

Knowsley's Local Offer to Care Experienced People



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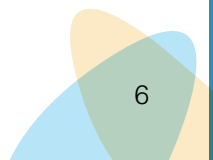
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Foreword

by Knowsley Care Experienced Forum Members

“ Having supported the development of Knowsley’s local offer it is good to know care experienced people approaching 18 will receive a good level of support. Our Local Offer will help improve the quality of service they receive and will help the understanding of everyone around the local authority who support children in care and those leaving care. It will help care experienced people to be ready for adult life. It is important we continue to update the local offer and we are sure we can make things better by continuing to share our ideas. It has been great to be involved in the development of the local offer and to feel listened to. ”

Dylan and Adam
Knowsley Care Experienced Forum Members

Introduction

The process of leaving care and transitioning to adult life can be a challenging and confusing time, here in Knowsley we remain steadfast in our commitment to you as a care experienced person. In developing our Local Offer we have sought to understand your lived experiences and we remain dedicated to working in partnership with you and the people important to you whilst aiming to remove the barriers that may prevent you from making a successful transition to adult life.

We know that it is a big step when you move out of care and start living on your own or with friends. Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you. We want to ensure you feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for help, support and advice.

To be able to get the help set out in this Local Offer, you must have been in care for a period of at least 13 weeks (or periods amounting to 13 weeks) from the age of 14 including some time after your 16th Birthday. If you are not sure whether you qualify please contact Knowsley's Care Experienced People Team for further guidance.

As a care experienced person your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be available to talk with you about the information contained within this Local Offer and will provide you with an online link or hard copy on request.

Knowsley's Care Experienced Person's Charter

Knowsley's Care Experienced Person's Charter is a unique and innovative set of principles created with the input of our Care Experienced Young People and developed within our Care Experienced People's Forum. The resulting charter has been a collaborative effort between the Local Council and our young people, who have been fully involved in the development and consultation process.

The Charter outlines a clear set of principles our young people can come to expect of the local authority. By involving care experienced people in the development of the charter, Knowsley has shown its commitment to listening to and valuing the views of those most affected by its policies and services. The result is a charter and broader local offer that reflects the aspirations and concerns of our care experienced people and provides them with a clear and concise set of principles and rights as they make their transition to independent living and adult life.

In agreeing the Care Experienced Charter, Knowsley Council has committed to:

- Listen to us earlier
- Do not judge us on our past
- Ask our opinion before moving forward
- Invite us to regular groups to prevent isolation
- Get us involved
- Prioritise time with us
- Treat everyone equally
- Do not make judgements
- Make the transition easier from being in care to being care experienced
- Explain decisions before taking any action

The Care Experienced People's Team

All our departments have a responsibility to act as your 'corporate parent', which means it is our shared responsibility to be good parents to you and to other young people leaving our care. The Care Experienced People team sit within our children and families service and will be your main point of contact.

Your Personal Advisor will support you directly whilst also coordinating any additional support you receive, either from us or our partners. Our Personal Advisors have diverse backgrounds but usually will have experience in a field such as youth work, social work, children's residential care, housing, health or education.

Address: Care Experienced People Team
Nutgrove Villa
Westmoorland Road
Huyton
Knowsley
L36 6GA

Telephone: 0151 443 2005

Who can access support from the Care Experienced People's Team

In order to understand the type of support you can expect to receive from the Care Experienced People's team you will need to understand some key terms which are used to describe the 4 statuses for care experienced people. The key words and their definitions are described below; if when you have read the key words you still need help in understanding them then you can discuss these with your Social Worker or Personal Advisor.

Key Words – categories of Care Experienced People

Eligible – you are an Eligible care experienced person if:

- You are aged 16 or 17, and
- You are currently a young person in care, and
- You have been in care for a period of 13 weeks (91 days) or periods accumulating 13 weeks since the age of 14 including a period since your 16th birthday

Relevant – you are a Relevant care experienced person if:

- You are aged 16 or 17, and
- You are no longer cared for by the Local Authority but you have previously been an 'Eligible' care experienced person

Former Relevant – you are a Former Relevant care experienced person if:

- You are aged between 18 and 25 and before reaching 18 you were or had been a Relevant care experienced person, or
- Immediately before you stopped being cared for you were an Eligible care experienced person

Qualifying – you are a Qualifying care experienced person if:

- You are at least 16 but under 21, and
- You were a cared for child prior to the making of a Special Guardianship Order, which was in force when you reached 18, or
- If at any after you reached aged 16, you were no longer a child in care, or accommodated, or
- You were privately fostered and assessed to be in need

[Coram Voice provide a useful quiz that can help identify Care Experienced status](#)

Advice, Support and Guidance up to 25

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced the extension of duties to all Former Relevant care experienced people up to the age of 25. From the age of 21 all Former Relevant care experienced people will be offered continued allocation to a Personal Advisor who'll provide advice, support and guidance to address any unmet needs as identified within your Pathway Plan.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

An Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) is defined as an individual who is under 18, who has arrived in the UK without a responsible adult, is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so, is separated from both parents and has applied for asylum in the United Kingdom in his/her own right.

The local authority has a duty to assess such children under section 17, and then, almost always, to accommodate them under section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Support will be provided to our UASC to access legal representation in support of their initial asylum claim to remain in the United Kingdom. Care experienced status as detailed above applies to all UASC who achieve Eligible care experienced status having been accommodated for 13 weeks from the age of 14 including 1 day since the age of 16. As an UASC you are entitled to all elements of the Local Offer that apply to your care experienced status.

As an UASC with Care Experienced status the Local Authority will prepare a Pathway Plan with specific focus to meeting your cultural and religious identity needs. The local authority will also provide interpretation services to ensure communication and to enable your understanding.

[Statutory guidance for local authorities can be found on the Department for Education website](#)

If on reaching 18 with no recourse to public funds pending the outcome of an asylum claim, your pathway plan assessment will be updated and a personal allowance payment may be continued. Accommodation may also be provided, or the means to secure it, to a maximum of the relevant Local Housing Allowance rates.

The [South London Refugee Association](#) provide a wide range of advice and support for Local Authorities supporting Unaccompanied Asylum seeking children and Care Leavers.

The Role of Personal Advisors

Personal Advisors from the Care Experienced People Team will be allocated to all Eligible care experienced people from 16 years of age. The role of Personal Advisors is varied and whilst this is not an exhaustive list, Personal Advisors will provide advice, support and guidance throughout your journey into adulthood as follows:

Eligible Care Experienced People aged 16

- Personal Advisors befriend and provide support, advice, and guidance
- Provide direct support to develop independence skills in one to one and group sessions with frequency and duration to be approved by the Care Experienced People Team Manager
- May attend statutory visits alongside the allocated Social Worker

Eligible Care Experienced People aged 17

- Attend Statutory Reviews and Personal Education Planning meetings
- Support Property Pool Plus applications (see Accommodation)
- Support early Universal Credit claims (see Joint Protocol with DWP)
- Present the young person's case to the High Priority Resettlement Panel (see Accommodation)
- Provide support to obtain a provisional driving licence

Relevant aged 16-17 and Former Relevant Care Experienced People aged 18-21

- Personal Advisors coordinate the update of the Pathway Plan within every 6 months or within 28 days following a significant event
- Maintain Keeping In Touch within every 60 days as a minimum
- Support involvement with partner agencies: Health, DWP, EET providers, Probation, Police, etc
- Will provide support with voter registration

Former Relevant Care Experienced People aged 21-25

- Personal Advisor provide on-going support, advice and guidance based on needs led Pathway Planning
- Maintain Keeping In Touch in line with needs led assessment
- Signpost to partner agencies and 3rd sector services

Qualifying Care Experienced People aged 18-25

- Personal Advisor will send a yearly letter detailing the support offer and guidance on how this can be accessed
- Personal Advisors undertake one off needs assessment on request which may include time limited support advice and guidance

The Young People's Team and the role of Social Workers

All Eligible care experienced people will be allocated to a Social Worker, for the majority of children in care this will be a Social Worker from the Young People's Team, however if you are an older child when entering care you may remain allocated to a Social Worker from a Child Protection Team, particularly if you are approaching 18 years of age.

Whilst you are an Eligible care experienced person your Social Worker will act as your lead worker and be responsible for the regular update of your Pathway Plan (see Pathway Planning).

