

## LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

<b>REPORT:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Board</b>
<b>DATE OF DECISION</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Revised Local Offer to Care Experienced Young People 2023-24.</b>
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	<b>Róisín Madden, Director Children's Social Care</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Tom Hurst, Service Manager Young People's 16+ and Placements Service</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Maria Gatland, Cabinet Member for Children &amp; Young People</b>

### 1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

#### 1.1

This report provides an update to Corporate Parenting Board on the work being undertaken to revise Croydon's local offer to our Care Experienced Adults aged 18-25.

The current published Local Offer has not been updated since 2021-2022.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:

#### 2.1

To note the contents and provide comment and challenge to the updated Local Offer.

To endorse the updated Local Offer.

Provide agreement for the draft Local Offer to be shared with Esther and Children in Care Council groups, following Corporate Parenting Board consideration, to provide for further consultation and co-production.

### 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 states that local authorities in England must publish information about services which the local authority offers to care leavers because of its functions under the Children Act 1989.

The local offer should be updated every 1-2 years and considered in line with the financial policy.

Mark Riddell MBE, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers at the Department for Education, visited Croydon in February 2023 to review the service offered to Care Experienced Adults and provided comments and recommendations in respect of the Local Offer which have been taken into consideration.

The revised Local Offer takes into consideration Care Experienced young people’s views that the current offer is “not good enough” or “explicit enough.”

## 4 REPORT

### 4.1

It is recommended that a copy of content to be included into the revised local offer which Croydon’s communications team will publish into a brochure style document, with relevant images which can be both printed and shared electronically with care experienced adults’ people by their social workers and personal advisors. The revised Local Offer will also be published on Croydon’s website and made available via the ‘Care Leavers app.’

Revised Local Offer 2023		
	Heading	Content
COVER PAGE	<p><b>Croydon’s Offer for Care Experienced young people.</b></p> <p><b>2023 - 2024 Supporting you to succeed</b></p>	
Page 1	<p>Introduction to Croydon’s Local Offer to our Care Experienced Adults 2023-2024</p>	<p>In Croydon we believe that everyone in society has a responsibility to help those who have been in care to overcome any difficulties they experienced in their childhoods, so that they can lead successful lives.</p> <p>It is our responsibility to make sure you know what services are available to you, and what you can expect to receive when you leave care. As a Care Experienced member of the Croydon community, you should have all possible opportunities to achieve your goals and aspirations. Sometimes this requires extra support and this document outlines some of the support available to you.</p>

	Contents	<p>As your Corporate Parents, we want to make sure that you know where and who to go to for advice and help. Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you and will be here whenever you need us.</p> <p>Croydon's Local Offer contains information about all the support and services available in Croydon for you, as you move into adulthood. We have worked with care experienced adults to put this together. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we provide are what you need.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction</li> <li>2. What is a Corporate Parent? &amp; Croydon's Young People's 16+ Service</li> <li>3. Our Promise to You</li> <li>4. The difference between Social workers and Personal Advisors</li> <li>5. Pathway Plans</li> <li>6. The Care Leaver Covenant</li> <li>7. Taking part</li> <li>8. Money matters. official documents &amp; Special Birthdays</li> <li>9. Financial Support available</li> <li>10. Moving home</li> <li>11. Education, Employment and Training</li> <li>12. University students</li> <li>13. Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>14. Care Leavers who are parents</li> <li>15. Care Leavers in Custody</li> <li>16. Care Leavers who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum</li> <li>17. Care leavers aged 21 and our over 25's.</li> <li>18. Advocacy Service, Complaints, and Independent Visitors</li> <li>19. Keeping safe &amp; Contact details</li> </ol>
Page 2	What is a Corporate Parent?	<p>When you came into our care, Croydon Council became your Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, to provide the best possible care, and safeguarding, for the children and young people who are cared for by us.</p> <p>The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced corporate parenting principles, which comprise of seven things we must take into account in supporting you. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To act in your best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of all</li> </ol>

