

Help and housing for care leavers

If you have been in care then you may be entitled to housing and other help from Warwickshire County Council and your local Council, such as Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council. The type of help you will receive depends upon your age.

Warwickshire County Council is responsible for finding you somewhere to live until you turn 18. The County Council [website](#) will provide you with further details if you are thinking of leaving care.

If you are 18, 19 or 20 years old and are homeless, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council must help you. The Councils Housing Solutions Team will be able to advise you if you are a care leaver looking for accommodation.

For general advice contact [Shelter](#) who can offer advice and support relating to housing and homelessness.

Definition of a Care Leaver

The broad definition of a care leaver (as described by the Care Leavers Association) is 'Any adult who spent time in care as a child (i.e. under the age of 18). Such care could be in foster care, residential care (mainly children's homes), or other arrangements outside the immediate or extended family'.

If you are a 16/17-year-old care leaver

Up until your 18th birthday the County Council is responsible for providing you with somewhere to live. If you are homeless and under 18, the Council might provide you with [emergency accommodation](#) while it arranges a social services assessment.

Social services must then provide accommodation while they investigate what help and support you need.

If you are 18 years old and leaving care

If you are a care leaver Warwickshire County Council will support and work with you to prepare you for adult life. Care workers will assist you until you are at least 21 and possibly longer if you are in education. When deciding where to live, there are 3 things to consider:

- Where you would like to live
- What support you are likely to need
- What is available

The longer you stay in foster care, the more time you will have to plan what is right for you. When the time comes for you to move out you and/or your foster carers should try to give at least 56 days' notice wherever possible. Moving out of foster or residential care on your own can be scary. Even if you are surrounded by other people, living on your own can be lonely; it is hard to manage your money, to keep everything clean, and to work out which of your friends can be trusted in your home.

Most landlords including the Council could evict you if you are in breach of their tenancy rules, such as rent arrears or causing noise nuisance to your neighbours. Depending on your situation there are several options including:

- Higher support accommodation: you rent a room and share a bathroom and kitchen with others and receive support at least once a week from a key worker. The staff team are on site and available throughout the day and most of the night.
- Medium support accommodation: you might share a flat with others, have key work support once a week and staff are available on site 9-5 pm.
- Lower support accommodation: you might live in your own flat and are visited at least once a week by your key worker. [Doorway](#) (a local charity for young people aged 16-25 who are faced with homelessness) offers this service.
- Independent tenancy: If you can demonstrate a degree of independence skills and you are supported by your leaving care team you may be able to apply for your own housing e.g. a flat owned by your local council.
- Staying Put: If you have been in the same foster placement since the age of 15 and your foster family agree you can stay in the family home when you are over the age of 18, your worker can put in a referral to the staying put scheme.
- Supported Lodgings: Warwickshire County Council is also able to access other people that you think would provide a safe and supportive place to develop your independence skills, for example: a relative, a previous support person, a previous carer, your partner's parents etc.

If you need furniture when you move, the leaving care teams will make sure you have all the essential items.

If you are 21 years old and above and a Care leaver

Some older care leavers may be entitled to accommodation if you are considered to be in [priority need](#).

For example, this may be the case if you:

- are vulnerable as a result of having been in care
- have not had a stable home since you left care
- have slept on the streets in the past

Am I eligible for benefits?

Most 16- or 17-year-old care leavers are not eligible for benefits. The Children's Services department of Warwickshire County Council will support you financially by paying you enough for your rent, food, bills, travel costs and giving you any other support you need, such as help with continuing your education.

If you are an 18- to 21-year-old care leaver then you will be entitled to Housing Benefit or help with housing costs in Universal Credit full-service areas, which includes Nuneaton and Bedworth.

The [Government](#) website provides more information about getting help with housing costs if you are 18-21 years old.

If you require any further advice or assistance, please call 02476 376406 or email customer.services@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk

Useful contact details:

[Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

Telephone: 024 7637 6406

Open 9:00am until 5:00pm, Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays).

[Warwickshire County Council](#)

The Leaving Care Team

Telephone: 01926 410410

Monday to Friday – 8:00am to 6:30pm

Saturday – 9:00am to 1:00pm

Email: feedback@warwickshire.gov.uk

[Citizens Advice](#)

Advice line: 02476 494393 10am - 2pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Advice line: 0300 3301163 9am - 4pm Monday – Friday

[Doorway](#)

Telephone: 02476 345583

9 am to 5 pm (Monday to Friday)

P3 - a local charity based in Nuneaton that helps people aged 25 and over who are faced with homelessness.

Freephone **0808 164 6220** or email warks@p3charity.org for more information.

[St Basil's](#)

St Basils is a charity and housing association that works with young people aged 16-24 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to enable them to find and keep a home, grow their confidence, develop their skills, increase opportunities and prevent homelessness.

Become – The charity for children in care and young care leavers.

Care advice line for those in care or a care leaver and looking for help and advice

Telephone: 0800 023 2033 between 10:30am and 3pm, Monday to Friday,

Email: advice@becomecharity.org.uk

Capstone Care Leavers Trust – a charity that awards grants to people in need who are aged 17-25 years and who have been in care in local authorities in England and Wales.

Telephone: 0121 374 2601

Email: info@capstonetrust.org