

# What is York's Enhanced Local Offer to Care Leavers?

**We believe that everyone has a responsibility to help those who have been in care to overcome the difficulties that they experienced in their childhoods, so that they can lead successful lives.**

More than anything else we recognise that the help and support that you receive from your corporate parents in York is critical to whether you make the transition from care to independence successfully.

We take this responsibility very seriously. For Children in our Care and Care Leavers we strive to be excellent Corporate Parents, having high aspirations for you and encouraging you to achieve your goals and potential. A good parent means keeping you safe and providing you with the best support to meet your individual needs. We can help you to access housing, education and training, work experience, health services and we are here to support you to make the most of leaving care.

Our professionals working with you share high aspirations for you and make sure that all the children in our care and care leavers have all the opportunities we would give our own children through good access to high quality education, health, and social care services.

This offer focuses on how we work across the partnership to meet your needs to achieve the best of outcomes.

# What does the Pathway Team do?

**We are your 'Corporate Parents' which means, it is our responsibility to be good parents to all of our care leavers and support you in your journey to independence.**

Our team is made up of Pathway Workers, an accommodation officer and an Education Training and Employment Adviser who will support you with your journey to independent living. We have a legal duty to support you and provide you with assistance until you are 21, or up until 25 if you are in education, or if you wish to have an ongoing service.

The Pathway Team is based in at Howe Hill.

136 Acomb Road  
Acomb  
[pathwayteam@york.gov.uk](mailto:pathwayteam@york.gov.uk)

01904 555389

Don't forget to keep checking the Pathway Padlet which will keep you updated with your care leaver entitlements and the local offer and much much more. Use this QR code to take you straight there.



How to get in touch for support & advice:

Telephone: 01904 555389

Duty hours: 1pm- 5pm Monday - Friday

Email: [pathwayteam@york.gov.uk](mailto:pathwayteam@york.gov.uk)



# What is my Pathway Plan?

**Every young person between the ages of 16 and 21 in care or a Care Leaver has a pathway plan and up to 25 if you are in education or wish to continue to receive a service from us.**

- Your first pathway plan will be based on and will include your Care Plan and any Personal Education Plan (PEP) you have. It will be written with you by your Social Worker
- Your pathway plan has information on the best way to support you towards full independence and adulthood. It will cover your education, employment, health, finance, social needs, relationships and housing.
- Your plan will be written in a way that should meet your individual needs, it will capture your hopes for the future and include your views. It will be regularly reviewed with you, at least every six months, to check that your goals and milestones are still right and are being met.

## What is the role of my Social Worker?

- Visit you regularly and keep you up to date about any decisions made about you.
- Make sure that you stay healthy by having annual health assessments and health appointments when needed.
- Make sure you are getting all the help you need to in school/college or to access education/work with a Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Talk to you about your plans, where you live, who will care for you, seeing your family and what will happen in the future so that these can be shared with your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) at your review meetings (and included in your My Care Plan for your records).
- Help you prepare for the changes when moving from the Children in our Care Team to the Pathway Team by having a Pathway Plan from 16 years old which details the help and support you will receive from us.
- Help you speak to people on your behalf when you don't feel able to.
- Provide financial help with things you need like travel, getting to school/college/work, seeing family, new clothes and fees for

## What is the role of my Pathway Worker?

- To support you when you are leaving care to develop a strong sense of yourself and your identity, your background and history.
- To help you build on your family and significant positive relationships in preparation for adulthood.
- To enable you to hold a sense of belonging to the community where you live and connection to society in general.
- To help you to understand what support is available, so that you can make informed choices.
- To encourage you to develop confidence and self-esteem, and the ability to voice your opinions and thoughts on key issues that affect you.
- Support you to develop the necessary skills to live independently.

## What we will do:

When you turn 17 ½ you will be allocated a Pathway Worker. It is their job to keep in touch and arrange to meet with you, at home or somewhere local to you. Your Pathway Worker will give you advice, information, and guidance to help you make the best decisions. Some young people who reach independence earlier may be allocated a Pathway Worker sooner. You will have your social worker and Pathway Worker's mobile number and email so you can contact them within office hours, and you will be told who you can speak to if they are not available.

