

# Leaving Care

# A guide for Young People



**prospects** | Calderdale  
Council  
Working together to support young people leaving care

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# Who is a care leaver?

The level of support young people receive from the Leaving Care Team (Pathways) depends on your legal status as a care leaver.

## **Eligible Young People**

Are aged 16 or 17, have been Looked After for a period or periods totalling at least 13 weeks starting after their 14th birthday and are still in care. (This total does not include a series of pre-planned short-term placements of up to four weeks where the young person has returned to a parent.) There is a duty to support these young people up to the age of 18, wherever they are living.

Unaccompanied asylum seekers aged 16 and 17 are always deemed to be looked after until they are aged 18 and are therefore 'eligible' under the Children (Leaving Care) Act.

## **Relevant Child**

They are aged 16 or 17 and are no longer Looked After, having previously been in the category of Eligible Young Person when in care. However, if after leaving care, a young person returns home for a period of 6 months or more to be cared for by a parent and the return home has been formally agreed as successful, he or she will no longer be a "Relevant Young Person".

A young person is also "Relevant" if, having been in care for three months or more, he or she is then detained after their 16th birthday either in a hospital, remand centre, young offenders' institution or secure training centre. There is a duty to support Relevant Young People up to the age of 18, wherever they are living.

## **Former Relevant**

They are aged 18 to 21 (or up to 25 if in full-time further or higher education), and have left care having been previously either "Eligible", "Relevant" or both. There is a duty to consider the need to support these young people wherever they are living.

## **Qualifying**

They are over the age of 16 and under the age of 21, (or up to 24 if in full-time further or higher education), and have been Looked After or, if disabled, have been Privately Fostered after reaching 16, but do not qualify as Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant. They may receive support, advice and assistance wherever they are living. They may also qualify if they are the subject of a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and were Looked After immediately before the SGO was made.

# Social Workers and Personal Advisors

As an Eligible Young Person you will be allocated a Social Worker within the Pathways Service. Before you come to Pathways, your current Social Worker and Pathway Social Worker will work with you on your Pathway Plan. They will work together for a while so your Pathway Social Worker can get to know you. Once this has happened, your Pathway Social Worker will become your Social Worker. When you are 18 you will get a Pathway Adviser who will support you until you are 21 (longer if you are still in education).

## Pathway Planning

All young people who are Looked After who are 16 and over and Care Leavers in Calderdale have a Pathway Plan. Your Pathway Plan will replace your Care Plan from the age of 16. Your Pathway Plan is about your needs and what we all need to do to ensure your successful transition to adult life.

### **How will I be involved?**

For your Pathway Plan to be effective it will be based on an up to date needs assessment; setting out the support that will be offered to you to achieve your aspirations. We aim to fully involve you in the development of your Plan and you will be offered support to complete a Review Form for any updates.

### **Who else will be involved?**

With your agreement, we will seek the views of our partner agencies when completing your Pathway Plan. This may include Housing, Education, Training and Employment providers, Health Services, The Youth Offending Service and Youth Support Services to ensure we all work together to provide you with clear and consistent advice and support. We will also involve parents if it is appropriate.

## What will be included in my pathway plan?

The following diagram sets out some of the areas covered in your plan:



## When will my plan be completed?

Your initial Pathway Plan will usually be completed before you are 16 years and 3 months old.

## What about changes to my plan?

Your Pathway plan will then be updated and reviewed within every 6 months or within 28 working days of any significant change to your plan such as a change of address.

As an Eligible Young Person or Relevant Care Leaver your Pathway Plan will be written and available at your statutory review chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) - a review must take place before making a decision to confirm that a young person is ready to leave care.

For young people over 18, the review will be led by your Pathway Adviser and checked by their Team Manager.

# Care Leaver Entitlements

A copy of the Financial Policy is available on request from your Pathway Adviser.

Relevant Care Leavers will receive Income Maintenance Allowance (same as the UK Government rate at that time) that will continue for up to 4 weeks after your 18th birthday to allow for a benefits claim to be processed (adjusted if in employment.). This will be paid at a reduced rate of £40.00 per week if you are not in education, training or employment and not attending careers at least twice a week to engage in support. If you are engaging with and attending careers appointments or undertaking unpaid work at least twice a week you will receive the full maintenance allowance

Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers will receive a birthday allowance either by cash or into your bank account.

