

Accommodation Guide for Care Leavers



Warwickshire
County Council

This is a brief guide to help you understand your accommodation options. Your Social Worker or Personal Advisor will be able to give you more details for each option listed below. You can decide with the support of your Social Worker or Personal Advisor what is best for you.

Foster Care & Staying Put Arrangements

What is Foster Care?

You will be living in a family home with foster carers who will ensure you have everything you need to be safe, healthy and happy on a daily basis. Fostering arrangements usually end when a young person turns 18 unless Staying Put arrangements have been made. You can stay with your foster carers until your 18th birthday, but your social worker will have explored other options with you so that there is a move on plan.

What is Staying Put?

If both you and your foster carers feel it would be good for you to stay with them after your 18th birthday and Leaving Care is in agreement, you can be considered to remain under a Staying Put arrangement. Staying Put means you stay with the same foster carers but you are supported to be more independent. In order to get everything in place by your 18th birthday, planning starts for Staying Put when you reach age 16.

Who is it for?

Foster Care - Young people under 18

Staying Put - Young people over 18 up until aged 21

Who covers the cost? Under 18's costs are paid by WCC.

Over 18s in Staying Put contribute to rent if they are employed, or by claiming benefits such as Housing benefit, or from their student loan if they are at university locally.

Residential Homes

What are they?

Residential homes can vary in size from smaller 2 bed homes through to larger 8 bed homes with young people having their own rooms but sharing living spaces, for example, kitchen, living room and sometimes bathrooms with other young people. Young people have a key worker and homes will have different staff working 24 hours a day, usually in shifts.

Who is it for?

Young people under 18

Who covers the cost?

All costs are paid for by WCC for under 18s

Supported Lodgings

What are they?

Supported Lodgings is a bit like foster care/staying put but gives you more independence e.g. cooking some of your own meals, managing your own money, doing your own laundry, etc. to prepare you for living independently. You will live in a family home with your own room and usually share other areas of the house, for example, kitchen, bathroom, living room. We have 2 types of supported lodgings.

One is where you can identify someone you would like to live with. The second is when you can be introduced/matched to someone by an organisation like Barnardo's or St Basil's.

1. You identify someone to live with, for example: a relative, a previous support person, a previous carer, partner's parents etc. WCC will do a check on the person you have identified and make sure you are safe, supported and everyone is clear and happy with the arrangements.
2. Barnardo's or St Basil's Supported Lodgings where you are introduced/matched to a new host/carers. The host/carers will have been checked out and supported by the organisation.

Who is it for?

Young people 16 - 21

Who will cover the cost?

Under 18's costs are paid by WCC.

Over 18 you will be responsible for paying the rent through your wages, housing benefit or student loan if you are at university.



Supported Accommodation

Warwickshire have two types of supported accommodation to prepare you for living independently.

1. SAHA have a range of accommodation across Warwickshire.

What is it?

This could be a 2 bedroomed flat or a larger building that accommodates up to 25 young people. You will have a key worker and receive support depending on your needs. There are currently three shared accommodation homes with staff available 24 hours a day (Binswood Lodge, Newbold Lodge and Arbury Lodge). SAHA run three projects for young parents (Meadow House in Atherstone, Hadley Mews in Nuneaton and Warford Lodge in Leamington). You can generally live in one of these settings for up to 2 years. You can also refer yourself directly to SAHA for accommodation.

Who is it for?

Young people 16 – 25 (Warford Lodge accommodates young Mums with children aged under 5 years old)

Who covers the cost?

Under 18s are paid by WCC (except for the weekly service charge). After your 18th birthday you will be responsible for paying the rent through your wages if you are working or housing benefit together with a weekly service charge for bills.

2. Other supported accommodation providers for 16 and 17 year olds

What is it?

This could be shared accommodation with other young people or self-contained flats depending on your needs. Some accommodation is in Warwickshire and some outside Warwickshire. You will receive daily support from key workers from 6 hours per week up to 24 hours a day depending on your needs.

Who is it for?

Young people aged 16 and 17

Who covers the cost?

Costs will be paid by WCC.

With all supported accommodation (staying put, supported lodgings and supported accommodation) you are expected to agree to get involved in the support offered as part of the conditions of staying there and in order to gain the skills to live independently.



Social/Council Housing

What is it?

When you reach the age of 16 your social worker will make sure your name is added to your local housing department housing register (council or housing association). Usually you won't be able to rent a council property until you are 18 as legally you cannot hold a tenancy until then but there are some special circumstances where arrangements can be made. Your personal advisor should be able to help you find out about this. You will need to apply to the area you have a 'local connection' with and also the area in which you live (if different).

To have a local connection you must:

- have lived in Warwickshire for at least 6 months out of the last 12 months, or at least 3 years out of the last 5 years;
- be employed in Warwickshire in permanent paid work (not casual employment); or
- have a close family connection in Warwickshire who has lived there for at least 5 years before the date of your application.

(Some exceptions may apply but you would need to discuss this with the local housing department.)

There are 5 district or borough councils in Warwickshire who manage a social housing register (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Rugby, Warwick and Stratford). In some areas property is provided by the council and in others by a housing association. Generally, extra priority is given to care leavers so that you can be offered housing more quickly. You 'bid' (apply) for available housing which meets your needs. Your worker will support you with the 'bidding' process. Social housing generally provides you with a secure tenancy, which means it will usually be for a much longer period than private accommodation.

