



**Solihull**  
METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Leaders careers

Solihull's  
Local Offer



# Foreword

As your Corporate Parents, we want you to reach your full potential, aspirations and goals, as any good parent would. The Local Offer explains how we are going to work with you to achieve your goals, and outlines the services we will provide.

We are, on a daily basis, amazed and inspired by the resilience and courage you show in the most challenging of circumstances. We all need to provide any and every opportunity we can to help and support you during your transition to adulthood.

The Local Offer represents our commitment to improving your life and the opportunities available to you, as we believe in you, and want to guide and support you to achieve a successful future.

Best wishes from your Corporate Parents.



*Nick Page  
(Solihull Chief Executive)*

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# Introduction

Welcome to Solihull's Care Leaver Local Offer.

You are a Care Leaver if:

You were looked after by Solihull on or after your 16th birthday, we will now be here for you up to your 25th birthday if you need us.

Solihull is committed to helping you to achieve your aspirations, as any good parent would do for their own child; within the resources we have available, we want to make sure that you get the best level of support and guidance we can provide to help you reach your full potential.

This Local Offer will tell you all about the range of support we will give you, from housing and health support to help with education, employment and training. You can speak with your Social Worker or Personal Advisor about where to find these services and who can help.

Our care leavers have helped to create this Local Offer and we will continue to listen to your views and how you feel. We want to keep your views at the forefront of all that we do; after all, this is your life.



Listening to young people who have care experience is essential in understanding what works well within Solihull and what improvements can be made.

OVOS is Solihull's children in care council for young people aged 16 – 25 where you can meet others to discuss issues that are important to you and begin to make improvements in the service you receive from Solihull. Being part of OVOS enables you to meet decision-makers and to learn new skills by being involved in a range of challenging and exciting activities.

OVOS meets regularly on the last Wednesday of the month where you can plan events and activities and make friends and have fun, but most importantly, talk about the things you'd like to change and make happen.

For more information please contact the OVOS team:

Email: [ovos@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:ovos@solihull.gov.uk)  
Twitter: [@SolihullYV](https://twitter.com/SolihullYV)  
Web: [www.getitsorted.me](http://www.getitsorted.me)

# 'Moving Forward'

*by an OVOS young person*

Be it sixteen or eighteen  
Ya feelin stuck in some strange dream  
Which is now ya short-changed routine  
Since being kicked out that deranged regime

Thinking bout what's next

Council housing is far ya gotta move remote  
Did I get a say nah did a get a vote  
Everyday just bloomin beans on toast  
Hah! Forget about a Sunday roast

Ya may be feeling angry  
Don't you worry that's okay  
Just stop and take a breath  
Write down what you wanna say

Then bell up your OVOS or ya PA  
And say what you gotta say  
Listen, I need to get my life on track  
I need some of this and want some of that  
So sit down my G and lets have a nice chat

I am a big man but I still need to hit the gym  
Tryna move forward but I dunno where to begin  
I get universal credit but then I just blow it  
Can you teach me how to budget?

I got bare tings runnin through ma mind  
I got too many problems have you got the time  
Help me with a plan cuz right now I got no hope  
Please help me now becuz I am strugglin to cope

# Being a good corporate parent

## What is a 'Good Parent'?

All Solihull Council employees are automatically Corporate Parents.

This means they have a commitment to support our children in care and care leavers as best they can.

This can be as little as making a donation on fundraising days or offering work experience to young people.

A good Corporate Parent will:

- Listen to your voice and understand your point of view and take action if necessary.
- Know your history and understand you, so that you don't have to repeatedly tell your story.
- Attend events with you, if your own parents, carers or guardians can't attend for whatever reason.
- Will be aware of OVOS, Solihull's children in care council. They should encourage you to attend its meetings and activities where you will be able to voice your views and opinions about the service you are being provided with.

## The 7 Corporate Parenting Principles

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being of, those children and young people.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independence.



# Statutory entitlements

On or around your 16th birthday, you will transition across to the Child Asylum & 16+ team; you will have a Social Worker from your 16th to your 18th birthday who will work with you to create a Pathway Plan that will help identify how we will support you towards independence.

The Pathway Plan will start after your 16th birthday and continue until your 21st birthday or 25th if you continue to want support from us.

We will meet with you on a regular basis and will review your Pathway Plan every 6 months with you.

## Personal Advisor

Before your 18th birthday you will also have a Personal Advisor who will be your worker up to your 21st birthday and, if you require it, your 25th birthday.

The role of a Personal Advisor is to help you prepare for independent living and to support you after leaving care.

Personal Advisors are responsible for ensuring that your Pathway Plan is developed and kept up to date for you.

We will make every effort for you to keep the same Personal Advisor where possible as we recognise to develop a long term and trusting relationship with your worker is important.

