

# Welcome to Warwickshire



## What does it mean to be a “Child in Care”?

Because you are in England without your parents and you are unaccompanied, it is the government’s responsibility to look after you. This means you are “looked after” under “section 20” of the Children Act 1989 (this is legislation in England).

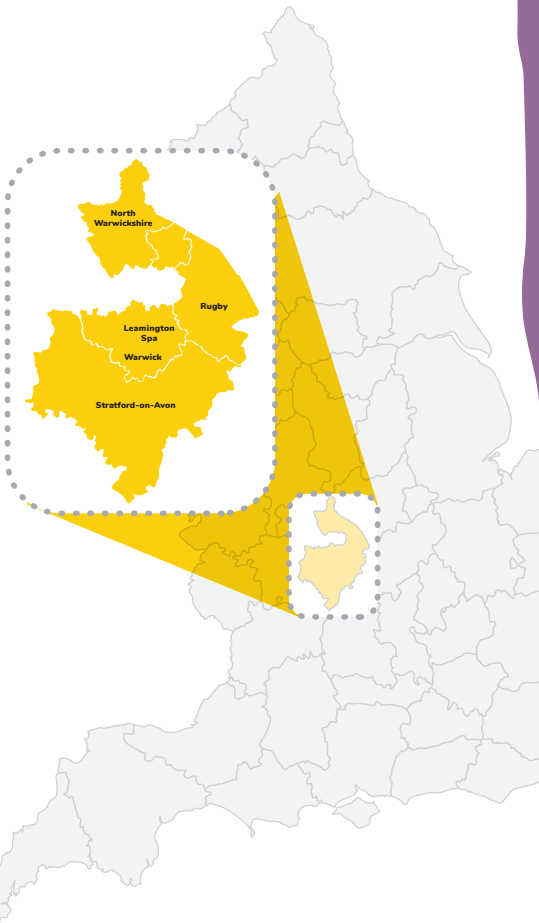


Warwickshire  
County Council

## Where is Warwickshire?

Warwickshire is a rural county in the middle of England, close to the midlands. One of the bigger towns in the area is Leamington Spa.

Warwickshire is very close to both Coventry and Birmingham and it is easy to travel between all 3 areas.



## Who will be involved in my life?

A social worker will work with you, it's their job to make sure that you are safe, looked after and that your basic needs are met.

A social worker works for the Local Government. They work closely with teachers and nurses.

Your social worker will come and see you within 1 week of you coming to England. After this your social worker will visit at least every 6 weeks and you should have their contact number to speak to them between visits if you need to. Your social worker may only work **Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 5:30** so you will not be able to contact them all of the time.

A social worker will work with you until you turn 18. After this, depending on your circumstances, a personal advisor could support you until you turn 25 years old.

An Independent Reviewing Officer will also work with you, they will review your care plan within 28 days of you being accommodated at an "All About Me Review." They review it again after 3 months and then every 6 months until you turn 18. They are independent from the social worker and want to ensure your needs are being met.

Professionals involved in your life may be both male or female. This may not be something that you are used to, but you should be prepared to have a female social worker, teacher or be seen by a female doctor or dentists.

**Your social worker will also bring an interpreter with them on their visits if you need one or request one.**

## Who is the Home Office?

The Home Office are a separate part of the government who process people's visas and asylum claims. Your social worker does not work for the Home Office. They are separate; however, your social worker can try to speak to the Home Office on your behalf.

## Where will I live?

Depending on your needs, your social worker may decide for you to live in foster care or supported accommodation. Foster care means you will be cared for by a family. Supported Accommodation means you will live in a shared house with other young people and there will be staff there to help you. Supported Accommodation is used for people who are at least 16 and at college, not school.

No matter where you live, there will be expectations in the house to follow, such as times to come in, keeping things tidy and not smoking or vaping inside.



## What money will I receive?

If you are in foster care, you will receive weekly pocket money. This is money for you to spend on anything you like. Your foster carer will have other money available for activities, transport and clothing. This will be discussed on visits and during meetings.

