



# Reach for the stars!

Our Local Offer for  
Brighton & Hove care leavers



# Reach for the stars!

You may be leaving care or have left care. In either case we want you to feel safe and supported **and to know that we care about you.**

As you prepare for independence, we want to make sure you receive the advice and support you need to be successful and to achieve your potential.

We have taken advice from some of our care leavers in order to develop a package of support and services for young people leaving care in Brighton & Hove. This is called our Local Offer.

We will continue to consult with young people in care and care leavers so that we can provide the service you need and will need in future.



If the answer to both these questions is **'yes'**, then this leaflet **will help you.** It tells you about the support on offer to you as someone aged between 16 and 25 who has been in care but who has now left care.

We know you have the potential to achieve great things.

We want to continue to work with you to help you **reach for the stars** – and achieve the best in your life.



Through our **Local Offer** we are committed to working with you to:

- develop healthy and safe relationships
- promote your physical and emotional health and well-being
- access education, training and employment opportunities
- have financial support and security
- have access to high quality supported accommodation
- prepare you for independent living and support you into your own tenancy.

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# Relationships



We believe it is important to feel supported and have positive and healthy relationships.

**We are committed to supporting you to achieve this:**

## Family contact

**We will work with you to promote your relationships with your family.** In some cases, we can help you with travel costs to have contact with immediate family members.

**We will give you support and advice** to help you maintain or regain relationships with friends, family or previous carers.

**We will provide advice and referrals to more specialist agencies in your local area** who can help you learn about building and maintaining positive, healthy relationships.

## Parents

**If you are parent – or become one – we will support you to care for your child safely.** This includes access to an early parenting assessment programme (known as an EPAP) if you want it.

This is a specialist team of social workers based in a children's centre. They offer parents a chance to prepare for the birth of their baby and support them after the birth with a programme of baby-focused work, teaching and guidance.

## Social worker support

Between the ages of 16 and 18 your social worker will continue to work with you. Your social worker will meet with you in your accommodation / placement at least every six weeks, or every three months if you have been living there for over a year and there are no concerns about this accommodation.

Around your 16th birthday your social worker will develop a 'Pathway Plan' with you. This will replace your care plan and will be based on an assessment of your needs. Your plan will look at important things such as:

- getting ready to leave care
- where you live
- health issues
- employment, education and training opportunities
- developing independent living skills such as budgeting, cooking etc.



As you approach your 18th birthday your social worker will introduce you to a colleague in the leaving care team who will be your **personal adviser (known as a PA)**. If you are supported by the Disability Service you may continue to have a social worker alongside your PA.

You will be entitled to support from your PA up to the age of 25. We will continue to care about you and support you even though you are an adult.



## There for you

**Your PA will be there for you.** They will offer support and guidance to help you with your transition into adulthood and develop your independence. They will support you if you are struggling and celebrate your successes.

Your PA will want you to be the best that you can be. This means they will help you access the support services that you need in key areas such as housing, health, employment, training and education.

Whenever possible you will keep the same PA throughout your time with the leaving care team. If your PA is on holiday or off sick and you need assistance you can contact a leaving care team duty worker. If your PA is off work for more than four weeks we will contact you and give you a different PA who will be your contact until your usual PA returns to work.



## How we will help you in terms of building supportive relationships:

- Your PA will discuss with you how often to meet and how best to keep in contact. They should see you every two months, or more often than that when required.
- In between visits you and your PA can keep in contact by phone, text, email or Facebook.
- Your PA will review and agree your pathway plan with you at least every six months.
- Your PA will be able to talk to you about support services and mentoring schemes that are available to you.
- If you had an independent visitor while you were in care you will be able to continue this contact.
- You can ask for an independent advocate if you are not happy about the support you are receiving, and we will refer you to the advocacy service.





# Education & training support

We have high aspirations for your progress in education and training. We want all our young people to thrive and learn new skills and knowledge.

**We want you to achieve your goals in life, and we will provide support to help you achieve them.**

Your PA will support you into education, employment or training. If you live in the Brighton & Hove area you can also get help from the youth employment service (YES) to access education, employment or training. If you live out of the area your PA will help put you in contact with the local YES services.

They work jointly with your PA to offer face to face support and / or online advice and guidance. This is part of the support YES offers care leavers up to the age of 25.

Care leavers who are not ready to access mainstream education or employment can access vocational training and qualifications as part of the YES Plus re-engagement programme.



## Support for 16-17 year olds

For all further education courses and some training schemes you can claim an education bursary from your college or training provider.

