

a guide to
leavingcare...

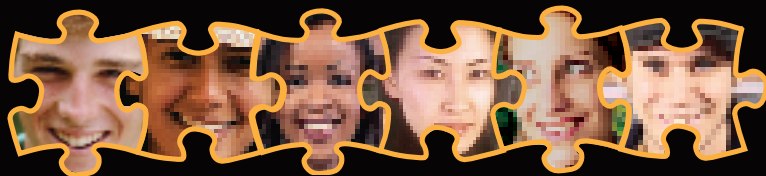
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VALE of GLAMORGAN



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a guide to leaving care produced by community services

3 your rights when you leave

The Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 give you certain rights as a young person leaving care. These laws say that if you have been looked after, for example, in a residential children's home or a foster home, the council's social care services must provide you with:

A Young Person's Adviser

A Pathway Plan

which maps out your hopes for the future

Contact

to make sure that somebody keeps in touch to know you are alright

Financial support

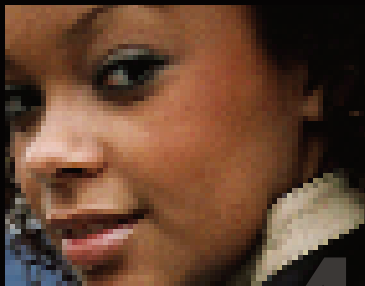
until you are 18 years for a personal allowance and accommodation costs and certain additional financial assistance 18+ to assist with education, training or employment



your rights when you leave

These services are designed to help you and you are entitled to make use of them to plan your future. Under the law you are entitled to receive this help until you are 21 (or 24 if you are in full time education). We want you to leave care well equipped to cope with the wider world. You should not feel pushed into leaving care until you are ready, but when you are approaching 16 we will need to start planning with you for your future. Some young people are keen to leave care as soon as they reach 16 whilst others prefer to remain longer.

If you are staying on at school, going to college or starting a training scheme you will not be disrupted at a crucial time. When you leave care there are many sources of advice and information but there are specialist Leaving Care Services in Barry.

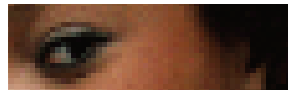


your rights when you leave

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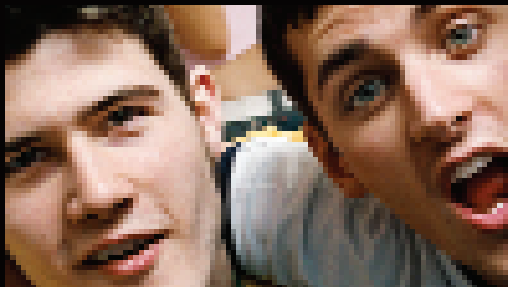
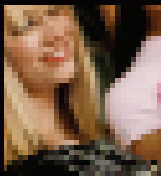
Your Social Worker will make an appointment for you to meet with one of the Leaving Care workers or you can contact them yourself - see page 32 for addresses and telephone numbers. The staff from these organisations can give you advice including:

- **Information and help with financial problems**
- **Advice on education and training**
- **Support and advice about accommodation**
- **Practical and emotional support**



thinking about your future

Everyone has to think about the future. Things like jobs and training, money, relationships and health worry us all. This booklet has been designed to help you think about all these things, to find the best people to discuss all the options and to take make sure your rights are protected. This is particularly important if you have been in care and are now thinking about what happens next.



young person's advisor

If you are in care, your Young Person's Adviser is responsible for making sure that your Pathway Plan is working properly and that you are happy with the way things are going. You should feel free to discuss your future with your Young Person's Adviser - he/she is responsible for keeping in touch with you until you are 21 (or 24 if you are in full-time education) and will be trained and skilled in helping you.



your pathway plan

Your Pathway Plan will be based on what you want and expect as well as on what other people think you will be best at and need. It is important that this plan is full and clear and enables you, and those helping you, to make the best decisions and take clear action. As far as possible, (and subject to your approval) the plan should contain information from your teachers, social workers, carers and members of your family.



