



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

**SKILLS SUPPORT FOR CARE
LEAVERS**

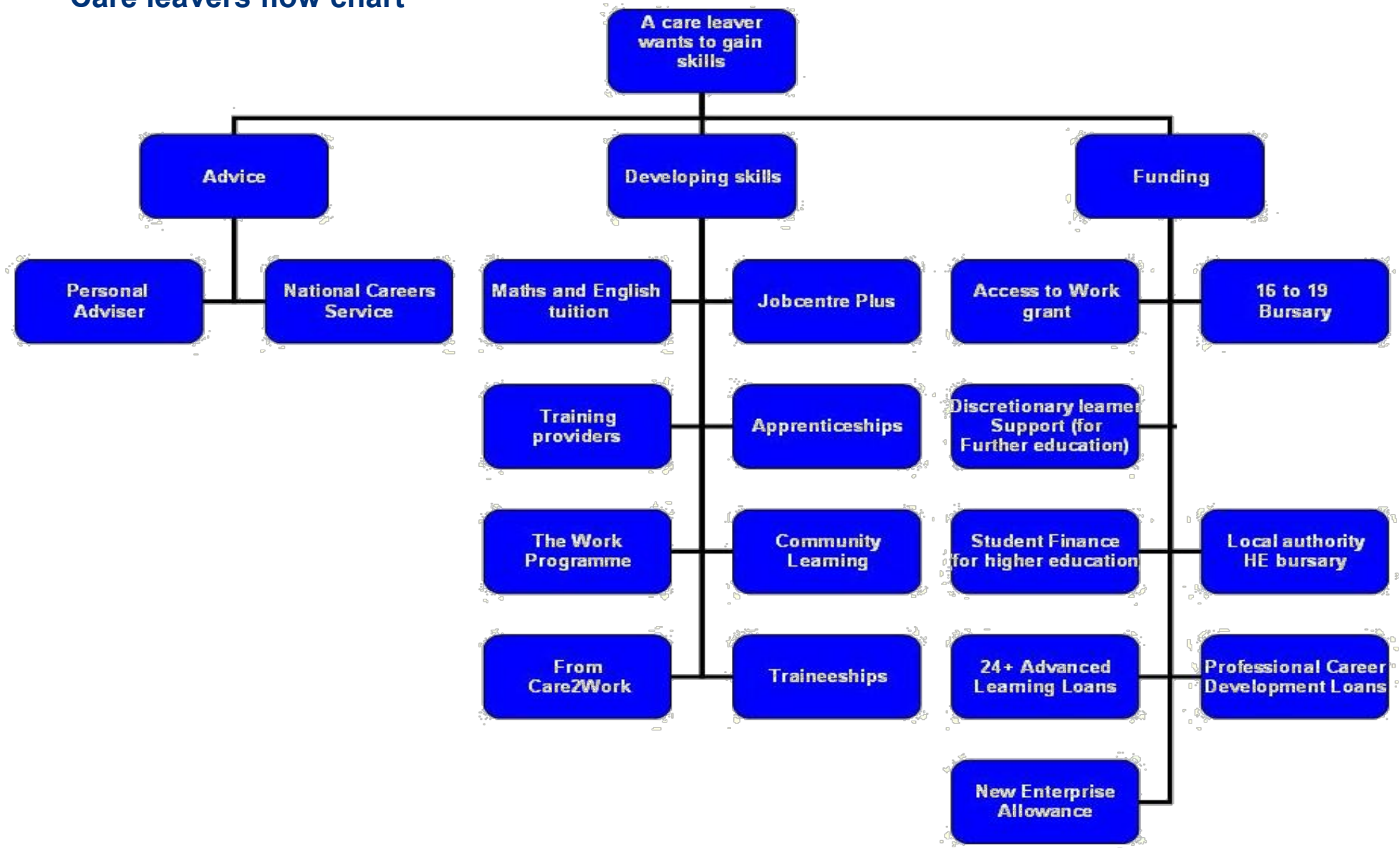
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Care leavers flow chart



About this guide

This booklet is a short guide to the many learning resources available to care leavers to gain new skills and open up new opportunities for work.

It is designed to be useful for anyone helping a care leaver think about their future. It includes initial information on the support available and useful links to further information.