As an Eligible care experienced person you will remain allocated to your Social Worker until you either leave care or reach 18 years of age. You will remain allocated to your Personal Advisor whilst you continue to have Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant care experienced status.

Prevention for Care Experienced Young People at risk of Offending

It is acknowledged that Care Experienced young people are vulnerable to entering the Criminal Justice System. As such, Knowsley Youth Offending Service and Children's Service are committed to supporting these children at the earliest opportunity to enable them to live crime free lives. Knowsley Local Authority work within the Pan Merseyside Decriminalisation of Looked After Children Protocol, which seeks to ensure agencies such as the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Youth Offending Service and Children's Services all work in partnership to reduce the likelihood of cared for children and care Experienced people entering the Criminal Justice System.

For those young people who do have experience of the Criminal Justice System, transitioning into adulthood can be a turbulent time in terms of their own safety and wellbeing, risks in the community, and potential risks to others. Therefore, it is vital that there is a clear plan to support these young people and that the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and Children's Social Care (CSC) work together to promote independence and risk management.

In Knowsley we have a Joint Working Protocol between the YOS and CSC, which is a working tool to provide a framework on how we work together. This outlines clear responsibilities of the agencies and supports partnership working.

[YOS CSC Protocol 2022-2024](#)

Support for Care Experienced People in Custody

We recognise the importance of providing ongoing support, advice and guidance to our Care Experienced People throughout their time in custody, with the aim of promoting positive outcomes and reducing the risk of future offending upon release.

We understand that maintaining connections with your support networks, promoting important contacts and developing a comprehensive release plan are crucial factors for your successful reintegration into the community.

Your Personal Advisor will offer continued regular Keeping In Touch visit and maintain your Pathway Plan throughout your custodial sentence. Linking in with the Prison Offender Management team your Personal Advisor will be able to advocate for you to access Prison services including access to Health, Mental Health, Education and Training support in line with your needs.

We will work closely with Probation, DWP and Housing partners in preparation for your release to ensure a clear plan is in place in preparation for your release.

[The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders \(NICCO\) have developed a comprehensive tool kit in support of Care Experienced People in custody.](#)

Some young people may have had a negative experience of the care system and do not want to be associated with being a Care Experienced Person. Many young people consider being care experienced a negative label that carries stigma associated with challenging behaviour and poor attainment. The NICCO toolkit helps promote the benefits of prisoners identifying themselves as Care Experienced, to give them the opportunity to speak about their experience and to be made aware that staff understand the challenges that they might have faced.

Children with Disability Team (CWD)

If you are an Eligible care experienced person supported by the Children with Disability (CWD) team you will continue to receive support from your allocated Social Worker until you transition to Adult Social Care. The Care Experienced People Team will allocate you a Personal Advisor from the age of 16 who will work alongside your allocated Social Worker and later your Adults Social Care Social Worker and who will remain available to you in supporting your transition to adult life.

[Guidance on Knowsley Local offer for SEND can be found on the council website.](#)

Transition Team

To ensure robust and timely transition planning for our children and young people identified with SEND Adult Social Care have co-located their Transition team to work alongside the Children with Disability Team (CWD). The Transition Team comprises a Senior Practitioner and two Social Workers who are allocated to all children aged 14+ currently open to the CWD team.

The scope of the Transition Team is to extend to all Children identified for transition to Adult Social Care from the age of 14 by 2024. This will include those children and young people supported by the Cared For Children and Care Experienced People's Teams.

Adult Social Care

We consider the safeguarding of our Care Experienced People making their transition to adult life to be of paramount concern. As such our joint efforts working in partnership with Adult Social Care are dedicated to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our care experienced people.

Through regular communication, information sharing and collaborative decision making our joint commitment seeks to ensure the transition from care to independence is a journey marked by security, guidance and support.

As a Cared for Child your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will discuss with you the need for an Adult Social Care referral. This will be when your identified care needs or concerns for your safety or wellbeing extend beyond your 18th birthday.

To ensure smooth transition to Adult Social Care, Children's Services aim to identify from 14 years of age those who may be in need of future transition. Your Social Worker and Personal Advisor will be able to talk to you about the referral process to Adult Social Care and will be able to support you through the process of the Care Act assessment that will determine your eligibility for Adult Social Care services.

[Further information on Adult Social Care referrals, policies, procedures and practices, safeguarding and care and support can be on the council website.](#)

You can refer yourself to Knowsley's adult social services by emailing adultsocialcare@knowsley.gov.uk or by calling **0151 443 2600**

Adult Safeguarding

An adult deemed to be at risk is a person aged 18 years or over who has needs for care and support.

Safeguarding adults means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Abuse takes many forms and can include everything from physical and sexual harm to discrimination and neglect. Safeguarding is about people and organisations working together to prevent or stop abuse and neglect. Any agency providing care or any member of the public can complete a referral to Adult Safeguarding if they have concerns for an adults safety or wellbeing.

[The Adult Safeguarding Referral can be found on the council website.](#)

24 hour contact tel no: 0151 443 2600

You can use this number to contact Knowsley Adult Social Care during working hours and to help with urgent situations between 5pm and 9am every weekday, weekends and public holidays.

Child Exploitation & Missing: Shield (Continued support to Care Experienced People)

The Shield Team is an established, specialist multi-agency child exploitation & missing service in Knowsley. The aim of the service is to safeguard and protect children and provide a coordinated response to keep Knowsley children safe and free from exploitation. In particular our cohort of cared for children also receive the same intensive level of support even when placed out of borough to maintain and build relationships. Shield will also continue to provide intensive intervention to children who turn 18, including our care experienced people, if further support is identified as needed to assist transition to adult services or there is an ongoing police investigation or court proceedings.

The Shield Team has proven success in reducing missing episodes and exploitation and is at the forefront of practice development to tackle exploitation. Shield's social care practice is underpinned by therapeutic interventions using a trusted working relationship approach, which is enhanced by Shield Police practice which tackles the contextual safeguarding risks. In addition, our commissioned voluntary missing service helps to gather the voice of the child which supports engagement and targeting interventions.

Please see Pan-Merseyside Child Exploitation Policy for referral pathways, and/or contact Shield for advice and guidance on **0151 443 2028** or email Shield@knowsley.gov.uk

Support with Domestic Violence

Admitting to yourself and others that you are experiencing domestic abuse is very difficult; however it may be your first step towards getting help and support.

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass (but is not limited to) the following types of abuse:

- psychological (e.g. being told you are worthless)
- physical (e.g. being hit)
- sexual (e.g. rape or degrading treatment)
- financial (e.g. having money withheld)
- emotional (e.g. name calling, put downs)

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim." (This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM)

and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.)

Early warning signs

- Being cut off from family and friends and being isolated
- Suffering humiliation or being insulted in front of others
- Constantly getting criticised and being told you can't cope without them

How can I report domestic abuse?

- If you are in danger, call the Police on **999**
- The First Step – **0151 548 3333**
- National Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours) **0808 2000 247**

Arrangements in place in Knowsley to support those experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse include:

- Specialist Domestic Violence Courts, where perpetrators of domestic abuse will be fast-tracked through the criminal justice system. Specially trained magistrates will hear cases of this type, and this will ensure that offenders are dealt with swiftly and robustly
- Independent advocates (IDVAs) are available to support victim survivors in high risk cases, providing advice and information at the point of crisis
- The Knowsley Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi agency approach to supporting high risk victim survivors of domestic abuse and any children involved

- Help and support is promoted throughout the year, including the White Ribbon campaign – an annual event encouraging people to wear a white ribbon and pledging never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women
- The Freedom Programme is offered in Knowsley, helping women to understand the issues of what domestic abuse is and how perpetrators use a variety of different tactics to control them. For further details contact The First Step on **0151 548 3333**
- Knowsley Council and a number of partner agencies have introduced Domestic Abuse Champions – dedicated people in organisations who staff can turn to for support

[Further information on support in response to Domestic Abuse and Knowsley's Domestic Abuse Strategy can be found on the council website.](#)



Pathway Planning

Pathway Planning will be provided for all Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant young people. From the age of 16 your Pathway Plan will replace your Care Plan. Your Pathway Plan is about your needs and what we all need to do to ensure your successful transition to adult life. Your pathway plan is prepared by the local authority in 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.

