



Throughcare and Aftercare Service



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The Promise



A Promise was made by the Scottish Government to set out what needs to change in the care system by 2030 to make sure every child and young person feels safe, loved, and respected. The Promise was made using the voices and experiences of over 5,500 care experienced children, young people, their families, and the paid and unpaid workforce.

The Promise says...

- You must be listened to and meaningfully and appropriately involved in decision-making about your care. Decision making must take account of what is reported by people who you trust, and professionals should properly listen and respond to what you and they want and need.
- You should feel comfortable expressing your views at meetings and know that you can ask for fewer professionals to be there in person.
- You should belong to a loving home and stay there for as long as needed. There should be ongoing support available to do this, and support will be timely, judgement-free and anytime it's needed and for as long as it's needed.
- As you become an adult, the help should not stop. You should feel fully prepared for adulthood, know how to ask for help when you need it, and be given this help when you ask.
- The language we use must not stigmatise care experienced children and young people further by using over-professionalised jargon. We must stop using words like "placement", "unit" and "LAC".
- Organisations will support care-experienced children, young people, and their families in a trauma-informed way.

Our commitment to you

The Comhairle is a Corporate Parent to care experienced children and young people. This means the Comhairle has a legal duty to keep you safe and promote your wellbeing. Corporate Parents should listen to your needs, fears and wishes, and be proactive and determined to address these. The Comhairle has a duty to look after care experienced children and young people as any other parents would look after their own children.

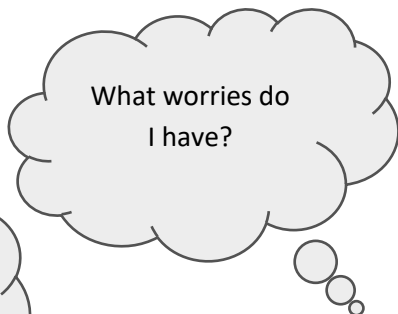
- Your transition towards living more independently should be a natural and gradual process and you should feel prepared for this.
- You will be told of all the accommodation options available to you when you are getting ready to move on from care, including continuing your current care arrangement until age 21 if this is in your best interests.
- You should only leave care when you are ready, rather than due to your age.
- You will be given all the support you need to develop your practical living skills and plan for your future using the Pathways Planning programme.
- Moving on from care does not mean you need to move on from the services and support you are needing.
- You can continue to be supported by children's services until aged 26, and there is **no closed door** in seeking any help you might need, at any time.
- The preparation to leave care should involve all significant people in your life, and you will be central to this process with your best interests prioritised.

Pathway Planning

All young people experiencing care, will be introduced to the Throughcare and Aftercare worker from around age 14 – 15 to begin thinking about what you are currently doing and where you would like to be in the future. It focuses on your hopes and aspirations and how to make these a reality.

Pathways will look into seven areas of your life and helps you think about what is going well, any concerns you may have and what actions/supports you feel you need. The seven areas are.

- Lifestyle
- Family and Friends
- Health and Wellbeing
- Learning and Work
- Where I live
- Money
- Rights and Legal Issues



What are my options for living?

Continuing Care?...

If you are currently in foster, kinship or residential care from age 16, you have a right to request that you remain there until aged 21.

This might be because this is the place you call home, feel safe and feel supported and that this feels right for you. You might not feel ready to leave care or live independently, and this might not be in your best interests either.

A young person receiving Continuing Care will no longer be defined as 'looked after' but will continue to receive the same support.

If the placement cannot be maintained, or if it is in your best interests to start an alternative placement, a welfare assessment must be provided to show why staying in your current placement would significantly negatively affect your wellbeing.

Supported Lodgings?....

Supported lodgings are when people and families (sometimes called "hosts") offer to rent a room to a young person leaving care. If you are not ready to live on your own yet, supported lodgings can be a great stepping stone.

It allows you to live in a family home, but you'll have a bit more independence while continuing to learn and build on your practical life skills. At least one of your hosts will be trained so they can offer you practical and emotional support.

The Comhairle will work hard to ensure you and your host are good match for you and your needs.



Own Tenancy?...

Through Pathway Planning, it may be identified that living independently is best suited to you and your needs, and you may feel ready for this. An alternative is that living independently is something to work towards following Continuing Care or a Supported Lodgings placement.