The booklet includes information on opportunities to develop skills that will help those who are unemployed in to work. Opportunities include traineeships, apprenticeships, support from Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme. The booklet also provides advice on the National Careers Service.

This booklet also gives information on funding opportunities including Access to Work grants, Discretionary Learner Support, 24+ Advanced Learning Loans, Professional Career Development Loans, New Enterprise Allowance and Student Finance.

Finally the booklet gives information about Community Learning programmes and From Care2Work.

See which you think might be helpful to the care leavers you work with and investigate further. In many cases there will be more than one route or source of support which might fit the needs of the care leavers you are working with. We have included some links to further information in the booklet.

There is also an accompanying booklet for care leavers themselves.

If you are helping a care leaver, make sure you discuss the ideas in this guide with them and listen to their feedback on any skills training they undertake as a result.

The entries in this guide are correct at the time of going to print. However, changes can frequently occur in these areas, so we intend to produce updated versions when new information becomes available. Any comments, feedback or suggestions for improvement will be welcome. Please send them to: theresa.bailey@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

Care leavers' entitlements

When a young person leaves care their local authority has to continue to support them.

The level of support their leaving care service should give them depends on their status, i.e. are they 'eligible', 'relevant', 'former relevant' or 'qualifying'? Their status depends on their age, when they were in care and for how long.

Care leavers can also use Voice's online tool (<http://www.voiceyp.org/young-peoples-zone/are-you-care-leaver>), which asks some short questions about their situation and clarifies their entitlements. The different categories and what support each group should get are detailed on the next page.

The basic rules are that from 16 a care leaver should have a **Personal Adviser**, an **assessment** of the support they need and a **Pathway Plan** that sets out how the local authority will support them, including **financial support for education, employment and training**. They should also **keep in touch** with the care leaver until they are at least 21.

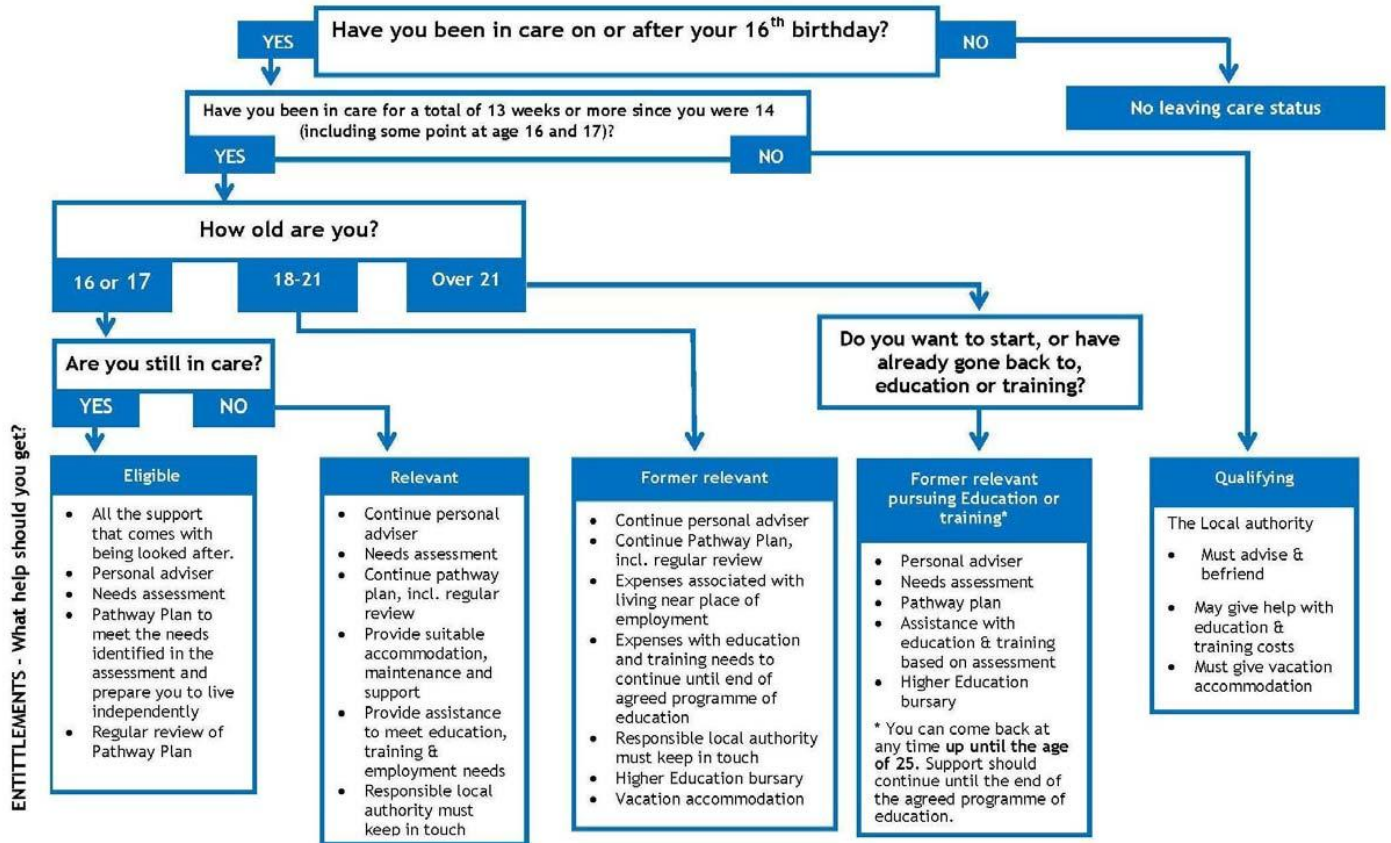
If at age 21 they are already in education or training then leaving care support continues until the programme of education or training, which has been agreed in their Pathway Plan, ends.

