

Nottinghamshire's Local Offer for Care Leavers



For care leavers who are a parent
or preparing to become a parent

working with





Is the offer for me?

If you are a care leaver who is pregnant, preparing to become a parent or already parenting a child/children, then we can provide you with support and guidance for you and your family.

As someone who has been in our care, our role to you is to be your corporate parent and provide you with support and guidance within this role. As such this offer is also about providing support for your child or children, as their 'corporate grandparent'.

We will:

- Support you to do the best for your child and develop the skills you need as a parent
- Consider your child/children in any plans around needs or support you might have (including in your Pathway Plan)
- Help you find and access any support you may need
- Help you make links with other parents or support groups in your local area
- Support you to access opportunities in employment, education and training plans
- Offer you advice, guidance and advocacy to help you manage the demands of being a parent
- Support you to enjoy the experience of being a mum, a dad or seeing yourself as a parent.

This local offer for parents has been co-produced with Nottinghamshire care leavers who have lived experience of being a parent and/or parent to be.





Pregnancy

Being a parent can be a very rewarding and positive experience, but it also comes with a lot of responsibility and at times it will be difficult, stressful and challenging.

If you think you are pregnant, then we think it is important that you are aware of your options and choices especially if your pregnancy is unplanned. There will be many things to consider, and it can sometimes feel like a very difficult situation, but we will be here for you to talk to, to explore your options, and support you (and people important in your life) in making the right choice for you.

Whatever your situation, it is important that you are not pressured by other people to make any decisions you may later regret.

Your personal adviser or the 21Plus Service will be able to support you with whatever decision you choose to make and can attend any medical appointments with you that you might have or identify how best to support you to and from your appointments.



Being a parent



Being a parent is exciting and deeply rewarding - but it takes a lot of skills, knowledge and experience, which many first-time parents feel that they do not have. We can help you access the support you need before, during and after your pregnancy. Asking for and accessing support is one of the key attributes of being a parent, as being a parent can take time to learn.

Babies do not come with instruction booklets, which is why we want to make sure you have access to the right support and information so that you can be the best parent you could ever wish to be.

The relationships our children see between the people they love, affects their happiness and wellbeing. We can all have arguments and fall out with people, it is a natural part of relationships. There is lots of information available about managing everyday disagreements in a more positive and healthy way at www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/relationshipsreallymatter.

Parenting can be a wonderful, unique, and incredible experience for you and your child as you both grow and develop together, and everyone needs support as children grow into healthy and happy adults.



When your baby is born



We know it is important to build trusting relationships with the professionals involved during and after your pregnancy. We will support you to engage with professionals and advocate for you when needed. Your personal adviser will be able to support you to identify what needs you might have as an expectant parent and explore what is suitable for you and your family. As well as link you with our Nottinghamshire Children's Centre Service or other suitable services in your local area.

Your midwife and health visitor will be able to provide you with additional support from when your pregnancy is confirmed and this means you will have access to lots of important information and other professionals during your pregnancy and after your baby is born. We will support you to engage with and access this support.



Parenting skills



We can help you to explore accessing parenting skills support. Your personal adviser can advise you of support options including those from Children's Centres which offer a range of parenting courses, such as Incredible Years, 123 Magic, Solihull and EPEC Being a Parent, which give you tried and tested tips and tools to help you manage your child's behaviour and family life.

If you experienced difficult times as a child in care, you can receive support with this from our Developmental Trauma and Attachment Team (DTAT). Our DTAT social workers work with you to see what impact your care experience might have on your parenting and use therapeutic techniques to help you with positive parenting of your child.

If you are a first-time mum and under 19 years, then you also might be able to receive support from the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme. This includes intensive home visiting support from trained family nurses, to support you with your child until they are 2 years of age.



You are not alone



Sometimes parenting can be quite isolating. It is important to remember that you are not alone and we can support your family unit to access advice, support and suitable groups of all types.

Socialising is an important aspect of your journey through parenthood, for both you and your child. Meeting others, especially other parents, can allow you to share experiences and both give and receive helpful parenting tips. Accessing such groups also helps your child develop important social skills, which is important for their brain development and emotional development.

We can explore how you can access children's centres and activity groups or even help fund you to access activities such as baby massage and musical stimulation for babies and toddlers.

Being a parent is exciting and fun and you and your baby can develop a very special relationship especially when you engage together in positive new stimulation that develops and enriches their experience and promotes their development.



Being safe in your home



Your child needs a home which is clean, organised and safe. If your home is not suitable for a baby, it is important you speak to your personal adviser to talk through your options, including working with the housing departments across Nottinghamshire to identify suitable housing for you.

We will also be able to support you to make your home safe for you and your family including accessing stairgates, cupboard locks, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and general safety advice. Your health visitor will also discuss this with you before or after your baby is born.