If you are in supported accommodation, you will receive £72 per week. This is for you to buy food, toiletries, clothing and to pay for transport. This will be paid on either a Thursday or Friday to your temporary card or your bank account. You must remember your PIN and keep this private! If you struggle to budget with your money, your social worker might decide to pay it differently, or ask staff to support you with shopping, called a 'supervised shop'. You can speak to your social worker if you need specific items for education, your health or wellbeing that you cannot afford.

In supported accommodation, you will get some clothing money when you first arrive in the UK. This is to make sure you have items you need such as a coat and adequate shoes.

We can also support you financially to have a gym membership (up to £25 per month) and to buy calling

cards so that you can speak to your family until you turn 21.

You will get £50 birthday money and £50 festival allowance each year until you turn 21.

**You are not able to work whilst you are claiming asylum in the UK.**



## What about my cultural and religious needs?

You will be supported to find a local place of worship if you would like to. Your social worker can get items you might need for prayer such as a Quran, prayer mat or Bible in your language. If there is anything else you need, you can ask for this.

Your social worker will also ask you about your culture to ensure that you have access to things you need, such as your dietary requirements, hair and skincare and other individual items that are important to you.

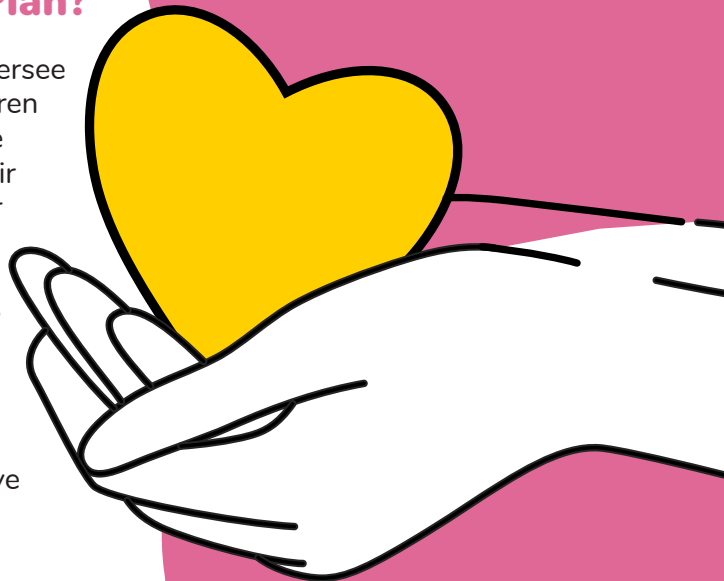
## What is a Care Plan?

Your social worker will oversee your “Care Plan”. All children who are looked after have one to make sure that their views are heard, and their needs are being met.

As part of your Care Plan, your social worker will make sure that you have a place in education, that you are seen by health services, and that you have somewhere to live.

## What if I'm not happy?

If you are unhappy with the support that you are receiving, you have the right to make a complaint. Barnardos advocacy service can support young people who are thinking about or want to make a complaint. Your support worker or social worker can make a referral to them, or you can contact them directly on **02476372596**.



# Education

## What does education look like in England?

The education system in England is compulsory and free. This means refugee, asylum seeker and migrant children have the same entitlement to full-time education as other children in England.

Education is important and it will help you to learn English language skills to then be able to read, write and speak. These skills are essential in everyday life and will help you to progress onto courses and jobs of interest.

The academic year runs from September to July. It can be difficult to find an educational provider or course once the academic year has started, but your social worker or personal advisor will always try their best to get you into education. If this isn't possible, they might identify an informal learning environment provided by a charity or community for you in the meantime, this might include smaller groups or tuition online. It is important that you engage with this, as it will give you a good start to your learning journey and prepare you for when you do move into a more formal setting. Remember, it is not easy or always possible to change educational providers or courses during the academic year.



## How often do I have to attend?

You will be given a timetable for your course, and you are expected to attend every day. The only authorised reasons to miss education is if you have an appointment with a health professional, a solicitor, the Home Office or you are unwell. It is often cold (and rainy) in England, but you are still expected to attend even on these days!

