

**Oldham Children's Social Care**

# **Oldham's Local Offer for Care Leavers**

October 2021

## What's inside this Offer to Care Leavers booklet?

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## **1. What is the Local Offer to Care Leavers?**

Local authorities have a legal duty to support young people making the transition from care to adulthood. It is our responsibility to make sure you know what services are available to you, and what you can expect to receive when you are in care.

If you are leaving care, or have already left care, this doesn't mean that we don't care about you and don't want to continue to support you. We want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where to go for advice and help. This document will tell you about the support that Oldham has in place for you as a care leaver. It will help you make the most of the services available to you and will help you navigate the support you can expect on your journey to independence.

To be able to get the support set out in this document, you must have been in care for at least 13 weeks or periods totaling 13 weeks which began after you turned 14 years old, and also included some time on or after your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. If you are not sure whether you qualify for support, you can ask your social worker or personal advisor.

This document will cover the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing
- Finance and money
- Accommodation
- Education, employment and training
- Relationships
- Participation in society

At the back of this document there is a list of useful contact numbers that you should find helpful. Below is some important information you will need to know about the support we must give you by law, the After Care Team, Personal Advisors, Pathway Planning and more.

## **2. The support we must give you by law**

Through the Children Leaving Care Act (2000) Oldham must provide you with the following:

- A Personal Advisor (PA), who will offer you advice and support.
- Suitable accommodation and financial support if you leave care before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- A Pathway Plan which must be regularly reviewed with you.

Following changes introduced via the Children and Social Work Act 2017, you can ask for support from your PA up to the age of 25, regardless of whether you are in education employment or training or not.

There are also times when you may need extra support, and this may be due to:

- being a young parent.
- you have a disability or additional educational need.
- you are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person and you have an ongoing asylum claim.
- you are in custody or in contact with Probation or Youth Offending services.
- you are going through a difficult time and feel that you need support.

### **3. What does the Oldham After Care Team do?**

We are your 'Corporate Parents', which means that it our responsibility to be good parents to all young people in our care. A good corporate parent should have the same aspirations for a child in care, or a care leaver, that any good parent would have for their own child. This means providing you with the stability and support that you need to make progress; helping you to access new opportunities and experiences that inspire you to set ambitious goals for yourself. It means celebrating your successes, but also recognising that you will sometimes make mistakes and may need our help to get back on track. It also means supporting you to gain the skills and confidence to live an independent life whilst letting you know that you have someone to call on for help if the going gets tough.

The After-Care Team are based at Metropolitan Place, Hobson street in Oldham. It is part of the Children in Care Service and works with young people who are aged 18+ (care leavers). Our team is made up of PAs who will support you with your journey to independence. We have a legal duty to support and assist you until you are 25.

### **4. What you can expect from your Corporate Parents**

A corporate parent is an organisation or person who has special responsibilities to care for looked after children and young people, including:

- those in residential care
- those in foster care
- those in kinship care, who live with a family member other than a parent
- those who are looked after at home
- those who are no longer in care as over 18 years and are Care

## Leavers

### **Our pledge to you as Care Leavers**

Our ambition is for Oldham to be a place where Care Leavers thrive. In simple terms, we want Oldham to be a place where Care Leavers:

#### **Are safe and supported**

- We will aim to ensure that you have a home where you feel safe and secure
- We will help you to keep in touch and spend time with your family and friends
- We will make sure you have photographs of your time in care for you to look back on in later life
- We will make sure that the people who look after you and work with you, care for you, support you and encourage are available to support you in everything you do

#### **Are healthy and happy**

- We will make sure you get what you need to stay healthy
- We will support you to take part in positive activities
- We are there to listen to any worries you may have and support you when times get tough.

#### **Have the opportunities to learn and achieve their potential**

- We will support you to get the best education, including going onto further education and university.
- We will support young people to gain access to the virtual school, both in mandatory education and on leaving year 11.

#### **Have a voice and feel part of the community**

- We will make sure you are involved in decisions that affect you.
- We will support the children in care council which includes care leavers.
- We have a young inspectors services that we will encourage our young people to be involved in.
- There is a Champions Scheme that is available to young people in care and care leavers – we will help you access this.

#### **Are ready for work and life**

- We will create opportunities for traineeships, work experience and apprenticeships so that you are ready for work.
- We will support your aspirations and have a specific Careers Advisor for Care Leavers.
- We have links with Get Oldham working, the Princes Trust and GMYN – we can support you in accessing services that will help you.

#### **Feel proud**

- We will run celebration events each year to celebrate your achievements

- We will make sure that we recognize all those important life moments of achievements with a call, a card, an email or a catch up with a celebration coffee.
- We will never forget your birthday.
- We will link into the Greater Manchester forums and support you to attend the annual awards and celebrations – we will be there to cheer you on!

