

Thurrock Council – Our commitment and local offer for care leavers

This document sets out what we can, and will, do to support and guide you, so you know what to expect on your journey from care to adulthood.



thurrock.gov.uk/bigwideworld

Our commitment to care leavers

We believe that everyone has a responsibility to help those who have been in care to overcome the difficulties that they experienced in their childhoods, so that they can lead successful lives.

More than anything else we recognise that the help and support that you receive from the local authority Aftercare Service is critical to whether you make the transition from care to independence successfully.

We take this responsibility very seriously. For our Looked After Children and Care Leavers we strive to be excellent Corporate Parents, having high aspirations for you and encouraging you to achieve your goals and potential. A good parent means keeping you safe and providing you with the best support to meet your individual needs. We can help you to access housing, education and training, work experience, health services and we are here to support you to make the most of leaving care.

All professionals working with you share high aspirations for you and make sure that all our looked after children and care leavers have all the opportunities we would give our own children through good access to high quality education, health and social care services.

This offer focuses on how we work with our partners to make sure you have the best possible outcomes.

What the Thurrock Aftercare Team does

We are your corporate parents, which means the collective responsibility of the council elected members and partners for providing the best possible care to you, this means that we care about and not just for you.

Our team is made up of Personal Advisors (PA's) and Social Workers (SW) who will support you with your journey to independent living. We have a legal duty to support you and provide you with assistance until you are 21, or 25 if you are in education, or you wish to have an ongoing service.

The Aftercare Service is based in the Civic offices in Grays. It is part of the Children's Social Care and Support Services.

The contact details of the Aftercare Service are as follows.

Address	Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, RM17 6SL
Email	aftercare@thurrock.gov.uk
Web	thurrock.gov.uk/bigwideworld

Your pathway plan

Every young person between the ages of 16 and 21 up to 25 in care or a care leaver has a pathway plan and are in education or wish to continue to receive a service from us.

Your first pathway plan will be based on your care plan – It will be written with you by your social worker.

The pathway plan has information on the best way to support you towards full independence and adulthood. It will cover your education, employment, health, finance, social needs, relationships and housing.

Your plan will be written in a way that meets your needs, it will capture your hopes for the future and include your views. It will be regularly reviewed with you, at least every six months, to check that your goals and milestones are still right and are being met.

The role of your social worker

Your social worker:

- regularly visits children in care and care leavers
- makes sure you have annual medicals and can attend with you if you wish
- makes sure you have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- contributes to your Looked After Child Reviews
- contributes to the transition planning process prior to your switch over to the support of a personal adviser at the age of 18
- makes sure that the six-monthly Pathway Plans are in place post-16
- conducts Age Assessments for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)
- completes and updates Risk Assessments, if required
- speaks with appropriate services on your behalf
- can provide finances for travel, education, trips, food, clothing, exam fees and college enrolment, for example

The role of your personal adviser (PA)

Your personal adviser:

- supports you leaving care to develop a strong sense of yourself and your identity, your background and history
- builds on your family and significant positive relationships in preparation for adulthood
- enables you to hold a sense of belonging to the community where you live and connection to society in general
- helps you to understand what support is available, so that you can make informed choices
- encourages you to develop confidence and self-esteem, and the ability to voice your opinions and thoughts on key issues that affect you
- supports you to develop the necessary skills to live independently

What you need to do

When you turn 16 you will get a personal adviser (PA) allocated to you, your personal advisor will work alongside your allocated social worker until you are 18 when your PA will become your only allocated worker. It is their job to keep in contact and arrange meetings with you, at home or somewhere local to you. Your PA will give you advice, information and guidance to help you make the best decisions.

You will have your social worker or PA's mobile number and email so you can contact them within office hours, and you will be told who you can speak to if they are not available.