We will pay for all essential books, equipment, special clothing and field trips. We will also pay for your exam fees and the internet access that you need for your course.

If you don't have access to a computer, one will be provided for full-time courses where it's needed for completing coursework.

If you're on a course of more than 16 hours a week and can't get the education bursary, we'll pay £30 a week incentive allowance.

If you're on a course of less than 16 hours and not getting the education bursary, we'll pay £20 a week for 10 weeks.

After 10 weeks, this can go up to £30 a week depending on how many hours a week you are training. These incentives are paid on the same attendance conditions as the education bursary.

Where a traineeship pays less than £59 a week you will get a top-up to this amount.

If you are on the Under-18 Minimum Wage or on an apprentice wage, we will top up your earnings by 50p for every hour you work.

Any expenses you have when doing voluntary work will be repaid.

## Higher Education

If you are thinking of going to university, please let your social worker know and they will fully support you to achieve this. This will be included in your Pathway Plan and we will help you plan for this. We can arrange for a higher education student mentor to provide support around this.

Our higher education student mentors are care leavers who have graduated from university or who are still at university. They can offer advice and information about going to university – the process of applying, the different educational paths you can take to get there and the financial support available to BHCC care leavers when at university.

## Further Education & Training

Support is available for young people aged 18-25.

For further education courses and some training schemes you can claim either an education bursary or 19+ Learner Funds from your college.

If you're unable to claim either of these and you continue in full-time further education (more than 16 hours a week) we'll pay you £30 a week incentive allowance on the same attendance conditions as the education bursary.

If you're on a training course of less than 16 hours a week and can't get the education bursary, we'll pay you an incentive allowance of £20 a week for 10 weeks.

After 10 weeks, this could go up to £30 a week. This depends upon the number of training hours a week and will be paid on the same attendance conditions as the education bursary.

We will pay for books, equipment, special clothing, field trips, exam fees and internet access that are essential for your course. We will also pay for a weekly or a monthly bus pass during term time.

If you didn't receive a computer when you were 16 or 17 and you haven't got access to one – and you need one to complete coursework – we will provide one.

We will also repay any expenses you have when doing voluntary work.



## University

You will receive the following support:

- **A higher education bursary** of £670 at the start of the academic year
- **Rent** on your flat, or a shared house or your hall of residence for 52 weeks a year
- **If 'staying put' with former foster carers this arrangement can continue** with the agreement of the foster carers. It can be either full-time or weekend stays or for vacations on a daily pro-rata basis
- **We will pay for all required books, equipment, special clothing, field trips and exam fees.** If you didn't receive a computer when you were 16 or 17 and you haven't got access to one we will provide one if it is required to complete your course.
- **We will pay travel costs to university** at the beginning of each term and then home at the end of each term. We will also pay any removal costs.

Like all other students, you will need to take out a loan from the Student Loan Company to cover payment of the tuition fees. We can help you with this.

You will be responsible for repaying any loan you take out.

However, many universities give a fees discount or cash bursary to young people who are care leavers under the National Scholarship Scheme or Access to Learning Fund. We will support you to access these bursaries and/or reductions.

You will also be entitled to a student mentor if you want one. All universities have staff specifically to support care leavers. We will encourage you to make contact with these people.



# Employment



Working is a great way to earn money, increase your confidence and help you get to where you want to be in your adult life.

## We can offer you the following support:

If you are on the 18-20 years or 21+ years Minimum Wage or the Apprentice Wage there may be additional support available to encourage you to stay in that job.

If you are working while living in supported accommodation we will provide additional money up to £30 a week to offset some of the rental costs.

We'll pay for interview clothes or special clothes you need for work. We will pay your transport costs to attend interviews for employment.

As a Brighton & Hove care leaver you are guaranteed a job interview for any apprenticeships within the council. We will also discuss with you any relevant work experience you may be able to undertake within the council. We will work with colleagues in other teams to arrange this.

We will have a 'bring a care leaver to work' day twice a year. These will give you a chance to see and experience what working at Brighton & Hove City Council is like.



# Financial support

We will provide financial support and advice to help you prepare for your transition to adulthood and independence.

## Your personal adviser will help you develop your budgeting skills. Where necessary, they will also refer you to money advice services.

We have close links with the local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). If you need help claiming the benefits you are entitled to, we will help you.

While you are waiting for your benefits to come through we will pay £59 minus your service charge for four weeks. If your benefits have not arrived after this, through no fault of your own, we will give you food vouchers. We do not ask you to repay this money when you get your backdated claim.