If at age 21 they are not in education or training then support from leaving care services will usually stop around their 21st birthday. They should have a final meeting with their Personal Adviser who will talk to them about other services they may be able to get help from.

However, if, up until their 25th birthday, they return, or want to return to, education or training, they can go back to their local authority and ask for support.

The local authority that took them into care remains responsible for them.

Are you a care leaver? Categories of care leavers and entitlements



Developing educational and employment skills

There are some learning entitlements whatever the care leaver's benefit status.

All adults in England aged 19 or over, regardless of benefit status, are eligible for fully funded English and maths tuition where needed.

Full fee remission is provided for first full Level 2 and 3 qualifications for 19-23 year olds and for Foundation Learning (pre-Level 2) and full level 2 for those who need a step up to progress to GCSE English and maths.

Although a list of qualifications eligible for full funding is available on the Skills Funding Agency website, the National Careers Service or a local Further Education (FE) College will often be a more straightforward source of advice.

Residency rules apply to much of this funding, although UK citizens and citizens of a country within the European Economic Area will generally be eligible. For further information in relation to refugee or migrant young people go to:

Skills Funding Agency: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk>.

National Careers Service: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>.

If the person is unemployed...

Colleges and providers provide free training designed to address the skills needs of people who are out of work and in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance in the Work Related Activity Group (ESA WRAG) or Universal Credit (UC) mandated to provision by Jobcentre Plus who have had a skills need identified and where training will help them get into work.

Colleges and providers also have the discretion to offer fully funded training to people who are out of work and on other benefits, provided that they have sufficient funds to do so and can demonstrate that the training is being provided to help those individuals enter or return to work.

Anyone looking for work can find a job through Universal Jobmatch, a web-based service that allows users to search and apply for full or part-time jobs in Great Britain and abroad. Jobseekers can access Universal Jobmatch by visiting: www.gov.uk/jobsearch.

By setting up a Universal Jobmatch account, jobseekers can make full use of the service, including creating, copying or uploading a public CV, receiving automated matches to jobs and email alerts when new jobs are posted.

Jobcentre Plus works with specialist providers from the voluntary and community sector, so have the scope to adopt approaches to improve employment outcomes for care leavers. Jobcentre Plus: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/working/finding-job>.

For Community Learning, Local Authority adult education services, FE colleges and other Community Learning providers set their own fees. In practice, courses are often free or nearly free for people on work-related benefits. However, fee concessions will vary from area to area and each learning provider will have information about which learners are entitled to a concession, and for which courses.

Care leavers, who, after their 18th birthday, remain estranged from their family can claim Income Support (or Universal Credit if applicable) if they are in relevant education (up to level 3) if the course is full time and below Higher Education (HE) level. Entitlement extends to the end of the academic year following their 21st birthday.

