

Torbay Local Offer for Care Experienced Adults and Young People 2021 - 2022

What is the Local Offer?

Torbay's 'Local Offer' for care experienced explains what support is available to young people who have been 'cared for' by the Local Authority before they were eighteen years old. The table below will help you decide whether you are entitled to this support, or you can follow [this link](#). Your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will also help you with this.

Our Care Experienced Team is here to offer you advice and help so you feel safe and supported as you move into adulthood.

Who are 'care-experienced' young people?

You are a care experienced young person or adult if you are:

- A young person aged sixteen or over who has been cared for by the Local Authority for a relevant period of time since your 14th birthday, and with a period of care taking place on or after your 16th birthday.

You can also find out more about this by using the information on the Coram Voice website page '**Am I a Care Leaver?**' here: <https://coramvoice.org.uk/young-peoples-zone/am-i-care-leaver?>

Please note: the terms here are taken directly from the legislation and this is really important, as it provides you with information relating to the entitlements you have as a care experienced young person or adult. However, we would like to say that you are all absolutely relevant to us, in the actual sense of the word; we will continue to campaign to the legislators about this use of language and try and get this changed, but in the meantime, it is really important you have some sense of what it means for you.

Categories of care experienced adult; from the Leaving Care Act 2000:

'Eligible' children - looked after, aged 16 or 17, and have been looked after for a total of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14. This entitles you to be allocated a 'Personal Advisor' (PA) and your Pathway Plan being reviewed on a six monthly basis. As you will have an allocated Social Worker, most of your support will come from your Social Worker.

'Relevant' children - aged 16 or 17, you are no longer cared for, and at the point you left care you were Eligible children. This entitles you to be allocated a Personal Advisor, and your Pathway Plan being reviewed on a six monthly basis.

'Former relevant' young people - aged 18 - 24 who, prior to your 18th birthday, were either Eligible or Relevant. This entitles you to an allocation of Personal Advisor and your Pathway Plan being reviewed on a six monthly basis.

Qualifying children and young people – aged between 16–24, who:

A: Have been looked after following your 16th birthday, but for less than the 13 weeks since your 14th birthday that would make you a 'Relevant' or 'Former Relevant' young person if you had continued to be cared for.

B: You were accommodated in a non-local authority setting or privately fostered over the age of 16.

C: You were subject to a Special Guardianship Order up to the age of 16.

Care experienced adults and ‘Personal Advisors’, or ‘PAs’

‘Personal Advisors’ (PAs) are what we call our experienced and knowledgeable staff team in the Care Experience Service. You will be allocated a Personal Advisor when you are sixteen, and will get to know them as you journey towards adulthood.

Personal Advisors work with Social Workers and other professionals until you are eighteen, to ensure that everything is in place for you when you transition from support from ‘Children’s Services’.

Support from your Personal Advisor continues from 18 up until your 21st birthday, and you can ask for support at any time from the age of 21 up to your 25th birthday – this is your choice.

Up until your 21st birthday, your Personal Advisor will be in touch with you at least six times a year, or more if needed. You can contact your Personal Advisor or the team at any time if you need advice or support.

Your Personal Advisor can support you to access your records.

Your Pathway Plan

Your Pathway Plan includes everything that is important to you as you move towards independence, such as being ready to transition to becoming a care experienced adult, where you live, managing your money, staying healthy, employment, citizenship, education and training, and your future.

When you are sixteen, you will develop your Pathway Plan with your Social Worker. Your Pathway Plan will be updated with you and your Personal Advisor once you become care experienced.

Your Pathway Plan is also your record of the support we have agreed to provide.

Your important documents:

You will need a photographic form of identification, such as a passport or driving licence, as well as your birth certificate and National Insurance Number, ready for when you become a care experienced adult. You will need these to prove who you are to landlords, employers, the benefits agency and more.

You should have a copy of your birth certificate as well as a renewed passport or a provisional driving licence when you become a care experienced adult.

If you need extra help with identification, we may be able to pay for the cost of one passport application and one birth certificate up until you turn 21. We may also pay for a provisional driving licence if you need it for your employment.

If you are an unaccompanied young person and there are immigration issues to be resolved, your Personal Advisor will help you get the right documentation required to prove who you are.

Torbay Virtual School

The Torbay Virtual School will provide you with support throughout your education, helping you as you move on to different stages of education and offering you opportunities to explore different education, training and employment options as you plan for your future. Your Personal Education Plan will be a record of how you are supported, including your views about your education and what you want to achieve.

Financial support for our care experienced young people aged between 16 and 17.

Managing your money: We know that for some young people the thought of managing your own money can be scary; you won't be expected to 'just know' about this stuff! Your Social Worker, Personal Advisor and the Independent Reviewing Officer who chairs your Cared For review meetings will be talking with you about how you can manage your money and savings now and after you turn eighteen. MyBnk offers a great service to young people.

MyBnk' – online financial education for young people

MyBnk offers support with budgeting, being independent, banking and borrowing through 'Money Works' sessions online. 'Money Works' offers a range of accredited life skills, money management and employability courses, with certificates. If you attend the full programme, you can also qualify for a Level 1 Personal Money Management accreditation.

You can find out more about MyBank here: www.mybnk.org

Living costs for 16 and 17 year olds

We provide a 'personal allowance' payment to cover your daily living costs if you are living semi-independently and cannot claim benefits. We will help you to budget, e.g. by supporting you to prepare a meal planner and a shopping list.

We can sometimes help with additional financial support, e.g. we may give you a food voucher to make sure you always have enough for food.

Savings

Torbay Children's Services makes sure that your foster carer puts aside savings for you during the time you are cared for. This is to ensure that you have a lump sum of money which you can use in the future. You will not normally be able to access the savings bank account until you are eighteen.

Initial benefits claim

If you are working and / or are eligible for benefits, four weeks before your 18th birthday you will be supported by your Personal Advisor, Social Worker or another person in your support network to make your initial claim, often with an appointment at Jobcentre Plus. We will also support you to claim Housing Benefit as part of Universal Credit claim if this is needed. The Housing Benefit element of your Universal Credit can be paid straight to your landlord if you agree to this, which means you won't have to worry about paying your rent from your benefit money. We will encourage you to do this to ensure you always have a roof over your head. You can choose to consent for the

Care Experience Team to support your claim by talking to the Job Centre in your journal; this has been helpful for many young people in the past as it can prevent delays and speed up payments.

Don't worry – we can provide you with a 'personal allowance' for up to six weeks while your benefits claim is processed, as long as you continue to attend any Jobcentre Plus appointments you need to and give them the information they ask for. If you need any help to attend, your Personal Advisor will help to make arrangements to support you.

When you move from benefits to employment, Universal Credit means there should be no gap in receiving money. Talk to your Personal Advisor and/or Work Coach if you have any questions or concerns about benefits.

Remember: *You will need to make a claim for Housing Benefit / the rent element of Universal Credit when you make a claim for benefits, so that you do not fall into rent arrears.*

Clothing allowance

If you are aged 16 or 17 and living semi-independently, you *may be given a clothing allowance of up to £550 every financial year once an assessment has been undertaken. This will be assessed through your pathway plan, and will take into account any additional clothing you may need for education or employment purposes.*

Birthday Gifts

You may receive a £30 gift on your 16th and 17th birthday.

Holiday grant - new

As a former relevant young person in education or training, the Care Experience Service may be able to provide you with funding towards a holiday. This will be agreed as part of your Pathway Planning process. Please note, this grant is discretionary to a maximum of £200 and you are allowed one request per year. Please talk to your Personal Advisor about how you can access the holiday grant. This may be linked for example to a school or college or university trip or could be used to ensure you have the essentials you need for a trip you are planning with your friends, or carers or educational provider.

Social and leisure activities

We want you to be happy and healthy, and will encourage you to take part in social and leisure activities. If you are aged 16 or 17, you can apply for a local leisure card. If you live outside Torbay, your Personal Advisor may be able to help you get one for where you live. If there are other activities you are interested in, we may be able to pay for these – you will need to speak to your Personal Advisor about other options.

Support in pregnancy

You may be entitled to a maternity grant of up to £150, eleven weeks before your baby is born if you are aged 16 or 17 and pregnant.

You could be entitled to a 'Sure Start Maternity Grant' of £500 if you are claiming

benefits, from the Department of Work and Pensions to buy essentials for when your first baby is born. You can talk to your Personal Advisor and midwife about these grants and other support that might be available to you.

You will be able to have free NHS dental care in the UK while you're pregnant and for a year after the baby is born.

In England, you're entitled to free prescriptions while you're pregnant and for a year after the baby is born.

Financial support for our care experienced adults aged 18 - 21:

Setting Up Home Allowance, also known as the 'Leaving Care grant'

When you become a care experienced adult and are assessed as being ready to live independently, you may be eligible for a 'Setting Up Home Allowance' (also known as Leaving Care Grant) of up to £2000, which your Personal Advisor will help you apply for. Your Personal Advisor will work with you to ensure the allowance lasts well into your adult life, so you have a fall-back plan if something doesn't quite work out as you planned.

This allowance is to help you to buy furniture or other equipment when moving into independent, permanent housing, and will be reflected in your Pathway Plan. We have a guide to costings to help you to manage this and encourage you to buy second-hand when this is safe and appropriate, e.g., coffee tables, bedside cabinets, wardrobes. We have a handy guide to suggested costings for various items of furniture which we will share with you.

Starter Pack

When you move into your first accommodation as a care experienced adult, you may receive a one-off payment of up to £200 to purchase essential items such as bedding, cutlery etc.

Remember: *When most young people leave home to live independently, they cannot always afford everything they need straight away and cannot always afford to buy everything new. Your savings are there for you to use in your transition to independence and into later adulthood.*

Birthday Gifts

You may receive a £100 gift voucher on your 18th birthday and a £30 gift voucher on your 19th, 20th and 21st birthday if we know how to contact you.

Holiday grant

As a 'former relevant' young person in education or training, the Care Experience Service may be able to provide you with funding towards a holiday. This will be agreed as part of your Pathway Planning process. Please note, this grant is discretionary and payable up to a maximum of £200 and you are allowed one request per year. Please

discuss with your Personal Advisor how you can access the holiday grant. This may be linked for example to a school or college or university trip or could be used to ensure you have the essentials you need for a trip you are planning with your friends, or carers or educational provider.

Festivities Grant

You may receive a £30 yearly festive grant to celebrate one significant religious or cultural event if we are in touch with you.

Social and leisure activities

We want you to be happy and healthy, and will encourage you to take part in social and leisure activities. If there are specific activities you are interested in, and which promote your mental wellbeing, we may be able to pay for these – you will need to speak to your Personal Advisor about other options.

‘MyBnk’ – online financial education for young people

If you need support with budgeting, being independent, banking and borrowing ‘MyBank’ offer money management sessions. The Money Works programme maps into a range of accredited life skills, money management and employability certificates. If you attend the full programme, you can also qualify for a Level 1 Personal Money Management accreditation.

You can find out more about MyBank here: www.mybnk.org

Martin Lewis has a trusted and trustworthy website:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/> where you can find lots of advice, financial support and information.

Child Trust Funds were set up by the Government for young people born between 2002 and 2011. The Share Foundation www.sharefound.org (registered charity no. 1108068), has operated the Department for Education’s savings/investment schemes for looked-after children and young people since 2012, during which time it has benefited over 175,000 young people. Its analysis over the past three years (2018 – 2021) has shown that very large numbers of families and young people generally are unaware of their Child Trust Fund accounts, particularly among the most disadvantaged (those in receipt of Child Tax Credit). We can support you to access this fund if you were born between 2002 and 2011.

If you have been in foster care you may also have had savings built up for you by your foster carers. We will support you to access this if you haven’t been given this money at 18.

Support in pregnancy

You are entitled to a ‘Sure Start Maternity Grant’ of £500 from the Department of Work and Pensions if you are on benefits to buy essentials for when your first baby is born. You can talk to your Personal Advisor and midwife about these grants and other support that might be available to you.

You will be able to get free NHS dental care in the UK while you’re pregnant and for a year after the baby is born.

In England, you're entitled to free prescriptions while you're pregnant and for a year after the baby is born.

Support for parents with child care

If you choose to access training or education as a parent we can support you to find out what child care support is on offer from your employer, training provider, college or university. Your Personal Advisor can provide support to you if you are struggling to identify childcare support.

Remember: All three year olds are entitled to free nursery hours from Early Years Services. In some areas they also offer free provision for two year olds.

16 to 18:

We want to make sure that, once you become cared experienced at 18, you find suitable accommodation that meets your needs. We know not all young people will be ready to live without support, on their own, straight away. Your Personal Advisor will work with you to agree accommodation plans for when you are no longer cared for, and will include these plans within in your Pathway Plan.

Most young people will, we hope, stay in their foster placement or with their placement provider until they are 18 at least. However, we know this does not work for everyone. Options at 16 and 17 are limited as you cannot have your own tenancy until you are 18, but you do have some choices:

Staying Put

A staying put arrangement is where you remain by agreement in your foster placement or with your placement provider past your 18th birthday. This decision is made with you and your foster carers, Social Worker/s, placement staff and Personal Advisor. A lot of young people choose this option as it can really work for you. You contribute towards the costs of 'staying put' as you would with any other accommodation.

Supported Accommodation:

Supported accommodation schemes are provided by organisations that are assessed as safe and offer young people the support they need. Some have 24 hour support, meaning staff sleep in overnight, whereas others have staff available during the day, with an 'on-call' service available off site. You would be placed into one that best meets your need, and should have the chance to see it before you move in. You contribute towards the costs of supported accommodation as you would with any other accommodation.

Examples of supported accommodation providers in Torbay are the Foyer and Young Devon.

Training flats:

When you feel you are able to be more independent, and you have some experience of living more independently and have developed your independent living skills, we can access a small number of 'training flats' you can apply for with your Social Worker or Personal Advisor. These are self-contained flats that are supported by staff at a level that is right for you. You contribute towards the costs of the training flat as you would with any other accommodation.

Setting up Home Allowance:

This allowance is to assist you in purchasing furniture or equipment when moving into independent, permanent housing and will be reflected in your Pathway Plan. It is money that is designed to last you into adulthood, and you and your Personal Advisor agree how and when to spend it within your Pathway Plan.

Housing Specialist Personal Advisors:

Torbay now has 1 full-time and 1 part-time Housing Specialist Personal Advisors. They do not 'sit' in the Care Experience team but in the 'Early Help' team, and provide

invaluable support to young people aged 16 + who are no longer 'cared for' (either under Section 20 of the Children Act, a voluntary agreement with you and / or your birth family, or under a Section 31 (Children Act) Care Order).

Please contact your Social Worker or Personal Advisor if you are not clear about your legal status, or you think you would benefit from support from our Housing Personal Advisors.

Accommodation for our care experienced adults aged 18 to 21:

We want to make sure that once you become care experienced, we can help you to find suitable accommodation that meets your needs. We know that many young people are not ready to live without support, on their own, straight away. Your Personal Advisor will work with you to agree accommodation plans for when you are no longer cared for, and will include these plans within in your Pathway Plan. Whilst we cannot directly provide housing ourselves, we work hard to advocate for your rights with our partners in Housing.

At least six months prior to your 18th birthday (or earlier if you become care experienced at a younger age), you and your Social Worker will have a clear plan as to how we will support you once you are 18.

A recent change (June 2021) to the law means that care experienced adults can now access the local one bed rate of housing benefit until you are 25. This is good news as it means you no longer have to move to shared accommodation at 21 but can stay in a (one bedroomed) flat if this is what you choose to do, as the benefit rate will not drop like it did before. This improvement to your rights has not unfortunately led to an increase in the availability of housing for young people.

There are some options of supported housing providing low, medium and high support, dependent on your needs, and we want to work with you to find the best 'fit' for you. Some information about these different types of providers is below:

Staying Put

A staying put arrangement is where you remain by agreement in your foster placement or your placement provider past your 18th birthday. This decision is made with you and your Social Worker/s, foster carer, placement staff and Personal Advisor before you are 18. You contribute towards the costs of 'staying put' as you would with any other accommodation.

Supported Accommodation:

Some supported accommodation schemes have 24 hour support, meaning staff sleep in overnight, whereas others have staff available during the day, with an 'on-call' service available off site. You would be placed into one that best meets your need, and with your agreement. Examples of supported accommodation providers in Torbay are the Foyer and Young Devon. You contribute towards the costs of the supported accommodation as you would with any other accommodation.

You may also be able to access supported accommodation via Adult Services and/or the Community Mental Health Team. You will have a Care Act assessment

to identify your needs to access this type of accommodation.

Social or Council Accommodation

This can be a secure and long-term option for some of our care experienced adults above the age of eighteen, and we will always encourage you to apply for this option. Locally this is through Devon Home Choice, and if you are a care leaver you can register and back-date it to your 16th birthday.

Shared Housing

This can be an important step for care experienced adults, as it allows you to gain independence without living completely on your own. It is also often cheaper, and we can help you find the best options available through our long-standing relationships with landlords in the community.

University Accommodation

If you plan to go to university, the Care Experience Service will work in partnership with you and your University to identify the most suitable accommodation. During the summer break, when you are not at university, we may be able to help you find somewhere to live during this time.

Although the financial support we provide covers the academic year, we may be able to contribute to any additional rent costs you may have during the semester and summer breaks. This will be agreed before you go to University.

Emergency Accommodation

We understand that sometimes there may be situations when you may need emergency accommodation. We can help you to access short term or emergency accommodation in urgent situations via our Housing colleagues. We want to reduce the numbers of care-experienced adults having to access emergency accommodation, and are working hard with our colleagues in Housing, supported lodgings, and families (where this is appropriate) to make this a reality.

If you think you could become homeless for any reason, please let us know as soon as possible, as we can work to try to prevent this happening, and / or you going into emergency accommodation. Our team can submit a 'Duty to Refer' up to 56 days before you become homeless, which acts to give our Housing colleagues notice of you potentially becoming homeless. As a care experienced adult you are seen as a Housing priority until you are 25, although this does not mean that you will automatically be given somewhere to live.

Family home

If you decide to return to your family home, support could be available in addition to the support from your Personal Advisor, and possibly from Housing or Adult Social Care for example. If this happens, we will want to ensure there is a back-up plan in case you need one.

Housing association

We will support you to apply for Housing Association property.

Private Rented Accommodation

Many young people get their first fully independent home through the private rented market. We will help you to talk with letting agents and landlords, and will support you as much as you need. We have housing partners in Torbay who can also help to make sure that the property you rent is safe and secure, and is up to a certain standard. We will work with you to ensure you are ready for the responsibility of your first tenancy from the age of 16, as private rented is not right for everyone.

We will still provide advice and guidance as required and agreed in the Pathway Plan. It is likely your landlord will require a deposit and rent in advance before they will agree to a tenancy. If you are over eighteen and assessed as being ready for a tenancy, we will support you to access rent deposit or 'Bond' schemes through the Housing Department, designed to help you save for your second or next deposit.

We can also help to support you by contributing to your first deposit and your first month's rent. Prior to agreeing this through your pathway planning and a funding request to our Panel, we will explore with you what your financial position looks like, to ensure that the properties you are looking for match your income and do not leave you in the difficult position of trying to meet the demands of a rent which is too high for you, on an ongoing basis. This will form part of the work we do with you about how you maintain a tenancy.

Living costs and accommodation:

As a care experienced adult, you will be expected to claim the relevant benefits to assist with paying your rent, and/or fund this through your wages.

Council tax exemption scheme for care experienced young people

Any Torbay care experienced young person aged 18-25 who lives within the Council's boundaries and is liable to pay Council Tax will be helped to apply for a council tax exemption. If you live outside Torbay, we may pay your council tax on your behalf to the local authority where you live. Your Personal Advisor will help you with the application to be exempted from council tax payment.

Setting up Home Allowance

When you leave care and you are assessed as being ready to live independently, you may be eligible for a Setting Up Home Allowance (previously known as Leaving Care allowance) of £2000, which your Personal Advisor will help you apply for through the Social Fund.

This allowance is to provide you with furniture or equipment when moving into independent, permanent housing and will be reflected in your Pathway Plan.

Starter Pack

When you move into your first accommodation as a care experienced adult, you may receive a one-off payment of up to £200 to purchase essential items such as bedding, cutlery etc.

Remember: *When most young people leave home to live independently they cannot always afford everything they need straight away, and cannot always afford to buy everything new. Your savings are there for you to use in your journey to independence and into later adulthood.*

Emergency Assistance

The Care Experience Team can support you to access universal emergency assistance, from Housing, DWP (Department of Work and Pensions), and other relevant agencies including your utilities provider.

You will be expected to contact the Care Experience Team for this support, and as soon as possible so we can ensure your emergency doesn't become any more serious.

If you are not eligible for emergency assistance, you could receive up to a £100 over the course of a single year, which would follow a 'Needs Assessment', if you have no other way of supporting yourself. This will be at the discretion of the Care Experience Team, and will be used as the last resort. It is likely this will be used to buy food or pay utility bills for you.

If you ask for emergency assistance regularly you may be asked to show us your bank statements so we can support with this process.

In the first year of living independently, we will pay your water bill and TV license.

We will pay your Council Tax from 18 to 21 years. If you are struggling financially we will complete an assessment of your finances, and if you are in need will consider paying your Council Tax up to the age of 25.

Support whilst in education, training and/or employment – for care experienced adults aged between 18 and 21.

Work: Apprenticeships, internships, and jobs.

We are working hard to increase availability of apprenticeships in the Council, and will regularly send out emails from our contact4careleavers@torbay.gov.uk email to inform you of local and national apprenticeships, job opportunities and internships. If you're not receiving these emails, let us know and we'll add your email to this group – your email address is kept confidential to you.