Relevant Care Leavers will receive an additional annual festival allowance either by cash or into your bank account.

If you are a cared for young person on remand or were cared for, prior to receiving a custodial sentence you will receive a small allowance whilst you are 16 or 17 years old.

Relevant Young People receive a clothing allowance of £100 per quarter until you reach 18 years old – the first quarter is usually paid after 3 months from coming to Pathways.

If you are aged 16 or 17 living independently and in full time education for 12 hours or more per week, you will receive £10.00 per week tenancy top up. You will also be eligible for a £30.00 per week bursary paid by the college.

If you are 18 – 20yrs, living independently, and on an apprenticeship, you will receive £20.00 per week top up allowance and £10.00 tenancy top up.

If you are over 18 and in full time Further or Higher Education and in your own or a shared tenancy you will receive a Living Allowance, + £30.00 Education Top Up and £10.00 Tenancy Premium if you are in rented accommodation.

If you are living in Halls of Residence we will pay the accommodation fees. You will receive £30.00 per week living allowance and £30.00 education top up.

The education top up is to cover transport costs and the cost of stationary and text books.

You will have your accommodation costs fully met whilst in Higher Education.

If the course requires you to have a laptop we will contribute up to £250.00 towards the purchase price once you have established regular attendance for 3 months.

If you are studying a degree or equivalent course you will receive a total bursary of £2,000; £150 paid each academic year & £1550 on successful completion of your degree.

Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers can access a Setting Up Home Allowance of up to £1500 (plus up to £500 for a Bond) - to help furnish their independent accommodation.

# Setting Up Home Allowance

## What is included in the Setting Up Home Allowance?

Your Setting Up Home Allowance (SHA) is held by the Pathway Service and your Social Worker or Pathway Advisor will be able to purchase items with you from the following list:

Amounts are the limit to pay. – Items in brackets are optional not necessities.

### Living room

|      |      |
|------|------|
| TV   | £150 |
| Sofa | £120 |

### Bedroom

|                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Bed incl. mattress              | £140 |
| Duvet/sheets - Bedding in total | £50  |
| Wardrobe & Drawers - total      | £130 |

**TV Licence £145.50 (1<sup>st</sup> one only)** Curtains for each room – up to £25 per pair.

### Kitchen

|                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Cooker                            | £130           |
| (Microwave                        | £35) *Optional |
| Washing machine                   | £140           |
| Fridge freezer                    | £130           |
| Kettle                            | £12            |
| Toaster                           | £10            |
| Tea, Coffee & Sugar pots, Cups    |                |
| Pan Set, Cutlery, Oven tins etc., | £15 - £25      |
| Bin                               | £8             |
| T Towels                          | £3             |
| Iron & Ironing Board              | £20            |

### Bathroom

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| Laundry Basket | £6               |
| Towels         | £15 (towel bale) |
| Bath Mat       | £5               |

White goods can be purchased & charged on Invoice from Appliance World (Halifax) – they may give Prospects a discount – all goods have 12 month guarantee and possible free delivery – please make sure Appliance World are reminded to Invoice to 'Prospects Services' & put the young person's name on the invoice.

\* Gas or Electric with connection by a certified fitter.

With your agreement, your Social Worker/Personal Advisor will contact your local Fire Brigade to request a safety check for your property.

# Somewhere to Live

## **How can you help me find somewhere to live?**

If you are living with Foster Carers and want to remain living with them after you are 18 you can ask your Social Worker or Pathway Advisor to request that this is considered by Calderdale Council and made into a “Staying Put” arrangement.

“Staying Put” arrangements could also be continued if you are attending Full Time Higher Education to ensure you have somewhere to stay during holidays.

As part of your preparation for adult life you will be supported to complete a Social Housing Application and/or to secure private rented accommodation in line with your wishes and your Pathway Plan. We will offer you support to make a housing benefit claim if you are on a low income or not in work.