## Support 21-25

If you no longer have a worker from the Child Asylum & 16+ team supporting you, but are under 25 years of age, you can now come back to us and ask for help.

You can contact the Child Asylum & 16+ team (Contact information at end of document) and we will support you.

We will provide a listening ear and some basic practical help to get you through any difficulties.

## Your Rights

You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your life.

We will talk with you about how your information will be shared with others.

You have the right to see the information we keep about you.

You have a right to an Advocate (to represent your voice) and for the advocacy service to voice your views if you feel you can't.



# Health & Well-being

On your journey to independence, there are a few things to think about to help you along the way.

## Registering at your local practices

It is important that you register with your local GP, Optician and Dental practices. We can support you to do this.

## Healthy living

It's really important you look after your physical and emotional health. Sometimes if you are busy or feeling stressed it is easy to stop taking care of yourself. We can offer advice and support around healthy living and emotional well-being. You get also get free access to leisure centres in Solihull

If you are concerned about drugs or alcohol, we can discuss this with you and put you in touch with people/services that can help.

## Loneliness & Isolation

We are aware that loneliness and isolation is a real problem for many people. If you ever experience this we will meet with you and listen to what you might need.

This could include linking you up with your family or friends or just providing someone to discuss things with.

## Mental Health Support

Your Personal Advisor or Social Worker can support you with making a referral to SOLAR (CAMHS) and/or other mental health services in your area.

## SOLAR

Support from Solar is available for all our young people up to their 19th birthday. We know that your emotional well-being is critical and so advice is available for you.

We will support you to find out about other community resources that may be able to help you deal with any challenges you may have.



## Kooth

Kooth is an anonymous online support and counselling service for any emotional wellbeing/ mental health issues. You don't need a referral and it's open 365 days a year.

## Healthy minds

Birmingham Healthy Minds (BHM) is an NHS primary care psychological therapies service that works closely with Birmingham GPs.

BHM offers advice, information and brief psychological talking therapies for people aged 16 and over, who are often feeling anxious, low in mood or feeling depressed.

## Relationships

Your relationship with your Personal Advisor or Social Worker is important as they are the main go-to person for any support you may need.

Your Personal Advisor will support you to understand about healthy relationships.

We will support you to understand good sexual health and healthy relationships. We can link you with community organisations such as the Umbrella service to offer advice, guidance and practical support.

## SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities)

This specialist team offer support for young people who have additional needs.

## Transition to Adult Services

The move from receiving a service from Children's Mental Health Services to Adults Services can be a worrying time for young people who have additional needs. We want to make this time of change as smooth as possible and so an assessment will start at age 17.

# Employment, Education & Training

We want you to succeed in all that you do, whether that is getting a job, higher education or accessing training. We will ask you how you are doing and be ready to support you in whichever direction you choose to go in. We can help you to find the right path for you in regards to your talents and interests.

## What we can offer you

As a care leaver you will be supported to access appropriate education or training that will enable you to fulfil your future goals.

We will also offer you careers advice and information, such as helping you with developing your CV, advice about job interviews and how to prepare for them, including what to wear.

We will support you with the costs of travelling to locations for training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews.

You will be allocated an Employment & Skills worker, who will work with you to look for employment and/or training available to you.

## Funding:

From the ages of 16 – 19 we can offer a bursary fund administered by the Further Education College, which will be a bursary of up to £1,200 a year to support vulnerable young people to participate in education.

This will be used to fund essential equipment; clothing and books that you may need to participate in education including help to get you there.

We will provide a laptop before your 18th birthday if you need it for studying.

## Apprenticeships, Work Experience & Employment

As good parents we will offer you the opportunity to apply for apprenticeships/jobs within departments in the council. We will guarantee you an interview if you meet the criteria for the job or apprenticeship.

We will also offer work experience either for a few days or even weeks so that you can get some experience of a working environment.

## Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way for you to experience a variety of roles, where you can learn new skills and experiences and build up your confidence. It can also support any future employment opportunities, and will improve your CV too!

We can help you find a role to suit your interests and passions and we can support you with searching and applying for these, as well as preparing you ready for your first day.

We can also support you to access the 'Do It' website where you can find information.

## University support

This support can include a £2,000 bursary for care leavers in higher education, as well as other support from the local authority.

We can advise you on university courses and how to apply for tuition fees, maintenance loan or grants at the start and end of term.

We will also make sure that during the holidays you have somewhere to live and we will help you with funding this.



# Accommodation

We want to make sure that when you move into your first home, you are fully prepared.

To do this we will offer a range of practical support to help develop your independent life skills.

The following information will help you to understand what support you can get in order to be ready for your own place.

## Training Flat

To help develop your skills, we have 2 training flats (1 long term, 1 short term) which you can stay in for short periods of time. This will help you have a good understanding of what it is like to live on your own.