We can refer you to Kitchen Kick Start. This is a programme for care leavers run by the voluntary organisation Food Matters.

Their workshops help you develop happy healthy eating habits for long-term independent living and learn cooking skills.

When you are ready to live independently, you are entitled to a 'Setting Up' allowance of up to £2,170. This is to help you set up home and live independently.

You'll need to agree what you need with your PA well before you move, and find out the cost of each item so these can be approved.

The allowance is also available to young people with disabilities who are not able or ready to live independently.

We will pay for:

- any documents you will need including replacement birth certificate, passport and provisional and full driving licences
- removal costs
- a TV licence
- home contents insurance policy for the first year in your own accommodation.

If you are a care leaver living on your own in Brighton & Hove (or out of the area) you don't pay council tax until your 26 years old. If you live with one other adult you will receive a 25% discount. If you live with more than one other adult the council tax bill will not be reduced.





# Accommodation

★ We want you to be happy, safe and secure.

## Support for 16-17 year olds

If you live with foster carers or in a children's home, they provide you:

- pocket money
- personal and clothing allowances
- travel costs
- birthday and Christmas presents (or other festival such as Eid al-Fitr) and holiday costs

If you live in supported lodgings you get a personal allowance of £38 a week and a weekly or monthly bus pass. All your meals are provided and you don't pay towards household bills.

In young people's hostels such as Downslink YMCA, Foyer and Stopover you get an allowance of £58 a week and a weekly or monthly bus pass. The weekly service charge from the hostel which covers your contribution to utility bills will be deducted from your allowance.

## Support for 18-21 year olds

When you leave care we will help you find accommodation that fits with what you want and need. Most young people will not be ready to live unsupported in their own tenancy straight away.

Your social worker will have worked with you to agree your accommodation and these will be included in your Pathway Plan. Whichever accommodation you move into, your PA will visit you and make sure you are safe and happy.

## Staying Put

If you have been in a settled foster home you may want to remain living there. You have the right to do so until the age of 21 if your foster carers agree.

This arrangement is called 'staying put'. If you and your foster carer want to do this we will help draw up a 'living together' agreement.



## Support to 18-25 Year olds

### Supported Accommodation

Another option available to you is to move to supported accommodation. This gives you the chance to learn skills for independent living in preparation for your own tenancy.

There are different types of supported accommodation available. These include semi-independent units of various sizes with various levels of support offered. There is also the possibility of supported lodgings and shared houses with extra support if you need it.

Your PA will discuss your requirements with you and help complete the appropriate referral forms.

### Independent Living

The leaving care team has an agreement with the council's housing team to make sure care leavers can access affordable social housing when they have been assessed as being ready for independent living.

However, you can only get your own council tenancy when your PA has assessed you as being ready for independent living. It doesn't happen automatically when you turn 18.

For your PA to assess you as ready for your own tenancy you will usually be expected to have sustained at least a year in employment, training or further / higher education. You will also have to demonstrate that you have practical skills like budgeting and cooking, and that you are emotionally ready to live on your own.



In addition, you will have to attend the leaving care team's two-day course on independent living skills.

You can only be nominated once for social housing so we need to make sure you are ready to avoid any risk of you losing your tenancy.

When you do get your own tenancy, you will automatically be offered tenancy support.





Your physical and emotional health and well-being is important. We want to help you learn about healthy lifestyles and try out local leisure activities.

**You will have health assessments every year until your 18th birthday.**

These will be carried out by a specialist nurse in the children in care health team, with supervision from a named doctor.

As part of this they will discuss with you your physical health and emotional well-being, and address any identified needs in your health assessment report and individual health care plan.

If you have specific health needs, your PA will talk to you about how these can be met as part of your Pathway Plan. They will also offer you advice and support on how to access health services (both mental well-being and physical health). This will include giving you information about counselling services that are available.

**When you leave care you will receive a copy of your health passport.** This will include all the available information regarding your health history, from your birth to leaving care.

**We will help you register with a GP and dentist.** Your PA will check if you are eligible for free dental care, eye care and prescriptions. We will also help you with transport costs to attend health appointments.

**You'll get a 'Listen Up' card** that gives you free use of swimming and sports facilities at the Prince Regent, King Alfred, Moulsecomb, St Luke's and Withdean centres. If you have to pay for costs like gym induction, we will reimburse you.

The 'Listen up' card also gives you free admission to the Royal Pavilion and to all Brighton and Hove Museums. If you are placed outside the city we will pay for gym membership.