We will review your pathway plan with you regularly so that it is kept up-to-date. We will try to enable you to keep the same Personal Adviser, though this will not always be possible. The amount of support that you receive from your Personal Adviser will depend on what you want and your circumstances.

Your Social Worker and/or Personal Advisor will look to support identification of your unmet needs, you might, for example, need extra support because:

- You have special educational needs or a disability
- You are an unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unclear
- You are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with the criminal justice system
- You are a young parent or
- You are going through a difficult time in your personal life

How will I be involved?

For your Pathway Plan to be effective it will be based on an up to date needs assessment and will set out the support that you need to achieve your aspirations.

We aim to fully involve you in the development of your Pathway Plan. You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. You also have the right to support from an independent advocate if you want to challenge any of the decisions about the support you receive. (See Advocacy Services).

Who else will be involved?

With your agreement and where it is appropriate we will seek the views of your parents and carers, we will also seek the views from our partner agencies which may include; Housing, Education, Training and Employment providers, Job Centre Plus, Health services, Youth Offending Services, Transition Support Service and others. Your Pathway Plan will seek to ensure that all agencies are working together to provide you with clear and consistent advice and support.

When will my Pathway Plan be completed and revised?

Your initial Pathway Plan will be completed before you are 16 years and 3 months old. If you are already over 16 on entering care of the Local Authority then your Pathway Plan will be completed within 3 months of your accommodation start date. Your Pathway Plan will then be reviewed within every 6 months or within every 28 days of any significant change to your plan such as a change of address, significant health event or at your request.

As an Eligible care experienced person your Pathway Plan will be written and available at your Statutory Review which will continue to be chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). A Statutory Review must take place before making a decision to confirm that a young person is ready to leave care.

If you are a Relevant care experienced person your Pathway Plan review meeting will be held within every 6 months or 28 days of a significant change. Your Pathway plan review will be undertaken by your Personal Advisor who will consult with you and when in-line with your wishes other important people and professionals.

If you are a Former Relevant Care experienced person your Pathway Plan will continue to be updated within every 6 months or 28 days of a change of address. Your Pathway plan review will be undertaken by your Personal Advisor who will consult with you, and with your agreement, with other important people and professionals.

Pilot Scheme – Extension of Independent Reviews of Pathway Plans up to 19 years of age

The IRO handbook describes the role of Independent Reviewing Officers in relation to care leavers:

“ Where a review concludes that it is appropriate for a looked after young person to make the move to independent living arrangements, and such a move takes place, this does not automatically result in the young person ceasing to be looked after. It is likely that given their vulnerability most young people will benefit from the support that results from being looked after (including having a pathway plan that is kept up to date and reviewed by an IRO) until the age of 18. However, where there is consideration that it might be in a young person's interests to no longer be looked after and become a 'relevant child' then this entirely separate issue must be considered by a properly constituted statutory review of the pathway plan, chaired by the IRO. The proposed pathway plan for the young person concerned must be available for scrutiny at this review. The review should also stipulate how in future the pathway plan is to be reviewed and whether there would be any benefits in these meetings being chaired by an independent person, with an established competence in the provision of leaving care, housing support and other services to care leavers. ”

(IRO Handbook Paras 5.16 & 5.17)

The offer to relevant and former relevant young people in Knowsley is that their pathway plan will be reviewed at 6 monthly intervals for a further 2 occasions by an Independent Reviewing Officer. This will be the same IRO who previously reviewed their looked after care plan, as this ensures continuity in the planning and reviewing process, minimises the number of new professionals the young person needs to deal with, and maintains the relationship between young person and their IRO. The IRO will offer to chair a maximum of 2 reviews following the young person ceasing to be looked after. The decision to continue the independent oversight of the Pathway Plan will be led by the young person, who may not want the IRO to continue in this role or may want the IRO to chair only one of the maximum 2 further reviews offered.

Independence Skills Development

We want you to be as prepared as possible as you move into adulthood, which is why we will start to assess your skills early, usually shortly after you turn 16 and we will continue to support your progress within your pathway plan.

We will discuss all aspects of skills that help in adult life, such as cooking, shopping, laundry and your ability to pay bills and manage a budget, self-care, and personal hygiene.

We will then work with you and your residential or foster carers to help you to build your skills in the key areas we feel you need help with. We understand that you won't always get things right first time, so we will also ensure you have a safety net during transitional periods to ensure you have a safe environment to learn and build your skills in. This may be by facilitating a 'staying put' arrangement with your foster carers or putting you forward for supported accommodation where you will have support provided within your tenancy to help you build all the skills you need.

We want you to have the things you need to live in your own home, so we will talk to you about these and will help you buy you the right things at the right time. (See Financial Entitlements) You will be able to get items you need from your setting up home allowance to buy essential items for your home, things like a washing machine, TV, bed, carpets or cutlery. We will also consider things such as pictures and soft furnishings to make your home feel more like home, as long as you don't need this money for other things.

Independence tool kits

[Getting ready for adult life is a resource which includes worksheets and information to help you build on your own life skills.](#)

This is something we or your carers may use together to help you build skills in key areas that you need some help with. To help support understanding of your independence skills development we can also offer Bronze, Silver and Gold Independence skills assessment:

[Bronze Independent Training](#)

[Silver Independent Training](#)

[Gold Independent Training](#)

Managing your money

Managing your money can present many challenges, the journey to independence requires budgeting and managing money effectively that requires the development of essential skills. It is important to recognise that as a Care Experienced Person you may face hurdles that can feel overwhelming. Your Personal Advisor will remain available to you to support you to prioritise your expenses and to forewarn you of the risks of developing unmanageable debts.

If however you find yourself with financial difficulties please alert your Personal Advisor as the earliest opportunity. Your Personal Advisor will be able to support you in ensuring you have accessed all available support via Job Centre Plus and from your financial entitlement as outlined within this local offer.

There are a number of local and national services can offer you free help and support. They can help you manage your money, sort debts or claim the benefits you are entitled to.

Call the council's dedicated Financial Advice line on **0151 443 3300** to find out more about free sources of money and debt advice, and credit unions.

Local financial advice and support

All Knowsley residents can visit Livv Housing Trust (previously KHT) online at [Money advice hub](#) to find local support including advice on employment, training, managing debt, health and wellbeing, furniture, getting online and claiming Universal Credit.

Many other organisations provide free and confidential advice to Knowsley residents. Some exceptions apply, so check the details below and if in doubt get in touch before you visit.

This advice includes:

- [Help with benefits \(checking entitlement or making a claim\)](#)
- [Help to sort out debts](#)
- [Financial Services \(including low cost loans, savings and affordable white goods and electricals\)](#)
- [Where to go in a crisis \(including help with fuel costs and food\)](#)

National Money Advice and Support Services

Online money advice is available through a number of national organisations. Again, the advice is confidential and free.

[Turn2us – www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

Information and advice on benefits, grants and managing your money, with an online benefits calculator to work out what you could claim. Visit their website or, if you don't have access to the internet call **0808 802 2000**.

[Money Advice Service – www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

Clear and unbiased advice to help you manage your money. Visit their website or call **0800 138 7777** to speak with a trained advisor.

[Entitledto – www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk)

Information and advice on benefits and grants including an online calculator to find benefits you may be entitled to.

National Debt Services

[Stepchange.org](https://www.stepchange.org)

Advice and support on managing debt including bankruptcy and Debt Relief Orders. Has an online benefits calculator. Go online or call **0800 138 1111**.

[National Debtline – www.nationaldebtline.co.uk](https://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk)

Advice on dealing with debt problems. Visit their website or call **0808 808 4000** for more information.

[Debt Support Trust – www.debtsupporttrust.org.uk](https://www.debtsupporttrust.org.uk)

Online and telephone debt advice. Use their 'debt analyser' tool to work out where your money goes and which solution might be best.

Not Forgotten Boxes

The Freedom Church, Childwall, Liverpool very kindly donate an independence starter pack, known as a Not Forgotten Box for all Knowsley's Care Experienced People when moving on to independence in adult life. The Not Forgotten Box includes kitchen utensils, bedding, towels, and other thoughtful essentials that can provide a great help when setting up your first home.

Your Personal Advisor will be able to make arrangements for your Not Forgotten Box to be delivered to you in a timely way once your independent accommodation has been identified.

