

Care Leavers Housing Advice

A care leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date. If you are a care leaver you may be able to get help from Tamworth Borough Council. The help you get may depend on your age.

If you are a 'looked after child,' Staffordshire County Council's Children's Services is responsible for finding you somewhere to live until you turn 18.

More information on Staffordshire's Local Offer for Care Experienced Young People can be found on their website [Overview - Staffordshire County Council](#).

We work with Staffordshire County council and other districts and boroughs on a joint care leavers protocol. This can be found of the following link: [Joint Care leavers protocol 18-25](#)

More information on support available can also be found on the [Staffordshire Connects Website](#).

What the law says

The legal framework for care leavers aims to make sure that they receive the right support and services in their transition to adulthood, including access to accommodation. Homelessness legislation also provides a safety net for care leavers experiencing homelessness.

The legislation most relevant to care leavers' accommodation needs is the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, to impose duties on local authorities to support certain categories of looked-after children and care leavers.

Help available for Care Leavers

Personal advisor

Before you turn 18 and leave care, you will be given a pathway plan by your Personal Advisor at Children's Services. This is your plan for training, further education and what contains help and support you might need after you leave care, including financial support.

You are given a personal adviser whose job it is to make sure that you claim everything you are entitled to. Your Personal Advisor can help you with applying for housing, benefits, and education and/or training courses. They should also help you with learning life skills, like how to budget.

Following changes introduced through the Children & Social Work Act 2017, you will be able to ask for support from your Personal Adviser up to the age of 25, whether you are in education, training or not.

Get advice if you don't have a personal adviser. You may be able to get one even if you didn't have one previously.

Supported accommodation

As a Care leaver, you may be offered supported accommodation if it is felt you may benefit from the support they may offer to help prepare you for independent living. The Council works with several agencies that support move-on arrangements from supported accommodation units, other specialist/funded accommodation and some Hostels. Applicants moving on from short term supported accommodation (usually up to 2 years duration) who are capable of independent living will be placed into Band 1 once they have successfully engaged with the supported housing scheme.

Housing Advice

If you are a care leaver, you can apply to our housing register 6 months before your 18th birthday. But you will not be offered accommodation until you turn 18, unless you have a guarantor who will be responsible for the tenancy.

We may ask for a support plan from your Personal Advisor to demonstrate that you will be able to manage your own tenancy, for example, you can understand you are responsible for your rent, any guests in the property, are able to live independently, budget and manage finances. You may have support from your Personal Advisor in achieving this.

You can apply to the Housing Register by applying online <https://mytamworth.tamworth.gov.uk>. Your personal advisor may be able to help you apply. If you have any problems, please call us on 01827 709709, or by emailing housingsolutions@tamworth.gov.uk.

Choices you make around housing have long-term effects on your ability to find accommodation later in life. For example, if you fall behind on your rent payments or lose accommodation due to problems with friends causing noise and nuisance.

It is important that Staffordshire County Council, Tamworth Borough Council and any housing provider works closely together to help you with your first tenancy. Support is often available, so it is important that you ask for help from your personal advisor, the Council or your housing provider.

Once you have applied to the housing register, you will need to provide proof of identification and various other documents. Once you have been applied and you have been assessed, you will be sent a letter confirming the decision.

Homelessness Advice

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, it is important you contact the Housing Solutions Team as soon as possible on 01827 709709 who will assess your situation and provide you with the relevant housing advice and assistance. There are 4 Steps to this process:

- **Step 1:** When you contact us and make a homeless application you will need to provide identification and various other documents. You will need to complete an assessment with us so we can determine what support you are entitled to.
- **Step 2:** Once we have assessed if you are eligible, we will then assess if you are threatened with homelessness or homeless immediately.
- **Step 3:** After a full assessment, Tamworth Borough Council will establish whether emergency temporary accommodation will be provided to you. This decision will be based on the information you have provided to us.
- **Step 4:** We will work closely with you to find and secure accommodation for you which will be done by completing a Personalised Housing Plan. This plan will look further at your housing needs, wishes, and

will list actions for you and us to complete. It is important that you are honest with us during this assessment and provide us with all the information you can, so support can be tailored to you.

You are automatically classed as being in 'priority need' up to your 21st Birthday, if you have spent at least one night in care when you were 16 or 17. This means that Housing Solutions will have a duty to provide you with emergency accommodation if you are homeless and eligible for assistance.

