

Accommodation Options for Young People Leaving the Care of Powys County Council Post 16 Years of Age

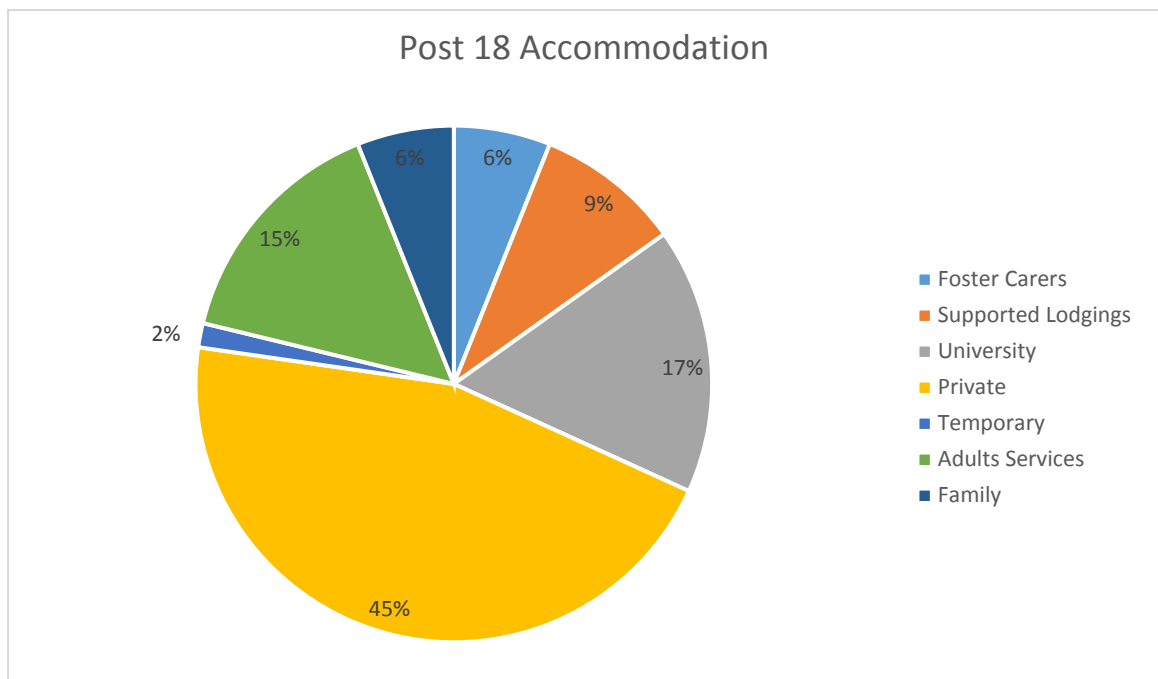
I will provide you with a brief of both the legislative and local options available to young people leaving care when they are owed a duty under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

In order to be owed a duty under this legislation young people need to have been 'looked after' for a minimum of thirteen weeks since their fourteenth birthday **and** be in care at some point when they are sixteen or seventeen years of age. Formal respite does not count.

Eligibility for leaving care services under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is the same bar an additional category of young people who have previously been subject to a Special Guardianship Order – these young people are now also entitled to a level of service provision.

'Looked after' children can continue to live with their foster carers until their eighteenth birthday, as with a number of local authorities Powys County Council has an agreement that young people can continue with their 'looked after' placement option until the end of the academic year they reach eighteen in if they are in education. This promotes a young person's stability of education and aids in improving their educational outcomes. The numbers of young people remaining in care until the end of the academic year has increased since the fruition of leaving care services within the local authority. The change of team name from 'leaving care' to '16+' has also aided in the stability of placements for young people and their carers due to the connotation of a leaving care worker meaning that a young person needs to move on.

The chart below provides an overview of all current post 18 young people and their accommodation status as of the report date. The majority of young people currently in University will move to foster carers, or supported lodgings for the summer vacation period.



Accommodation Types

Foster Carers – This category refers to young people who have remained with their foster carers beyond the end of their academic year. To date these carers have been converted to supported lodgings hosts for the specific young people post 18 within their care. As from April 2016 these placement types will be classified as ‘When I’m Ready Arrangements’.

Supported Lodgings – This category refers to young people who have moved to supported lodgings hosts as per the local authorities supported lodgings scheme. Supported lodgings can be easily classified as a ‘halfway’ house between being in foster care and living independently.

University – This refers to young people currently in higher education and in University based accommodation – mainly halls of residence however some young people are in shared accommodation with their peers.

Private – This category refers to young people in a private tenancy, young people in private tenancies regularly have a higher level of support and guidance from their Personal Advisor in order to maintain such a placement. We also utilise services such as tenancy support schemes to assist in this.

Temporary – This category refers to young people in temporary accommodation. One young person is in temporary accommodation in Shropshire following a relationship breakdown, however is maintaining their employment. One young person and their partner are in temporary accommodation within Powys following an eviction from a private tenancy.

Adults Services – This category refers to young people who have continuing care and support needs over and above those of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and have their primary needs met via adult’s services provision. They continue to have Personal Advisor support and services from the 16+ Team alongside this as per the legislative requirements.

Family – This category refers to young people who are currently living with family members, this is in some cases extended family members.

‘When I’m Ready’

When I’m Ready is a new legislative duty under Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It basically allows young people to remain with their foster carers until the age of twenty one years, up to twenty five years of age if they are still in education or training post 21. Such a provision (Staying Put) has already been introduced in England, there is also further consideration taking place in England with regards to extending their ‘Staying Put’ scheme to young people in residential provision.

The main difference between ‘When I’m Ready’ and supported lodgings is that supported lodgings falls under the rent a room tax allowance and When I’m Ready falls under the same tax allowances as fostering so is more beneficial for carers.

When I’m Ready has the potential for significant financial commitments on the local authority, there are instances when money can be reclaimed from local housing allowance payments towards the costs of arrangements but this depends on the individual circumstances of each young person. Each When I’m ready arrangement could cost up to £10,000 per annum.

Claire Williams

16+ Team Manager

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