



# LOCAL OFFER

18-21 year olds

For care experienced young people

# Welcome



**At Together for Children we work with care experienced young people to make sure they feel supported into independence after leaving care - this is known as our Care Experienced Local Offer.**

Support into independence and adult life will look different for different people, but could include:

- Deciding where to live.
- Choosing whether to get into employment, get some more training or study for more qualifications.
- Budgeting advice.
- Working out how much support might be needed from a social worker or personal adviser.

The level of support that is offered depends on:

- Your age.
- When and how long you were cared for.
- Whether you are currently still cared for.

## Get in touch

For more information about our support for care experienced young people, please contact the Next Steps team.

 0191 561 7109

 [next.steps@togetherforchildren.org.uk](mailto:next.steps@togetherforchildren.org.uk)

# Getting around

All care experienced young people aged 18-25 in Sunderland will be provided with a free Network One travel pass. This will need replaced yearly.

This will allow unlimited travel on bus services in County Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. You can also use this on the Shields Ferry and Northern Rail services between Sunderland and Blaydon.

Your Personal Adviser will give you this card and the full information leaflet alongside this.



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# Relationships

## Advocacy scheme for cared for and care experienced young people.

- Access to an advocate who can provide confidential and independent advice, information and representation. For access follow the link to the online referral form, alternatively your Social Worker can complete the referral for an advocate on your behalf.

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## Understanding life story

- Support to request your records/files and also to talk about what is in these. If you need emotional support following this, your Personal Adviser will discuss with you and refer you to the service best able to meet your needs.
- Your Personal Adviser can communicate with family members and friends in your network to include them, if you want them to do this.

# Health and wellbeing

## Support with health appointments

- Your Personal Adviser can support you to attend important appointments while you get used to going to these by yourself.
- If you feel you will need a lot of support or longer-term support, we can refer you to the social prescribing service for specialist support with accessing health services.



## Access to leisure services

- All care experienced young people are entitled to a free Everyone Active gym membership in Sunderland. If you live outside of Sunderland, we will explore funding access to a service local to you, so you do not miss out.

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## Health services we provide

- Access to Kooth, an online counsellor and support service for young people aged 10-18 and care experienced people up to 25 years of age.
- Staff have advice available from a Consultant Clinical Psychologist weekly to make sure we are offering you the best service we can.
- Young Person's Activity Coordinator will support young people with cooking and health eating, workshops around a healthy lifestyle, sexual relationships, promoting an active lifestyle and more.
- Signposting to sexual health services and support to access these where needed.
- If you need support with substance misuse, we can refer you to Wear Recover for specialist support.
- We can support you to link in with the Recovery College who offer a range of free recovery focussed educational courses for people with lived mental health experience, their friends and family.

# Education and training



## Additional education/training incentives

- We will provide a laptop/software.
- If the course or training, you are on does not offer a cash bursary then we will consider a cash incentive subject to continued attendance.
- Advice and guidance to ensure you are receiving any bursary you are entitled to.
- Support with equipment or clothing needed for education/training.
- Books/stationary needed for education/training.
- Celebratory voucher/meal given on completion of course.
- Support to attend open days for education/training courses.



## Extra support at university

- Bursary up to 4 years of university education. This must begin before the age of 25.
- Support with initial costs of moving belongings to university
- Upon Graduation, you will be provided with a one-off bonus of £1,000 currently.
- Your Personal Adviser will make sure you have access to support within university, linked to your care experienced status, as long as you are comfortable with this.



## Additional financial support with employment

- Support costs associated with uniform, interview clothes and tools.
  - Signposting to training courses such as the CSCS card course
  - Support to access specialist Connexions adviser for target support.
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## Apprenticeships

- Support to apply for apprenticeships.
- Together for Children will guarantee care experienced young people an interview for their apprenticeships.
- Care experienced young people are able to access a bursary of between £1000 and £3000 of additional support when completing an apprenticeship.
- Supported programme to work towards apprenticeships e.g., interview practice, help with CV writing, personal statement, etc.



[Find out more about the care leavers bursary](#)

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## Specialised support/project workers

- Careers/work readiness/advice/access to courses through the specialist Connexions worker, Parker Trust, Pallion Action Group (PAG) and Springboard
- We have a contact within the Job Centre specially trained to support care experienced young people.

# Where you live

## Additional financial support with accommodation

- Access to your setting up home allowance so you can furnish your home.
- As a care experienced young person, you will not need to pay council tax until you are 25 years old.
- Make sure you have a suitcase/appropriate luggage to keep your belongings safe.
- Pay for first TV licence.
- Support to find the best places to buy expensive items like white goods.
- Pay one-year home contents insurance.
- Support to set up your first home so it is safe and ready for you.
- If you move into a Gentoo tenancy, they will offer you targeted support including providing carpets for your home.
- Housing worker linked to accommodation e.g., floating support including evenings and weekends depending on what kind of tenancy you have.
- Northumbria Water offer 90 % reduction in water rates for care experienced young people.
- All 12 local authorities in the North East offer council tax exemption to care experienced young people living in their area who are from one of the other 12 local authority area.

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## Based on an assessment of eligibility and need, we may support

- Cost of deposit/agency admin fee.
- One month's rent.
- Help with moving/Priority Housing.
- Priority with housing bidding.
- Priority with housing department if returning to live in the area after university.
- Support in housing crisis.



# Participation in society / getting involved in your community



## Celebration of achievements

- Individual celebration of milestones such as gaining qualifications e.g. a meal out.
- Support to celebrate religious festivals.

