

# Skills 2 Thrive

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The Transition Toolkit: Thrive Into Adulthood

# Agenda

## **10 – Intros**

1015 – The REAL care planning

1115 – Regs (inspection top tips)

## **1130 – coffee break**

1145 – legal framework

## **1245 lunch**

130 – techniques and approach

## **245 coffee**

3 – taking the right steps and resources available

## **4 finish**

# Aims of training

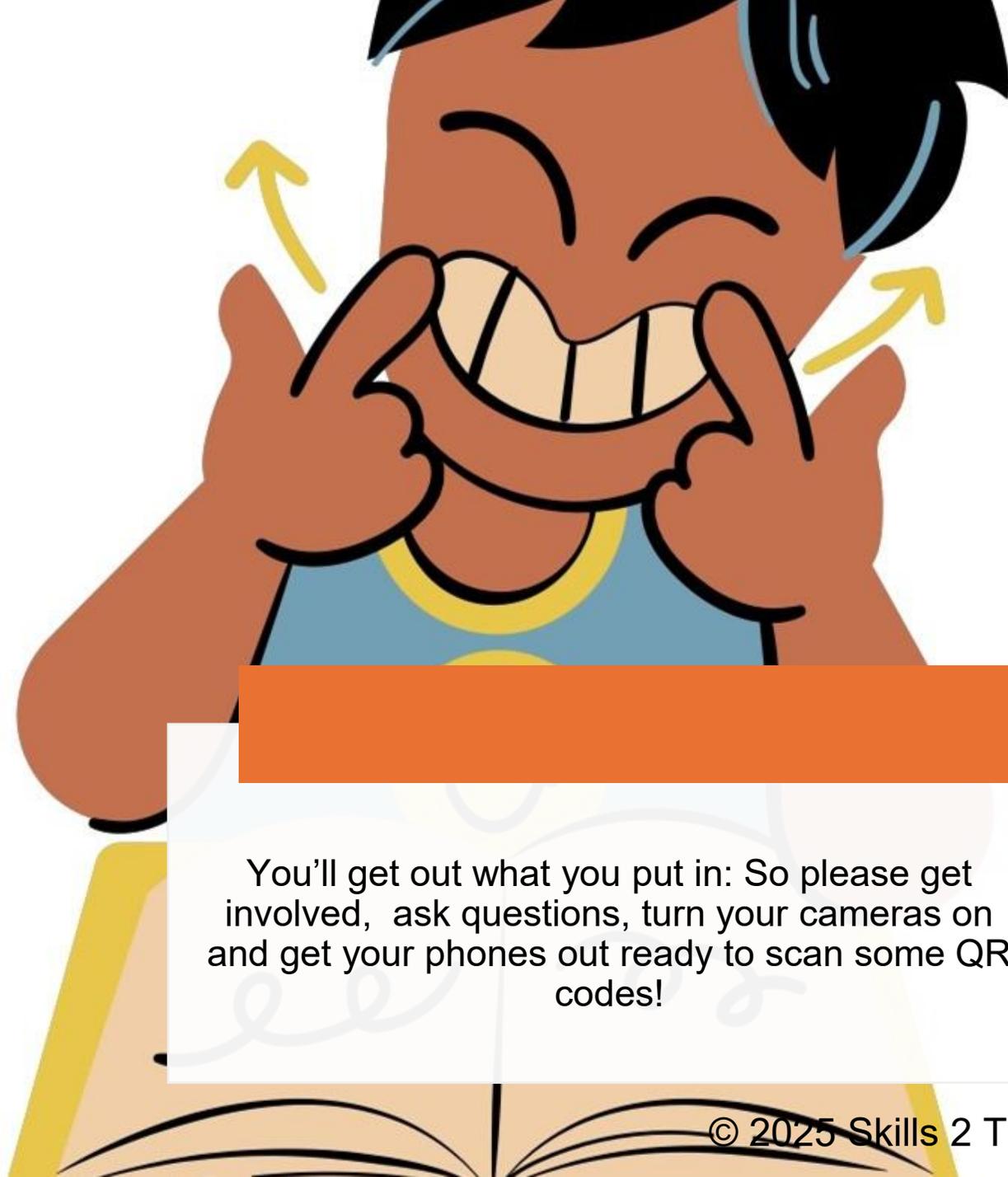
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## **By the end of this course participants will:**

- Have reflected on context and nature of young people and how their needs impact on their leaving care journey
- Understand the legal requirements, rights and practical steps put in place at each step for young people
- Have improved skills in working with young people to unlock their potential
- Remain aspirational for young people, while developing concrete steps to help them achieve
- Be confident developing contingency plans for common things that can go wrong
- Be able to navigate a wide range of resources to support young people into other forms of accommodation

<https://dialogueltd.co.uk/courses/leaving-care-training/>

# CAMERAS IN USE



You'll get out what you put in: So please get involved, ask questions, turn your cameras on and get your phones out ready to scan some QR codes!