**Brighton Table Tennis Club** in Kemptown runs four 'all-comers' sessions a week for anyone aged 16+. A 'Listen Up' card will give you free access to any of these. If you attend 10 sessions then you get a free bat worth £30. Contact [nick@brightontabletennisclub.com](mailto:nick@brightontabletennisclub.com) for more information.



**The Early Parenting Assessment Programme (EPAP) is available to you if you want it.**

This is a specialist team of social workers and parenting workers based in a Children's Centre. They offer parents an opportunity to prepare for the birth of their baby and support them after the birth with a programme of baby-focused work, teaching and guiding.

# Participation in society

We want to help you feel you have all the chances in life that other young adults have, and that you can make a positive contribution to society.

- ★ We will help you to **enrol on the Electoral Register**, so you can vote in elections. We will also inform you about groups and activities in your area.
- ★ We will give you access to the **council's staff discount scheme**. This gives you discounts on a whole range of shops and services across the city and beyond (eg restaurants, local and national supermarkets, and cinema tickets).
- ★ We will **pay for special costs** that will help you follow your religion or culture or with your English if it is not your first language.
- ★ You are **guaranteed an interview** if you apply for any **BHCC apprenticeships**. We will also explore any relevant work experience opportunities within the council.
- ★ We hold the **Children in Care and Care Leavers Awards** each year. These are to celebrate and recognise your personal achievements, and show how you have made a difference to your own lives as well as other people's. The awards are also designed to inspire you to strive for success – to reach for the stars! – knowing that we are behind you every step of the way, and that we appreciate how much you are achieving.
- ★ We will hold an **annual participation event** with care leavers and other key people, chaired by our assistant director responsible for children in care, to review this local offer and ensure it is updated where necessary.

Your Children in Care Council:

## #Your Voice, Your Choice

– Get involved and make a difference

We are committed to working with you to learn from your experiences to improve services. We want to listen to your views and encourage you to take part in making decisions.

There are lots of opportunities to get involved and make a difference. For example you can:

- **meet other care leavers** to work on projects, eat together and take part in activities you are interested in
- **share your views** with decision makers and councillors
- **help to recruit** new social workers and managers
- **train** university students and other professionals
- **learn leadership skills** so you can work with groups of young people
- **visit residential homes**, talk to the young people there and suggest changes
- **attend regional and national events** to meet other care leavers who have a passion for making a difference.

We will give you the training and skills you need for each of these roles. The training is accredited so will add to your qualifications and look great on your CV.

We will pay you in gift vouchers for some of this work. This is usually at £9 an hour.

## Get involved, build your skills and make a difference!

For information about Youth Voice, Advocacy, Independent Visitors, Accreditation, contact: **The Youth Participation Team**, 67 Centre, Hodshrove Lane, BN2 4SE  
Tel: 01273 295510 [www.bhyap.org.uk](http://www.bhyap.org.uk)

## Relevant services & useful contacts for care leavers

### Accommodation

#### Young People's Supported accommodation

– If you require supported accommodation your PA can refer you to the supported accommodation panel. Your referral will be discussed with the council's housing team to see what is the best option for you.

#### Brighton Housing Trust (BHT)

114 London Road, Brighton BN1 4PH  
**01273 645400**

BHT has developed a comprehensive range of services to meet the needs of homeless, insecurely housed and vulnerable men and women. It works in partnership with other organisations.

#### YMCA Youth Advice Centre(YAC)

11 St Georges Place, Brighton BN1 4GB  
**01273 624432**

Email [yacservices@ymcadlg.org](mailto:yacservices@ymcadlg.org)

YAC offers housing advice for anyone under 26 years old who is homeless or threatened with homelessness. It also has a family support and mediation service, and offers support and advice about sexual health advice and services, emotional and well-being support and benefits and money advice.

### Education and Training

#### Greater Brighton City Metropolitan College

Central Brighton Campus  
Pelham Street, Brighton BN1 4FA  
**01273 667788**

We offer a huge range of qualifications for 16-19 year olds, university degrees, full and part time courses for adults, apprenticeships and professional qualifications.

#### Albion in the Community

American Express Community Stadium  
Village Way, Brighton BN1 9BL  
**01273 878265**

Email: [info@albioninthecommunity.org.uk](mailto:info@albioninthecommunity.org.uk)

We deliver high-quality, accessible opportunities that improve the health and well-being, education and aspirations of our community.

#### Prince's Trust

47 Church Road, Hove BN3 2BE  
**01273 221470**

The trust's team programme is a FREE course available throughout the year that enables you to develop your communication, leadership and team work skills through projects in the community.

