

# Care Leavers Local Offer for Halton



Care Leavers Local Offer

Halton Local Offer



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## Introduction

If you are from Halton and are, or will be, a care leaver this leaflet is for you, it tells you about all the support that we have in Halton for you as a care leaver.

Just because you are leaving care, or have already left care, we haven't stopped caring about you. We know that it is a big step when you move out of care and start living on your own or with friends, so we want to make sure that you feel safe and supported and know where and who to go to for advice and help.

Local Care Leavers and the Children in Care Council have helped to make this leaflet and also the development and design of an interactive website, where we have published our [Care Leavers Local Offer](https://localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/care-leavers-local-offer/)

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We will continue to listen to your views, to make sure that the services we offer are what you need. We will update this leaflet and our website regularly as new services and entitlements are agreed.

If English is not your first language, or if you have communication difficulties, we will arrange for you to have a copy of this leaflet in a format you can access.

Your Personal Adviser will talk to you about the information in this leaflet.

## Who can get support

To be able to get the support set out in this leaflet, you must have been in care:

- For at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 (including your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday);
- For 13 weeks after your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday;
- Because you were an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker who is in the process of seeking leave to remain.

If you are not sure whether you qualify for support ask your Personal Adviser.

If you are a failed asylum seeker who is 'Appeal Right Exhausted' you will not be entitled to support within this Care Leavers Local Offer.

# The Pledge

## What is the Children in Care Council?

The Children in Care Council is a group of young people, who are all cared for by Halton Borough Council, who represent the views and wishes of all children in care and care leavers. We meet once a month to discuss the things that really matter in our lives. The Children in Care Council gives us the chance to speak up, shape and influence the parenting we receive at every level.

We would like you to get involved! If you would like to join the Children in Care Council, get more involved or raise an issue for discussion please contact us ...

## What is the pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers?

The Pledge is a promise made by Halton Borough Council to all Halton children in care and care leavers. This pledge spells out how we promise to help.

## Pledge Statements

1. We will help you and stick by you.
2. We will love and care for you as we would our own children.
3. We promise to keep you safe and make sure you live in a safe place.
4. We will support you to see appropriate family and friends. If you can't see them we will explain the reasons why.
5. We will help you to keep in touch with old friends and make new friends.
6. We will give you pocket money and explain pocket money arrangements to you at the start of your placement.
7. We will help you achieve in school and try new activities.
8. We will look after your health.
9. We will keep your information private.
10. We will help you to speak up.
11. We will give you time and space to express your feelings and give you opportunities to influence decisions about your future.
12. We will support you when you move on to adult life.

**Children in Care Council**

[www.haltoncicc.co.uk](http://www.haltoncicc.co.uk)

## Corporate Parenting Principles, our priorities

We have adopted 8 Corporate Parenting Principles.

In everything we say and do we are mindful of these principles and we will map our Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy and our 'Pledge' to these principles:



## Halton's Care Leaver Local Offer, The support we must give you by law

### A Personal Adviser

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

Your Personal Adviser is there to help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care. Personal Advisers get involved in discussions about your needs and your Pathway Plan.



Your Pathway Plan is written by the Local Authority after consultation with you and important people in your life. It sets out your needs, views and future goals, and exactly what support you will receive from us. We will review your Pathway Plan with you regularly so that it is kept up-to-date.

We will try to let you keep the same Personal Adviser, though this will not always be possible. The amount of support that you receive from your Personal Adviser will depend on what you want and your circumstances.

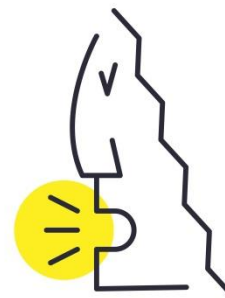
Your Personal Advisor will consider with you what extra support you may need. You might, for example, need extra support because:

- You have Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability
- You are an unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unclear
- You are in or leaving custody, or you have had contact with the criminal justice system
- You are a young parent
- You are going through a difficult time in your personal life

## Your right to be heard and taken seriously

You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for leaving care. You have a right to support from an independent advocate if you are thinking about challenging decisions about the care we give you.

