

Local Offer Guidance

Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to consult on and publish a local offer for their care leavers. The local offer should provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers in the local area where they live. It should include information about their statutory entitlements, as well as any discretionary support that a local authority might choose to provide.

Local authorities should develop their local offer in their role as corporate parent. Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to have regard to seven corporate parenting principles when discharging their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers. Full guidance on corporate parenting is available at [\[HYPERLINK\]](#).

The local offer can include details of the services and support that the local authority provides in relation to:

- **Health and wellbeing:** this will include services that teach about, support and enable good health and wellbeing. It should include links to, or information about, universal health services that might be particularly relevant to care leavers, as well as specific services for them.
- **Relationships:** having strong and supportive relationships is crucially important for care leavers as they move to independent adult life. Local authorities will want to consider the services and/ or support that is available to help care leavers develop and maintain positive social networks and to understand what positive relationships look like.
- **Education and training:** Care leavers should be supported to access appropriate education or training that will enable them to fulfil their goals. This will include the statutory support available to care leavers, specific support from the local authority and universal information such as careers advice and financial support for young people.
- **Employment:** this will include information to care leavers about general employment support, such as careers support and links to local Job Centre Plus. Local authorities should also include any other employment support that they or partners deliver that is specifically available to care leavers, for example, any apprenticeships that the local authority offers, in particular where such opportunities are ring-fenced for care leavers.
- **Accommodation:** care leavers should be supported to access appropriate and suitable accommodation. The local authority should include relevant

information about their Staying Put policy, the support available from Housing Services and any financial assistance that is available to care leavers.

- **Participation in society:** this will include links to and information about activities or events happening in the local area that care leavers can get involved in.

Appendix [XX] includes an illustrative local offer to support local authorities when developing their own local offer. It is designed to provide an illustration of the types of support that local authorities may wish to provide in their local offer and provides a range of ideas that local authorities could choose to follow.

When developing their local offer, local authorities are required to consult with relevant persons which would include care leavers and organisations or people that represent care leavers. Local authorities should consider how best to engage and consult with as many of their care leavers as possible. It will be good practice for local authorities to work effectively with their care leavers to co-produce a local offer that is meaningful and reflects the needs, views and wishes of the care leavers they are responsible for. It may also be useful for Personal Advisors to seek the views and ideas of the care leavers that they support and work with on a regular basis.

The Children and Social Work Act does not specify how soon after commencement of the duty the local offer should be published. However, there will be a duty on the local authority to publish the local offer (subject to the consultation requirements) on commencement and Government's expectation is that the local offer should be available within six to nine months of commencement. Once local authorities have consulted on and published their local offer it should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the services on offer reflect what care leavers need most. Local authorities can choose how regularly they review their local offer and it will be good practice to do so every year. Local authorities must consult relevant persons before the local offer is updated.

The local offer should be easily available and accessible to all care leavers in the local authority. This may mean that it is made available in a number of formats including printed hard copies, online digital copies and in different languages. There is likely to be a role for Personal Advisors to share and promote the local offer with the care leavers they work with and to make sure they are aware of it and the services they are entitled to. Local authorities will want to consider how the local offer is made available to, and is easily understood by, care leavers with additional needs.