your pathway plan

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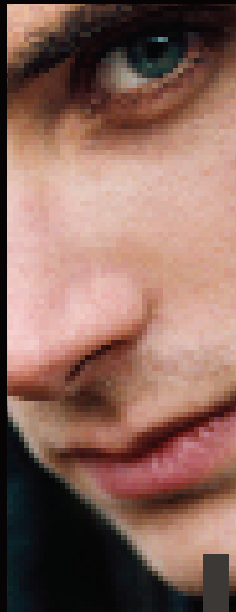
The sorts of areas the plan will cover are:

- **What you want to do with your life**
- **What job you want to do**
- **What training/education you need**
- **What financial help you will need to achieve your ambitions**
- **Where you want to live**
- **Your health needs**
- **Where you want to work**
- **Who is around to support you**
- **Other things that are important to you**

Your Young Person's Adviser and your Social Worker will want to visit you and talk to you about your hopes and ambitions and help you decide what you might need in order to achieve them.

education **and** training

There is a wide range of education and training available to people over the age of 16. Most young people either stay on at school or go to a local college of further education to study for A-levels or other type of qualification. Some courses are traditional while others are very practical and a lot of time is spent in places of work. Your Social Worker and Young Persons Advisor can offer advice and guidance and also put you in touch with careers advisors and colleges to give you information to help you decide what is best for you.



where would you like to live?

When you start planning to move on, you will probably discover that finding a home of your own is not that easy and you may not be able to get exactly what you want straight away. When you update your Pathway Plan your Social Worker or Young Person's Adviser will help you decide what sort of accommodation suits you best and will do what he/she can to help you find it.



where would you like to live?

When thinking about accommodation, try to imagine where you would like to see yourself in the future and where you feel you would like to put down roots. Think about it carefully and listen to the advice on offer as we don't want you to have to move from pillar to post. Accommodation is precious and in short supply so always look after it and treat it with respect.

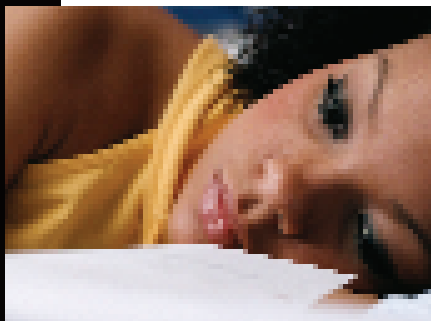


where would you like to live?

staying on with carers

Some young people stay on with their foster carers as lodgers where that suits everybody. If you decide to leave school and become a lodger in your foster carer's house when you are 18, you will be living there as a paying guest and will have to claim social security benefits to pay for your rent, your food and your keep. Obviously this would need to be agreed well before you are 18 to make sure that it is written in to your plan and all the necessary arrangements are entirely clear.

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where would you like to live? **going back to live with your family**

Many young people decide they want to go back and live with their mother or father or other members of their family. If you decide to do this you may find that things have changed since you last lived there. Your Young Person's Adviser and Social Worker will give the advice and support you need to handle the adjustment. The Social Security benefits system works differently for young people depending on whether or not they are living with their parents or close family. You will need to get expert advice on this so discuss it with your Social Worker or Young Persons Advisor and they will help you to check this out.



where would you like to live?

lodgings

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If you are not too confident about living by yourself or with other young people, or you don't feel ready to budget your money and cook for yourself yet, then living in someone's house as a lodger may be the answer for you. Some people rent out a room or rooms in their house to bring in a little extra money, and you must remember, that as a lodger you are living in another person's house as a paying guest, and that person can ask you to leave if things go wrong.

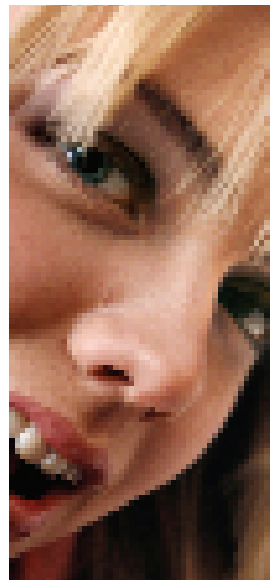


where would you like to live?

supported project accommodation

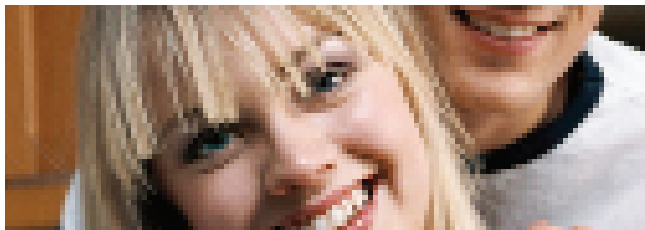
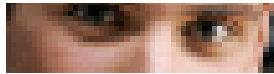
If being a lodger doesn't suit you but you still feel you need help with managing the bills and generally looking after yourself, supported accommodation might be the answer and has lots of benefits. The one we use here in the Vale is Ty John Rowley which is a house with separate self contained bedsits. You have your own place and staff visit to offer assistance and support when you need it.