# **Dougie Stringer – Founder and Director**

- **Founder and company Director Skills 2 Thrive and Thrive Support**
- **Care experienced**
- **8 years' experience as a qualified social worker and Personal Advisor (leaving care worker)**
- **BA Hons 2:1 Social Work**
- **BA Hons 2:1 Sport and Social Sciences**

**My mission – to empower young people to thrive as they transition out of care**

# Inspection Top Tips

Leaving Care

July 2025

# Children's Homes Regulations

- ...help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to ... live independently as an adult

# Children's Homes Guide

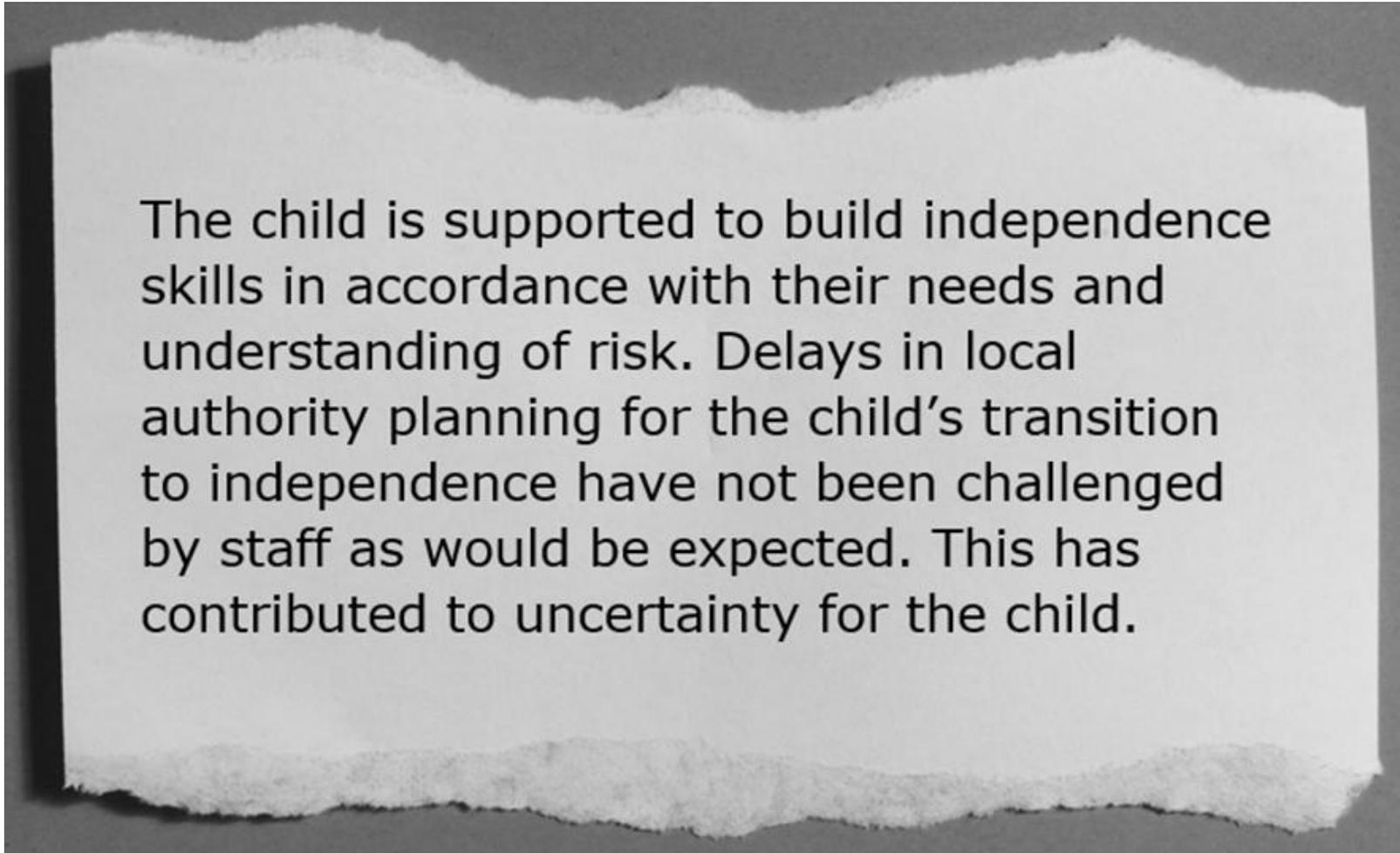
**2.8** Where the placing authority or another relevant person does not provide the input and services needed to meet a child's needs during their time in the home or in preparation for leaving the home, the home must challenge them to meet the child's needs (see regulations 5(c)). Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would. The registered person should consider the use of an independent advocate (see paragraph 4.16) if the child's needs are not being met.

**11.9** ...The registered person should work with the placing authority to ensure that each child's transition is planned and help each child to prepare for leaving both practically and emotionally.