This will involve lots of planning to ensure it is right for you, to give you the best chance of success, and identify all support you may need for this. A Team Around The Child (TATC) meeting will:

- Assess the suitability of the accommodation, and identify any furnishings/decorations needed,
- Ensure all financial arrangements have been made and income/benefits assessed,
- Ensure all necessary health arrangements are in place,
- Set a contingency plan so that in the event the move to your own tenancy is difficult or unsuccessful, you have the option to return to your previous accommodation. This means there will be a set period of time agreed that your bed in your previous accommodation will be kept for you.

Return to your Family Home?...

On leaving care, you may decide that you wish to return to your family home, and your parents or carers agree with this plan. If this is the case, your parents or carers should be offered a welfare benefits appointment at the earliest opportunity, and you can continue to receive support from Aftercare services until age 26.

What financial help can I expect?

If you are aged 16 – 26 years old and in Aftercare, you can receive financial assistance from the Comhairle. You can receive support for:

- Accommodation and maintenance costs,
- General assistance, such as applying for benefits,
- Help with education and training, and
- Provision of vacation accommodation for care leavers in higher education which requires you to live away from home.



Your social worker has a duty to assist you with this by:

- Ensuring you have opened a bank account,
- Applying for regular financial support on your behalf,
- Assessing other financial benefits and grants you are entitled to,
- Reviewing the financial assistance you receive every 12 weeks,

In emergencies, you can request additional help from your social worker for one-off items, or large goods such as:

- Clothing – essential clothing, interview clothing or work/training related items
- Personal Care
- Work/ Education/ Training Equipment (where not provided by trainer, etc.)
- Sport activities - i.e. gym membership
- Music/Leisure/Hobbies
- Pursuing Religious interests
- Driving Licence
- Passport Application

Benefits and regular financial assistance

The assessment of your need for financial assistance will be undertaken prior to leaving care. You may be eligible for any of the following supports depending on your personal circumstances:

Universal credit

This is a social security payment which replaces six means-tested legacy benefits:

Housing Support, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Child Tax Credits & Working Tax.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Care leavers who have a disability may be entitled to this.

Scottish Welfare Fund

This is a safety net for those on low incomes to access a grant payment.

Access to Food Bank support

Cost of Living Payments

This is to support those on low incomes with the cost of living.

Financial assistance for work, training, and higher education

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

A weekly payment to support young people to stay on in post-16 education.

Education Bursary Fund

£1200 bursary for CEYP to stay on in full time education.

£2000 bursary available if going on to Higher Education (e.g. university).

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

You may be eligible for this if you have a disability which affects how much you can work.

Job Start Payment

This is available to 16 – 25 year olds who need help with the costs of starting a new job e.g. uniform, lunches, childcare.

Unite Foundation Scholarship Scheme

Application to have university accommodation and bills covered for up to three years of study.

Accommodation costs for Higher Education

The Comhairle will pay accommodation costs to the same level you would receive in Housing Benefit.

Other entitlements

Travel and transport

- Apply for a Young Scot card to receive free bus travel across Scotland.
- Two free return ferry journeys per year with a Young Scot card.
- Air Discount Scheme (ADS) enables discounted flights from the Western Isles.

If you are compulsory supported or receiving Aftercare and not in training or employment you may qualify to receive travel reimbursement to attend appointments, seek job and training opportunities, maintain links with family and friends, and to participate in leisure activities.

Health costs

Young people who are compulsory supported or receiving Aftercare are entitled to full help with health costs. Request a HC1 (SC) form from your local pharmacy.

Birthday allowance

A birthday allowance will be payable to all care leavers. This will be paid with their weekly allowance. The amounts are as follows;

17th Birthday = **£25**,

18th Birthday = **£50**,

19th Birthday = **£25**

Grants from charities and businesses

Some charities offer grants for care experienced young people to help cover the costs of household items, education, training, and employment. Your social worker can help you apply for these.

Emergency help and contacts

Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum (STAF)

www.staf.scot



WhoCares? Scotland

www.whocaresscotland.org

0330 107 7540



**WHO
CARES?**
SCOTLAND

Information here about emergency mental health support and contact details for Childline/Samaritans/YoungMinds?

- Emma/YP to choose charity to link here

Children and Families Social Work

-Lewis & Harris

St Lennan's Centre,
22-24 Point Street,
Stornoway, Isle of Lewis
01851 822749

Throughcare and Aftercare Support Worker

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