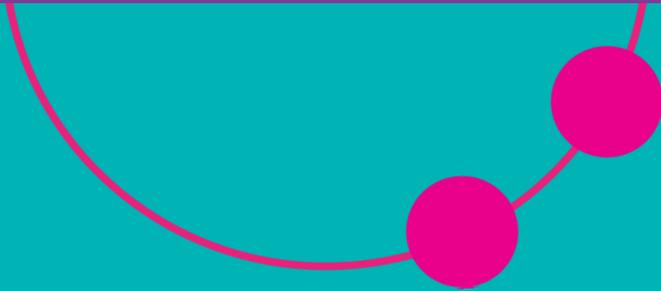


Care Leaving Entitlement!



Care Leaving Entitlement!

Now that you are aged 16+ and have been in the Care of Kent County Council, (KCC), you are legally entitled to ongoing support from Kent County Council. (KCC)

KCC works within **The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000** and **the Children Act Transition Guidance (vol3)** which is designed to give 16 and 17 year olds still in care, and care leavers, the support and advice that you need to enable you to move successfully into adulthood.

This leaflet describes the support and financial help you should receive from KCC as a Care Leaver and also gives you details of other information that you can access to help you understand what support you can expect to receive from KCC.

What specific support you will get will depend on your “Care Leaving status”, which is based on how long you have been in care and how old you are. Depending on this you may get help with housing, education and training. However, all care leavers, (no matter what your status) can expect the same quality service which is set out in KCC’s charter for care leavers. This sets out 14 key promises to you which means we **“promise to listen, support and guide you to grow into healthy, happy and successful young adults”**.

Care Leavers

Status

There are 4 different types of status that you might hear people talk about:

Eligible child – If you are 16 or 17 years old who is still in care and who has been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.

Relevant child – If you are 16 or 17 years old who has left care but were in care on or after your 16th birthday and have been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14. This can include if you have been part of youth justice system or hospitalised on / after your 16th birthday.

Former Relevant child - if you are now aged 18 - 21 years old who was previously either an eligible or relevant child.

Qualifying child – If you are aged 16 - 21 years old, and have been Looked After or, if disabled, have been Privately Fostered after reaching 16, but do not qualify as Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant. (i.e you spent less than 13 weeks in care).

You may also qualify if you are the subject of a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and were Looked After immediately before the SGO was made.

Or if, you were previously an eligible child but returned to live with someone with Parental Responsibility (PR) for more than 6 months before your 18th Birthday.

Support You Can Expect From KCC

Eligible or Relevant child, you can expect to receive:

- An allocated Social Worker / Personal Advisor
- A full assessment based on your needs
- A detailed Pathway Plan (PWP) based on your assessed needs, which will be overseen by a qualified social work Team manager
- Your plan will be reviewed every 6 months
- We will keep in touch / visit you every 6-8 weeks (more often if necessary)
- Provide you with financial support (see table below)
- Support you to access safe and suitable accommodation
- Financial support to help you maintain education / training / employment
- Ensure that you have a bank account / NI number and passport (unless your legal status prevents you)

If you are aged 18+ and Former Relevant

- An allocated Personal Advisor
- A full assessment based on your needs
- A detailed Pathway Plan (based on your assessed needs) which will be overseen by a qualified social work Team manager
- Your plan will be reviewed every 6 months
- We will keep in touch / visit you every 6-8 weeks (more often if necessary)
- Ensuring that you are in relevant safe and suitable accommodation
- Financial support to help you maintain education / training / employment
- Provide you with vacation accommodation if in higher or further education

Qualifying:

If you contact us requesting support we will:

- Assess your current needs and provide you with the appropriate advice and support based on those needs
- Provide you with vacation accommodation if in higher or further education

Financial support

The type of financial help you receive from KCC will depend on whether you are an eligible, relevant, former relevant or qualifying young person. The details in the following chart are a guide to the kind of help you might receive and your social worker / personal advisor will assist you to understand your entitlement.

It is important that you discuss the timings and amounts with your social worker / personal advisor as some of these amounts are fixed and others are discretionary, meaning that they may have to be agreed by a group of managers, (Often referred to as a Panel), before they can be agreed in your pathway plan.