Free Cooking Sessions

As a Knowsley Care Experienced person you can now access free cooking sessions, if under 19 you will need to attend with an adult, with sessions available to start from 5th June 2023.

Adult Learning are offering the supported use of brand new cooking facilities at New Hutte, Neighbourhood Centre in Halewood. One to one and group session can be arranged as a one off or ongoing...and all free of charge with ingredients provided! The 1.5 hour sessions will include:

- Basic cooking
- Recipe ideas
- Healthy and balanced diets
- Practical skills

Your Personal Advisor will be able to refer you of to the cooking sessions via a referral to FACE.

Knowsley Citizen's Advice Bureau

[Knowsley's Citizens Advice Bureau offer all Knowsley residents free, impartial, independent and confidential advice including benefits advice, debt advice and general advice.](#)

With further information on their Energy Advice Project including energy efficiency, energy usage and cost savings available here:

[Energy Advice Information](#)

Centre 63

Centre 63 support young people from across Kirkby with a safe place to go, to build friendships, and to develop new skills.

Centre 63 offer services such as housing/debt advice and advocacy, access to benefits, employability support, practical help with food poverty, up-cycling skills programme, access grants for furniture and household goods, provide targeted youth activities, mentoring and volunteering.

[Further information on the Centre 63 support offer can be found on their webpage.](#)

Accommodation

Ensuring suitable accommodation

As a Knowsley Care Experienced Person you will be provided information on all the various accommodation pathways available to you by your Social Worker and Personal Advisor. Your accommodation needs will be reviewed within your Pathway Plan and will likely change over time as you continue towards adulthood. The ultimate aim is for you to be confident to manage your accommodation and to live as independently as possible.

Your Pathway Plan will detail your accommodation arrangements and the support that you can expect from the Local Authority, alongside information on organisations that provide support services that could help meet your accommodation needs.

Staying Put

Knowsley Children's Services are firmly committed to supporting young people to remain in their foster care placements beyond the age of 18 and up to the age of 21. This is irrespective of whether the foster carer is a Knowsley Foster Carer, Family and Friends foster carer or a Foster Carer from an Independent Fostering Agency.

Plans for Staying Put need to be discussed with all involved and agreed within your Pathway Plan review at the earliest opportunity. For more information on Staying Put arrangements and finances then please request information from your Social Worker or Personal Advisor.

Knowsley's Supported Lodgings (KSL)

KSL provide support for young people age 16-19 who are either care experienced or potentially at risk of becoming homeless. The service offers family-style placements for up to 2 years. KSL also operate the Knowsley Crash Bed – emergency accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year olds. Access to KSL's Crash Bed can be arranged via Housing Solutions or Childrens Social Care.

Semi-Independent supported tenancy and multi-occupancy providers

Semi-independent accommodation options are available to Eligible or Relevant care experienced people. The focus of semi-independent provision is to develop your independence skills and bridge the gap between foster placement or Residential Children's homes towards achieving full independence on reaching adulthood. This type of provision is accessible from 16 years of age and following completion of year 11 academic year.

Semi-independent accommodation includes supported tenancies with varying amounts of floating support made available in line with your assessed needs or multi occupancy accommodation, these properties usually accommodate between two and four care leavers and have support staff on site around the clock. The higher staffing in multi-occupancy provision can provide for more intense support to enable care leavers to engage with services and appointments as well as supporting the ongoing development of independence skills and occasional assistance with transport to maintain key appointments.

High Priority Resettlement Panel (HPRP)

The HPRP meets monthly and is led by Housing, in collaboration with multi-agency partners. The panel consists of members from various agencies, including Children's Social Care, Commissioning Services, Social Housing Providers, Adult Mental Health Services, and Supported Housing Providers.

HPRP provides the opportunity for Care Experienced People to access housing options such as a solo tenancy or shared housing. Once you reach the age of 17, your Personal Advisor can refer you to the panel to confirm your readiness for a tenancy.

Your Personal Advisor will complete the referral process, including a risk assessment. In cases where complex and additional needs are identified, Adult Social Care or Adult Mental Health Services may be recommended as a more suitable pathway instead of Property Pool Plus. Exemptions from Property Pool Plus may also include any previous criminal convictions.

Property Pool Plus

From age of 17 your Personal Advisor can support you to apply to Property Pool Plus, which is a bidding system for housing. The banding system determines priority for housing allocation. Initial Banding would be Band E, however, following successful referral to HPRP as a Care Experienced Person you will be awarded Band B with your banding back dated to your 16th Birthday to further increase your priority status. Once 18 your case will not need to be presented to panel, confirmation of your Care Experienced status is sufficient to secure the higher B banding.

From 6th November 2023 care experienced people aged 18 to 25 will be able to achieve Band A status with Personal Advisors supporting presentation to High Priority Resettlement Panel.

Your Personal Advisor will be able to support you to complete the referral to Property Pool Plus and throughout the bidding process.

Direct Matches

A Direct Match can be requested at presentation to High Priority Resettlement panel. Social Landlords receive a list of the direct match request which they are able to consider against local housing stock.

To enable greater choice, it is strongly recommended for Care Experienced People to continue bidding on Property Pool Plus alongside any direct match application as there is no guarantee a direct match will be available and to prevent possible delay in accessing suitable move on accommodation.

SHAP – Knowsley's Temporary Accommodation

SHAP are commissioned to provide the housing management to the council's temporary accommodation. They help persons placed in temporary accommodation to set themselves up such as completing Housing Benefit claims. SHAP will undertake regular housing management functions including property checks to ensure occupants comply with their obligations and to also collect service charge.

SHAP is managed by the Scheme Manager, two Project Worker and a Housing Management Administrator.

It is not possible to apply directly to SHAP for accommodation, instead anyone living in Knowsley who is experiencing difficulties with their accommodation – being unable to live safely at their home; losing their home or being threatened with homelessness, should contact the local authority Housing Solutions Service **as soon as possible**.

Don't wait until you have left your home or have to leave home very soon before you contact them – the sooner you contact them, the more they can do to help you.

If Housing Solutions offer you accommodation within the Temporary Accommodation Scheme, you will be offered:

- a fully furnished property
- a 'starter pack'
- new bedding (which you will be allowed to take with when you leave)

The staff team will help you to complete all the paperwork needed for you to live in the property; claim housing benefit, to pay council tax and to claim council tax relief, to claim any other welfare benefits you may be entitled to and to access Property Pool Plus (PPP).

They will also carry out house safety checks and visit you regularly and support you while you wait for a move to more permanent accommodation. Besides Knowsley Housing Solutions, they also work closely with Knowsley Strategic Housing, Adult and Children's Social Care Services, LIVV

Housing Group, Knowsley Furnished Tenancies, The Emergency Support team, Knowsley Social Care, [the Tenants Extra Support Scheme \(TESS\)](#), Knowsley Housing Benefits Department and help service users and clients access support from [Knowsley's Emergency Support Scheme](#).

[Further information on SHAP can be found on the council website.](#)

Social Housing outside of Knowsley – Local Connections

You may need to provide evidence of a local connection if you wish to apply for Social Housing in another Local Authority. Housing legislation provides that a person has a local connection with the district of a housing authority if they have a connection with it because:

- (a) they are, or were in the past, normally resident there, and that residence was of their own choice, or
- (b) they are employed there, or
- (c) they have family associations living there, or
- (d) of any special circumstances
- (e) Care Experienced People will have a local connection to an area where they normally live and have lived for at least 2 years including some time before they reached 16

Your Personal Advisor will be able to provide you with advice, guidance and support to engage with the relevant local authority Housing services.

Risk of Homelessness and the Duty to Refer

If as a Care Experienced Person you are at risk of losing your housing, your Personal Advisor should complete the Duty to Refer as soon as possible. Your consent will be sought to share your Pathway Plan with Knowsley Housing Solutions Team.

If needing to present as homeless, someone aged 18, 19 or 20 automatically has a priority need if they were in care when they were 16 or 17 years old. A person over 21 has a priority need if they are vulnerable as a result of having been in care. Provision of Temporary Accommodation is subject to the Housing Solutions service being satisfied that the person is homeless. Knowsley Housing has a duty to provide temporary accommodation under the relief duty for up to 56 days. The aim is to find suitable accommodation and discharge the duty. Every effort is made to avoid use of Bed and Breakfast for Care Experienced People. Temporary accommodation in Knowsley consists of dispersed flats and housing. For 18+ year olds, referrals can also be made to SHAP, Knowsley's Temporary Accommodation Scheme.