	<p>Croydon Young People's 16+ Service</p>	<p>care leavers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To encourage every care leaver to express their views, wishes and feelings.</li> <li>3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of every care leaver.</li> <li>4. To help care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.</li> <li>5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for care leavers.</li> <li>6. For care leavers to be safe, with stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.</li> <li>7. To prepare care leavers for adulthood and independent living.</li> </ol> <p>Croydon Young People's 16+ Service is made up of 11 Teams. Each team is made up of social workers and personal advisers, supported by a Team Manager. If you are in care and under 18 years, you will be supported by a social worker. Your social worker can and may continue to work with you after you are 18 if that is the best way to support you. A personal adviser will be introduced to no later than your 17<sup>th</sup> birthday so that you can get to know them, and they will be your main support from 18 years onwards when your social worker is no longer involved. The team approach will make sure that you are supported by those who know you best, and the team can respond to you if your main worker is not available.</p> <p>Your personal advisor will support you and provide you with assistance until you are at least 21. If you are in education or want to continue to receive support from us your personal adviser will be able to support, you up to the age of 25.</p>
<p>Page 3</p>	<p>Our Promise to You</p>	<p>Our Good Practice Promises were developed with care experienced adults during 2022 and these are:</p> <p>I will show that I <u>Hear</u> you by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Listening to your views</li> <li>&gt; Exploring ways to achieve what you want</li> </ul> <p>I will show that I <u>See</u> you by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Visiting when I say I will</li> <li>&gt; Noticing how you are feeling</li> </ul>

		<p>I will show that I <u>Care</u> about you by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Worrying about your safety</li> <li>&gt; Remembering important events for you, such as your Birthday</li> </ul> <p>We will support you by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Providing you with your own allocated worker and make sure you know who you can contact if they are not available. They will keep in touch and visit regularly.</li> <li>· Talk to you about when you and your family can see or contact each other and support travel arrangements and if you can't, we'll explain why.</li> <li>· Keep brothers and sisters together, wherever possible.</li> <li>· Regularly review how well we are keeping our promises to you and keep your pathway plan up to date.</li> <li>· Make sure the adults, such as carers and workers, get the right training to understand the issues that affect children in care and care leavers, so that you get the best care possible.</li> <li>· Make sure you know how to complain and help to resolve complaints as quickly as possible.</li> </ul>
Page 4	The difference between Social Workers and Personal Advisers	<p>Your social worker will support you up to the age of 18, they will develop your first Pathway Plan, conduct any assessments with you and liaise with other services on your behalf.</p> <p>Your personal adviser will start getting to know you when you are 17 and take over as your main support when you no longer need your social worker. For many young people this will be shortly after they are 18, for some it's best for the social worker to stay involved working with the personal advisor.</p> <p>Personal Advisers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Help you to understand what support is available, so that you can make informed choices.</li> <li>· Review your Pathway Plan with you at least every 6 months.</li> <li>· Help you to develop links in the community where you live .</li> <li>· Support you to develop the necessary skills to live independently.</li> <li>· Support you to understand your identity and background and help you develop positive and lasting relationships with family and friends.</li> <li>· Encourage you to develop confidence and self-esteem, and the ability to voice your opinions and thoughts on key issues that affect you</li> </ul>

Page 5	Pathway Plans	<p>When you turn 15 years and 9 months your social worker will meet with you to start your pathway plan.</p> <p>Every young adult between the ages of 16 and 21 in care, or leaving care, has a pathway plan. This will continue up to 25 if you are in education or wish to continue to receive a service from us.</p> <p>Your first pathway plan will build on and will include your Care Plan and any Personal Education Plan. It will be written with you by your social Worker.</p> <p>The pathway plan has information on the best way to support you towards full independence and adulthood. It will cover your education, employment, health, finance, social needs, relationships and where you will live.</p> <p>Your plan will be written in a way that meets your individual needs. It will capture your hopes for the future and include your views. It will be regularly reviewed with you, at least every six months, to check that your goals are still right and are being met.</p>
Page 6	The Care Leaver Covenant	<p>Have you heard about The Care Leaver Covenant? The covenant is a pledge made by public, private and voluntary organisations to Care Experienced Young Adults, including opportunities with employment, work with placements, and internships with big businesses, government departments, museums, theatres, or Premier League football clubs, as well as training workshops or life-skills coaching. There are also resources and tools from Barclays Life Skills to help to manage your money.</p> <p>Speak to your Personal advisor for more information about the care leaver covenant or visit the website to sign up to alerts about opportunities including work and education. There are also recreational offers and give-aways. Visit: <a href="https://mycovenant.org.uk">Connects Sign-up - Care Leaver Covenant (mycovenant.org.uk)</a> www.mycovenant.org.uk</p>
Page 7	Taking part	<p>We want all our Care Experienced Adults to be active members of society. As your corporate parents we will be there to offer you advice and support. An important part of staying mentally and physically healthy is enjoying hobbies and interests.</p> <p>Some of the ways you can take part to stay active and engaged with local services include:</p> <p>Free leisure centre membership:</p>

As a Care Experienced member of our Croydon community, you are eligible for free membership to the BETTER leisure centres in Croydon.