# Children's Homes SCCIF Good Criteria

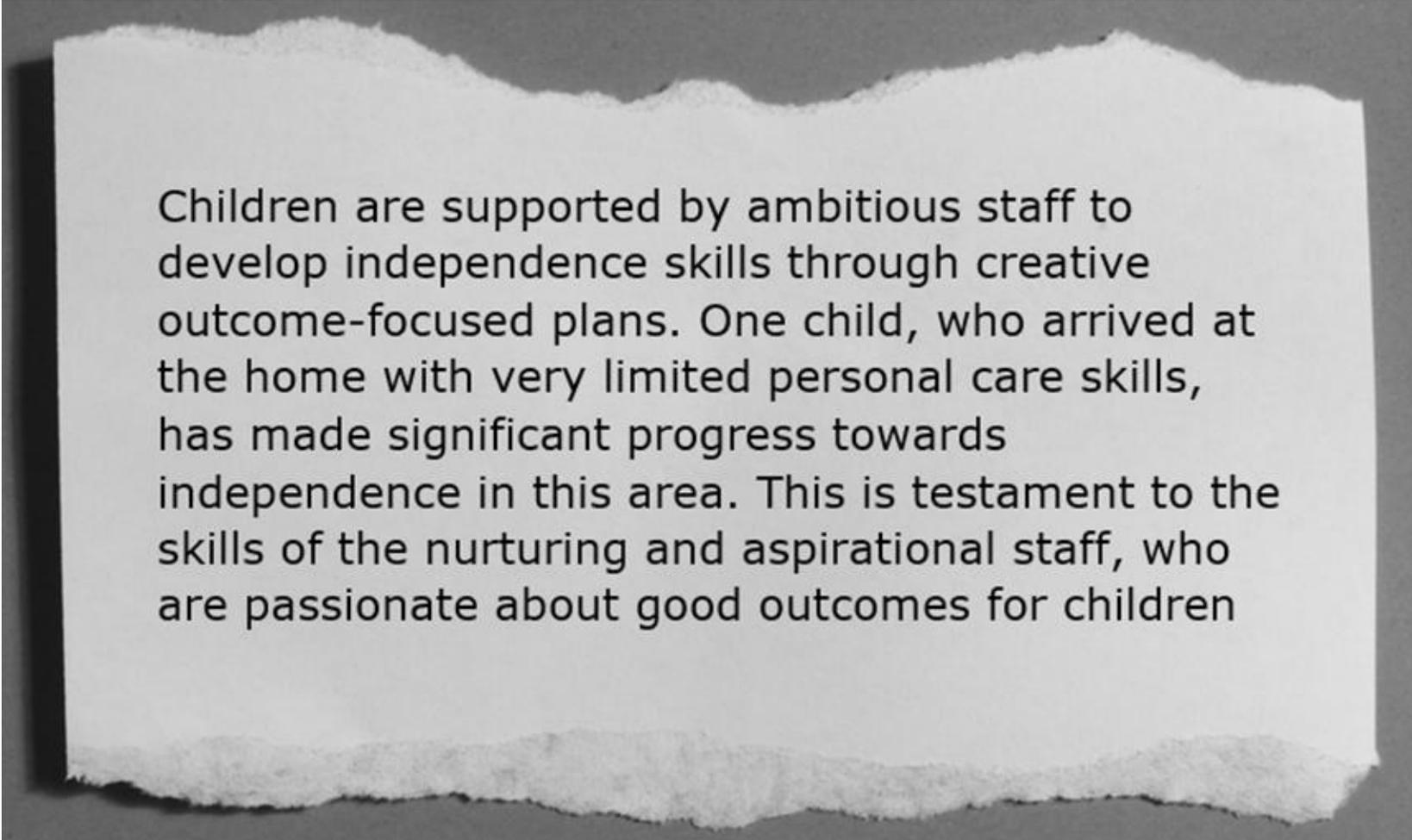
Children receive effective and timely help to prepare them for their futures. They are supported to develop their independence according to their individual needs, while protecting themselves from being in unsafe situations or with unsafe people. The home challenges the responsible placing authority when staff have concerns about the plans for children's futures, including the timing of leaving care.

## Ofsted comment from inspection – good



**Recommendation:** As per last slide

## Ofsted comment from inspection – good

A piece of white paper with a torn, deckled edge is centered on a dark grey background. The paper contains a black and white text block. The text describes a child's progress in developing independence skills through creative, outcome-focused plans, highlighting the role of ambitious and nurturing staff.

Children are supported by ambitious staff to develop independence skills through creative outcome-focused plans. One child, who arrived at the home with very limited personal care skills, has made significant progress towards independence in this area. This is testament to the skills of the nurturing and aspirational staff, who are passionate about good outcomes for children

# Top tips...

- 1. Start when they arrive...** children's homes are always a transition and before accepting a young person you should be thinking about where they are going and how you can help them get there.
- 2. Arm yourself with plans!** Ensure you have the care plan, needs assessment, pathway plan and reference these all within your placement plan.
- 3. Take a structured approach** - follow a programme that covers all the areas young people need to succeed.
- 4. Dream big** 😊 Care planning is about helping young people realise their goals. This is an exciting time where young people will have more agency and control, when done well.
- 5. "Staff should act as champions for their children, expecting nothing less than a good parent would"** – couldn't have put it better.
- 6. Fight hard** – it's tough out there. Build in visiting advocates to support the young person's wishes and feelings about when is the right time.

# Wanting more...

We have some brilliant training programmes around Leaving Care – let's talk about what we can offer your team.

If you're interested in a place on a course, express interest at...

[www.dialogueltd.co.uk/leaving-care-training](http://www.dialogueltd.co.uk/leaving-care-training)

**Care Leavers make up 25% Homeless Population**

41% are not in Education, Employment or Training.

**Care Leavers make up 25% Prison Population**

39% Say that they lack confidence in money and benefits.

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**35% Of care Leavers struggle with loneliness and isolation**

**They are FIVE time's more likely to end their own life**



# Ice Breaker-

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Reflect on a previous experience where you supported a young person preparing to leave care. What was the biggest challenge you encountered during that time?