To access homeless services, you need to [complete an online homeless presentation](#) with the assistance of an HSO or your Personal Advisor.

Private Rented Sector Guarantee Scheme

The Private Rented Guarantee Scheme offers help to homeless people living in Knowsley to access private rented accommodation. This offer includes 1 months Rent in Advance, Deposit (1 month rent equivalent) and Guarantee up to £2500 (Total package maximum £3500).

LIVV Housing Support Offer to Care Experienced People

Our partners at Livv Housing are passionate in their support of our cared for children, care experienced people and those who support them, with a clear ambition to help our care experienced people to believe in themselves and to grow and unleash their potential. As such, Livv Housing are developing an offer that provides care-experienced people with the same chances as everyone else to live happy, healthy, and fulfilled lives. Livv housing want to make more things possible for our young people and believe that care experienced people should have the same opportunities and access to support as any other young person. Livv Housings developing proposals to our Care Experienced People can be found here:

[LIVV Care Leavers Offer Initial Updated](#)

For Housing Tenants Extra Support Service (TESS)

TESS is a free service funded by Knowsley Council. If you are a Knowsley resident and are struggling with rent arrears, debt or any other circumstances which may lead to eviction the TESS team may be able to support you. Full information on the wide range of TESS support services can be found here:

[TESS Leaflet](#)

Staying Close... New for 2023/2024

Great news! We are currently developing Knowsley's Staying Close model, this will be a pilot scheme that will work with care experienced people who have recently left or are preparing to leave residential care from both council and privately run children's homes, private semi-independent provision or supported lodgings. This can include single young people, those with children and young people who wish to share with others.

Good quality accommodation will be sourced with the support of housing colleagues. Working with local housing associations and private landlords we will be providing 5 affordable tenancies in Knowsley in the first year, expanding to a further 2 tenancies in year two.

To achieve our aims of timely access to suitable Staying Close accommodation, Children's Services will seek to secure suitable tenancies as part of a new pilot scheme to fund initial rent and deposits for independent private lets.

Under the staying close model we will be providing bespoke support plans detailed within the young person Pathway Plan, linking in with a range of multi-agency partners including Health, Education, Training and Employment. We will be supporting tenancy bonds and will pilot tenancy guarantor arrangements. Our staying close model will offer each young person a mentor and we envisage that our young people will be able to achieve permanence by remaining in their properties as they transition to adulthood. The Staying Close scheme will be overseen by a Senior Personal Advisor, a new role within the Care Experienced People team.

Employment, Education and Training

As corporate parents we aim to provide a bespoke offer to all of our care experienced people. We seek to ensure all those who are struggling to access education and training are provided with the advice, support and guidance they need to be able to access and maintain a full range of education, training and employment (EET) opportunities. Our bespoke offer included opportunities within Council Services and through developing links with partners such as Health services as across private industry and charities. This is achieved through our commitment to work in partnership with partners such as the Virtual School Team, Chamber of Commerce, Knowsley Works, Job Centre Plus and many more education and training provider.

We aim to ensure everyone of Knowsley's Care Experienced people has a bespoke EET arrangement in line with their ability and aspirations whether it be in full or part time employment, training provision, further or Higher Education, an apprenticeship, work experience, study programme, supported internships, or traineeships.

We will ensure that all of our care leavers can access a readily available pathway in line with their ability and aspirations. In Knowsley we have very high aspirations for our care experienced people, we aim to support you to achieve all of your goals and aspirations.

Personal Education Plans (PEP's)

All Eligible Care Experienced People will be supported with regular Personal Education Plan's (PEPs). PEP's are an integral part of the Pathway Plan and remain a statutory document to be updated termly. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which secures good basic skills, stretches aspiration and builds life chances.

The PEP must record SMART targets, which are key to releasing Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) funding. The targets need to be agreed with the child/young person; PEPs will detail achievement and attendance, identify Special Educational Needs or Disability. The PEP will also identify any behavioural issues and any extra-curricular activities.

The PEP must give details of who will take the plan forward, specify timescales for action and review and identify funding sources for implementing the plan e.g. Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) or 16-19 Bursary that all Care Experienced People are entitled to.

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

An EHC plan identifies a child's special educational needs, and where relevant, brings together education, health and care services to achieve agreed outcomes.

An EHC plan will only be written for an Eligible child on the completion of a SEND needs assessment. Children, young people and families are at the centre of the assessment and planning process and this should be reflected in the EHC plan.

The focus is very much on what is important for the child or young person – what they want to achieve now and in the future. Your EHC plan will be reviewed by the local authority a minimum of every twelve months. These reviews will focus on your progression towards achieving the outcomes specified in your plan. The review will also consider whether the outcomes and supporting targets remain appropriate.

The Virtual School Team

Knowsley's Virtual School works to ensure that the education of our Cared For Children and Care Experienced Young People is of an exceptional standard. We aim for learners to have access to high quality, personalised and aspirational learning opportunities and strive to ensure they receive this.

The Virtual School is not, as the name suggests, a physical school. It is a team of teachers and professionals working alongside nurseries, schools and colleges to ensure that our children and young people receive a quality provision via all partnerships. We aim to close the educational gap between children who are cared for by the Local Authority and their peers who are not, alongside reducing rates of exclusions and persistent absence.

We work directly with children and young people in their placements. We support schools and training providers directly and indirectly in collaboration with Social Worker and Personal Advisors to provide a team of professionals putting the child or young person and their needs at the centre of decision making and planning.

Our Key Stage 4 and Post 16: Education and Employability Officer offers focused support to our Care Experienced People in seeking to secure them aspirational routes into further education, University or quality training and pathways into employment.

Multi-Agency Panel for Care Experienced People Not in Education, Training and Employment (NEET)

Each month the Virtual School Team leads the NEET panel for our care experienced people. Personal Advisors are invited to discuss the aspirations of their Care Experienced People who are NEET. The multi-agency panel includes a range of Education, Training and Employment (EET) partners, Job Centre Plus and Knowsley Works. Individual EET engagement plans are discussed, with Information, advice and guidance offered alongside targeted support to access opportunities in line with the young person's aspiration.

Personal Advisor supported AQA Accredited Courses

From April 2023 we are excited to announce Knowsley Local Authority has registered to provide AQA qualifications to small groups of Care Experienced People. These qualifications will be delivered by Personal Advisors in the Care Experienced Team with backgrounds in Education. Our AQA qualifications will offer a range of units that are tailored to meet your individual needs and interests. By completing these units you will receive certificates that will enhance your CV, but also build your confidence, employability and independence skills.

We believe that every Care Experienced Person deserves the change to reach their full potential, and our AQA qualifications provide an excellent opportunity for you to do just that. Whether you are looking to further your education or improve your job prospects, our Personal Advisors will work with you to identify the right units and qualifications for you.

If you are interested in taking part in this programme or would like more information please contact your Personal Advisor who will be able to advise you.

[UAS Leaflet](#)

Knowsley Works

Are you looking for work? Job opportunities for unemployed people aged 16 and over.

Knowsley Works is a free service supporting local residents into work through:

- Paid employment
- Training
- Information and advice
- Coaching and mentoring
- Skills development
- 1 to 1 support
- Job search
- CV and application support
- Interview preparation and techniques

Extra support

If you need more specialist support, we can refer you to organisations that provide advice on topics such as:

- Debt and finance advice
- Health and lifestyle
- Counselling services
- Women's groups
- Family support groups

Positive Inclusion Programme

The Positive Inclusion Programme is a personal development and employability programme which aims to support local people of all ages from 16 years onwards, who require intensive specialist support to progress into education, training, or employment.

We can offer support with:

- Career, life goals and action planning
- Training, short courses and Further Education
- Numeracy, literacy and I.T. skills
- Job searching and application forms
- CV Support
- Confidence and motivational coaching
- Interview skills and techniques
- Work placements

The programme is delivered on a one-to-one basis with your own personal mentor.

Are you eligible?

- Inactive or unemployed?
- Keen to develop new skills?

To register with us please call **0151 443 5010** or **5015** and ask for the Positive Inclusion Team.