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## Fun activities

- We have a brilliant offer through our Young Person's Activity Coordinator. Please come and join us in a range of activities including the cinema, going to the zoo, Harry's Game Shack, cooking lessons and even residential trips! We encourage you to keep coming along to the activities post 18.
- Chill out space at Stanfield Centre building/laundry facilities at Next Steps.



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## Support with learning to drive

- Either car or motorcycle.
- Match funding scheme (e.g., care experienced young people, pay for 5 driving lessons max number of lessons conditional on being linked to education or training).
- Cost towards theory test, practical test, and provisional driving licence. Same offered with motorcycle, up to same costs.

## Volunteering Activities

- Volunteering opportunities and help to access these.
  - Training offered re: interview staff, compensation for time.
  - Young people can be compensated for time when taking part in consultation about TfC services.
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**Out of hours support** In the evening via EDT 0191 5205560.

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## Care experienced forum

- Monthly Change Council meetings in the evening with the purpose of having your voice heard, making positive changes, shaping services, meeting senior managers, meeting other young people and having food together.
- National young people benchmarking forum.
- Newsletter to share what young people have been up to and to show what's been happening in the local community.
- Support to sign up to the Care Leaver Covenant.



[Find out more about the Care Leaver Covenant.](#)

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## Digital support/ social media

- Access to Mind Of My Own app.
  - Facebook page.
  - We will ensure that you have access to internet in your home.
  - Laptop provided to all young people who are in education.
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## Identity documents

- Financial support with ID documents e.g. National Insurance Numbers, passports, birth certificates, provisional driving licence and photos if needed.
- We will keep a copy of these documents safe for you.
- Support with British citizenship/naturalisation
- Support to open a bank account.
- Help to join electoral register.





## Finance - your money

- Your Personal Advisor will offer you money management/budgeting training at Next Steps, if you need more specialists advise we will support you to access this.
  - Benefits and finance advice via services such as the Job Centre and Pallion Action Group, who support with benefit advice.
  - Information about financial support available which is updated annually.
  - We will help you with any difficulties with your UC claim.
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## Savings

- Help to access your Junior ISA
  - Help to open a bank account.
  - Help to set up a 'basic account' if young people are not able to open a debit account.
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## Support during financial crisis

- If your benefits are sanctioned, we will explore how we can support you. This may include a support such as a food parcel, utilities payment or sign posting to another service who can provide this.
  - We will also try to work with the Job Centre where appropriate to prevent sanctioning/resolve a sanctioning.
  - Support while applying for benefits and waiting for these to be in place (up to 5 weeks).
  - Signpost or refer to voluntary organisations e.g., foodbanks; community furniture stores; Hopesprings.
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## Personal allowance

- Birthday money.
- Festival/Christmas money.
- Christmas hamper/gift.

## Care experienced young people who are parents

- We will signpost you to appropriate services including Early Help for support.
- One to one parenting support focused on the areas you want to develop.
- Signposting to services such as the Family Nurse Practitioner and dad's groups
- Our Young Person's Activities Coordinator has activities just for young parents, including accessing soft play. New members are always welcome.



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## Unaccompanied asylum-Seeking Young People

- Specialised Immunisation program.
- UASC pathway tailored to your needs.
- Support to access Refugee Council and legal representation.
- Emotional support from UASC leads who understand the challenges faced by unaccompanied young people.

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## Care experienced young people in custody

- We will work with your support where you live to make sure you have access to advocacy and that your status is known so you have the right support.
- We will help you remain connected to the people who are important to you, this may include making people in your life aware of the support UC can offer to visit you.
- We will offer advice and guidance when you are finished your sentence. This may include completing a duty to refer for housing or linking in with probation.

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## LGBTQ+ young people

- We will listen to you when you tell us about your identity and sexuality.
- We will respect the pronouns that you use and use these as you want us to.
- We will support you to access groups such as Cozmic 3piphany (Cozmic 3piphany is a group for young people aged 11 to 18, or up to age 25 for care experienced young people or those with a special educational need or disability, who identify as LGBTQ+ or are questioning their sexuality and/or gender identity) if this is something you want.

## Care experienced young people who have a disability

- We will listen to you when you tell us what helps you manage best so your plan reflects your individual experience. We will support you to lead support for your needs wherever possible.
- Referral for specialist services such as Adult Social Care to make sure you have the support you need.
- We have a Transitions Lead who attends monthly meetings to support young people having a positive experience of transition from children's services to adult services.

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## Groups and youth projects you can join

- You will be supported to join/attend any groups that you may be interested in that are within your local area.
- This includes support of LGBTQ+ young people.

# Information about turning 21-25

When you turn 21, you have a few different options. If you are still working on something with your Personal Adviser, like housing, or building your network, then you can choose to keep working with them. In terms of their support to you, nothing will change. What does change, however, is that there is no finance directly from Next Steps that can be accessed.

Wider offers like council tax and your travel pass still apply, even if you close to us, however money for things like education equipment does not. We will, however, support you to access other sources of support such as foodbanks if you need this.

If you feel you no longer need your Personal Adviser, or we have been unable to contact you for some time, then you can step down to a duty service. This means you won't have an allocated worker, however you can still call our duty line any time and, if you just want support with a short-term issue, like a new housing application, we will allocate someone to do this with you.

One thing which is important to share, however, is that when you decide, you can change your mind. You might be 23 and finding things a bit difficult, to the point short-term isn't enough. If that's the case, then we can do a new Pathway Assessment and plan with you, and you can reopen. We can't guarantee it will be the Personal Adviser you had before, but it will be someone ready to support you.

Some of the photos featured in this booklet include photos of young people who we support and are being used with their permission.