To download the regulations go to:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/757/part/3/made>.

To find out more, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office or visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus> or call 0345 6060 234.

Leaving care services, or organisations that run employability schemes for care leavers will want to discuss with the local Jobcentre Plus District Managers how this can fit in with Jobcentre Plus support allowing young people who need it to remain on benefits whilst on such schemes. For instance Barnardo's Lincolnshire negotiated an agreement with Jobcentre Plus so that those taking part in work experience can sign-on fortnightly by post, rather than have to take time off placements to attend the Jobcentre. To find out more: <http://bitly.com/TGbrN0>.

Traineeships

Traineeships are an education and training programme with work experience focused on helping young people prepare for an apprenticeship or other sustainable employment.

Traineeships have been available since August 2013 and are delivered by education and training providers for young people aged 16-24 (and for young people with a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) up to academic age 25).

At the core of traineeships are work preparation training, English and maths for those below GCSE A*-C standard, and a high quality work experience placement with an employer.

The core target group for traineeships are young people who:

- are not currently in a job and have little work experience, but who are focused on work or the prospect of it;
- are 16 to 24 and qualified below Level 3; and

- providers and employers believe have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or an apprenticeship within six months of engaging in a traineeship.

Traineeship participation must be within benefit rules to ensure continuing receipt of benefit. Providers will design their traineeships accordingly to ensure participants can continue claiming benefit.

More information can be found in the traineeships Framework for Delivery:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-young-people-to-develop-the-skills-for-apprenticeships-and-sustainable-employment-framework-for-delivery>.

Individuals can find out more about traineeship opportunities by visiting <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/traineeships.aspx>, by calling the National Careers Service on 0800 100 900 or by visiting their local Jobcentre.

National Apprenticeship Service

The National Apprenticeship Service allows young people to search for and apply to apprenticeships online.

Eligible learners, including care leavers, who have not been available to enter learning prior to their 19th birthday due to a reason beyond their control, will be funded at fully funded 19-23 rates as long as they start an Apprenticeship before their 24th birthday.

In order to benefit from this the training provider will need to be aware that a person is a care leaver so they can make the case for additional funding.

Local authorities can also use external providers to ensure access to opportunities for their young people, for example, **Catch22 offer** a package of on-the-job training and qualifications designed around the needs of the employer.

Supported internships

Supported internships are a study programme based primarily at an employer. They enable young people aged 16-24 with a statement of SEN, a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an Education, Health and Care plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace.

Supported internships are unpaid, and last for a minimum of six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Alongside their time at the employer, young people complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths.

Further information is available at: <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships> or individuals can contact their local authority, school or college.

Jobcentre Plus Support

Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches have the flexibility to judge which support will help claimants at the most appropriate point of their claim and tailor this to their individual needs.

Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches can offer a variety of support to individuals including help with: job search; careers advice; boosting literacy, numeracy and language skills; other skills training; work experience; and setting up a business. This support can be provided by a range of organisations.

Where individuals need to improve their skills to get a job they can be referred to provision mainly funded by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), or the Scottish and Welsh governments. Turning up to skills training and completing it can be made mandatory, as a condition of receiving benefit.

Where Jobcentre Plus District Managers identify gaps in skills or other provision they have discretion to purchase extra support to meet particular needs using their Flexible Support Fund.

Where Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches feel that a person would benefit from a short period of work-related activity, they may require them to attend a work placement focused on delivering benefit to the local community.

To find out more, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office or visit: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus> or call 0345 6060 234.

18-24 Jobcentre Plus Offer

Each young person aged 18-24 in receipt of benefit is eligible for additional help and receives support tailored to their needs that includes:

- extra advisor time to improve job search skills
- a referral to the careers service within three months
- DWP work experience placements, and
- referral to a sector based work academy place (pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed job interview)

More information can be found on the Department for Work and Pension's website: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/key-initiatives/>.

For further information contact Jobcentre Plus: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus> or call: 0345 6060 234 or by visiting the local Jobcentre Plus.

The Work Programme

The Work Programme provides individualised intensive support and advice for those who are looking for work. Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches have discretion to enable care leavers to opt for early access to the Work Programme from the start of their benefit claim.