The Ways to Work programme

Work with people to help them into work through providing information, advice and guidance, work placements and targeted training. There will also be initiatives to specifically support vulnerable young people, and other vulnerable groups and people who are out of work. This provides a positive impact on our local communities, and the opportunity to gain employment, skills and training for participants.

You can phone or call into the Knowsley Works offices at:

Huyton **Knowsley Works**
43 Derby Road
Huyton
L36 9UQ
Telephone: **0151 443 5010**

Kirkby **Knowsley Works**
The Kirkby Centre
Norwich way
Kirkby
L32 8XY
Telephone: **0151 443 4780**

Halewood **Knowsley Works**
The Halewood Centre
Roseheath Drive
Halewood
L26 9UH
Telephone: **0151 443 2040**

Knowsley Family and Community Education (FACE)

FACE is Knowsley Council's Adult and Community Education Service, and we provide a friendly service where adults can learn in supportive environments.

We offer affordable and accessible adult education courses throughout the Borough and want all learners to fulfil their learning potential.

We deliver a mix of remote learning classes and some classroom-based classes in a range of venues across Knowsley when possible.

Digital Drop In Sessions

Digital Drop-In Sessions are **FREE** to access and open to everyone. The aim of the sessions is to provide help and support to the community with basic, every day digital skills, e.g. social media, emails, using the internet safely and securely, managing a Universal Credit account, accessing the Property Pool, Zoom etc.

You will receive help with:

- Being able to use digital technologies, such as using a browser, connecting to the internet, and keeping passwords secure
- Sending emails securely, using attachments, and participating on social media
- Using search engines, being aware that not all online content is reliable, accessing content across devices

- Setting up accounts, e.g. Universal Credit, Property Pool, e-consult, online shopping etc

Further information for FACE can be found on their website; [Knowsley FACE – Family & Community Education](#).

Protocol between DWP offices in Knowsley & Knowsley Local Authority

Financial responsibility for care leavers not in employment at age 18 rests with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Knowsley DWP Offices (KDWP) and Knowsley Local Authorities (KLA) will work together to provide an enhanced service to support young people leaving care. This will assist a smooth transition for those claiming benefits and support care experienced people into education employment and training. Each organisation will be responsible for ensuring that the contact details held in relation to their single points of contact (SPOC) is up to date and that named staff are fully aware of its content.

KDWP and KLA will aim to undertake a 'warm handover' in advance of any claim being made. They will ensure that care experienced people are aware both of the support available to them and the actions they need to take, to satisfy conditionality.

[Knowsley Care Experienced People Protocol](#)

Financial Entitlements

The Pathway assessment will determine the young person's financial needs; the Pathway Plan will outline the amount, timing and payment method that has been agreed. The Pathway Plan will be reviewed on a six monthly basis, the young person's financial position will be considered during the Pathway Plan review.

Personal Allowance

A weekly personal allowance will be paid to Eligible and Relevant care experienced people living in semi-independent accommodation including Supported Lodgings. The weekly payment tracks the equivalent Universal Credit rate for young people, currently set at £67.20 as of April 2023.

Where possible, allowances will be paid into the young person's bank account. In some circumstances, particularly for those not in education, training or employment, an arrangement may be made for the young person to collect their allowances at the same time as attending for a meeting with a Social Worker or Personal Adviser. In some circumstances young people may require assistance with managing their money; allowances may be split to require more frequent collection. In extreme circumstances a support worker, Social Worker or Personal Adviser may need to shop for provisions with the young person or provide allowances 'in kind' instead of providing cash.

For Care Experienced People living in Knowsley your Personal Advisor will be able to support you with making an early application for benefits in line with Knowsley's Joint Protocol between the Department for Work and Pension and Knowsley Children's Services.

Setting up Home

All Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant care experienced people are entitled to up to £2000 towards the cost of setting up home.

It may be spent in stages and ideally the bulk of it will be spent for setting up in the young person's own independent accommodation. When the accommodation is being set up, consideration should be made in respect of the longevity of the stay to ensure the young person maximises on the items purchased. The Social Worker or Personal Advisor will discuss with the young person the sort of things they can spend the money on, e.g. furniture and household items, assist the young person in balancing cost, value for money and choice, and will make these purchases with the young person.

If this allowance has not been accessed by the time the young person's case is closed, a note will be made in the last Pathway Plan of the amount remaining. The allowance may be accessed at any time up to the young person's 25th birthday.

The Government has announced an increase to the Setting Up Home entitlement up to £3000, therefore all Former Relevant Care Experienced People with a birthday on or after 1st April 2023 will be entitled to this higher rate.

All Care Experienced People accessing their setting up home entitlement will be encouraged to purchase contents insurance and a TV licence.

Clothing Allowance

All Eligible and Relevant care experienced people living in semi-independent, supported accommodation and all Former Relevant care experienced people up to age 21 including those in custody are entitled to £150 annually towards shoes and clothing.

Birthday Allowance

Eligible and Relevant care experienced people living in semi-independent, supported accommodation and all Former Relevant care experienced people up to age 21 including those in custody but excluding those in Staying Put are entitled to a birthday allowance:

- 16th Birthday £50
- 17th Birthday £50
- 18th Birthday £100
- 19th Birthday £50
- 20th Birthday £50
- 21st Birthday £233

Care Experienced People remaining with Staying Put hosts can expect to receive Birthday entitlement as funded by Fostering Allowances.

Birthday Allowance for Care Experienced People in Custody may be paid in instalments or saved to support at point of release. To be agreed with the Personal Advisor and detailed in the Pathway Plan.

Festival Allowance (Christmas/Eid/Hanukkah)

Eligible and Relevant care experienced people living in semi-independent, supported accommodation and all Former Relevant care experienced people up to age 21 including those in custody but excluding those in Staying Put are entitled to £100 Festival Allowance.

Care Experienced People remaining with Staying Put hosts can expect to receive Festival Allowance as funded by Fostering Allowances.

Festival Allowance for Care Experienced People in Custody may be paid in instalments or saved to support a point of release. To be agreed with the Personal Advisor and detailed in the Pathway Plan.

Council Tax Discount

All Former Relevant care experienced people will receive 100% Council Tax discount up to the age of 25. If in a shared tenancy this will cover your relative share of the tenancy agreement. Payments will be made direct to the Local Authority Council Tax Department.

Identification documents

All Eligible and Relevant care experienced people living in semi-independent, supported accommodation and all Former Relevant care experienced people up to age 21 will be supported with the purchase of a Passport and Provisional driving licence, from 17 years of age.

Higher Education £2000 Bursary

As a Former Relevant Care Experienced Young Person in Higher Education the Local Authority will provide you with a £2,000 Higher Education Bursary. Your Personal advisor will arrange for this to be paid in instalments over the length of the course, with the first instalment should be paid within six weeks at the start of the course.

Improved 52 week Higher Education Accommodation Offer

To ensure our care experienced people in Higher Education do not experience hardship from the increase cost of living, from the September term 2023 all Former Relevant care experienced people will be provided with support to identify a 52 week accommodation plan, this may include you remaining with or returning to your Staying Put hosts during non-term time. Your 52 week higher education accommodation plan will be established within your Pathway Plan.

All Former Relevant care experienced people will be supported to identify suitable accommodation in line with average rental rates in the area of their university. Financial support will be provided at a minimum of £100 per week towards accommodation and living costs.

Young people will be supported to apply for Student Finance loans to cover course fees and additional living allowance costs by their Personal Advisor.

For young people who get or qualify for Income Support or Housing Benefit they may get the Special Support Grant instead of the Maintenance Grant. The amount is the same as that available through the Maintenance Grant. People are likely to qualify for the Special Support Grant if:

- They are a single parent
- Their partner is also a student
- They have certain disabilities

Eligibility for the Special Support Grant does not affect how much can be accessed through the Maintenance Loan. It will also not be counted as income when working out entitlement to income-related benefits or tax credits.

This grant is non-repayable.

Repayable Student Loans for fees and living costs are also available. Both may be applied for at the same time through the Student Loans Company.

Some Universities and Colleges also pay Institutional Bursaries and extra bursaries for students who have been in care. Your Social Worker and Personal Advisor will be able to assist in applying for all these and also to charitable organisations for any additional funding.