It is possible that your timetable and classes may coincide with time for prayer in Islam and in some other religions. Your school or college will have a prayer room that you are able to use whenever you need to. You can also speak to your social worker if you would like time off to celebrate an important religious festival.

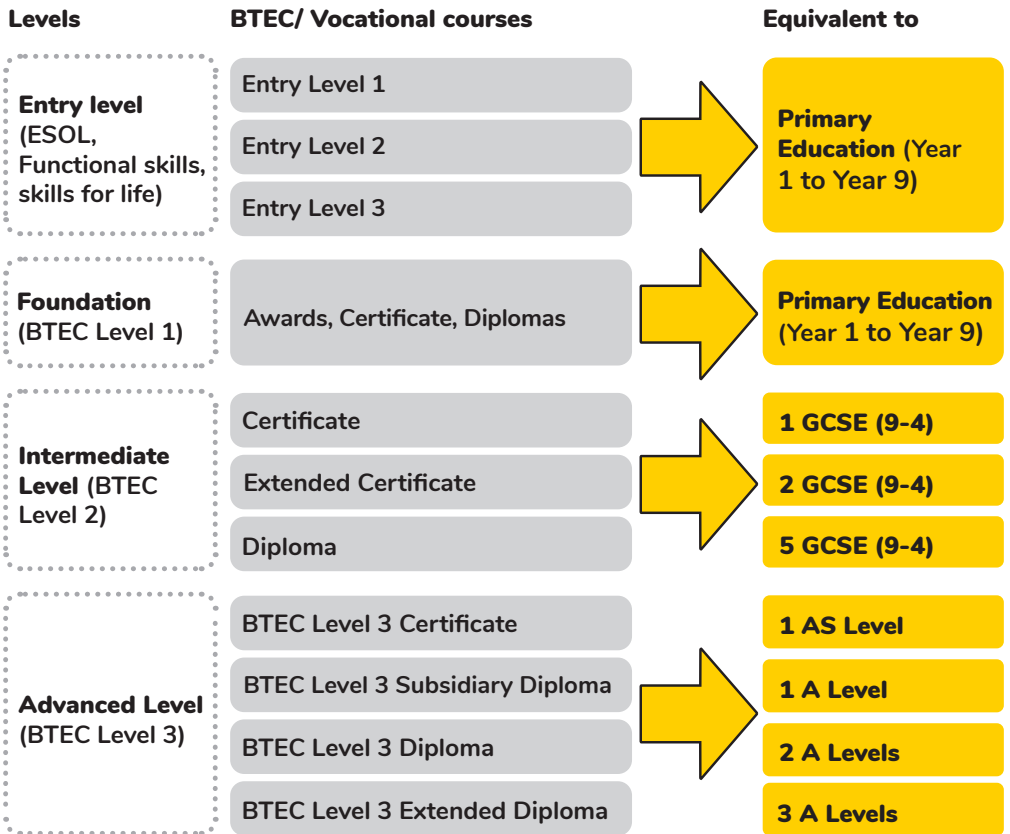
### Timetable

Maths  
English  
Science  
PE  
History



# What does ESOL mean?

The first step to learning is known as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), this starts at Entry Level and progresses all the way to Functional Skills Level 1 and 2. You can only progress onto the next level once you have completed and passed each level.



Once you have achieved Level 1/Level 2 in Functional Skills you can then progress onto a vocational course that is more specific to a job, career and sector (for example: engineering, medical science and construction).



## College or Sixth Form?

The best place to learn and acquire qualifications is a formal setting like school and colleges. Anyone under 16 will go to school, above the age of 16 you will have the possibility of a school (sixth form) or college. Sixth Form is more formal, with a uniform and teaching Monday to Friday 9am until 3:30pm. College is more informal with more self-study and approximately 3 days or 5 half days teaching time.

When in learning it is important that you attend and follow the rules of the school or college. This will include uniform, behaviour, respect and positive attitude. You should be willing to travel and make every effort to access education. The best school or college for you may not be close to where you live.

Learning is also fun and interactive where you meet other young people and learn about positive relationships with adults and teachers.