Your Social Worker or Young Persons Adviser will help you decide if this sort of accommodation is for you and will give you information about how to make a referral.



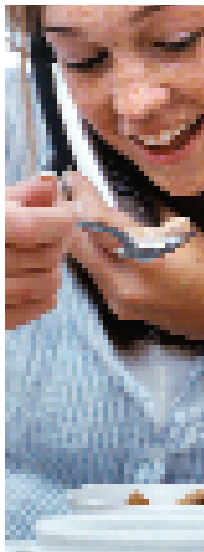
where would you like to live? **shared house or flat**

Sharing a house or flat is how many young people start out in life. The advantages are that all the bills (heating, water rates, and so on) are shared, and you are less likely to feel lonely with other people around. The problems are that you may not have a permanent right to stay there, and you may find difficulties crop up when you have to share your space with other people - even if you start out as friends! Additionally private landlords can sometimes be unsympathetic if there are problems in the house.



where would you like to live?

private rented accommodation



This may be your idea of setting up home - a self-contained place with your own front door.

The problem is that landlords are usually reluctant to let properties to 16 or 17 year olds and so you may have to wait until you are 18 before moving into a privately rented flat.

Private tenancy agreements are quite difficult to understand - get someone who is expert in housing matters to help you or ask your Young Person's Adviser where to go for advice.

Private tenancies are short term, usually lasting between six months and a year. There are quite a lot of private flats to let, and so you will have some choice as to where you live, but you must remember that you may be asked to move on after 6 to 12 months.

where would you like to live?

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Many private flats have furniture in them, including carpets and cookers, but these items belong to the landlord, not to you, and may be quite old. Because private flats are let for profit, the rents tend to be high, and you will often be asked to pay the equivalent of one month's rent as a deposit and one month's rent in advance to your private landlord before you move in. If you receive Housing Benefit you may find that it does not cover the full rent - if this is the case, read page 23 and get advice.

If you find a flat or a bedsit but the landlord wants a deposit/rent in advance or the landlord is worried that you will not pay the rent, ask your Young Person's Adviser for information about how social care services may be able to help you by:

- **Providing you with a deposit/rent and**
- **Offering or arranging a rent guarantee (bond) to your landlord**



where would you like to live?

We are unable to be a guarantor however. Your Social Worker or Young Person's Advisor will explain if that's not clear.

If you do decide to move into a flat or bedsit, you will probably have to pay for your gas, electricity and your water rates. Ask your Young Person's Adviser to give you some advice about budgeting to meet these costs.

housing association/council

Council/housing association accommodation is likely to be a self contained flat. Although you can choose the area you want to live in, you will not be able to choose exactly which flat you get. Your rent will be relatively cheap, you will be able to stay there as long as you want to and you may have the chance to move into a bigger place later on.

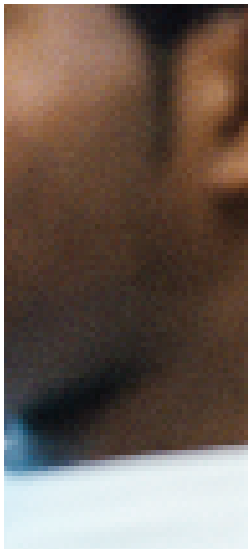


housing

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what about money?