Independent advocates can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings. They are separate and independent from the Children's Services.



**RAISE YOUR VOICE**

If you want to make a complaint you can contact our Customer Care Manager, Dorothy Roberts on Tel: 0151 511 8624, by email [dorothy.roberts@halton.gov.uk](mailto:dorothy.roberts@halton.gov.uk) or send a text to Tel: 07775765489. We will arrange for you to have access to an independent advocate through the National Youth Advisory Service (NYAS) should you wish to make a complaint.

Or if you want, you can contact NYAS direct on Tel: 0808 8081001, by email [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net) or through their website [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)



Please note, we are eager to hear from you if things are going well too – you can make a compliment or simply comment on our services by contacting our Customer Care Manager in the same way you would if you were to make a complaint.

You have a right to see the information we keep about you, including the files and records written about you when you were in care, this is called 'Access to Records' or a 'Subject Access Request'. If you want to access your records you can speak to your social worker or Personal Advisor who will arrange for this to happen.

## Leaving care before turning 18

We will encourage you to stay in care until you are 18. Most young people still live at home with their families at this age. If you choose to leave care before age 18, the law says we must provide you with suitable accommodation.

### 'Stay Put' with your former foster carer

If this is what you and your foster carers want, we can support you to remain with your foster carers under what's called a 'Staying Put' arrangement. This can last until you are 21, you should speak to your social worker if this is what you want to do. The Staying Put Policy is available at [http://www.proceduresonline.com/halton/cs/p\\_stay\\_put.html](http://www.proceduresonline.com/halton/cs/p_stay_put.html)

## Other support we offer

### Accommodation

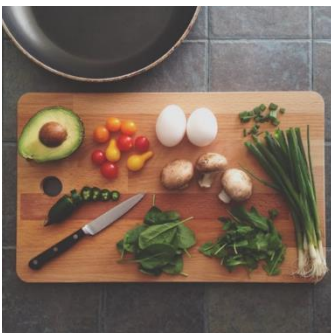
If you are aged over 18, your Personal Adviser will help you to find suitable accommodation, this might involve:

- Working with Housing Services to come up with suitable housing options for you, including supported accommodation if you are not ready or don't want to have your own tenancy.
- Support to access different housing options including social housing (this is accommodation generally managed by Halton Housing, or another local registered social housing landlord).



- Advice about holding down a tenancy, including avoiding rent or Council Tax arrears, paying bills and budgeting. We know it can be very hard having your own place for the first time. We will do whatever we can to ease the pressures on you. As a Halton care leaver, if you live in Halton, you will be exempt from Council Tax until your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

- Help you to claim housing benefit/universal credit.
- Practical support with moving into and furnishing your new home.
- Help to get your National Insurance Number.



- Support you if you have a housing crisis, including helping if you are threatened with or lose a tenancy. If you are aged 18 – 20 you will be treated as a priority need group under homelessness legislation.



## Support to engage in Education, Training or Employment



We want to make sure every young person leaving care has the support to achieve their goals in life.

