 'a corporate parent' to make
sure care leavers are safe and
supported until the age of 25 years.
- Give care leavers the skills and
opportunities to succeed in life.
- May not always be able to give you
what you want but we'll listen to and
respect your views.
- Will be there when things get tough
as well as celebrate with you when
things go well.

For more information about the Care
Leavers Service please contact
Here4u on **0118 9088386** and ask to
speak with a Personal Advisor.