## **Our promise to you as care leavers**

We will treat you with respect and ask ourselves “would this be good enough for my child?”

We will have a conference each year so that all adults who make decisions about your care and who provide services for you can find out what they can do to help you reach your goals. We will challenge and champion your cause.

## **5. What is the role of the Personal Advisor (PA)?**

Once you turn 18, you will no longer have a social worker and your Personal Advisor) PA will become your main worker and continue working with you until the age of 25, regardless of whether you are in education, employment or training or not. A PA will be identified for you after you become 16, so you can build a relationship before they become your allocated worker.

Your PA is there to help you to prepare to live independently and be successful at this. They can offer you advice, guidance and support after you leave care. Your PA will talk with you about the support that you may need and will work with you to record this in your Pathway Plan. The amount of support that you receive from your PA will depend on what you need, and we will talk about this together.

We will try and keep the same PA allocated to you, however this can sometimes be difficult, and you may wish to request a change in your worker. The relationship between you and your PA is important; make the most of them, treat them with respect and keep in touch, they have your best interests at heart and want to support you in any way they can.

## **6. What is a Pathway Plan?**

Every young person between the ages of 16-25 in care or a care leaver will have had an After-Care assessment and should have an up to date Pathway Plan. Your Pathway Plan is a document that is written by your social worker and handed over to your PA after speaking to you and the other significant people in your life. It sets out what support and help you need, your views and what your future goals are. It will also outline exactly what support you will receive from Oldham Council.

Your Pathway Plan will be reviewed with you every 6 months, or if there are any significant changes in your situation.

When you are 18 years old, there is a dedicated reviewing worker for Formerly Relevant Care Leavers, who will support you in making sure that you are supported, and your future is considered.

## 6.1 Health and wellbeing

Your health matters to us. Being healthy doesn't just mean eating fruit, exercising regularly and keeping your teeth clean. It also means feeling strong and well emotionally and being sexually healthy and safe. Your PA can offer you support to achieve and maintain positive health and wellbeing and we recognise that this is different for each individual. In Oldham we will support you to recognise your own health needs and signpost you to services to meet these needs.

We also recognise that it can be very difficult leaving care and living independently and that this can often be lonely and isolating. This can have a negative impact on how you feel and cope on a day to day basis. There are lots of services and support out there. Read this section to find out some of the services available to you.

What we offer to you	What you need to know
<p><b>Emotional problems</b> Your PA can offer you emotional support to talk through any feelings and problems you have and can put in strategies with you to help you cope. If you need more specialist support your PA can refer and support you to access adult mental/emotional health services.</p> <p>Off the Record free and confidential information, advice, support and counselling to young people aged 16-25: This service is based as a drop-in service initially at positive steps Email: Tel: 0161 621 9400</p> <p>Childline offers 24-hours support: Tel: 0800 1111</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> if you are struggling with anything, speak to someone about it - don't bottle it up!</p> <p>Evidence suggests that a small improvement in wellbeing can help to decrease some mental health problems and also help people to flourish. There are five actions to improve personal wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• connect</li> <li>• be active</li> <li>• take notice</li> <li>• keep learning</li> <li>• give</li> </ul>
<p><b>Access to free leisure facilities</b> If you want to access free leisure care within Oldham, speak to your PA who will arrange for you to be issued with a Leisure Pass which will give you discounted access to Oldham's leisure centres</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> Your PA can arrange free access to leisure services for you and let you know about other groups happening that you might be interested in.</p>
What we offer to you	What you need to know

<p><b>Sexual health</b></p> <p>If you need help and support with sexual health and family planning issues you will be signposted by your PA to the right local services for you that can offer you additional support and advice.</p> <p>Free contraception, pregnancy checks and check-ups are available. There is a health team based at positive steps Tel: 0161 621 3400 whilst free contraceptive services are held at the ICC in Oldham: Tel;- 0161621 3411 or 0800 988 2209</p> <p>There is also advice that can be accessed from the Looked After Nurse Angela Rufnacht: 0161 621 9449</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> Keep yourself safe. If you do not use a condom you will be at risk of becoming a young parent and catching infections.</p>
<p><b>Drug and alcohol support</b></p> <p>Oldham offers a range of specialist substance misuse services</p> <p>Turning Point: 0300 555 0234</p> <p>OASIS at Positive Steps Tel; 0161 621 9600</p> <p>ADS (Addiction Dependency Solutions) Tel; 0161 624 9595</p> <p>Oldham substance misuse service is a single, integrated drug and alcohol recovery service for all adults in Oldham.</p> <p>Web address:ROARreferrals@turningpoint.co.uk</p> <p>FRANK (friendly, confidential drugs advice): <a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a>, Tel: 0300 123 6600 / SMS to 82111</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> At Oldham, we believe that everyone has the right to lead the best life they can. Our accessible services empower people to improve their health and wellbeing and take control of the direction of their lives.</p>
<p><b>Dentist and opticians</b></p> <p>If you are receiving benefits, then you will have access to free dental health care and opticians.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> You should visit the dentist twice a year for cleaning and a check-up.</p>

