

# Support for care leavers in England and Wales

**Over 10,000**

16-18 -year-olds leave care every year across England and Wales.

**1 in 4**

people experiencing homelessness spent some time in care as a child.

**24**

is the average age at which young people move out from their family home in the UK.

The role local councils play as the 'corporate parent' for care leavers is incredibly important in enabling young people to have positive outcomes in their life, but that can differ between countries and local areas. There is increasing pressure on services to provide support as the number of young people entering and leaving care has been growing.

While young people can thrive when they leave care, many also face significant challenges.

Some care-experienced young people are missing positive adult role models or stable relationships, while others struggle to access education, employment, mental health services, or to maintain financial security. That is why corporate parents are encouraged to offer the best support they can.

A website created by Care Leaver Advocate Terry Galloway sets out and compares care leaver offers from each local authority across the UK. Anyone can find out about their local offer here:  
[www.careleaveroffer.co.uk/](http://www.careleaveroffer.co.uk/)

## Who is a care leaver?

In Wales, a young person can only gain care leaver entitlements if they have been looked after by a local authority for more than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday. In England, it is for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday. Many charities in the children's sector have been urging governments to be less restrictive in their definition of a care leaver. The Care Leavers' Association is calling for this to be "any adult who has spent time in care".

## Comparing support for care leavers across England and Wales

### Policy

### England

### Wales

At what ages can a young person be considered a care leaver?	16-25	16-21
Up until what age are all care leavers entitled to a Personal Advisor?	25	* 21
Are care leavers exempt nationwide from paying council tax?	** No	Yes
Is there a Care Leaver Covenant national inclusion programme that supports care leavers to live independently?	Yes	No
Is national guidance available for supporting care leavers beyond the age of 25?	No	No

\* Personal Advisors are available to care leavers in Wales up to the age of 25 only if they are following or want to follow a programme of education or training. This was the case in England until the Children & Social Work Act 2017 extended the entitlement to all care leavers.

\*\* Some local authorities in England have chosen to exempt care leavers from paying council tax in their area.

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service) is a socio-legal charity that campaigns for the rights of care-experienced young people across England and Wales, championing their voices to be heard in the decisions made about them. We support and mentor care leavers to bridge the gap between leaving care and finding their way in the world. NYAS Cymru has been making progress with Welsh Government and partners to strengthen corporate parenting for all care-experienced children and young people.

Across the Border Briefings are a series of NYAS reports that draw on our experience of working within the different national systems of England and Wales. They aim to highlight best practice, and where improvements need to be made to protect the rights of young people in line with the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). Care-experienced children and young people must receive the most effective support, no matter where they live.

 **#AcrossTheBorder**

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