#### Brighton and Hove Recovery Centre

18 Preston Park Avenue, Brighton, BN1 6HL  
**01273 565 049**

The Recovery College is a specialist college dedicated to providing courses that support people to manage their mental health and recovery. Courses on offer include those that focus on a student's health and well-being, managing their mental health, developing life skills, and their expression and creativity.

### Health and Well-being

#### Sexual Health and Contraception (SHAC)

[www.brightonsexualhealth.com](http://www.brightonsexualhealth.com)

A free and confidential specialist service open to everyone regardless of age and sexuality.

#### Brighton and Hove Mental Health Rapid Response Service

**0300 304 0078** (24 hour service)

We provide an urgent response service to the people of Brighton & Hove when they feel they are in a mental health crisis and are at immediate risk of harming themselves or others.

#### MindOut Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer Mental Health Service

Community Base  
113 Queens Road, Brighton BN1 3XG  
**01273 234839**

Email: [info@mindout.org.uk](mailto:info@mindout.org.uk)

We are a mental health service run by and for LGBTQ people who work to improve the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ communities.

#### Pavilions

**01273 731900** or **0800 014 9819**

Drug and alcohol services for people in Brighton & Hove. Support is available to anyone concerned about their drug or alcohol use, and for families and carers supporting people who are struggling with substance misuse.

### Finance

#### The council's welfare rights team

Mondays 10am to 1pm: **01273 291116**

This offers advice and representation to people who have been turned down for benefits. We can be contacted on our public advice line on Mondays (as above). If you need basic information about benefits, go to a local Jobcentre plus office or visit GOV.UK.

#### Brighton and Hove Food Partnership

Brighthelm Centre  
North Road, Brighton BN1 1YD  
**01273 431700**

Email: [info@bhfood.org.uk](mailto:info@bhfood.org.uk)  
[www.bhfood.org.uk](http://www.bhfood.org.uk)

Helps people learn to cook, eat a healthy diet, to grow their own food and to waste less food.

#### Brighton & Hove Citizens Advice Bureau

Tisbury Road Offices, Hove Town Hall,  
Tisbury Road, Hove BN3 3BQ  
[www.brightonhovecab.org.uk/](http://www.brightonhovecab.org.uk/)  
**0300 3309033**

CAB offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice on managing your finances, including opening bank accounts, problems with bank accounts, benefit overpayments, budgeting and general debt problems.

#### Money Advice

St Luke's Advice Service  
18 Exeter Street, Brighton BN1 5PG  
**01273 549203**

Helps you negotiate a repayment plan if you are in debt that suits your circumstances. Helps you fill in income and expenditure forms. Looks at whether there are other benefits to which you are entitled. Helps you apply for grants to pay off utility arrears. Negotiates with your creditors or tells your creditors that you do not have any spare money to repay your debts at the present etc.

#### Refugee Council

**0808 808 2255**  
text phone/Minicom: 0808 808 2259  
(for people with speech or hearing difficulties)  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

Offers information and advice to asylum seekers and refugees. Opening hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9.30am - 1pm and 2pm - 4.30pm. Wednesdays 2-5pm only.

### Participation

#### The council's youth participation team

**0800 0524 280 (free from a landline)**  
**01273 295510**

Text or call us on 07870 168948  
Email: [help@bhyap.org.uk](mailto:help@bhyap.org.uk)

The council's youth participation team is made up of the following teams:

- Advocacy
- Youth Voice (including Youth Council, Children in Care Council, Young Ambassadors, Ask Report Change Programme)
- Independent Visitors
- Accreditation (including Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Youth Arts Award)

The office is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

### Relationships

#### Brighton Table Tennis Club

The Fitzherbert Centre  
36 Upper Bedford Street, Kemptown BN2 1JP  
**01273 670 145**

The club works with people of all ages, especially young people, to improve health, celebrate diversity and build a strong community. We run sessions for young people of all ages and backgrounds.

#### Allsorts Youth Project

Young People's Centre  
69 Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AE  
**01273 721211**

We listen to, support and connect children and young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure (LGBTU) of their sexual orientation and / or gender identity.

#### Miss Represented

[www.brightondome.org/missrep](http://www.brightondome.org/missrep)  
We use the arts to explore important issues, feel empowered and have a platform to be heard. It is a lifeline to many vulnerable young women in Brighton and its surrounding area. You can get in touch with us by contacting Bex on [rebecca.fidler@brightondome.org](mailto:rebecca.fidler@brightondome.org)



For more information go to  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk)