

Care Leavers Entitled to Continuing Support after the Age of 21 - Personal Adviser to 25 Policy

Young people previously eligible for leaving care services resuming programmes of education or training after the age of 21 are entitled to continuing support from a personal adviser allocated from the local authority.

.Programmes of education must be interpreted broadly, they may include:

- Basic skills course
- Further education
- Higher Education
- Support to complete a postgraduate qualification, or,
- Vocational training and apprenticeships.

Arrangements to ensure young people can resume contact easily with the service include:

- Ensuring that young people are aware of their entitlement to a personal adviser up to the age of 25.
- Confirm a young person's entitlement in their pathway plan
- Include arrangements in the pathway plan how a young person can easily contact the local authority after the age of 21
- Provide details to the young person of how the local authority can support with resuming a programme of education.
- Provide information regarding financial support
- Provide a leaflet informing how young people can get in touch in the future.

The personal adviser will confirm in the pathway plan that the young person is aware of the arrangements prior to their 21st birthday. Young people will be encouraged to take up the support available.

In every case where a care leaver requests this support, the local authority will need to assess the appropriateness of the education or training course and how it will help young people to achieve their ambitions. Young people do not need to have decided what education or training they would like to pursue. They can get in touch if they are 'wanting to pursue education or training' and in such cases, the personal adviser should help the young person identify the options best suited to them.

The service should meet with the young person and based on the assessment of their needs and the suitability of the course, assign a personal adviser to participate in the preparation of a pathway plan. The plan should reflect the agreed educational outcomes for the young person and the type of support the young person will require.

Care leavers will need support and guidance to help them think about and plan their return to education or training, consider all aspects such as financial support and impact on housing or benefits, as they do once the course has actually commenced. In particular support should be provided with the consideration of and access to appropriate courses.

Local authorities should make it clear that this entitlement to resume the pathway planning process and a support relationship with a named personal adviser starts from the time the young person informs the local authority of their intention to resume their education or training and ends with the completion of the course.