16-19 Further Education Bursary

As a Care Experienced Person you are eligible to receive a £1,200 16-19 Further Education Bursary. Details about the bursary can be seen at the Department for Education website. Bursary awards are managed by the colleges and are targeted towards the costs of transport, meals, books and equipment. The colleges may use their discretion to make awards to young people in the way that they feel best fits the needs and circumstances of their students. Therefore arrangements vary

from college to college and the Young Person's Team can provide further information about a specific college. Receipt of a bursary is conditional on the student meeting agreed standards set by the college for example, relating to attendance and/or standards of behaviour. Awards to students undertaking courses lasting less than 30 weeks are made on a pro-rata basis.

Your Social Worker and Personal Advisor will be able to assist you to apply for college support funds to help with costs associated with courses.

Further Education Books & Equipment Allowance

All Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant care experienced people engaged in Further Education will be provided with up to £200 towards books and equipment as required to support completion of their course.

Driving Lessons

All Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Care Experienced People aged 17 to 21 will be offered up to 10 Driving lessons. To qualify for the driving lessons you must be engaged in education, training or employment and be able to evidence financial savings or sufficient income to match fund further lessons.

Digital Inclusion (Laptops, smart mobiles and free Wi-Fi)

All Eligible and Relevant care experienced people living in semi-independent, supported accommodation and all Former Relevant care experienced people up to age 21 will be provided with a repurposed council laptop and a smart mobile phone. The mobile phone will be provided with unlimited voice calls and texts and 12GB data plan.

Distribution of all devices will be subject to risk assessment and the agreement of a manager. Where risk factors are identified that prohibit the distribution of a laptop and smart mobile phone a basic model phone will be offered as a means to maintain regular communication.

Care Experienced Forum participation incentive

To encourage active participation with our monthly Care Experienced Forum all Care Experienced People attending planned sessions will be provided with a £20 voucher or equivalent to thank them for their engagement.

Free Gym Passes

Children who are cared for by Knowsley council and all Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant care experienced people up to the age of 21 will receive a free leisure pass to access many of the services provided in our Leisure Centres including swimming pool and gyms.

For children aged 13 years and under, the child and 1 carer will be allocated a leisure pass. This will enable the carer to accompany the child in their chosen activity. For those aged 14 to 21 years, only the young person will be allocated a leisure pass.

Additional carers/supporting adults are also encouraged to see if they are eligible to access Passport to Leisure, which is discounted off peak leisure access for themselves

Please follow guidance attached below to access free leisure

[Accessing Free Leisure Card](#)

Health and Wellbeing

As a Knowsley Care Experienced person we will ensure you have an identified lead health professional within your Pathway Plan. This may be your GP or Knowsley's Children Looked After Nurses in light of their extended offer of support to all Care Experienced People.

We understand that health and Well-being are essential for individuals to lead fulfilling lives, which is why we offer a range of services to help you maintain good health with access to the support services you may need.

Health Support

Our team of Health Professionals can provide you with support, advice and guidance on a range of health-related issues. This includes mental health, sexual health, healthy eating, physical fitness, oral hygiene and more.

Your Personal Advisor will be able to support you to register and access support via your GP, Dentist or Optician. The Children Looked After Nurse will be able to advocate for your health needs and support signposting you to the appropriate health services.

Extended Support from the Cared For Nurse

We recognise that the transition out of care can be a difficult time, and that is why we offer extended support from the Children Looked After Nurse. This service is available to all Care Experienced People up to the age of 25, and includes access to a nurse, who can provide a range of health related support and advice. This could include advice on managing existing conditions, support with accessing specialist services, or general guidance on staying healthy.

You can contact the Children Looked After Nurses at:
mcn-tr.KnowsleyLACHealthTeam@nhs.net
Telephone: **0151 351 8825**

Health Passport

We understand that transitioning out of care can be a confusing time, particularly when it comes to managing your Health, that's why we offer a Health Passport to all care leavers prior to their 18th Birthday. This document is a comprehensive guide to your health needs and is designed to help you manage your health effectively, the Health Passport includes information on any medical conditions, allergies, or medication you may be taking, as well as details of any ongoing treatment or support you may

require. This document is yours to keep, and you can take it with you wherever you go to ensure that healthcare professionals have all the information they need to provide you with the best possible care.

A copy of your Health Passport will be shared with your Personal Advisor to retain a copy on the Local Authority system should you ever require it. Likewise, a copy will also be sent to your GP and to remain available to you on request.

Free Prescriptions to 25

Are available for all Care Experienced Young People up to age 25 when registered to a Knowsley GP.

We are seeking to ensure that as care experienced young people you have access to essential medications without financial burden. Therefore, we are pleased to inform you that if you are a Former Relevant Care Experienced Person in Knowsley up to the age of 25 and where other exemptions do not already apply you are entitled to free prescriptions. This means you that you will not need to pay for prescribed medication at the point of access. This exemption applies for all prescription charges, including those for long-term conditions, and is available to you regardless of your income.

To sign up for free prescriptions please contact your Personal Advisor who will be able to support you through the process.

Polaris Therapeutic Mental Health Services

We understand that Mental Health is a crucial aspect of overall wellbeing and that as Care Experienced young people you may require additional support to maintain good mental health.

That is why we offer access to Polaris, a specialist mental health service, for all care leavers up to the age of 25. The Polaris Service provides a range of mental health support, Polaris will meet with you in a place you feel most comfortable and work with you to address your emotional health and wellbeing needs.

Polaris will cover topics such as mental health awareness and promoting emotional health and wellbeing to help you build your resilience, as well as any other concerns you may have about your emotional health and wellbeing. Your mental health plan will be developed by you and Polaris will work towards the goals that you want to achieve.

We encourage all Care Experienced People to take advantage of this service if they feel that could benefit from additional support. The Polaris team is here to provide a safe and confidential space for you to explore your mental health needs and to ensure you receive the appropriate care and support.

Your Personal Advisor will be able to discuss a potential referral with you, with further information on the services available from Polaris, Knowsley Elev8 available here:

[EHWB Young Persons Guide Elev8](#)

[Knowsley Elev8 Service for Professionals](#)

[PCS Elev8 Staff and Service Induction](#)

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Whilst a cared for child you may have received support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – also known as CAMHS – work with young people and their families. The service is for young people up to the age of 18 who have emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties which are causing difficulties in their school, family or social life.

Knowsley's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service can be found at:

Address: **Young People and Families' Wellbeing Hub
Knowsley Resource and Recovery Centre
Whiston Hospital
Prescot
L35 5DR**

Telephone: **0151 351 8610**

Further information on the range of support offered by CAMHS can be found on the [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service :: Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust website](#).

Adult Mental Health Social Work Team

Access to Knowsley's Adult Mental Health Social Work Team is via the single point of access to Adult Social Care. In Knowsley we aim to support smooth transition to adult services through early identification and referral. If you have been supported by CAMHS or have emerging mental health issues on reaching 18 you can be referred to the Mental Health Social Work Team for ongoing support.

[Further information on Adult Social Care referrals, policies, procedures and practices, safeguarding and care and support can be on the council website.](#)

You can also refer yourself to Knowsley's adult social services by emailing adultsocialcare@knowsley.gov.uk or by calling **0151 443 2600**.

For referral advice the Mental Health Social Work team can be contacted directly by email MentalHealthSocialWorker@knowsley.gov.uk

The Mental Health Social Work team will be able to support the development of your crisis care plan an example of which can be found here:

[Crisis Care Plan](#)

Enhancing Families Programme

Starting a family can be a significant change in your life, as a Care Experienced Person we want to ensure this is a positive transition. As such we offer access to the Enhancing Families Programme, which has replaced Family Nurse Partnership (FNP). This programme is available to all care experienced people who are up to 28 weeks pregnant and provides support through out pregnancy and the up to the child's second birthday. The Enhancing Families Programme is based on the Journey of Change model, which is designed to help individuals navigate changes in their lives and build positive relationships. This approach is build on building trust, empathy, and mutual respect between the Care Experienced Person and their assigned family nurse. Through this programme, you will receive one to one support, practical advice, and guidance to help you prepare for parenthood and build positive relationships with your child.

Pause

Halton & Knowsley – Pause – Creating Space for Change

practices work directly with women, so that no woman should ever to experience the removal of a child more than once. They offer an intensive, supportive 18-month programme that involves a trusting relationship between a woman and her Pause practitioner.

