

MEG

MiZone Entitlement Guide



Contents

Introduction	Page 03
Care Leaver Rights	Page 04
- 1. A Pathway Assessment of Your Needs	Page 04
- 2. A Pathway Plan	Page 04
- 3. A Personal Adviser	Page 04
- 4. A Place to Live	Page 05
- 5. Maintain Contact	Page 06
- 6. Involvement with Decisions	Page 06
- 7. To Have Your Say	Page 06
- 8. Access Your Records	Page 06
- 9. To Know About Services	Page 06
Advocacy	Page 07
Entitlement	Page 08
- 1. Eligible Young People	Page 09
- 2. Relevant Young People	Page 09
- 3. Former Relevant Young People	Page 09
- 4. Qualifying Young People	Page 10
Accommodation	Page 12
- Post 18 Accommodation	Page 12
Homeless Young People under 18	Page 13
Young Refugees, Children Seeking Asylum, Migrants And Children without Citizenship	Page 14
Children with Disabilities	Page 15
Jargon Buster	Page 16
Useful Contacts	Page 17

Introduction

Leaving care can be an exciting time. It can also feel quite scary and overwhelming period for others. Some care leavers will have good support from Children's Services, but others may feel they could have more advice, guidance and support.

Although Children's Services should be there to help with the practical aspects of becoming more independent, they may not always realise that this time can be very stressful and becoming a young adult is not always easy, especially if you have had a difficult time growing up.

Struggling with upsetting thoughts and feelings is very common, and it is a sign of strength to be able to recognise this and to ask for help if you need it. Your GP or social worker can refer you to a counsellor for emotional support, but there are also many other organisations that can help.

In 2001, a law came into place designed to give care leavers the support that they need to do well when living independently. This was called the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. Then, in 2008, a new law – the Children and Young Person's Act – extended these rights.

Children's Services should tell you about your rights and make sure that you understand them and know how to seek help. They will also have to listen to your views when making decisions about your life.

As with all laws, some of this will be very complicated and it is important that you know your rights and how to get help. Sorted and Supported is designed to help you with this.

Care Leaver Rights

The Office of Children's Rights have identified a number of core aspects the law says YOU are entitled to from your local authority when leaving care and they include:

1. A Pathway Assessment of Your Needs

You have a right to have your needs assessed not more than 3 months after the date you become an eligible care leaver which is commonly called a 'Pathway Assessment' designed to make sure that you leave;

1. at a time that is right for you
2. knowing what support you will be getting and,
3. understanding what your options are if things don't work out for the best.

For many young people, it is important to know that you can stay in care up until you are 18, unless you agree that you are ready to leave before.

2. A Pathway Plan

Following the completion of your Pathway assessment and, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so, Children's Services will prepare your individual Pathway Plan which will generally start 3 months after your 16th birthday or point of entitlement. This should make clear the help you will be getting in preparing to leave care and what support you will receive after you have left.

This should say how your local authority will help you achieve the things you want in life (such as a place of your own, educational achievement, having your own money to spend, going on a training course or getting the job that you want). This is very important to you, as your Pathway Plan says exactly what help you should be getting before, during and after you leave care. Once agreed, it should to be kept to by all those who have signed it.

When the time comes for you to leave care, you should be able to look after yourself, keep yourself healthy, continue with your learning, enjoy and achieve things in life, stay in touch with family and friends, and be confident about who you.

3. A Personal Adviser

Children's Services should make sure that you have a Personal Adviser. This could be your current social worker or a worker from the 'leaving care' team. It is their job to keep in touch with you, check that you are alright and help you in getting what you need. To do this they must make sure that your Pathway Plan is followed, reviewed (at least every six months) and kept up to date.

From April 2011, a change in the law means that care leavers up to the age of 25 who tell their council they have returned, or want to return, to education or training, will also be able to have the support of a personal adviser while they are on their course (if the course is agreed in their Pathway Plan). ('Young People's Entitlements', Department for Education).

4. A Place to Live

Your local authority must make sure that you have somewhere 'suitable to live'. This means that it has to be right for you and, above all, safe. It is important that wherever you prefer to live, you make sure that your local authority puts this into your Pathway Plan. You can decide to return home if this is what you and your family wish.