It is important to note that Young People under 25 are normally only entitled to rent payments equivalent to the cost of a room in a shared house. Care Leavers between 18 and 21 can get the rate for 1-bedroom accommodation instead but once you turn 22 you can only get the shared accommodation amount. Bear this in mind if you are moving into a new home and think that you will continue to claim benefits after you are 22.

As a Care Leaver you may be entitled to Council Tax rebate or a reduction in council tax through Second Adult Rebate. Like Housing Benefit, you can qualify for Council Tax Benefit if you are not working or on a low income. If you have savings of over £16,000 you cannot normally get Council Tax Benefit.

All your benefit entitlements will need to be confirmed with the benefits agency and your Personal Advisor will be available to support you to attend appointments as required.

# Further Education

## **How can you support me with my further education?**

As an Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant Care Leaver you may be able to get financial support of £1200 a year direct from your School, Further Education College or Learning Provider. The 16-19 bursary is guaranteed for care leavers aged 16-19, and discretionary learner support can support older students. The Pathways Team will confirm your Care Leaver status with your Education or Training provider but you may wish to talk to your School, College or learning provider to find out more.

# Employment and Training

A significant concern raised by young people leaving care is that the focus is on preparing them for “a life in benefits”

Our priority is to support you with employment and training opportunities.

We will support you with training opportunities with local colleges and training providers and employment through our partnership with C & K Careers.

Calderdale Council runs an Apprenticeship scheme specifically for young people who are supported by the Pathway Service. Your Social Worker or Pathway Advisor will discuss these opportunities with you.

Some additional financial support may be available for training courses and apprenticeships which your Social Worker or Pathway Advisor will discuss with you.

## Support and somewhere to meet



### Getting On And Living – Independent Living

The GOAL Project brings together Care Experienced Young People to learn about the key skills and knowledge needed for ‘Getting On And Living’. The project is designed to improve the skills, knowledge and confidence required for young care leavers to live independently

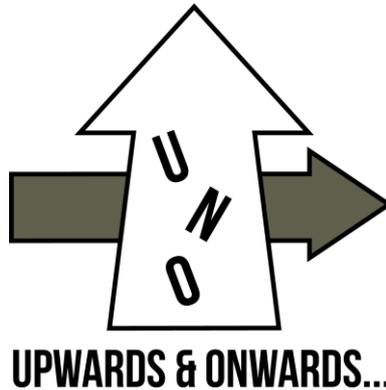
GOAL is unique as it has been created by Care Leavers who have been there, it is also taught by Care Leaver Mentors who bring their own experiences to share and inspire others.

We have put together this toolkit to help you with ‘Getting On And Living’ (GOAL) with Independent Living and to help you to get on the pathway to achieving your dreams in life.

Our care experienced trainer-mentors who deliver the training are here to support you.

By the end of the course you will:

- Be more confident at approaching independent life and will demonstrate an increase in confidence in the self-evaluation assessment
- Will understand the importance of goal setting, showing that you can evaluate your progress based in your GOAL Outcome Star support sheets
- Able to identify and list your key areas for learning in life skills and demonstrate that you can apply the knowledge learnt appropriately by setting specific actions for ways forward



UnO is a group created by young people for young people who are Looked After or Care Leavers. This group has been created to enable young people the opportunity to 'have their say' on the services provided by the Local Authority and help make the right changes, meet other young people, and have a space to relax.

The group meets once every two weeks on a Wednesday evening, 6pm-8pm; we are currently based at Youth Works in the Orange Box.

## Benefits

### **What if I need to claim benefits?**

On your 18th Birthday, your Personal Advisor will be available to support you to make a claim for Job Seekers Allowance. You can apply online at [www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/how-to-claim) or by phoning: Tel: 0800 055 6688 or ask at your Job Centre to make a paper claim.

If you are in full time further education, your Personal Advisor will assist you to claim Income Support. You will need to be able to provide confirmation of your attendance from your education provider.