We have good links with the DWP and often have excellent opportunities sent to our team from local employers. Talk to your Personal Advisor about these opportunities and we can support you to get the job you want.

Education Bursary for 16 to 19 year olds

If you are in education or training, your college will let you know if you are eligible for a 16–19 Bursary. A bursary is money provided to help you to complete your course, e.g. getting the bus to and from college, buying a laptop if you need it for your course, or other course equipment like overalls or hairdressing scissors. Your Personal Advisor can support you to complete the application, e.g. help you get ID documents together.

Grants

You may be entitled to receive a £150 support grant per financial year, but your attendance will usually have to be a minimum of 90% per academic year.

If you have passed exams, completed a course/training, accomplished another significant achievement or coped with a challenging situation, you may be entitled to a reward grant. Decisions on reward grants are made by considering your individual circumstances and achievements.

Rewards for exam achievements

GCSE passes A-G	£15.00 per GCSE
One year courses such as Basic Skills, Entry level, ESOL, GNVQ Foundation, GNVQ Intermediate, NVQ1, NVQ2	£50.00
AVCE, BTEC National, AS/A levels, NVQ3	£100.00 on completion or £50.00 for passing each year.
Life Skills Programme	£20.00
Access courses	£100.00
HND, Degree	£100.00 for passing each year
On graduation	£250.00

Incentive payment

You could also be entitled to £20 per week incentive payment if you are in education or training. You will need to evidence / provide proof that you are attending your course to your Personal Advisor. You won't get incentive payments if you get a college bursary.

Fares

If you are in education or training you could get financial help with travel costs during your term time and some fares for family contact, leisure and cultural activities. You would need to provide information about your costs and circumstances to your Personal Advisor in advance so we can plan for this.

Starting university – please see further information in the section below about financial support for when you are starting university.

Education, training and employment – All care experienced adults aged between 18 and 25

We want you to be able to continue your education or training, or to find work when you become cared experienced and transition into adulthood. Below is a summary of the support available to you. Talk to your Social Worker or Personal Advisor to find out more.

We would support you getting a job to supplement income as a student if this would not have a negative effect on your studies.

18 to 21 year olds wanting to go to college / further education / training

Support can include:

Your Personal Advisor keeping in touch with you and reviewing your Pathway Plan to ensure you are getting the support you need.

Assistance with some expenses for education, training and employment if needed, which may include help with purchasing industry-specific clothing for example.

Income Support and Housing Benefit should be available if you have been cared for and remain separated from your family and are in:

- Full time further education - this is up to A-level standard or equivalent, or in direct training for 12 hours a week or more.
- Income Support and Housing Benefit should continue to be paid until the end of the academic year that you turn 21.
- In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to make a contribution towards course workbooks, field trips, special equipment or materials, clothing for work experience or job interviews.

For Care Experienced Adults aged between 21 and 25.

We will support you from 21 to 25 if this is what you would like.

- An example of this might be that you want to get back into education or training, and that this is agreed as part of your Pathway Plan. We will support you for the duration of your course, which may include applying for charitable grants and funding, you combining work and study, and considering if you are eligible for any funding from an employer.
- If we do provide you with support and guidance after 21, we will also provide you with access to a Personal Advisor who will update your Pathway Plan with you and keep in touch.

Support for young people wanting to go to university for care experienced adults aged between 18 and 25. .

Support related to attending university is dependent on eligibility. The information below provides some information but please also talk to your Social Worker or Personal Advisor:

- You must have completed BTEC level 3 or A-levels and be enrolled on a course of higher education, which includes first degree and higher education qualifications that are over twelve hours per week of study, including some distance learning courses.
- You must commence the course of higher education prior to your 25th birthday and have confirmation of your student loan. If you were previously seeking asylum, you must also have confirmation of your immigration status for the duration of your course.
- Your Personal Advisor will support you with this decision if you would like them to.

If you are starting university you may be eligible for the support detailed below:

- Your Personal Advisor will review and update your Pathway Plan and keep in touch with you.
- We may provide you with an education bursary of £2,000 if this is not available through your university. We will support you to access all possible loans, bursaries etc. that are available to you. Any bursary usually covers the duration of the whole course. This would be paid to you in instalments over the course of your degree programme, spread over a maximum of four years.
- We may pay a top-up amount to assist with your accommodation costs whilst at university. An assessment would be carried out to calculate the amount based on your circumstances and is up to £100 per week.