Each centre has a:

- swimming pool
- gym
- exercise classes

We can make an agreement through your pathway plan about how we can support you to get involved in sporting activities or other leisure activities near where you live.

Your Personal advisor will have details of clubs, community groups, and activities which may interest you.

Your right to vote:

The electoral register (sometimes called the 'electoral roll') lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote, in local and general elections. You must register to vote if you're asked to do so, and you meet the conditions for this. For example, if you're 18 or over and you're a British or a national of an EU or Commonwealth country. If needed, your Personal advisor can assist you to enrol on the electoral register.

Children in Care Council & Care Leavers Forum

We want to hear your views so we can improve the lives of all of our Care Experienced Adults. Croydon's Children in Care Council & Care Leavers Forum is a collective of young people who are all cared for by Croydon. The purpose is to empower Children Looked After and Care Experienced Adults with the confidence and power to influence policy change, shape the service and have their voice heard. These groups will provide young adults the chance to identify common issues with the care they receive for example and make proposals for improvements. All of these are presented to the Corporate Parenting Board at Croydon Council, Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Education.

Legacy Youth Zone:

Legacy Youth Zone is open 7 days a week, and offers over 20 activities to discover, learn and excel at. We will pay for all children looked after and care experienced young people to become involved. Legacy Membership

		<p>for young adults aged 8-19 years, and up to 25 for those with disabilities. <a href="https://www.legacyyouthzone.org">https://www.legacyyouthzone.org</a>.</p> <p>Esther support group:</p> <p>We're proud to run a support group that brings both Looked After children and care leavers together in a friendly, safe environment where they can develop independent skills. Esther Outreach is a voluntarily run initiative that provides practical support, advice and advocacy to care leavers. The practical support covers everything from assistance in finding work, all the way through to preparing meals. Past workshops have covered money management, drug awareness, parenting, cooking on a budget and creative art. To sign up you can phone either 07847 844 269 or 07783 894 358, or email <a href="mailto:estheroutreach@wwmf.org">estheroutreach@wwmf.org</a></p> <p>The Princes Trust:</p> <p>The Prince's Trust offers a number of opportunities for Care Experienced young people with support available between the aged 16-30. Including a 'Step Into Adulthood' programme which offers support around managing money and bills, cooking, networking with professionals, CV writing, community support groups and training and employment opportunities. Speak to your personal advisor who can support you to access the service or contact <a href="mailto:LondonGetStarted@princes-trust.org.uk">LondonGetStarted@princes-trust.org.uk</a> for more information or call 0800 842 842.</p>
Page 8	Money Matters, Official Documents and Special Birthdays	<p>Your personal advisor will help you to manage your money and understand any benefits you may be entitled to. In addition, your personal advisor will make sure that there is someone to support you in the event of a crisis or when things do not go according to plan. The service is able to consider discretionary additional financial support based on an assessment of your individual needs.</p> <p>Although you may still receive some financial support once you are 18, you will be expected to find your income from work, education grants and, if eligible, benefits.</p> <p>Croydon Young People 16+ Service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Help you to open your own bank account and advise how to manage your money, to help you avoid getting into debt.</li> <li>· Help you to get identification documents, (important pieces of paper about you) such as a passport, birth</li> </ul>



certificate and provisional driving licence.

- Help you to get your National Insurance (NI) number. Every adult in the country has their own NI number, so that records about their benefits, taxes and pensions are kept. Your worker might write a letter or help you fill in a form to apply for it before you leave care.
- Help you to access Department of work and Pensions for advice.
- Help you when you make your first claim for benefits at 18, by supporting you with a personal allowance for up to six weeks while your benefits claim is being processed. You are allowed to claim benefits up to one month before you turn 18 and will be supported to do so.
- Help you, if you are unable to claim benefits by supporting you financially for a longer period while your entitlements are being established, as set out in your Pathway Plan.
- Help you to purchase furniture and white goods, such as washing machines and fridges, when you are setting up your home through a Setting up home allowance.
- Support you to apply for a HC2 or HC3 certificate which would mean that optical, dental and prescription costs would either be fully or partially covered. Croydon Leaving care service can offer support to cover the cost of your prescriptions. Speak to your personal advisor who can support you with claiming the costs.