<p>Opticians and dentists are free if you are under 18 years old, on benefits or in full time education.</p> <p>There is also advice that can be accessed from the Looked After Nurse Angela Rufnacht: 0161 621 9449</p>	<p>Even if you do not have any eye problems you should have your eyes tested every 2 years.</p>
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<p><b>What we offer to you</b></p>	<p><b>What you need to know</b></p>
<p><b>GP/doctor</b> Your PA will support you to register with a GP and will help you to attend health appointments. A GP treats preventative illnesses and will be able to refer you to other services. Any Care Leaver registered at a G.P in Oldham will have priority to gain an immediate appointment.</p> <p>Any care leaver up to the age of 25 who currently pays for their prescriptions and lives in Oldham can now get an annual free prescriptions card. Your PA can help you apply for this, or it is easy to fill in the online form at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.oldhamccg.nhs.uk/careleaversprescriptions">http://www.oldhamccg.nhs.uk/careleaversprescriptions</a></p> <p>There is a dedicated under 19 years midwife for young people looked after and care leavers. This is Janine Brooks, who will be introduced when you attend the antenatal appointment at the hospital</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> If you move it will be your responsibility to inform your GP and sign up with a different, more local GP. Your PA can always help you with this.</p>
<p><b>Health passports</b> When you become a care leaver you will be given a health passport by the children looked after (CLA Angela Rufnacht: 0161 621 9449) Nurse</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> If you lose your health passport speak to your CLA nurse or PA so we can replace this.</p>

at your last statutory health check. This will contain all your available health information, like the name of your GP and dentist and any ongoing health conditions. This will be useful for you to use when you access health services and adult services.

You will also be offered a monthly drop-in session which the CLA Nurse will attend giving the opportunity to discuss any health issues that you may have.

## 6.2 Finance and Money

We understand that one of the biggest concerns for care leavers is money. We can offer you financial support to make living independently that little bit less difficult. The amount of money you will get depends on your age and what type of accommodation you are in. There is a lot of information available online for care leavers and you will be able to ask your PA for more information if you need it.

Your pathway plan will set out the personal package required to meet your needs. The levels of financial support available to you will be based on a full assessment of your individual needs and aspirations.

We understand that your needs and aspirations are likely to change, and we will review your pathway plan with you every 6 months so we can capture these changes.

What we offer to you	What you need to know
<p><b>Budgeting</b></p> <p>We will give you support with budgeting your money and help you learn how to budget and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>You should open your own bank account before moving to the After Care Team, you may need some help with this, your Social Worker / PA can help you to complete this.</p> <p>If you don't know how to budget and spend your money wisely, you will really struggle when you live on your own.</p> <p>Not being able to budget properly may affect you in the long-term.</p> <p>If you need more budgeting support, then speak to your PA.</p>

<p><b>Welfare benefits</b></p> <p>When you are old enough to apply for benefits, we will help you do this. Four weeks before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday your PA will help you to make an application for financial help.</p> <p>We have a dedicated team in Oldham with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) who will make sure your application is looked at quickly and given priority.</p> <p>If you have applied for benefits and are waiting to be paid, we will pay you a weekly living allowance to help you live while your claim is processed.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>You must attend your appointments.</p> <p>It is a criminal offence to lie to the benefits office. You will also need to show your PA that you have applied for benefits.</p> <p>If you don't attend appointments with the Job Centre and don't keep to your agreement to look for work without a good reason, your benefits may be stopped.</p>
<p><b>What we offer to you</b></p>	<p><b>What you need to know</b></p>
<p><b>Benefit options</b></p> <p>Universal Credit - this is a monthly payment to encourage you to get into paid work. We are able to support any applications being made and have been able to make applications prior to young peoples 18 birthday, as this will limit any delays in payments.</p> <p>Job Seekers Allowance - this is a twice weekly payment to help you when you look for paid work</p> <p>Income Support - if you are in college full time or other education (first Level 3 qualification or below) you can claim Income Support (but not Universal Credit or Job Seekers Allowance). This is a right for all care leavers until you turn 21</p> <p>Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) - if you are ill or have other problems that stop you being available to work you may be able to claim</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>Your PA will advise and support you with applying for benefits and attending appointments.</p>

