

NORTH SOMERSET'S
OFFER FOR OUR
CARE LEAVERS

FOREWORD

I am pleased to welcome you to our care leavers local offer.

To me, corporate parenting means acting in the way that any parent would do for their child, giving their child the support, guidance and care to allow them to fulfil their dreams as young people going into adulthood. It is important to me that our offer supports young people in all aspects of their lives and is driven by the voice of young people who have experienced what it is like to be in care and then leave care. As they know best the support that they need both now and in the future.

We are really proud of what our young people have achieved through the making of this booklet and we hope it will help you in making the very most of all the support that is available to you.

Best wishes,

Sheila Smith
Director of People and Communities
(one of your corporate parents)



INTRODUCTION

This is our local offer for Care
Leavers in North Somerset.

Here you will find information about the aspirations we have for you in our role as your corporate parents. This booklet will let you know what you are entitled to and how North Somerset will support, guide and help you towards a successful life as an adult.

CORPORATE PARENTING PRINCIPLES

We take our responsibilities as your Corporate Parents seriously, we are committed to the following principles, as we will:

- act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of our children and young people
- encourage our children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- take into account the views, wishes and feelings of our children and young people
- help our children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for our children and young people
- help our children and young people to be safe, and to have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- prepare our children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

These are your rights as a Care Leaver and we are required by law to ensure these principles are followed.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

YOUR RIGHTS

- You have a right to be involved in all decisions regarding when you leave care and your plans for leaving care.
- You have a right to tell us how you feel about the services you are receiving and to expect an answer.
- You have a right to see all information about you, this includes all the files North Somerset Council kept when you were in care.
- We will support you to apply for the financial support you are entitled to.

MENTORING AND ADVOCACY

- You can ask for a volunteer mentor to meet you regularly to offer ongoing help, support and advice.
- You have the right to have an independent advocate who can offer confidential advice and help you understand your rights. You can ask your Leaving Care Personal Advisor (LCPA) for a referral or you can self-refer to:

Junction 21 Mentoring and Advocacy

- Steve Coggins 01275 888 360
- Louise Calcutt 07776 170 028
- Junction21@n-somerset.gov.uk

PATHWAY PLAN

The Pathway Plan is a continuation of your Care Plan. It will look at how we need to work together to support you. It is designed to help you make the most of life and develop useful skills that could help you in the future.

It will include things like:

- where you will live
- any education or training
- jobs, money, financial management such as opening a bank account
- applying for a National Insurance number
- cultural or identity needs
- your health and lifestyle.

ADVICE AND SUPPORT FROM A LEAVING CARE PERSONAL ADVISOR (LCPA)

LCPAs will support you until you are aged 25.

LCPA's are part of the Leaving Care Team. You will have a LCPA from age 18.

Your LCPA can help you with independent living and a range of advice and support. Personal advisors should talk to you about what support you need and record this information in your Pathway Plan.

Your Pathway Plan is written after consultation with you and important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals, and identifies exactly what support you will receive from us. We will review your Pathway Plan with you regularly so it is kept up to date.

We will try to make sure you keep the same LCPA, though this is not always possible. The amount of support that you receive from your LCPA will depend on your circumstances.

ACCOMMODATION

HELPING YOU REMAIN SETTLED IN YOUR HOME...

We will support you to stay in your foster placement until you are 21, if that's best for you and your foster carers. This doesn't mean you must do this or that you must stay until you are 21.

If you are living in supported housing we will help you to remain there for as long as you need, up to the age of 25. This means you can move out into independence when you are ready. We offer a range of accommodation types that offer support according to what is needed.

FINANCES & ID

Becoming an adult and living independently can be complicated and expensive. As a Care Leaver you may be entitled to financial support.

FINANCIAL ENTITLEMENTS/SUPPORT

Your LCPA can support you to budget your money or they can signpost you to more specialist advice if that is what you need and help you to claim all you are entitled to. See our Entitlement Guide for more information on what financial assistance is available to you.

For example:

- Support towards paying your council tax. 18 to 21 - 100% paid, 22 to 23 - 75% paid, 24 to 25 - 50% paid.
- Support for driving lessons.
- Contribution to Wifi costs.
- Emergency payments if you are in financial crisis.
- Financial support for higher education.
- Free gym pass.
- Leaving Care Grant of £2,000 to buy essential items to set up home (for example, bed, cooker).
- Birthdays: Age 16 to 18 - £60, Age 19 - £30, Age 20 - £25, Age 21 - £20, Age 22 to 25 - £10.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

As an adult you will need ID to prove who you are.