## You need to:

- Be there when we visit.
  - Share your news; we are there to support you and can only do that if you speak to us openly about what is going on in your life.
  - Talk to us about any problems you may have, so we can help
- Respect us in the same way that we respect you



# Our promise to you

## To make sure you are supported, we will:

- Give you your own allocated worker and make sure you know who you can contact if they are not available.
- Talk to you about when you about how to support your relationships with your family
- Regularly review how well we are supporting you.
- Make sure that adults, such as carers and workers, get the right training to understand the issues that affect children in care and care leavers, so that you get the best support possible.
- Make sure you understand your rights and entitlements as a care leaver.

## To guide you and treat you well, we will:

- Make sure your allocated worker stays in touch and visits you regularly to see how you are.
- Write a Pathway Plan alongside you and will make sure your wishes and feelings and aspirations are captured.
- Talk to you about why decisions are made and explain this clearly in a way you can understand.
- Make sure your allocated worker doesn't change unless there is a good reason for it.
- Discuss with you if you would like to keep your IRO after you turn 18 to continue independent review of your Pathway Plan for up to a year
- Support you to make a complaint or refer you to Advocacy if you need to.

**To help you be healthy, we will:**

- Make sure you receive information and support to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Respect your right to confidentiality.
- Make sure you recognise the importance of wellbeing and have access to appropriate health and support services.
- Ensure you know how to access to Health services which include sexual health and contraception, dental health and emotional wellbeing.
- We will provide you with a referral to an emergency dentist if you are not registered with a dentist.
- Provide access to free gym and swimming with identified providers in York
- Support you to access substance misuse support.
- Provide you with your health history information.
- Provide you with access to a wellbeing, mindfulness app through an annual subscription.
- Consider funding (on an individual basis) any reasonable health related costs which impact on your day-to-day life such as transport costs to receive treatment.
- Explore funding options for non-essential treatment such as dentistry if you have no recourse to public funds.
- Invite you to Pathway Events to enjoy activities as a community.
- Support you to sign up with a local GP when you move home.

**To help you find and sustain suitable accommodation, we will:**

- Ensure a dedicated Accommodation Officer works jointly with you and your Pathway Worker to identify appropriate housing options.
- Help you set up a rent account, to assist you in getting used to managing a tenancy.
- Ensure that with our housing colleagues we are supporting you at every step of your accommodation journey.
- We will support you in building your independent living skills.

- Provide you with information on how to access our setting up home grant (£3000) to furnish your move on accommodation.
- Staying Put arrangements, if you are eligible and both agree, you can remain with your foster carer at 18 under a 'staying put' arrangement, which can last up to 21.
- Advice about a range of accommodation options including, taster & trainer flats, supported, semi supported and independent accommodation.
- When assessed as ready for your own home, you will be put forward for 'Care Leaver status' on the CYC housing register. Between the ages of 18-21 years, this equates to a priority banding. For those are between 21 – 24 years old this is discussed at the Move On Panel.
- If you are on Universal Credit, we will pay for your first week's rent.
- Support your with moving into and furnishing your new home. Your first CYC property will be decorated with flooring before you move in. Provide you with a moving in pack: includes basic food shop, cleaning products and a first night take away meal.
- We will support you with any future moves this support will be detailed in your pathway plan
- Support with managing a tenancy, managing your front door, budgeting to ensure your important bills are paid and you avoid rent or council tax arrears.
- When needed we will support you to apply for universal credit at 18 for housing costs.
- Support and advice if you have a housing crisis or need emergency accommodation.
- If you move into a CYC tenancy you will be exempt from council tax for the first year of your tenancy. In the second year you will receive a 50% discount and in your third year you will receive a 25% discount.

