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Welcome to Croydon's Local Offer to our Care Experienced young people 2023-2024

In Croydon we believe that everyone in society has a responsibility to help those who have been in care to overcome any difficulties they might have experienced in their childhoods, so that they can lead successful lives.

It is our responsibility to make sure you know what services are available to you, and what you can expect to receive when you leave care. As a Care Experienced member of the Croydon community, you should have all the opportunities possible to achieve your goals and aspirations. Sometimes this requires extra support, and this document outlines the main areas of support available and if what you need is not here, just ask and we will look into it with you.

As your Corporate Parents, we want to make sure that you know where and who to go to for advice and help. Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you and will be here whenever you need us.

Croydon's Local Offer contains information about all the support and services that we have in Croydon for you as you move into adulthood when you turn 18. We have worked with care experienced young people and young people to put this offer together. We will continue to listen to your views to make sure the services we provide are what you need.

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What is a Corporate Parent?

When you came into our care, Croydon Council became your Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate

Parent' means the collective responsibility of all council departments, elected members, and partner agencies (for example health or education providers) for providing the best possible care for the children and young people who are cared for by us.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced 7 corporate parenting principles, which we must take into account in supporting you:

1. To act in your best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of all care leavers.

2. To encourage every care leaver to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of every care leaver.
4. To help care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority (Croydon Council) and its relevant partners (for example health or education services).
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for care leavers.
6. For care leavers to be safe, with stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare care leavers for adulthood and independent living.

Croydon Young People's 16+ Service

Croydon Young People's 16+ Service is made up of 11 Young People's teams. Each team is made up of social workers and personal advisors supported by a team manager. If you are in care and under 18 years of age, you will be supported by a social worker. In some circumstances your social worker will continue to support you after you turn 18. A personal advisor from the team will be responsible for supporting you after you turn 18 unless it has been agreed that your social worker will continue to support you after you turn 18 if that is the right decision for you. Your personal advisor will be introduced to you when



you are 17 so that you can get to know your personal advisor before you turn 18. Your social worker or personal advisor will support you and provide you with assistance until you are at least 21. If you want to continue to receive support or are in education a personal advisor will be able to support you up to the age of 25.

Our promise to you

The Young People's 16+ Service developed our Good Practice Promises with children in care and care experienced young people:

<p>I will show that I Hear you by:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Listening to your views ✓ Exploring ways to achieve what you want
<p>I will show that I See you by:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visiting when I say I will ✓ Noticing how you are feeling

I will show that I Care about you by:

- ✓ Worrying about your safety
- ✓ Remembering important events for you, such as your Birthday

We will support you by:

- ✓ Providing you with your own allocated worker and make sure you know who you can contact if they are not available. They will keep in touch and visit regularly.
- ✓ Talk to you about when you and your family can see or contact each other and support travel arrangements and if you can't, we'll explain why.
- ✓ Keep brothers and sisters together, wherever possible.
- ✓ Regularly review how well we are keeping our promises to you and that your pathway plan is up to date.
- ✓ Make sure that young people, such as carers and workers, get the right training to understand the issues that affect children in care and care experienced young people, so that you get the best care possible.
- ✓ Make sure you know how to complain and help to resolve complaints as quickly as possible.

What is difference between a Social Worker and a Personal Advisor?

The most important role of your social worker and personal advisor is to be a trusted adult for children and young people, to be a source of guidance, support, and information.

Social workers have legal responsibilities for children in care up to the age of 18 and they may continue working with you after you turn 18 where that is the right decision.

Your social worker will develop your first pathway plan, conduct any assessments, and liaise with other services on your behalf.

Personal advisors advise and support young people from 17 through to 25, when care experienced young people no longer need a social worker, then a personal advisor will be your main allocated worker.

Your social worker or personal advisor will visit you regularly and provide you with their contact details. They will also:

- ✓ Help you to understand what support is available, so that you can make informed choices.
- ✓ Review your Pathway Plan with you at least every 6 months.
- ✓ Help you to develop links in the community where you live.
- ✓ Support you to develop the necessary skills to live independently.
- ✓ Support you to gain work experience, employment and training.
- ✓ Support you to understand your identity and background and help you develop positive and lasting relationships with family and friends.
- ✓ Encourage you to develop confidence and self-esteem, and the ability to voice your opinions and thoughts on key issues that affect you.