You can speak with your Social Worker or Personal Advisor about how you can arrange a stay at one of the flats.

On your first day in the training flat, you will be supported by staff to do a shop for food and essentials; we will provide a copy of the OVOS cook book which is made up of simple recipes that you can make with easy ingredients. This will give you an idea of meals you can cook when becoming independent.

## ASDAN

You can work with your support network to complete the ASDAN book, which is a book that can support you with all you need when becoming independent. There are modules that cover subjects from cooking to finance. When you complete the booklet you will receive a qualification and can use this on your CV.

## Cooking Skills Course

The Solihull Council's Catering Team offer a course for you to learn new skills and develop your knowledge of healthy eating and cooking on a budget. As part of this you can also achieve a Food Hygiene certificate.

## Staying Put

Staying Put is an agreement that you and your foster carer have which means that you can stay in

your foster carers' home but you will pay rent and pay for your own food.

At present this is only available up to the age of 21.

## Support for housing:

You will be supported to apply for housing, including your own property, when we all think the time is right. This can include supported accommodation if you are not ready for, or don't want to have, your own tenancy.

When you and all the key people around you agree that you can live independently, you will be able to bid for a place to live and when you move in you will receive on-going support from Solihull Community Housing who can offer a worker for 12 months for support, plus 5 hours of housing maintenance and help with decorating.

You will be supported to move your belongings in to your new accommodation and we will provide you with suitable bags for your belongings.

## Funding:

If required You will be supported by your Personal Advisor to apply for Universal Credit which will cover your Housing Benefit.

You will also be entitled to £2,000 setting up home allowance; this will pay for items such as a fridge/freezer, microwave, toaster etc.

## Budgeting, Rent & Council Tax

You will be supported with managing your rent and paying it in on time to make sure you don't end up in arrears. You will be supported with budgeting within the money you receive for the week. We can also help with Council Tax.

## Fire Safety

West Midlands Fire Service offer a 'Safe and Well' check on your property with loads of helpful hints and tips. They will support you to understand how to reduce the risk of fire, what to do in the event of a fire and supply and fit smoke alarms free of charge if required; they will also provide information covering home and vehicle safety, lifestyle and health, water safety and the environment.

# Participation - helping you to develop links

We want you to have an active part in society and to feel like you can participate to make and maintain links with people and organisations that are important to you.

It is important that you feel comfortable and confident to interact with the people around you and have agencies or a safe place to turn to in a crisis.

## What support we can provide

We can provide you with information on any clubs or groups that may support your hobbies or interests. This will give you a chance to meet new people and make new friends.

We can support you to make links with local community/religious services to make sure that you can develop your faith/practice however you need to. We will also inform you about any relevant awards, schemes and competitions you can enter, in line with your interests and talents.

We can support you to register to vote when you turn 18, so that you can have your say in elections.

We can support you to get a free leisure pass for Solihull leisure centres/gyms, up to the age of 25.

We can give you advice and help you to challenge any discrimination you face as a care leaver or because of your background.

We can support you to maintain contact with important people, parents etc.

## Other support

We will aspire to acknowledge your achievements when they happen.

We will share your Pathway plan or any other plan with you in a format that you feel comfortable with and that you understand.

## NLCBF/YPBMF (National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum & Young People's Benchmarking Forum)

We are part of the NLCBF group and it is our chance to work with other local authorities to share experiences and successes.

Attending the events put on by NLCBF can support young people across the country to have their voices heard nationally and help to support and implement changes nationally.

You can be part of this!

## Youth Offending and Probation:

If you are worried about being drawn into criminal behaviours and want some support and advice on how to stay out of trouble, the Youth Offending Service can support you with this.

If you become involved with the police or courts, regarding offending, we will help you understand your rights and support you through the police and court system.

If you are in prison at any point, we will visit you and help you when you are released, and with your life after prison.



# Finances/Benefits



## What support we can provide

If you are living independently in supported accommodation and are 16 or 17, we will provide you with a weekly personal allowance. This will be used to cover your food costs and any travel expenses.

When you turn 18 you may be eligible to claim Universal Credit. Your Social Worker and Personal Advisor will support you with the claim process.

We will also help you fund the first five weeks before your benefits arrive.

We can support with funding for the first month in employment, such as a bus pass, rent and food.

We have an agreement with the DWP (Department of Work & Pensions) which means they will identify you as a priority group; this will mean that if you have any difficulties with any of your benefits, they will talk to you, your Personal Advisor or Social Worker.

We will advise you on where you can seek other support for finances, such as money management courses to help with budgeting.

We can support you to set up your bank account if you don't already have one.

We can support you to obtain any identification documentation you may need such as a passport, birth certificate or a driving licence. If you become a parent we will help you and support you to apply for maternity costs such as clothing and essential baby equipment.

