

SUPPORT ENTITLEMENT FOR CHILDREN IN CARE



**JERSEY PUTTING
CHILDREN FIRST**



Government of
JERSEY

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Introduction

For some children and young people, family circumstances can mean it is necessary for you to become looked after. In those instances, the Government of Jersey takes on the role of ‘corporate parent’. This document is intended to provide clarity on the support that you can expect from us when we take on this parental role. This booklet brings all that information together in one place.

As a good corporate parent, we need to ensure that the right foundations are in place that will support you to flourish. As well as providing you with a safe, stable and loving home, this also means supporting you to access high quality education; ensuring that a full range of health services and leisure activities are available to you; and making sure that all the

things that a good parent would provide are fully funded.

In designing our Children in Care Support Package, we have been guided by two key questions:

- 1. What would a good parent do for their child?**
- 2. Would what we are offering meet the standard of ‘is this good enough for my child?’**

Priorities of the entitlement

- To clarify the support offered to you, if you are in the care of the Government of Jersey
- To increase your aspirations and achievements so that we narrow the attainment and outcome gaps for those young people who are in our care
- To ensure we are giving you a solid foundation from which to move confidently towards independence



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This section outlines the support arrangements that will be provided to you from an early age to ensure that you reach your potential. These are in addition to the statutory care plans that will be in place.

Personal advisors

Before or shortly after your 14th birthday you will be given access to a Personal Advisor (PA). Your PA will be in addition to your social worker who will remain with you until you are 18.

Your PA is someone to help you find information on things and help make sure that your wants and wishes are being captured and acted upon. They will be there for you until you turn 25.

You may feel you don't need or want that support and that is fine. Someone will still be there if circumstances change or you change your mind.

In addition to your PA and your social worker, you will also be able to talk to an independent advocacy and participation officer who will make sure that we, as your parent, are meeting your needs, and listening and acting on your wishes.

Pathway plans

Your PA will work with you and your social worker to create a pathway plan. This will be informed by a needs assessment, which must be completed before you are 15 $\frac{3}{4}$. Your pathway plan should be completed by the time you reach 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of age. In pulling this together they will talk with you about your hopes and aspirations for education, training and employment.

They will ensure you have an acceptable form of ID such as a passport or driving licence and if needed, they will pay for you to get a birth certificate and apply for a passport.

Together we will come up with a plan, which will help set some goals for your future (these will be revised and updated regularly) and outline the steps we need to take together, to help you reach those goals.

Your PA will consider with you what extra support you may need, for example because you:

- have special educational needs or a disability
- are an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child (UASC) and your immigration status is unclear
- wish to access Higher Education
- are in or leaving custody or you have had contact with the criminal justice system
- are a young parent
- are going through a difficult time in your personal life or
- live outside Jersey

We know that relationships are important and so we will try and make sure that you keep the same PA, though this will not always be possible.