What is a Pathway Plan?

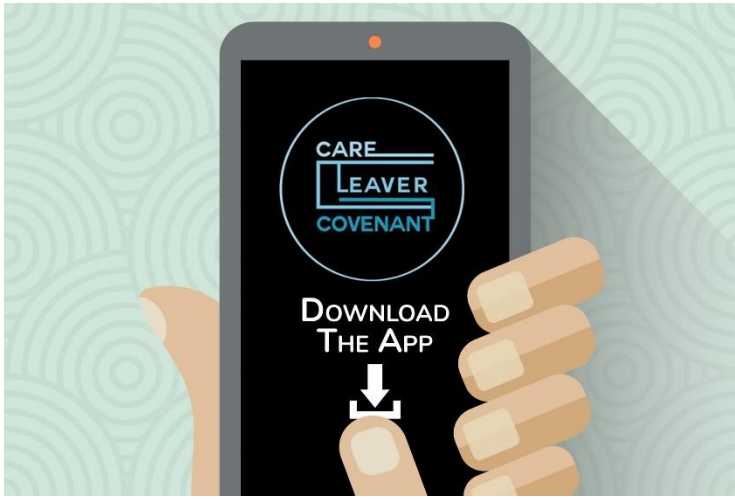
When you turn 15 years and 9 months your social worker will meet with you to start your pathway plan. Every young person between the ages of 16 and 21 in care or leaving care has a pathway plan and up to 25 if you still want a service after you turn 21 or are in education.

Your first pathway plan will be based on and will include your care plan and personal education plan. It will be written with you by your social worker and a personal advisor may support.

The pathway plan has information on the best way to support you towards full independence and adulthood. It will cover your education, employment, health, finance, social needs, relationships and where you will live. Your plan will be written in a way that should meet your individual needs, it will capture your hopes for the future and include your views. It will be regularly reviewed with you, at least every six months, to check that your goals are still right and are being met.

The Care Leaver Covenant

Have you heard about The Care Leaver Covenant?



The covenant is a pledge made by public, private and voluntary organisations to Care Experienced young people including opportunities with employment, work placements, internships with big businesses, government departments, museums, theatres, or Premier League football clubs, as well as training workshops or life-skills coaching. There are also resources and tools from Barclays Life Skills to help to manage your money.

Speak to your Personal Advisor for more information about the Care Leaver Covenant or visit the website to sign up alerts about opportunities including work and education, through to recreational offers and giveaways. Visit: [Connects Sign-up - Care Leaver Covenant \(mycovenant.org.uk\)](https://www.my covenant.org.uk)

Getting involved

We want all our Care Experienced young people to be active members of society. As your corporate parents we will be there to offer you advice and support. An important part of staying mentally and physically healthy is enjoying hobbies and interests.

Some of the ways you can take part to stay active and engaged with local services include:

Free leisure centre membership

As a Care Experienced young person you can access UK wide free membership to the BETTER leisure centres. There are 12 centres in Croydon. Each centre has a:

- Swimming pool
- Gym
- Exercise classes



- ✓ We can make an agreement through your pathway plan about how we can support you to get involved in sporting activities or other leisure activities near where you live. Your personal advisor will have details of clubs, community groups, and activities which may interest you.

Your right to vote in elections.

All democratic countries have rules about who has the right to vote in elections. This is usually based on nationality, age, and residence. When you turn 18 you must register to vote if you're asked to do so and you meet the conditions for registering, for example you're 18 or over and you're British or a national of an EU or Commonwealth country. The electoral register (sometimes called the 'electoral roll') lists the names and addresses of everyone who's registered to vote in local and general elections. You will need photo ID such as passport or driving license to be able to vote in elections.

- ✓ Your personal advisor can assist you to enrol on the electoral register.

Children in Care Council (E.M.P.I.R.E)

We want to hear your views so we can improve the lives of Care Experienced young people. E.M.P.I.R.E is a collective of young people who are all cared for by Croydon. The purpose of E.M.P.I.R.E is to empower Children in Care and Care Experienced young people with the confidence and power to influence policy change, shape the service and have their voice heard. E.M.P.I.R.E will provide young people the chance to identify common issues with the care they receive and make proposals for improvements. All of which are presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel at Croydon Council, Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

Legacy Youth Zone

Legacy Youth Zone is open 7 days a week, and offer over 20 activities to discover, learn and excel at. We will pay for all children looked after and care experienced young people. Legacy Membership for young aged 8- 19, and up to 25 for those with disabilities. <https://www.legacyyouthzone.org>.