Pause are committed to prioritising Knowsley's Care Experienced People with referral criteria met with a first child's removal. To make the process easier, we do not need you to complete a referral form, just give our Practice Lead, Lindsey Clarke, or myself a call to complete a risk assessment there and then. You can contact us on:

- **Lindsey Clarke**
07554 836 437 or lindsey.clarke@pause.org.uk
- **Jessica Hill**
07554 919 691 or jessica.hill@pasue.org.uk

Change, Grow, Live (CGL) Integrated Recovery Service

If you want to change your direction, grow as a person and live like to it's full potential Knowsley, [Integrated Recovery Service](#) [Change, Grow, Live](#) are here to help you. We're here for you if you need help with challenges including drugs or alcohol, trouble with housing, domestic abuse, or your mental and physical wellbeing. Our services are free and confidential.

Axess Sexual Health Huyton (The Arch)

[Axess Sexual Health offer free sexual health advice.](#)

CMAGIC

Telephone: **0151 317 8581**

[CMAGIC is a gender dysphoria service provided by Mersey Care](#)

The Cheshire and Merseyside Adult Gender Identity Collaborative (CMAGIC) is a partnership of clinicians, commissioners, providers and service users involved in the support and care of transgender and non binary individuals within Cheshire and Merseyside. CMAGIC is supporting the delivery of a new specialist gender identity clinic available to individuals living in Liverpool, South Sefton, Halton, Knowsley, Southport and Formby, St Helens, Cheshire, Vale Royal and Warrington.

Mermaids

[Mermaids supports transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse children and young people until their 20th birthday](#), as well as their families and professionals involved in their care. Transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse children and teens need support and understanding, as well as the freedom to explore their gender identity. Whatever the outcome, Mermaids is committed to helping families navigate the challenges they may face.

Building an Attachment Bonding (BABS)

Mersey Care's [Building Attachment and Bonds Service \(BABS\)](#) is for parents and carers in Knowsley who are pregnant or have a new born baby aged 0-3 months, who are pregnant or have a new born baby aged 0-3 months, who are struggling with their emotional wellbeing. BABS offer a fast track service for Cared For Children and Care Experienced People.

By offering specialist, therapeutic parent-infant mental health support during pregnancy and in the postnatal period – we can help parents to 'separate out' their own past and present struggles and issues, which without this specialist support, can have a huge impact on the parent-infant bond, relationship and mental health of both.

Kooth.com

[Kooth.Com | Knowsley Family Information Service \(knowsleyinfo.co.uk\)](#)

Provide an online and face to face counselling and support service open to young people 11-25 living in or attending school in Knowsley. Young People in care living in Knowsley or young people who are from Knowsley but resident in care in another borough are welcome to use this service.

ChatHealth

Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust [ChatHealth](#) service is a new text messaging service for young people across Knowsley, Cheshire East, St Helens and Wirral. If you're aged 11-19 you can text a school nurse to get confidential health and well-being advice. It's up to you whether you provide a name, you can text a school nurse anonymously.

Whatever your question, send a text to our team, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

- **Knowsley**
07312 263 254
- **Cheshire East**
07507 329 908
- **Wirral**
07480 635 538
- **St Helens**
07312 263 250

Relationships and Participation in Society

In Knowsley we understand the significance of meaningful connections in enhancing personal well-being and the importance this has in supporting you to build resilience and in enabling your social inclusion.

Whether you're a care experienced person looking to expand your social circle, or an individual eager to contribute to your community we aim to offer you as much support as you require.

We offer a range of activities that we hope will engage you, we are always looking at new ways to build stronger working relationships that promote communication and your emotional well-being whilst reducing the risk of social isolation.

The Personal Advisor in the Care Experienced Team support a range of fun activities throughout the year, this has included attending organised events, picnics in the park, easter treats and much more. Your Personal Advisor will be able to notify you of upcoming events.

Making a Difference Everywhere (MADE)

MADE is Knowsley's Children in care council. There is a Junior and Senior group which support transitions through care experiences by providing a venue and safe space for children and young people to be themselves, have a say and help to shape the future of service development. MADE gather views

and recommendations from children across CSC and meet with relevant heads of service and leaders to ensure the planning, design and delivery of services are shaped by what children say.

Care Experienced Forum

The Care Experienced Forum is held monthly for young people who are over 16 years old. The views of young people help to shape the services we offer you and provides an opportunity for care leavers to come together, socialise and share their experiences.

The forum offers a space where you can talk about your experiences, develop future plans regarding, life, completing activities together, building relationships and creating opportunities as a group on behalf of all Knowsley Care Experienced People. As Corporate parents Knowsley invest in the forum and by inviting individuals to share their views and experiences the Forums views are shared at Knowsley's Corporate Parenting Board as well as directly to Local Cllrs and Senior Leaders.

If you would like to be part of the group please discuss this with your PA or social worker.

Care Experienced Parents and Tots group

The parents and tots group is held monthly. Our Personal Advisors support the group to meet monthly, either at Nutgrove Villa or at a Children's centre with the venue agreed in advance. The Parents and tots group provides opportunity for our Care Experienced Parents to meet on a regular basis, to form support networks and to offer peer advice. Professionals from a range of support services will also be invited to share information, advice and support.

National Care Leavers Week

Provides an annual opportunity to raise the profile of our wonderful care experienced people and to have a greater and more powerful impact on matters such as 'take over day' 'shadowing opportunities' launch projects and complete activities and host fundraising events. Care Leavers Week is a national celebration of Care Experienced People that takes place in October.

Celebrating Success

This is our annual celebration of the achievements of Knowsley's cared for children and care experienced people. It's a chance to meet up, say well done and celebrate the successes of all our children and young people. The event is a celebratory event with nominations made by your Social Worker or Personal Advisor.

Care Experienced Christmas Meal

Each year we invite all our Care Experienced People to join us for a celebratory Christmas meal, this is a fun event that brings us all together in celebration, a chance to make new friends, receive gifts and share in some fun, festive activities.

Vibe

Vibe

Is a unique organisation run for young people by young people. From mentoring, volunteering, support into training or employment, outdoor education skills, there's something for everyone – check out the website for the latest news. You can also take part in the Enterprise Programme – supporting you to develop your own community based initiatives and small businesses.

Knowsley Community Voluntary Service

Interested in volunteering? Then [Knowsley Community Voluntary Service](#) can help you get out and about and meet new people. You can learn about yourself along the way through work or volunteering. Contact Knowsley Community Voluntary Services (KCVS) on **0151 489 1222** or email **kcvs@kcvs.org**

Important Information

Access to Files

We understand that accessing your care files can be a significant step in your journey. Our dedicated team of Personal Advisors is here to offer you support as you prepare for and respond to the contents of your files. Your Personal Advisor will work closely with you providing guidance, understanding, and a safe space to discuss your thoughts and emotions as you read through your files.

You can request access to your files by phoning the Customer Liaison Team on **0151 443 5609/5624** or email Inforights@knowsley.gov.uk

Alternatively you can write to **Customer Liaison Team, Knowsley Council, Huyton Municipal Buildings, Archway Road, Huyton, L36 9YU**

Advocacy Services

NYAS stands for [National Youth Advocacy Service](#), but known simply as NYAS.

NYAS advocates can support and listen to you if you feel your wishes and feelings are not being heard by your Social Worker, Personal Advisor, carers, or anyone else involved in decisions about your care and welfare.

NYAs will support you to be involved in making decisions about your life, it's your right!

NYAS can help if you are:

- Not being listened to
- In need of some advice
- Being told you have to move
- Having difficulties in school
- Not having the contact with your family you want.
- Homeless
- Experiencing the separation or divorce of your parents
- Not feeling safe

If you are a child or young person, or you are acting on behalf of a child, young person or vulnerable adult and need help, information or advice please contact the NYAS helpline on **0808 808 1001** or send an email to help@nyas.net

Complaints and Compliments

You can make a complaint or compliment by completing the online form at: <https://secured.knowsley.gov.uk/haveyoursayform> or you can phone **0151 443 3231**

Email the details to HaveYourSay@knowsley.gov.uk

Alternatively you can write to **Customer Liaison Team, Knowsley Council, Huyton Municipal Buildings, Archway Road, Huyton, L36 9YU**

[Have Your Say leaflet](#)