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If you are 16 years old and have left care, you will receive a weekly allowance for yourself and your rent directly from Social Services. If you are in training however your money will be paid from the training provider. Your Social Worker will tell you how much you will receive which will either be paid directly into your bank account if you already have one or arrangements will be made with you to set one up. This will continue until your 18th birthday when you will then be entitled to claim social security benefits. You'll receive help and advice as to how this happens so don't worry that you will be left without money.

what about money?

social security benefits

You may be entitled to social security benefits, so make sure that your social worker or Young Person's Adviser looks at your situation and advises you about what you can claim.

job seekers allowance

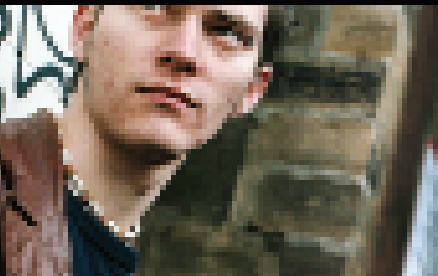
If you are over 18 and not working more than 16 hours or studying full time, you may need to claim Job Seekers Allowance while you are looking for work. Go to your local One Office, which is usually in your local Job Centre. You will be given a form to fill in and may be asked for other information such as pay slips if you have been working. You will also have an interview in which you will be asked about what type of work you are looking for. The rules for claiming job seekers allowance are complicated - so ask your Social Worker or Young Person's Adviser to explain them to you and how to go about claiming.

what about money?

housing benefit to help

pay your rent

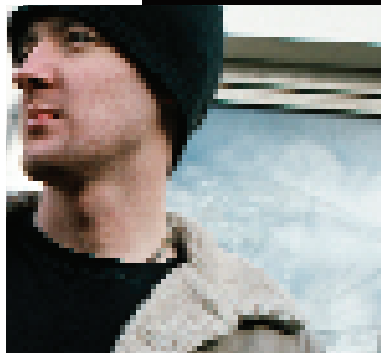
If you are over 18 and not working or working but on a low income you may be able to claim Housing Benefit. Local district or borough councils pay Housing Benefit to people who need help to pay their rent. It is paid by cheque every four weeks and normally paid directly to your landlord. If you are a council tenant your Housing Benefit will be paid straight into your council rent account.



what about money?

Sometimes Housing Benefit does not cover all the rent that you have to pay. This may be because you have extra items like food or lighting and fuel included in your rent or it may be because you are living somewhere that is bigger than you need. If Housing Benefit does not cover all your rent, ask your Young Person's Adviser for advice, as it is possible to get extra Housing Benefit in certain circumstances.

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what about money?

income support

to help pay your living costs

You may be able to claim Income Support to cover your living costs if you are unable to work due to:

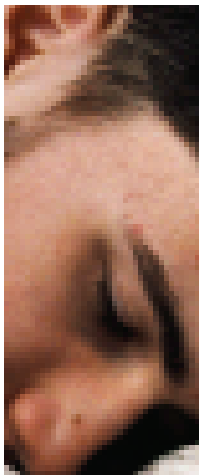
- **Illness or**
- **Disability or**
- **You are a lone parent** who is not working or who is working less than 16 hours a week or
- **You are on a course** of non-advanced education (up to A-level or equivalent)

You will need to contact your local Job centre to get the forms you need to claim Income Support.

what about money?

disability living allowance

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit you may be able to claim if you have an illness or disability that means you need help with getting around or with your personal care. Your illness or disability may be physical or due to problems that you have with your mental health or a learning disability. You can claim DLA even if you are working full time or are a full time student. The forms are very complicated and you should ask your Young Person's Adviser or Social Worker to help you fill them in.



what about money?

community care grants

If you are entitled to Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance and are leaving care, or have recently left care, and are setting up home you may be able to claim a Community Care Grant. This will help you to buy things such as bedding, pots and pans, furniture, in order to help you set up in your new home. You may also be able to claim for items that may help you to stay in your present home. You can claim a Community Care Grant from the Department of Work and Pensions. To receive a Community Care Grant you must be:

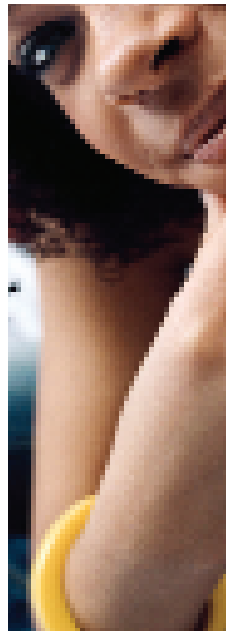
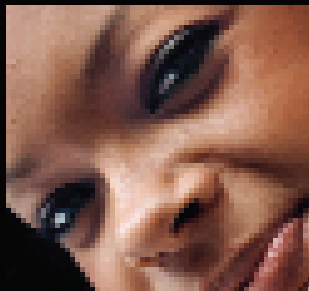
- **Receiving Income Support or**
- **Receiving Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, or**
- **Likely to receive one or other of the above benefits**

within six weeks of your application for a Community Care Grant.

what about money?