***In some educational setting you might receive a bursary (money) based on your age and entitlement, but this bursary is only paid if you have good attendance in lessons.***

## Can I go to University?

The potential to go to University, get a degree and graduate job is available once you have completed and achieved the required standards and entry requirements. Universities also offer financial support to care leavers based on the course and entitlement (but you must have Leave to Remain in the UK to be able to access this funding).

You should always aim high and have high aspirations of careers and jobs. Nothing is impossible and many young people just like you have gone on into good jobs and careers after learning.

## What is career's advice?

We have a designated career advisor and team within the leaving care service who are available to support you with accessing education, employment and training. This team is impartial and will work closely with your social workers/ personal advisors to support you to access positive education and a range of enrichment activities.

By not being in education and making the most of opportunities, your options are limited and can also have an impact on benefits, entitlements and also your legal status when applying for UK residence.

# Health

## When will I see a doctor?

When you first arrive in the UK you will have lots of health appointments and are likely to see a nurse, doctor, dentist and optician.

You will be registered to a General Practitioner (GP) surgery. This is a doctor that treats common medical conditions and who you can book appointments with. Depending on what your health problem is, these may be on the telephone or face to face at the practice. If the appointment is via telephone you should make sure that you answer the phone during the times you are given for the call. Any appointments you can't attend should be cancelled with the GP practice.

**If you are prescribed medicines by the doctor, these are free of charge until the age of 18 if you are in full time education. After the age of 18 you will need to pay for these.**

## What is a health assessment?

All young people will have a health assessment with the doctor when they first become a child in care. After one year they will have another health assessment with the nurse and an opportunity to ask any health questions that they may have. These assessments continue yearly with the nurse until the age of 18; you will then get a record of your health assessments to keep for the future.

## Blood Borne Virus Screening:

We recommend that all young people who are new to country have a blood test to check for blood borne infections. We test for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV and Syphilis. All these infections are treatable, and it is important that we identify if infection is present so treatment can start as soon as possible.

There will also be a blood test to check for Tuberculosis (TB). All blood tests should be completed in one appointment. The nurse will provide more information about these blood tests when she meets with you for a new to country health appointment.

If you test positive for any of these infections, we will arrange to see you in the clinic to explain your results and advise who you will be referred to for treatment. If you do not have any of these infections present, we will send you a letter explaining this and no follow up appointments are needed.

## Immunisations:

The unknown immunisation schedule is commenced for all young people arriving in the UK that do not know their previous immunisation status.

All the immunisations are given by injection in the upper arm and are safe and effective.

The immunisations that will be given are:

### **Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)**

- these are infections that spread easily and can cause more serious health problems in some people.

2 x two doses of this combined vaccination are needed given 4 weeks apart, this gives lifelong protection.

**MenACWY**- This is a single dose injection which protects against 4 strains of bacteria A, C, W and Y which causes meningitis and blood poisoning. This can be a life-threatening disease.

**Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio** - this is a combined vaccination that prevents against bacterial infections of Diphtheria and Tetanus and the serious viral infection, Polio - 3 doses are required. Each dose is given 4 weeks apart.

It is very important that you complete all doses of these vaccinations for them to be effective.



## What is my emotional health and wellbeing?

Emotional health is about how you think and feel. These are terms used to describe how you process your emotions, manage stress, have positive social connections, cope with life challenges and how you take care of your physical and mental health.

You might be asked about counselling. This is a talking therapy that involves a trained therapist listening to you and helping you to find ways to deal with your emotions and wellbeing. There are some services that are trained to work with young people who are here claiming asylum and you can ask your social worker/ personal advisor to refer you for this at any time.



# Finances

## What is Universal Credit?

Once you have leave to remain and you turn 18, you will be able to work OR claim Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a type of benefit given to anyone in the UK who is unable to work or who is seeking employment. If you work part time, the Universal Credit amount you will receive is reduced. For every £1 you earn 55p is deducted.

Universal Credit can also cover your rent payments for your accommodation (after you turn 18) but you will be responsible for paying your bills including:

- **Gas**
- **Electric**
- **council tax**
- **TV licence**
- **Water**
- **WiFi**

If you are claiming Universal Credit you are expected to be in education or seeking employment.