You need to:

- be there when we visit
- share your news; we are there to support you and can only do that if you speak to us openly about what is going on in your life
- talk to us about any problems you may have, so we can help
- understand that you can request to change your social worker or PA in exceptional circumstances
- attend workshops – these are an opportunity for you to learn additional skills that you will need to live more independently in the community

Our promise to you

To make sure you are supported, we will:

- give you your own allocated worker and make sure you know who you can contact if they are not available
- talk to you about when you and your family can see or contact each other and support travel arrangements and if you can't, we'll explain why
- keep brothers and sisters together, wherever possible
- regularly review how well we are keeping our promises to you
- make sure that adults, such as carers and workers, get the right training to understand the issues that affect children in care and care leavers, so that you get the best care possible

To guide you and treat you well, we will:

- make sure your allocated worker stays in touch and visits you regularly to see how you are
- write a pathway plan alongside you and will make sure your wishes and feelings and aspirations are captured
- talk to you about why decisions are made and explain this clearly in a way you can understand
- make sure your allocated worker doesn't change unless there is a good reason for it
- make sure you meet with an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) before your looked after child reviews, so you can share your thoughts about your care
- Share the good things that you have done in your review and discuss issues you feel are important
- support you to make a complaint if you need to
- support you to tell us how well we are looking after you and what you think we should do differently

To help you be healthy, we will:

- make sure you receive information and support to maintain a healthy lifestyle
- respect your right to confidentiality
- make sure you recognise the importance of wellbeing and have access to appropriate health and support services
- ensure you have access to support for your emotional health
- ensure you have access to health workshops which include sexual health and contraception and emotional wellbeing
- provide you with dedicated substance misuse support from Inclusion Visions.
- provide you with your health information
- consider funding on an individual basis for any reasonable health related costs that impact your day-to-day life, such as transport costs to receive treatment
- explore funding options for non-essential treatment such as cosmetic dentistry if you have no recourse to public funds
- assist you to sign up with a local GP when you move accommodation
- support you around your gender and sexual identity and how to gain professional advice if needed
- assist you to find advice and support in relation to healthy relationships
- ensure you have access to support in relation to sexual health, including sexual violence

To help you find and sustain suitable accommodation, we will:

- ensure a dedicated housing officer works jointly with you and your social worker to identify appropriate housing offers
- assist you in getting used to managing a tenancy
- provide workshops to support you to access social housing and maintain your tenancy
- provide you with opportunities to drop in for housing advice with our dedicated housing officer
- provide you with our Big Wide World housing booklet which will explain what you are entitled to and key provisions available to you
- provide you with access to ongoing workshops/groups to develop and improve your independent living skills
- provide you with information on how to access our leaving care grant (**£3,000**) to help you furnish your move on accommodation
- support you to access a rent officer will visit you within 4 weeks of moving in to talk about any issues you may have, such as with receiving benefits or meeting rent payments
- support you to access a financial inclusion officer who will contact you to ensure you are claiming all financial help you are entitled to, as well as to help in understanding your income and budgeting
- help you to access a local area coordinator to support you with sustaining your tenancy and be an active member of the local community
- provide support to ensure you do not become homeless

To help you get the best education and training, we will:

- work with your school and designated teacher to help you do your best by having a personal education plan (PEP).
- help you to get on the courses you want to study.
- support you on your pathway to university and higher education.
- provide a defined careers advice offer from our Inspire Youth Hub service.
- ensure you have someone of your choice attend all university open day visits and have their travel costs paid. This could be your personal adviser, foster carer or friend.
- ensure that whilst you are at university, your holiday accommodation costs are arranged in advance and paid for by a grant of up to **£2,750** during year 1, 2 and 3.

To help you find employment, we will:

- provide you with a careers mentor from Inspire Youth Hub
- support you through our Inspire Youth Hub to prepare a CV, complete job applications and prepare for interviews
- provide you with a financial payment to assist you with interviews – for example, travel costs and clothing
- Provide you with travel costs to attend work or university until your first pay cheque or student loan is available
- work with colleagues from Inspire Youth Hub to match you with training or employment opportunities

To be successful in life, we will:

- celebrate your achievements and successes with you
- make sure that you are asked about important decisions which affect your life
- provide you with support to live independently when you're ready
- help you leave care with your savings, learn to budget and manage your finances well
- help you get ready for the world of work, find a job or training placement
- make sure that if you move from one service to another or leave our care, that there is a plan in place that is suitable for you
- if you are assessed for an ongoing care need then you may be eligible for further support

Help and support – our commitment to you

Local authorities have a legal duty to support you to make the transition from care to adulthood. It is our responsibility to make sure you know what services are available to you, and what you can expect to receive when you are in care.

Thurrock's local offer for care leavers aims to clearly set out in one document what you are entitled to and what we expect from you and help you to make the most of your independence. Over the following pages, you will be able to learn more about:

- your money and official documents
- where you live
- your education, employment and training opportunities
- your health and safety
- care leavers who are parents
- care leavers who are over 21
- care leavers who are over 25
- care leavers in custody
- how to get your voice heard
- care leavers who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), or former UASC

Your money and official documents

This section gives you information on what financial help you can expect from the Aftercare Team.