The Department of Work and Pensions considers each application for Community Care Grants individually, so you need to include as much information on your application form as possible. You will need to give details of the following:

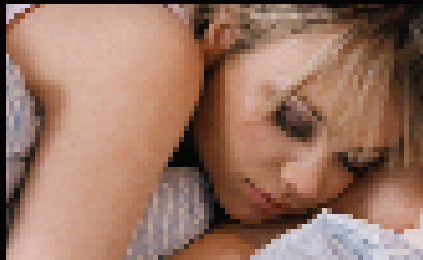
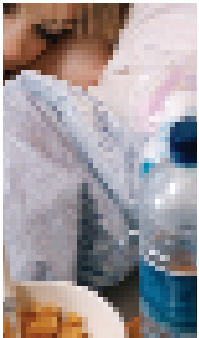
- **What you need to buy**
- **Why you need it**
- **What will happen to you if you do not get it**



health matters

Your Young Person's Adviser will advise you on how to obtain information about:

- **An eye test**
- **Financial help with prescriptions**
- **A list of doctors and dentists** and how to register with them
- **Contraception**
- **Pregnancy**
- **Sexual matters**
- **Any other health matters** you want to ask about



making a complaint

If you want to make a complaint about the service you have received from the department speak to your Social Worker or Young Person's Advisor and they will talk to you about what you need to do and what happens next.

You can speak to the complaints officer if you prefer:

tel: 01446 704800

or write to:

The Children's Complaints Officer,

The Vale of Glamorgan Community Services,

Docks Offices,

Barry.

CF63 4RT



or contact:

South Wales Children's Rights and Advocacy Network

tel: 0800 58186

or

Childline

tel: 0800 111117

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useful telephone numbers

● **benefits...**

Job Centre Plus _____ (Income support, JSA, Social Fund etc)	01446 444000
Private Tenants _____	01446 709244
Council Tenants _____	01446 709494

● **social services...**

Haydock House _____	01446 725202
YOT Team _____	01446 745820
Complaints Officer _____	01446 704800
Emergency Duty Team _____	02920 396873

● **hospitals...**

Barry _____	01446 704000
Heath _____	02920 747747
Llandough _____	02920 711711
Whitchurch _____	02920 693191

useful telephone numbers

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● doctors...

Court Road _____	01446 733181
High Street _____	01446 733355
Towers _____	01446 734131
Ravencourt _____	01446 733515
Park Crescent _____	01446 735365
Holton Road _____	01446 420222

● drugs advice...

Inroads _____	01446 407407
Vale Alcohol and Drug Team _____	01446 700943

● energy providers...

Swalec _____	0800 052 5252
British Gas _____	0845 6091122
Southern Elec Gas _____	0845 7585401
Transco Supply _____	0870 6081524

useful telephone numbers

● training organisations...

New Way	02920 345389
Barry College	01446 725000
Careers Wales	01446 410600
Nacro	01446 411100
Imtec	02920 640500
Itec Cardiff	02920 663800
Itec Barry	01446 721551
Learning for Life	02920 239585

● useful numbers...

Alcohol Concern	0171 928 7377
Parent Line	01702 559900
Women's Aid	01446 744755
Child Line NSPCC	0808 1002524
Child Line	0800 1111
National Aids Line	0800 567123
Drugs Help Line	0171 603 8654

useful telephone numbers

● useful numbers...

Princes Trust _____	01446 725046
National Drugs Line _____	0800 776600
Rape Crisis _____	01685 379310
Llamau _____	01446 722574
Amelia Trust Farm _____	01446 781427
Advocacy _____	02920 668956
Citizens Advice _____	0845 120 3756
NACRO _____	01446 411100

● housing providers...

Homes 4U _____	01446 709840
Homelessness _____	01446 709500
Hafod _____	02920 455078
Jigso _____	01446 748852
Newydd _____	01446 701501
Wales and West _____	0870 0131930
Glamorgan and Gwent _____	02920 473767

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