# What is a care Leaver?

A care leaver is a young person who has spent time in the care of a local authority and is now transitioning into adulthood. In the UK, this usually means someone who:

- Has been looked after by a local authority (for example, in foster care, residential care, or with kinship carers) for a period of time
- Is aged 16–25 (care leaver support can extend to 25 in many cases)
- Is entitled to additional support as they move towards independence



## What is the 13-week rule?

To qualify for full leaving care support, a young person must have been:

Looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks in total

After their 14th birthday, and

With at least one day in care after turning 16

If a young person meets this threshold, they may be entitled to enhanced statutory support under the Children

# Care Leaver Status Explained (England)

## Relevant child

Aged 16–17

Has left care

Previously met the 13-week rule

### Support includes:

A Personal Advisor (PA)

A Pathway Plan

Accommodation and financial support



## Eligible child

Aged 16–17

Still looked after by the local authority

Has been in care for 13+ weeks since age 14

### Support includes:

Leaving care planning

Preparation for independence

## Former Relevant child

Aged 18–25

Aged 18–25

Previously an Eligible or Relevant child

### Support includes:

Ongoing PA support

Regular Pathway Plan reviews

Help with education, employment and training (EET)

Support can continue up to age 25



## Qualifying care leaver

Were looked after for less than 13 weeks after age 14, or

Left care before age 16, or

Were in certain arrangements (e.g. Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Orders)

### Support includes:

- Advice and assistance from the local authority
- Support based on assessed need

## What is a Pathway Plan?

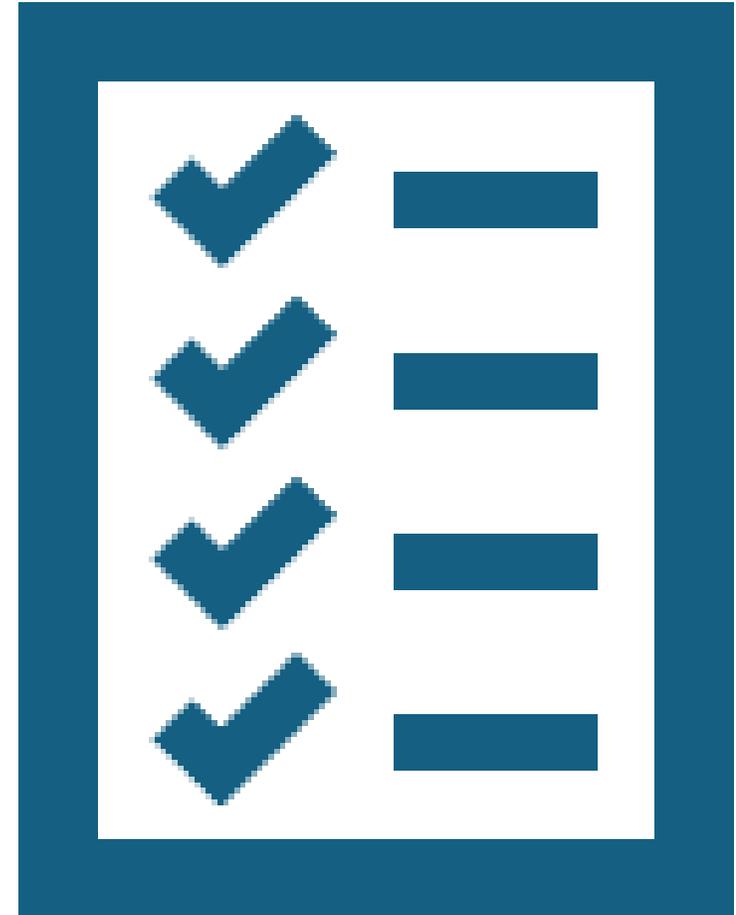
A Care Leaver's Pathway Plan is a legal document required by law for young people leaving care, usually from age 16. It outlines their goals, support needs, and the steps to help them prepare for independence. It must be created with the young person's input to ensure they're getting the support they need.

### When should it begin?

It should start at age 16 with your local council and be reviewed every six months (reviews can occur at any time).

### What should it cover?

- ✓ Health
- ✓ Education, training, and development
- ✓ Family connections
- ✓ Financial management



# What is a Personal advisor?

A personal advisor (PA) is a leaving care worker who provides guidance, support, and information to help YP transition from care.

A PA will:

Assume responsibility for YP support.

Collaborate with the YP to review their pathway plan and ensure they help them achieve their goals.

Maintain communication to ensure everyone involved has access to the necessary support.

After a YP leaves care, their personal advisor will continue to stay in touch. They can receive their help and support until they turn 25.



# Care Leaver Entitlements:

- ✓ PA until 25 (If applicable)
- ✓ Minimum 2k leaving care grant
- ✓ 2k grant uni fees- this can be split
- ✓ LA's must provide Vacation accommodation support if YP needs it.
- ✓ Council tax exemption\*
- ✓ Priority Housing status
- ✓ 1k Bursary for Care Leavers starting an apprenticeship.
- ✓ Employers hiring care leavers aged under 25 don't pay NI contributions.