#### Help with your council tax:

Council Tax is a payment made by all adults to your local authority for local services such as collecting your rubbish, clearing streets, running services and the local parks. Croydon Young People's 16+ Service will pay the Council tax bill for Care experienced Adults up the age of 25. Care experienced young people who are living outside of Croydon will be assisted to claim any local Council Tax Exemption or Council Tax Support available. Where care leavers living outside of Croydon remain liable for all, or part of their Council Tax Liability, Croydon Children's Service will pay the liability on your behalf.

#### Remembering your birthday:

Birthdays are an important milestones and if you are actively engaged with the Young People's 16+ Service you will receive either a gift or equivalent amount to the

		<p>value of £100 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday and £50 on your 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> birthdays.</p> <p>Your special 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday will be marked with a meal for you with your personal advisor up to the value of £50.</p>																		
Page 9	Financial support available	<p>This table sets out financial entitlements available to Care Experienced young people:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Allowance</th> <th>Amount</th> <th>Eligibility</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Living costs (Maintenance allowance)</td> <td> <p>Up to £67.20 p.w. (from April 2023).</p> <p>+ Equivalent child benefit amount where not in receipt: (£21 pw 1<sup>st</sup> child; £14 pw other children).</p> </td> <td>Subject to employment, education and training and immigration status. Must be engaging with Pathway Planning. Paid whilst waiting for initial Benefit Claim.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accommodation</td> <td> <p>Costs met in full up to age of 18.</p> <p>Deposit and rent in advance up to Local Housing Allowance rate.</p> <p>Rent Guarantor for University housing.</p> </td> <td>Not for local authority or housing association property.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Council Tax</td> <td>Full cost met – balance paid after any local exemptions applied.</td> <td>Must be a Croydon Care Experienced young person 18-25.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Starting work grant</td> <td>£150</td> <td>One off payment for interview clothes, protective clothes.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Birthday/ Christmas and Festival Allowances</td> <td> <p>£100 at age 17,18 &amp; 21</p> <p>£50 at aged 19 and 20</p> </td> <td>Paid if actively engaged with the Young People's 16+ Service</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Allowance	Amount	Eligibility	Living costs (Maintenance allowance)	<p>Up to £67.20 p.w. (from April 2023).</p> <p>+ Equivalent child benefit amount where not in receipt: (£21 pw 1<sup>st</sup> child; £14 pw other children).</p>	Subject to employment, education and training and immigration status. Must be engaging with Pathway Planning. Paid whilst waiting for initial Benefit Claim.	Accommodation	<p>Costs met in full up to age of 18.</p> <p>Deposit and rent in advance up to Local Housing Allowance rate.</p> <p>Rent Guarantor for University housing.</p>	Not for local authority or housing association property.	Council Tax	Full cost met – balance paid after any local exemptions applied.	Must be a Croydon Care Experienced young person 18-25.	Starting work grant	£150	One off payment for interview clothes, protective clothes.	Birthday/ Christmas and Festival Allowances	<p>£100 at age 17,18 &amp; 21</p> <p>£50 at aged 19 and 20</p>	Paid if actively engaged with the Young People's 16+ Service
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		Health	<p>Up to £300 per year towards the cost of opticians/glasses, dentist/dental treatment.</p> <p>Pregnancy testing.</p> <p>Pregnancy starter equipment – up to £500.</p>	<p>Subject to written quotes.</p> <p>Appointment with GP required.</p> <p>After voluntary sector support provided.</p>
		Identity Documents (passport/NI/Birth Certificate)	Up to £110.	For first application and 1 renewal up to the age of 21.
		Driving Licence and lessons	10 x 1-hour lessons; 1 theory test; 1 practical test; 1 provisional licence or the same amount towards travel costs.	17-25 in Education, Employment or Training.
		Travel and Family time costs	<p>£25 per week for education travel.</p> <p>Travel to and from university 3 times per year.</p> <p>Travel to spend time with family, previous foster carer etc.</p>	<p>Attendance over 85%</p> <p>Each situation will need to be assessed.</p>
		Setting up home allowance	Up to £3000 for furnishing & equipment for care experienced young people who turned 18 from 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2023. Previously £2,000.	<p>Up to 25</p> <p>Not provided in cash.</p>