Esther support group

We're proud to run a support group that brings both Looked After children and care leavers together in a friendly, safe environment where they can develop independent skills. Esther Outreach is a voluntarily run initiative that provides practical support, advice and advocacy to care leavers. The practical support covers everything from assistance in finding work all the way through to preparing meals. Past workshops have covered money management, drug awareness, parenting, cooking on a budget and creative art. There are two regular groups that run at the Turnaround Centre from 6.30-8.30pm as follows: Young men Meeting on the first Wednesday of every month. Young women Meeting on the third Wednesday of every month. To sign up you can phone either 07847 844 269 or 07783 894 358, or email estheroutreach@wvmf.org

The Princes Trust

The Princes Trust offer a number of opportunities for Care Experienced young people with support available between the aged 16-30. Including a 'Step Into Adulthood' programme which offers support around managing money and bills, cooking, networking with professionals, CV writing, community support groups and training and employment opportunities. Speak to your personal advisor who can support you to access the service or contact LondonGetStarted@princes-trust.org.uk for more information or call 0800 842 842.

- ✓ We can help you to get involved with EMPIRE, Legacy Youth Zone, Esther support, The Princes Trust or any other local groups which you might be interested in attending.

Money matters, official documents and birthdays

Your personal advisor will help you to manage your money and understand any benefits you may be entitled to. In addition, your personal advisor will make sure that there is someone to support you in the event of a crisis or when things do not go according to plan. Although you may still receive some financial support once you are 18, you will be expected to find your income from work, education grants and, if eligible, benefits.

Your social worker or personal advisor will:

- ✓ Help you to open your own bank account and how to manage your money, so that you avoid getting into debt.
- ✓ Help you to get identification documents, (important pieces of paper about you) such as a passport, birth certificate and provisional driving license.
- ✓ Help you to get your National Insurance (NI) number. This is a number you receive an adult individual to you so that records about benefits, taxes and pensions are kept. You will need this for any future employer. Your worker might write a letter or help you fill in a form to apply for it before you leave care.
- ✓ Help you to access Department of Work and Pensions for advice.

- ✓ Help you when you make your first claim for benefits at 18, by supporting you with a personal allowance for up to six weeks while your benefits claim is being processed. You are allowed to claim benefits up to one month before you turn 18 and will be supported to do so.
- ✓ Help you if you are unable to claim benefits by supporting you financially for a longer period while your entitlements are being established, as set out in your Pathway Plan.
- ✓ Help you to purchase furniture and white goods, such as washing machines and fridges, when you are setting up your home through a setting up home allowance.
- ✓ Support you to apply for a HC2 or HC3 which is an exemption certificate which would mean that optical, dental and prescription costs would either be fully or partially covered. The Young People's 16+ Service can offer support to cover the cost of your prescriptions if you do not qualify. Speak to your personal advisor who can support you with claiming the costs.

Help with your council tax bill

Council Tax is a payment made to your local authority for local services such as collecting your rubbish clearing streets, running services and the local parks.

- ✓ Croydon Council gives exemption from the Council tax bill for Care experienced young people up the age of 25 living in Croydon so you don't have to pay it.
- ✓ Care Experienced young people who are living outside of Croydon will be assisted to claim any local Council tax exemption or support where available. Where Care Experienced young people are living outside of Croydon remain responsible for all, or part of their Council Tax bill, Croydon Young People's 16+ Service will pay the bill on your behalf.

Remembering your birthday

Birthdays are an important milestone. If you are actively engaged with the Croydon Young People's 16+ Service you will receive either a gift or equivalent amount to the value of:

- ✓ £100 on 18th and 21st Birthday and £50 on your 19th and 20th birthdays.
- ✓ On your special 18th and 21st Birthday will be marked with a meal for you with your Personal Advisor up to the value of £50.