*See one page link for housing protocol summary.*

**To help you to get the best education and training, we will:**

- If you are under 18-year-old we will work with your school and designated teacher to help support you through your Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Help you to apply for courses you want to study.
- Information about courses that run at different times of the year; “not all courses start in September”.
- Support you to apply for Further Education bursaries. [NB: Care leavers are a priority group for the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund administered by FE colleges, which pays a bursary of up to £1,200 a year to support vulnerable young people to participate in education or if over 19 the discretionary bursary for costs associated with your course.
- Offer you opportunities to speak directly to employers and education providers about your future.
- Support you on your journey to university and higher education.
- Ensure you have someone of your choice attend all university open day visits and have their travel costs paid. This could be a family member, Pathway Worker, foster carer, or friend.
- Ensure that someone is able to accompany you to university on day one and that a ‘big shop’ is done to make sure you have all basic foods and cleaning items.
- We will contribute to your accommodation costs whilst at University. This is assessed on an individual basis and in conjunction with the University offer.
- If you attend university, a bursary of £2,000 to help with the cost of books and materials spread over the length of your course.

**To help you find employment, we will:**

- Provide you with bespoke support from our specialist ETE advisor and Employment and Opportunities Broker.
- Access to a bespoke programme of work experience opportunities for care leavers in all areas of the council.
- Ensure connections with Local business who have agreed guaranteed interviews for care leavers.
- Support you to prepare a CV, complete job applications and prepare for interviews.



- Provide you with support to assist you with interviews e.g., travel costs and clothing.
- Provide you with travel costs to attend work or university until your first pay cheque or student loan is available.
- Give you careers information and advice.
- Support you with transport costs when travelling to training, school/college, apprenticeships, or job interviews. Tools, compulsory equipment, essential clothing, and books.
- Support you with providing tools, compulsory equipment, essential clothing, and books.
- Source opportunities to explore work experience, apprenticeships, and employment within the council.
- Inform you about voluntary work that we think you may be interested in.
- If you plan to go to university, we will help you choose the right course and university that matches your talents & interests.

**To be successful in life, we will:**

- Celebrate your achievements and successes with you.
- Make sure that you are asked about important decisions which affect your life.
- Provide you with support to live independently when you're ready.
- Help you prepare to manage your finances well and understand how to budget.
- Help you get ready for the world of work, find a job or training opportunities.

**YOU STILL MATTER!**

# Help and support: Our enhanced Local Offer

**Local authorities have a legal duty to support you to make the transition from care to adulthood. It is our responsibility to make sure you know what services are available to you, and what you can expect to receive from us as your corporate parents.**

This Enhanced Local Offer for Care Leavers aims to clearly set out in one document what you are entitled to and what we expect from you and help you to make the most of your independence. Over the following pages, you will be able to learn more about:

- Your money and official documents
- Where you live
- Your education, employment and training opportunities
- Your health and safety
- Care Leavers who are Parents
- Care Leavers who are over 21
- Care Leavers who are over 25
- Care Leavers in Custody
- Care Leavers who are refugees
- How to get your voice heard

# Your money and official documents

**This section gives you information on what financial help you can expect from the Children in our Care Team and The Pathway Team.**

We provide financial advice and support to help you prepare for living independently and manage your money. To do this we will:

- Make sure that you have the advice you need to learn how to manage your money and that this is written in your Pathway Plan
- Help you to open your own bank account and learn how to manage your money, so that you avoid getting into debt.
- Help you to get identification documents, (important pieces of paper about you) such as a passport, birth certificate and provisional driving licence.
- Help you to get your National Insurance (NI) number. Every adult in the country has their own NI number, so that records about their benefits, taxes and pensions are kept. Your Social Worker will write a letter or help you fill in a form to apply for it before you leave care.
- Help you to access universal credit drop in for advice.
- Help you when you make your first claim for benefits at 18, by supporting you with a personal allowance for up to six weeks while your benefits claim is being processed.
- Help you if you are unable to claim benefits by supporting you financially for a longer period while your entitlements are being established, as set out in your Pathway Plan.
- Help you to purchase furniture and white goods, such as washing machines and fridges, when you are setting up your home through a Setting up home grant.
- Where necessary, we give you financial assistance with the cost of health, dental or optician services.