If you are a care leaver and 21 years of age or over, the Housing solutions team will determine whether you are in 'priority need' for emergency accommodation. We will assess each case on an individual basis and assess the vulnerability of the person approaching our service.

Regardless of whether you are considered in priority need, the Housing Solutions Team can help you to find long-term accommodation if you are homeless and eligible for assistance. This can include referrals to supported accommodation, finding private accommodation or private shared accommodation along with other housing options.

Staffordshire County Council has specialist Housing Personal Advisors who can provide you with further advice and assistance if you find that you are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

Money Matters

Benefits

When you turn 18 you are entitled to claim benefits. You should be able to claim Universal Credit if you are not working or on low income. Your personal advisor should help you to apply for what you are entitled too. We can also refer you to Citizen's Advice who will be able to check you are claiming everything you are entitled too.

Housing-Related Benefits

Usually if you are aged under 35 and you rent from a private landlord, the maximum housing benefit you can get is the same rate you would be the shared room rate. As a care leaver you can get the 1- bedroom local housing allowance rate up to 25.

There is a maximum amount that you can be paid for housing-related benefits, which depends on the area you live in. The maximum rates of entitlement (known as Local Housing Allowance) are available on our website www.tamworth.gov.uk

Even with be allowed the 1bedroom rate there may still be a shortfall between your rent and local housing allowance.

Extra Help for Moving into a New Place

If you are a care leaver moving to a new home, you can get a setting up home allowance (also known as a leaving care grant) to help you buy essential things when moving into your own home. Speak to your personal adviser about this.

Housing Solutions Fund

If you are a care leaver moving to a new property, you may be entitled to support from the Housing Solutions Fund. This fund is used to help prevent homelessness. For example, it may cover your first month's rent in advance, if it is a private rented or shared accommodation to help you to secure the accommodation.

Support Services Contacts

The following are useful support services contacts which can help care leavers:

Name of Organisation	Who they can help	Contact details
Centrepoint	Centrepoint help 16–25-year-olds into a safe place to live, provide a health assessment and plan support for their individual mental and physical health needs. Centrepoint is the UK's leading charity for homeless young people.	Tel: 0808 800 0661 Website: Centrepoint
Barnardo's	Barnardo's runs 22 leaving care services across the UK. The services aim to bridge the gap for young people leaving care and living in the adult world. The services help young people to develop the life skills they need to look after themselves, and include encouraging them to look at employment, training, or further education opportunities.	Tel: 01827 286643 Website: Barnardo's
St Basil's	St Basils helps young people aged 16-25, across the West Midlands region, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	Youthline Tel: 0300 303 0099 Head office: 0121 7722483 Email: info@stbasils.org.uk Website: St Basils
Tamworth Cornerstone Housing Association	The service helps young, single people aged between 16 and 25 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Tamworth Cornerstone has a range of service that aims to support young people to gain the skills they need to live independently and to lead full and productive lives.	Tel: 01827 319918 Email: info@t-c-h-a.co.uk Website: Tamworth Cornerstone Housing Association (tcha.org.uk)
The Mix	Providing a range of support to under 25's including guidance on housing, mental health and relationships.	Freephone: 0808 808 4994 Twitter: @themix Facebook: The Mix Website: Get Support - The Mix
National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAC)	Advocacy for children in care and those in need – including children subject to child protection plans, care leavers, children and young people	Tele: 0808 808 1001 Email: help@nyas.net WhatsApp: 07494788875 Text: 85258 Website: The National Youth Advocacy Service NYAS
The Care Leavers' Foundation	This a national user led charity aimed at improving the lives of care leavers. They bring together the voices and experiences of care leavers to support care leavers of all ages, improve the current care system and change for the better society's perception of people in care.	Tel: 0161 826 0214 Email: Info@careleavers.com Website: The Care Leavers Association

Contact us

The Housing Solutions team are available to give full advice on your housing needs and explain what options are available to you should you find yourself Homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Contact: Email: Housingsolutions@tamworth.gov.uk

Tel: 01827 709709.

If you are homeless and the offices are closed, then you can contact the homelessness out of hours service on 01827 709709. You should only use this service if you have nowhere to stay immediately.



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