



# Staying Close



## Staying Close

Wolverhampton Staying Close is designed to help you through one of the most important periods in your life and to give you the skills and confidence to build a life for yourself when leaving care. Moving to independence from 16 and living alone from 18 as a care leaver can be daunting. Doing this without support can be difficult for many young people and care leavers often describe the loneliness and fear they feel.

**Staying Close** is an enhanced support package for young people leaving care and care leavers. It is designed to support you to live independently in move-on accommodation with ongoing practical and emotional support, which will strengthen your confidence and skills for independent living. You will also be supported with your aspirations for the future, by maintaining relationships that you have established as important people in your life.

# Aim of Staying Close

The aim of Staying Close is around supporting young people leaving Children's Homes, Supported Accommodation or Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people to acquire the skills for independence, focusing on 5 key areas:

- Stable accommodation
- Wellbeing
- Education, Employment and Training (EET)
- Strong relationships and support network
- Greater independent living skills

Staying Close focuses on maximising your independence in all aspects of your life, you will develop confidence in yourself and your future by acquiring skills that will equip you to be ready to maintain your own tenancy/property.

Our Staying Close Mentors will work closely with the you to set out your aspirations for the future in your Staying Close Plan, breaking these down into individual goals and targets, with our aim of providing you with the support you need, as you take the next step into independent living. The plan may include the following:

- Support and guidance in accessing education, training and employment from a designated EET worker
- Emotional health and wellbeing support
- Access to a designated nurse
- Support to acquire your own tenancy

There is also a requirement for you to complete a ASDAN Award as part of Staying Close, which will help develop the skills needed.

## Referral Process

Staying Close works with young people in care and care leavers. A discussion takes place with you and your social worker around whether it is something that you would like to be part of. If you are happy to proceed with Staying Close, your social worker will complete a referral form. Once the team has received this, they will contact you and discuss this and support you to complete an application form.

Our mentors will then support you to formulate your Staying Close Plan.



## Staying Close Programme

The ethos of the Staying Close Programme is around promoting a sense of wellbeing and confidence and having those relationships that are important to you are instrumental in this. Your plan will enable us to understand who these people are and we will work with them to encourage their involvement.

Our Staying Close Mentors will provide weekly support to ensure that your plan is on track and that those involved in the plan are continuing to work with you and support you to develop your independence skills through the ASDAN accreditation.

Our EET advisor will also be involved in the plan, providing support and advice around your aspirations in education, employment or training.

You will also have access to a designated nurse and therapeutic support if needed and this can be incorporated into your plan.

As part of the programme, you may have access to a property in Wolverhampton. Whilst in one of these properties, you will be fully supported to develop the skills for independence and then ultimately, when deemed ready, be given the opportunity to take the tenancy on.

If you have been living outside of Wolverhampton but want to return to be nearer your support network, we will work with your current home to help

you achieve this, understand the processes involved, identify suitable, safe accommodation whilst we prepare you to return.

If you have been living outside of the city and it is your aspiration to remain there once you reach 18, the team will work with your social worker, your current home and landlords in that area to support this. We will do our utmost but there may be occasions when this is not possible, but we will support you along the way and provide you with advice around alternative options.



## Support

The Staying Close Mentors will continue to work with you until they feel you are ready to take the step into independence.

Our aim is to continue to support you until, along with your agreement, we both feel that you are able to manage your monthly finances, sustain your tenancy, have a good knowledge of the local area and have established good support networks.

Access to support from Staying Close can continue or be re-accessed; once part of the project our team will always be on hand should you need any support. There may be times when a young person has been living successfully in their own tenancy, but a life occurrence means that they suddenly need support. As part of our commitment under Staying Close, we will support young people in these situations and work with them to get things back on track.



## Oasis Hub

Staying Close has a base, somewhere you can go and spend time with other young people leaving care and the team who are there to support you. We will be running monthly group sessions and drop-in sessions where you will have the opportunity to meet other young people on the project and work together as a team.

## Care Leavers Independent Collective (CLIC)

CLIC represents Care Leavers aged 17-25, and are the voice of young people leaving care. Their goal is to ensure that care leavers voices are heard and help shape the leaving care service.

You can be part of CLIC where you would have the opportunity to contribute to and influence change to policies and procedures, interview new staff for the Children and Young People in Care Service, deliver training sessions for social care staff and promote Care Leavers rights. There are many benefits for you to meet up with other care leavers every month, make new friends and access help if needed and also, have fun.

***For more information contact your participation officer  
on 01902 556951***



## Complaints

Should you wish to make an informal or formal complaint in relation to the service provided by Staying Close, you may discuss this with the Supported Accommodation Manager. The complaints leaflet shall be made available on request. Thereafter, the Supported Accommodation Manager may carry out any investigation if deems necessary.

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## Advocacy

The Children's Society Black Country Advocacy Service is an independent, confidential service in Sandwell, Wolverhampton, and Walsall. It's for children and young people who are in care, leaving care, or who have a social worker. An advocate is a person who can help you say if you don't like something or if you don't agree with a decision that affects your life. Advocates are independent and confidential – they don't work for the council or children's services, and they will not tell anyone what you say to them without your agreement (unless there is something that might cause harm to you or someone else)

*For referrals to the BCA service email:*

**BCA.referral@childrenssociety.org.uk**

*Tel:* 0808 169 9954

*Web Link:* <https://forms.office.com/r/Ts4KV9T2qD>

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## Interested in joining or simply learning more about Staying Close?

Please speak to your Social Worker, Young Person's Advisor, Independent Reviewing Officer, carer or an adult you trust and email us at: **stayingclose@wolverhampton.gov.uk**

# Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you...

You can get this information in large print, braille, audio or in another language by calling **01902 551155**

or emailing **[translations@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:translations@wolverhampton.gov.uk)**

You can get this information in large print, braille, audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155

**[wolverhampton.gov.uk](http://wolverhampton.gov.uk)** 01902 551155

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