



Selby District Council

# **Advice for all – Care Leavers**

## **Care Leavers**

We will work with anybody who is either homeless or threatened with homelessness. If you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and are seeking housing advice and assistance, contact your local authority to make an appointment with the Housing Options team.

If you are eligible and homeless or at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days, you are likely to be entitled to make a homeless application. Additional information regarding homeless applications can be found under the Homeless Application section on our website.

### **I am leaving care soon and would like to know what support I am entitled to from my local authority as a care leaver?**

When you leave care you will have to manage more things on your own, but your local authority has to continue to support you.

### **'Category' of care leaver**

The level of support your leaving care service should give you depends on your status. Your status depends on your age, when you were in care and for how long.

The basic rules are that from 16 you should have a personal advisor, an assessment of the support you need and a Pathway Plan that sets out how the local authority will support you, including financial support. They should also keep in touch with you until you are at least 21.

If at 21 you are already in education or training then support from leaving care services will usually stop around your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. You should have a final meeting with your personal advisor who will talk to you about other services you may be able to get help with.

However, if, up until your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, you return to, or want to education or training, you can go back to your local authority and ask for support.

- Pathway Plan
- Support
- Financial Assistance

### **Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old care leavers - the first steps**

When young people leave their care placement, the local authority must ensure that the accommodation they move to is suitable and appropriate to the pathway plan.

For many young people, moving straight from care to independent living is too big a step. A young care leaver may be able to make a more successful transition if there is a choice of returning home for a short time, remaining with

a former carer, or moving to supported lodgings or to a semi-independent option with some support, depending on the young person's needs.

### **Returning to the family home**

Most young care leavers have some form of contact with their birth families, and some will choose to return there when they leave care.

Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act, returning to live with family can affect eligibility for services. If a young person aged 16 or 17 returns home successfully to a parent (or someone with parental responsibility) for a continuous period of six months, they can no longer be treated as a 'relevant child'. They would instead be a 'qualifying' child. The local authority would have the power to advise and assist the young person, but there would no longer be any statutory duty to maintain the Pathway Plan.

### **Foster care - Staying Put**

Young people who have been in the same foster placement since the age of 15 may choose to continue to live with their foster family.

### **Supported lodgings with other friends or family**

Adult friends, the family of a partner, or wider family may be able offer to provide lodgings for young care leavers. Local authorities may be able to provide financial assistance to support this.

A friends and family (or found) placement can provide a safe and positive placement for the young person, whether the arrangement is a temporary one, acting as a bridge to the next stage of housing provision, or as a longer term solution.

When funding ends for these placements, young people can also choose to stay on with their former supported lodgings carer as a lodger. There may however be restrictions on claiming housing benefit for young people renting from family members.

### **Moving on and accommodation from the age of 18**

Some of the options listed above will be available to young people long-term, and some young people will choose to stay in their supported lodgings scheme rather than move to different accommodation. However, many will move-on to the next stage of housing options.

### **Accommodation options**

Local authorities may be able to accommodate care leavers in dedicated properties such as taster flats, supported lodgings (in family homes) or supported accommodation, self-contained flats and shared houses hostel type accommodation, or fully independent accommodation options.

Local authorities may also be able to offer flexible tenancies and support services in social housing, but with the continuing shortage in local authority accommodation, it is more likely a young person will rent from the private rented sector once they turn 18. At this age they will also be able to claim housing benefit, but will be exempt from the shared accommodation rate until the age of 22.

**Selby District Council's Housing Options team** – 01757 705101 and can be found at Access Selby in the Town Centre.

### **Social housing**

Depending on social housing policies and resources, young care leavers may be able to take up a housing association tenancy. There may also be the opportunity to be given a flexible tenancy and be provided with support services.

To complete an application for social housing visit North Yorkshire Home Choice ([www.northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk](http://www.northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk)). Paper applications are also available if online completion is not an option.

### **Private rented sector**

Once they turn 18, young people are legally able to take on their own tenancies. The main advantage of private rented accommodation is that you will have a greater degree of choice in terms of location and type of property.

Your local council might also be able to give you advice about what is available in your local area and how you can get help with paying the rent bonds and rent in advance.

Different options will be available for renting in the private sector, including:

- accommodation with floating support
- shared housing or lodgings
- Self-contained accommodation in the private rented sector (young care leavers are exempt from the shared accommodation rate until the age of 22).

Some young care leavers will choose to find their own tenancies in the private sector. Appropriate support services can still be put in place to help ensure the tenancy is sustained and help given to address any problems.

### **Financial support**

Young people leaving care must be provided with a leaving care maintenance allowance equivalent to the current Income Support/Jobseekers Allowance benefit. Once a young care leaver turns 18, they will be expected to be financially responsible for themselves, either

through benefits or employment. Some financial assistance may be available in emergencies.

If you are receiving a state benefit or on a low income, you are likely entitled to financial assistance towards your rent. The Housing benefit online calculator can be used to check your entitlement to housing benefit and can be found at [www.selby.gov.uk/benefits-calculator](http://www.selby.gov.uk/benefits-calculator). You can also apply for Housing Benefit on this same website.

If you are looking to rent a private rented property, you may instead be entitled to Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The amount available to you will depend on where you live and who else lives with you. LHA rates are set for different types of accommodation in each area. The rates range from a single room in a shared house up to properties with four bedrooms. Below shows the maximum housing benefit you may be entitled, depending on what category you fall into.