## How do I claim Universal Credit?

You will have to attend appointments at the Job Centre and keep an online journal up to date to prove that you are in education, training or seeking employment. If you don't do this, they will stop your payments and you could end up in debt.

Initially these appointments will be weekly and later fortnightly, they are reduced over time based on your commitment and attitude to seeking work. You must always stay in touch with your 'work coach' at the Job Centre.

You need good IT/phone skills to manage your Universal Credit account effectively including an active email address and a good level of reading and writing to be able to update your record and understand the requirements of job search activities.

Your work coach will encourage you to develop work readiness skills by attending training, courses or work experience.

You must declare to the Job Centre any work you are doing and any earnings you are getting. Failing to do so is against the law and can result in fines, sanctions and a criminal record.

## What if I go abroad?

If you decide to go abroad for a long period of time (approximately 3 months or more), you will stop being paid Universal Credit. If you decide to go abroad, you will still have to pay your rent and all of your bills for the time that you are not staying in your accommodation otherwise you will accrue a debt.

If you have any debts, you may struggle to stay in your accommodation/keep your tenancy.

**Once you have your leave to remain, you can apply for your provisional driving licence. Once you have this you are able to learn to drive. As long as you are committed, and can afford to see this through, you will be able to have 10 free driving lessons from the local authority (up to the age of 21).**



# Employment

## Do I have any rights in employment?

In the UK there is legislation around working conditions and employment rights. There is a minimum wage, this is the least amount that your employer can legally pay you per hour and it depends on your age. This can change from year to year and amounts can be found on the GOV.UK website.

If you secure employment, you should sign a contract with your employer and ensure that your employer is regulated. The contract will make your working hours and the employer and the employee responsibilities clear. Jobs are offered as part-time, short-term or permanent contracts, it is important you know and understand your contract.

If you are working you should be paying tax and National Insurance which should be shown on your pay slip. Each time you get paid you should receive a payslip, you may need to show these to the housing department if you are seeking a tenancy.

You should always be willing to try different roles, travel and learn new skills as opportunities will be offered when employers see potential in you. Employers like to employ people who are trustworthy, reliable and committed to their work!

**Volunteering is a great way to acquire skills, experience and knowledge and these are transferable to different jobs and roles. Anyone can volunteer (even if you don't have any right to work in the UK) as it is not paid employment. Volunteering means giving your time for free to a charity or community based organisation – it can also be very rewarding!**



# Accommodation

## What are my options after 18?

When you reach the age of 16 your social worker should start talking to you about your future options for accommodation through your Pathway Plan. This plan is about what you would like to do and achieve in the short term and long-term future, it looks at the support you need in order to achieve your goals.

If you live with a family, you might be able to stay with them after you turn 18, this is called 'staying put'.

If this isn't possible or if you and/or your social worker thinks you need to develop your skills of independence you might move into supported accommodation, maybe even before 18. This is usually staffed for some additional support to help you live more independently.

If you would prefer to remain with a family after you turn 18 another option is 'supported lodgings'. This would mean you live with a family, but they are there to offer supported/guidance, not to look after you.

## Can I move to a different city?

The UK is split into lots of different areas called councils. As your social worker is from Warwickshire, Warwickshire has a responsibility to help you with housing in the future and this gives you a "local connection" to Warwickshire. This means, if you live in Warwickshire or want to move to Warwickshire, you may be prioritised for your own tenancy, and this may be quicker than applying to the council that you live in (such as Birmingham or Coventry).

You may also have a local connection if you have lived in that council area for at least 6 months.

Most young people wait for housing in places like Coventry or Birmingham for years before they secure their own tenancy.

Moving to other cities like Manchester or London is also very difficult as the accommodation options there are extremely limited. Just like Warwickshire does, places like London and Manchester look after their own young people first!

**You can only apply for your own tenancy if you have leave to remain in the UK.**



## What is a tenancy?

A tenancy is an agreement between you and either the council, social housing provider or a private landlord.

There are lots of benefits to securing a social/council tenancy such as low rent and rent being covered by Universal Credit. Therefore you don't have to worry if you are still in education or you are not working.