The table below describes the range of financial support that is available for when you leave care:

Item	Amount	Regularity	More information
<b>Health Support</b>	Subject to assessment	Subject to assessment	E.g. To put toward the cost of glasses, subject to written quote
<b>Clothing for work</b>	Up to £100	Subject to assessment	Ask your Pathway Worker
<b>Passport, Provisional Licences, travel documents &amp; birth certificate</b>	Rates will be set for each documents	As required	Each document will be provided once
<b>Driving Lessons</b>	Up to 10 hours of lessons	Subject to assessment	We will support with lessons once theory test has been passed & you have financial means to continue lessons.
<b>Driving or CBT Test</b>	Rates to be set by provider	Once	
<b>Theory Test</b>	Rates to be set by provider	Once	
<b>Access to cost of living voucher scheme</b>	£60 voucher	3 times a year	Whilst scheme is available
<b>York Bus Pass</b>	Subject to assessment	Yearly	Up until 25 years old
<b>Young Person's Railcard</b>	Subject to assessment	Once	Up until 25 years old
<b>Education Training &amp; employment. Travel (out of York)</b>	Subject to assessment		If not covered by education bursary when attending education or training only
<b>Setting Up Home Grant</b>	£3000	Once	To be accessed up until 25. To be supported by Pathway Worker
<b>Council Tax Exemption for CYC first tenancy</b>	100% discount Y1 50% discount Y2 25% discount Y3	For first three years of tenancy	
<b>Birthday Gift</b>	£50 voucher 19, 20 years old £100 voucher 21-year-old	You need to be in touch with us to receive this.	Financial gift or activity based on your preference
<b>Christmas/ Eid/ Celebration</b>	£50 voucher	Once a year up until 20 years	Dependent on your cultural beliefs
<b>Internet</b>	Rates to be set by provider up to £25 a month	For first year of tenancy	

# Where you live

**There are different types of housing with support, and you will have some options in where you want to live.**

- Your social worker and Pathway Worker will be visiting you, and where you live will be agreed in your Pathway Plan.
- Staying on with foster carers is called 'Staying Put', you can stay with your foster carer until you are 21 years old, if this is agreed. This will not affect your long term move or plans.
- When you turn 16, a dedicated Accommodation Officer will become involved with you to begin discussions about your housing options post 18 as part of the pathway planning process.
- We will continue to provide advice and information to assist with housing.
- When assessed as ready for your own home, you will be put forward for 'Care Leaver status' on the CYC housing register. Between the ages of 18-21 years, this equates to a priority banding. For those who are between 21 and 24 years old, this will be assessed individually and discussed at the Move on Panel
- We will use our established Move on Panel to track and support all young people in the transition into living independently.
- Where young people want to remain outside of York; we try to work in conjunction with other local authority housing departments to advocate on their behalf for entitlement to apply for social housing in that locality.
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## **If you need extra help:**

- Where there are concerns, that you are not in a position manage independent living, bespoke packages of support can be implemented to support you with your next steps in partnership with adult services to support your preparation for adulthood.
- This might include supported accommodation post 18 years old until you are more able to manage independent living.
- These packages can vary enormously in terms of how many hours of support per week are offered to young people in their own accommodation. The Pathway Team will liaise with Adults' Services and other departments within the council where young people meet their criteria, to seek appropriate adult accommodation and support services.

## Accommodation types

Type	Description	Detail
<b>Staying Put</b>	A continuation of Foster Care	Extending your time with your foster carer up until 21 years old  Agreement between young person and carers to remain where you are living
<b>Staying Close</b>	Making York Home for young people placed out of the local area	Taster and Trainer flats with bespoke support
<b>Howe Hill</b>	24 bed supported accommodation for young people 16-25 years old.	24 hour support Key worker and independence and education sessions
<b>SASH</b>	Supported lodgings for young people 16-25 years old Homes of hosts in York and local area who are vetted and trained by the project	Support worker provided
<b>Independent Living (CYC Tenancy)</b>	When assessed as ready for your own tenancy you will be able to bid on York properties dependent on you circumstances	Support from Pathway worker to help set up and manage your tenancy
<b>Private arrangement</b>	You may decide to return home to your family networks and make your own arrangements about where to live.	Support from Pathway worker to help set up and manage your tenancy
<b>Specialist provision</b>	If you have specific needs you may have access to specific provision. This would be assessed on an individual basis.	Support from Pathway worker to help step up and manage your tenancy

