



# LOCAL OFFER

16-18 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)

# Health and wellbeing



## Support with health appointments

- Support to health appointments where this is needed.
- A member of Next Steps staff you are comfortable with can attend subject to availability.
- Where the NHS does not cover the cost of treatment/equipment, we will explore covering this cost.

## Health passport

- Available to every care experienced young people and opportunity to understand this information supported by the child looked after health team (CLA health team).

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## 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 the cared for nursing service until you are 18.
- 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.
- Support around substances from Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP).

## 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 at [Advocacy Service - Together for Children](#), 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 Social Worker will discuss with you and refer you to the service best able to meet your needs.
- Funding to print off family photos and documents.
- Help with transport costs to see family and people who are important to you.
- Help to stay in touch with family, friends and people who are important to you.
- Your social worker can refer you and your family to our Family Group Conferencing service to help reconnect with your family or work through issues you are struggling with.
- Help to reconnect with family, friends, past carers and anyone who is important to you.



# Education and training



- 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.
- We will provide a laptop/software.
- Trips linked to education/training.
- Support with equipment or clothing needed for education/training.
- Books/stationary needed for education/training.
- Celebratory voucher/meal given on completion of course.
- Private tuition via the virtual school
- Support to attend open days for education/training courses.
- Virtual School Post-16 staff will continue to support you in your education, training, and employment when you leave school and ensure you are supported through PEP meetings up until your 18th birthday.
- Choices Together Years 10 and 11 is the perfect opportunity to find out all about being a university student and what Higher Education could offer you in the future. It doesn't matter if haven't thought about university - everyone is welcome!

# Employment / work



## Additional financial support with employment

- Support costs associated with uniform, interview clothes and tools.
- Support with travel costs to interview and work.
- 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 Post-16 workers, 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

- 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.
- 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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## Specialist housing project and/or worker for care experienced young people

- Preparation for Independence workbook or similar document capturing your preparation for independence.
- Housing worker linked to accommodation e.g. floating support including evenings and weekends depending on what kind of tenancy you have.
- Supported accommodation scheme where you can move in to from age 16, when you are ready for more independence, to help you prepare for your own home.
- Supported Lodgings scheme which provides accommodation for 16-21-year-old care experienced young people within a home environment. The aim is to offer a supportive, safe environment to help young people develop their self-confidence and independent living skills to prepare for their future.



# Participation in society / getting involved in your community



## Celebration of achievements

- Support to be involved in and attend award events which are relevant to you such as your prom.
- Individual celebration of milestones such as gaining qualifications e.g. 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!
- Financial and practical support towards hobbies, cultural outing, etc.
- Support to be involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 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 Social Worker / Care Team will offer you money management / budgeting training at Next Steps, if you need more specialist advice we will support you to access it.
  - 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 to make a UC claim before you turn 18.
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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).
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## Personal allowance

- Birthday money
- Festival/Christmas money
- Christmas hamper/gift
- Clothing allowance

## Groups and youth projects you can join

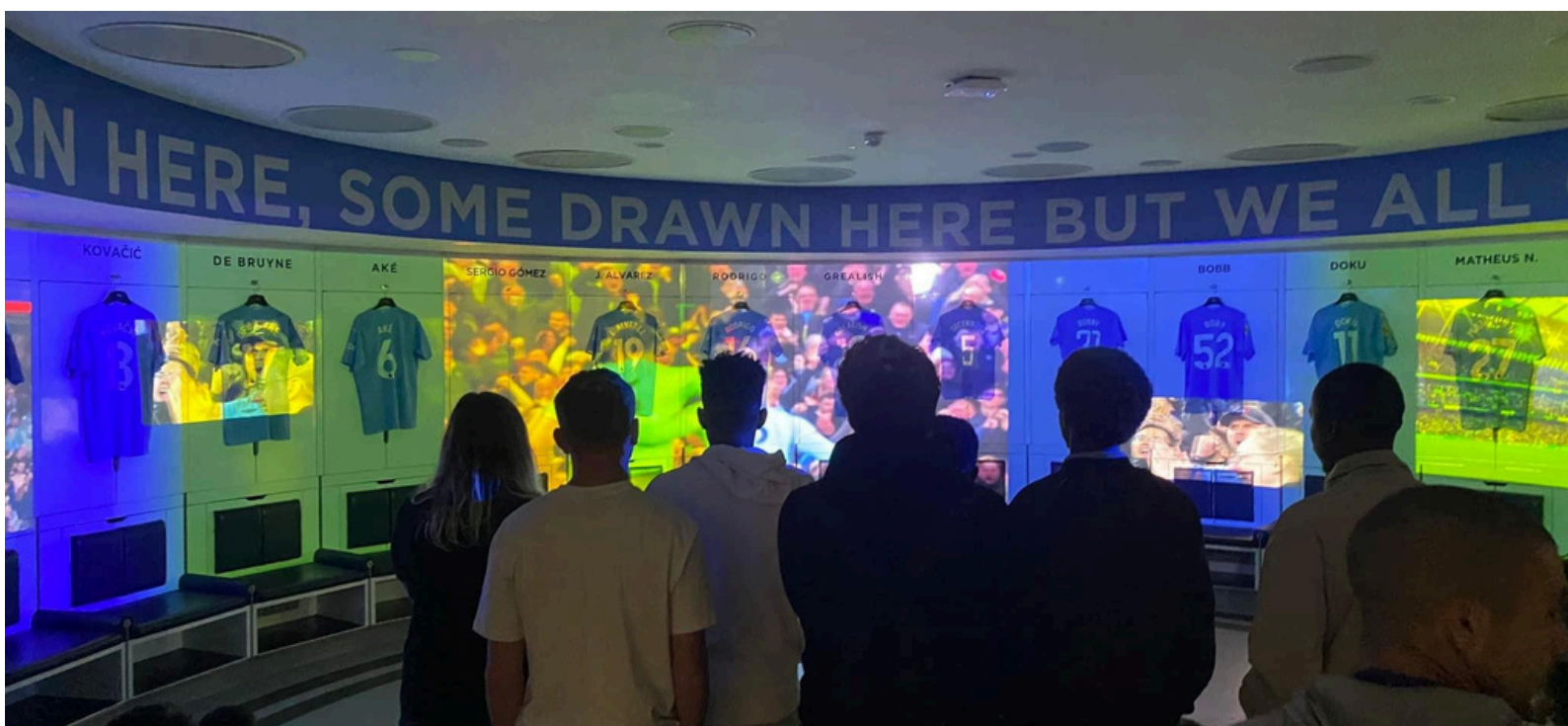
- You will be supported to join/attend any groups that you may be interested in that are within your local area.
  - Cared for young people who are parents.
  - We will signpost you to appropriate services including Early Help for support.
  - We will work with your child's care team, if they have one.
  - 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.
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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 (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.
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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.
- Referral support for therapeutic services for Separated Children, via the Refugee Council.



## Cared for young people in custody

- We will top up your weekly income to £10 if you are in education/work.
- We will work with your support worker 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.
- If you will be under 18 when you finish your sentence, we will find somewhere for you to live.

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