 Leaving Care Service

Financial Offer 2023 - 2024

All allowances and grants are based on an assessment of need and will be set out in the young person’s Pathway Plan and recorded in the young person financial tracker. The Plan must also highlight any attached conditions, how payments will be made, the frequency of payments, when they will be reviewed and when they will cease. Allowances are conditional on reasonable engagement with Personal Advisor, supporting services, education, and co-production of the Pathway Plan.

Financial requests will require evidence of assessment from pathway plan and updated financial tracker before authorisation can be considered.

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1.3 The Provision of Allowances and Unused and Uncollected Allowances

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| 1.1 | Accommodation and Placements pre 18 |  |

Placement and accommodation costs to be met in full for young people up to the age of 18. Any additional accommodation needs post 18 will be agreed prior to transfer to leaving care services. Where young people are moving into private sector accommodation the rent level must be within the Local Housing Allowance for that area. Any requirement to provide a deposit and rent in advance must be clarified prior to the tenancy agreement being authorised by senior management.

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| 1.2 | Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA) | Under 18 |

This is provided to young people who are studying, undertaking unpaid training, looking for employment, or taking part in voluntary work. In situations where, young people are not involved in any education, training, employment, or voluntary activity and where possible, the allowance could be paid at, or in association with meeting their social worker, leaving care personal adviser and engaging with supporting services at a positive level.

**Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Supported Accommodation Adjustments**

The Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, weekly rates will apply depending on the type and level of support/services provided.

For young people who are living in semi supported accommodation aged 16 and 17 years old, £10 will be deducted from their LCMA at source. This is to help them prepare for when they have their own tenancy, or an arrangement where they will be responsible for paying utility bills.

| **Coverage** | **Maintenance Element** |
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| Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs | £67.20 |
| Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation and engaged | £57.20 |
| Young person is provided with utilities and food | £47.20 |
| Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation - no cooking facilities – Breakfast only | £67.20 |
| Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation with half board – Bed, Breakfast and Evening Meal | £47.20 |

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| 1.3 | The Provision of Allowances and Unused and Uncollected Allowances |  |

Most young people are paid a via BACS payments. Where young people are paid via Cashless or via placement providers and fail to collect allowances, a maximum of two weeks back payment will be made.

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| 1.4 | Social Activities and Leisure | As assessed or up to £5/week **Access to Leisure Pass** |

Young people should be encouraged and assisted (via the Pathway Plan) to explore the leisure facilities. Young people should have access to at least one leisure/hobby/sports activity per week to ensure social inclusion. The allowance is only provided where young people are undertaking a named and verified leisure activity. (up to the age of 18) Children’s trust will provide up to £50 grant for chosen sports equipment and clothing needs. (Once only, this aspect of the social activity grant is available up to 21yrs of age)

Financial assistance provided to pursue hobbies, leisure interests and social activities should be governed by the principle that these activities can be afforded by the young person at the age of eighteen, when they take over financial responsibility for their own affairs. This payment will cease at point young person turns 18.

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| 1.5 | Young People Detained in Youth Offending Institutions, Secure Training Centres, Secure Hospitals, in Hospital | £5/week or £100 one off clothing grant if renumeration/clothing provision not available£200 clothing grant upon release |

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If young people are remanded or received a custodial sentence, they will still be eligible to support as a care leaver. The visits will ensure an assessment of needs is completed and will identify what financial support the young person is eligible for during their sentence. Whilst detained they will be expected to take up and engage fully with training and education programmes and earn money where possible.

All young people will be eligible for birthday and festival gifts (up to the age of 21) on achieving the requirements of engagement.

If someone is unable to earn money, and there is no remuneration /clothing provision at the individual institution, up to £5 per week may be provided to the young person and one-off clothing purchase grant is available up to £100, subject to a needs assessment.

Upon release, young people will be able to access the pre release clothing grant (subject to an assessment of need and the young person requiring clothing) up to £200.

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| 1.6 | Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance - Reductions Where Young People Are Earning |  |

Reductions:

* When a young person has a net income of £125.00 net or more per week, his/her allowance will be reduced by 50%.
* When a young person has a net income of £145.00 net or more per week, his/her , YPA, clothing and leisure allowances will cease.