- We may be able to help you with up to £300 (per academic year) to buy books and materials. If your course requires it, we may be able to help you with a grant to buy a laptop in your first year of study up to £500.
- If you decide at the end of the first year you are on the wrong course, we may provide an additional year's funding for you to change to another course. You would only receive four years funding in total.
- If you are unsuccessful in a year of your education, financial support would be re-assessed in your Pathway Plan. A maximum of one year's additional financial support may be provided.

Attendance

If there is any disagreement about your attendance, your Personal Advisor will ask you to provide a letter of attendance from your Higher Education Institution / University). If you are not attending your course as set out in your Pathway Plan, we may withhold payment of any bursary and other financial support provided by Torbay. Where you have been paid but decide not to attend, we would ask for the money to be repaid.

Additional funding

There may be other sources of additional funding that you can use for financial support, including seeking part-time employment, student loans, grants and hardship grants. Many universities offer a Care Leavers Bursary or financial support through the 'Access to Learning' fund. Your Personal Advisor can discuss these with you.

Support after university

We can continue to offer you advice and guidance, if you want it, up until you are 25, in relation to employment, education or training.

However, when you have completed your university course and if you do not have paid work, you will be expected to claim benefits, unless you are considering going on to a post-graduate course.

If you would like to go on to complete a post graduate course, we can offer you support and guidance to help identify financial support for you to continue your education and will advise you how to access this. We may pay additionally one years' support as identified above.

Support for parents in education who have children

If you would like to access training or education you should find out what child care support is on offer from your employer, training provider, college or

university.

Remember: *All three year olds are entitled to free nursery hours from Early Years Services. In some areas they also offer free provision for two year olds.*

Custody

We understand that being taken into custody can be a stressful experience and when you are approaching the end of your sentence, you may be worried about where you will live and what you will do next.

You will have access to your Personal Advisor whilst you are in custody up to the age of 25 if you choose. While you are in custody, we may provide you with a level of financial help up until you are 21, if the prison agrees to this and it is in your best interests. Any benefit payments would be stopped, but your claim would stay active and in place ready for your release.

There are education, training and employment opportunities to explore with your Personal Advisor and staff in custody.

Your PA will liaise with the HMP and Probation to support your release and support options. For young people on a longer sentence, HMP prisons will liaise with the Care Experienced team months before your release to start planning your release.

We will continue to visit you virtually or face to face, linking in with you and the HMP to agree this.

Our 'offer' to care-experienced young people and adults, from the Children Family Health Devon (Children in Care / CIC) Nurse team.

The Children and Family Health Nurse Team works with children and young people who are 'care-experienced'. They can help care experienced young people and cared for children with support, health advice and signposting to health services that are right for them.

We will treat you with respect and understanding, and as an individual.

Our Nurses also work with other professionals such as Personal Advisors, Participation teams, voluntary organisations and other partner agencies.

Our Nurses offer yearly Health Reviews up until the age of 18 years. It is your right to have a health review every year.

Health reviews are an opportunity to talk to a qualified Nurse about any health issues or worries, and get advice and support.

Your confidentiality is always respected during these talks, and the Nurse will discuss with you what information can be included in your Personal Health Plan. This will be developed with you and is designed to meet your health needs.

Health Passports:

When you are 16, you will be given a health passport. This is a small booklet which outlines your immunisation history and other relevant health information. It also provides a wide range of useful health information including how to find other health services. The Health Passport should form part of your Pathway Plan.

17+ years: preparing for adulthood: The Nurses can discuss how to become more independent in looking after your own health needs e.g. how to book a GP appointment or collect a prescription. They can also help to get you any support you might need and be eligible for from adult health services.

Final statutory health review: when you are 17 you will be offered your last health review. The Nurse will ensure that you have our contact details and know how to contact us if you require support or advice after you are 18, or if you need a new health passport.

18+ years: The Nurse team will send you a letter just before your 18th birthday which provides you with our contact details and an offer of health advice and support throughout your adult life.

If you give your consent to our Nurses team they can talk with your GP in cases of emergency. This consent can be added to your Pathway Plan.

Sexual health

Most of the care experienced nursing team is trained in the C-Card scheme, and can support you to access free condoms and services that are related to your sexual and reproductive health.