This table sets out the financial entitlements available to our care experienced young people who have former relevant status:

Allowance

Amount

Eligibility

Living costs (Maintenance allowance)	Up to £67.20 per week (from April 2023) + Equivalent child benefit amount where not in receipt: (£21 per week for 1st child; £14 per week other children)	Subject to employment, education and training and immigration status. Must be engaging with Pathway Planning. Paid whilst waiting for initial Benefit Claim.
Accommodation	Costs met in full up to age of 18. Deposit and Rent in advance up to Local Housing Allowance rate. Rent Guarantor scheme for University accommodation.	Must be a Croydon Care Experienced young person 18-25.
Allowance	Amount	Eligibility
Council Tax	Full cost met – balance paid after any local exemptions applied.	Must be a Croydon Care Experienced adult 18-25.
Starting work grant	£150	One off- for interview clothes, protective clothes.
Birthday allowances	£100 at age 17,18 & 21 £50 at aged 19 and 20	Paid if actively engaged with the Croydon Young People's 16+ Service
Health	Up to £300 per year towards the cost of opticians/glasses, dentist/ dental treatment. Pregnancy testing Pregnancy starter equipment – up to £500	Subject to written quotes. Appointment with GP required. After voluntary sector support provided.
Identity Documents (Passport/National Insurance card/ Birth Certificate)	Up to £110	Croydon Young People's 16+ Service will cover the cost of your 1 st application and 1 renewal up to the age of 21.
Driving license and lessons	1 provisional license funded 10 x 1 hour lessons; 1 theory test; 1 practical test;	You must provide a contribution (the cost of 10 (1 hours) lessons) prior to the personal adviser booking the overall package which would total 20 hours of driving lessons.

Travel and Family time costs	£25 per week for education travel Travel to and from University 3 times per year. Travel to spend time with family, previous foster carer etc.	Attendance over 85% Each situation will need to be assessed.
Setting up home allowance	Up to £3000 for furnishing & equipment for care experienced young people who turned 18 from 5th April 2023. Previously £2,000 for care experienced young people who turned 18 before April 2023.	Up to 25 Not provided in cash.
Wi-fi	Up to £300 per year towards wi-fi connectivity	Must be a Croydon Care Experienced adult 18-25.
Crisis payment	One off payment towards food/heating. Up to £50	Assessment of need by Team Manager

Moving home or accommodation



Your social worker and personal advisor will visit you, and where you live will be agreed in your pathway plan.

When you turn 16, your social worker will become involved with you to begin discussions about your housing options after you turn 18 as part of your pathway plan. There will be reviews of your housing options until an 18+ accommodation offer is agreed.

We will work with Croydon housing services to assess your accommodation needs and agree the most suitable type of accommodation and support for you.

Staying on with foster carers is called 'Staying Put', you can stay with your foster carer until you are 21 years old, or beyond if you are in education. This will not affect your long term move or plans.

If there are any worries that you may struggle to manage independent living, individual packages of support can be provided to support you including:

- ✓ Remaining in supported accommodation after you turn 18 until you are more able to manage independent living.

- ✓ Outreach support packages, focusing on Health, Education, Employment and Self Care Skills.
- ✓ Floating support provided by CAYSH (Croydon Association for Young Single Homeless) which is a dedicated support services for young people their staff are specialists in working with young people to set goals and then construct a support plan that break down into manageable steps of tasks, experience and learning. www.caysh.org/about-us
- ✓ Communicate with Adult Services and other departments within the council where young people meet their criteria, to seek appropriate adult accommodation and support services.
- ✓ Where young people want to remain in a different borough; we try to work in conjunction with other local authority housing departments to advocate on your behalf for entitlement to apply for social housing in that area.

Some of the types of accommodation available to Care Experienced young people in Croydon include:

	Description	Details
Foster Carers	Foster Carers can provide care for up to three children/young people in their own home. They will be paid and supported by Croydon or an Independent Fostering Agency.	Most care experienced young people in Croydon will have lived with foster carers. Because foster carers are only approved to 18 the arrangements for staying with your foster carers after this age needs to be through a 'staying put' arrangement.
Staying Put	These are foster carers who continue to have young people live with them after they become young people at 18.	Staying put arrangements are funded through an agreement for housing allowances to be paid to your staying put carer.
Shared Lives	Where young people have additional needs shared lives supports carers.	Shared lives can support people from age 16 onwards. Whatever a young person's support needs many young people find Shared Lives is an ideal way to maintain independence whilst having support.