Work Programme providers have the freedom to deliver personalised support for a broad range of participants and are paid by results only and paid more for supporting those who are harder to help.

For more information contact Jobcentre Plus: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus> or call: 0345 6060 234.

From Care2Work

A DfE funded national programme called From Care2Work managed by Catch22 NCAS helps care leavers gain work experience and skills which can help them enter the workforce. From Care2Work organises placements for care leavers and works with employers and local authorities to ensure they are supported e.g. in Marriott Hotels and at Premier League football clubs. To find out more about how From Care2Work can support your care leavers with employment go to: <http://www.catch-22.org.uk/expertise/care-leavers/>

Local provision

Individual councils also run programmes helping young people, including care leavers, into work. Young people or their advisers should enquire as to what is available from their council. This may be delivered in house by the leaving care service or other parts of the council, or other services such as local charities.

Helping people make career decisions

The National Careers Service in England provides professional, independent careers advice through an online and telephone helpline offer available to everyone aged 13 and over and a local face to face offer for adults over 19 (or 18+ if on out of work benefits) including adults in custody.

The website includes tools and a range of information including;

- A skills health check which tests a range of skills, aptitudes and preferences
- A course search
- A CV builder
- Job profiles and labour market information
- Links to Jobcentre and apprenticeship vacancies and job search advice

National Careers Service advisers are professionally qualified and can give personalised advice to help individuals make the right choices about learning and work.

They can help customers:

- find learning and training that is right for the individual, including courses that can help improve reading, writing and maths skills;
- understand the local job market;
- look at, and assess skills;
- find out about funding to support learning;
- develop CVs;
- improve interview and presentation skills;
- find out about the types of disability and childcare support available.

To contact the National Careers Service call: 0800 100 900, website <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk> or it can also be accessed via Facebook and twitter.

Care leavers still at school may be able to access school based career advice.

Care leavers have a named Local Authority personal adviser and pathway plan that is updated every six months. The agreed pathway plan should set out the support that will be provided to the young person with education, employment and training and how online and telephone support from the National Careers Service advisers can help with this.

Many colleges and universities will also offer support for care leavers in making decisions about further study. This may include the provision of impartial advice, taster days, open days and summer schools with priority places for care leavers.

For further information, contact the college or university. Many will often have a named contact for care leavers, whose details can usually be found on their website and publications. Those wishing to attend university can also look at the Who Cares? Trust HE website for care leavers: <http://www.propel.org.uk/>.

Funding learning for care leavers

The material above describes how much of the learning and skills activity available to care leavers will be fully-funded by the government. But other sources of funding support is available for those with particular circumstances:

Access to Work Grant

Those with a disability or health condition that affects their ability to do a job or that means they incur extra work-related costs (for example, special computer equipment or travel costs because they cannot use public transport) may be eligible for this grant.

They must be 16 or over and either:

unemployed and about to start a job or a work trial; or

in a paid job or self-employed.

An Access to Work grant may be available for some pre-employment activity such as traineeships, supported internships and some work experience but it is not available for voluntary work.

For more information on the Access to Work grant visit: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>.

16-19 Bursary

For 16 to 19 year olds in FE or training, the Bursary Fund can help pay for costs like equipment needed for the course, lunch, and transport to and from the school or college. Young people in care and care leavers are automatically entitled to at least £1,200 which is paid directly by the school, college or training provider.

For further information contact the Student Support Officer or Tutor at the school, college, or training provider that the care leaver you are working with attends/plans to attend.

An example of joint working is in East Sussex where young people in care and care leavers eligible for the bursary are identified via the virtual school, their Personal Education Plan at 16, through applications and regular monitoring.

For more information on the 16-19 bursary: <https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>.

Discretionary Learner Support

Discretionary Learner Support Funds can help students aged 19 and over with the costs associated with FE. Those may include accommodation, transport costs, childcare (20+), course materials, and exceptionally, fees support.

If learners are under 20 they can apply for Care to Learn which is government provision for childcare costs for those in education.

Care to Learn: <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>.

For further information contact the Student Support Officer at the college or training provider that the care leaver you are working with attends/plans to attend.

