

Help for you if you are LEAVING CARE



What is this factsheet about?

This factsheet provides information to young people who are leaving care, and who are seeking housing advice from Cambridge City Council. It contains information on support that is available to you, and ideas for finding somewhere to live, and for making it a successful, settled home of your own. On your 18th birthday, the funding for your care is suddenly reduced, but you still have a number of challenges ahead, that mean you may need further help – such as finding a place to live independently, and improving your budgeting and practical skills.

Cambridgeshire County Council Leaving Care Team

The *County's Social Care team* will help care leavers in Cambridgeshire to prepare for becoming an adult and developing their independence. You will be entitled to this support up to the age of 21 (or longer, if you are in full-time education), if you have been 'Looked After' for 13 weeks from the age of 14, and for at least a day following your 16th birthday. The Leaving Care Team is based at Scott House, 5 George Street, Huntingdon PE29 3AD, and can be reached on **01480 372463**.

Staying Close, Staying Connected

Staying Close, Staying Connected is a project focused on supported young people leaving residential care in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The project provides **Moving On Houses** and work with care leavers up to the age of 25. They also offer help with training and employment opportunities. You can contact the team on **01603 670 100** or email scsc@break-charity.org

Centre 33

All young people need support sometimes. Centre 33 is an advice service specifically for under 26-year-olds. They are located at 33 Clarendon Street, Cambridge, CB1 1JX and are open Mon-Wed 10am-5pm and Fri and Sat 10am-1:30pm (they are closed on Thursdays). Their Housing and Living Skills worker can be reached on **01223 316488**.

The following organisations that specialise in helping young people may also be able to help you:

Centrepont: **0808 800 0661**

Coram Voice: **0808 800 5792**

Depaul Nightstop UK: **0207 939 1235**

Getting on the housing register (Home-Link)

Affordable housing is in very short supply in Cambridge. However, we do accept applications onto the Home-Link scheme from anyone who is eligible, and who can demonstrate a local connection to the city. If you are leaving the care of Cambridgeshire County Council, you will have a local connection to every local housing authority within Cambridgeshire, even if your care placement has been outside the Council's boundaries. Cambridgeshire districts include Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Fenland District Council.

Under Cambridge City Council's Lettings Policy, additional priority may be awarded to applicants leaving Social Services care who are ready to move to a permanent home of their own. This will be dependent on a full assessment of your readiness, at a panel called 'HARP'..

The details are contained within section 4.6 of the Council's Lettings Policy (see <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lettings-policy.pdf>).

Threatened with homelessness?

If you are think you will be made homeless in the next 56 days, and you cannot find your own alternative accommodation (despite the help of the agencies mentioned above), you can approach any local authority in England, and ask for assistance. Provided you are eligible, the council will assess your needs, and draw up a plan to help you resolve your housing problem.

This plan will include the steps that you and the council will take to find a solution. This might involve, for example, ensuring you have approached all the right agencies in the right way, maximising benefits, or getting help with training or work.

- Our *Single Homeless Service* helps single people with low support needs into shared houses;
- Our *HB+* scheme provides rent top-ups, if there is a shortfall in housing benefit for renting somewhere in the private sector. The top-ups last for up to 2 years, while we help you improve your employment situation, so that you don't need this financial help any more.

Already homeless?

If we are satisfied that you are eligible, and do not have accommodation anywhere that you have a right to occupy, and can gain access to, we will try to help you resolve your homelessness. As a care leaver, we would decide if you are more vulnerable than an ordinary person, and may decide you are in a priority need group as a result. If this is the case, we will provide you with suitable temporary accommodation, while we try and help you to find a more permanent solution

Whether you are vulnerable or not, we will try and relieve your homelessness for a period of 56 days. If we are unable to help you find a home during this 'relief period', and you are in priority need (and have co-operated with us), we may then make you a direct offer of housing.

If you need to contact us

Visit:

Customer Services Centre,
Mandela House,
4 Regent Street,
CB2 1BY

Email to: housing.advice@cambridge.gov.uk,
or

Post to:
PO Box 700,
Cambridge
CB1 0JH.