

## The 16 Plus Leaving Care Service

### About the Service

This service works with young people who have been in care for at least 13 weeks since their 14th birthday, including on or after their 16th birthday; up to the age of 21 (or 24 if in advanced education). We provide advice, assistance and support enabling these young people to live independently. The Children's Act 1989 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 provides our legislative framework and underpins our practice.

We facilitate each care leaver's transition from being in care to becoming an independent adult. We assess their needs and establish Pathway Plans that detail the support they will require and stay in touch with each young person until they are no longer entitled to our services. By working in partnership with the young people, their carers and families, other agencies within the council, and the third and private sectors, enable the five key 'Every Child Matters' outcomes to be achieved for care leavers; keeping them:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Economically active
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution.

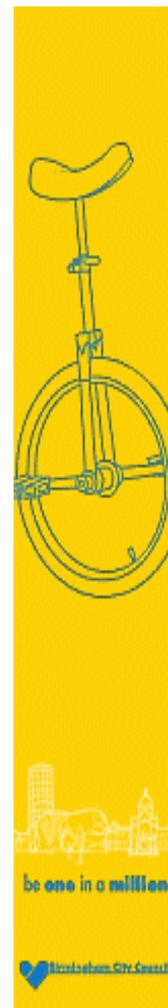
We encourage young people to take up opportunities in education, training and employment; and work with accommodation providers enabling them to access good quality and suitable places to live. Therefore our partnership arrangements with the City's Housing Directorate, St Basil's Centre and three local registered housing associations are invaluable.

Further partnerships arrangements are being developed, which we hope will see much closer links with Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and the Health Service for children and young people in care.

Staff in the 16 Plus Leaving Care Service need to:

- have experience of working with young people.
- be skilled communicators, assessors and planners.
- able to work collaboratively with different agencies to achieve positive outcomes.
- have knowledge of the relevant legislation.

**'Young people leaving care deserve the same opportunities that we all take for granted!'**



## Team Structure

There are three teams covering the whole of the city and have the following staff composition:

- Team Manager
- Assistant Team Manager/Senior Practitioner
- Social Workers x 3
- Aftercare Adviser x 12
- Support Worker.

We also work with Connexions and each team has a Connexions Personal Advisor attached.

## Roles and Responsibilities

For young people still in care on their 16th birthday, case responsibility is transferred from the Children and Families Social Work Teams to the 16 Plus Care Leavers Service. Before this takes place the initial Pathway Plan remains the responsibility of the Children and Families team. The Pathway Plan sets out support arrangements for the next 6 months, to enable young people to make the transition to independence.

### Social Worker – Leaving Care Service

With planned work, the Social Worker, Leaving Care will continue with the Pathway Plan, ensuring young people have the skills, knowledge and opportunities they need to move on. The actual stage that the young person leaves care will vary according to the individual, and may not be 'till nearer their 18th birthday. A planned handover will be arranged with one of the team's Aftercare Advisers.

### Aftercare Advisers

Aftercare Advisers carry forward the Pathway Plan for young people aged 16 to 21, or 24 where appropriate. They identify resources and assist with accessing suitable accommodation providers; education and training provision and ensure young people have access to financial support. They work collaboratively with partner agencies to ensure a support network is established.

### Senior Practitioner

The Senior Practitioner will undertake the more complex cases, with the same range of tasks as the Social Worker. They will also support and supervise Social Workers as well as assisting the Team Manager with the day to day management responsibilities for the service.

### Extra Support Worker

The Extra Support Worker compliments the work of the Social Worker and Aftercare Adviser, undertaking short-term programmes of tasks with our more vulnerable or less confident young people. They assist, as agreed, in the young people's Pathway Plan, to assist with developing the skills they need to cope in independence. This might involve a short course on budgeting or sessions in cookery or other life skills, which can be provided on a group work basis.

## Connexions Personal Adviser

The Connexions Service shares our responsibility in ensuring young people, who are not currently in education, training or employment are encouraged to do so. Therefore as part of our partnership arrangements, a Connexions Personal Adviser works alongside other Leaving Care staff to attain this goal.

### We Offer

Working hours at 8.45 to 15.15 (Monday to Thursday) and 8.45 to 16.15 on Fridays; occasionally staff may be required to work outside these hours for which time off in lieu can be taken. We fully support the City Council's flexible working arrangements.

- Based at one of our 3 centres (in Ladywood, Edgbaston and Selly Oak).
- We support job-sharing, part time and other flexible arrangements wherever possible given the needs of the service.
- Salaries for all our posts are within the specified grade range; there is room for individual discussion.
- Mileage payments for authorised car drivers.
- On site/in-house induction programme.
- Supervision and continuous professional development; access to support/mentoring can be arranged.
- Access to training pathway for the service.
- We support the City Council's In-Source scheme, which finds staff placements in other service areas to widen their experience.
- Experience in a specialised and rewarding field, working with young people aged 16 to 24, from children in care to fully independent young adults, where positive outcomes are a key feature.
- Close team working with multi-agency partnerships.
- The City Council's pension scheme.
- We support staff taking up secondment opportunities wherever available.