In deciding whether accommodation is suitable for a care leaver to live in, your local authority must take into account your wishes and feelings about their accommodation, as well as setting out if the accommodation meets your needs and what the landlord is like.

If your local authority arranges accommodation for you, they must conduct a Statutory Review of your pathway plan after you have lived there for 28 days – and at least every three months after that. Your personal adviser must visit in the first week and then at least every two months after that and, also, before each review of the Pathway Plan.

Financial Support

Until you are 18, Children's Services must arrange for your financial support to help you pay for the things you need to live on (for example for food, clothing, travel, hobbies and for your accommodation). They have to make sure that you are not any worse off than if you were on benefits. Once you are 18, if not in employment or full-time education, you can claim benefits as an adult and your personal adviser should support you to make all relevant claims. However, your local authority should continue to give you financial help (for example towards the costs of your education and training), if that is what they have agreed to do. In order that children's social services keep to their promises, they should make sure that all agreed support is written into your Pathway Plan.

Local authorities also must pay the Higher Education Bursary for all eligible care leavers. A formal 16-19 Bursary scheme was introduced from the start of the 20011/12 academic year and looked after young people and care leavers are guaranteed a £1,200 bursary if they stay in full-time education (and £2,000 if going to university). Young people should get in touch with their education provider (that is school or college) to find out how to claim the bursary. For advice speak to student support services or your tutor, or go to www.direct.gov.uk/16-19bursary

As part of your transition to adulthood your local authority is required to provide you with a setting up home allowances will be crucial in helping you establish your own home and support your independence and it should be used to ensure that they have appropriate equipment and household items to set up safe, secure and stable accommodation. You can ask your authority for £2,000 for the setting up home allowance. This was the amount that the young people agreed, at the regional meetings for Chairs of Children in Care Councils, to ask their local authorities for.

5. Maintain Contact

Your Personal Adviser should help you to keep in contact with relatives and also friends that you have met whilst in care. If you would like more information about finding friends that you met whilst in care why not visit; www.careleaversreunited.com

6. Involvement with Decisions

You have a right to be involved in all major decisions that effect you, including when you leave care, where you go to live and what support you receive.

7. To Have Your Say

Although you have left care you are still entitled to let Children's Services know and, if necessary, complain if not satisfied with the support you are getting.

REMEMBER: You also have the right to have an advocate to help you do this (see below).

8. Access Your Records

Children's Services must keep written case records of the time you have spent in their care, including assessments of needs, Pathway Plans, and their reviews. These records should be kept for 75 years. You can ask to access your records yourself or through other people, such as a solicitor or an advocate, although Children's Services may ask that they prove that they are acting on your behalf. You need to ask to access your records in writing. Children's Services must then give you access within 40 working days.

Although you have a right to be given access to the information about you, there is some information that they may not disclose. This can be the case if:

- The information on file identifies other people (called third parties). In these cases the information should be removed or given in a way that does not identify these people. The information must be given to you if the third parties have agreed for the information to be passed on to you.
- Giving you the information would seriously harm your physical or mental health or that of any other person.

Children's Services may charge a fee of up to £10 but it is common practice not to ask for this fee from care leavers.

9. To Know About Services

You have a right to be told, and given information telling you, about all the services that you are entitled to used once you leave care (for example, Connexions, children's social services, health, further and higher education courses, housing advice).

Advocacy

In general, Children's Services will help you make decisions about what is best for you and will use the Pathway Planning process to work with you to identify what your individual transition plan to adulthood will look like.

As part of that planning you have a right to be involved in any decision that effects you and whilst Children's Services do not have to do what you would prefer, they should take your view into account and should consult with you.

However, sometimes it is difficult to be heard and you may not be happy with the decisions that are made that effect you. Having someone available to you who can help you say what you want can make things easier and that is why you have the right to have an advocate.

