



Help for you if you are LEAVING CARE

What is this factsheet about?

This factsheet provides information to young people who are leaving care, and who are seeking housing advice from Merton Council. It contains information on support that is available to you, and ideas for finding somewhere to live, and for making it a successful settled home of your own. On your 18th Birthday, the funding for your care is suddenly reduced, but you still have a number of challenges ahead, that mean you may need further help – such as finding a place to live independently, and improving your budgeting and practical skills.

Merton Council 14 + Team

The Council's 14 + Team will help care leavers in Merton to prepare for becoming an adult and developing their independence. You will be entitled to this support up to the age of 21 (or longer in some circumstances), if you have been “looked after” for 13 weeks from the age of 14, and for at least a day following your 16th Birthday. The 14 + Team are based at the Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DX, and can be reached on 0208 545 4293.

Jigsaw 4U

Jigsaw 4U is a charitable organisation assisting young people with emotional and practical support. They can be contacted on 020 8687 1384 or via their website <https://www.jigsaw4u.org.uk>

Spear

Provide hostel accommodation and support to single homeless people aged 16-24. You must have a 6 month local connection to London Borough of Merton. Referrals are made initially through the Housing Options Team at Merton Council. For more information follow link to website <https://www.homeless.org.uk/homeless-england/service/spear-wilton-road-young-people-in-merton>

The following organisations may also be helpful

Centrepoint : 0808 800 0661

De Paul Night Stop London: 0207 939 1220

Getting on the Housing Register (choice based letting scheme)

Affordable housing is in very short supply in Merton. However we do accept applications onto the choice based lettings scheme from anyone who is eligible and has a local connection with Merton. If you are leaving the care of Merton Council you would still have a local connection even if your care placement was outside the borough. As a care leaver your social worker can nominate you for a special quota on the housing register.

Threatened with homelessness?

If you think you will be made homeless in the next 56 days, and you cannot find your own alternative accommodation (despite the help of the agencies mentioned above), you can approach any local authority in England, and ask for assistance. Provided you are eligible, the council will assess your needs, and draw up a plan to help you resolve your housing problem.

This plan will include the steps that you and the council will take to find a solution. This might involve, for example, ensuring you have approached all the right agencies in the right way, maximising benefits, or getting help with training or work.

Already homeless?

If we are satisfied that you are eligible, and do not have accommodation anywhere that you have a right to occupy, and can gain access to, we will try to help you resolve your homelessness. As a care leaver over the age of 20, we would decide if you are more vulnerable than an ordinary person, and may decide you are in a priority need group as a result. If You are 18 to 20 years old and were looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 you will automatically be in priority need. If you are in priority need, we will provide you with suitable temporary accommodation, while we try and help you to find a more permanent solution.

If you need to contact us

Visit:

Housing Options
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

Email to: housingadvice@merton.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8545 3636