Who is it for?

You can move into social housing from the age of 18 as long as you've shown you're ready to manage your own tenancy.

Who covers the cost?

You will be responsible for paying the rent through your wages or housing benefit. Your council or housing association landlord sets your rent. Most rents charged by councils or housing associations are called social rents. Social rents are usually lower than rents for similar private rented properties.

Privately Rented Accommodation

What is it?

What is it? Private accommodation is normally available through letting agents, online adverts or by word of mouth. This type of accommodation is where you rent a property from a private landlord. You will generally have a 6 month tenancy which may be renewed or extended.

Who is it for?

Young people over the age of 18

Who covers the cost?

The rent is usually more expensive than social housing. Rent will either be paid by you or through claiming Universal Credit. There is a maximum limit to the amount of Universal Credit that will be paid. You may be required to pay extra if your rent is not covered by Universal Credit. You may also be required to pay a deposit, usually at least equivalent to one month's rent. The deposit and rent in advance may be paid by Children's Services. The deposit has to be returned to Children's Services at the end of the tenancy.

Floating Support

What is it?

If you have your own property, either social/council housing or with a private landlord and need extra support to be independent and keep your home, you may be able to access Floating Support. This additional support can come from a floating support worker from St Basil's. A floating support worker visits you a number of hours per week to help you with things such as managing your own money, applying for welfare and housing benefits, developing skills for independence, accessing education, training and employment opportunities and accessing health services depending on what support you need. Support can be provided for up to 2 years. You can refer yourself directly to St Basils for this service.

Who is it for?

Young people 16 - 25

Who will cover the cost?

This is paid for by WCC

Independent Living Skills Training

What is it?

Landlords like to know that you are prepared for independent living and know about budgeting and managing your home and tenancy. We have bespoke training to help you do this and earn AQA accreditations. Ask your social worker/personal adviser for more information.

Who is it for?

Young people aged 16 - 25

Who will cover the cost?

This is paid for by WCC

Emergency Accommodation

What is it?

If you have nowhere to go and/or it is out of office hours and you need emergency accommodation, you or a support person acting on your behalf, can contact the Emergency Duty Team. WCC have emergency foster carers and crash pads. Young people can stay in the “crash beds” for up to 3 months whilst more permanent accommodation is found.

Who is it for?

Young people aged 16 - 25

Who covers the cost?

Costs are paid for by WCC under 18 and through housing benefit @ 18+

Jargon

Word	Definition
Bidding process	This is the way you express an interest in a property that you would like to rent. The districts and boroughs all have slightly different processes but details of properties are usually available online or by phone once you have registered.
Tenancy	The right to use land or live in a building in exchange for rent.
Deposit	Landlords ask for a sum of money, usually equivalent to one month's rent or more, which they keep for the time that you rent the property. At the end of the tenancy they will return it if they are happy there are no rent arrears, damage or missing items that need paying for.
Letting Agents	A letting agent looks after a landlord's property and finds the best people to move into that house.
Private Landlord	Someone who owns a property that they rent out to earn money. It can be a person or a company.
District and Borough Councils	The County of Warwickshire is divided up into 5 separate administrative areas. Warwick and Stratford are Districts while Rugby, Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire are Boroughs. They are each responsible for Housing Services in their area.
Floating Support Worker	They provide housing and support for vulnerable people, helping them to develop the skills and confidence to live independently.

Useful contacts

Organisation	Contact Numbers	Websites	Email Addresses
Warwickshire MASH	01926 414 144	www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mash	N/A
Emergency Duty Team	01926 886 922	N/A	N/A
St Basil's Floating Support	01789 332 540	N/A	N/A
SAHA supported accommodation	01926 335 402	N/A	N/A
Citizens Advice	03444 111 444	www.citizensadvice.org.uk	N/A
Housing officer	01926 414 841	N/A	samchurch@warwickshire.gov.uk
Asylum Support Tribunal	0207 7538 6171	www.gov.uk/appeal-first-tier-asylum-support-tribunal	N/A
The Albert Kennedy Square	0207 831 6562	www.akt.org.uk	N/A
Warwick District Council	01926 450 000	www.warwickdc.gov.uk	contactus@warwickdc.gov.uk
Stratford District Council	01789 267 575	www.stratford.gov.uk	info@statford.gov.uk
Rugby Borough Council	01788 533 533	www.rugby.gov.uk	contact.centre@rugby.gov.uk
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	024 7637 6376	www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk	customer.services@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk
North Warwickshire Borough Council	01827 715 341	www.northwarks.gov.uk	customerservices@northwarks.gov.uk
Talk to Frank	0300 123 6600 sms-82111	www.talktofrank.com	N/A
Compass (substance misuse support and advice)	01788 578227	N/A	N/A
Duty Worker Contact	01926 414 891	www.warwickshire.gov.uk.leavingcare	leavingcareduty@warwickshire.gov.uk
OUT OF HOURS CONTACT	01926 886 922	N/A	N/A

WCC want to make sure that you have the best possible experience, wherever you live. We'd really like you to tell us what you think about where you're living. We also want to know as soon as possible if something's wrong with the accommodation or support. Please email us @ cicc@warwickshire.gov.uk