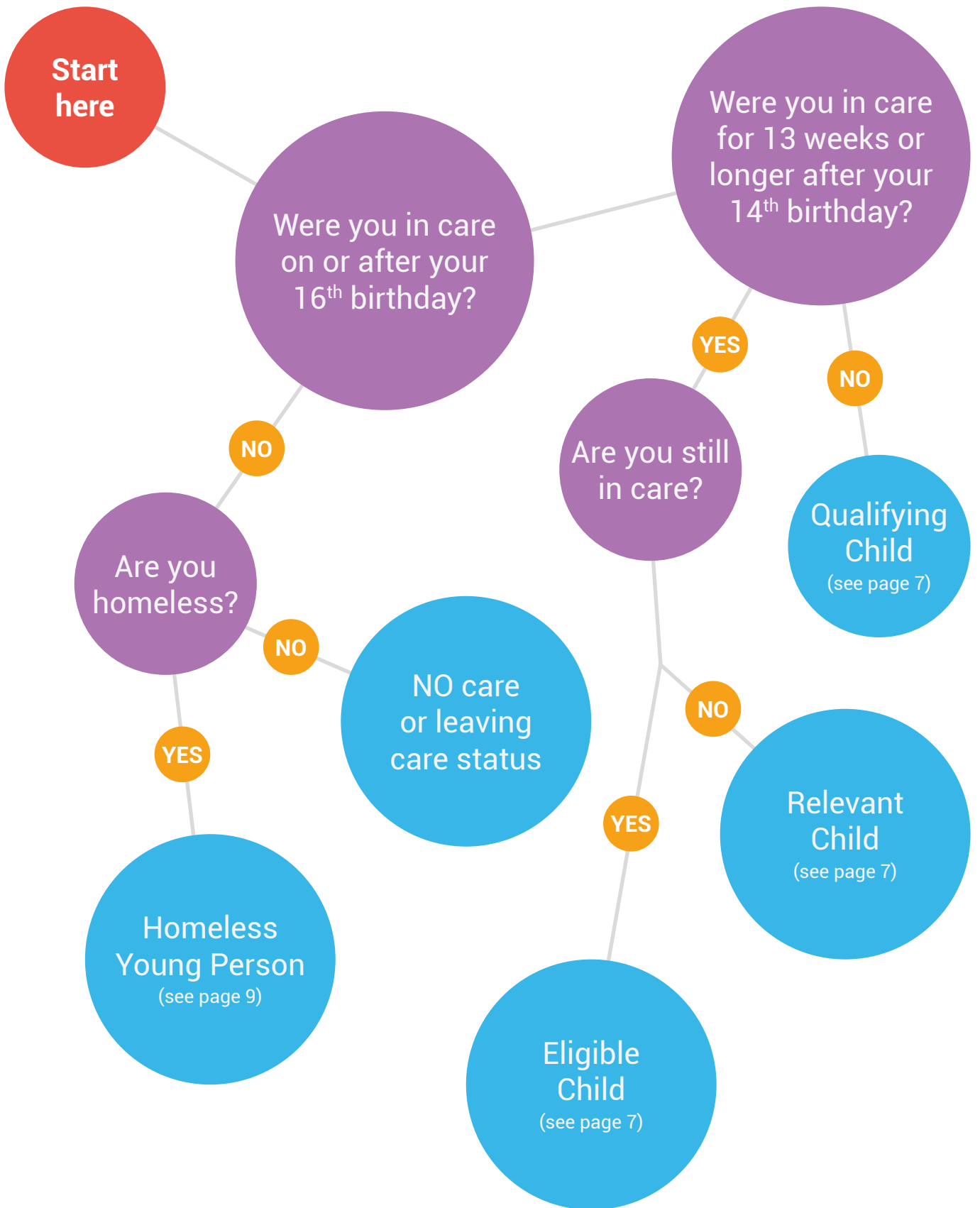
An Advocate can:

- Give you information and advice so you understand your rights
- Make sure people listen to you and know what's important to you
- Help you speak out at your reviews or other meetings

There are lots of organisations that can support, advise and assist you and you can find some at the end of this booklet.

Transitional Plus Care recognise the importance of effective advocacy and we provide advocates to support young people. Your local authority may also have a Children's Rights Officer who may be able to help you and it may be worth asking your Personal Advisor for that persons name and contact details. You can also find more information on TPC's advocacy service by speaking to your keyworker or unit Team Leader or by visiting our website at: www.tranpluscare.com

Entitlement



1. Eligible Young People

An eligible young person is aged 16 or 17 and has been Looked After for a period or periods totalling at least 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday and they are still in care. (This total does not include a series of pre-planned short-term placements of up to four weeks where the child has returned to the parent). There is a duty to support these young people up to the age of 18, wherever they are living.