Supported Lodgings	This is when you live with a single person, a couple, and/or with other young people or children.	This provides support toward developing independence, you will be expected to financially contribute but continue to have support from person/s you are living with.
Supported Accommodation	This may be a flat, shared house or a private house with additional support provided to help manage day to day arrangements.	Your Personal Adviser or Social Worker will discuss what additional support is available and help to tailor this to your needs. These arrangements provide less direct care and are a half-way step to being independent.
Private Rented	This may be a house, flat or studio or house share owned by a private You will be responsible for your own tenancy.	Your Personal Advisor will be able to discuss with the housing team if private rented is the best option for you.
Social Housing	Living independently, this may be a house, flat or studio or house share owned by a private You will be responsible for your own tenancy.	Your Personal Advisor will be able to discuss with the housing team if social housing is the best option for you.
House Project	<p>What is the house project.</p> <p>The house project works with young people on cooperative principles through which young people leaving care work together to refurbish properties that become their home and build a long terms community of support.</p>	Your Personal Advisor will be able to discuss this programme with you to consider if this is something you would be interested in.

Education, employment and training

Education is essential for you to gain the qualifications you need when looking for employment. However, college and university are not the only options. Apprenticeships and training schemes can be a good way to learn practical work skills and earn. Volunteering is another excellent option to help you gain work skills and get that all important work experience that employers want.

- ✓ We will support your education, training needs and detail this in your pathway plan. These proposals build on information that is already included in your personal education plan (PEP).
- ✓ Some young people will not be able to access formal education and training straight away but may be working towards these opportunities, such as undertaking English as A Second Language (ESOL) classes or volunteering.

Croydon Works

- ✓ Croydon works is Croydon's job and training hub. Who offer a free recruitment service working in partnership with Job Centre Plus, Croydon College and Croydon Council. <https://croydonworks.co.uk>
- ✓ **Care Experienced Education, Employment and Training Drop in every Wednesday**
- ✓ There is drop in every Wednesday at the Turnround Centre between 2 and 4pm where there is dedicated advice from Croydon's Care Experienced Education, Employment and Training Officer.
- ✓ **Croydon Council Apprenticeship programme**
- ✓ Croydon is committed to also supporting Care Experienced young people with apprenticeships both with the Council and with other organisations. Your personal advisor can help you to register your interest www.croydonworks.co.uk/opportunities/4294/croydon-council-apprenticeship-academy

University students

We will support you with your education, if you decide to go to university, this will include, if you want them to:

- ✓ Your personal advisor helping you to move to your university accommodation.
- ✓ Your personal advisor will support you to purchase any essential items and taking you to do your first food shop on moving to university.
- ✓ Connect you with Care Experienced support services at the university.
- ✓ Helping with applications for the disabled student allowance.
- ✓ Your personal advisor will arrange to visit you at university and will offer you support throughout the duration of your studies.
- ✓ Your personal advisor will attend your graduation ceremony to celebrate your achievement.



You will receive up to a three-year financial support package. The financial support you can access includes:

- ✓ A one-off Computer Grant for a note-pad or lap-top depending on an assessment of need and if not previously accessed – up to £300.00.
- ✓ A Stationery Grant, Educational Visits and Books and Equipment Grant of up to £225.00 The Grant is per academic year (assessed each year).
- ✓ A Higher Education Bursary of £2,000.00 which is provided over the period of a two, three or four year course. Depending on the length of the course the £2,000.00 per course will be made up of £1,000.00 per year (2 year course) £666.67 per year (3 year course) £500.00 per year (4 year course)
- ✓ A Vacation Accommodation Allowance of up to 22 weeks – Up to the level of the LHA (London Housing Allowance) one bedroom self-contained rate and/or the level of university accommodation (in the vacation).
- ✓ We understand that everyone going to university will have individual needs and where possible if a Staying Put arrangement with your foster carer can be made , Croydon Young People's 16+ service who will explore whether this arrangement can be made and make individual arrangements based on your needs.
- ✓ A Travel Grant to enable you to get to and return to university (three return journeys per academic year). The travel grant will be paid at the off-peak rate and at the advanced and pre-booked rate of at least one month before the journey.
- ✓ A Graduation Grant of up to £1000.00 to cover the cost of the graduation ceremony and gown hire etc and to cover relocation costs when leaving university.

Care Experienced young people applying to and undertaking higher education courses will be required to apply for all available universal student funding i.e. maintenance loans, tuition fee loans, as well as individual establishment bursaries. These loans and grants and the H.E. Bursary should be used by students as their main source of income through-out their term time course of study. This will fund their higher education accommodation, living expenses and travel etc.

