Am I a care leaver and your PA

Last Modified September 29, 2026

Eligible child

If you are aged 16 or 17 and you have been in care for 13 weeks or more (this does not have to be a 13 weeks all at once. It can be several periods where you have been looked after). The 13 weeks has to have started after you reached 14 years of age and ended after you reached the age of 16.

Children's services are required to support you and you should have a personal advisor (PA). Your PA or social worker must complete an assessment of your needs, in areas such as housing, education and finances. When this has been agreed, with your input, they must write a pathway plan with you, setting out how you will receive the support.

Relevant child

If you are aged 16 or 17, were in care for more than 13 weeks after your 14th birthday and left care on or after your 16th birthday, the law says you are a relevant child.

Children's services are required to support you and you should have a personal advisor (PA). Your PA or social worker must complete an assessment of your needs, in areas such as housing, education and finances. When this has been agreed, with your input, they must write a pathway plan with you, setting out how you will receive the support.

Former relevant child

If you are aged 18 to 25 and were in care for more than 13 weeks after your 14th birthday, and you were still in care on your 16th birthday, the law says you are a former relevant child.

You should have a personal advisor (PA) and pathway plan, and receive support with your housing, education, and related expenses.

Qualifying care leaver

If you are aged 18 to 25 and spent time in care after your 16th birthday, but have been in care for less than 13 weeks in total since your 14th birthday, the law says you are a qualifying care leaver.

You will not have a pathway plan or personal advisor, but you are entitled to advice and assistance from the local authority's leaving care service. They can support you with your education, such as study expenses and accommodation during the holidays, and can help you with your housing and health in exceptional circumstances.

Been on remand to a secure establishment

When a person under the age of 18 is remanded to youth detention accommodation they become one of our children under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. If you have served a period of time on remand you could be classed as an **eligible**, **relevant** or **qualifying** child. Check out the criteria above.

Separated children and young people

If you are a child under the age of 18 who has travelled to the UK for safety or a better life then you will become one of our children under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, you could be classed as an **eligible**, **relevant** or **qualifying child**. Check out the criteria above.

Coram Voice has a very useful tool for working out if you are a care leaver, and what support you are entitled to.

Corporate parenting

'When a child or young person has to come into our care, the council becomes their corporate parent. This means lots of people—like councillors, social workers, teachers, and other adults—work together to make sure they are safe, happy, and have the best chances in life.

In Blackpool, being a corporate parent is everyone's responsibility. Everyone in the council helps children and young people who are in our care or have been in our care. We follow special rules from the government to make sure we do this properly. These rules are called the corporate parenting principles, and they help us make good decisions and give the right support'

The local authority and all partners will have regard to the corporate parenting principles as detailed in the Children and Social Work Act (2017) when working with and supporting our children and young people:

The local authority and all partners will have regard to the seven corporate parenting principles as detailed in the Children and Social Work Act (2017) when working with and supporting our children and young people:

1. To act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes, and feelings
3. To take into account the views, wishes, and feelings of children and young people
4. To help children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided to them
5. To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for children and young people
6. To ensure that children and young people are safe and feel safe
7. To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

Personal advisors

Leaving care

Before you turn 16 you will meet your personal advisor (PA). They will work alongside you and your social worker to plan and support you for when you leave our care at 18.

When you turn 18 your social worker will say goodbye and your PA will then continue to help and support you with all areas of your life until 21 or 25 if you want them to. Your PA will visit you at home and other places that your feel safe and comfortable. They will make sure they keep in touch with you as often as you want but they will definitely see you once every 2 months.

Your PA will make sure that you have their contact details, so that you can get in touch with them whenever you want. However, if they are not around you can call 01253 478320 and ask for the Duty PA.

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The local authority and all partners will have regard to the corporate parenting principles as detailed in the Children and Social Work Act (2017) when working with and supporting our children and young people:

Your personal adviser (PA)

Your personal adviser (PA) will get to know you and learn about what is important to you. They will talk with you about the things you enjoy and help you think about your goals for the future.

Your PA will build a good relationship with you based on trust, honesty and respect. They are there to support you, listen to you and help you when you need it.

Your PA will:

- Listen to you and give advice
- Help you make choices about your future
- Celebrate your successes
- Support you when things are difficult
- Help you access services and support

Having people around you who care about you is important. Your PA can help you stay in touch with family members, former carers, friends and other trusted adults who are important to you, if it is safe to do so.

They can also help you meet new people through:

- Activities and clubs
- Groups and events
- Mentoring opportunities
- Care leaver activities

This can help you build a strong support network.

If something difficult happens in your life, such as losing someone you care about, we can help you get the support you need. We want to make sure you have people around you who care, listen, encourage you and help you feel connected and confident as you move into adult life.

Preparing to leave care

From the age of 18 your PA will be responsible for completing your pathway plan. You and your PA will create your plan together, other people who are important to you can also contribute. You can tell your PA who these are and who you want to be involved. The plan will focus on different areas of your life and will include:

- Earning and managing your money
- Cooking skills
- Your health and wellbeing
- Managing your own home
- Supporting relationships with family and friends
- Managing appointments... and much more

Need help?

If you cannot contact your personal adviser, please contact the duty PA:

Email: blackpoolleavingcare@blackpool.gov.uk
Telephone: 01253 754840

We know, because you have told us that having a strong and meaningful relationship with your PA is really important. We therefore will not change your personal advisor unless we have to, or you want us to.

We know that not everyone gets along all the time. If you are unhappy and would like a change in PA you can talk to the team manager Mark McElroy email mark.mcelroy@blackpool.gov.uk or 07881 281 573

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