Eye care

You may be eligible for free eye tests and vouchers towards glasses/contact lenses if you are:

- Age 16 to 18 and in full time education
- Receiving certain benefits, such as Universal Credit
- on a low income and have a Health Credit Certificate (known as HC2 or HC3 certificate)

Prescriptions

Advice and support can be provided about prescription fees but we are not able to pay for the costs of prescriptions for you to get medication. However you are eligible for free prescriptions if you are:

- age 16 to 18 and in full time education
- receiving certain benefits, such as Universal Credit
- pregnant nor have had a baby in the last 12 months (you will need an exemption certificate from your GP)
- receiving treatment in hospital

You as a member of your community:

We want to work with you to help you to be an active member of society, and can help you by:

- Helping you to register to vote.
- Supporting you to find information on groups and clubs you may wish to join.
- Sharing information with you about voluntary work.
- Listening and taking account of your views about how we support you.
- Supporting you to join the Cared For Community or The Circle (up to 18) and 'Your Voice' Forum (16 - 25)
- Asking you about your views in our surveys and taking account of what you say.
- Asking you to be on an interview panel when we recruit new social care staff.
- Recognising and celebrating your achievements in the Annual Awards Ceremony

- Having a member of the 'Your Voice' Forum on the Corporate Parenting Board so that senior leaders can hear feedback about the service directly from a care experienced adult.

Other places you can go for help and advice:

Colleges and Universities: Your local college / chosen University will have their own website.

Government website student financial support – www.gov.uk/browse/educations/student-finance

Job Centre Plus – www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

Citizens Advice – www.citizensadvice.org.uk

SHELTER – www.shelter.org.uk National housing

FRANK – www.talktofrank.com 0300 123 6600

CORAM VOICE – www.coram.org.uk 0808 800 5792

National Youth Advisory Service (NYAS) – www.nyas.net

Making a complaint about Torbay Council Services – If you would like to make a complaint about the service you have received please contact the Care Experience Team Manager: penny.ashby@torbay.gov.uk or call 01803 208400 and ask for a complaint call-back. This will be treated as a priority.

UCAS – www.ucas.com

Prince's Trust – www.princes-trust.org.uk

Asylum Aid – www.asylumaid.org.uk

Asylum Support Tribunal – www.gov.uk/appeal-first-tier-asylum-support-tribunal

Refugee Council – www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

The Albert Kennedy Trust – www.akt.org.uk – The AKT support LGBTQ+ young people aged 16 – 25 in the UK who are facing or experiencing homelessness and/or living in a hostile environment.

Being Heard: complaints, compliments and participation.

How do I make a complaint?

The Torbay Care Experience
Team Manager is Penny Ashby:
Tel 01803 208400, email
Penny.Ashby@torbay.gov.uk



Stage One: If you would like to make a complaint please telephone, write or email the manager of your allocated Social Worker or Personal Advisor and explain why you want to make a complaint.

Many problems can be put right straight away. However, if this is not possible we aim to investigate and respond to your complaint within 15 working days.

If this is not possible, the timescale may be extended by an additional 10 working days. We will keep you updated of the progress of the complaint.

Stage 2

If you are not happy with the Stage 1 response and wish to take your complaint further you should write to Information Compliance, Torbay Council, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR or email <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/complaints> within 30 working days of the date of the response. You should give details of the issues you are still unhappy about and what you think we should do to put things right. The Information Compliance team will arrange for a Senior Officer within the relevant department to carry out an investigation. The Information Compliance Team will then review the investigation and respond to you with a final response no later than 30 working days after receiving your Stage 2 request. If we are unable to meet this deadline, you will be informed.

If you feel the problem is still not resolved

If you are still not satisfied after we have investigated and reviewed your complaint, then you can refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. A leaflet produced by the Ombudsman entitled 'Complaint about the Council?' is available at our Connections offices. Alternatively you can contact the [Local Government Ombudsman](#) directly.

Compliments: We are always happy to hear about your successes, and positive comments about the work we do well with you! Please email us on contact4careleavers@torbay.gov.uk or call on 01803 208400.

Participation: Torbay Youth Trust (TYT) leads 'Your Voice', and supports us to make sure you are heard and that we are taking action to improve the work we do. We have care-experienced young people on our interview panels, supporting training events and much more – we'd love you to get involved! Please talk to your Personal Advisor and we will link you in with Torbay Youth Trust.

If you want to make a complaint or want support and advice from someone outside of Torbay Council you can contact The Office of the Children's Rights Director on:

Free Phone: 0800 528 0731

Website: via the following link <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

Complaints to Ofsted

Ofsted regulate social care services in England, such as children's homes, residential family centres and fostering and adoption services.

If you feel that you want to make a complaint directly to Ofsted then the details of how to contact them are provided below–

<https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>