If you are ill or disabled your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be able to support you to make a claim for Employment and Support Allowance and/or Personal Independence Payment. You can find out more by calling the Benefit Enquiry Line on Tel: 0800 88 22 00

If you are pregnant or a parent your Personal Advisor will be able to support you to claim Income Support, Maternity Allowance (dependent on previous employment), Healthy Start Vouchers, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits.

Please note that as Universal Credit is rolled out by Job Centre Plus throughout 2016 this will impact on the benefits you claim. Your Personal Advisor will be available to support you through these changes.

You may wish to visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) for more information.

# Financial Advice

## **What if I still need financial advice and assistance?**

As a Former Relevant Care Leaver you can ask the Pathways Service for financial help in emergencies. In very exceptional circumstances this will include small amounts of cash for specific items.

You can access further advice and assistance by requesting an appointment at your local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

You can visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) for details of your local office.

# Care Leavers Pledge

Calderdale Council has made a commitment to supporting young people and all elected Councillors have signed the pledge.

  
**Simon Young**  
 Luddendenfoot Ward  
 Labour (2016)

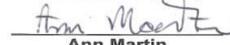
  
**Jill Smith-Moorhouse**  
 Luddendenfoot Ward  
 Conservative (2018)

  
**Nicole May**  
 Luddendenfoot Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

  
**Peter Caffrey**  
 Northwram & Shelf Ward  
 Conservative (2016)

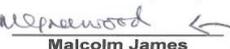
  
**Stephen Baines MBE**  
 Northwram & Shelf Ward  
 Conservative (2018)

  
**Roger Taylor**  
 Northwram & Shelf Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

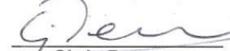
  
**Ann Martin**  
 Brighouse Ward  
 Labour (2016)

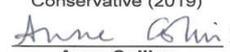
  
**Howard Blagbrough**  
 Brighouse Ward  
 Conservative (2018)

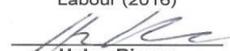
  
**Scott Benton**  
 Brighouse Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

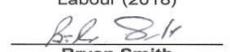
  
**Malcolm James**  
 Greetland & Stainland Ward  
 Lib Dem (2016)

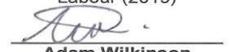
  
**Marilyn Greenwood**  
 Greetland & Stainland Ward  
 Lib Dem (2018)

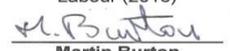
  
**Chris Pearson**  
 Greetland & Stainland Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

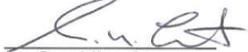
  
**Anne Collins**  
 Ovenden Ward  
 Labour (2016)

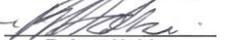
  
**Helen Rivron**  
 Ovenden Ward  
 Labour (2018)

  
**Bryan Smith**  
 Ovenden Ward  
 Labour (2019)

  
**Adam Wilkinson**  
 Sowerby Bridge Ward  
 Labour (2016)

  
**Martin Burton**  
 Warley Ward  
 Labour (2016)

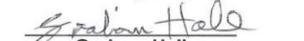
  
**Geraldine Carter**  
 Ryburn Ward  