## Some Local offers Include:

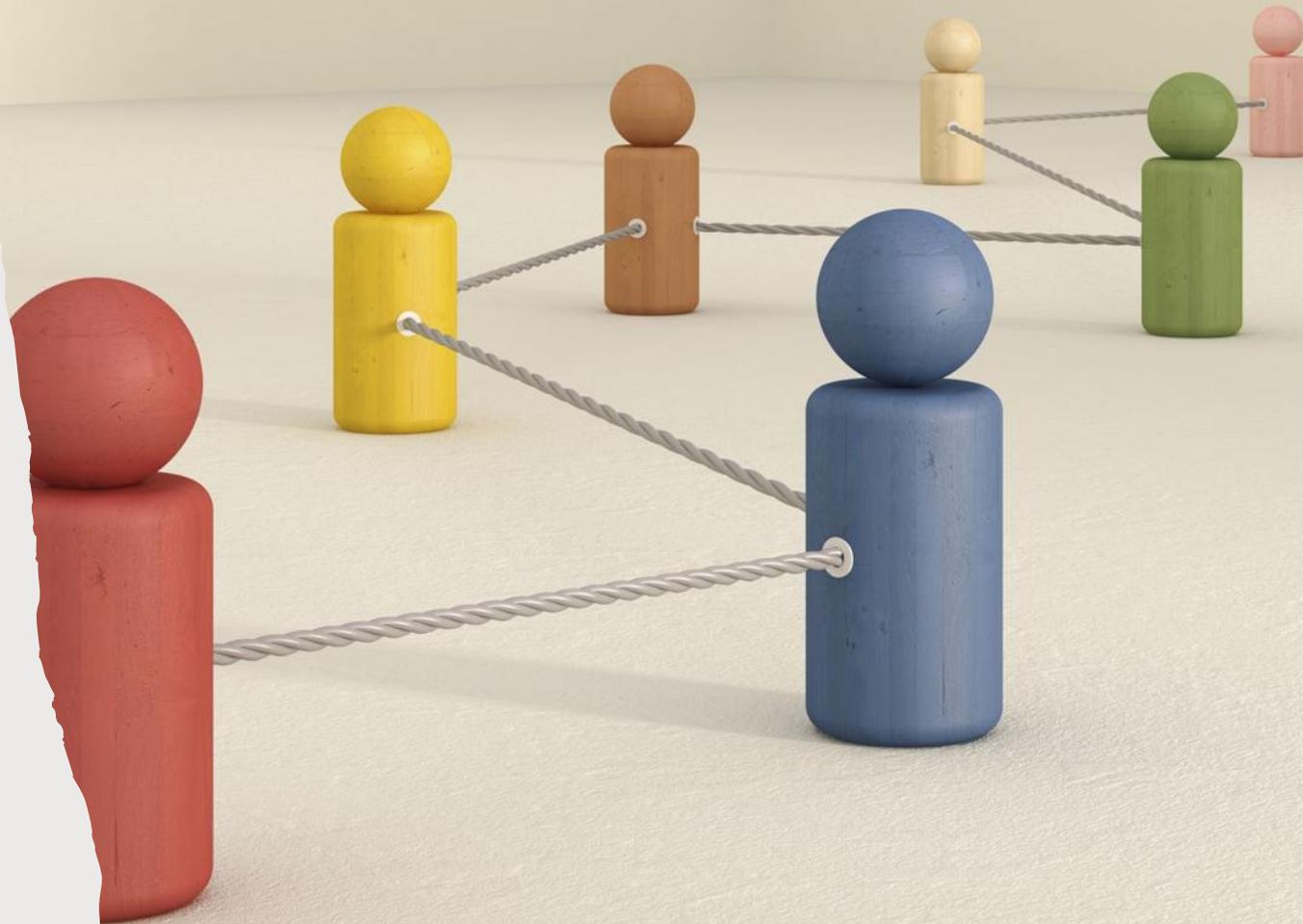
- ✓ Free travel passes.
- ✓ Driving Lessons.
- ✓ Leisure passes.



# Grant/Child Trust Fund

| <b>Type of Savings</b>        | <b>Who Gets It</b>                    | <b>When Accessible</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Junior ISA / Child Trust Fund | In care 12+ months, opened by gov't   | At age 18              |
| Local authority savings       | Depends on council policy             | 18 or 21               |
| Leaving Care Grant            | All eligible care leavers             | When moving out        |
| Own personal savings          | All care leavers (encouraged to save) | Anytime                |

The Role of  
Community and  
positive  
Networks –  
Interdependenc  
e



# Why is empathy important?

**Builds trust and rapport**, creating a safe, supportive environment.

**Recognises unique challenges**, offering tailored, compassionate support.

**Encourages active listening**, making care leavers feel heard and valued.

**Promotes resilience and hope**, empowering growth and independence



# Role modelling



# Empower VS 'Doing for'.



Creating Good Daily Habits...start by making your bed!





# DISCIPLINE

Is doing what needs to be done,  
even if you don't want to do it.

# Finding a sense of purpose through goal setting.

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Work backwards- what doesn't a YP want to do, to get to what they do.



A person wearing a hat and jacket is sitting on the edge of a dark, rocky cliff. They are looking out over a vast, hazy landscape of rolling hills or mountains under a warm, orange and red sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The person is silhouetted against the bright light of the sky.

“ITS NOT WHAT  
HAPPENS TO YOU,  
BUT HOW YOU  
RESPOND TO  
WHAT’S HAPPENED  
TO YOU”

Constantly fixating on things that have happened to us can morph our identity, allowing our past to define us.

# Perspective



**“I can’t believe this happened to me”**

**“X is at fault for all my problems”**

**“This is what happened to me, so this is now who I am”**

...leads to bitterness, anger, resentment and a victim mindset.

**“I’m grateful the things this experience has taught me because”:**

- I’m now more resilient
- It forced me to make a positive change
- Leant a lot about myself
- I grew as a person because of it
- It gave me a sense of purpose
- It gave me a superpower

# Post Traumatic Growth

**Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG)** refers to the positive psychological changes that can occur after experiencing trauma, highlighting the potential for growth alongside the pain.