We provide financial advice and support to help you prepare for living independently and manage your money. To do this we will:

- Make sure that you have the advice you need to learn how to manage your money and that this is written out in your Pathway Plan, whether you are in full time education, or ready to live independently.
- Help you to open your own bank account and how to manage your money, so that you avoid getting into debt.
- Help you to get identification documents, (important pieces of paper about you) such as a passport, birth certificate and provisional driving licence.
- Help you to get your National Insurance (NI) number. Every adult in the country has their own NI number, so that records about their benefits, taxes and pensions are kept. Your worker might write a letter or help you fill in a form to apply for it before you leave care.
- Help you to access our Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Drop In for advice.
- Help you when you make your first claim for benefits at 18, by supporting you with a personal allowance for up to six weeks while your benefits claim is being processed. You are allowed to claim benefits up to one month before you turn 18 and will be supported to do so.
- Help you if you are unable to claim benefits by supporting you financially for a longer period while your entitlements are being established, as set out in your Pathway Plan.
- Help you to purchase furniture and white goods, such as washing machines and fridges, when you are setting up your home through a Setting Up Home Grant.
- Where necessary, we give young people financial assistance with the cost of health, dental or optician services.

The amount of money you will get depends on your age and what type of accommodation you are in. There is a lot of information for Care Leavers online and you will have social workers and PA's who you can ask for more information. Remember if you are not sure about anything, just ask a member of staff.

Allowances

The table below describes the range of financial support that is available for when you leave care.

Allowance	Amount, age 16-17	Frequency, age 16-17	Amount, age 18+	Frequency, age 18+
Birth certificates	£11 to £15	Once	Not applicable	Not applicable
Birthdays	£50	Once per year (for young people who are in touch with us on those birthdays)	£50 for 19th and 20th birthday, £100 for 18th and 21st birthday	Once per year (for young people who are in touch with us on those birthdays)
Books and materials	£100 for those young people attending college or university.	Once per year	£100 for those young people attending college or university.	Once per year
Christmas presents	Give a Gift Scheme	Once a year	Give a Gift Scheme up to 25 years-old	Once a year
Clothing allowance	£150	Twice a year	Not applicable	Not applicable
Cost of glasses and optical checks	Free	As per need	Up to £75	Once at the point the young person comes to the attention of the Aftercare service, up to age 21
Consultation work	Young people to be paid £12.50 per hour when engaging in consultation work such as interviewing staff.	As appropriate	Young people to be paid £12.50 per hour when engaging in consultation work such as interviewing staff.	As appropriate
Council tax support	Not applicable	Not applicable	From 1 April 2018, care leavers living in their own social housing in Thurrock are exempt from paying council tax up to the age of 21 years-old. You will not have to pay council tax if you live in a hostel or a house in multiple occupation (HMO).	

Allowance	Amount, age 16-17	Frequency, age 16-17	Amount, age 18+	Frequency, age 18+
Cultural celebrations	£30 to be provided for either Christmas or Eid	Once per year	£30 to be provided for either Christmas or Eid	Once per year
Driving lessons	Not applicable	Not applicable	Cost of provisional license and contribution to driving lessons up to £100 dependent on Pathway Plan.	Once
First aid box – up to £10 value	Not applicable	Not applicable	To be provided to young person upon moving into their first independent accommodation.	Once
Gap year	Not applicable	Not applicable	£500 to support living costs for those young people deciding to take a gap year before attending higher education.	Once
Job interviews	Not applicable	Not applicable	£100 towards cost of clothing for first job interview.	Once
Passports	£85	Once	Not applicable	Not applicable
Prescriptions	Not applicable	Not applicable	Cost of prescriptions for young people up to the age of 21 to be paid by the Aftercare team (where a young person is not entitled to free prescription by other means).	As appropriate
Prom and graduation costs	£100	Once	£100	Once

