

## **A Young Person's Guide to Leaving Care**

This information is available in Welsh.

### **Introduction**

Leaving Care is all about being independent and making your own choices about the future. This can mean getting ready to start work, finding out about training and finding somewhere to live.

When you reach 18 years old, you legally become an adult and are no longer a Looked After Child, you become a Care Leaver and plans have to be made with you to prepare for your future.

Prior to your 18th birthday, discussions will take place between yourself and any professionals offering you support and guidance to discuss your future plans and create your pathway plan.

### **What is a Pathway Plan?**

A pathway plan says what you want for your future, and we record what you want to do and how we will work together to help you succeed. It includes things like:-

- Education, training, employment and career planning
- Health and Development
- Contact with parents, wider family and friends
- Financial support

We will also think about what money you may need for things like:-

- Travel
- Equipment or other things for school or college
- Clothing for interviews & work
- Contact with your family or friends
- Hobbies and holiday
- Costs for any special needs
- Counselling
- Cultural or religious needs

You may not get money for all these things, and you might need other things that are not on the list. We will work out the best way to help you and agree with you what we can do. This will be written in your pathway plan.

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## **How often does the plan get reviewed?**

Every six months a review meeting will be held to look at the plan and see if it is offering you the support that you want and need.

## **How will I get my money?**

We will help you to set up a bank account and learn how to run it. It is important that you learn how to manage your money and make it stretch to pay for the things you need. In some cases we will pay you in cash, but we want to help you get the skills you need to manage this yourself.

## **What is personal support?**

Personal support is all about who can offer you help, and how and when you will get the help you need. This means making plans for keeping in touch with the people you care about and who care about you, and making sure you know how to get in touch with a doctor, dentist and help in an emergency.

## **What happens when I'm 18?**

You should stay in care until you are 18 unless you are very sure that you don't want this kind of help and support. From the age of 18 you will still have your pathway plan and a personal advisor and Education & Children's Services will still keep in touch with you until you are 25.

From 18 you can claim benefits and the Council will no longer give you most of your money.

We will still help you in ways that we both agree to. If you are over 19 and in education, training or work we will still help you. This might mean buying books, equipment or clothing or helping with field trips, travel costs and college registration and exam fees, childcare costs or tuition fees. We can give you this kind of support until you are 21 or older, it just depends what's agreed in your pathway plan.

## **What happens when I'm 21?**

If you are 21 and actively working with your Personal Advisor you will continue to receive support from your Personal Advisor to work towards the actions outlined in your pathway plan.

If you are not actively working with your Personal Advisor your case will be closed to the Personal Advisor Service, however you can request support at any time up the age of 25, even if you have not previously requested support from a Personal Advisor.

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## Reconnecting to care

If you are a care leaver and would like support to address a particular issue please contact Denbighshire Education and Children's Service Gateway on 01824 712200 (Monday - Thursday 9AM – 5PM, Friday 9AM - 4.30PM) or via [cfsgateway@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:cfsgateway@denbighshire.gov.uk) . The 14+ Team Manager will review the request, update your Pathway Plan to reflect the support needed and refer you back to the Personal Advisor Service who will provide the support.

## Can I go to college or university?

If you go to university, you will get money through the same system of student loans as everyone else, your pathway plan will be updated and will also include a bespoke financial package to assist with fees, accommodation and any other support needs identified. We will make sure you have somewhere to stay in the holidays if you need it.

## What is a Personal Advisor?

A personal advisor is someone who is there to help you work out your pathway plan. They work with you to make sure you get all the help you need.

They will:-

- Give advice and support.
- Understand your needs and help you write your pathway plan.
- Work with you to review your pathway plan - your hopes and ideas may change as you go along, so it will need to be changed to show this.
- Talk to the council to make sure you get all the help you need, including any money you should get.
- Keep in touch with you until you are at least 25.
- Help you find a good place to live.
- Make sure you get the right training and support you need, so you have the right skills to help you live independently.
- Help you to move into a place of your own, as well as helping you buy the basics and making sure you settle into your new home.
- Help you to find out what you need to know about the community you live in.
- Advise you what do to in an emergency.
- Help you to complain or sort out any problem you might have with Education & Children's Services. They might ask an advocate to work with you as well – this is someone who can make sure your complaint is listened to, and can even speak on your behalf if you like.

A personal advisor is there for you - they know how things should work and how to get things done. They will give you a different type of help than your social worker will and they may get you more support, or a special kind of support, through the Family Support Team – especially as you settle into your own place. It is important that you have a good

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relationship with your personal advisor. You may not always agree, but you should feel able to work together and talk to them.

## Can I complain?

We listen to your views and we will always try our best, but we can't always promise that what you want is possible.

If you are unhappy with what any person working with you has done, you have a right to make a complaint. You can contact the Complaints Officer in any of the following ways or ask your Social Worker or advocate to help you to do this:-

Freephone number: 0800 032 1099

Email: [ssdcomments@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ssdcomments@denbighshire.gov.uk)

Write to: The Complaints Officer, Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl  
Denbighshire, LL18 3DP

Web: [www.denbighshire.gov.uk/yourvoice](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/yourvoice)

This information can be made available in other languages and/or alternative formats upon request.