

## Care Leavers Housing Advice

### Care Leavers

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 housing and other help from Tamworth Borough Council. The help you get mainly depends on your age.

### 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. General 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.

### What help is available for Care Leavers?

**Personal advisor-** Before you leave care you've given a pathway plan settings out what support you might need to live independently. You're given a personal adviser whose job is to make sure that you claim everything you are entitled to. 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 or training or not.

**Supported accommodation-** The Council works in partnership with a number of agencies that support move-on arrangements from hostels, supporting people funded and/or other specialist accommodation. Applicants moving on from short term accommodation (up to 2 years duration) who are capable of independent living (with or without care and support plans) will be placed into Band 1, provided there is evidence from the support provider to confirm that: 1) Their rehousing requirements constitute a high

social and/or medical need and an appropriate move on package is in place or 2) Rehousing will free up a place for a vulnerable person(s) in supported housing

**Housing Solutions Fund-** If you are a care leaver moving to a new place, you may be entitled to support from the Housing Solutions Fund. This fund may cover your first month rent payment in advance if it is a shared accommodation to help you to secure the accommodation.

### **What will happen if I approach Tamworth Borough Council for housing assistance?**

- **Step 1:** You will need to provide identification if you are applying as homeless or for housing.
- **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 Personal 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.

### **Housing help for 18 to 21 year old care leavers**

- You are automatically classed as being in 'priority need' until your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, if you are aged 18 to 21 and spent at least one night in care when you were 16 or 17, which means that the Housing solutions Team service should help you to find a place to live.
- This can include referral to supported accommodation, finding a private accommodation or private shared accommodation.
- When you are 18 you are eligible to join housing registration list.
- Social Services can help you by providing assistance with education and training until your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- **You may be entitled to emergency housing from the council if you are in priority need.**

## I am 16/17 and am not a care leaver, can you help me?

Applicants aged 16 or 17 will not normally be able to join the housing register as they are prevented by law from holding a tenancy, the only exceptions to this are as follows;

- Where a statutory homelessness duty is owed
- For care leavers 6months before their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday to allow the council to work with them effectively to help source suitable alternative accommodation to try and prevent them from becoming Homeless.
- Where they have been accepted into supported accommodation provided by Tamworth Borough council and there is a requirement for the application to be processed to enable the occupant to pay rent and other charges.
- Where an applicant under 18 is unable to join the housing register but is threatened with homelessness full advice and assistance will be offered to the young person for them to return home where is safely to do so or source alternate accommodation.

## Support Services Contact

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: <a href="https://centrepoint.org.uk/youth-homelessness">https://centrepoint.org.uk/youth-homelessness</a>
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	Tel: 01827 286643 Website: <a href="http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/care-leavers/care_leavers_why_we_are_campaigning.htm">http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/care-leavers/care_leavers_why_we_are_campaigning.htm</a>

	employment, training or further education opportunities.	
St Basil's	St Basils helps young people aged 16-25, across the West Midlands region, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	Tel: 0300 303 0099 Website: <a href="http://www.stbasils.org.uk">http://www.stbasils.org.uk</a>
The Care Leavers' Foundation	They can offer modest but vital grants to care leavers aged 18-29 who are in crisis, or who want to take control of their lives and develop new skills.	Tel: 01678540598 Website: <a href="http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/">http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/</a>
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 Website: <a href="http://www.tcha.org.uk/">http://www.tcha.org.uk/</a>

## **Money Matters**

### **Financial support for 16 or 17 year old care leavers:**

Most 16 or 17 year old care leavers are not eligible for benefits. The Children services department of Tamworth Borough Council must help you by:

- Providing housing or helping you find your own place
- Supporting you financially by paying you enough for your rent, food, bills, travel costs for education and training, clothing, pocket money and childcare if you need it
- Giving you any other support you need, such as helping with continuing your education, finding work or dealing with personal problems

## Benefits for care leavers over 18

- When you turn 18 you are entitled to claim benefits. You should be able to claim Universal Credits.
- Housing Solutions Team can refer you to Tamworth Advice Centre who will be able to check what you are entitled to or your personal advisor should help you to apply.
- 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 get for renting a single room in a shared house.
- But if you've been in care, this doesn't apply until you turn 22. You should be entitled to housing benefit for a flat of your own, even if you have just spent one night in care.

## Contact us

The Housing Solutions team are based at Tamworth Borough Council, they 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](mailto:Housingsolutions@tamworth.gov.uk)

Tel: 01827 709709.

**If you are homeless and the council offices are closed, then you can contact the homelessness out of hours service on 01827 709709 and choose option 1. You should only use this service if you have nowhere to stay immediately. You should only use this service if you have nowhere to stay immediately.**