<p>ESA</p> <p>Council Tax Exemption - all care leavers living in Oldham will be given 100% exemption from Council Tax until you turn 25. This is a reciprocal arrangement should you live in another Greater Manchester Local Authority.</p>	
<p><b>Living allowance payments</b></p> <p>If you are unable to claim benefits or are waiting for your application to be processed, you will be offered a weekly payment until you are in receipt of money. This payment will be the equivalent of state benefits. You will be expected to use this for all your living costs.</p> <p>We will provide you with a financial gift on your birthday, at Christmas and other celebratory events. More details about these are listed in the discretionary payment table below.</p> <p>If you are in your own tenancy you may be provided you with a winter fuel allowance of up to £40 to help with the extra costs of heating your home over winter</p> <p>How will I be paid?</p> <p>You will be encouraged to set up a bank account. The best way to get paid is through BACS - which is a bank transfer. The money will be paid into your account.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>You will need to spend your Weekly Living Allowance on day to day essentials. You should budget this money and pay for your essentials first (food and bills).</p> <p>Your PA will support you to open your own bank account if you haven't done this before.</p>
<p><b>What we offer to you</b></p>	<p><b>What you need to know</b></p>
<p><b>Savings</b></p> <p>If you have been in care for a while you will have a savings account which you can access when you turn 18.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>Depending on how long you have been in care, your savings may be quite a lot. Use this chunk of money to help you with your future and don't waste it.</p>

<p>Your PA will provide you with information on how to access your Junior ISA or Child Trust Fund.</p>	
<p><b>Costs to support you in setting up your home</b></p> <p><b>Setting up Home Allowance (or leaving care grant)</b></p> <p>We will provide you with a leaving care grant, up to the value of £2,000, to decorate and furnish your home. Payments will be worked out according to your needs and reasonable cost.</p> <p>At times you may need items of furniture before you move onto independent living. Your PA will help you decide which items you will need, such as white goods, crockery, beds, curtains etc. from a list of recommended items.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>To choose items that you really need from the recommended items list.</p> <p>The grant is a contribution to help you buy everything you might need when moving into your first home.</p>
<p><b>Education incentive payment</b></p> <p>If you are in full time education, we will provide you with bursaries or money for your education, employment or training. Details of these are listed in the discretionary payments table below.</p>	<p>See the education, employment and training section for more information.</p>
<p><b>Emergencies</b></p> <p>We understand that emergencies do happen. We will pay emergency payments or offer food packages to care leavers for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of an education package</li> <li>• If you are unable to claim benefits</li> <li>• If you are waiting for your benefits to start</li> <li>• In an emergency</li> </ul>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>Speak to your PA if you think you are entitled to food packages or you are facing an emergency.</p> <p>You may be asked for more information about your situation.</p>

## Discretionary Payments

In addition to the payments above, the After Care Team may include payments for:

Item	Eligible and Relevant Young People Living Independently	Former Relevant 18-25 Year Olds Living Independently
18 <sup>th</sup> birthday card and present	This would be discussed with the team manager	18 <sup>th</sup> birthday allowance
21 <sup>st</sup> birthday money	Not applicable	£25 one off payment for 21 <sup>st</sup>
Christmas and religious festivals – pre 18	Eligible in line with fostering payments.	As agreed by the team manager
Bus passes in certain circumstances	Weekly if agreed	If agreed
Driving lessons (and driving licence)	50% of costs if engaged in education, training or employment up to 10 lessons	50% of costs if engaged in education, training or employment up to 10 lessons
Cold weather payments	Up to £40 (in two amounts) if in training flat in the winter months if agreed.	Up to £40 (in two amounts) if in training flat in the winter months if agreed.
Education materials and equipment	Negotiated and grants sourced. If equipment required for college course, this can be provided if agreed	Negotiated and grants sourced. If equipment required for college course, this can be provided if agreed
Course costs	N/A	On individual assessment at college. This does not include university fees
Social activities and hobbies	Upon assessment	Upon assessment
Therapeutic needs	Upon assessment	Adult services
Passport	Cost of one passport for 16-25 year olds	Cost of one passport for 16-25 year olds
Birth certificate	Cost of one birth certificate 16-25 year olds	Cost of one birth certificate 16-25 year olds
University	N/A	Lap top and soft ware in conjunction with the virtual school to an agreed amount. Accommodation and weekly top up supported.

Armed Forces		If you join the armed forces, we will make sure that we keep in touch with you and will support you with a postal boxes each month, with some of your favourite treats.
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### What we offer to you

#### **Credit Union**

A Credit Union is a 'not for profit' financial organisation that provides savings and loans accounts for its members.

In many ways a Credit Union is just like any other bank. The big difference between a Credit Union and a bank is that a Credit Union is owned and run by its members. A Credit Union does not make huge profits or reward its directors with enormous salaries.