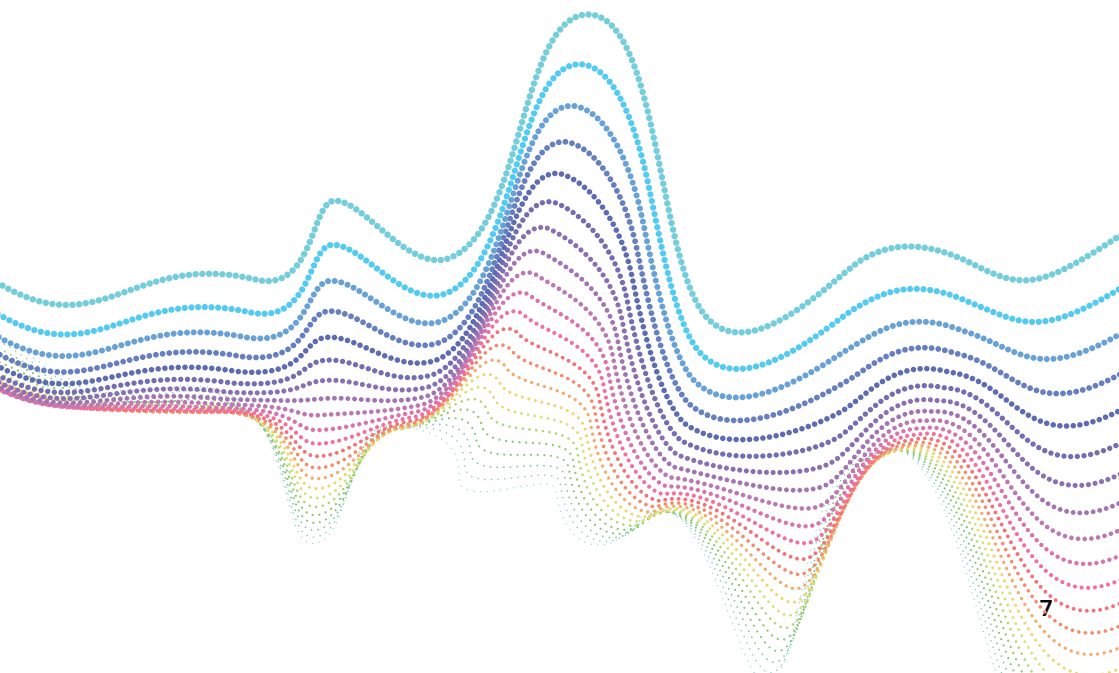
Personal education plan

If you are between 3 and 18 years of age, we will make sure you have a personal education plan (PEP).

This plan will set out what needs to happen, including any additional support you might require, to ensure you reach your full potential.

Your time at school should be fun, as well as about learning and it's important that we capture everything and support you to explore the things that interest you.

Equally, any skills, talents or interests should be recorded in the plan as well as how we will nurture these and help you to develop them further.





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This section outlines the specific elements of the children in care support arrangements across each of the following four headings:

- Health and wellbeing
- Finance
- Education and training
- Relationships

Health and wellbeing

Like any good parent we will make sure you regularly visit the optician and dentist. We will fund the cost of all visits and any treatment that you may need. This will include any ongoing treatment costs and any recommended items such as glasses or braces.

We will make sure that you are registered with a GP and will fund the costs of all visits and any treatments required.

We will make sure that you have an annual health check and we will be accountable for ensuring that your health and wellbeing is prioritised.

We are proposing that your annual health check is extended to also include an assessment of your mental health and emotional wellbeing, leading to a clear action plan for how best to address any needs identified. As part of our offer, should a need be identified, you will be able to access a mental wellbeing officer/life coach who will work with you to ensure your mental health and wellbeing is also looked after.

Education and training

Education

We know that attainment levels for children in care are significantly lower than the national average in Jersey. This needs to change and improving attendance alongside raising the aspirations and attainment levels for children in our care is a priority for the Government.

The education attainment at Key Stages 1 - 3, A Level and GNVQ for all children (off and on Island) will be recorded and progress monitored by the Virtual Headteacher and monitored through the Corporate Parenting Board. The core purpose of the Virtual Headteacher is to be relentless in driving up improvements in the educational progress and attainment of all children in care including those that have been placed off island.

Transparency on the use and impact of the Jersey Premium will also be reviewed and monitored through the Corporate Parenting

Board as will the PEPs, including data on numbers completed and the level of quality compliance achieved.

This will help us to know how you are doing and identify where we need to provide extra focus, if additional support or attention is required.

Currently, care experienced young people are significantly underrepresented in the numbers of young people accessing further and higher education. This is not good enough and we are proposing a range of measures aimed at improving these numbers.

As part of your pathway plan you will be given access to a skilled careers advisor who will be able to help you think about your options for the future.

If you decide to go on to FE and the course is off-island, we will cover the cost for you and an approved adult to visit up to five potential places of study. If you decide to study then we will fund your tuition and accommodation costs.