If you need to move accommodation, then we can also explore your options around suitable private rented accommodation, including providing a deposit and first month's rent to secure this for you.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service can come to your home and complete a free home fire safety assessment to help you identify potential fire risks. You can book a visit from them by calling **0115 967 5948**. These visits are completely free.



Additional support



Being a parent is a full-time job, but it is important that you keep your own individuality and the need you might have for personal support from time to time. Knowing what things can impact on you and therefore might impact on your child's development before and after the birth can help you make positive parenting decisions for you and your child's welfare.

If you are experiencing some challenges in your own life around things like mental health and wellbeing, or using drugs or alcohol, then speak with a personal adviser and make sure you have access to the support you need, so that you can be the parent you want to be.

We support young people with a variety of additional needs. You may have a health diagnosis that means that we must adapt the support we offer or your needs as a parent. We will work with you to understand how best to support you to ensure you can access everything you need; at the time you need it.

You may have a neurodiverse condition or suspect that you might have some additional support needs around this and its impact on your parenting. If so, then we can adapt information, the way we present it, and the way we communicate with you and advocate for you with other professionals who might need to do the same to meet those needs. Please talk with your personal adviser about how best we can support you around this.

There are many ways people define their gender, identity and sexuality. You might identify yourself as being included in the LGBTQIA+ community and want to explore how this might impact on you as a parent. If you want to access information or support around this then please speak with your personal adviser or you can get more information on what's available in Nottinghamshire at www.nottslgbt.com.

Healthy relationships



Although we want a positive experience of being pregnant and giving birth, it can bring a period of heightened emotions, which means sometimes an increase in conflict in families and between couples. Arguments and physical violence can increase during pregnancy and after babies are born. If this occurs, this will have a serious impact for your child.

If your partner is hitting you, hurting you or forcing you to do things you don't want to do then this is abusive. If your partner is controlling, perhaps with money or being possessive and not letting you see friends, family, professionals or checking your phone, then this is also abusive.

If you are worried about how your relationship is affecting your child, it is important that you ask for help to make sure you are all safe. You can contact the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on **0808 2000 247** or speak with your personal adviser to help get the support you and your partner might need.

If you are worried, or unsure about your partner's past and how this will affect your child, you can get information about their history from the police under 'Sarah's Law', for sexual offences against children, or under 'Clare's Law', for domestic abuse history. You can phone 101 and ask for this yourself or you can ask your personal adviser for their support.

Other useful contacts:

- Nottinghamshire Domestic and Sexual Violence 24-hour free helpline: **0808 800 0340** (Providing support for women in Nottinghamshire affected by domestic abuse)
- Nottinghamshire Women's Aid 24-hour free helpline: **0808 800 0340** (Providing support for women and children affected by domestic abuse in Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood)
- Equation **0115 960 5556** (9.30am-4.30pm Monday-Friday) (Providing support for men aged 18 and over in Nottinghamshire who are experiencing domestic abuse)
- National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – **0800 999 5428**.

Financial support



Being a parent is expensive, so you need to be able to manage your money well before your baby arrives. Accessing second hand clothes from donations or charity shops is helpful as they are affordable and can be of high quality because children grow out of them quickly and they have limited wear. There are also organisations which may provide grants or the equipment you need.

Your personal adviser will help you to get advice about childcare, benefits and any grants you may be entitled to as a parent, such as maternity grants if you are on a low income. We can also help you with budgeting and making sure that you are receiving all the assistance you are entitled to.

Our Achievement Service can also help support you to plan your finances if you are in education or training including support to access student finance, loans and bursaries including childcare costs as a parent. You may also be able to apply for the Care to Learn scheme to help you with any childcare costs you might have whilst you study or we can explore other financial support you might need. Or perhaps you are wanting to get into employment or return to work after pregnancy.

For more information contact achievement@nottsc.gov.uk or visit www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk to see our Achievement Offer.



Family planning



As part of your midwife's appointment, they will talk to you about family planning and you will also be asked to take part in routine sexually transmitted infection (STI) checks before your baby is born, so that you are both clear of any possible infections or issues that these can cause at birth.

When you have just had your baby, you may think it is too late or too early to think about future family planning and contraception, but at this time you will be even more fertile. As such it is important that you plan for this responsibly as part of your midwife meetings and discuss whether you want contraception such as implants fitted or other contraception prescribed, even before you and your baby are discharged from hospital. For free sexual health advice and condom service for young people in Nottinghamshire then visit www.ccardnottinghamshire.co.uk or speak with your personal adviser.



Making sure you and your child/ children are safe



Being a care leaver should not mean that you automatically need an assessment by social workers about your pregnancy or child. We will work with you to make sure you have the support you need and be honest with you about where you are doing well or if we have any concerns.

If there are worries about your relationship, if you have had a child that no longer lives with you or if you need some extra parenting support, then it might be necessary for a social worker to do an assessment of your family's needs. This may cause you anxiety, but it is important to remember that the assessment can be a positive experience as the focus will be on what support you may need so that you can be the best parent you can.