# Education, Employment and Training

**Education is essential for you to gain the academic qualifications you will need when looking for employment. However, college and university are not the only options. Apprenticeships and training schemes are very popular and can be a good way to learn practical work skills and earn!**

**Volunteering is another excellent option to help you gain ‘work ready’ skills and get that all important work experience that employers want.**

- We encourage, support and help you plan your education, training and leisure activities based on a your needs and aspirations. This is recorded in detail in your pathway plan. These plans build on information that is already included in your personal education plan (PEP).
- We recognise that you may not be able to access formal education and training straight away but may be working towards these opportunities, that is English as A Second Language (ESOL) classes or volunteering. We will support you with this.
- The council is committed to also giving priority for apprenticeships to Care Leavers.
- We work provide support from our specialist ETE Advisor, Employment and Opportunities Broker, our SLEA Team, Virtual School and colleagues at DWP and local businesses so that you receive appropriate careers advice and guidance up to the age of 21 year (or 25 years if required).
- Our partners can also help you with practical tasks such as CV building, interview preparation and practising and work readiness preparation.
- We work in partnership with a number of education and employment trainers who specialise in either one to one intensive work to build up confidence, motivation and the self-esteem of young people who wish to further their goals in connection with education, employment training.

# University students

**We will work hard to support you with your education, if you decide to go to university you will receive up to a three-year financial support package. Further education a fantastic opportunity for you to gain academic qualifications and skills that you will need when looking for employment.**

- We will support you if you choose to study higher education alongside; your employment or whilst remaining in your own accommodation. (Speak with the pathway ETE officer for details).
- Support you to attend interviews and open days.
- Advice and support you in applying for tuition fees, loans, and bursaries available from Student Finance, the individual HE establishment and Care Leaver trusts.
- We will contribute to your accommodation costs whilst at University. This is assessed on an individual basis and in conjunction with the University offer
- If you attend university, we will provide you with a bursary of £2,000 to help with the cost of books and materials spread over the length of your course.
- We will support you with travel costs at the start and end of term and offer assistance to transport your belongings to and from university.
- The Pathway ETE officer will liaise with tutors & support services over the period of your course to ensure you receive all possible support to successfully complete your degree.
- We will on completion of your degree help with the cost of photographs and your cap & gown.
- We will support you in accessing CYC housing register if returning from your course to live in York.



## The financial support you could receive includes:

Title	Amount	Detail
Higher education bursary	£2000	Paid over the duration of an agreed university course
University holiday accommodation & travel costs	Dependent on location	Pathway team will assist you to obtain holiday accommodation over summer and Christmas if required.  You must make us aware of your plans at least 4 weeks in advance.  Your worker will also assist with return travel costs if required
Contribution to University accommodation costs	Assessed dependent on individual need and university accommodation offer.	This is paid termly. Confirmation of course and accommodation costs are required.
University graduation equipment	Dependent on rates	We will pay for your Cap, Gown and graduation photograph
Support in accessing all relevant funding streams including application for student loan	Dependent on university	We will ensure that you understand all of the ways that you can be financially support when you are in higher education.

# Your health and safety

**Your health and well-being is very important to us. There are lots of services and support you can access, and we will do our very best to keep you safe.**

**We will support and encourage you to be healthy by:**

- Encouraging you to speak up if you are struggling with anything so we can get you the support that you need. Don't bottle it up!
- Providing a Health Summary or Passport as you reach 18 years old. This is a summary of all your health information.
- Helping you to register at a doctor's surgery and at other health services when you move home.
- Helping you to manage your emotional well-being –supporting you to get services as an adult.
- Helping you to attend hospital or doctors' appointments.
- Providing help and support if you are a parent.
- Providing you with a gym membership to support your physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Access to a yearly subscription to CALM app to support mindfulness and wellbeing.
- Making sure you have an adult you can trust with you, should you get into trouble with the police if you are under 18.
- Ensure you are invited to all Pathway events and activities.