Travel costs

If you are in full time education or training in London you are entitled to a 18+ Student Oyster photocard which gives you 30% off the cost of your fare.

- ✓ Your personal advisor can help you to apply or you can apply by visiting the website: www.tfl.gov.uk/fares-and-payments/adult-discounts-and-concessions/18-student

Transport for London has announced that care leavers aged between 18 and 25, who live in London, will be able to apply to receive half price bus and tram travel from early 2024.

- ✓ Your personal advisor can help you to apply for this scheme when it is made available.

Health and wellbeing



Being healthy is as much about how your emotional health and wellbeing as it is about your physical health. It's really important to regularly exercise, eat a balanced diet and keep your teeth clean.

It's equally important to talk to people if you're struggling with anything or feeling down so that we can identify the right support for you. Sometimes being part of a social group through sports, music, study can help your emotional wellbeing as well. Your

pathway plan will also detail any health needs that you may have, remember to keep your Personal Advisor updated about your health if anything changes.

There are lots of services and support you can access and we will do our very best to keep you safe. We will support and encourage you to be healthy by:

- ✓
- ✓ Encouraging you to speak up if you are struggling with anything so we can get you the support you need.
- ✓ Providing a Health Passport as you reach 18 years old. This is a summary of all your health information.

- ✓ Helping you to register at a doctor's surgery, dentist and optician.
- ✓ Advice on healthy living which will include anything from safe sex through to having a balanced diet.
- ✓ Leisure and Fitness passes to Croydon facilities are available to all Care Experienced young people through your personal advisor or social worker.

Mental and emotional health

Seeking help is the first step towards improving your mental health and wellbeing, but it can be daunting. Do not try to handle things on your own if you are struggling to cope, it is always okay to ask for help.

- ✓ We will be there to support you.
- ✓ We can help you to access support from South London and Maudsley (SLaM) Mental Health Trust on their 24-hour helpline 0800 731 2864.
- ✓ We can help you to access Oasis on 020 3228 5800 which is a health service for young people aged 14-35, who are experiencing psychological distress. These experiences might include:
 - Struggling to cope at school, college or work
 - Preferring to spend time alone, away from family and friends
 - Feeling anxious, irritable or depressed
 - Changes in sleeping and eating patterns
 - Confused or muddled thinking
 - Feeling that things and people seem strange or unreal
 - Constantly thinking about particular ideas or beliefs
 - Unusual experiences like seeing or hearing things that other people cant.

Eye tests , prescriptions and dental check up

- ✓ Croydon Young People's 16+ Service can support you with the cost of your eye tests, prescriptions and dental checkups. Please speak to your personal advisor who can give you more information about claiming the costs.

Dedicated Care Experienced Nurses

- ✓ Croydon Young People's 16+ Service has two dedicated nurses for Care Experienced young people. Our nurses offer a drop in at the Turnaround Centre on Wednesday from 12pm and will also offer you a health assessment when you turn 18 and able to provide any health support and advice when needed.

Counselling

Off The Record Youth Counselling Croydon provide free, independent and professional counselling for 14-25 year olds in the Croydon area. Since. To discuss the possibility of receiving their support, speak to your social worker or personal advisor or call 020 8251 0251 or email them at croydon@talkofftherecord.org.

Healthy Eating and Living

Your Personal Adviser will talk to you about shopping for a balanced diet. The NHS Eat Well has information about staying healthy. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/>

Sexual Health Services

As with any other health matter, your personal advisor will be supportive of you and happy to offer their support to help you to access sexual health support. Sexual health support is available from Croydon Sexual Health Centre based at Croydon University Hospital Croydon Sexual Health Centre also has its own Condom Distribution Scheme called the C Card, which will allow you to pick up free condoms from a number of places in the borough.

- ✓ Your personal advisor can help you to seek support by contacting ch-tr.sexualhealth@nhs.net
0208 401 3766

Drugs and Alcohol support

If you need support around drug or alcohol, use your personal advisor will discuss this with you in a non-judgmental way. Croydon has specialist support available if you do ever have need of it.

Turning Point is a national service that provides support across a broad spectrum but, in Croydon, it runs the Croydon Recovery Network, which includes a service for substance misuse.

- ✓ Your personal advisor can help you to seek support on 0300 123 9288.