To assist a young person with making a successful transition to employment and managing their wages a reduction will not be applied until they have completed six weeks of employment. A young person will need to provide proof of income in order that his/her social worker/personal adviser can calculate incentive opportunities and reductions. If proof is not forthcoming it will be assumed that earnings are exceeding £145.00 net per week. In these circumstances the young person’s allowance will cease on a temporary basis until proof of income is provided. Food Parcels/Vouchers can be provided where the young person is working and is unable to provide proof of income. Additionally, all other allowances will be suspended.

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| 1.7 | Initial Clothing Allowance | Up to £200 |

In circumstances where young people become looked after and are placed in semi-independent or independent accommodation, they will be provided with an initial clothing allowance subject to an assessment of need.

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| 1.8 | Birthdays | 17th birthday: £50.0018th Birthday: £100.00 **19/ 20th Birthday: £50.00**  **21st Birthday: £100.00** |

The birthday allowance covers the cost of a gift, wrapping and a card. The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who are engaged fully in the support offered by education, placement providers, PA and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process. The Pathway Plan should specify whether the allowance is given to the young person directly as a cash gift or is used by the personal adviser, staying put carer or previous carer to purchase a gift.

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| 1.9 | Christmas/Festivals | **£50.00** |

A gift, or gifts, to the value of £50.00 or a contribution towards the cost of celebrations. If the allowance is not used to purchase a gift or gifts, it can be provided in the form of a gift card, gift voucher or via the cashless system.

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| 1.10 | Travel and Contact Costs & UASC contact | As assessed |

Travel costs associated with family contact, extended family, former foster carers and significant friends may be provided following an assessment of need.

Where young people are engaged in education, training, or employment (EET) and are not provided with a 16 to 19 Bursary, travel costs will be provided by Northamptonshire Children’s Trust subject to satisfactory attendance (85%) up to the age of 18.

**UASC Contact**

Following an assessment of need, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children aged 16 & 17 years will be provided with an additional £5.00 per week phone card/contact allowance where they have significant family members overseas. This payment will cease at point young person turns 18.

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| **1.11** | **Key Documents** | **Up to £100** |

The Children’s Trust will purchase a passport (including the check and send facility) and 1 birth certificate for each young person. One passport, or passport renewal age 16 to 21, one birth certificate only if the young person does not have the original. The Children’s Trust will purchase a travel document for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children dependent on an assessment of need. (Up to £82)

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| **1.12** | **Education, Training and Employment** |  |

Young people who are undertaking an education course or training activity will receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance. Additionally, young people who are undertaking full time education courses or unpaid training courses (minimum 12 hours’ study/training and contact time) are eligible for the 16-19 bursary (£1,200.00 per year, usually paid for 30 weeks at £40.00 per week) scheme (administered by individual schools and colleges).

Where a young person is involved in a full-time education or training activity that does not attract a 16 to 19 Bursary, Northamptonshire Children’s Trust will provide a £10.00 per week incentive when there is evidence from the provider that they have 95% attendance for the duration of the training activity or education course up until the age of 18yrs.

**Paid Training**

Young people who are undertaking a paid traineeship will not receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance. If the traineeship allowance is paid at a rate less than £99.20 the allowance is topped up to £99.20. The £99.20 may then be subject to a £10.00 or £20.00 deduction dependent on the type of placement and whether a) utilities or b) utilities and food are included with the placement (semi-independent accommodation or supported lodgings).

**Commencing Work Grant**

The Children’s Trust will purchase equipment and/or clothing to assist the young person with their chosen employment e.g. interview clothes, overalls, protective clothing, depending on an assessment of need. Maximum Commencing Work Grant £100.00. This is provided as a one off.

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| **1.13** | **Introduction to Driving Allowance** |  |

The Introduction to Driving package is available to young people aged 17 to 21 and is conditional on the individual young person having been engaged in education, training, or employment (full time) for at least 3 months. The lessons must be provided by an approved instructor and should be used for motor car or motor bike lessons.

Once a form of transport has been chosen the financial support cannot be transferred. (I.e., motorbike to car lessons or tests)

A requirement to be engaged in education, training, or employment (and having completed at least 3 months) enables those who aged 17 (to 21). Subject to the young person covering the cost of 5hrs of lessons and evidenced need through assessment in the Pathway plan, will the young person be eligible for financial support.

The Children’s Trust will provide the following Introduction to Driving package to assist a young person’s employability and to provide an additional identity document:

1. 1 provisional driving licence
2. 1 theory test
3. 10hrs of driving lessons up to a maximum of £350
4. 1 practical driving test
5. CBT (up to a value of £200)

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| **1.14** | **Personal Luggage** | **£70** |

Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between placements must have appropriate personal luggage. At least two items of appropriate personal luggage will be purchased (once only).

