

SUPPORT FOR SEPARATED CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE

**Please read this document in conjunction with the
Solihull Care Experienced Local Offer**



**Working
for Children
and Families**
in Solihull



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. Introduction

This guidance is to help you understand your care experienced rights and entitlements as a young person who arrived in the UK to claim asylum and was cared for by Solihull Council.

We understand that each young person's background and experiences are different, and that being a newer arrival to the UK is only a small part of your identity. We also understand that the transition to adulthood can be a difficult and worrying time and we wish to support you as much as possible with becoming an independent adult.

Please read through this document carefully so that you fully understand your rights and entitlements and do not hesitate to contact your Personal Advisor (PA) if you have any questions. Please let us know if you need support to understand this document in your own language.

2. Eligibility

There are different kinds of care leaver status, and each type has different entitlements. If you are 18-25, arrived in the UK as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child and were looked after by Solihull Council for at least 13 weeks before you turned 18, then you are likely a 'former relevant' care leaver and will be entitled to the full range of support described in this guidance. If you are over 25 and was previously in the care of Solihull Council, then you can access advice and guidance under the 'Always Here' offer. You will not be entitled to all the provisions set out below, but we will still offer as much support as we are able.

If you have any questions about your care experienced status or entitlements or your entitlements, please contact the Next Steps Service using the details at the end of this guidance.

3. Your Personal Adviser (PA) and Pathway Plan

Your PA will support you from the age of 18 until the age of 21 as a minimum. Support can continue from the age of 21 up to the age of 25 if you would like this to continue. This is your choice and there are different levels of service available for young people aged 21-25 which you can choose from to suit your needs.

Your PA will visit you regularly – you can choose to see them at home, in the community or at our office. They will contact you at least once every 8 weeks until the age of 21 and will try to ensure that these visits are always face-to-face if you are accepting of this.

Reduced visiting/contact can be agreed from the age of 21-25 if you wish to continue to have our support but want contact with us to be less often.

The role of the PA is to support young people with transitioning to adulthood and independence. As part of this they will complete a Pathway Plan with you. It's important that you are involved in this plan. It will set out what you want to achieve and how we will support you to do this. This plan will be reviewed every six months and can be changed to fit your needs. If there's a significant change in circumstances, we'll review your plan earlier.

Your Pathway Plan touches on many aspects of your life and how we can support you in each area, sections of your plan include:

- Your identity
- Family, friends and carers
- Health, wellbeing and leisure
- Life skills support
- Accommodation
- Education, training and employment
- Your money

4. Support and the Next Steps Hub

As a Solihull care experienced young person you are welcome to access the range of support on offer from the Next Steps Hub. This is where the Next Steps service is based and is the home of our care experienced community in Solihull. We have a 'warm space' offer which means that you are welcome to attend during office hours and can just have a drink or a meal if you need one. During office hours we have an 'open door' duty PA system to make sure there's someone to listen or offer support when you need it.

The Next Steps Hub also offers:

- Community food pantry (food for you to take home if you are struggling to afford shopping)
- Free internet access
- Laundry facilities
- Access to Health and Education/ Employment/Training drop in

5. Advice and assistance

All care experienced young people in Solihull are entitled to advice and guidance from the Next Steps Service regardless of age and status. You can access this by contacting the Next Steps Hub using the details at the end of this guidance. We work closely with a range of partners including NHS, Jobcentre Plus, and local colleges and training providers. This means that we can offer advice around your support options and can help with referrals to these agencies if necessary.

6. Practical and financial support

Allowances

- If you are unable to claim Universal Credit because you are waiting for your decision from the Home Office and have no recourse to public funds, we will pay you a weekly allowance in line with the Universal Credit rate.
- We can explore your needs and consider the need to provide you with financial support for example for essentials such as clothing.
- You may have savings which were made for you during your time in care. Your PA can help you with exploring this and with claiming these savings.
- You receive Birthday and Festive allowances up to the age of 25 if your application for leave to remain in the UK is successful.
- You will receive a festive allowance once per year until the age of 25 to recognise a festival which is culturally significant for you (e.g. Christmas, Vaisakhi, Eid)

Please note that allowances are only payable to young people until the age of 25 if your application for leave to remain is successful and your application is not deemed to be 'Appeal Rights Exhausted' (ARE), and you're permitted to remain in the UK until on or after your 25th birthday.

If your application for leave to remain in the UK is unsuccessful, we will work with you to ensure that you are able to access support services meaning that you can continue to access funding and essential items.

Immigration Advice and ID

- We will help you to identify and access a legal aid funded solicitor to support you with your Home Office claim and immigration status.

- We work with a range of local charities and advice providers, including the Refugee and Migrant Council and Brushstrokes, which can also provide immigration advice and support.
- When you have your Home Office interview, we will support you to request that this takes place at the Next Steps Hub via video call if you wish and will provide an appropriate adult who will sit with you to support your comfort and engagement throughout the interview.
- You are entitled to two forms of ID as a Solihull Care Leaver. One of these will be an e-visa and we will support you with your application and understanding of how to use it. A second form of ID may be a provisional licence or a travel document (or we will pay towards a 'certificate of travel' if you are not eligible for a travel document).
- Your PA can provide an official letter confirming your care experienced status.
- Although not a form of official ID, your PA can help you find out your National Insurance and NHS Number if you do not already know this.