If you are studying off-island, we will also make sure that you have a place to stay when you come home at weekends or in the holidays.

We will ensure that you have the necessary equipment to support you in your studies. This might include, for example, purchasing a computer or laptop.

Please refer to the Care Leavers Offer for additional information on funding for further, higher and post graduate studies.



Uniforms

We want you to look smart so we will make sure that you have a new school uniform each year (or more frequently if you grow!).

While we will try and limit any change of schools, if you do need to move we will make sure that you have the right uniform for that school.

Transport

You will be entitled to a free bus pass until you are 25.

We will support you to get your driving licence. We will pay for your provisional driving licence, theory test and one practical driving test. We will also pay for up to 20 driving lessons.

Learning equipment

We will ensure that you have any equipment necessary to support your education, including purchasing a computer or laptop. Any additional equipment or adjustments required to support your learning will also be funded and will make sure these are provided as quickly as possible following the identification of need.

School trips, school activities and extra curricular activities

We recognise that education is broader than classroom learning. We will ensure that you have access to the same sort of extra-curricular activities as your friends. We will also make sure that any school trips or activities are funded.

Discretion will need to be applied for some trips but where possible, we will encourage you to broaden your experiences and aspirations.

Your interests will dictate what additional activities are funded but we do want to encourage you to access, experience and develop a wide and varied range of interests.

Reasonable extra curricula activities such as leisure or sports activities, music or drama will also be funded. You will also be eligible for an active card that will allow you to have free access to certain leisure facilities across Jersey.



Finance

Clothing, shoes and other essentials

We will make sure that whoever is looking after you has the money to buy you the clothes, shoes and sportswear that you need. While we need to be sensible, we do understand that you want to have the same sort of things as your friends and we will be mindful of this when it's time to go shopping.

Pocket money

From the age of 5 until you are 18 (unless you are in full-time employment), you will receive weekly pocket money. While it will be up to you how you spend it we will also make sure that you have a bank account and encourage you to save for the things that you really want.

In addition, we are looking at how best to set up a savings account for all children who have been in care for more than 12 months. As part of this we will invest a monthly sum that will mature and be accessible once you turn 18.

Holidays

We will support you to broaden your horizons and encourage you to travel and have experiences outside Jersey. We will fund at least one holiday per year, up to an agreed amount– this will include making sure that you have a passport if you are going abroad and you don't yet have one.

Relationships

We understand that love and consistent relationships are crucial in supporting you to fulfil your potential. Bonds with people who care about you underpin your wellbeing and help you build resilience to life's challenges.

A golden thread running through all aspects of our offer is the desire to support you to develop and maintain strong relationships that will help you flourish as you move into adulthood and independence. This is not simply about professional relationships. It is about enabling you to build and maintain connections with people who truly care about you.

For that reason, if you are in foster care, you and your foster parents will be supported to remain together until you are 25 if that is what you both wish to do. We are also reviewing how best to extend the age range for residential care so that you can have the choice to stay there for longer if that is what you want. We are also looking at the options for extending the numbers of supported living arrangements available so that there is a much more gradual, young person led transition to independence.



For more information, please refer to the Care Leavers Offer.

We will also support you to stay in touch with members of your family and explain to you if there are any reasons why it may not be safe for you to do so.

We will also make sure that you are made aware of and have access to an independent visitor, mentor/peer mentor, advocate or similar, to support you and make sure your voice is heard.

Like any parent, we want to be there to help you celebrate birthdays, festivals or other milestones that are important to you. To help you celebrate those important occasions in your life we will:

- Make sure you always have a present and card on your birthday and at Christmas (or other religious festivals that you observe)
- Make sure you have a birthday party or other celebration of your choice
- Recognise and celebrate your achievements.

Finally, we will do our best to be a good parent simply by being there for you. That means there will always be someone there for you on those occasions when it is important that there is someone by your side. That might be attending your parents' evenings, your school assembly or shouting from the side lines on sports day – or anything else that is special to you.