Rates (April 2017 - March 2018)

### Weekly Rates

	York	Doncaster	Wakefield	Leeds
Shared room	<b>£67.09</b>	<b>£55.12</b>	<b>£55.00</b>	<b>£62.48</b>
1 Bed	<b>£98.96</b>	<b>£78.08</b>	<b>£86.30</b>	<b>£100.05</b>
2 Bed	<b>£123.58</b>	<b>£93.23</b>	<b>£103.56</b>	<b>£122.36</b>
3 Bed	<b>£141.24</b>	<b>£103.56</b>	<b>£113.92</b>	<b>£149.59</b>
4 Bed	<b>£200.09</b>	<b>£143.84</b>	<b>£149.59</b>	<b>£195.62</b>

### Calendar Monthly Rates

	York	Doncaster	Wakefield	Leeds
Shared room	<b>£291.52</b>	<b>£239.51</b>	<b>£238.99</b>	<b>£271.49</b>
1 Bed	<b>£430.00</b>	<b>£339.28</b>	<b>£374.99</b>	<b>£434.74</b>
2 Bed	<b>£536.98</b>	<b>£405.11</b>	<b>£449.99</b>	<b>£531.68</b>
3 Bed	<b>£613.72</b>	<b>£449.99</b>	<b>£495.01</b>	<b>£650.00</b>
4 Bed	<b>£869.44</b>	<b>£625.02</b>	<b>£650.00</b>	<b>£850.02</b>

You may also wish to start looking at suitable private renting options on websites such as 'Right Move' or 'Spare Room.' We may be able to offer help towards upfront fees for private rent options to help you secure suitable accommodation. This is our Frontline Prevention Fund and is subject to an affordability assessment.

## **Help available from other agencies:**

### **Leaving Care – North Yorkshire County Council**

The majority of care leavers are entitled to a Leaving Care Case Worker, an assessment of needs and the preparation of a Pathway Plan, which should be reviewed regularly. Support for care leavers is usually provided up until the age of 21 and up to 25 if the young person is in education or training, or if they request further support.

The Leaving Care team encourage young people to stay looked after for as long as possible. Please note that young people who are in foster care may, with the agreement of their foster carers, remain with previous foster carers in a '**staying put**' arrangement until they reach 21.

Your Pathway Plan will also set out how your Case Worker will prepare and support you into your transition to adulthood and you should be fully involved in the development of your Pathway Plan. Your plan will most likely include and consider preparing you for independent living, accommodation finances, income, family and social relationships and more.

North Yorkshire County Council has 4 locality teams based around the county in Scarborough, Knaresborough, Selby and Northallerton. For more information, see North Yorkshire County Council's website and the Leaving Care page [www.northyorks.gov.uk/supporting-young-people-leaving-care](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/supporting-young-people-leaving-care)

### **The HUB – Young Person's Housing Solutions**

Selby District Council deal with all 16-25 year olds through a 'Hub' that is based at the Access Selby office. The Hub offers:

- Support if you are a young person aged between 16-25 and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- General housing advice and support around issues like benefits and managing a tenancy.
- Offer you support and help to stay in your own home where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- However, we know staying at home isn't always suitable or possible so we offer a range of accommodation and support services.

For more information, speak to your social worker or contact the Young People's Hub at Access Selby on 01757 705101.

### **No wrong door**

No Wrong Door is a new way of providing support to young people who are within or on the edge of the care system. It replaces traditional Council-run Young Peoples' homes with Hubs which combine residential care with fostering.

There are two Hubs within North Yorkshire, one in Scarborough to serve the east of the county, whilst one in Harrogate serves the west.

Each hub has a dedicated team which includes:

- A life coach who is a clinical psychologist;
- A speech therapist;
- Two community foster families who work out of the hub and are part of the professional team; and
- Community supported lodging places for 16 and 17-year-olds, again staffed by people who are specially trained and are part of the professional team.

Every young person in the No Wrong Door programme is given one key worker supported by a single team of trusted and skilled workers. These workers stick with the young person through thick and thin to access the right services, at the right time, and in the right place to meet their needs.

For more information, visit North Yorkshire County Council's website [www.northyorks.gov.uk/no-wrong-door](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/no-wrong-door) or visit the Young People's Hub at Access Selby.

### **Access Towards Inclusion - Foundation**

Action Towards Inclusion is a NEW intervention service launched in Harrogate, York, Selby and Hambleton. It provides keyworker support for individuals over 18 who are unemployed or economically inactive. Foundation will offer direct support to help participants to progress into job-search, education, training and employment; alongside offering support to access partners who can provide specific activities aimed at removing barriers associated with health, finances and skills.

What to expect:

- A keyworker will work with other partner agencies to offer a tailored support programme;
- Flexible, sensitive, non-judgmental and non-oppressive support;
- The opportunity to attend a variety of groups and training sessions aimed at raising self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Support with CV writing, job searching and finding volunteering opportunities in the local community;
- Help to career plan and to make those positive next steps.

Referrals can be made through partner agencies or Foundation directly by asking to speak to a member of the ATI team. Contact the Harrogate office at 12 Haywra Street, HG1 5BJ on 01423 500905.