Anyone who lives or works in Oldham is eligible to join Oldham Credit Union

The benefits of being a member of Oldham Credit Union include:

- Access to straightforward and secure savings accounts;
- The availability to members of loans at interest rates that are much lower than many loan providers (especially door stop lenders, pay-day loan companies and pawn brokers);
- Free life insurance on savings and loans. \*

**Please note:** Loan interest rates depend on personal circumstances. \* Life Insurance subject to terms and conditions.

**For more information:** [www.oldhamcreditunion.co.uk](http://www.oldhamcreditunion.co.uk) or Tel: 0161 678 7245 or Email: [enquiry@oldhamcreditunion.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@oldhamcreditunion.co.uk)

#### **Other sources of funding**

Some organisations help care leavers by awarding grants (which do not need to be repaid). Some grants help with university, moving into independent accommodation, financial support to help you train etc.

Contact the Care Advice Line at: [www.thecareadvice.org](http://www.thecareadvice.org)/Tel:0161 413 7860

You may apply to charities and organisations for additional grant funding if you meet their criteria.

Speak to your PA about what other funds you may be entitled to.

### 6.3 Your important documents

We all need important documents to do simple things like book on a course, claim benefits or open a bank account. We will make sure that you have the important documents that you need in adulthood, such as a passport and birth certificate. We will keep copies of your important documents safely on file and you will be responsible for keeping the original documents safe. If you lose any of these documents, you should inform the relevant authority or discuss this with your PA immediately. Lost documents can be used for identity theft - this is where someone may use your name and personal information in order to obtain credit, loans, etc.

What we offer to you	What you need to know
<b>National Insurance number</b> At 15 years and 9 months we will apply for your national insurance number (NI Number)	<b>Remember: let us know</b> if you have not received this.
<b>Passport</b> We will support you with an application for a passport and pay the fee for your first one. Your passport is your main source of ID.	<b>Remember:</b> Do not lose your passport or you will have to apply and pay for a new one which will cost you over £70. If you lose it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• you will not be allowed to leave the country to travel</li><li>• you may be at risk of identity theft</li></ul>
<b>Health Passport</b> On reaching 18 the Looked After Nurse will provide collated information of your health records for you to have.	
<b>Provisional Driving License</b> We will support you with an application for a provisional driving license and pay ½ to the cost of gaining this.	<b>Remember:</b> You cannot drive without a provisional licence.  If you lose your licence you will have to pay for a new one

<p>If you are in education, training or employment, we will also pay 50% towards the cost of up to 10 driving lessons.</p>	
<p><b>Birth Certificate</b></p> <p>If you do not already have a birth certificate, we will apply for you to get one and pay for this.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> If you lose your documents you will have to pay for new copies. Your birth certificate is an important document.</p>
<p><b>What we offer to you</b></p>	<p><b>What you need to know</b></p>
<p><b>British citizenship</b></p> <p>If you are entitled to apply for British Citizenship before the age of 18 then we will support you to do this.</p> <p>This also applies if you are an EU citizen, we will support your application for naturalization</p> <p>We will continue to support you if your citizenship remains unsettled after you reach 18 and will work with you and the Home Office to try and resolve this with you.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> To tell us if you want to apply. We will help you with the application.</p> <p>We need to do these applications and process together as sometimes residency needs to be re applied for depending on how long this has been agreed</p>
<p><b>Access to your file</b></p> <p>You have a right to see the information we keep about you. If you apply, we will provide you with a copy of your social services records.</p> <p>If you would like to see a copy of your file, please make a request in writing and give this to your PA</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>Think about the decision very carefully. Files can be very difficult to read.</p> <p>It can take some time to get a copy of your files, so please be patient.</p> <p>It may be that you want to know something specific about your time in care or the reason you were brought into care in the first place – we can always get this information for you, you are entitled to know the circumstances in which</p>

	you became cared for by the local authority.
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#### 6.4 Accommodation

If you are aged over 18 your PA will help you find suitable accommodation. This might involve working with First Choice Homes, supported housing and supported lodgings to support you to get the best accommodation suitable for you. We might also recommend a taster flat to you, in case you prefer to experience living independently with some support from the After-Care Team.

Oldham have agreed that as a council they will never class a care leaver as intentionally homeless and will ensure all care leavers are given priority when looking at their housing needs.