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| **1.15** | **Exceptional Needs and Emergency Payments** | **Up to £300 based on assessment of need** |

All areas are dependent on an assessment of need. From the age of 16 until the age of 21/25 Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant young people living in semi-independent or independent accommodation are entitled to up to a total of £300.00 of exceptional needs / emergency payments.

**Corporate Parent Payment**

The trust will assist to ensure that the young person has a hospital bag with required items for labour and birth up to the value of £50. In addition, a Gift for new baby, flowers and clothing to a maximum of £50.00 For family bereavement, terminal illness etc., a payment or cost normally met by a family member to a maximum of £100 per year.

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| SECTION 2 | FORMER RELEVANT YOUNG PEOPLE |

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| 2.1 | Accommodation and Placements post 18 |  |

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Accommodation costs for young people aged 18 and older will only be provided in exceptional circumstances and will need to be agreed prior to transfer from Children in Care team. Placements and accommodation costs for young people aged 18 and up to the age of 21 may be funded in part or full following an assessment of need and the case being considered by senior management. Wherever possible all young people should claim housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit subject to accommodation type.

1. Young people living in foster care who meet the Staying Put criteria can remain in their placement. (See Staying Put policy)
2. Those young people who remain in placement and are in employment will be asked to contribute towards placement costs in line with the Staying Put financial guidelines.
3. Asylum Seekers with all rights exhausted, (ARE) with no recourse to public funds will continue to be provided with accommodation funded by the Children’s Trust subject to a human rights assessment.
4. Asylum seekers who at the point they turn 21yrs old and remain without confirmed status, The Childrens Trust will cease financial and accommodation support and young person will be assisted with seeking support from Home office.

Where there is a clear assessment of need, The Children’s Trust will consider acting as a trustee or guarantor for care leavers aged 18 and older. In exceptional circumstances and with agreement from the Service Manger following a or above, consideration will be given to the Children’s Trust acting as a trustee/guarantor, such as acting as a trustee/guarantor for university accommodation. The nature and scope of the trustee/guarantor must be clarified before any agreement is given and authorised by the legal services team with clear recommendations that trustee/guarantor be for a 6 month period only.

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| 2.2 | Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Rates |  |

For young people post 18 LCMA, measures are intended to ensure that vulnerable young people receive the care and help they need to grow into independence. The Childrens Trust provides higher levels of support than simply cash, especially when we work across Departments to fulfil our role as corporate parents. We will ensure that young people in and leaving care are suitably accommodated, supported and advised according to their needs, to enable development of life skills and resilience, rather than simply given money.

Young people will be required to be engaged fully in the support offered by education, placement providers and PA to be eligible for the full LCMA. Those not engaging will be incentivised by a weekly reduction of £10 until re-engagement occurs. Assessment of this will be monitored monthly and agreed by PM/TM prior to financial authorisation.

The following weekly rates will apply, depending on the type of accommodation and level of support provided and engagement:

| **Arrangement** | **Value** |
| --- | --- |
| Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs | £67.20 |
| Young person is provided with utilities and is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation and engaged with support and constructive activities | £57.20 |
| Young person is provided with utilities and is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation and not engaging with support services | £47.20 |
| Young person is provided with utilities and food | £47.20 |
| Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation - no cooking facilities – Breakfast only | £67.20 |
| Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation with half board – Bed, Breakfast and Evening Meal | £47.20 |
| Young people identified as ARE | £45.00 |

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| 2.3 | Initial Benefit Claim | See table above for amountsPayable for maximum of 5 weeks |

Subject to the type of accommodation the young person is living in on their 18th birthday the following allowances - £67.20, or £57.20 or £47.20 (see table above) will continue for a maximum of 5 weeks whilst a claim for Universal Credit is being established. The allowance should only be paid after checking the progress of the young person’s Universal Credit claim with the DWP.

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| 2.5 | Qualifying Young People |  |

Dependent on an assessment of need which includes an evaluation of all income, Qualifying Young People may be eligible to certain allowances. For detailed guidance please see the Leaving Care Financial Policy 2023

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| 2.6 | Asylum Seekers with no Recourse to Public Funds | £45.00 per week |

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Asylum seekers and ‘all rights/appeals exhausted young people (ARE) with no recourse to public funds are provided with £45 in line with UKBA guidelines. A human rights assessment should be conducted to ascertain if financial support should continue alongside UKBA procedures.

