

MCCARE

YOUR PRACTICAL GUIDE TO AFTERCARE SERVICES

A detailed guide for young adults receiving aftercare, keyworking or supported accommodation services from McCare

Clear information about your plan, home, money, education, health, rights, support and next steps.

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Aftercare should be practical, clear and built around you

Leaving care and becoming an adult can be exciting, but it can also involve major changes in where you live, how you manage money, who supports you and what happens next. You should not be expected to manage everything alone or to understand every system immediately.

This guide explains the support you may receive from Tusla and from McCare, what should happen in practice, what decisions you should be involved in and where to go when something is not working.

You are an adult

Your consent, privacy, choices and goals matter. Team members should work alongside you, explain options and help you build confidence. Support should not take over decisions you can make for yourself.

What this guide can and cannot do

This is a general website guide. Your local McCare service must give you the specific information for your placement, including contact details, support hours, house arrangements, emergency contacts, charges or contributions, and the terms of your service agreement.

HOW AFTERCARE WORKS

The aftercare pathway - from referral to ongoing support

1. Referral

A referral can be made before you leave care. Depending on your circumstances, you may also be able to refer yourself through a Tusla aftercare drop-in service. Your social worker, aftercare service, placement, family or carer may also help with a referral.

2. Assessment of need

The assessment identifies the areas where you may need support as you move into adulthood. It should include education, money and budgeting, training and employment, health and wellbeing, personal and social development, accommodation and family support.

3. Aftercare plan

Your written aftercare plan should set out the support required, who is responsible for each action and the timescale. Where possible, it should be prepared at least six months before you turn 18. You should be directly involved and receive a copy.

4. Ongoing support and review

If an aftercare worker is allocated, they may support applications, entitlements, referrals and reviews of your plan. The plan should be reviewed regularly and at least annually, and sooner when your accommodation, education, health, relationships or other circumstances change.

General eligibility information

Tusla aftercare is generally for young people aged 16 to 21 who have spent at least 12 months in State care between the ages of 13 and 18. Certain education or training supports may continue to age 23. Eligibility rules are detailed, so ask Tusla to explain the decision in writing and what support is available to you.

Drop-in services

Tusla aftercare drop-in clinics can provide information, guidance, advice, support and signposting, whether or not you have an aftercare plan or an allocated aftercare worker. Tusla currently states that there is no age limit or fee for using a drop-in clinic.

WHO DOES WHAT

You should know who is responsible for each part of your support

Your Tusla aftercare worker

- Works with you on your assessment of need and aftercare plan, where allocated.
- Helps with supporting documents, entitlements, referrals and applications.
- Reviews the plan with you and follows up agreed Tusla actions.
- Explains what Tusla can provide and what must be provided by another service.

Your McCare keyworker or named team member

- Meets with you at an agreed frequency and helps turn your goals into practical steps.
- Supports day-to-day living, appointments, routines, skills and agreed actions.
- Keeps clear records of support and follows up work that has been agreed.
- Works with your aftercare worker and other services with your knowledge and consent, unless information must be shared for safety or legal reasons.

The McCare Aftercare Manager

The manager is responsible for the quality and safety of the McCare service, team practice, complaints, risk management and ensuring that agreed support is delivered. You should know how to contact the manager directly.

High support and high accountability

High support means team members receive training, supervision, guidance and help with complex situations. High accountability means they follow through, record accurately, explain decisions, raise concerns and take responsibility when something has not been done. Support and accountability must apply to team members as well as to the young adults using the service.

STARTING WITH MCCARE

What should happen when your service begins

The beginning of a placement or support service should be planned and explained. You should not have to discover important information only after a problem occurs.

Before or when you move in

- You should be shown the accommodation and given clear information about the service.
- You should receive a written agreement explaining support, facilities, visitors, safety arrangements, charges or contributions, house expectations and how the placement may end.
- You should be told who your keyworker, manager and Tusla aftercare worker are and how to contact them.
- You should receive local emergency and out-of-hours contact information.
- Your privacy, communication, cultural, dietary, health, disability and accessibility needs should be discussed.
- Existing plans, risks, medication information and important appointments should be reviewed with you.

During the first few weeks

- Agree your immediate priorities and what a settled first month would look like.
- Check income, benefits, banking, identification documents and urgent applications.
- Confirm education, training, employment, health and transport arrangements.
- Agree routines, keyworking, contact with family or important people and use of shared spaces.
- Record your longer-term housing plan and the first actions needed to progress it.

Ask until it is clear

You can ask for information to be explained again, written down, translated or provided in another format. You should know what is expected of you and what you can expect from McCare.

YOUR PLANS

Your aftercare plan and McCare support plan should connect

Your assessment of need and aftercare plan

The plan should identify what you need, what outcome you want, the action to be taken, who will take it and when it will be reviewed. It should not contain vague statements such as “support with housing” without setting out the next practical step.