		Wi-fi	Up to £300 per year towards wi-fi connectivity.	
		Crisis payment	One off payment towards food/heating. Up to £50.	Assessment of need by Team Manager
Page 10	Moving home	<p>Your social worker and personal adviser will be visiting you, and where you live will be agreed in your Pathway Plan.</p> <p>Staying on with foster carers is called 'Staying Put'. You can stay with your foster carer until you are 21 years old, if this is agreed. This will not affect your long term move or plans.</p> <p>When you turn 17, your personal adviser will become involved with you to begin discussions about your housing options post 18 as part of the pathway planning process. There will be reviews of your housing options until an 18+ accommodation offer is agreed.</p> <p>Our aim is to encourage early joint planning with housing colleagues, we will continue to provide advice and information to assist Croydon housing department, as well explore other options for young people, who cannot be rehoused in the borough.</p> <p>There is a very limited supply of Council Social Housing Accommodation, and our duty is to provide suitable accommodation, not Permanent Council Social Housing Accommodation.</p> <p>Where there are worries that a young person may not manage independent living, individual packages of support can be implemented to support this transition.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remaining in semi-independent provision post 18 until you are more able to manage independent living.</li> <li>• Outreach support packages from a variety of external providers, focussing on Health, Education, Employment and Self Care Skills.</li> </ul> <p>These packages can vary in terms of how many hours of support per week are offered based on your individual needs.</p>		

The Young People's 16+ Service will liaise with Adults' Services and other departments within the council where young people meet their criteria, to seek appropriate adult accommodation and support services.

Where young people want to remain in a different borough; we try to work in conjunction with other local authority housing departments to advocate on your behalf for entitlement to apply for social housing in that locality.

Some of the types of accommodation available to Care Experienced young people in Croydon include:

Type	Description	Details
Foster Carers	Foster Carers can provide care for up to three children/young people in their own home. They will be paid and supported by Croydon or an Independent Fostering Agency.	Most care experienced young people in Croydon will have lived with foster carers. Because foster carers are only approved to 18 the arrangements for staying with your foster carers after this age needs to be through a 'staying put' arrangement.
Staying Put	These are foster carers who continue to have young people live with them after they become adults at 18.	Staying put arrangements are funded through an agreement for housing allowances to be paid to your staying put carer.

		Semi-Independent support	These are arrangements are for 16- & 17-year-olds that require 'support' in a caring environment	These arrangements provide less direct 'care' for children and young people and are a half-way step to being independent.
		Shared Lives	Where young people have additional needs, shared lives support carers.	Shared lives can support people from age 16 onwards. Whatever a young person's support needs many young people find Shared Lives is an ideal way to maintain independence whilst having support.
		Supported Accommodation	This may be a flat, shared house or a private house with additional support provided to help manage day to day arrangements.	Your Personal Adviser or Social worker will discuss what additional support is available and help to tailor this to your needs.
		Private Rented	This may be a house, flat or studio or house share owned by a private	Your Personal advisor will be able to discuss with the housing team if private rented is the best option for you.
		House Project	What is the house project.	Your Personal advisor will be able to discuss this programme with you to consider if this is

		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <p>The house project works with young people on cooperative principles and young adults leaving care work together to refurbish properties that become their home and build long term communities of support.</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <p>something you would be interested in.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>The house project works with young people on cooperative principles and young adults leaving care work together to refurbish properties that become their home and build long term communities of support.</p>	<p>something you would be interested in.</p>
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<p>Page 11</p>	<p>Education, Employment and Training</p>	<p>Education is essential for you to gain the qualifications you need when looking for employment. However, college and university are not the only options. Apprenticeships and training schemes are very popular and can be a good way to learn practical work skills and earn. Volunteering is another excellent option to help you gain work skills and get that all important work experience that employers want.</p> <p>We will support your education, training and leisure activities based on an assessment of your needs and this is recorded in detail in your pathway plans. These proposals build on information that is already included in your personal education plan (PEP).</p> <p>Some young people will not be able to access formal education and training straight away but may be working towards these opportunities, such as undertaking English as A Second Language (ESOL) classes or volunteering.</p> <p>Croydon Works:</p> <p>Croydon works is Croydon’s job and training hub. Who offer a free recruitment service working in partnership with Job Centre Plus, Croydon College and Croydon Council. Croydon Works treat apprenticeships as a top priority and understand the importance of gaining vocational qualifications and can offer a range of support in this area. <a href="https://croydonworks.co.uk/">https://croydonworks.co.uk/</a></p>		