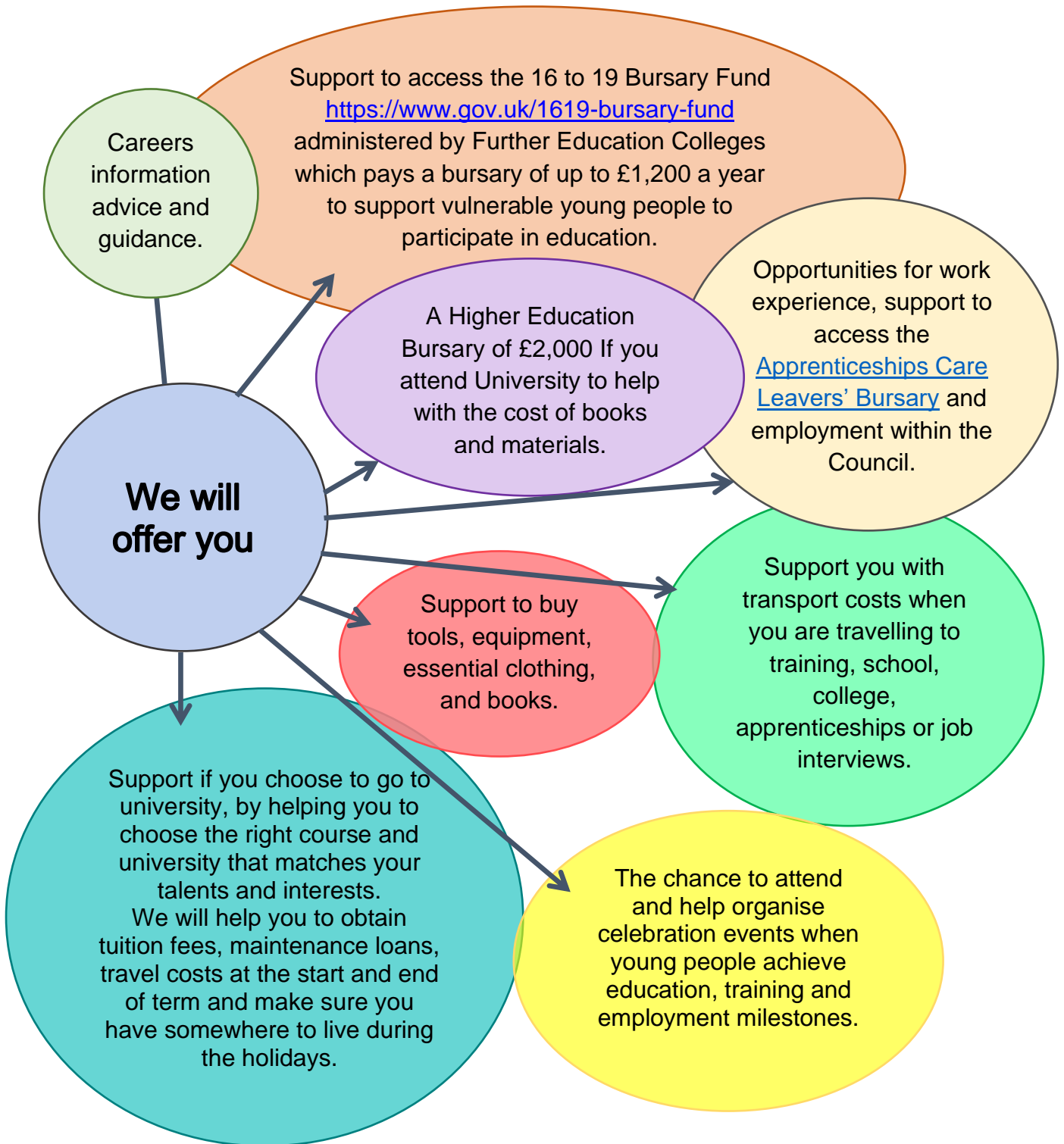


We want you to succeed in your education, training and employment.

We will ask you how you are doing and we will be ready to celebrate your achievements with you.

The law says we must provide you with assistance with expenses linked with employment, education and training.

The Halton Virtual School will provide support and advice and/or signpost you to other help available as needed [www.myvirtualschool.org](http://www.myvirtualschool.org)



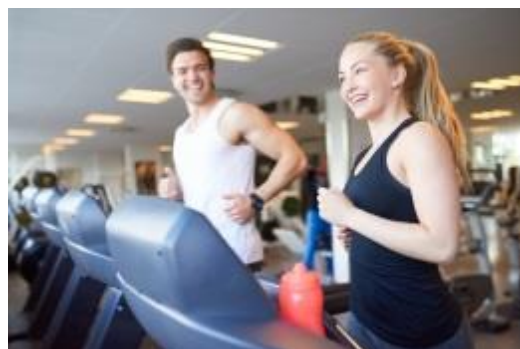
## Health and wellbeing

Our Care Leavers Team and your Personal Adviser can support you to stay healthy and look after your physical and mental health, they can:



Give you information on healthy living.