Live Well Croydon

The Live Well Croydon programme, which is the healthy lifestyle service for residents has a website called Just Be Croydon which offers advice, hints and tips on six health topics such as being happy, active, alcohol aware, sexually safe, food smart and stopping smoking. Contact livewell@croydon.gov.uk or phone 0800 019 8570 or speak to your Personal Advisor who can help you to access support.

Domestic abuse

If you have experienced or experiencing domestic abuse and need support speak to your personal advisor who can help you to seek support.

There are services in Croydon who can help. Including:

- The FJC (formerly Family Justice Centre) The centre is run by a skilled experienced team that works to provide you and your family access to support services. Our aim is to listen and respond to your needs in a safe way. Telephone: 020 8688 0100 or email: fjc@croydon.gov.uk
- The 24 hour National domestic helpline: The helpline can give support, help and information over the telephone, wherever the caller might be in the country. Telephone: 0808 2000 247
- RASAC: The RASAC Crisis centre in Croydon provides specialist support to female survivors of sexual violence. Telephone: 0808 802 9999

- ✓ Your personal advisor can help you to seek support from these services.

LGBTQ+ support

The Bridge is a free and confidential service for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning (LGBTQ) young people aged 11 - 25 in Croydon.

- ✓ Your personal advisor can help you to access support by contacting 020 8305 5004 or email Thebridge@croydon.gov.uk for more details.

Care leavers who are parents

Being a parent for the first time can be challenging. We want to make sure that you get the support you need when you are pregnant and during your child's early years.

We can help you in the following ways:

- ✓ Ensure that you have essential items for your baby by accessing correct benefits, grants and charities.
- ✓ Provide you with up to £500 toward the cost of essential items in preparation for your baby.
- ✓ Offer prospective mothers a birthing partner and someone to accompany you to pre- and post-natal health appointments e.g. their personal advisor, ex foster carer, if you would like this.
- ✓ Support travel costs for a friend/family member to accompany you to appointments and the hospital for the birth.



- ✓ Provide you with the opportunity to have a Family Group Conference during pregnancy to identify support within friends and family network.
- ✓ Provide all mothers and fathers to access parenting support from a local children's centre to help with parenting skills, support and advice.
- ✓ Provide access to support to assist with claiming relevant benefits and registering the birth of the baby.

Care experienced young people in custody

We will be there for any of our Care Experienced young people who are in custody. This will include:

- ✓ Keeping in touch by visiting or writing to you depending on what you want.
- ✓ Supporting you to make arrangements so that you have somewhere to live when you are released.
- ✓ Supporting you on release to make sure you have the support you need.
- ✓ If you are engaging with your personal advisor, we will support you with £20 subsistence payment per month.
- ✓ Assist you with keeping in touch with friends and family if you want this.
- ✓ We can arrange to keep your important documents such as your passport safe until you are released.

Care experienced unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people

We will be there to support our care experienced unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. There are organisations in Croydon who can support you if you are a Care experienced unaccompanied asylum-seeking adult or refugee.

- ✓ Your social worker or personal advisor can help you to access the following groups:
 - Injera Club is a youth club in south London for 14-to-21-year-old unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children and young people from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and

Somalia (and their friends). At Injera Club, young people are invited to socialise with others, play games, pool, table tennis, football and to enjoy a home-cooked traditional meal. We also run workshops and outings. info@daaroyouth.org.uk.

- Young Roots is a London-based charity working with young refugees and asylum seekers aged 11-25, most of whom are alone in the UK without their families. They offer support to young people to improve their wellbeing and fulfil their potential, through intensive one-to-one Casework, youth and sporting activities, English language mentoring, youth leadership and access to specialist therapeutic and legal advice. They can be contacted by emailing: london@youngroots.org.uk or 020 8684 9140
- Refugee Council work directly with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People providing independent advice and guidance. They can be contacted on: 0808 175 3499 or www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/childrens-advice

If you are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person your social Worker or personal advisors will ensure that you have applied to extend your leave to remain, and the application is submitted to the Home Office before your leave status expires. This will enable you to be eligible to claim means tested benefits on your 18th birthday.