The statutory definition and requirements to undertake a needs assessment, prepare a Pathway Plan, keep the Pathway Plan under review and appoint a Personal Adviser are now covered by Regulations 42, 43 and 44 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.

2. Relevant Young People

A relevant young person is aged 16 or 17 and no longer Looked After, having previously been in the category of Eligible Young Person when in care. However, if after leaving care, a young person returns home for a period of 6 months or more to be cared for by a parent and the return home has been formally agreed as successful, he or she will no longer be a "Relevant Young Person".

A young person is also "Relevant" if, having been in care for three months or more, he or she is then detained after their 16th birthday either in a hospital, remand centre, young offenders' institution or secure training centre. There is a duty to support Relevant Young People up to the age of 18, wherever they are living.

The statutory definition and requirements to stay in touch with the young person, undertake a needs assessment (unless this was done when the young person was 'Eligible'), prepare and keep the Pathway Plan under review, appoint a Personal Adviser (unless this was done when the young person was 'Eligible') and provide accommodation and assistance to meet his or her needs in relation to education, training or employment are now covered by Regulations 4 to 9 of the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010.

3. Former Relevant Young People

A former relevant young person are those aged 18 to 21 (or up to 24 if in full-time further or higher education), and have left care having been previously either "Eligible", "Relevant" or both. There is a duty to consider the need to support these young people wherever they are living.

The statutory definition and requirements to stay in touch with the young person, keep the Pathway Plan under review, continue the appointment of a Personal Adviser and provide financial assistance near where the young person is employed or seeking employment/to enable the young person to pursue education or training remain unchanged they are now covered by Regulations 4 to 9 of the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010. These duties continue until the young person becomes 21 or, where the Pathway Plan sets out a programme of education or training beyond 21, they continue so long as the young person pursues the programme. The duty to pay a higher education bursary also continues, as before.

The duties of Local Authorities are extended in relation to Former Relevant Young People who inform the Local Authority of their wish to take up a programme of full time further or higher education after the age of 21 and under the age of 25. In relation to these young people, the Local authority has a duty to:

- Appoint a Personal Adviser;
- Carry out an assessment of the needs to determine what assistance (if any) it would be appropriate to provide;
- Prepare a Pathway Plan;
- Give assistance to the extent that the young person's educational or training needs require it. The kinds of assistance are: contributing to expenses incurred by the young person in living near the place where (s)he is, or will be, receiving education or training; or making a grant to enable the young person to meet expenses connected with his education and training.

The duties of the Local Authority subsist for as long as the young person pursues the programme of education or training in accordance with the Pathway Plan, and the Local Authority may disregard any interruption in the education/training if it is satisfied that the young person will resume it as soon as is reasonably practicable. In each case where a care leaver requests this support, the Local Authority will need to assess the appropriateness of the course and how it will help the young person to achieve his or her ambitions. The extent of the practical and financial assistance provided will reflect the type of course, whether full- or part-time, and the young person's existing income.

NB: Any decision to cease looking after a child aged 16 or 17 who is Looked After other than by virtue of a Care Order, must be approved by the Director of Children's Services. The Director must be satisfied that:

- The child's wishes and feelings have been ascertained and given due consideration;
- The child's Independent Reviewing Officer has been consulted;
- The child's relatives have been consulted, where appropriate.

4. Qualifying Young People

Qualifying children are those who:

- left care on or after their 16th birthday and were looked after for less than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday (even for one day)
- are on a special guardianship order or were on a special guardianship order when they reached the age of 18 and were looked after immediately before the making of that order
- are Relevant Children (see above) who have returned home for six months or more.

What you can expect from Children's Services Children's Services must:

- give you advice and support
- keep in touch with you
- provide or pay for accommodation during college or university holidays if you are studying full-time away from home, up to the age of 25 Children's Services may:
- find you somewhere to live in exceptional circumstances
- provide you with other support by buying the items you need or, in exceptional circumstances, by giving you cash, to the extent that your welfare and education requires it
- give you a grant to pay for expenses related to your education, training and work needs up to the age of 25
- contribute to living expenses related to your education and training, up to the age of 25

Plans:

Although Children's Services do not have to make a Pathway Plan as such, after an initial assessment they should make a plan stating what support you will receive. This may follow the same format as a Pathway Plan. Children's Services do not have to regularly review this plan, but, as your circumstances change, you may want to ask Children's Services to update it.