You can privately rent anywhere in the UK, however you have to have some money saved to pay a deposit, the rent is usually very high and landlords do not often take Universal Credit. Therefore, if you are not working full time, privately renting somewhere may be very difficult.

## How do I apply for my own tenancy?

If your social worker/personal advisor (or accommodation provider) thinks that you are ready for your own tenancy and you have good skills of independence (meaning that you can keep yourself safe, look after

yourself and solve problems independently) they may be able to refer you to housing. This depends on where you are living and which council area you want to live in.

You will be helped to fill in an application and you will then receive a log in to the housing register.

You will be given a "banding" such as Band A, Band B and Band C. This tells housing whether your housing situation is a priority or not, as housing will help people who are most in need and at risk of being homeless first.



You will need to 'bid' on the properties that you like as your banding may be time limited before you become a lower priority. You should go to the area that the flat is in first to have a look at the outside and the area. If you have bided and are successful, the council will arrange for you to have a look at the inside of the flat. If you like it you will be asked to sign the tenancy agreement. If you decline, you may only get 1 more opportunity to secure a flat before housing decide to lower your banding.

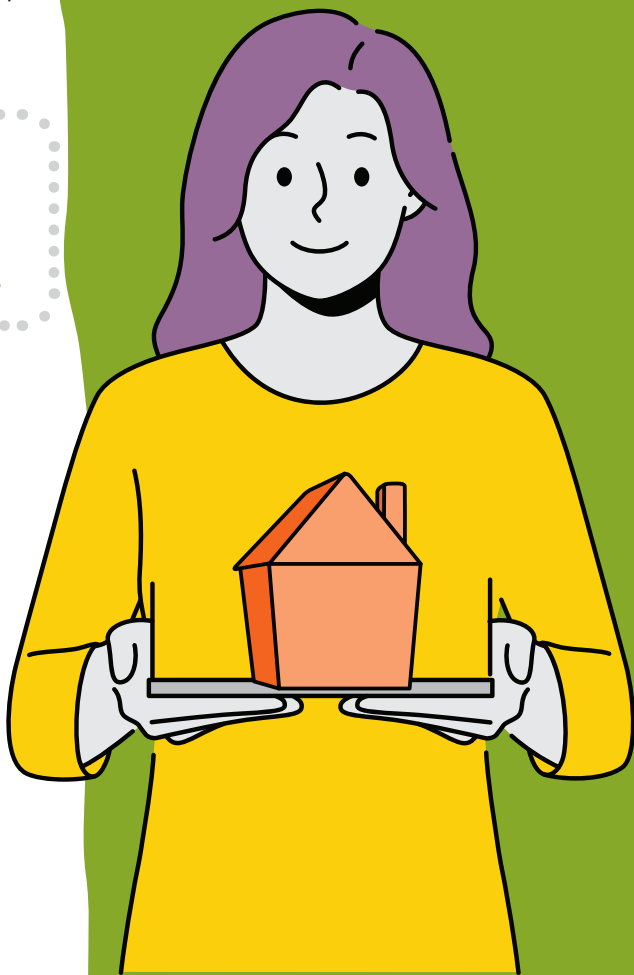
**As you are likely to be a single occupant, you are likely to only be able to bid on one bedroom flats.**

## What is "intentionally homeless"?

This is when you have decided to leave adequate housing that has been provided to you, and the result of your actions causes you to become homeless. An example would be that you decided to move out of your accommodation and go to stay with a friend, but you later decide you don't want to live there anymore.

You can also be evicted if you do not comply with your tenancy agreement. This means that the council and/or landlord will ask you to leave your flat and you could end up being homeless.

**Your Personal Advisor will support you post 18 to give you advice, guidance and support.**



## Will I get financial support to furnish my flat?

You will receive a Setting Up Home Allowance (a grant up to £3000) to help to buy furniture and items you need for your flat. You will need to buy lots of things including carpet, curtains, fridge, cooker, sofa, bed, table, desk, chairs, even lightbulbs!

There is also other financial support you are entitled to as a young person who has been in care, your Personal Advisor will be able to explain what is available to you at the time you sign your tenancy.

