

Your right to be heard

We believe and promote your rights to be heard and we will involve you in all decisions made about your care experience, pathway planning and arrangements for leaving care.

Children in care and care leavers have developed a pledge to explain how we will help and support you. Find the Pledge at: <https://cicc.org.uk/the-pledge>

Contacts for care leavers

Contacts for services you may need

- **Cheshire West and Chester Council** (search 'Care Leaver Offer'):
<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk>
- **Leaving Care Team:** 01244975926
- **Out of Hours Team:** 01244 977277
- **Forfutures Housing:** 0151 373 2523
- **LAC Nurse:** 01244 393338
- **Youth Justice Service:** 0345 145 0055
- **Family Information Service:**
0800 0852863
- **Young Stonewall** (supports and empowers young lesbians, gay, bi and trans people to live free from discrimination and fulfil their potential):
www.youngstonewall.org.uk
- **The Rees Foundation** (offers financial support for care leavers in emergency situations involving e.g. food, gas/electricity, transport):
www.reesfoundation.org
- **Care Leavers Foundation:**
www.thecareleaversfoundation.org
- **Citizens advice:**
www.citizenadvice.org.uk
- **Shelter** (advice and guidance on housing matters, including advice specific to care leavers): 08088004444/
www.shelter.org
- **Princes Trust** (offer 12 week Personal Development Programmes):
0800042842/ www.prince-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/get-job/boost-your-confidence
- **Care Leaver Covenant:**
mycovenant.org.uk

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Are you or have you been a care leaver?

Personal Adviser support is being extended to all **care leavers up to age 25**



Cheshire West
and Chester

A guide for young people leaving care

Leaving care to live on your own is a big step but we can support you through the process. If you have or are about to leave care, there's a range of information, support and benefits.

This might include help finding somewhere to live, advice on further education or getting into work and guidance about what financial support you are entitled to.

Who is a care leaver?

The amount of support you can get when you leave care depends on your age and circumstances.

It is often confusing understanding the terms that councils use to describe care leavers. You may need to know what term applies to you when understanding out how much support you can get.

There are several types of care leavers:

- **Eligible care leaver** is a young person still in care aged 16 and 17 who has been in care for a total of 13 weeks from the age of 14
- **Relevant care leaver** is someone aged 16 or 17 who has left care having been looked after for at least 13 weeks from

the age of 14 (including some time aged 16 or 17). This includes young people who were in care immediately prior to being detained in a Youth Offending Institution, or hospital, from age 16

- **Former relevant care leaver** aged 18-25 who has been an eligible and/or relevant care leaver
- **Former relevant child** is a young person who is aged 18 to 25, and has been a relevant child (and would be one if aged under 18), or was an eligible child immediately before he/she ceased to be looked after at age 18.

So, I'm a care leaver – what are my entitlements?

You can expect involvement in the decisions that will affect your future.

You will be provided with the information and support required to help you make informed decisions about where you are going to live, what you are going to do and how you are going to support yourself.

This means we will:

- **Allocate a personal advisor**
- **Develop an individual pathway plan**
- **Support you to find somewhere suitable to live**
- **Offer you financial support**

- **Support you with education, training and employment**
- **Help you stay fit and healthy**
- **Ensure we listen to you and know what to do if you are not happy about something**
- **Help you with contact with your family - if you want to and it is safe for you to do so**
- **You are able to continue to get support from the Leaving Care Team until you are 25 years old.**

Your support team

The Leaving Care Team is here to help support you as you learn to live more independently.

We can help you:

- **Make plans for the future**
- **Have somewhere safe and secure to live**
- **Keep yourself fit and healthy, and feel good about yourself**
- **Make sure that you have enough money to live on**
- **Continue your education**
- **Find the training course or career that you really want**
- **Stay in touch with people who are important to you**
- **Deal with difficulties and negotiate solutions to problems**
- **Find out about your rights**

When you reach 18 you might stop having a social worker but you will still have a personal advisor.

Your personal advisor will:

- **Listen to your views and ideas about your life and help you to use these to inform your Pathway Plan**
- **Work with you and your carers and others to put your Pathway Plan into practice**
- **Attend your looked after review meeting every 6 months while you are still in care**
- **Organise a Pathway Plan review every 6 months after you have left care**
- **Support you in looking after your health, including arranging regular health assessments and dental checks, and making sure that you have all the immunisations that you need**
- **Encourage and support you to go as far as you can with your education**
- **Make sure you receive advice and guidance with jobs, careers and training**
- **Help you to develop the skills and knowledge that you need to live independently**
- **Help you to stay in touch with your family**
- **Support you to find somewhere suitable to live.**

