



SLEE

A Brief Guide to Leaving Care in Somerset





Introduction



If you are 16, and have been in the care of Somerset County Council for 3 months, you are entitled to a range of services and financial support, usually until the age of at least 21.

This includes;

Personal
adviser

- A 'personal advisor' who will be your main contact and who will make sure that you have all the support you need.
- A 'Pathway Plan' of what Somerset County Council will do for you in the future
- Preparation for Adult Life
- Accommodation provision until you are 18 and advice and help to find accommodation after that
- Money to live on until you are 18 and help and advice about finances after that.
- Help with education, training and employment
- Advice about your general health and wellbeing,

When you are 21 and are in or want to return to education or training we can support you with that until you are 25.



Accommodation

We want to encourage you to remain in a care setting until you are really ready to live more independently. Accommodation options available are:

- With former Foster Carers - a 'Staying Put Arrangement'.
- 'Stepping Stones' – Supported Lodgings
- Supported accommodation – a range of sizes with support workers visiting
- Independent housing



Money to live on

When you are living in a foster home or in residential care the foster carer or staff will give you some money to spend on some of the things you need and they will buy you or provide other things.

If you leave foster or residential care before you are 18, unless you are working full time, we will pay you a 'personal allowance' to cover food, clothes, phone money, going out, bills etc. This allowance matches the benefits rate for other young people aged 16 or 17 years.

You can also receive money to help with other things that are agreed in your Pathway Plan. These might be for a passport, birth certificate

or provisional driving licence, for contact with family, emergency or crisis support, connected with your health or emotional wellbeing. You will also receive a voucher for your birthdays and once a year for a festivity such as Christmas.

When you are 18 you are entitled to claim all welfare benefits.



Education, training and employment (ETE)

**£30
PER WEEK**

As a care leaver you will be entitled to bursaries for further and higher education. In addition we will give you an 'incentive' payment of up to £30.00 per week depending on attendance. We can meet other costs not covered in other ways such as;

- Transport, registration and examination fees, books, clothing, equipment activities etc connected to a course

Also you will be supported through at least one move into employment e.g we can help with clothes for interview, transport or start up equipment.

Having Your Say

There are a range of ways that you can have your voice heard about the services you receive;

- Making comments or suggestions at any time to your worker or their manager
- Making a complaint – an advocate will be available if you want to do that
- The Leaving Care Council - a group of care leavers who meet approximately every 4 weeks to discuss how best to improve services for care leavers.