Offer you free or subsidised access to the leisure centres we run.



Support you to register with a GP/dental surgery.

Give you information about health drop-in centres.

Support you to move from CAMHS to adult services.



Give you information about counselling services that are available locally.

Give you help with transport costs when attending health appointments.

Give you information on getting help to pay for prescriptions.

Work with you to make a 'health passport' containing key information from your childhood (for example, when and if you have had immunisations) and your current health needs.

**HEALTH  
PASSPORT**



Support you to access the free and totally confidential NHS sexual health service AXESS, which provides a range of support including STI and contraception. Clinic details and more information is available at <https://www.axess.clinic/>

If you are a young parent, take an interest in your children and support you to do the best for them. We will also help you to arrange childcare, if this is what you want.



## Finances

We will try to help you financially, in a similar way to how parents would support their own children. Our help includes:



A leaving care grant of up to £2,000 this will help you buy essential things when moving into your own home.

You will be exempt from paying Council Tax.

Provide or tell you about relevant money management courses.

Information on how to access your Junior ISA, if you have one (a fund of money set aside by the government and the Council).

Support you to open a bank account.

Support you to gain important identification documents, such as a passport and/or provisional driving licence before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Support you to get your National Insurance number.

Provide exceptional financial support in emergencies.

Provide you with a financial gift at Birthdays, Christmas or other celebrations.



