We know that the coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting us all in many ways. The government has been making a variety of changes to the way it supports us all during the outbreak.

This is a very strange and unsettling time we are currently going through, and your Personal Advisor (PA) or Key Worker should be your first point of contact for support.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced a series of factsheets specifically for care leavers to provide further information about the support that is currently available to you (links to the other guidance are provided below).

## Main things you need to know:

* Local authorities (LAs) must continue to meet their statutory responsibilities towards care leavers. The government has encouraged LAs to continue to keep in touch with care leavers throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis and whilst social distancing measures are in place.
* LAs have equipped their PAs and Key Workers with phones and IT equipment, so they can remain in touch with you and support you remotely through telephone calls and video conferencing.
* You will continue to be advised and supported on how you can access leaving care services, key workers, the duty service, and any other additional online support that they may currently be offering during coronavirus (COVID-19).
* Your PA should also be able to share details with you of support from other services, such as food banks, health service, local charities, and other agencies and organisations.

## Support for care leavers who are pregnant or a lone parent:

We are aware there are some young people leaving care who are pregnant, or they may already be a parent(s). Many LAs list the support they provide to care leavers who may be pregnant, or already have a child, in their Local Offer for care leavers.

LAs are aware that during coronavirus (COVID-19) they must continue supporting local care leavers and engaging with them. They should continue to adopt good practices in promoting care leavers’ health and wellbeing. They are also expected to recognise that being a parent is hard work, which will bring additional pressure on a young person, especially during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and due to the social distancing measures we have all been asked to follow.

You will need to get in touch with your PA who will be able to advise on the support available locally for you if you are expecting or are a parent. Examples of support they may be able to help you access include:

* Advising you on the support available from health visitors, who help to support young mothers. Health visitors also deliver the Healthy Child Programme, as part of which the health visitor will try to identify where additional support may be needed.
* Advising you on the support available through the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP), which operates which is a home visiting programme for first-time young mums and families. It helps young mothers have a healthy pregnancy, improve your child’s health and development; and helps you plan your future and achieve your aspirations.

**Health visiting and appointments during Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

Antenatal and postnatal care is essential and you should try to attend any appointments, despite the current social distancing measures. The NHS remains keen to ensure that you and your baby are supported and cared for during these uncertain times.

Your local maternity team may reduce routine appointments, provide more home visits or deliver some care and support over the phone or by video, to reduce the number of times you might need to travel and attend hospital or clinics. They ought to inform you in advance if there are any changes to your care. You should contact your local health continuity team or community midwife by telephone to discuss any questions or concerns you might have, or to check on arrangements for all scheduled and future appointments.

If you have not yet been allocated a local health continuity team, or a community midwife, you should contact your GP surgery, or local maternity unit, so that you can be linked to an appropriate continuity team or named community midwife.

**Childcare and schools during coronavirus (COVID-19)**

As part of national social distancing measures to limit the spread of coronavirus, we have had to limit the numbers of children and young people attending educational and childcare settings, to ensure that pupils and staff attending could do so safely. That is why, since 23 March, education and childcare settings have only been open to priority groups ([children of critical workers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision) and [vulnerable children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people)).

As the Prime Minister announced on the 10 May, from 1 June, at the earliest, the government is asking primary schools in England to welcome back children in key transition years – nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6. We are also asking secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges to provide some face-to-face support for young people in year 10 and year 12 to help them prepare for exams next year. Other children will continue to be supported to learn at home.

**Information about further online support for young people who are pregnant, already parents, or are lone parents can be accessed on the websites listed below:**

* Antenatal care - [www.nhs.uk/antenatal](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/antenatal-midwife-care-pregnant/) and postnatal care - [www.nhs.uk/postnatal](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/postnatal-check/)
* Information about mental health support - [www.nhs.uk/mental-health](https://nhsuk-live-review-research-content-team.nhswebsite-integration.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/dealing-with-a-mental-health-crisis-or-emergency/)
* The charity [Family Lives](https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/parenting/where-can-young-parents-go-for-support/)has a free and confidential helpline (0808 800 222) available *24* hours if you need someone to talk to.
* [Healthy Start](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/) is a scheme that offers free vouchers, which can be swapped for milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins. The vouchers are for people under 18 who are pregnant, or with children under four years old.
* [Gingerbread](https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/) is a charity that supports single parent families.
* The [Family Rights Group](https://www.frg.org.uk/ypa/need-help-or-advice/care-leavers) offers advice and support to care leavers who are young parents.
* [The Care Leaver Covenant](https://mycovenant.org.uk/) provides a way for organisations to show their commitment to care leavers by providing concrete offers of support including, for example, through apprenticeships, work experience and internships.

**A number of charities that support vulnerable young people are providing information, advice and guidance to support them through COVID-19:**

* **Become:**If you’ve got questions about the impact of COVID-19 on the care you’re receiving, want some personal advice, or just need someone to talk to, you can get in touch with Become on 0800 023 2033 or at [advice@becomecharity.org.uk](mailto:advice@becomecharity.org.uk).
* **Rees Foundation:** Committed to doing everything they can to continue to provide you with the support that you need whilst prioritising your health and that of their employees and families. If you have any difficulties at all, get in touch with them [contactus@reesfoundation.org](mailto:contactus@reesfoundation.org).
* **Care Matters:** Are running virtual support sessions and workshops online for care leavers over the coming weeks. For more info, to offer support, partnership, to get involved please contact:[info@career-matters.org](mailto:info@career-matters.org).
* **UK Youth:** Online support for young people during COVID-19 can be found [here](https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Covid-19-Young-people-final-2.pdf).
* **Young Minds:** Looking after your mental health while self-isolating - Some tips that may help can be found on [here](https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/looking-after-your-mental-health-while-self-isolating/).
* **The Children’s Society:** Support for mental and emotional well-being can be found [here](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/coronavirus-information-and-support).
* **NYAS Services‏:** Despite the challenging circumstances, NYAS will continue to provide their services. If you or someone you know is in need of support, call their helpline on 0808 808 1001.

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| Other sources of information available to you  * [Information on what you need to do during COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus). * [Information and FAQs on the wide range of employment and benefits support available](https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/). * [Guidance for local government on a range of issues during COVID-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government#housing). * Citizens Advice [information and advice on COVID-19](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/). * Money Advice Service [information and advice on paying your bills during COVID-19.](https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-bills)   We have published a number of other factsheets that outline further support available to you:   * Factsheet for care leavers on Universal Credit during COVID-19. * Factsheet for care leavers whose employers have stopped trading during COVID-19. * Factsheet for care leavers who are self-employed, a contractor, freelancer or a gig-economy worker during COVID-19. * Factsheet for care leavers who are university students during COVID-19 – to follow * Factsheet for former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) care leavers during COVID-19 – to follow * Factsheet for care leavers on housing during coronavirus (COVID-19) * Factsheet for care leavers on how to stay safe and maintain good emotional health and wellbeing during COVID-19. |