

**ONGOING CARE LEAVER SUPPORT – INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

What Has Changed?

The new duty under the Children & Social Work Act extends the time care leavers can expect to receive support from their local authority. Previously care leavers received support until they reached 21 years. With the change, ongoing support is now available for all care leavers up to the age of 25. This change became effective from the 1st April 2018. The aim is to support care leavers so that they can live successful independent lives with continued support from their local authority if this is needed. It is acknowledged that each care leaver will reach the point of full independence at different points of their life. There is no assumption that all care leavers will want or require ongoing Personal Adviser support until the age of 25 and that they should develop maturity and more independence with the right support and social networks around them upon leaving care. But for some care leavers, they need support beyond reaching the age of 21.

What can I expect if I have an extended service?

It will be different to the care leaver service you have been receiving as it is recognised that you are older and your needs are likely to be different. We want to provide you with somebody to turn to for advice or support but we also respect that you might want more freedom as an older young adult to make your own choices, independently from the local authority.

If you still have some needs at the age of 21, you can receive a service from a specifically trained Personal Adviser who is located within our Services for Young People team for care leavers aged 21 and over. The following information aims to help you make an informed decision about an ongoing care leaver service.

There will still be a pathway plan in place, but it doesn’t need to be a full one as there might only be the need for support in one aspect of your life (however, you might have more complex needs, In which case a full pathway plan will be in place).

Contact with your 21yr+ Personal Adviser can be as much or as little as agreed between you and your PA. You will also agree the ways in which contact will happen (whether face to face, by phone, email or social media Apps).

If you feel that you do not need the PAs involvement at any time because things are better for you then you can agree with your PA to only have contact again if you have another need, in which case it will be left that you will come back to ask for support if you have the need to.

It might be that you decide that you do not need or want a continuing care leaver service right now, but then something crops up and you want some advice and guidance and do not have someone to turn to. The 21yr+ service we offer allows you to make contact and get advice and guidance whenever you need it. This will continue to be offered to you until you reach the age of 25yrs.

Further information can be found at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/leavingcare](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/leavingcare). If you would like to request a service, please email us at [leavingcare@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:leavingcare@hertfordshire.gov.uk) Please provide some brief information on what services you would like from us. Alternatively if you would like to speak to someone please call on 0300 123 4043