		<p>Education, Employment and Training Drop in:</p> <p>There is drop in every Wednesday at the Turnround Centre between 2 and 4pm where there is dedicated advice from Croydon's Leaving Care Education, Employment and Training Officer.</p> <p>Croydon Council Apprenticeship programme:</p> <p>Croydon is committed to also giving priority to apprenticeships to Care Leavers. There are 40+ apprenticeships planned for 2024 within the council. To register your interest visit: <a href="http://www.croydonworks.co.uk/opportunities/4294/croydon-council-apprenticeship-academy">www.croydonworks.co.uk/opportunities/4294/croydon-council-apprenticeship-academy</a>.</p> <p>Travel costs:</p> <p>If you are in full time education or training in London, you are entitled to an 18+ Student Oyster photocard which gives you 30% off the cost of your fare. You can apply here <a href="http://www.tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/18-student">www.tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/18-student</a>.</p>
Page 12	University students	<p>We will support you with your education, if you decide to go to university you will receive up to a three-year financial support package. The financial support you could receive includes:</p> <p>All young adults entering higher education are entitled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A one-off Computer Grant for a notepad or lap-top depending on an assessment of need and if not previously accessed – up to £400.00.</li> <li>• A Stationery Grant, Educational Visits and Books and Equipment Grant of up to £225.00 The Grant is per academic year (assessed each year).</li> </ul> <p>1. A Higher Education Bursary of £2,000.00 which is provided over the period of a two-, three- or four-year course. Depending on the length of your course the £2,000.00 per course will be made up of £1,000.00 per year (2-year course) £666.67 per year (3-year course) £500.00 per year (4-year course).</p>



		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. A Vacation Accommodation Allowance of up to 22 weeks – Up to the level of the LHA (London Housing Allowance) one-bedroom self-contained rate and/or the level of university accommodation (in the vacation).</li> <li>3. We understand that everyone going to university will have individual needs and where possible if a Staying Put arrangement with your foster carer can be made, Croydon Care Experienced team will explore whether this arrangement is possible, and make individual arrangements based on your needs.</li> <li>4. A Travel Grant to enable you to get to and return to university (three return journeys per academic year). The travel grant will be paid at the off-peak rate and at the advanced and pre-booked rate of at least one month before the journey.</li> <li>5. A Graduation Grant of up to £1000.00 to cover the cost of the graduation ceremony, gown hire, etc., and to cover relocation, deposit and rent in advance costs when leaving university.</li> </ol> <p>Care Experienced young adults applying to and undertaking higher education courses will be required to apply for all available universal student funding i.e., maintenance loans, tuition fee loans, as well as individual establishment bursaries. These loans and grants and the H.E. Bursary should be used by students as their main source of income through-out their term time course of study. This will fund their higher education accommodation, living expenses and travel etc.</p> <p>Your personal advisor will arrange to visit you at university and can support you with your move, to make sure you are settled in and have the support you need. We will also make sure you are connected to the university-based support for care experienced students, and any support that is available from the council area where your university is based.</p>
Page 13	Health and wellbeing	<p>Being healthy is as much about how your emotional health and wellbeing, as it is about your physical health. It's really important to regularly exercise, eat a balanced diet and keep your teeth clean.</p> <p>It's equally important to talk to people if you're struggling with anything or feeling down so that we can identify the right support for you. Sometimes being part of a social</p>

group through sports, music, study can help your emotional wellbeing as well. Your pathway plan will also detail any health needs that you may have, remember to keep your personal advisor updated about your health if anything changes.

There are lots of services and support you can access, and we will do our very best to keep you safe. We will support and encourage you to be healthy by:

- Encouraging you to speak up if you are struggling with anything so we can get you the support that you need.
- Provide a Health Passport as you reach 18 years old. This is a summary of all your health information.
- Helping you to register at a doctor's surgery, dentist and optician.
- Advice on healthy living which will include anything from being smart about having safe sex all the way through to having a balanced diet.
- Leisure and Fitness passes to Croydon facilities are available to all 16/17-year-olds and if you are 18+ can be requested through your personal advisor.

Helping you to manage your emotional well-being – this may include Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or supporting you to get services as an adult.

Counselling:

Off The Record Youth Counselling Croydon provide free, independent and professional counselling for 14–25-year-olds in the Croydon area. To discuss the possibility of receiving their support, speak to your personal advisor or call 020 8251 0251, or email them at: [croydon@talkofftherecord.org](mailto:croydon@talkofftherecord.org).

Healthy Eating and Living:

Your personal advisor will talk to you about shopping for a balanced diet. The NHS Eat Well has information about staying healthy. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

**Sexual Health Services:**

As with any other health matter, your Personal Advisor will be supportive of you and happy to offer their advice, but the borough does have support from Croydon Sexual Health Centre based at Croydon University Hospital Croydon Sexual Health Centre also has its own Condom Distribution Scheme called the C Card, which will allow you to pick up free condoms from a number of places in the borough. [ch-tr.sexualhealth@nhs.net](mailto:ch-tr.sexualhealth@nhs.net)  
0208 401 3766.