Family and relationships

- We want to support you to regain and remain in contact with people who are important to you. We will support you to access the Red Cross Family Tracing service so that you can attempt to regain lost contact with family members abroad. We can also support you to regain contact with people in the UK who you may have lost contact with.
- We host regular 'newer arrivals social group' events which you will be invited to. These events take place throughout the year and are a chance to meet and make friends with other separated young people. These events take place in the community or at the Next Steps Hub and include different activities.
- You are welcome to attend the monthly general social drop-in at the Next Steps Hub.

- This is a chance to hang out with your PA, play games, have a meal and meet with other care experienced young people.

Housing

- When you initially arrive in the UK you will not have a 'right to rent' and are not able to secure your own accommodation. If you are unable to apply for social housing because you are waiting for your decision from the Home Office, we will arrange accommodation for you.
- When you get your status in the UK you will gain a 'right to rent' and we can support you to apply for social housing if we agree that you are ready to. If you choose to live in Solihull, you will be given top priority access to social housing. If you decide that you wish to live outside of Solihull, then you may have to wait whilst we liaise with the local council who manage the homes in that area – ask your PA for more details if you wish to secure social housing outside of Solihull.
- You will be able to access your Setting Up Home Grant (up to £3000) to buy essentials and furnish your home. This is accessed in agreement with your PA.

Health

- You can access health support through the NHS, and your PA can support you in seeking the advice and support you may need or in booking an appointment with your GP if you wish to discuss something confidential with them. Your PA can help you with registering with a GP, dentist and optician.
- We can find out if you are missing any vaccinations and can support you to access a clinic to catch up on these.
- You should be provided with a Health Summary when you leave care at the age of 18, if
- this has not been shared with you then please let your PA know so that this can be requested.

- We can support you to confidentially access sexual health advice and support and offer kits for at home testing for sexually transmitted diseases. Please ask your PA if you want to access this advice.
- All care experienced young people can seek emotional support through the Next Steps Hub emotional wellbeing drop-in sessions and our specialist emotional health PA. This is in addition to being supported by the service to access community emotional wellbeing services.

Education, Employment and Training

- We can support you to enrol on an English as a Second Language (ESOL) course.
- We work with the Refugee and Migrant Centre to offer a course which is available for each level of learner and is taught both face-to-face in the classroom and online via access to an ESOL app. Where possible, we will support you to enrol on an accredited ESOL course via college.
- If you are studying and have good attendance, we will request a laptop for you to support with your education.
- When you have your right to work in the UK, we can support you to ensure that your CV is up to date, explore your aspirations and views around prospective careers and help you with making job applications.
- You are able to access support through our Employment, Education and Training drop-in sessions at the Next Steps Hub.
- We have a specialist Employment Education and Training Link Worker within the Next Steps Service who can support you back into education at any age, if this is your wish. Speak to your PA if you would like to arrange a call or visit with the Link Worker to explore your education and employment options further.

7. How to contact us

Solihull Next Step Service
Chelmunds Place
858 Chester Road
Solihull
B37 7TW

0121 717 1473 (option 1)

Caring4youngpeople@solihull.gov.uk

Solihull Next Steps Service - 0121 717 1473 (option 1)

The Solihull Next Steps Service offers a duty personal advisor Monday to Friday between the times of 9am and 5pm. This service ensures that you can access advice and guidance when you need it.

Rees Foundation – 0330 094 5645

This organisation offers advice and guidance for care leavers. The helpline operates from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Care Leavers Association – 0161 826 0214 – careleavers.com

This is a national, user-led charity which provides specialist advice, guidance and advocacy for all care leavers.

Children's Commissioner Help at Hand – 0800 528 0731

This organisation offers advice and support for care leavers and can also provide direct advocacy to help you ensure that your rights and entitlements are respected. The helpline operates from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Migrant Help - 0808 8010 503

This is an independent helpline which can provide asylum seekers with advice and guidance about their claim, rights and responsibilities in the UK. The helpline is free to call and operates from 8am to 8pm (and is available 24 hours per day, every day of the year for emergencies).

Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) – Various office sites

If you need help, you can attend one of RMC's four centres where the drop-in service runs on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings between 9am-1pm. Offices are in Birmingham (Chamberlain Building, B1 3HN), Walsall (41-45 Bridge Street, WS1 1JQ), Wolverhampton (Roma Parva, WV1 4NB) and Dudley (Trident Shopping Centre, DY1 1QJ).

Brushstrokes Community Project - 0121 565 2234

This charity offers support with immigration advice and a range of other issues including housing, benefits and family. They also offer social events and outings for young people who arrived in the UK as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

My notes



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