What we offer to you	What you need to know
<p><b>Staying Put</b></p> <p>If your foster carer and you decide that you would like to remain living with them, then we will support you to do that under a Staying Put arrangement. This can last until you are 21.</p> <p>If you are planning to study at university, staying put arrangements will be considered for you if you remain or return during holidays.</p> <p>It is important to remember that University accommodation cannot be paid as well as Staying Put, therefore you will need to make a decision, supported by your PA as to which plan you would prefer. This will be recorded in your pathway plan.</p> <p>Staying Put allows you to stay with your foster carers so that you can get further help and support with independent living skills. You will</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> Staying Put will help you maintain a supportive relationship with your foster carers.</p> <p>Your social worker, foster carer and PA will be able to discuss this option with you.</p> <p>If you decide to stay with your foster family, we will help you apply for independent accommodation after you are 21.</p>

<p>have responsibilities such as paying board and other independent living skills. All of this is to prepare you for when you move on.</p>	
<p><b>Taster flat</b></p> <p>This is a flat that will be your own but will give you the opportunity to experience living independently without the added pressure of a tenancy agreement as it is managed by the After-Care Team. If, after a period of time, you have been successful at managing this tenancy then we will sign it over to you completely.</p>	
<p><b>What we offer to you</b></p>	<p><b>What you need to know</b></p>
<p><b>Independent housing</b></p> <p>When you are in independent accommodation you are responsible for yourself and for paying your bills. We will support you to make an application so you can access registered social landlords. We will support this application when you are 17 years old ready for when this is required in your future, to gain your own tenancy.</p> <p>Your PA will make a referral for floating support with organizations such as KeyRing - this is so you can have more support with managing your tenancy and help you avoid arrears in your rent and bills. We know it can be very hard having your own place for the first time and we will support you the best we can to make that easier for you and ease some of the pressures.</p> <p>Your PA will help you make a claim for housing benefit.</p> <p>You will be entitled to a setting up home allowance if you are living in your own tenancy. This will be £2,000 to furnish and decorate your</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To keep on top of your bills</li> <li>• To keep to your tenancy agreement</li> </ul> <p>Work with your PA who will help you with all of these things.</p> <p>If you do not keep to your tenancy agreement, you may be at risk of losing it.</p> <p>Your bills (water, gas and electricity) can all be paid for monthly through your bank. This is often a much better option than running up bills.</p> <p>Make sure you know how your rent is being paid. It is your responsibility, whether you are working or on benefits, to ensure that your rent is paid to avoid eviction.</p>

<p>home. See the Finance section of this offer for more information.</p>	
<p><b>Supported Accommodation/Semi-Independent</b>  You may not be ready for your own tenancy when you decide to leave care and may prefer more supported options. Your PA will discuss these with you and help you identify one that will be suitable for you.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> Make good use of your PA and Support Worker - they will help you access local services and help you connect with your local community. They are there for you. If you do not use your accommodation, then you may be at risk of losing it.</p>
<p><b>University accommodation (holiday periods)</b>  We will provide you with accommodation during university holidays (or fund this if you make your own arrangements). We will make arrangements for University accommodation to be 52 weeks or arrange alternative accommodation with family or returning to former carers.</p>	
<p><b>Home Contents Insurance</b>  Your PA will encourage you to take out basic contents insurance when you move into independent living and support you to budget to renew this insurance.</p>	
<p><b>Storage Costs</b>  Where possible, the aftercare team will support you to store furniture and also keep personal possessions such as photographs securely for a minimum time limited period, usually three months, but longer if negotiated.</p>	
<p><b>Removal Methods and Costs</b></p>	

Your PA will negotiate transport for agreed moves to new accommodation. We will also make sure you have suitable bags to transport your belongings in if you do not have them.

## 6.5 Employment, Education and Training

We want to make sure that every young person leaving care is able to achieve the goals that they set in life. We want you to succeed in your education, training and employment. When we meet with you, we will find out how you are doing and will celebrate achievements with you

What we offer to you	What you need to know
<p><b>Careers advice and information on training and courses</b></p> <p>We also recognise that personal circumstances can impact on a person's ability to engage full time in a course or job. We can offer support to look at courses that can be tailored to your needs, explore with you what you want to achieve and help you make a realistic plan to get there.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> Education, training and finding a job is your responsibility. The After-Care Team will support and help you, but you must be willing and give your best.</p>
<p><b>Job search</b></p> <p>We will support you with finding employment, including help to write your CV, apply for jobs and prepare for interviews.</p> <p>We will provide you with funding for interview clothing and transport costs.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p>Interview clothing should be <b>work appropriate</b> clothing.</p> <p>Speak to your PA or Support Worker for help to apply for jobs and get ready for an interview.</p>
<p><b>Year 11 guarantee</b></p> <p>We will give you access to a careers guidance and information meeting which lets you know what progression pathways are available into apprenticeships, which includes CV and interview preparation workshop.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> You will have a dedicated advisor and personal tutor.</p>