Your McCare support or placement plan

McCare should agree a practical plan with you that reflects your aftercare plan and your day-to-day needs. It should include clear goals, support arrangements, safety planning, responsibilities and review dates.

- You should help choose your goals and priorities.
- Your strengths, identity, culture, relationships, wishes and concerns should be included.
- Actions should be specific: what will happen, who will do it and by when.
- You should be able to see your plan, request changes and receive a copy.
- Plans should be reviewed when circumstances change, not only on a fixed date.
- A missed goal should lead to discussion and problem-solving, not shame or punishment.

A useful question at every review

What has been agreed, who is responsible, what is the deadline, and what will happen if the action is delayed?

DAY-TO-DAY SUPPORT

What practical support from McCare may look like

Your service should agree how often you meet with your keyworker or named team member, how support will be provided and what to do if that person is unavailable. Support may include working beside you, attending an appointment with you, helping you prepare, practising a task or following up an application.

Doing with - not doing for

- Breaking a difficult task into manageable steps.
- Showing you how to complete a form, then supporting you to complete it yourself.
- Preparing questions before a meeting and helping you record the answers.
- Practising phone calls, interviews, travel routes or household tasks.
- Reviewing what worked, what did not and what support should change.

Reliable follow-through

- Agreed actions and appointments should be recorded.
- You should be told when an action is completed, delayed or cannot happen.
- Team members should not promise outcomes they cannot control.
- Where another service is responsible, McCare should help you understand how to follow up and escalate delays.

Your responsibilities

You are expected to take part as much as you can, communicate when you need help, respect shared living arrangements and follow agreed safety measures. Your support should recognise that motivation and capacity can change when you are stressed, unwell or dealing with a crisis.

YOUR HOME

Accommodation should support stability, privacy and progression

Your written service agreement should explain

- The accommodation and facilities provided.
- The support hours and how to contact the service.
- Any rent, contribution, charge or additional cost.
- Visitors, overnight stays, shared spaces, keys, security and safety arrangements.
- What happens if something is damaged or needs repair.
- Your responsibilities and the process if there is a concern about the placement.
- How decisions about ending or changing the placement will be made and communicated.

Your privacy and sense of home

- Your room, belongings and communications should be respected.
- Team members should knock and explain any limits to privacy.
- You should be able to personalise your space within reasonable safety arrangements.
- Information about you should not be discussed where other residents or visitors can hear it.

Shared living

Shared accommodation also involves respecting neighbours, other residents, noise, visitors, communal areas and agreed safety arrangements. Expectations should be clear, fair and applied consistently.

Support should help you build financial and future stability

Money and entitlements

- Setting up and using a bank account safely.
- Making a realistic weekly budget for food, travel, phone, clothing, social activities and savings.
- Understanding rent, deposits, bills, arrears, debt and financial exploitation.
- Applying for social welfare, student supports, grants or other entitlements for which you may qualify.
- Keeping important receipts, letters, payslips and application records.

Tusla financial supports

Depending on eligibility and your aftercare plan, Tusla support may include an aftercare allowance while you are in eligible accredited education or training, or a once-off aftercare grant to help with the costs of moving into independent accommodation. Amounts and rules can change. Ask your aftercare worker or drop-in clinic for the current criteria and written information.

Education, training and employment

- Choosing courses or training that match your interests and circumstances.
- Applications, registration, student grants, documents and deadlines.
- Study routines, attendance, travel and communication with the provider.
- CVs, job searches, applications, interview preparation and workplace routines.
- A plan for what happens if a course, job or training placement ends unexpectedly.

McCare can support preparation and applications, but it cannot guarantee a grant, welfare payment, home, college place or job. You should be told clearly which organisation makes each decision.

A good adult life is more than forms, appointments and tasks

Health and wellbeing

- Registering with and attending a GP, dentist or other health service.
- Understanding medication and managing prescriptions safely.
- Accessing mental health, counselling, addiction, sexual health, disability or specialist services when needed.
- Building routines around sleep, nutrition, movement, appointments and self-care.
- Making a plan for periods when you feel overwhelmed, unsafe or unable to manage daily tasks.

Relationships, identity and belonging

- Maintaining safe contact with family, previous carers, friends and other important people.
- Developing healthy relationships, communication, consent and personal boundaries.
- Respect for your culture, language, religion, gender, sexuality and identity.
- Building a circle of support so that one team member or service is not your only connection.
- Taking part in sport, hobbies, community life, travel, celebrations and enjoyable experiences.

Enjoyment matters

Aftercare should help you build a life, not only manage a list of problems. Rest, fun, friendships, interests and positive memories are important parts of wellbeing and belonging.