## Birthday Allowances:

You will receive a birthday allowance each year until your 21st birthday. You and your PA will agree how this will be paid (By cash, direct debit, and voucher/gift card).

What you get:

£25 for your 16th and 17th birthday if you are living in supported accommodation. (If you are 16 or 17 and still in foster care, your carer will provide you with a birthday present)

£50 for your 18th birthday

£15 for your 19th and 20th birthday

£30 for your 21st birthday

Festive Allowance:

If you are aged 16 or 17 and live in supported accommodation, you are entitled to a festive allowance of £50.

If you still live with your foster carer, they will provide you with a festive gift and provide support for your cultural needs.

## Other financial support

If you are 16 or 17 we can help with money for clothing.

We want to hear from you if you are under 25 years of age. We can provide some basic funding to assist you in an emergency.

More details on how we can support you financially can be found in the 'Money & More' booklet.

(Please speak to your worker for a copy of the booklet).

# UASC

## *(Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People)*

We will support all our UASC young people who come to Solihull. We understand that during your journey you may have faced many challenges, we are here to make sure that we can provide all the support we can to help you settle into a new environment. We want to make sure that you feel safe and secure when you come to us.

### **Immigration Status and The Home Office**

We will support you to understand the immigration process and what you need to do when you see anyone from the Home Office.

We will be with you all through this process and will support you the best we can with your immigration situation. If required we will make sure we have an interpreter at important meetings to make sure you understand what is being said and can translate your words to the people who need to understand what you are saying.

If you require an age assessment we will help you to understand the process and ensure that you have access to independent representation.

We will support you to think about having to return home if your application to the home office for asylum is not accepted.

### **Support we can offer**

We will try and place you with a family who can speak your first language, or can develop the means to communicate with you and share your culture and religion.

We will help you to trace your family, if you have no contact with them.

We will help you to settle in to a school or college placement. We can also help you meet other young people from your country, faith or religion who can also help you settle in this country.

We will help you to develop your language skills, in order to adapt to your new environment.

We will support you and take notice of your faith or religion so that you can access support or know where the nearest centre is for you to attend.

We will support any health and medical needs you have and signpost you to any specialist teams if needed.

We can also put you in touch with refugee support organisations that are independent and can offer you advice and support on a range of social and legal issues.

### **Immigration/UASC**

Entraide - [www.entraideuk.org.uk](http://www.entraideuk.org.uk)  
0121 788 1087

British Red Cross - [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)

Refugee Council - [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)



# Contact us

## Visit us at our main office:

Chelmunds Place  
858 Chester Road  
Chelmsley Wood  
Solihull  
B37 7WG

## Opening Times

Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 5.20pm  
Friday 8.45am to 4.30pm  
Closed Bank Holidays

## Call or email us:

Main reception for Chelmunds is 0121 717 1473  
CA16+ Duty number is 0121 717 1467  
Emails us: [16plusadmin@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:16plusadmin@solihull.gov.uk)



# Useful links and contacts

## Health Support:

**111** (Out of hour's medical advice line)

**SOLAR** - 0121 301 2750 (Daytime)  
0121 301 5500 (Out of hours)  
<https://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/solar-youth-services/>

**KOOTH** - Online counselling service <https://kooth.com/>

**Solihull Mind** - 0121 742 4941  
or 0121 743 4237 <http://www.solihullmind.org.uk/>

**Umbrella** (Sexual Health) -  
0121 237 5700 <https://umbrellahealth.co.uk/>

**NYAS** - 0808 808 1001  
(Helpline) <https://www.nyas.net/>

**Change 4 life** - <https://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/>

**Healthy Mind Online** - <https://www.healthymindonline.com/>

## Finance/housing support:

**St Basil's** - 0121 766 6603

**Solihull Community Housing** -  
0121 717 1515 (Phone) or 07781  
474 722 (Text)

**Bromford Housing** -  
0330 1234 034

**Fry Housing Trust** (Supported  
Housing) - 0121 706 0900

**Samaritans** - 0121 704 2255

**Gov. Website** -  
<https://www.gov.uk/>

**UCAS** - <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/getting-student-support/undergraduate-student-finance-and-support>

**Citizens Advice Bureau** - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

## Education/employment support:

**Employment & Skills Team** -  
0121 704 8076

**Job Centres** - 0845 604 3719  
(Solihull) 0800 169 0190  
(Chelmsley Wood)

**STEPS** (For SEND Support with  
Employment) - 0121 704 7495.

**WM Jobs** - 0121 704 6000

**Do It** - <https://do-it.org/>

**National Careers Service** -  
<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/contact-us/home#>  
or 0800 100 900 (Lines open  
8am – 10pm)

**Ground Work** - <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/westmidlands>

# Notes



**Solihull Council Address:**

**Council House,  
Manor Square,  
Solihull B91 3QB**