Allowance	Amount, age 16-17	Frequency, age 16-17	Amount, age 18+	Frequency, age 18+
Private renting arrangements	Not applicable	Not applicable	Provision of deposit and one month's rent on property assessed to be financially sustainable for the young person	As appropriate
Rent deposit for social housing tenancy	Not applicable	Not applicable	1 week's rent, according to amount, assessed to ensure ongoing costs for the young person are sustainable	Paid once
Savings	£7.50 fostering	Weekly	Work alongside the young person to encourage saving money from the funds available to them	As described
Setting-up home grant	Not applicable	Not applicable	£3,000	Available upon moving into independent accommodation and with receipts and based on need
Basic provisions payment	Not applicable	Not applicable	£30	One-off payment to care leavers moving into their first accommodation to ensure they have basic provisions, including food and cleaning products
Subsistence (unable to claim benefit)	Benefit rate	Weekly	Benefit rate	Weekly

Allowance	Amount, age 16-17	Frequency, age 16-17	Amount, age 18+	Frequency, age 18+
Subsistence (waiting for benefit claim to be processed)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Benefit rate	Weekly until the claim is authorised and in place – review 4 weeks and 6 weeks
Travel costs with learning and training attendance	Travel warrant, or equivalent, provided on the basis of an assessed need, considered in light of college bursary	As applicable	Travel warrant, or equivalent, provided on the basis of an assessed need, considered in light of college bursary	As applicable
Travel documents for unaccompanied asylum seeking children	£75	Once	Not applicable	Not applicable
TV Licence	Included in placement	Included in placement	£159	First year of tenancy
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children 18+ on appeal (personal allowance)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Benefit rate personal allowance gov.uk/universalcredit	Weekly
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children 18+ NRPF or ARE (personal allowance)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Benefit rate personal allowance gov.uk/universal-credit	Weekly
Utility costs – gas, electric, water	Not applicable	Not applicable	First 4 weeks costs paid for at the point the young person moves into their first independent accommodation	Once

	Eligible Child	Relevant Care Leaver	Former Relevant Care Leaver	Qualifying Care Leaver
Needs Assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	If required
Pathway Plan (and review)	Yes	Yes	Yes	If required
Personal Adviser	Yes	Yes	Yes	If required
Keep "in touch"	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (as appropriate and if assisted with education / training)
Primary income / maintenance	Yes	Yes	–	–
Provide / maintain in suitable accommodation	Yes	Yes	–	–
Financial support to maintain education, training or employment placement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (as appropriate and if assisted with education / training)
Vacation accommodation (in higher education or residential further education courses)	–	–	Yes	Yes
Advice and assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Where you live

There are different types of housing with support, and you will have some options in where you want to live.

Your social worker and PA will be visiting you, and where you live will be agreed in your Pathway Plan. Staying on with foster carers is called 'Staying Put', you can stay with your foster carer until you are 21 years old, if this is agreed. This will not affect your long term move on plans.

When you turn 16, your social worker and Personal Advisor will begin discussions about your housing options post 18 as part of the pathway planning process. There will be reviews of your housing options until an 18+ accommodation offer is agreed.

We will provide advice and information to assist with housing within Thurrock as well as explore other options for young people who cannot be rehoused in the borough.

We are also able to help with housing applications which can then be put on hold for young people who are not quite ready to transition into independent living. This means that the Housing Department are notified of the request for housing well in advance.

Where there are concerns that young people are not going to manage independent living, bespoke packages of support can be implemented to support this transition.

These include:

- Young people remaining in semi-independent provision post 18 year until they are more able to manage independent living.
- Outreach support packages.

These packages can vary enormously in terms of how many hours of support per week are offered to young people in their own accommodation. The Aftercare Team will liaise with Adults' Services and other departments within the council where young people meet their criteria, to seek appropriate adult accommodation and support services.

Where young people want to remain in a different borough; we try to work in conjunction with other local authority housing departments to advocate on their behalf for entitlement to apply for social housing in that locality.

Types of accommodation

There is a range of accommodation options post-18 that are outlined in a brochure for Care Leavers (Making Housing a Home), which is on our website.

Type	Description	Detail
Age 16+ 24-hour unit	For young people who are being prepared for semi-independent living	Usually, a large house with up to five young people sharing. You will have your own room but share the kitchen, bathroom and lounge. You will still have an allocated key worker who works within the service but has responsibility of overseeing your pathway plan and making sure you can demonstrate you can look after yourself. There will always be a member of staff in the house including sleep-in staff overnight.