Housing:

If you are a Qualifying Child, you may have priority for housing, which means that your local Housing Department must give you somewhere to live fairly quickly.

Money:

Children's Services may be able to help you but in most cases they do not have to. You will need to ask them whether they can help you. However, if Children's Services will not help you, they have to give you advice on how to get the support that you need. You have the same rights to benefits as any other young person who is your age, so you should apply for benefits. Any extra money you get from Children's Services will not be taken into account in working out your benefits. If you are studying in higher education, you will have to apply for a student loan and grant, just like any other young person. Some courses may also have special grants to help you pay for your expenses and some universities may have special grants for care leavers. You should seek information from your university. Care leavers can also access financial support for their education outside Children's Services. Some of this support is specifically for care leavers; some can be accessed by any young person. Funding for further and higher education is very complicated and comes from lots of different places. Your leaving care team should be able to give you advice about this.

Secure settings:

Children's Services must make sure that they keep in touch with you but they do not have to visit you. Your rights are the same as for any young person in the community. If you are under 18 and on secure remand you will become a looked after child.

Accommodation

Children's Services must make sure that you are living somewhere that is suitable for you and provides the support you need.

Continuing to live with your existing carers after you reach the age of 18 is encouraged but not always possible. Children's Services will have "Staying Put" policies which explain how care leavers aged 18 years and older can stay with their carers when they become adults and your options should be discussed within your Pathway Assessment and first Pathway Plan.

If you are moved from a foster carer or children's home into what is called 'other arrangements' accommodation, your local authority will need to:

- Take your needs into account
- Look at the accommodations facilities, services, state of repair, safety, location, support, tenancy status, affordability and any required financial commitments
- Seek your views and take them into account
- Arrange for you to visit your new accommodation, unless this is not reasonably practical

Where possible, all the above actions should be taken before you move and your local authority must be reasonable when deciding where you should live. However, that does not mean that they have to agree with your wishes if, for whatever reason, they feel your wishes are unreasonable or not in your best interests.

Post 18 Accommodation

Children's Services should plan where you are going to live when you turn 18. Up until you are 21 as a Former Relevant Child you are a priority for housing, which means that your local Housing Department should give you somewhere to live fairly quickly. Also, lots of local authorities offer their care leavers different levels of support such as relief from Community Charge and it is important that you work with your local authority Personal Advisor to make sure you receive all your entitlements.

Further, in what is known as the Barking and Dagenham judgement, the High Court has ruled that Children's Services has a duty to provide accommodation to Former Relevant Children even after the age of 18 if required on safeguarding and welfare grounds and if the young person cannot access suitable accommodation in any other way. This includes young people who may be seeking asylum whom do not have recourse to public funds and would have otherwise been referred to the Home Office.

Homeless Young People Under 18

Sometimes young people cannot live at home with their families as the relationship with them has broken down and they are at risk at home. Sometimes they may have been kicked out of their home and do not have an adult who can look after them and so become homeless or are sofa surfing. If you are under 18 and you are homeless, Children's Services must undertake an assessment of your needs as a child in need. This is usually called a child in need assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Children's Services must provide you with accommodation under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 if:

- you are a child in need
- you need somewhere to live because there are no adults who can provide you with safe accommodation. It does not matter if you go to Children's Services or the Housing Department. If you go to the Housing Department, they should refer you to Children's Services to be assessed. Being accommodated under section 20 means that you become a looked after child.

Receiving support under section 17 means that you will not be looked after and that all support will stop when you become an adult at age 18. There was a court ruling saying that Children's Services must not just give you somewhere to live or send you to the Housing Department and ask you to apply for benefits. They must look after all your needs under section 20. This will include things like keeping you safe and helping you do as well as you can, looking at your needs relating to education, health, financial support, contact with your family and friends (if you want that), and any other needs that you have. Children's Services – or the Housing Department, if you went there first – should give you somewhere safe to stay as soon as they learn that you are homeless or at risk of being homeless. They should not wait to end their assessments and only then make a decision. Children's Services will need to know if there is someone within your family that can look after you, so they will be asking you about this. This does not mean that you will need to go back to your family, if this is not a good place for you to be.