We will help you to obtain the following:

- Birth Certificate
- National Insurance number
- Bank account
- Passport
- Citizen's cards
- Provisional driving licence
- ARC card

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

We have a Care Leavers Job Club on
Wednesdays between 2-4pm.

We can help you with

- Opportunities for further education such as college or A Levels.
- Apprenticeships.
- Financial support package if you go into higher education courses such as University.
- Paid employment.
- Financial support for work experience or volunteering opportunities to learn new skills.
- Support with travel and clothes for interviews.
- First month subsidy if in employment.

HEALTH & WELL-BEING/ BECOMING A PARENT

We will support you to be healthy and feel well.

HEALTH

We want to help as much as we can to ensure you look after your health and get the support you need to stay healthy.

To do this, we can offer:

- A free gym pass
- Access to counselling
- An assessment by a health trainer
- Support to go to specialist services

BECOMING A PARENT

There may be additional support we can identify for you if you are expecting a child, for example:

- SureStart Maternity Grant to help towards the cost of having a child.
- Support to attend parenting groups at your local Children's Centre.

MAKING A COMPLAINT/ SHARING A COMPLIMENT

We want to know what you think about the service you are receiving from us.

if you are not happy with the service you receive, you can:

- Talk to your LCPA.
- Ask the Care Leavers Service Team to arrange for you to meet with a Team Leader/Service Leader.
- Fill in the **'Talk to a manager' compliments/ comments/complaints leaflet** which are available in the Resource Room or which could be posted out to you if you contact the Care Leavers Service Team.
- Email North Somerset Social Care complaints department:
complaints.manager@n-somerset.gov.uk

If you need help making a complaint or filling out the 'Make Yourself Heard' form, you can ask your LCPA to refer you to the independent advocacy service at Junction 21, or you can self-refer to Junction 21 by contacting:

Call Steve Coggins on **01275 888 360** or
Louise Calcutt on **07776 170 028** or by email
Junction21@n-somerset.gov.uk

**FormoreinformationspeaktoyourLCPAortheDuty
LCPA**

HEARING YOUR VOICE/ GETTING INVOLVED

Your voice is important as it helps us to understand how we can improve our Care Leaver Service and give you the best service possible.

We have a Participation Worker in North Somerset who will work with you to collect your views and experiences, including the good stuff as well as the not so good. This information will inform us in how to best meet your needs to give you the highest chance of achieving a successful, independent and fulfilling life.

You can have your say in different ways:

- Fill in the 'Make Yourself Heard' Compliments/ Comments /Complaints leaflet available in the Resource Room or which can be sent out to you if you ask the Care Leaver Team.
- Speak to or ask to speak to, the Participation Worker, to give your verbal comments.
- Complete the Annual Survey that is designed to seek your views.
- Attend the Care Leavers Participation Forum UNITE

THE CARE LEAVERS FORUM (UNITE)

This is a group of Care Leavers who meet regularly to talk about issues that affect them. The views from this group are shared with decision makers at North Somerset Council.

If you would be interested in finding out more about UNITE or would like to come to a meeting, please let your LCPA know or contact:

Karen MacVean , Participation Worker:

01275 888 841 / 07776 170 039,

karen.macvean@n-somerset.gov.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS

LEAVING CARE PERSONAL ADVISORS

You will be allocated a Leaving Care PA up to the age of 21 years of age who will meet with you regularly and support you as you move from care to independence. You can access a Duty LCPA when you are aged 21 to 25 years old.

01934 421 900

THE CARE LEAVERS CARERS AND PROGRESSION COACH

Sue Waters can support you into education, employment or training.

01934 421 283

sue.waters@n-somerset.gov.uk

REBOOT ENGAGEMENT WORKER

Emma Jones can offer specialised support into employment and training

07399 011 988

emma.jones3@n-somerset.gov.uk

CARE LEAVERS HOMELESS PREVENTION OFFICER

Claire Ward will help you find somewhere to live.

01934 426 189

claire.ward@n-somerset.gov.uk

MENTORING AND ADVOCACY SERVICE

Steve Coggins and Louise Calcutt

Steve - **01275 888 360**, Louise - **07776 170 028**

junction21@n-somerset.gov.uk

THE CARE LEAVERS FORUM (UNITE)

Care Leavers participation and consultation forum supported by the Participation Worker Karen MacVean

01275 888 841 / 07776 170 039

karen.macvean@n-somerset.gov.uk

KOOTH

Free Safe Anonymous Online Counselling and Support

www.kooth.com



THANK YOU...

We would like to say a big **THANK YOU** to the following care leavers who gave up their time to discuss, create and design this booklet.

● Caroline

● Danni

● Demi

● Ryan