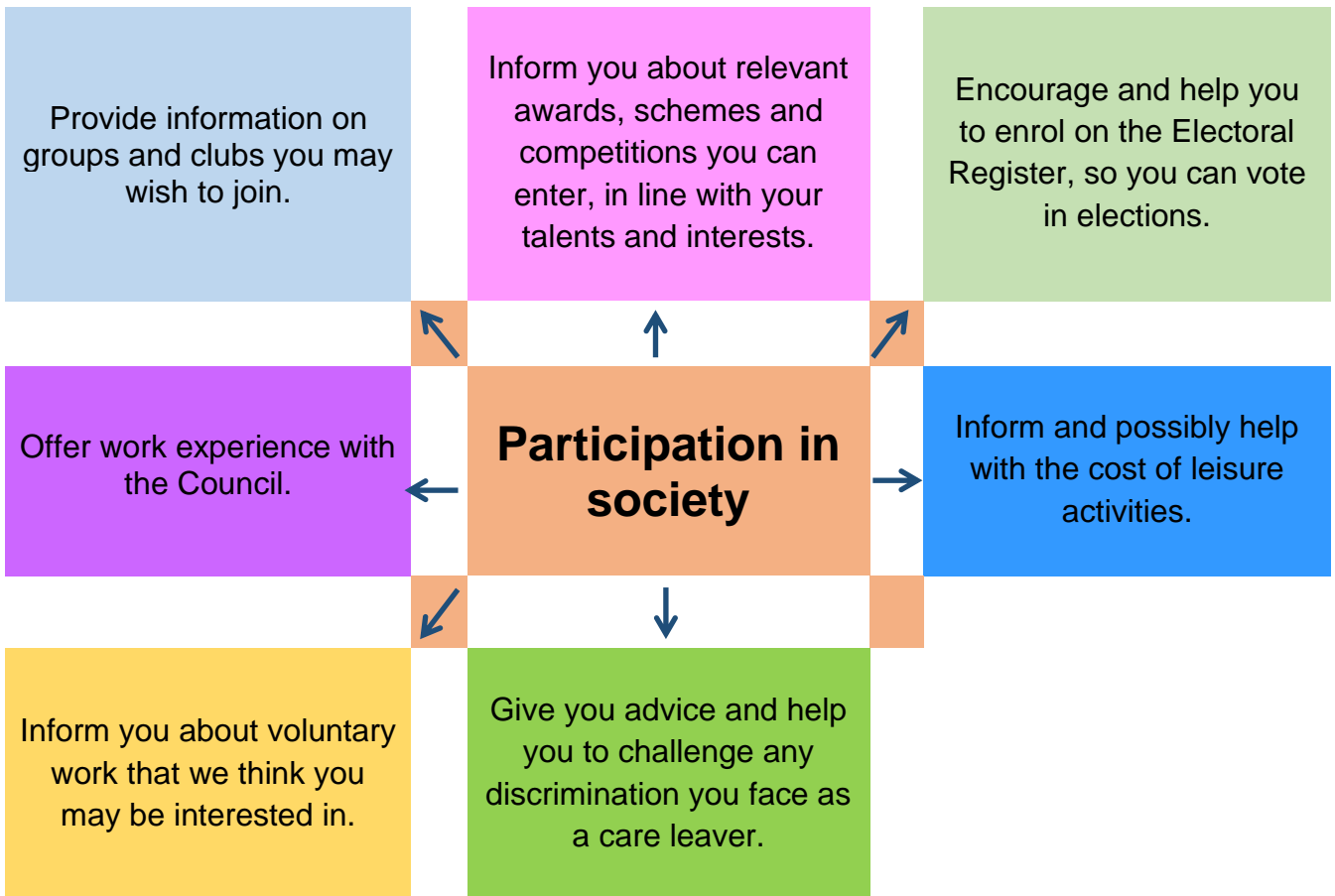
## Relationships

As well as support from a Personal Adviser, we may be able to offer you additional practical and emotional support, for example:

- Provide you with a mentor/peer mentor.
- Help to maintain or regain contact with people special to you, or who cared for you in the past, like former foster carers, social workers or independent visitors.
- Support to reconnect with family where this is in your best interests.

## Participation in Society

We want our care leavers to be active members of society and to have all the chances in life that other young adults have. We can help you participate in society in the following ways:



For more details see our **Children in Care Council** website <https://haltoncicc.co.uk/>

## Who can help?

Key contact numbers for:		
<b>Children in Care and Care Leavers (CICCL)</b>	<b>Inclusion &amp; Participation Officer</b> Debbie Gates Childrens Services Rutland House Tel: 07717246108 Email: <a href="mailto:debbie.gates@halton.gov.uk">debbie.gates@halton.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Personal Advisers, Children in Care and Care Leavers Team</b>	Tel: 0151 511 7900	
<b>Designated doctors/nurses</b>	<b>Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust</b> Emma Smith Lead Specialist Nurse for Children in Care Halton Child in Care Health Team Lister Road Astmoor Runcorn WA7 1TW Tel: 01928 593054 Email: <a href="mailto:Emma.Smith141@nhs.net">Emma.Smith141@nhs.net</a> or <a href="mailto:ALWCH.haltoncichealthteam@nhs.net">ALWCH.haltoncichealthteam@nhs.net</a>	
<b>Local Authority leadership, Lead Member</b>	<b>Executive Director Children's Services</b> Zoe Fearon Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QF Tel:0151 511 4118 Email: <a href="mailto:zoe.fearon@halton.gov.uk">zoe.fearon@halton.gov.uk</a>	<b>Executive Board Member for Children, Young People and Families</b> Councillor Tom McInerney Tel: 0151 424 4491 Email: <a href="mailto:tom.mcinerney@halton.gov.uk">tom.mcinerney@halton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Halton Virtual School</b>	Halton Virtual School website <a href="http://www.myvirtualschool.org">www.myvirtualschool.org</a> Key contacts: <a href="http://www.myvirtualschool.org/Pages/AboutUs.aspx">http://www.myvirtualschool.org/Pages/AboutUs.aspx</a> Email: <a href="mailto:Virtual.School@halton.gov.uk">Virtual.School@halton.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Housing advice</b>	Halton Supported Housing Network    Tel: 0151 422 6300 Citizens Advice Bureau                    Tel: 0344 477 2121 Halton Housing Trust                         Tel: 0151 510 5000/0303 333 0101	
Other places you can go for help:		
<b>Princes Trust</b>	Tel: 0800 842 842	
<b>Rees – The Care Leavers Foundation</b>	County Court Buildings 13 Church Road Redditch B97 4AB <a href="http://www.reesfoundation.org/contact/">www.reesfoundation.org/contact/</a>	
<b>The Care Leavers Association</b>	The Care Leavers Association website <a href="https://www.careleavers.com/">https://www.careleavers.com/</a> Tel: 0161 826 0214	
<b>National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)</b>	NYAS website <a href="https://www.nyas.net/">https://www.nyas.net/</a> Freepost – NYAS Tower House 1 Tower Road Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 1FF Tel: 0808 808 1001 Email: <a href="mailto:help@nyas.net">help@nyas.net</a>	

