

# Standards for the LEAVING CARE SERVICE

These standards were co-produced with young people. They set out the minimum things you can expect from the Leaving Care Service.

We will work with you up to the age of 25 unless you decide (after you are 21) that you no longer wish to have a worker. From the age of 21, you and your worker will decide together how long support continues for.

The support you are given should be led by your needs. The best way to make sure your worker is aware of your needs and can fully support you, is to discuss everything with your worker and make sure it is all written in your pathway plan.

The role of your leaving care personal adviser is to support you to work towards doing things yourself and becoming independent. It is important to say that everyone is different and you will always be treated as an individual by the Leaving Care Service.

## Contact with your worker

- You will be given a contact card with your worker's number, their manager's name and the duty number
- At age 18yrs and 19yrs you can expect a phone call from your worker every month and a face to face visit every other month. Contact can be more than this if you have important things to discuss or if you need a bit of extra support
- From age 20 to 21yrs your worker should still contact you monthly but face to face visits may change to once every 3 months, recognising that as you grow older your independence skills will increase too
- From 21yrs to 25yrs your worker should still contact you once a month but frequency of face to face visits will be flexible depending on your needs
- If your worker is going on annual leave for more than 3 days they will let you know in advance and tell you who to contact in their absence for support. If your worker is off unexpectedly for illness or other reason, we will let you know as soon as we can and always within 2 weeks
- If your worker is going to be away for more than 4 weeks, wherever possible, we will give you a named person who will offer you consistent support in your worker's absence (on rare occasions this might not be possible due to staffing)

## Supporting you at meetings and helping with forms

- You and your worker will decide during your pathway plan conversations what support you need to attend appointments. Your worker will support you to build the confidence you need to attend appointments independently. Meetings may include Job Centre; hospital appointments; PIP/Medical assessment etc.
- If you are having difficulty completing a form, your worker can assist you as needed including Universal Credit, housing etc
- If there is a wait for your universal credit to be paid then Children's Services will look to support you based on an assessment of needs

## Supporting you when you get your own flat

- Your worker (or other key worker if you have one) will view the flat with you
- There should be a checklist of what is acceptable for the flat, and your worker should advocate on your behalf with the housing provider if any work is needed
- Once you've accepted the flat, we will look to support you to remain in your current accommodation wherever possible until the essentials are in place
- The essentials are: a bed; cooker or microwave (if microwave only this should just be for a short time whilst cooker is being arranged); fridge/freezer; washing machine as well as the electricity and gas being connected with a minimum amount of credit in place. We can provide a suggested budgeting sheet for the essentials with some suggested companies if you find it helpful. We will also provide information about discounts for care leavers/furniture schemes/ volunteers who can help with DIY etc/local charities/ etc 'how to survive after care'
- Setting Up Home Allowance: there can be delays for example if something you have requested is out of stock. We will do all we can to avoid this happening by asking you for more than one option on the essentials
- We will offer you some flexibility on how you spend your SUHA (eg pre-paid cards or cash for smaller items)
- Your worker will attend the tenancy sign up and keys collection with you and help you understand your responsibilities for paying rent, gas, electric, water rates and will help you understand the conditions of your tenancy
- Your worker will help you to move in, and help you to identify who can help decorate and with DIY
- Once you've moved in, your worker will call or text you every week for a month to make sure you are ok

## Supporting you through difficult times

- Your worker will get to know you over time, and should notice if you are going through a difficult time with mental health. It also helps if you can be as open as possible and ask your worker for help, as your worker will not always know unless you speak to them
- Your worker will contact you more regularly when you need extra support
- All Leaving Care Workers will attend mental health first aid training, meaning they will know signs to look out for and how to support you
- Your worker will provide a wellbeing kit and signpost you to other services who can help eg counselling including online like Kooth, mental health and wellbeing apps
- Your worker will refer you to adult mental health services if needed
- Any plan and extra support will be agreed by you and your worker (everyone is different)

**Thank you to CHICC Care Leavers Group  
for working on these standards**

CHICC is the Council for Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers. It is to listen to young people's views and help improve things.

For information on how to get involved call or text **07812323854** or email **CHICC@hertfordshire.gov.uk**