	<b>Remember:</b> You will be given pastoral care, to support you with personal issues.
<b>What we offer to you</b>	<b>What you need to know</b>
<p><b>Apprenticeships</b></p> <p>As your corporate parent we take our role seriously, we are therefore making efforts to offer opportunities for apprenticeships within Oldham Local Authority. There will opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships and employment within the council.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> You may still be getting Housing Benefit and other support (talk to your PA to ensure that you are getting all the financial help available to you)</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> If you didn't do as well as you had expected at school, we will still get you a job with training.</p>
<p><b>Apprenticeship guarantee</b></p> <p>We will give you an apprenticeship guarantee, you will have a guaranteed apprenticeship offer through learning Skills, this guarantee consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telephone interview with specialist information, advice and guidance to identify your vocational areas of interest, including access to live vacancies and for you to make an informed choice on whether apprenticeships are the right choice for you.</li> <li>• An invite to the weekly learning Skills Assessment Centre and an interview with our dedicated advisors who will help you to identify your skills, experience and prior attainment and support you to progress into an apprenticeship. This will give you access to the opportunities below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Programme of Study- a full time programme (16-18 years, 16hrs a week for up to a year) in a range of vocational subjects, math's and English support at an accessible venue in Oldham, including financial support with travel and lunch. This route will</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Remember:</b> We expect you to have good attendance and punctuality.</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> We expect you to attend all interviews.</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> We expect you to sign up to our learner charter.</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> We have a zero tolerance to bullying and harassment.</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> We make decisions together, everyone is valued, all cultures celebrated, and we share and respect the opinions of others.</p> <p><b>Remember:</b> If you get an apprenticeship or traineeship,</p>

<p>give you the skills employers demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employability programmes - intensive support for 19+ unemployed into sustainable employment. Including job search, math's and English support, help with job applications, digital skills and CV writing.</li> </ul>	<p>there may be a grant from the employer to gain support with equipment and transport. This can be fully explored with your PA and the Careers advisor.</p>
<p><b>What we offer to you</b></p>	<p><b>What you need to know</b></p>
<p><b>Apprenticeship guarantee (cont.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Traineeship - this programme provides a direct route into apprenticeships, you will have access to math's and English support if you need it, will be provided with a work placement in your chosen vocational area and will be supported to develop your employability skills to enable you to be apprenticeship ready. You will be provided with financial support for travel, lunch and interview clothes.</li> </ul>	
<p>Do you have a learning difficulty/disability?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will guarantee a priority application to our internship programme.</li> <li>• The internship offer is 4 days a week working with an employer and 1 day a week classroom based. You will be provided with financial support for travel, lunch and interview clothes.</li> <li>• You will progress into employment, volunteering or further learning.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>University</b></p> <p>If you decide to go to university, we will assist you with your housing during holiday periods and provide you with extra financial support. This offer is in place to support you over a 3-year Degree Course (funding will only cover one 3 year period). There is no financial support in relation to this offer when accessing Foundation or Master Course's, which will need to be financed by alternatives methods.</p> <p>Part-time, blended learning and distance learning courses will not qualify</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> There is additional support available to you if you go on to attend university - this can be from a designated person within the university who your PA will help you to identify.</p> <p>Also Please note: Continuing payment of this financial support package from After Care is subject to satisfactory attendance (i.e. minimum 80%) at your Higher Education</p>

for this additional funding. In addition, non-attending students (i.e. those completing outstanding coursework or examinations from a previous academic year) will not be eligible for financial support.

If eligible and at University you could be entitled to the below; -

- We will provide a weekly allowance subject to assessment of financial needs.
- We will give you a higher education bursary to the value of £2000, that is included within the accommodation fees that are paid whilst you are at University. We will offer accommodation fees up to a yearly value of £7000 over a 52-week period. Any accommodation finances will be paid directly to the accommodation provider.
- We will help you obtain tuition fees and any University Bursary that you may be entitled to
- We will assist you with the initial costs of moving to and from university, which will be provided from your Leaving Care Grant
- You will be eligible to apply for a student loan and we will support you with this
- There will be a contract of expectations that you will be asked to sign, so everyone's roles and responsibilities will be clear. You will be asked to give permission for your PA to contact your University and maintain links. An example of this agreement will be attached for your information

£500 pledge from virtual school for a laptop etc, which will be purchased as needed on your behalf. The Laptop will belong to yourself and any repairs will be held by yourself.

institution and complying with deadlines for the submission of coursework, etc. In situations where students are clearly not meeting these expectations, the funding available from Oldham After Care may be reviewed and possibly withdrawn altogether.

### **Useful Contacts**

Get Oldham Working : 0161 770 4674 – this is a free service for Oldham residents.

## 6.6 Relationships

Having relationships, both personal and professional, is important for emotional health as well as support. One of the biggest issues raised by care leavers is that of isolation - without a strong and stable social network it can be extremely hard to navigate life after care.