**Drugs and Alcohol support:**

If you need support around drug or alcohol use, your Personal Advisor will discuss this with you in a non-judgemental way. Croydon has specialist support available if you do ever have need of it.

Turning Point is a national service that provides support across a broad spectrum but, in Croydon, it runs the Croydon Recovery Network, which includes a service for substance misuse. Contact: [0300 123 9288](tel:03001239288) or speak to your Personal advisor who can help you to access support.

The Live Well Croydon programme, which is the healthy lifestyle service for residents has a website called Just Be Croydon which offers advice, hints and tips on six health topics such as being happy, active, alcohol aware, sexually safe, food smart and stopping smoking. Contact [livewell@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:livewell@croydon.gov.uk) or phone [0800 019 8570](tel:08000198570) or speak to your Personal advisor who can help you to access support.

**Domestic abuse.**

If you have experienced or experiencing domestic abuse and need support speak to your personal advisor who can help you to seek the right support.

There are services in Croydon who can help, including:

The Family Justice Service (formerly Family Justice Centre). The centre is run by a skilled experienced team that works to provide you and your family access to support services. Our aim is to listen and respond to your needs in a safe way.

Telephone: 020 8688 0100 or  
email: [fjc@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:fjc@croydon.gov.uk).

**The 24-hour National domestic helpline:** The helpline can give support, help and information over the telephone,

		<p>wherever the caller might be in the country. Telephone: 0808 2000 247.</p> <p><b>RASAC:</b> The RASAC Crisis centre in Croydon provides specialist support to female survivors of sexual violence. Telephone: 0808 802 9999.</p> <p>LGBTQ+ support:</p> <p>The Bridge is a free and confidential service for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning (LGBTQ) for young adults aged 11 - 25 in Croydon. Phone 020 8305 5004 or email <a href="mailto:youth@metrocharity.org.uk">youth@metrocharity.org.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:Thebridge@croydon.gov.uk">Thebridge@croydon.gov.uk</a> for more details.</p>
Page 14	Care Leavers who are Parents	<p>Being a parent for the first time can be challenging. We want to make sure that you get the support you need when you are pregnant and during your first year of being a parent.</p> <p>We can support you in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that you have essential items for baby by accessing the correct benefits, grants, charities and consideration of a discretionary grant up to £100 if required.</li> <li>• Offer prospective mothers a birthing partner and someone to accompany them to pre- and post-natal health appointments e.g., their Personal Advisor, ex foster carer, if you would like this.</li> <li>• Support travel costs for a friend/family member to accompany you to appointments and the hospital for the birth.</li> <li>• Provide you with the opportunity to have a Family Group Conference during pregnancy to identify support within friends and family network.</li> <li>• Support you with attending health appointments such as antenatal care.</li> <li>• Provide all mothers and fathers access to parenting support from a local children's centre to help with parenting skills, support and advice.</li> <li>• Provide access to support to assist with claiming relevant benefits and registering the birth of the baby.</li> </ul>
Page 15	Care Leavers in Custody	<p>We will be there for any of our young adults in custody. This will include making arrangements to collect you when you are released and make arrangements so that</p>