You have adult rights and you should know the limits of confidentiality

Your rights include

- Being treated with dignity, fairness and respect.
- Receiving information you can understand and being involved in decisions.
- Giving or refusing consent, subject to the law and serious safety concerns.
- Privacy in your room, communications, relationships and personal information.
- Accessing records and information about you, subject to legal limits.
- Raising concerns, making complaints and seeking independent advocacy.
- Being free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, coercion and financial harm.

When information may be shared

Team members should normally seek your consent before sharing personal information. Information may need to be shared without consent where there is a serious concern about your safety or another person, where abuse or a crime may have occurred, or where there is another legal duty. You should be told what is being shared and why, unless doing so would increase risk or interfere with an investigation.

If you feel unsafe

Tell a team member, the McCare manager, your aftercare worker, an advocate or another trusted person. In an immediate emergency, call 112 or 999. Your local guide should also give you the service's out-of-hours arrangements.

SPEAKING UP

Complaints, reviews and independent advocacy

1. Raise the issue with McCare

You can speak to any team member, your keyworker or the manager, or use the McCare complaints process. You can ask someone you trust to help and request a written response.

2. Review your aftercare plan or Tusla support

If the concern relates to your assessment, aftercare plan, aftercare worker or a Tusla service, ask for a review and a clear explanation of the decision. You can also contact Tusla Tell Us.

3. Use independent advocacy

An advocate can help you understand your rights, prepare for meetings, make a complaint and ensure your views are heard. EPIC provides independent advocacy to care-experienced young people, including those in aftercare, up to age 26.

4. Keep a record

Write down the date, what happened, who you spoke to, what was agreed and when you expect a response. Ask for reference numbers and copies of important correspondence.

Tusla Tell Us

Use Tell Us to give feedback or make a formal complaint about a Tusla team member or Tusla service. You can contact the Service Experience and Feedback team directly.

Phone: 01 771 8500 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) **Email:** tellus@tusla.ie

Online: [Tusla Tell Us - feedback and complaints](#)

EPIC - Empowering People in Care

EPIC is independent of McCare and Tusla. An EPIC Advocate can help with your aftercare plan, meetings, complaints, rights and decisions affecting your life. You can request an advocate yourself.

Phone: 01 872 7661 **Email:** info@epiconline.ie

Online: [Request an EPIC Advocate](#)

MOVING ON

A planned transition with support around you

Moving from supported accommodation or ending a service should be planned early with you. You should understand the reason, timescale, actions required and what support will continue afterwards.

Your transition plan should consider

- Safe, suitable and sustainable accommodation.
- Deposit, rent, bills, furniture, food and other set-up costs.
- Income, benefits, education funding or employment income.
- Identification, banking, health, immigration or residency documents.
- GP, medication, mental health and other ongoing supports.
- Education, training, employment and transport arrangements.
- Family, friends, community links and people you can contact in a crisis.
- What support McCare, Tusla and other services will provide after the move.

Support should not disappear overnight

The goal is a safe handover and a realistic plan, not simply a move-out date. You should know who you can contact after leaving and how to access Tusla drop-in services if you need advice later.

YOUR QUICK CHECKLIST

Information you should be able to answer

- Who is my Tusla aftercare worker and how do I contact them?
- Who is my McCare keyworker or named team member?
- Who is the McCare Aftercare Manager?
- Do I have a copy of my assessment of need and aftercare plan?
- Do I have a copy of my McCare support plan and service agreement?
- What are my three current priorities?
- Who is responsible for each action and what is the deadline?
- What money, housing, education or health applications are in progress?
- What are the local emergency and out-of-hours arrangements?
- When is my next keyworking meeting and plan review?
- How do I make a McCare complaint or contact Tusla Tell Us?
- How can I contact EPIC or another independent advocate?
- What is my longer-term accommodation and moving-on plan?

If you cannot answer these questions

Ask a team member to go through the guide and your local information with you. Important arrangements should be written down and easy for you to find.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

What this guide is based on

This general guide was prepared for the McCare website to explain what young adults using McCare aftercare and supported accommodation services should be able to expect. It does not replace your individual aftercare plan, McCare support plan, service agreement or local guide.

The guide is informed by:

- Child Care Act 1991, as amended by the Child Care (Amendment) Act 2015.
- Tusla National Aftercare Policy for Alternative Care and Tusla's official aftercare information.
- McCare's Ground to Growth Model of Care and preparation-for-leaving-care materials.
- Principles of adult consent, privacy, dignity, participation, safeguarding and person-centred support.

Useful official information: [Tusla Aftercare](#) | [Tusla Tell Us](#) | [EPIC Advocacy](#)

Reviewed: July 2026. This guide should be reviewed whenever relevant law, policy, official contact details or McCare service arrangements change.