

## Parenting offer for Care Leavers

As Corporate Parents we are committed to supporting mothers and fathers who are care experienced.

During pregnancy, the health and well-being of expectant mothers and babies is our priority. We are also committed to supporting the well-being and inclusion of fathers. We know that individual needs and circumstances are different.

Some parents will need little support, while others will need more help.

We promise to listen to you, to be honest with you and to work with you to make sure you have the things you need – including a place to live, support with finances and essential items.

We want to support you to know your rights and entitlements – including benefits, grants and resources in your local community.

We want you to feel ready and know what to do – this could include how to change a nappy or bath a baby, when you need to seek medical advice or how to register for a school place, a dentist or optician.

This support will be on-going, as what you will need to know will change as your child gets older. Parenting can be rewarding but also challenging.

We promise to work with you.

## So what does this mean for me?

Access and support to a Personal Advisor who will support you in all aspects of your life, as well as becoming a parent.

### **Weekly parent group**

Every week, we hold a parent and child group at our Care Leavers hub. This group is an opportunity for care leavers to bring their children and enjoy activities together such as messy play, story time, crafts, weaning as well as free play and social catch ups. During consultations, young people told us that they wouldn't feel confident enough to attend parent and child groups in the community but would attend in a familiar environment. Our shared aim is to introduce young people to parent and child groups and activities in the community and for them to be accessing these also.

Before a young person comes along to the parenting group, a team member will go out and visit them (potentially with their PA) to do a 'getting to know you' session. This could include sharing what happens in the parenting group, a conversation about what they would like to get from it. Is there anything that the young person needs for themselves (in relation to pregnancy) or baby? This will gain a wider view about what referrals could be made as part of their attendance at group e.g. to The baby room or Shoebox Fairies baby box.

### **Dedicated baby pantry**

Essential everyday items for babies can be costly, though some things can be inexpensive, the frequency that they are needed means the cost can be significant. At the Care Leavers hub, we have a dedicated 'baby pantry' for young people to access. This is stocked with items such as nappies in varying sizes, wipes, blankets, clothes, and toiletries.

### **Additional visit from PA**

When a young person welcomes their new baby and becomes a Mum or Dad, an additional visit will be offered by their PA within the first month of the baby being born. The Advanced Practitioner and Participation Worker at the Leaving Care team are able to support PAs with signposting to any necessary services to support with becoming a new parent, such as their local Start Well Family Centre.

New Mums or Dads will receive a gift from their PA and the Leaving Care team on the birth of their child, usually an outfit and a congratulations card from the team.

Our Participation Worker is (as of 26th September 2023) trained in paediatric first aid, and several members of the Leaving Care team have attended paediatric awareness and SABL training.

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### **Team link with Start Well Family Centres**

A link has been made with a senior Start Well Worker from the local Family Centre to support the parent offer for Care Leavers at the Hub. The timetable for the weekly sessions held at the Care Leavers Hub have been discussed with and advised by Start Well, and some of these sessions will be facilitated by an Early Years Worker from a Start Well Family Centre.

Through this, some of the Leaving Care staff have been trained in paediatric awareness and SABL. This training will also be available to young people and provided specifically for them rather than in the community if preferred.

### **Informed staff team for local charities and services**

Our Leaving Care Personal Advisors are well informed on local charities available to support young people who are in need of support with items for their baby. This includes the Shoebox Fairies who provide mother and baby boxes to provide essential items for the first few weeks and the Baby Room who provide essentials for babies 0-6 months, including a Moses basket or baby bath.

### **Young people who are care leavers and expecting a child**

You will not automatically be referred for a pre-birth assessment. The same procedure is to be followed for all, and a referral is only to be made when there are concerns about the pregnant mother, the father, their respective partners or immediate family or associates which may pose a risk to the unborn baby.

If a parenting assessment is needed, we promise to support you and make sure you are assessed as you are now and not how you were in the past, that you are treated fairly and your rights are respected.

### **We will support you to continue your education, access training or employment.**

This could include providing careers advice and guidance, and practical help with childcare, transport, and other things you need.

### **Free condoms**

Staff at the Leaving Care service have attended C-Card training which enables them to give out free condoms for young people who register with a 'C-Card'.

This is also to support you with consideration for future 'family planning' and can also direct to the outreach team at Spectrum Health.

### **If you are living apart from your child.**

There are numerous reasons for this, which could include situations where there are no concerns about parenting (such as when children are living with another parent), as well as when children have been removed on a temporary or permanent basis. Whatever the circumstances, we will support you in building and maintaining a relationship with your child. Depending on the situation, this support may be practical (e.g. assisting you to see and spend time with your child), financial (e.g. travel costs), emotional (e.g. discussing your thoughts and feelings) and ensuring you have access to advocacy or legal advice (e.g. to make sure your rights to see your child are respected).

If your child has been removed from your care, we will not abandon you and will never give up on you.

We will take time to support you and help you deal with the practical, financial, and emotional implications. This could include supporting you through the legal proceedings. We will support you to build and maintain a relationship with your child, even if this is through letter-box contact.

We promise to make this support available to parents up to the age of 25 and beyond if needed.