# The superpower of Exercise and Sport





# How does exercise help improve mental health?

Get out your  
comfort zone  
and do tough  
sh\*t



# The Pillars Of Wellbeing



-SLEEP



-LIGHT



-MOVEMENT AND  
EXERCISE



-SOCIAL  
CONNECTION AND  
RELATIONSHIPS



-GET CREATIVE



-NUTRITION



-SENSE OF  
PURPOSE

# Prep for (Inter)dependence

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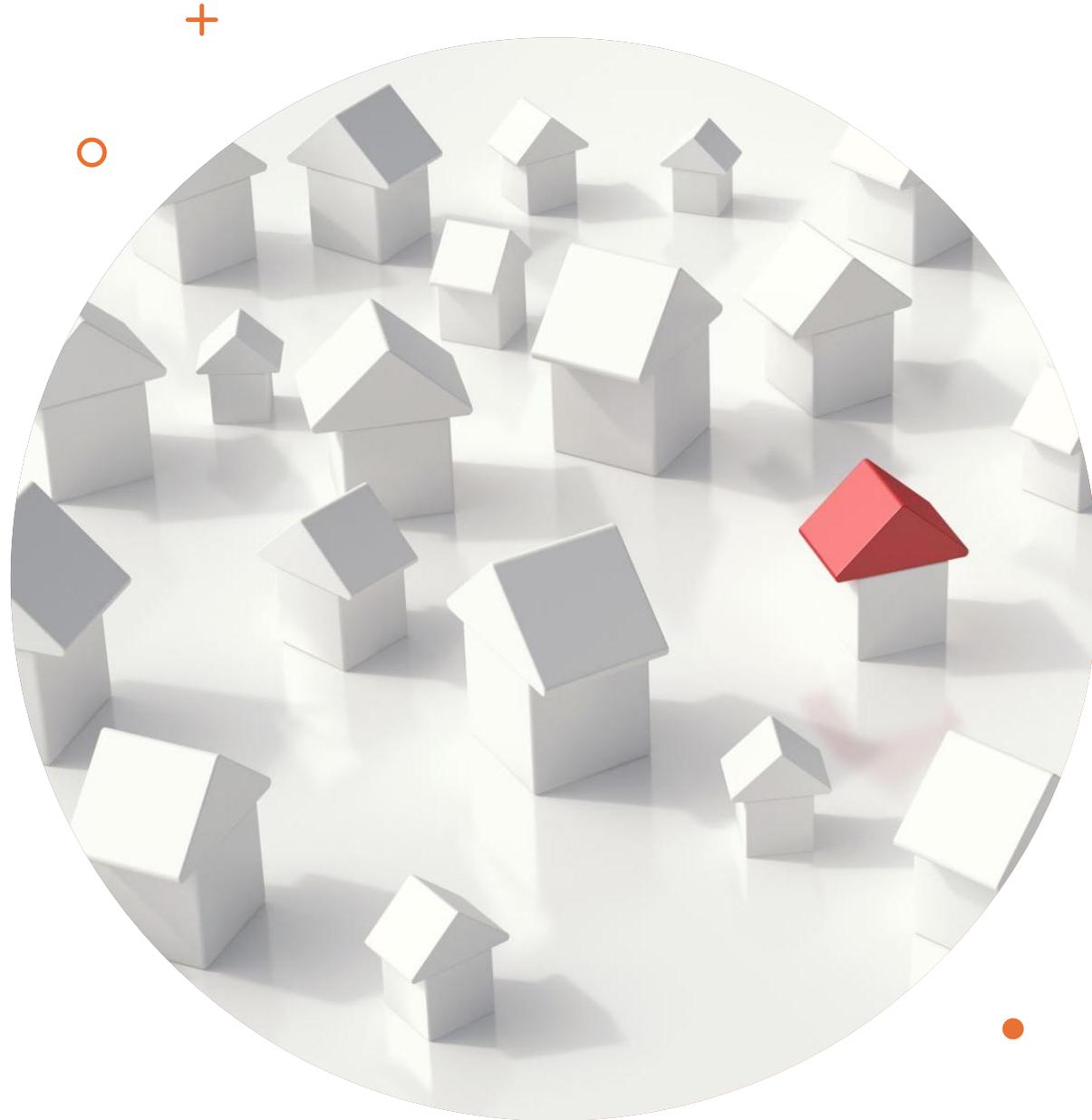


# THE CLIFF EDGE



## Potential Post 18 Accommodation options:

- ✓ Staying Put (with foster carers).
- ✓ Supported Lodgings.
- ✓ Supported Accommodation.
- ✓ Social Housing.
- ✓ Private Accommodation.
- ✓ University Accommodation.
- ✓ Family or Friends.



## Social Housing

- 🏠 Care leavers may get priority for social housing – depends on local council policy
- 🏠 Local authorities must help care leavers aged 18–25 find suitable housing
- 🏠 Many councils offer priority need or extra points on housing lists
- 🏠 Applies if YP was in care for 13+ weeks since age 14, including time after 16
- 🏠 Care leavers aged 18–21 are often considered automatically vulnerable
- 🏠 Joint protocols often exist between housing and leaving care teams
- 🏠 Check local housing allocation policy for specific entitlements



## Staying Put:

Allows care leavers to stay with foster carers after 18 (up to 21, or 25 if in education).

Helps provide a smoother transition into adulthood.

Becomes a formal agreement, not a fostering placement.

Carers receive financial support from the local authority.

Young people may contribute to rent/bills.

Aims to provide stability and ongoing support during early adulthood.



Young people who participate in the **Staying Put** experience significantly better outcomes compared to those who leave care at 18.

This arrangement provides a more gradual and supported transition into adulthood.