		<p>you have somewhere to go. We will stay in touch by visiting or writing to you depending on what you want.</p> <p>We will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide you with a payment of £25 per month into savings until you are 21 years old, unless agreed otherwise. This is to provide you with some financial support upon release.</li> <li>• Ensure your social worker or personal advisor will make a case for any additional funding for hardship support you may need.</li> <li>• Visit you every month and be actively involved in any resettlement planning for you.</li> <li>• Assist you with keeping in touch with friends and family if you want this.</li> <li>• We can arrange to keep your important documents such as your passport safe until you are back in the community.</li> </ul>
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<p>Page 16</p>	<p><b>Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People</b></p>	<p>There are organisations in Croydon who can support you if you are an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young Person or refugee:</p> <p>Young Roots is a London-based charity working with young refugees and asylum seekers aged 11-25, most of whom are alone in the UK without their families. They offer support to young adults to improve their wellbeing and fulfil their potential, through intensive one-to-one Casework, youth and sporting activities, English language mentoring, youth leadership and access to specialist therapeutic and legal advice. They can be contacted by emailing: <a href="mailto:london@youngroots.org.uk">london@youngroots.org.uk</a> 020 8684 9140</p> <p>Refugee Council work directly with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People providing independent advice and guidance. They can be contacted on: <b>0808 175 3499</b> or <a href="http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/childrens-advice/">www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/childrens-advice/</a></p>
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		<p>If you are an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young person. Your social worker or personal advisor will ensure that you have applied to extend your leave to remain, and the application is submitted to the Home Office before your leave status expires. This will enable you to be eligible to claim means tested benefits on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.</p> <p>When developing Pathway Plans with you as a young person who is Unaccompanied and Asylum-Seeking, your social worker or personal advisor will help you to think about your possible status options when you turn 18 including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a transitional plan during the period of uncertainty when a young person is in the United Kingdom without permanent immigration status.</li> <li>2. longer term plans in the United Kingdom, should you be granted long term permission to stay (for example through the grant of Refugee Status); or</li> <li>3. a return to your country of origin at any appropriate point or at the end of the immigration consideration process, should that be necessary because young person decides to leave the UK or is required to do so.</li> </ol> <p>The Young People's 16+ Service can provide up to £1500.00 to any young people who have a negative immigration status and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) where it is assessed that you are likely to be able to make a successful application that will give them access to public funds and services.</p> <p>British Citizenship:</p> <p>If you are not a British Citizen but are entitled to apply, we will support you to do this.  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/browse/citizenship/citizenship">https://www.gov.uk/browse/citizenship/citizenship</a></p>
Page 17	Care leavers aged 21 and over 25's.	We can continue to offer to support to Care Experienced Adults aged over 21 years until you turn 25 if you want this. If at any point you no longer require a service from us, you can ask to have a

		<p>service reinstated up until the age of 25 by contacting the Young People's 16+ Service.</p> <p>From 25 onwards; there will be no more pathway plans but you can still contact the service for information, advice and guidance and we will help in any way we can.</p>
Page 18	Advocacy Service, dealing with Complaints and Independent Visitors	<p>Advocacy:</p> <p>Having a voice and knowing your rights are important and this document will hopefully help you to understand what support and advice is available to you.</p> <p>We really want to hear your views, wishes and feelings so you can help us to improve your experience of being in care. We have a duty to listen to you and will treat you fairly and with respect, and this is expected of you, too. We encourage you to speak to your personal advisor if there is something you are unhappy about.</p> <p>It is important for you to know what to do if you feel you are not being listened to. Children's Services are obliged to protect you from harm and provide you with support and services that meet your needs.</p> <p>You can get in touch with an advocate at Barnardo's if you would like to talk to someone about any issues, or if you want to know more about the service.</p> <p>Freephone: 0808 800 0017  Telephone: 020 8509 3432  E-mail: <a href="mailto:advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk">advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk</a></p> <p>Sometimes problems do happen and when they do, we have a policy of trying to sort things out as soon as we can. If you feel you have been treated unfairly or discriminated against in any way, or if you are unhappy about the support or service you have received, an advocate will help you to address your concerns.</p> <p><b>Complaints</b></p> <p>Croydon Council Complaints Resolution Team are available to speak to on <b>020 8726 6000</b>.</p>





		<p>Croydon Social Care Emergency Duty Team  Out of Hours Support is available if you require emergency support out of office working hours (9am - 5pm / Monday to Friday), or in emergencies and social worker support that cannot wait until the next working day. You can ring our Emergency Duty Service by calling the Contact Centre on 0208 726 6400 and asking for the Out of Hours social work team.</p>
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## **7. CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 7.1** This report supports the council priority of working with partners to enable our Care Experienced Young People to fulfil their potential.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1.1** The financial implications are setting up home grant increase from £2,000 to £3,000 in line with Department for Education guidance as set out in the Section 31 Grant Determination Letter for - Leaving Care Allowance Uplift Implementation Grant (New Burdens) 2023/25.
- 8.1.2** All other elements of the Care Leaver Offer are met from current budget allocation.

### **8.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.2.1** The Children and Social Work Act 2017 Section 2 requires local authorities to publish information about the services it offers to care leavers which may assist them in preparing for adulthood and independent living. These services may include health and wellbeing, education and training, employment, accommodation, and participation in society.
- 8.2.2** Before publishing its local offer for care leavers (or any updated version) a local authority must consult relevant persons about which of the services offered by the local authority may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living.
- 8.2.3** Publishing an updated local offer will ensure compliance with the legislation.

### **8.3 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

**8.3.1** The local offer supports addressing equalities challenges for Care Experienced Young People.

## **9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

**9.1** -Financial policy

-Care leaver offer 21-22

-Section 31 Grant Determination Letter for - Leaving Care Allowance Uplift Implementation Grant (New Burdens) 2023/25 [31/6559]