# Care leavers who are parents

**Being a parent for the first time can be challenging. We want to make sure that you get the support you need when you are pregnant and during your first year of being a parent.**

**We can support you in the following ways:**

- Provide you with a gift bag. The gift bag is available to both prospective parents.
- Ensure that you have essential items for you and baby by accessing correct benefits, grants and charities
- Together, we will make sure that you have someone to accompany to pre and post-natal health appointments e.g. a friend, family member, Pathway Worker, foster carer, if you would like this.
- Provide you with the opportunity to have a Friends and Family for Life Meeting during pregnancy to identify support within friends and family network.
- This meeting would ensure all prospective parents have a birth plan which includes a 6 week after care plan where it is clear who is there to support you with your new baby.
- Provide access to support to assist with claiming relevant benefits and registering the birth of your baby.
- With your consent your Pathway Worker will liaise with all of the professionals supporting you and your baby
- Support you attending important meetings
- Support from the Local Area Co-ordinators and family hubs.
- Support in accessing local groups and support if you would like to go
- Access to [DadPad - The Essential Guide for New Dads support Guide for New Dads](#) is a guide for new dads (app available), developed with the NHS. The DadPad app available for dads within North Yorkshire and York. Created to provide dads with support and knowledge to help them with their new-borns.

# Refugees

We recognise that York is not your country of origin, and you will have unique needs.

There may be uncertainty around your immigration status, particularly if you have claimed asylum, have leave to remain or are awaiting a decision on an immigration application. It is very hard for anyone to predict in which way claims or applications will be resolved.

We understand that this can be very hard and worrying. It is our job to support you in managing this and ensuring that your applications are being processed and that you have the correct legal support in place.

If you are in touch with any family members, either in the UK or abroad, support will be provided to maintain contact once sensible checks have been made (and there hasn't been any indication of risk. This support may include, providing international phone cards and facilitating visits.



<https://www.speakupyork.co.uk/guide-young-refugees>

- We will support you in gaining your leave to remain.
- Whilst you do not have recourse to public funds, we will provide you with a weekly allowance.
- Whilst you do not have leave to remain, we will ensure that you have somewhere to live.
- Provide translators for important meetings.
- Encourage and support you in accessing education and training.
- We will support you in connecting with family and important people.
- Support your cultural identity.

# Care leavers who are over 21

**We continue to offer support to Care Leavers aged over 21 years until you turn 25 in line with your needs and wishes and feelings. If at any point you no longer require a service from us, this is ok! You can ask multiple times to have a service reinstated up until the age of 25.**

**The support we will provide to you if you do not have a Pathway Worker or Pathway Plan includes:**

- Support and advice from our duty service (Monday – Friday 1pm- 5pm)
- Targeted housing advice and support from our Accommodation Officer
- Council Tax exemption in York for CYC tenancies (see finance section)
- Access to your setting up home grant if you haven't accessed it
- Support in education, training and employment via our Education, Training and Employment advisor
- Invitation to Pathway events, activities and partner initiatives
- You will be sent our seasonal Newsletter to provide you with updates and information across the year
- Access to the Pathway Padlet

**In addition to the above, if you request leaving care support at any point after the age of 21 and up to the age of 25, we will assess your needs and depending on your identified needs:**

- Develop a pathway plan setting out the support to be provide allocate a named pathway worker. (Although we will try, we cannot guarantee this will be your previous worker)
- The amount of support and the frequency of contact that you receive from your pathway worker will depend on your individual circumstances and wishes.

When you need us, we will be here – you STILL Matter!

## Care leavers who are over 25

As Corporate Parents we are still here when young people need us beyond the age of 25. We want you to know that **'You Still Matter'**. This is about having someone to turn to when advice or support is needed, alongside having someone to share positive news and celebrations with.