 Conservative (2016)

  
**Robert Holden**  
 Ryburn Ward  
 Conservative (2018)

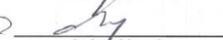
  
**Robert Thornber**  
 Ryburn Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

  
**Ali Miles**  
 Calder Ward  
 Labour (2018)

  
**Dave Young**  
 Calder Ward  
 Labour (2019)

  
**Graham Hall**  
 Hipperholme & Lightcliffe Ward  
 Conservative (2016)

  
**Faisal Shoukat**  
 Park Ward  
 Labour (2019)

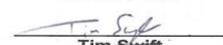
  
**John Hardy**  
 Skipcoat Ward  
 Conservative (2016)

  
**Andrew Tagg**  
 Skipcoat Ward  
 Conservative (2018)

  
**Marcus Thompson**  
 Skipcoat Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

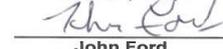
  
**Megan Swift**  
 Town Ward  
 Labour (2016)

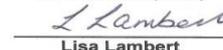
  
**Bob Metcalfe**  
 Town Ward  
 Labour (2018)

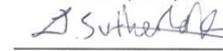
  
**Tim Swift**  
 Town Ward  
 Labour (2019)

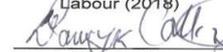
  
**Patricia Allen**  
 Elland Ward  
 Lib Dem (2016)

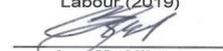
  
**Angie Gallagher**  
 Elland Ward  
 Labour (2018)

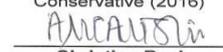
  
**John Ford**  
 Elland Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

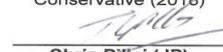
  
**Lisa Lambert**  
 Illingworth & Mixenden Ward  
 Labour (2016)

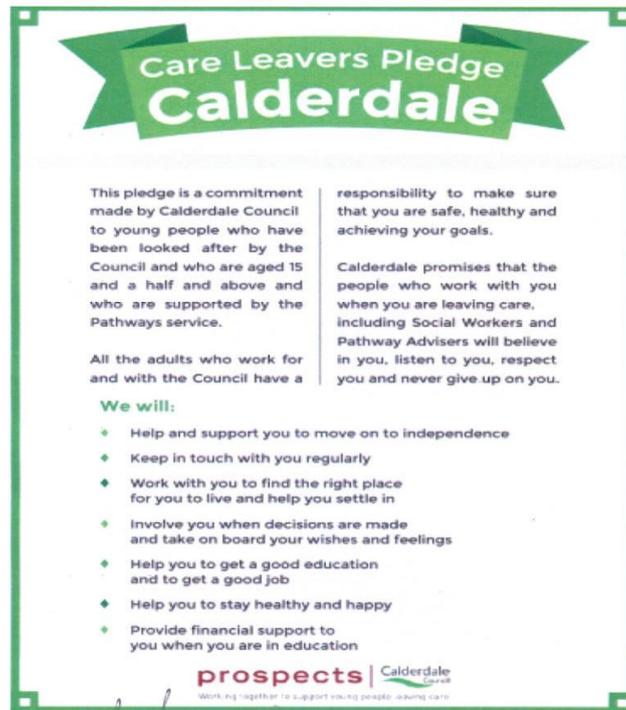
  
**Daniel Sutherland**  
 Illingworth & Mixenden Ward  
 Labour (2018)

  
**Barry Collins**  
 Illingworth & Mixenden Ward  
 Labour (2019)

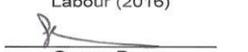
  
**Ann McAllister**  
 Rastrick Ward  
 Conservative (2016)

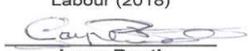
  
**Christine Beal**  
 Rastrick Ward  
 Conservative (2018)

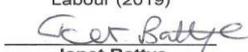
  
**Chris Pillai (JP)**  
 Rastrick Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

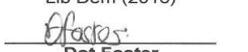


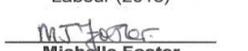
  
**Steve Sweeney**  
 Todmorden Ward  
 Labour (2016)

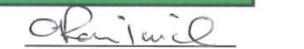
  
**Susan Press**  
 Todmorden Ward  
 Labour (2018)

  
**Jayne Booth**  
 Todmorden Ward  
 Labour (2019)

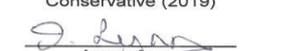
  
**Janet Battye**  
 Calder Ward  
 Lib Dem (2016)

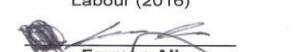
  
**Dot Foster**  
 Sowerby Bridge Ward  
 Labour (2018)

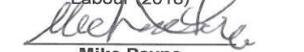
  
**Michelle Foster**  
 Warley Ward  
 Labour (2018)

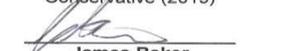
  
**Colin Raistrick**  
 Hipperholme & Lightcliffe Ward  
 Independent (2018)

  
**David Kirton**  
 Hipperholme & Lightcliffe Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

  
**Jenny Lynn**  
 Park Ward  
 Labour (2016)

  
**Ferman Ali**  
 Park Ward  
 Labour (2018)

  
**Mike Payne**  
 Sowerby Bridge Ward  
 Conservative (2019)

  
**James Baker**  
 Warley Ward  
 Lib Dem (2019)

# Children's Rights and Advocacy Service

The Children's Rights, Advocacy & Independent Visitor Service is for children and young people who are Looked After by Calderdale Council and also Care Leavers, aged 0-25years.