**What do you think is the most significant benefit of the Staying Put arrangement for young people leaving care?**

## What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is a form of adult social care where individuals (usually 18+) with support needs live with or regularly visit a trained carer in their home.

### Key Points:

- Provides a family-style environment for adults with learning disabilities, mental health needs, or other support needs.
- Can be long-term, short breaks, or day support.
- Aims to promote independence, inclusion, and stable relationships.
- Carers are carefully matched, trained, and supported by a regulated Shared Lives scheme.
- Not a parenting role – it's about support and shared living, not fostering.

A social worker or adult social care team carries out a **needs assessment** under the **Care Act 2014** (for adults) or **Children Act 1989** (if under 18): 'eligible care and support needs'

<https://sharedlivesplus.org.uk/our-work-and-campaigns/our-shared-lives-programmes/>



## Key Differences:

| Feature                        | Shared Lives Carer               | Foster Carer                       |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age of person cared for</b> | Adults (18+)                     | Children and young people (0–18)   |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | Adult support/companionship      | Parenting and safeguarding         |
| <b>Legal role</b>              | Supportive, not parental         | Acts as temporary parent           |
| <b>Duration</b>                | Often long-term or respite       | Varies – short/long-term/emergency |
| <b>Scheme</b>                  | Shared Lives schemes (regulated) | Fostering services (regulated)     |



# Homelessness

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# Planning for Post 18

Tenancy Ready  
and Housing

Health and  
Wellbeing

Crime, CCE,  
CSE and  
Criminal Justice

Practical Life  
Skills

Education,  
Employment  
and Training

Relationships

Money  
Management

# Housing and Tenancy Ready



<https://barclayslifeskills.com/help-others/cpd/moving-forward-after-care/>

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/homelessness/housing\\_help\\_and\\_homelessness\\_if\\_you\\_are\\_a\\_care\\_leaver](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/housing_help_and_homelessness_if_you_are_a_care_leaver)

<https://www.asdan.org.uk/>

<https://skills2thrive.co.uk/>

# Education, Employment and Training



<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/what-we-do/employment-and-training/>

<https://www.c22.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/cv-template.pdf>

<https://mycovenant.org.uk/about-the-care-leaver-covenant/>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-young-people/leaving-care/young-person/employment-training>

<https://alison.com/>

<https://www.kingstrust.org.uk/how-we-can-help/get-job>

# Money Management



<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting/budget-planner>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-young-people/leaving-care/financial-support>

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/help-others/adult-learning/modules/taking-control-of-your-income/>

Someone at 18  
doesn't have a job,  
what are their  
options?



Benefits Calculator:

[www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/benefits](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/benefits)

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

# Money Management

<https://barclayslifeskills.com/>

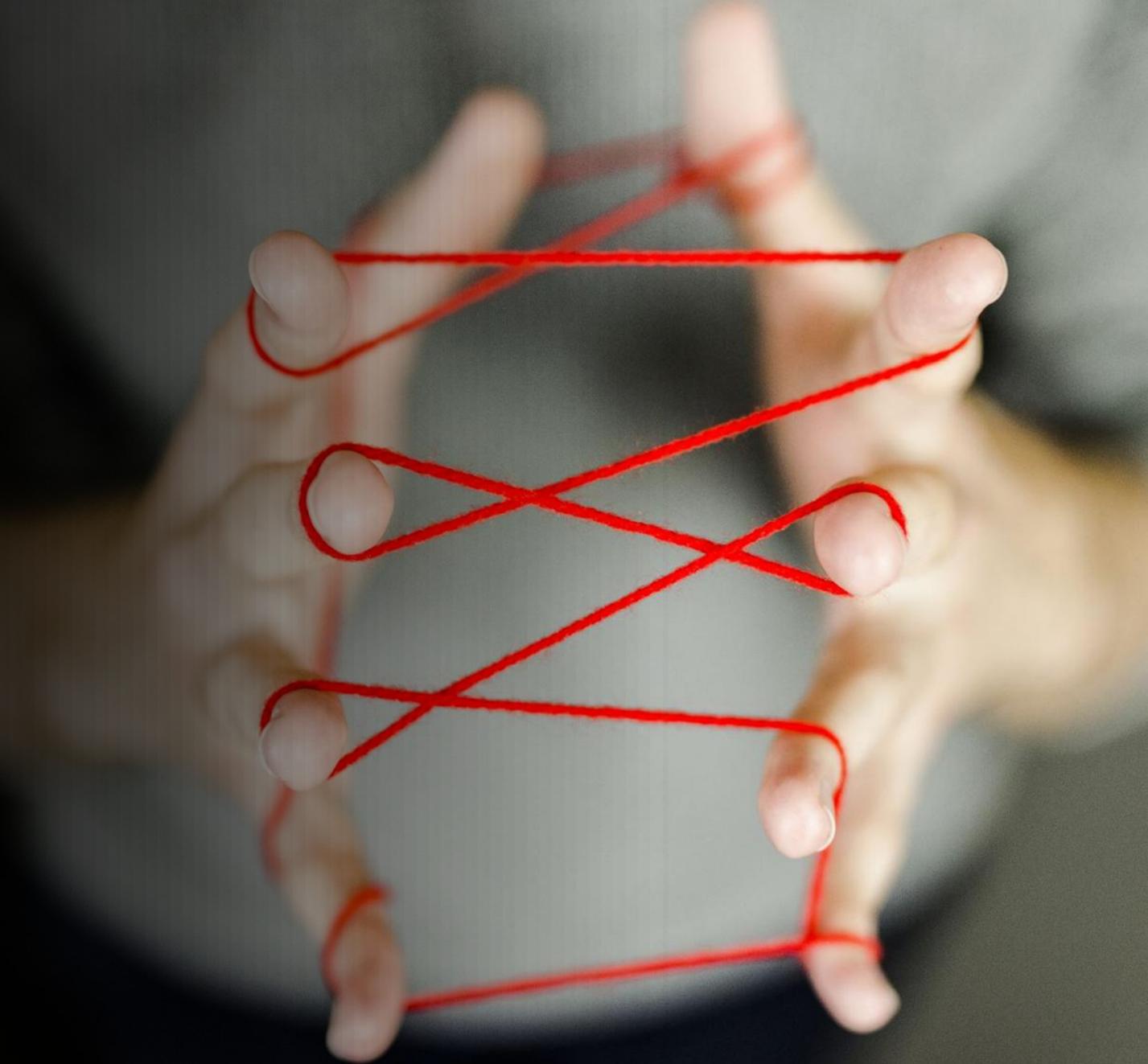
<https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/documents/everyday-banking-easy-read-guide.pdf>