Higher Education

Local Authority funding

Local authorities have a duty to support care leavers in education or training, but financial support packages vary from local authority to local authority. All care leavers in HE are entitled to a £2,000 HE bursary, but most local authorities also have additional packages of support. Local authorities also have to provide vacation accommodation for all care leavers in residential FE or HE who need it.

A Q&A on the HE Bursary can be found at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130123124929/http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/families/childrenincare/education/a00208597/support-beyond-compulsory-education>

Student Finance for HE courses

There is a range of support available to care leavers for full-time and part-time undergraduate HE courses in the 2015/16 academic year. Eligible full-time students are able to take out an up-front loan to finance their tuition fees regardless of their household income. Full-time students can also apply for a maintenance loan to help with their living costs while studying at university. Eligible full-time students living away from home and studying outside London will be entitled to a maintenance loan of up to £5,740 in 2015/16 (up to £8,009 in London and up to £4,565 for students living in the parental home). 35% of the maintenance loan is based on a student's household income but all eligible full-time students qualify for a minimum maintenance loan regardless of household income.

Full-time students from lower income households can, in addition, apply for a means-tested maintenance grant of up to £3,387 in 2015/16 to help with living costs. Additional grants are available for full-time and part-time students who are disabled and full-time students with adult or child dependants. These grants do not have to be repaid.

New full-time students from low income households starting courses in the 2016/17 academic year, from August 2016 onwards, will not qualify for a maintenance grant. They will instead qualify for an increased maintenance loan, which will be 10.3% higher than the total maintenance grant and loan support in 2015/16 for students entitled to the full maintenance grant.

Further information on student support available for HE courses is available on the gov.uk website at: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>.

University Care Leaver Bursaries

Many universities now offer dedicated bursaries to care leavers with lots of other dedicated support. The bursaries can be applied for on top of all other finances.

For further information on what colleges and universities offer and key points of contacts for Care Leavers please see The Who Cares? Trust HE website for care leavers: <http://www.propel.org.uk/> or enquire at the chosen institution.

Some care leavers might already be in work or have skills, but be interested in developing their skills further...

24+ Advanced Learning Loans

Learners aged 24 and above studying at Level 3 and 4 have access to loans to help meet up front course fees, removing one of the main barriers to learning. All providers with a loans facility also have a Loans Bursary Fund to assist disadvantaged and vulnerable learners who are funded through a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan with the associated costs of learning such as travel and childcare.

Learners can apply directly to the Student Support office of their chosen provider.

24+ Advanced Learning Loans: <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans>.

Professional and Career Development Loans

A Professional and Career Development Loan is a bank loan set at a competitive interest rate that learners aged 18 years or over can use to help pay for learning that leads to work or that will improve their employability.

The loan can be used to support any full-time, part-time or distance learning courses for up to two years, as long as the course leads to a trade, occupation or profession. Like any loan, learners must repay the money they borrow, but the Skills Funding Agency will pay the interest on the loan while the learner is in learning and for up to one month afterwards. The learner then repays the loan to the bank over an agreed period at a fixed rate of interest. Professional and Career Development Loans: <https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans>.

Some care leavers might be interested in starting up in business

New Enterprise Allowance

The Jobcentre can tell care leavers about help and information in starting up a business. People claiming Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support (claiming as sick or a lone parent) and who can show that they have a business idea that could work, are eligible to apply for New Enterprise Allowance.

A business mentor will provide advice and support on becoming self-employed, setting up in business and starting to trade.

Once a business plan has been made and approved, financial support is available:

- a weekly allowance worth up to £1,274 over 26 weeks and
- if they need start-up capital from an unsecured loan through the BIS start-up loan scheme.

The Prince's Trust also provides start up loans and mentoring to disadvantaged young people who want to start up a business. For further information see: http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about_the_trust/what_we_do/programmes/enterprise_programme/start_up_loans.aspx.

Some care leavers may be a long way from being ready for formal learning

Help for those who are furthest from employment

BIS-funded Community Learning covers a broad range of courses, for example, basic skills, crafts, digital skills, health and wellbeing, which are usually unaccredited and bring together adults aged 19 and over from different backgrounds. Many courses focus on helping people who have not had the chance to learn in the past to build their confidence, learn new skills and progress to training or employment.