The service is part of the Calderdale Councils Young People's Service but it is not part of Calderdale Children's Care Service.

## **Children's Rights and Advocacy**

We can

- Make sure you know what your rights are
- Tell you about other services that might be able to help you
- Help you sort out disagreements
- Help with something that you are unhappy about

If you feel that someone is making decisions about you without listening to what you have to say, an advocate can:

- Help your voice be heard
- Make sure that you are being treated fairly
- Support you in meetings
- Support you to have your say about things that affect you
- Help you understand what is happening and why
- Help you make a complaint
- Help you to speak out for yourself

## **Confidentiality**

Everything you tell us will be kept confidential. The only time we will pass on anything you say is:

- If you ask us to
- If we think that you or another person is at risk
- If we are concerned that a crime may be committed

## **Accessibility**

Children's Rights Advocacy & Independent Visitor Service can be contacted Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm.

Visits / appointments can take place outside of these times by prior arrangement.

## **How to contact us:**

Angela Gill

Children's Rights Worker

01422 288254 or 07712305060

01422 288253 or 07712305058

Office number

01422 288251

Email us:

[CRAADMIN@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:CRAADMIN@calderdale.gov.uk)

Write to us:

3rd Floor, Hoover Building, 21 West Parade, Halifax, HX1 2TE

# Useful Contacts

## **Pathway Team**

19 Horton Street, Halifax, HX1 1QE  
Tel: 01422 394099

## **Customer First**

Email: [customerfirst@calderdale.gov.uk](mailto:customerfirst@calderdale.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01422 288001 or  
0845 2458000

**Out of Hours Service: (EDT)** Tel: (emergencies only) 01422 288000

## **Housing:**

Tel: 01422 264300 or 0845 245 6000

## **Job Seekers Allowance Online Application:**

<https://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/how-to-claim> Tel: 0845 6060 234

## **National Care Advisory Service:**

<http://www.leavingcare.org> Email: [ncas@catch22.org.uk](mailto:ncas@catch22.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7336 4824

## **Citizens Advice Bureau:**

<http://www.calderdalecab.org.uk>  
Shelter: [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk) Tel: 03445 152315

## **Refugee Action:**

Tel: 0800 917 2719 (free from landlines)  
Normal landline rate  
Tel: 0161 441 4141  
General Enquiries:  
23-37 Edge Street, Manchester, M4 1HW Client Advice  
Tel: 0161 831 5420

## **C+K Careers:**

16 Alexandra Street Halifax  
Tel: 01484 225500 (Ask for the Halifax Centre)

# Compliments, Complaints & Suggestions

We need to know what you think about our services so that we can improve them. Your comments, good or bad, will help us to know how to change things for the better.

## **What if I want to make a complaint?**

If you have got a problem with Children's Social Care Services or if you are unhappy about something that is happening to you, this can usually be sorted out by speaking to someone you trust like your Social Worker, Personal Advisor, Key Worker or Foster Carer.

## **But if they cannot put things right for you, then you can make a complaint in one of the following ways:**

On request a complaints form can be sent to you. Complaints forms can also be found at Council offices including Customer First.

The council have a contact/ Customer Service Section, phone them on  
Tel: 01422 392279

## **Or write to us at:**

Social Care Complaints Manager  
Calderdale Council  
Complaints and Compliments Team  
Freepost RTGL-EXHR-SRLH  
Halifax Customer First 1st Floor, 19 Horton  
Street Halifax HX1 1QE.

# Legislation, Guidance, Regulations

Children Act Guidance and Regulations Vol. 3 Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers including the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 revised January 2015

Care Leavers Charter DfE 2012

Staying Put Guidance DfE, DWP and HMRC 2013

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2:  
Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010

The Children Act 1989

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

The Children Act 2004

The Children (Leaving Care) (England) Regulations 2001

National Standards for Leaving Care March 2004

Care of unaccompanied and trafficked children July 2014