Being pregnant causes changes in your hormones and as such it is not unusual for it to affect your wellbeing at some point. If you have experienced low mood previously, this is likely to increase the chances of you experiencing low mood again during and after pregnancy. Caring for a baby can also be stressful and tiring for any parent, and lack of sleep can also add more pressures on you and your confidence – all these can be issues for even the most experienced parents. Being open about such issues and raising them early with professionals such as your personal adviser is the best thing to do, to make sure support can be provided early and it also shows you are able to recognise when support is needed, take action and prioritise your child.

Eating well and exercise can help to maintain a stable and positive mood. Learning how to manage your emotions is an important part of being a mum, a dad or seeing yourself as a parent.

If you are feeling low during your pregnancy or after your baby is born, it is extremely important you speak to someone about how you feel. This will be the most important first step you take in feeling emotionally well again and you will not be judged for asking for support. You can also access our wellbeing workers for some advice and support or apply for the You Know Your Mind fund to get some funding to assist with activities or items that can help improve your emotional health and wellbeing. Speak with your personal adviser or the 21Plus Team for more information.

Being the other parent

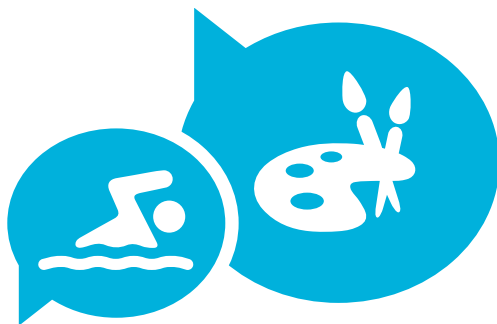


Sometimes being a dad or the other parent during pregnancy or straight after the baby is born can feel isolating, as a lot of the focus can be on mum and the baby. You may also feel excluded at times from the appointments, planning and meetings that might be taking place. It is important that you engage as much as you can and as early as you can, so that you are part of the pregnancy and birth plans. We can support you to access the Nottinghamshire Children's Centre Service and explore what support you can access.

If you are separated and no longer in a relationship with your partner, then you may also find it difficult to be part of the plans for baby before and after the birth. Speak with your personal adviser about what support we can offer and groups that can help parents be part of their children's lives.



Things to do



'Coffee and cake' monthly drop-in

We love hearing about what is happening in you and your child/children's lives, and we might be able to offer some advice or support, or maybe just celebrate your achievements, and so what better way is there than having a catch-up with a personal adviser over some *coffee and cake!

You could chat to us about:

- Being a parent
- Employment and training
- Education plans
- Housing and financial matters
- General catch-up
- Health and leisure.



These will be held at various venues across Nottinghamshire every month. So, if you want to arrange to meet up with your previous personal adviser/achievement adviser, or maybe pop in for five minutes or stay the full two hours... it is totally up to you. Your child/children are also welcome!

This is a **FREE** drop-in session and if you want to attend then bus fares and travel costs can be refunded.

For more information about dates, times and venues please check our social media apps or you can contact your current personal adviser, or the 21Plus Service at 21Plus@nottsc.gov.uk.

*Other refreshments will be available

Contacting us



You can contact Nottinghamshire's Leaving Care Team by phone or email:

For Bassetlaw (Worksop and Retford), **Newark and Sherwood** (Newark-on-Trent, Edwinstowe, Southwell and Ollerton)
Contact: **0115 804 4401** or **LeavingCare.North@nottscg.gov.uk**

For Mansfield (Mansfield Woodhouse, Market Warsop) and **Ashfield** (Selston, Hucknall, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield)
Contact: **0115 804 1236** or **LeavingCare.Central@nottscg.gov.uk**

For Broxtowe (Beeston, Stapleford, Kimberley and Eastwood), **Gedling** (Arnold, Carlton, Calverton, Ravenshead, Newstead), and **Rushcliffe** (West Bridgford, Bingham, Cotgrave, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Ruddington, Keyworth and East Leake)
Contact: **0115 854 6318** or **LeavingCare.South@nottscg.gov.uk**

If you are over 21 years old, then you can contact the 21Plus Service at:
0115 804 4154 or **21Plus@nottscg.gov.uk**

If you would like to speak with our Achievement Service, then you can either speak with your personal adviser or you can email them at **achievement@nottscg.gov.uk**

Our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Team support looked after children seeking asylum and care leavers until their 21st birthday. You can contact them at **uasc@nottscg.gov.uk**

For information about our Local Offer for Care Leavers or to see our specialist offers for the Achievement Service, 21Plus Service, young people seeking asylum (UASC), and those in or leaving custody then visit **www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk**.

This information can be provided in alternative formats and languages. If you would like this, then please contact us at the above details.