<b>Relevant universal services. This might include links to or contacts for:</b>	
<b>Health services e.g. sexual health clinics</b>	Sexual Health Service – AXESS <a href="https://www.axess.clinic/">https://www.axess.clinic/</a> Tel: 0845 155 0156 Clinic details and free contraception
<b>Specialist drug and alcohol support</b>	Halton Integrated Recovery Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aston Dane, Waterloo Road, Widnes, WA8 0QR</li> <li>• 1st Floor, 75 High Street, Runcorn, WA7 1AF (above Lloyds Bank)</li> </ul> Tel: 0151 422 1400 <a href="https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/halton-integrated-recovery-service">https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/halton-integrated-recovery-service</a>
<b>Education, employment or training support</b>	Princes Trust <a href="http://www.princes-trust.org.uk">www.princes-trust.org.uk</a> GOV.UK – Apprenticeships <a href="https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship">https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship</a> Vinspired - volunteering <a href="https://vinspired.com/">https://vinspired.com/</a> GOV.UK – Student finance <a href="http://www.gov.uk/student-finance">www.gov.uk/student-finance</a> Become - for children in care and care leavers <a href="http://www.becomecharity.org.uk">www.becomecharity.org.uk</a>
<b>Further or Higher Education information</b>	<a href="https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/individual-needs/ucas-undergraduate-support-care-leavers">https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/individual-needs/ucas-undergraduate-support-care-leavers</a>
<b>Relevant universal services. This might include links to or contacts for:</b>	
<b>Groups and activities for young people</b>	Activities and group information is available via: Halton Local Offer website, Leisure section <a href="https://localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/leisure/">https://localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/leisure/</a>
<b>Parenting support groups</b>	Brookvale Children Centre, Tel: 01928 797160 Email: <a href="mailto:brookvaleccreception@halton.gov.uk">brookvaleccreception@halton.gov.uk</a>  Windmill Hill Children Centre, Tel: 01928 717132 Email: <a href="mailto:windmillhillccreception@halton.gov.uk">windmillhillccreception@halton.gov.uk</a>  Halton Lodge Children Centre, Tel: 01928 573 107 Email: <a href="mailto:haltonlodgeccreception@halton.gov.uk">haltonlodgeccreception@halton.gov.uk</a>  Halton Brook Children Centre, Tel: 01928 573265 Email: <a href="mailto:haltonbrookccreception@halton.gov.uk">haltonbrookccreception@halton.gov.uk</a>  Ditton Children Centre, Tel : 0151 420 5482 Email: <a href="mailto:dittonccreception@halton.gov.uk">dittonccreception@halton.gov.uk</a>  Kingsway Children Centre, Tel: 0151 511 6222 Email: <a href="mailto:kingswayccreception@halton.gov.uk">kingswayccreception@halton.gov.uk</a>  Upton Children Centre, Tel: 0151 257 2450 Email: <a href="mailto:uptonchildrencentre@halton.gov.uk">uptonchildrencentre@halton.gov.uk</a>  Warrington Road Children Centre, Tel: 0151 424 4686 Email: <a href="mailto:warrington.roadreception@halton.gov.uk">warrington.roadreception@halton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Youth Justice Service</b>	Tel: 0345 145 0055



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