

# The Independence Support Team



Information for care leavers



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## Who we are

We are a team of specialist workers, mostly personal advisers (PA) and social workers (SW), for young people leaving the Council's care. We provide a service under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

IST aims to support you to make a successful transition from being 'looked after' to adult life in the community, and help you achieve your full potential. To do this we need to work with you and those supporting you to prepare early and make clear long-term plans, so you can have some confidence and security about the future.

## Who we help

Care leavers are individuals with different needs; for example, some may have family support here, others may be seeking asylum alone, some have health needs or are parents. Their circumstances mean they have different opportunities and need different support.

More details about our legal duties and your rights are in a Voice leaflet '**Sorted and Supported.**' Your SW can give

you this, or you can look on KCcentral for links to useful websites such as **[www.leavingcare.org](http://www.leavingcare.org)** and **[www.thewhowhocarestrust.org.uk](http://www.thewhowhocarestrust.org.uk)**.

You will see care leavers can be **eligible, relevant, former relevant or qualifying**. These terms relate to the kind of support you can expect, so check with your SW or PA to find out what this means for you.

IST becomes involved in your support when you are coming up to your 16th birthday. A PA will contact your SW about assessing your needs and abilities. Your SW will introduce you to your PA. Your PA will help your SW make a Pathway Plan with you and anyone important to your care and progress.

## The Pathway Plan

The Pathway Plan will build on documents such as your Care Plan and Personal Education Plan. Like your Care Plan, it will cover all aspects of your life. It will set out what you want to achieve, what needs to be done, when and by whom, to support you now and after you leave care. Most care leavers

are particularly concerned about where they will live, what money they will have to live on and what they will be doing in life.

The Pathway Plan includes **contingency** arrangements to say what will happen if things change e.g. you may go to a different college depending on your exam results.

Your Pathway Plan is **reviewed** every six months; whilst you are looked after, this will be done by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) as part of your statutory review.

## Leaving Care

You do not have to leave care before you are ready; however, care will end your 18th birthday when your SW will handover to your PA to provide and organise support until you are 21. Your PA will arrange reviews with you, which may be chaired by their manager. They will also explain how other IST workers can help you with specialist advice e.g. on accommodation, careers and who to contact if they are away.

If you are completing an education course or training agreed in your Pathway Plan that

started before you were 21, your PA can support you to the end of the course.

Your PA will plan with you well before IST services end to ensure you know how to get any future help you need in the community; we will talk about an Exit Strategy at your final Pathway Plan review.

If you are over 21 (but under 25) you can return to IST to ask about support for full-time education or training. We will advise you and assess your needs and may allocate a PA and make a new Pathway Plan. There is a leaflet available with more details about this. Any financial support will end on your 25th birthday.

Law, guidance and practice can change; IST aims to let you know about change that may affect you and consult you wherever possible. Care leavers' views help us improve our service, so we will ask what you think and invite you to get involved in certain activities e.g. in recruiting workers.

IST also arranges group activities where you can learn life skills with other young people, or attend events.

If you have questions or difficulties with IST, please speak to your SW or PA. If you want to speak to their manager, you can ask to do so. You can also speak to the young person's advocacy and consultation officer, or fill in a 'Comments, Complaint and Praise' form. This form can then be sent on to the Customer Care and Complaints Team.

### **Our address:**

The Independence Support Team  
36c Oxford Gardens  
London W10 5UQ  
(near Ladbroke Grove Tube Station)

### **Our opening hours:**

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.  
See our leaflet 'Keeping in touch' for more details

You can call your PA on their direct landline or their mobile number, or email them.

You can also call the duty number **(020 7854 5888)** if your PA is not available.

Outside office hours in an emergency, you can call Emergency Duty Team on **020 7373 2227**.



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