For a detailed explanation of what you are entitled to visit www.becomecharity.org.uk – monies

<http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/media/1066/factsheet-1-finances.pdf>

Financial support

Table

	Eligible (aged 16-18)	Relevant (aged 16-18)	Former Relevant (18+)	Qualifying (16-21)
Income maintenance (personal allowance / essential living allowance (ELA) (This is in line with payments made by DWP) (As of 2016 = £57.90p per week)	Yes If in foster care an agreement as to your weekly allowance given to you by your carer will be agreed as part of your Pathway Plan and this will be reviewed every 6 months If in Supportive Lodgings or a Semi-independent living home then a personal allowance will be paid which is equivalent to the benefits rates for young people (£57.90 as of 2016)	Yes If in Supportive Lodgings or a Semi-independent living home then a personal allowance will be paid which is equivalent to the benefits rates for young people (£57.90 as of 2016) If you have returned to live with someone with Parental Responsibility (PR) we will pay up to the 1 st 6 weeks only, until person with PR has claimed Child benefit After 6 months you will move to Qualifying status	Yes Only paid for 1 st month whilst claim is being processed with the DWP. (in exceptional circumstances this may be extended and food vouchers provided if needed)	No
Accommodation Costs Foster care Supported lodgings Semi independent living	Yes Yes Yes	N/A Yes Yes	N/A – unless in a Staying Put arrangement at which point placement changes from foster care to supported lodgings Young person to claim housing benefit and pay utility charges and for own food LA to pay top up support needs where assessed (Staying Put) As above	N/A Yes (subject to assessment) No
Holiday accommodation if in HE or residential FE (amount to be agreed by Pa and young person). Independent accommodation + Setting up home allowance	N/A Yes to setting up home allowance if moving into independent accommodation (up to max of £2,000) paid in instalments	N/A Yes to setting up home allowance if moving into independent accommodation (up to max of £2,000) paid in instalments	Yes 1 st month rental deposit paid if no other source available (depending on needs and financial assessment) Max of £2000, paid in instalments	Yes (subject to assessment) No
Education employment training Fees / materials Travel costs	Yes Bursary to be used where eligible Yes through Kent travel pass – bursary can be used In exceptional circumstances consideration will be given to additional payments if having to travel outside of Kent - To be agreed at Panel	Yes Bursary to be used where eligible Yes through Kent travel pass – bursary can be used In exceptional circumstances consideration will be given to additional payments if having to travel outside of Kent – To be agreed at Panel	Bursary to be used where eligible Yes through Kent travel pass – bursary can be used In exceptional circumstances consideration will be given to additional payments if having to travel outside of Kent – To be agreed at panel	No
Higher Education (university) Bursary Travel back to Kent during holiday time Accommodation during Holidays	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	Yes £1000 per annum Yes Yes	No No No

Other support payments				
Birthday (17 th and 18 th)	Yes £30 17 th b day £60 18 th b day (If you are in a placement where KCC pays the maintenance to the provider then agreement will be sort for the provider to give you this payment either through gifts / vouchers or cash)	Yes (unless returned home for more than 6 months as you then become Qualifying)	No	No
Clothing	Yes £120 (£70 + £50) If you are in a placement where KCC pays the maintenance to the provider then agreement will be sought for the provider to give you this payment either through vouchers or cash and will form part of your independent skills programme within your pathway plan	Yes £120 (£70 + £50) If you are in a placement where KCC pays the maintenance to the provider then agreement will be sought for the provider to give you this payment either through vouchers or cash and will form part of your independent skills programme within your pathway plan If you receive maintenance direct from KCC then your social worker will agree with you as to how this will be paid and will form part of your independent skills within your pathway plan programme	Yes £120 per annum (to be claimed back through receipts)	No
Other discretionary payments – (to be agreed with social worker or Personal advisor as part of PWP and agreed at Panel)				
Costs associated with special needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Costs of child care	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Travel Contact with family	Yes	Yes	Yes (only for contact with younger siblings (under 18) or own children – to be discussed with PA)	
Counselling therapeutic needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Cultural religious needs	Yes	Yes	Yes	
College bursary (16-19) Dependent on individual colleges you will be assisted to claim where appropriate – Bursary payments are expected to be used for travel / trips for part of course / equipment etc				

Shaded entitlements are discretionary. If, following discussion with your Social Worker or Personal Advisor it is felt that you are entitled to some of these payments and it has been assessed within your pathway plan then your worker will take your request to a Panel of senior managers to seek approval.

Advocacy and complaints

We always try to give a high standard of service, but if you are unhappy with the service you receive, you should discuss this first with the staff who are working with you, for example your Social Worker/ Personal Advisor or your advocate.

As a care leaver you have an entitlement to have an advocate. In Kent this is run by the Young Lives Foundation who will work with you on your behalf. www.ylf.org.uk. Please talk to your social worker / Personal Advisor about this and can they advise you on the process to request an advocate.

An Advocate can support you whilst in care and can support you if you are feeling unhappy about any aspect of the care you are receiving.

If you are unable to solve things this way you can make a complaint to Kent County Council

www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/complaints-and-feedback/specialist-children's-services-complaints

If you are unhappy about the responses from Kent County Council you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman who has a fast-track procedure for dealing with complaints made by or on behalf of children and young people up to the age of 19 (or 25 if they have a disability).

Contact details:

Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH
Phone: 0845 602 1983
Email: advice@lgo.org.uk