Community learning takes place in accessible, friendly community venues and caters for individual needs and learning styles. Most community learning courses are delivered or commissioned by Local Authority Adult Education Service providers, but provision is also commissioned and/or delivered by FE Colleges and voluntary sector organisations.

How to find a course

There are many ways of supporting learners to find the right community learning course, including:

- Looking at the website or published prospectus of the Local Authority Adult Education Service, FE College, voluntary sector organisation and/or Workers' Educational Association (WEA) branch.
- Using the National Careers Service website, which offers advice on choosing courses:
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/courses/typesoflearning/Pages/communitylearning.aspx>.
- Reading notices in local newspapers or on notice boards in schools, children's centres, doctors' surgeries, community centres, libraries, church halls or voluntary groups (this list is not exhaustive).
- Speaking to friends, neighbours and colleagues to find out what is happening locally and what courses they have found enjoyable.
- For people who are employed and whose workplace supports these schemes, speaking to the Unionlearn representative or Workplace Learning Advocate.

What if the care leaver has problems getting support?

If a care leaver is having trouble accessing skills support they should speak to their leaving care personal adviser. They should be able to help them. Other sources of help include the Virtual Head in their local authority or the designated person for care leavers at the place of education they want to attend. Their personal adviser can put them in touch. If they cannot help they can get independent advocacy from:

Coram Voice: <http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/>. Call: 0808 800 5792

National Youth Advocacy Service: <https://www.nyas.net/>. Call: 0808 808 1001

There will also be local providers of independent advocacy in different areas.

App to support care leavers into learning and work

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has launched an app to inspire and help young adult care leavers to find learning and work. The [Inspire Me!](#) app enables former care leavers who are now living independently and learning or working, to share their positive stories. The app is available for free download on all devices from the

app store and iTunes. It can also be accessed online at <http://inspire-me-live.herokuapp.com/>.

More information:

Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education>

Skills Funding Agency: <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>

Care to Learn: <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

Access to Work grant: <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Professional and Career Development Loans: www.gov.uk/career-development-loans.

24+ Advanced Learning Loans: <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans>.

National Careers Service: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>

Jobcentre Plus: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus>.

Skills support for care leavers (individual)

How can this guide help me?

This booklet is for you as a care leaver. It is a short guide to what support is available to get you the skills that will help you get and keep a job. In this guide you will find lots of ideas. Try and find out more about anything that interests you, for example by talking to your personal adviser, to help you decide which option would be best for you.

Your personal adviser may want to talk you through the booklet. There is another booklet for your personal adviser, which goes into more detail.

What leaving care support should I receive from the local authority?

Your local authority should make sure that you have a **personal adviser**, who should keep in touch with you and support you to achieve the things that are set out in your **pathway plan**. The **pathway plan** is a document which identifies your needs and how the local authority will help you meet these. This can include financial help with education, employment, and training.

If you have a personal adviser make sure you discuss your plans with them – their advice can be really helpful.

If you don't have a personal adviser, why not consider getting this kind of help as a first step – speak to your leaving care team about getting one.

What is the National Careers Service and how can they help me?

The National Career Services provides impartial advice on careers, training and skills to every one 13 and over in England. Its qualified advisers will help you make informed decisions about careers, learning and work; and understand the range of options open to you.

You can talk to an adviser using their telephone helpline, web chat or if you are over 19 (or 18+ if on out of work benefits) have a local face to face interview, to help you make the choice which is right for you.

National Careers Service: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

Call: 0800 100 900

What skills training and further education can I get?

You can get nationally recognised training which will help you get a job and improve the everyday skills that employers want. The main areas of training which you could get are:

Help with English, maths, and IT. Today most jobs need you to have some of these skills.

If English is not your first language, you can also get help to improve this.

Training on how to write a CV, how to prepare for an interview, how to work well with others, how to improve your confidence – all these will help you get and keep a job.

Skills training, especially for the job you want, can help you prepare for jobs which you feel are right for you. For example you could do a course on carpentry, hairdressing, or working in the care sector - there is training available to prepare you for most jobs.

Contact the National Careers Service for further details:

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>. Call: 0800 100 900.

How can the Jobcentre help me?