Being looked after does not mean that you have to live in a foster placement or a children's home. Children's Services can place you in semi-independent accommodation. Your views must always be considered by Children's Services but you should never be asked to make the final decision about whether you become a looked after child. You should be considered as looked after from the date that you presented yourself to Children's Services (or the Housing Department) as homeless. This is very important in relation to your leaving care status as the time you were looked after will count from that date. You can find more information on leaving care rights in previous sections of this guide.

Sometimes Children's Services may not make the right decision regarding the support they give to homeless children. If you presented yourself to Children's Services or Housing as a homeless child when you were under 18 years old and you were not looked after or were just given accommodation without any other support, you can challenge this decision. You can make a challenge even if you are now over the age of 18 years. If you are uncertain about what is best for you, you can speak with your advocate, Children's Rights Adviser or TPC keyworker regarding this.

Young Refugees, Children Seeking Asylum, Migrants And Children without Citizenship

Young refugees, young asylum seekers, and young people without British citizenship who are care leavers maintain their status as care leavers no matter what is happening with their immigration status. Your immigration status and right to be in the UK are an additional need that Children's Services should look at when making your care and Pathway Plans with you. It does not necessarily mean that you will not receive any services or that they will be different to those for other care leavers. However, this may not always be the case, and there can be some circumstances when you would lose leaving care support because you do not have the right to be in the UK. The rules about this often change and you should take advice from an advocate or a solicitor if you are told that you are losing leaving care support.

If you are under the age of 18 years, you have exactly the same rights as any other looked after child approaching leaving care. If you want to stay in this country you have to make sure you seek legal advice from an immigration solicitor in order to extend your leave. Children's Services should support you with this. If you have been granted leave to remain on the basis that you are an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) then this is most likely expire at 17 ½ years of age. You will need to make a new application before then. Your Discretionary Leave will be extended if you get your new application in before it expires. If you are over 18 and you have leave to remain in the UK - for example, if you have been granted discretionary leave, humanitarian protection, indefinite leave to remain, or refugee status - you are entitled to receive full leaving care support.

If you have not been granted leave and you are over 18, it may be that:

- you are still awaiting a decision on your asylum claim
- you have made a fresh claim for asylum and are waiting for a decision
- your appeal rights have been exhausted, which means your asylum claim has not been accepted and you have either appealed unsuccessfully or the deadline to make the appeal has passed
- you are from a country within the EU, so you are excluded from accessing housing and benefits
- you have an immigration application pending (this will normally be based on your personal circumstances)
- you have no immigration status In these situations, Children's Services may try to end your support, but they will need to conduct a Human Rights Act Assessment before they do so. It is likely to be a breach of your human rights to leave you without anywhere to stay if you are not able to return to your country of origin.

When making your Pathway Plan, Children's Services should talk to you about 'triple planning'. This means that they should help you plan for your life while you do not have settled status, assist you in making plans to stay in the UK in the long term, and talk to you about how you could return to your home country. However, in some circumstances, Children's Services may refer you to the Home Office for asylum accommodation and support, or they may only support you to return. If your circumstances are very complicated, or if Children's Services have told you they will no longer support you, then you should seek immediate advice and support from an advocacy organisation and a solicitor.

Some young care leavers, or young people in care, may have lived all of their lives in the UK. If you were born in the UK and lived here for your first ten years then you may be entitled to British citizenship. You may also be eligible for discretionary citizenship if you have spent most of your life here. You can contact your advocate, Children's Rights worker or, other form of support detailed at the end of this booklet.

Children with Disabilities

If you have a disability, you should be receiving services as a care leaver no matter which team is looking after your case. As with any other care leaver, Children's Services need to plan for your adulthood. Your disabilities are just one particular need to be taken into account when making plans for you. Even if you are looked after by the Children with Disabilities Team or referred to Adult Disability or Mental Health Services, you will maintain all your rights as a care leaver. This could just mean that several teams must work closely together to support you. You may also have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This was formerly known as a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Learning Disability Assessment (LDA). If you still have a statement of SEN or LDA you should ask about this being converted to an EHC plan. Planning must start for your transition when you are in Year 9, so during the review after your 14th birthday. The planning for transition should be done in parallel with Pathway Planning, when you approach the age of 16.