- ✓ When developing your pathway plan, your social worker or personal advisor will help you to think about your possible status options when you turn 18. Including:
 1. A transitional plan during the period of uncertainty when living in the United Kingdom without permanent immigration status.
 2. Longer term plan in the United Kingdom should you be granted long term permission to stay (for example through the grant of Refugee Status)
 3. A plan for return to your country of origin at any appropriate point or at the end of the immigration consideration process, should that be necessary because you decide to leave the UK or are required to do so.
- ✓ The Young People's 16+ Service can provide up to £1500.00 to any young person who has a negative immigration status and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) where it is assessed that you are likely to be able to make a successful application that will give them access to public funds and services.

British Citizenship

If you are not a British Citizen but are entitled to apply we can support you to make an application and cover the cost of your application: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-citizenship-indefinite-leave-to-remain>

Care experienced young people aged 21 and over 25's

We can continue to offer to support to Care Experienced young people aged over 21 years until you turn 25 if you want support. If at any point you no longer require a service from us, but later need support you can ask to have a service reinstated up until the age of 25 by contacting the Young People's 16+ Service.

From 25 onwards; there will be no more pathway plans but you can still contact the service for information, advice and guidance and we will help in any way we can.

Advocacy, complaints and independent visitors

Advocacy provided by Barnardo's.

Having a voice and knowing your rights are important and this document will hopefully help you to understand what support and advice is available to you.

We really want to hear your views, wishes and feelings so you can help us to improve your experience of being in care and the support you receive as a care experienced young person. We have a duty to listen to you and will treat you fairly and with respect, which is what is expected of you too. We encourage you to speak to your personal advisor if there is something you are unhappy about.

It is important for you to know what to do if you feel you are not being listened to. Children's Services are obliged to protect you from harm and provide you with support and services that meet your needs.

You can get in touch with an advocate at Barnardo's if you talk to someone about your issue, or if you want to know more about the service.

Freephone: 0808 800 0017

Telephone: 020 8509 3432

E-mail: advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk

Sometimes problems do happen and when they do, we have a policy of trying to sort things out as soon as we can. If you feel you have been treated unfairly or discriminated against in any way, or if you are unhappy about the support or service you have received, an advocate will help you to address your concerns.

Complaints

Croydon Council Complaints Resolution Team are available to speak to on 020 8726 6000

The easiest way to register a complaint is to email the complaints teams at complaints@croydon.gov.uk or you can write to:

Complaint Resolution Team
5th Floor, Zone D
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon
CR0 1EA

Independent Visitors

You, or your personal advisor can request an independent visitor, this is a volunteer who will spend time with you once a month doing things that you are interested in. They will see you for a minimum of a year or longer if you want the relationship to continue and they are able to. The idea is for you to have an adult you can trust who is not a professional person with a job to do. They are only there to see you and spend time with you.

Keeping safe

We will do our best to support and encourage you to feel safe. But if you are ever worried about your immediate safety or in an emergency situation you can phone:

Emergency Services

999 - for police, fire and ambulance in an emergency

111 – for police non emergency

NHS

111 – for non-emergency, for medical help and advice if it's not life-threatening.

Mental health crisis support

0800 731 2864 - South London and Maudsley (SLaM) Mental Health Trust 24-hour helpline

The Samaritans

116 123 – is a 24 hour helpline, open 365 days a year they offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you.

Facing hardship

If you are facing hardship or in a crisis, we will be there to help you.

- ✓ You can speak to your personal advisor or social worker or a duty worker about your difficulties and they will try to help you.
- ✓ Your social worker or personal advisor can refer you to Trussell Trust foodbank who provide emergency food and support to people facing hardship.

- ✓ In emergency situations where you are unable to access the Trussell Trust, we have a food and necessities storeroom at the Turnaround Centre which can be accessed by speaking to your allocated worker or contacting the duty service.

Contact details

The contact details of the Young People's 16+ Service are:

Address: Croydon Turnaround Centre 51-55 S End, Croydon CR0 1BF

Telephone: 0208 7605519

Email: CEYPduty@croydon.gov.uk

There is a duty worker available Monday to Friday between 9am – 5pm at Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint walk Croydon, CR0 1EA.

Croydon Social Care Emergency Duty Team

Out of Hours Support If you require emergency support out of office working hours (9am - 5pm / Monday to Friday), or in need of emergency Social Worker support that cannot wait until the next working day, then you can ring our Emergency Duty Service by calling the Contact Centre on 0208 726 6400 and asking for the Out of Hours social work team.