Age 16+ Lower Support Unit	This service is for young people who already have demonstrated that they have some semi-independent skills and are enrolled at college or working	You will have your own room but share the kitchen, bathroom and lounge. You will still have an allocated key worker who works within the service but has responsibility of overseeing your pathway plan and making sure you can demonstrate you can look after yourself.
Foster placement	Young people are placed in a family home with carers, often sharing with other young people or the carers' children	Foster Carers will continue to support you through education employment and training up until you reach the age of 18.
Staying Put	This is an extension of your foster placement.	This arrangement is for the young people who have requested to remain with their carers post 18 and the carers agree to this, you will normally be expected to contribute to this.
Age 18+ shared house, including Headstart Housing	This accommodation is for young people 18+ that continue to require a level of support and guidance to successfully achieve independence	You will have your own room and share a kitchen, bathroom and lounge area. You are expected to keep the accommodation clean and adhere to the house expectations. You will have a key worker that will come to the house to see you and offer support where required.

Education, employment and training

Education is essential for you to gain the academic qualifications you will need when looking for employment. However, college and university are not the only options. Apprenticeships and training schemes are very popular and can be a good way to learn practical work skills and earn!

Volunteering is another excellent option to help you gain 'work ready' skills and get that all important work experience that employers want.

We encourage and plan young people's education, training and leisure activities based on a comprehensive assessment of your needs and this is recorded in detail in your pathway plans. These proposals build on information that is already included in your personal education plan (PEP).

Some young people will not be able to access formal education and training straight away but may be working towards these opportunities, that is English as A Second Language (ESOL) classes or volunteering. It is important that these engagements are recognised.

The Aftercare team work together with the Inspire Youth Hub to make sure that young people receive appropriate careers advice and guidance up to the age of 21 years (or 25 years if required). If you are a care leaver you will receive priority access from the point of referral. Inspire and our partners can also help with practical tasks such as CV building, interview preparation and practicing and work readiness preparation.

We work in partnership with education and employment trainers who can work to build up confidence, motivation and the self-esteem of young people who wish to further their goals in connection with education, employment training.

University students

We will work hard to support you with your education, if you decide to go to university you will receive up to a three-year financial support package.

Further education is essential for you to gain academic qualifications you will need when looking for employment.

The financial support you could receive includes:

Title	Description	Detail
University higher education bursary	£2,000 per course	Spread in instalments, across duration of the course for up to 3 years
Laptops	Will depend on course and the need for specific IT equipment	A request will be made by your LCA if equipment is required.
University holiday accommodation	Dependent on location	The Aftercare team will assist you to source holiday accommodation during the summer and Christmas periods if required. You must make sure we are aware of your plans at least four weeks in advance. Your worker will also assist with a return travel costs. Additional payment will be added to your bursary to contribute to the of this up to £2,750 per year over the first three years of your course
University graduation equipment	£100	We will give assistance to you when you reach your final graduation ceremony. We will assist in the hiring of the gown and photo opportunities on the day of your graduation events.
University student bursary	Applications directly to universities	This is dependent on the University and further discussion will need to take place with each individual University.

Should you decide to stop attending university please make sure that you inform your allocated worker as soon as possible.

Your health and safety

Your health and well-being are very important to us. Being healthy doesn't just mean eating vegetables, exercising regularly and keeping your teeth clean. It also means feeling strong and well emotionally, being sexually healthy and safe and not smoking, doing drugs or drinking alcohol.

There are lots of services and support you can access and we will do our very best to keep you safe. We will support and encourage you to be healthy by:

- encouraging you to speak up if you are struggling with anything so we can get you the support that you need – it's good to talk
- providing a Health Letter as you reach 18 years old – this is a summary of your health information and provides information about health services who can support you
- helping you to register at a doctor's surgery and at other health services when you move home
- helping you to manage your emotional well-being – this may include Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or supporting you to get services as an adult
- helping you to attend hospital or doctor's appointments
- providing help and support if you are a parent. Your allocated worker will help or will be able to ensure you can access other support services
- making sure you have an adult you can trust with you, should you get into trouble with the police

Care leavers who are parents

Being a parent for the first time can be challenging. We want to make sure that you get the support you need when you are pregnant and during your first year of being a parent.