The Jobcentre can help you with information on benefits and services, free CV advice and help with looking for jobs. The Jobcentre Work Coach can help you decide which skills or training will help you get a job. They can also help you with Universal jobmatch, the Department for Work and Pension's on-line job posting and matching service for jobseekers.

It is strongly advised that you let the Jobcentre Work Coach know you are a care leaver so they provide extra support and better understand the issues you might face. You can contact Jobcentre Plus for further information on: <https://www.gov.uk/contact--plus>, or call: 0345 6060 234.

How can the Work Programme help me?

The Work Programme provides individualised support for up to two years to help you find and keep a job.

Care leavers can access the Work Programme from day one of their claim so that they can receive priority work support at the earliest opportunity. Contact the Jobcentre Plus for further information on: <https://www.gov.uk/contact--plus>, or call: 0345 6060 234.

What about Volunteering?

The government is encouraging unemployed people to take up voluntary work when they are looking for a job. If you are interested in volunteering you can get further information from the Jobcentre Plus (see above).

You can volunteer for as many hours as you like and still claim benefits as long as you stick to the rules for volunteering.

For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/get-involved/take-part/volunteer>

You can volunteer and claim benefits if the only money you get from volunteering is to cover expenses, like travel costs and you continue to meet the conditions of the benefit you get.

What about Community Learning?

Community learning courses take place in informal, friendly community venues, such as your Local Authority Adult Education Service, FE College, voluntary organisation and/or Workers' Educational Association (WEA) branch. There are different types of courses on offer, including arts, crafts and computer skills. These courses help you build your confidence, develop new skills and increase your chance of progressing to a training course or job.

To find a local community learning course, you can:

- Look at the website or prospectus of the Local Authority Adult Education Service, FE College, voluntary organisation and/or Workers' Educational Association (WEA) branch
- Use the National Careers Service website, which offers advice on choosing courses.

For more information speak to your personal adviser.

Traineeships

Traineeships are an education and training programme with work experience, providing eligible 16-24 year olds with the skills and experience they need to be able to successfully apply for apprenticeships or sustainable employment. At the core of traineeships are work preparation training, English and maths for those below GCSE A*-C standard and a high quality work experience placement with an employer. Traineeships last for a maximum of 6 months.

Individuals can find out more about traineeship opportunities and whether they are eligible by visiting <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/traineeships.aspx>, by calling the National Careers Service on 0800 100 900 or by visiting their local Jobcentre.

How about an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are paid jobs that include on and off the job training and lead to nationally recognised qualifications. As an employee, apprentices earn as they learn and gain practical skills from the job.

To do an apprenticeship you have to be aged 16 or over. You must also meet the entry requirements of the apprenticeship you want to do. To find out more about apprenticeships go to <https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide>.

Supported internships

Supported internships enable young people aged 16-24 with a statement of SEN, a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an Education, Health and Care plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace.

Supported internships are unpaid, and last for a minimum of six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Alongside their time at the employer, young people complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths.

Further information is available at: <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships> or individuals can contact their local authority, school or college.

What help is available from Jobcentres?

Jobcentre Plus offers a range of support for young people and encourages employers to take on young people including care leavers. As a care leaver you can get help to get a job, with training or education. Speak to your personal adviser or Jobcentre Plus Work Coach for further information.

You can also contact Jobcentre Plus via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus>, or call: 0345 6060 234.

Want to go to university?

If you want to go to university there are lots of funding opportunities for you. These include from your local authority, from universities themselves and from Student Finance. Speak to your personal adviser about how to get this support.

What if I am having problems getting skills support?

If you are having trouble accessing skills support speak to your personal adviser. They should be able to help you. Other sources of help include the virtual head in your local authority or the named person for care leavers at the place you want to study. Get your personal adviser to put you in touch. If they can't help you can get independent advocacy from:

Coram Voice: <http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/> Call: 0808 800 5792

National Youth Advocacy Service: <https://www.nyas.net/> Call: 0808 808 1001

There will also be local providers of independent advocacy in different areas.

What other support is available?

You can download the [Inspire Me!](#) app which has been developed by care leavers, for care leavers. It enables former care leavers who are now living independently and learning or working, to share their positive stories. The app is available for free download on all devices from the app store and iTunes. It can also be accessed online at <http://inspire-me-live.herokuapp.com/>.



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