<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting/budget-planner>

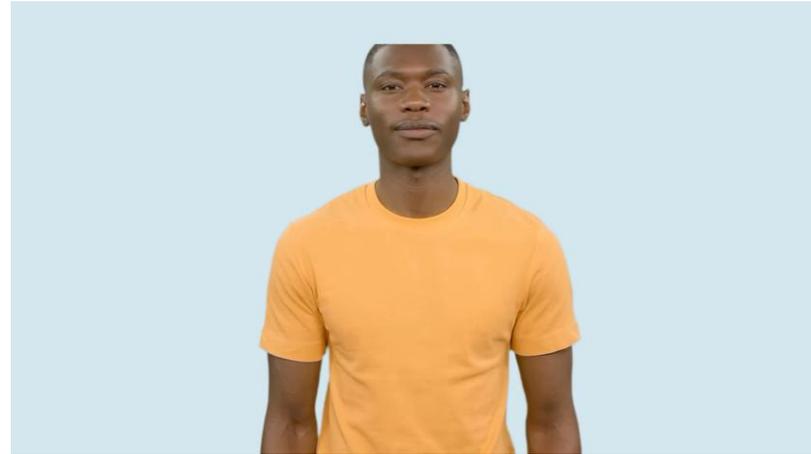




# Practical Life Skills

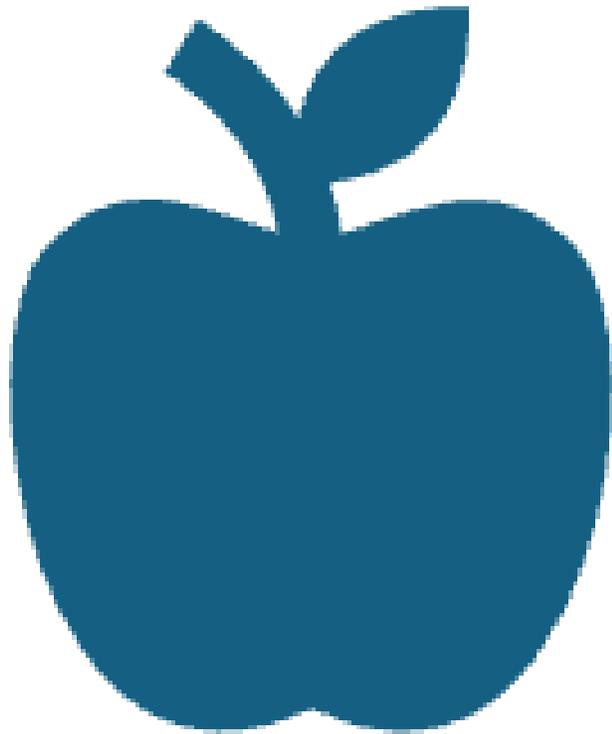


# University



<https://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/individual-needs/care-experienced-students>

<https://becomecharity.org.uk/get-support/propel/>



# Health and Wellbeing

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/self-care/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/>

<https://www.42ndstreet.org.uk/support/read/>

[Young Minds](#)

[Barnados mental health support](#)

[Mind](#)

[Kooth](#)

[The Mix](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Self Harm UK](#)

[Beat Eating Disorders](#)

[Grief and Bereavement Support](#)

# Post 18 finance support- what's available?

Barnados  
Financial  
Support

Become  
Charity

Debt Support

Step Change

Turn2 us

Money  
Helper-  
Budget  
Planner

Martin Lewis

Citizens  
Advice

# Advocacy for Care Leavers

**Age:** Care leavers can access an advocate **from age 16** (some areas offer it younger).

## How to get one:

- Ask your **Personal Advisor** or **Social Worker**.
- Contact a local **Advocacy Service** (many councils have one).
- Use national services like **NYAS** or **Coram Voice**.

## What an advocate does:

- Helps young people **understand their rights**.
- Supports them in **meetings**, making **complaints**, and **having their voice heard**.

**Let's empower young people to thrive- not just survive- as they leave care.**



**Email:** [douglas.stringer@skills2thrive.co.uk](mailto:douglas.stringer@skills2thrive.co.uk)

**Website:** [Skills2thrive.co.uk](https://Skills2thrive.co.uk)

# IT'S YOUR TIME TO THRIVE!

The digital platform and mobile app that helps you gain the skills you need to thrive