What we offer to you	What you need to know
<p><b>Peer mentoring</b></p> <p>We feel that it would be helpful for you to be in touch with other care leavers. We can link you with a peer mentor who can support you through the journey of preparing to leave care and help you when you have left.</p> <p>There are also opportunities for young people to train to become a peer mentor themselves, offering support to other young people leaving care.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> Your peer mentor has also been in care and gone through similar challenges to you.</p>
<p><b>Oldham’s children’s champion scheme</b></p> <p>Oldham run a scheme for children looked after and care leavers, where you can request to be matched with a champion. The champion will be somebody who works in Oldham. This is a voluntary position, but they will form positive relationships with you and join you on social events, support you as you make choices and be a consistent person in your life. For some of our care leavers, they still have their champion way beyond the age of 25. If you would like to find out more about this scheme, you can ask you PA or contact the scheme coordinator on:</p>	

0161 770 3118

## 6.7 You as an active member of society and your local community

You have a right to be involved in all the decisions about your plans for leaving care. In Oldham we value the participation of our care leavers within the development of services. We also want care leavers to be active members of society and the local community and to have all the chances that other young adults have.

<b>What we offer to you</b>	<b>What you need to know</b>
<p>If you are unhappy about the plans or support you get, you can speak to your PA about it. You also have a right to an advocacy service to help you say what you are not happy with and challenge any decisions.</p> <p>Oldham's Children's Rights Officer can help you with this or you can access an independent advocate;</p> <p>Children's Rights Officer: Email: <a href="https://oldhamchildrensrightsandadvocacy.co.uk">https://oldhamchildrensrightsandadvocacy.co.uk</a></p> <p>National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) <a href="http://www.nyas.net/">www.nyas.net/</a> Tel: 0808 808 1001</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> If you don't engage or speak up, decisions will be made without you. This may mean that things will happen that you do not want.</p> <p>Make sure you are clear about what you want - it's your life after all.</p>
<p><b>Participation</b> We want to offer you the opportunity to have your say on service improvement and delivery. You can do this by speaking with your PA or attending one of the events that we hold to consult with young people.</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> Your views are important to us You need to speak up and tell us how we can improve the services for you now and others in the future</p>

<p>Oldham also has a Children in Care Council, which is for children looked after and for care leavers, where you can get involved in lots of opportunities and meet other young people. This is delivered through our youth service and you can find out more by contacting:</p> <p><a href="https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201107/children_in_care_and_care_leavers">https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201107/children_in_care_and_care_leavers</a></p> <p>Each year, we also send a survey out to care leavers. This helps us to better understand your needs and experiences and then helps us to continue to improve our services to better support you. Your PA will be able to tell you when the next survey is due and how you can get involved with this.</p> <p>We will also provide you with information on groups and clubs that you may wish to join, along with informing you about relevant awards, schemes and activities you can engage in that are in line with your interests.</p>	
<b>What we offer to you</b>	<b>What you need to know</b>
<p><b>Changing your worker</b> In certain, exceptional circumstances you can request to change your social worker or Personal Advisor. You can speak to the Children’s Rights Officer to help you with this.</p> <p>Email: <a href="https://oldhamchildrensrightsandadvocacy.co.uk">https://oldhamchildrensrightsandadvocacy.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Remember: It is always possible to work through issues and we are listening.</b></p>
<p><b>Your right to vote</b> Once you turn 18 you are entitled to vote in local and national elections. We</p>	<p><b>Remember:</b> You can make sure that your voice is heard, and your vote will play an important role in</p>

<p>will encourage you and help you to enrol on the electoral roll so that you can vote in these, if you wish to.</p>	<p>shaping the government and your future.</p>
<p><b>Citizens advice</b>  The Citizens Advice Bureau aims to provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities as a member of society.   www.citizensadvice.org.uk / 0344 2451288</p>	
<p><b>How to complain</b>  You have the right to complain to Oldham if you can't solve a problem with your social worker, Personal Advisor or their manager. You can contact the Social Care complaints team on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By telephone: 0161 770 1129</li> <li>• By email: <a href="mailto:customer.feedback@oldham.gov.uk">customer.feedback@oldham.gov.uk</a></li> </ul>	

## 7. Where to get further information

As a Care Leaver there are a range of support services available to you. We have put together a list of useful contact details. If there is anything you do not understand or further information you need then please speak to your PA or social worker.

### **Oldham After Care Team Contact Information**

Metropolitan Place

Hobson Street

Oldham – OL1 1TT

Tel: 0161 770 1191

Out of Hours emergency number: 0161 770 6936

### **Useful Contacts:**

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) - [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)

Tel: 0808 808 1001

- Complaints Team: -
- By telephone: 0161 770 1129
- By email: [customer.feedback@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:customer.feedback@oldham.gov.uk)

Children's Rights <https://oldhamchildrensrightsandadvocacy.co.uk>