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| 2.7 | Education Financial Support | Up to £350 per year plus one off £300 equipment grant **£2000 Higher education bursary over period of 2-4 year course** |

Access to financial support will always be dependent on an assessment of the young person’s financial circumstances. Where appropriate; young people will be provided with practical support to help them access education, training, or benefits/Universal Credit funding, rather than with the provision of direct grants. The level of practical support and financial support should be set out within the young person’s pathway plan and highlight any conditionality to the support being provided.

Where young people do not have a status that gives them access to Student England Finances, personal advisers will support young people to apply for scholarships, grants and bursaries from voluntary organisations. The Children’s Trust does not have a responsibility to undertake the costs of tuition for in accordance with SCHEDULE 12 of the Immigration Act 2016.

The Northamptonshire Children’s Trust - Higher Education Grant which includes the Government’s Higher Education Bursary can be accessed once (for 4 years) at any point between a young person’s 18th and 25th birthday.

For detailed guidance please see the Leaving Care Financial Policy 2023

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| 2.8 | Higher Education – Requirements and Payment Process |  |

Northamptonshire Children’s Trust as corporate parents, wants to ensure all care leavers have the best possible chance of success when undertaking a higher education and university course. The following guidance has been developed to provide clarity about the higher education payments process and the eligibility requirements that young people are expected to follow.

The frequency and amount of each payment as well as the method of paying the higher education bursary and allowance should be set out in the young person’s Pathway Plan or learning agreement.

All young people attending further, and higher education will be required to sign a consent to share/disclose information form and will need to agree to their leaving care personal adviser liaising with the educational establishment in order to support the program of study and monitor attendance and learning.

In the event that a year is required to be resat a review of continued support payments will have to be undertaken by a senior manager.

For detailed guidance please see the Leaving Care Financial Policy 2023

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| 2.9 | Young People Returning to the Local Authority Aged 21 to 25 |  |

Young people are entitled to resume or continue a leaving care service from the age of 21 to 25 on request. In very exceptional circumstances and following an assessment of need, a request for financial support (usually provided in kind) will be considered. Agreement from the strategic lead is required.

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| **2.10** | **Deposit and Rent in Advance** | **Taken from SUHA** |

Where a young person has access to housing authority or housing association independent accommodation a deposit and rent in advance may be required.

In exceptional circumstances and depending on an assessment of need a deposit and rent in advance may be considered if a young person would be at risk in housing authority or housing association independent accommodation. Where young people are moving into private sector independent accommodation, workers should check if homeless prevention or discretionary housing payment (DHP) funding can be applied. Where needed, a deposit and rent in advance can be provided if the rent level falls within the given Local Housing Allowance rate for that area.

For detailed guidance please see the Leaving Care Financial Policy 2023

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| **2.11** | **Setting Up Home Allowance** | **Total incorporating all items £3000** |

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| **Item** | **Amount** |
| TV Licence | £159 |
| Equipping Accommodations | Up to £2200 |
| Fitting of a gas/electric cooker by an approved fitter | Up to £150 |
| Removal Costs | Up to £141 |
| Health & safety pack and security | Up to £200 |
| Contents insurance | Up to £100 |
| Setting up home starter pack | Up to £50 |
| Total Amount | £3000 |

This Grant should be spent in stages; initially on semi-independent setting needs and subsequently, on independent accommodation needs. The grant will always be spent collaboratively between the leaving care personal adviser (or foster carer / staying put carer / residential keyworker / supported accommodation support worker) and young person.

A Young person’s eligibility for the Setting Up Home Grant extends to the age of 25, or until the end of the agreed program of education/training being undertaken on the 25th birthday. The purpose of the Setting Up Home Grant is to ensure that young people have the household items that they need to furnish their home rather than being provided a cash amount. We recognise that some young people may have turned 18 prior to April 2023, but not received their Leaving Care Allowance at that point because, for example, they were in a Staying Put arrangement. In circumstances such as this, they would receive a £3,000 Leaving Care Allowance as they are moving into their first independent tenancy after the date that the Leaving Care Allowance was increased from 2022-2023 financial policy.

Young people who received their Leaving Care Allowance prior to April 2023 are not eligible to access the 20223-2024 SUHA increase.

Young people who received less than half of their Leaving Care Allowance prior to 1 April 2023, their, the balance for assessed eligibility will reflect the new higher (£3,000) level.