We can support you by:

- ensuring you have essential items for baby by accessing correct benefits, grants, charities and consideration of a discretionary grant up to £100 if required
- supporting travel costs for a friend/family member to accompany you to appointments and the hospital for the birth
- providing you with the opportunity to have a Family Network Meeting during pregnancy to identify support within friends and family network
- ensuring all prospective parents have a birth plan which includes a 6-week after care plan where we will support you with your new baby
- providing access to support to assist with claiming relevant benefits and registering the birth of the baby

Care leavers who are over 21

We can continue to offer support to Care Leavers aged over 21 years up until the age of 25. If you no longer require a service from us, you can contact us for further support up until the age of 25.

The support we will provide includes:

- access to the university bursary and all other aspects of a university package including financial assistance and general support
- council tax exemption up to the age of 21, or up to the age of 25 if you are assessed as being vulnerable
- access to your leaving care grant if you haven't accessed it before the age of 25
- personal adviser and pathway plan – if you want this, we will agree with you how often we see you and what we will help you with

Care leavers who are over 25

At Thurrock, we understand that parents do not stop being parents when a young person turns 25 years-old and do not believe that this should happen for care leavers. Therefore there will be no age limit on our service provision.

From 25 onwards:

- you can still come to us for information, advice and guidance and we will help in any way we can
- there will be no more pathway plans (but we can help you plan your life)
- we won't chase you but we will be here if you need us
- we would love to hear how you are getting on so please do call or write in with your news or just for a catch-up
- we would welcome your input into how we support other care leavers in the future

Care leavers in custody

We will be there for any of our young people in custody. This will include making arrangements to collect you when you are released and make arrangements so that you have somewhere to go. We will stay in touch by visiting or writing to you depending on what you want.

We will also:

- ensure your personal adviser will make a case for any additional funding for hardship support you may need
- be actively involved in any resettlement planning for you
- assist you with keeping in touch with friends and family if you want this

Former unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

For young people who were formerly UASC there may be a need for specific types of support to move forward into adulthood.

In order to ensure you are supported we will:

- ensure that you have accommodation while your immigration status remains unresolved
- support you to access legal representation in relation to your immigration status
- support you to make applications to the home office
- support you with access to education, including English for speakers of other languages
- ensure you receive weekly personal allowance payments while you are unable to access other forms of financial support
- support you to prepare for all outcomes of your asylum application through triple planning as part of your pathway plan
- provide you with information about the voluntary returns service if this is something you would like
- provide translation services where required

Numbers to contact if things go wrong

Service	Description	Contact
Children's Care and Support Out of Hours (EDT)	An emergency social care service outside of normal office hours. The service is designed to deal only with emergency situations that cannot wait until the next working day.	01375 372 468
Open Door Advocacy Service	Support you to explore any issues you may have regarding your pathway plan.	01375 389 879
Housing Emergency Duty Team	Advice and help if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness.	01375 652 820
Aftercare Team Duty Team	Responds to crisis situations in the absence of an allocated worker.	01375 366 605
The Mix helpline	They can help you take on any challenge you're facing – from mental health to money, from homelessness to finding a job, from break-ups to drugs.	0808 808 4994 themix.org.uk
Sexual Health Services	Sexual health advice and support. C-Card scheme for 13 to 24-year-olds.	brook.org.uk/thurrock

Getting your voice heard

Having a voice and knowing your rights are important when you are a Care Leaver and this document will hopefully help you to understand what support and advice is available to you.

We really want to hear your views, wishes and feelings so you can help us to improve your experience of being in care. We have a duty to listen to you and will treat you fairly and with respect, which is what is expected of you, too.

It is important for you to know what to do if you feel you are not being listened to. Children's Services are obliged to protect you from harm and provide you with support and services that meet your needs.

Service	What they do / how they help	Contact number	Email / website
Aftercare Service	Leaving care – support and guidance.	01375 366 605	aftercare@thurrock.gov.uk
Children and Young People in Care and Care Leaver Council	Gives care leavers the opportunity to discuss care related issues – for example, health, education, housing and finance. Meets with councillors and directors to share your views to make the service better for all children and young people in care and care leavers.	07876 398 613	thurrock.gov.uk/cicc
Mind of My Own	Finding it hard to talk to a social worker or professional? Want to have your views heard and be involved in decisions that affect you? The 'Mind of My Own' App makes it very easy for you to say what you want to say, when you want to say it.	07968 511 822	mindofmyown.org.uk

Sometimes problems do happen and when they do, we have a policy of trying to sort things out as soon as we can. If you feel you have been treated unfairly or discriminated against in any way, or if you are unhappy about the support or service you have received, an advocate will help you to address your concerns.