Young people with disabilities do not automatically receive services from Adult Services when they become 18 years old. If you feel that you will need support from Adult Services, you can request a Care Act assessment. Decisions made by Adult Services are made on a different basis than those of Children's Services, so they may decide you should not receive their help. If you are refused services from Adult Services, this may be challengeable and you may want an advocate to help you with this. Matters related to planning and funding of services can be complicated when there is more than one team involved, or if the council in the area where you now live is different to the council that looked after you. Everyone working with you should work together to ensure that all the services you need are in place. Services should not be stopped or delayed because of disagreements between teams regarding funding. If you are unhappy about the services you are receiving you should ask for help from an advocate.

Jargon Buster

Advocate: A person who listens to your point of view, gives you information about your rights, and helps you speak out about what you want and need. See page 5 for more details.

Appeals rights exhausted: When someone has made an asylum or immigration application that has been refused, they have had any appeals refused, and there are no further appeals possible against this decision.

Assessment: A close look at your situation, your needs, and what support you may need. Care (being in care, being looked after) Being in care or being a looked after child mean the same thing. A child or young person can be in care for three main reasons:

- If there is a court order, called a care order, which says that Children's Services should look after them
- If the parents – or the young person if they are aged 16 or 17 – agree that Children's Services will look after them
- If a young person aged between 12 and 17 is living on secure remand in a secure children's home, a Secure Training Centre, or a Young Offender Institution. Care plan A plan made when you are in care about your immediate and long-term future on the basis of your needs assessment. This should cover: personal support, accommodation, education and training, employment, family and social relationships, practical and other skills, financial support, and health needs. You should play a key role in devising your care plan.

Child in need: A child or young person who is in need of support from Children's Services to make sure that they have a reasonable standard of physical or mental health or development. Children with disabilities are considered to be children in need.

'Other arrangements' accommodation: Accommodation that, unlike foster care and children's homes, is not subject to regulation. Examples of 'other arrangements' accommodation are semi-independent accommodation, supported lodgings and foyers. They are also known as 'unregulated accommodation'. Pathway Plan Very similar to a care plan (see above) but more focused on preparing you to live independently. If you are still in care, it is often included in your care plan.

Personal adviser: (also known as PA) The worker allocated to care leavers to support them and to ensure that the things in their Pathway Plan are done. Usually Children's Services have professionals dedicated to this role but your PA can also be chosen from the professionals that work with you.

Policy: A written statement that outlines what services you can expect to receive.

Priority need: A term used by the Housing Department to identify who should have access to council housing first.

Secure remand: A court order made by the criminal court stating that you must be placed in a secure children's home, Secure Training Centre, or Young Offender Institution while you are waiting for your case to go through the court. Being on secure remand means that you are a looked after child.

Review: A look at previous assessments and decisions made about your care to check that things are still relevant and/or needed, and to make changes if necessary. People involved in your care are usually called to a Review meeting.

Further information

If you would like more information about any of your entitlements when leaving care contact any of the following organisations or visit their websites:

- Office of the Children's Rights Director (Tel: 0800 528 0731, website: www.rights4me.org)
- A National Voice (Tel: 0161 237 5577, website: www.anationalvoice.org)
- Who Cares? Trust (Tel: 0207 251 3117, website: www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)
- Care Leavers' Association (Tel: 0161 275 9500, website: www.careleavers.com)
- Children's Legal Centre (Tel: 01206 877 910, website: www.childrenslegalcentre.com)
- National Leaving Care Advisory Service (Tel: 0207 840 5620, website: www.raineronline.org)
- Voice (Tel: 0207 833 5792, website: www.vcc-uk.org)
- Your local children's social services or leaving care team for advice.
- Help at Hand (Children's Commissioner) www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/learn-more/help-at-hand 0800 528 0731
- Become – Care Advice Line www.becomecharity.org.uk/help-and-advice/care-advice-line 0800 023 2033
- Find a solicitor (Law Society) [solicitors www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk)
- Rees: The Care Leavers' Foundation www.thecareleaversfoundation.org 01678 540 598
- Refugee Council www.refugeecouncil.org.uk 0808 808 0500 0207 346 1134
- Shelter www.shelter.org.uk 0808 800 4444