### **Our offer post 25 will include:**

- Lifelong access to English and Maths through adult learning
- Introduction to RAISE York Family Hubs for access to services such as debt advice or parenting support.
- You can still come to us for information, advice and guidance through our duty service
- There will be no more pathway plans (but we can help you plan your life).
- We won't chase you but we will be here if you need us
- We would love to hear how you are getting on so please do call or write in with your news or just for a catch-up.

## Care leavers in custody

**We will be there for any of our young people in custody. This will include making arrangements to collect you when you are released and make arrangements so that you have somewhere to go. We will stay in touch by visiting or writing to you depending on what you want.**

### **We will also:**

- Provide you with a payment of £20 per month until you are 21 years old, unless agreed otherwise.
- Ensure your Pathway Worker will make a case for any additional funding for hardship support you may need.
- If you are in custody when you are under 21 we will save your Birthday and Christmas gifts for when you are released.
- Be actively involved in any resettlement planning for you.
- Assist you with keeping in touch with friends and family if you want this.
- With your consent working with the professionals around you to understand your plans.

# How to get your voice heard

## I Still Matter

**Having a voice and knowing your rights are important when you are a Care Leaver, and this document will hopefully help you to understand what support and advice is available to you.**

### **Advocacy**

You have a right to access the support of an independent advocate from Speak Up.

An advocate can help you with anything that is important to you, provide you with information, help you to understand what's happening and why and make sure that you have the support you are entitled to.

An advocate can:

- help you to express and communicate your views, wishes and feelings
- help you understand your rights, entitlements, and options
- help you understand information and decisions
- support you if you feel like workers or services are not listening to you



- help you to be more involved when decisions are being made
- help you to say if you're unhappy with the support you're receiving or if you would like to make a complaint
- go to meetings with you or on your behalf
- represent your views, wishes and feelings and champion your rights and entitlements
- help to better understand what professionals are saying

## Led by YOU

An Advocate is only interested in you and what *you* want. They work on *your* behalf and based on what you tell them to do. They work independently from your local authority and children's services. The service is completely free.

Advocacy is confidential, and your Advocate won't talk to anyone without asking your permission (unless you are putting yourself or someone else in danger).

If you would like the support of an Advocate, please contact us on the details below.

Call/Text: 07769 725174

Email: [speakup@york.gov.uk](mailto:speakup@york.gov.uk)

<https://www.speakupyork.co.uk/advocacy-young-people>



## Children in Care council and Care Leavers Forum delivered *by Speak Up*

York's Children in Care Council and **Care Leavers' Forum** exists to make sure that all children and young people who are cared for (or were previously cared for) by City of York Council have the chance to share their views, with the aim of helping

shape and influence the services and policies that affect them and other young people with care experience.

This is important because you know best what you want from the services that support you!

### **Getting involved**

There are lots of ways for you to have your say, you don't have to attend our monthly meetings, though we always welcome new members.

**Monthly meetings** – I Still Matter (ISM) is our monthly meeting the groups aim is to offer practical solutions to a variety of issues that affect all care leavers. You will be supported I Still Matter will support you to express your views to help make the transition from care to independence a better experience for you and others.

**Individual Consultation** If you don't want to attend the groups you can still have your say by meeting or talking to one of our **Corporate Parenting and Co-Production Advisors**.

Corporate Parenting and Co-production Advisors aim to ensure **all** young people's views are accounted for, so that every young person feels valued and cared for. They understand that speaking to professionals can sometimes be overwhelming for young people, so they seek to be the connection between young people and the Corporate Parenting Board.

[corporateparentingadvisors@york.gov.uk](mailto:corporateparentingadvisors@york.gov.uk)

### **Online**

We have a closed facebook group where you can get involved and share your views on the issues we are consulting on. [www.facebook.com/groups/smtim](https://www.facebook.com/groups/smtim)

There are also opportunities to get involved in projects, delivering training or being a member of our experienced interview panels. You can get involved with as much or as little as you like.

### **What are the benefits of getting involved?**

You will have the opportunity to develop lots of skills and gain confidence in areas which will enhance your CV and we can also provide you with a reference.

You may also be financially rewarded for your contribution using our reward and recognition scheme.

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