



Financial Assistance for Young People Leaving Care In Herefordshire April 2024 to March 2025 (Final version)

Guide to Financial Assistance



Preamble

This document is a draft 16 plus finance document for Care experienced young people. The figures in the document have yet to be finalised and may change based on discussions within Herefordshire Children's Services.

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NOTE: This guidance has been prepared to assist staff within Herefordshire County Council (HCC) and other professionals working with young people who have status under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

All financial assistance offered to young people from Herefordshire County Council is subject to assessment. Guidance given for the consideration of requests for financial assistance may be changed, varied or withdrawn at any time, and at short notice dependant on subsequent assessments of a young person's circumstances.

It must be noted that care leavers from other authorities do not have access to financial assistance from this budget.



The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood Guidance and regulations.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 introduced financial arrangements for 16+ care leavers and made clear that the responsible authority will normally be the young person's primary source of income. Access to Universal Credits including Housing Benefit for 16/17 year olds has been removed. .

The Children & Young Persons Act in 2008 enacts commitments made in *Care Matters* requiring legislative change. The main aims of the Leaving Care regulations and the related Guidance is to ensure care leavers are provided with comprehensive personal support in order that they can make a successful transition to adulthood.

Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood provides information for local authorities so they are able to meet the requirements of the *Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010*.

Care experienced young people are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, the local authority financial procedures should aim to mirror the types of support that families provide, to be flexible to the differing needs of care leavers and to be aware of the fact that they are often being required to be financially capable and competent early in adulthood.

All financial assistance will now come from CYPS, and will cover income maintenance, accommodation, housing costs and other expenses such as travel and leisure.

Each young person will have a different set of needs and a different capacity to manage a budget. Some young people may have sources of income of their own, such as a training allowance or wages from employment. This means that in each case the responsible authority will agree with the young person, normally detailed in their Pathway Plan, a financial support package.

Three principles drive the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000:

- Young people should not leave Local Authority accommodation until they are ready and able to cope with the rigours of independent or semi-independent living;
- Young people should be central to the discussions and plans for their future;
- The Local Authority has a responsibility to act as a "good parent" to all young people whether Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant and irrespective of formal legal status i.e. Care Order or Section 20.



The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

The Children Act 1989 Guidance & Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood Guidance and regulations.

All payments over and above income maintenance and housing costs for 16/17 year olds are discretionary and not an entitlement.

Items that may be considered to be a priority for financial assistance include:

- Travel costs e.g. for education and training
- Education materials / special equipment
- Other educational costs
- Costs associated with special need (pregnancy or disability)
- Contact with family or other significant relationships
- Cultural / religious needs
- Counselling / therapeutic needs
- Hobbies / leisure pursuit

It must be noted that this list is not exhaustive and any other requests for financial support should be discussed with a team manager at the 16+ Service



Eligible Young People

Definition

An Eligible Child is one who is aged 16/17, has been looked after by the local authority for a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14 and, who remains looked after beyond their 16th birthday. The period of 13 weeks need not have been continuous and may be made up of a series of shorter periods during which the child was looked after.

Where young people are accommodated post their 16th birthday and meet the 13 week criteria they become an Eligible child.

Planned periods of respite do not count towards eligibility even if the planned services of placement periods amount to 13 weeks in total (Regulation 4 – Children (Leaving Care)(England) Regulations 2001). However, a young person receiving a package of short breaks may qualify for advice and assistance under Section 24 (Children Act 1989); see section on Qualifying Young People.

Young people remanded into the care of the local authority under LASPO: Legal Aid Sentencing & Public Order Act.

Young people remanded into the care of the local authority under the LASPO arrangements are regarded as Eligible, even if they are not given a custodial sentence, if the period of remand is for 13 weeks or more, and crosses their 16th birthday.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

Young people who are seeking asylum are covered by the terms of the Act. Financial assistance

Income Maintenance payments are only made directly to the young person once they have achieved school leaving age and, only if they live in supported accommodation in the community. Young people who remain in foster or residential care will not be given Income Maintenance as their financial support will come from their foster carer or residential home. This includes travel, clothing, family time etc.

The calculations apply from the date of the young person's school leaving date. (Most often July 1st)

Income Maintenance - Eligible young people living in the community:

This is a payment made to "maintain a young person's income". Generally the payments mirror equivalent to the rates paid by the DWP and are set this year (2024/25) at £68.00 per week.



Eligible Young People

The implementation of these payments is as described in the young person's Pathway Plan. These payments are paid directly from service to the young person, preferably through a bank account.

Service charge elements to accommodation providers will/can be deducted at source and this should be detailed in the Pathway Plan.

It should be noted that the income maintenance level can be "paid" in kind as well as cash, and for some young people food parcels, fuel tokens etc can be used to replace cash.

From 3 April 2024 the weekly Income Maintenance level is £70.00 per week.

How young people are paid

Ideally, all young people should be paid directly into a bank account.

If this is not possible then cash can be given. Payments will be made on Mondays one week in arrears.

In circumstances where a young person is assessed as being extremely vulnerable, payments can be split between Tuesday and the following Friday and, in extreme cases on a daily basis.

Whilst the income maintenance level should not be less than £70.00 payments do not have to be made in cash. Payments in kind, to this value, can be made where the assessment by the social worker is that to give cash to the young person would in fact be detrimental to their wellbeing.



Eligible Young People

Accommodation costs

The accommodation costs of Eligible young people will, in all circumstances, be met by service.

This is the case wherever the young person lives: supported lodgings, supported accommodation etc.

Eligible young people are not entitled to claim Housing Benefit.

Where young people are in employment and earn above UC levels a contribution from the service budget may be calculated on an individual basis with the budget holder.

Further support

Legislation has simplified the arrangements for financial support of young people leaving care. Previously, young people who left care at 16 could claim welfare benefits. Depending on their circumstances these might have been Income Support, Housing Benefit or income-based Job-Seekers Allowance. .

Current legislation places local authorities under a new statutory duty to support these care leavers and at the same time removes entitlement to these means-tested benefits from eligible and relevant children.

New measures are intended to ensure that vulnerable young people receive the care and help they need to grow into independence. Local authorities provide far higher levels of support than simply cash, especially when they work across Departments to fulfil their role as corporate parents. They will be able to ensure that young people in and leaving care are suitably accommodated, supported and advised according to their needs, rather than simply given money and obliged to fend for themselves.

Herefordshire Children's Services will become a rent guarantor we pay deposit AND first month's rent for Care experienced young people.

Assistance for further education and training courses

Financial assistance for further education and training courses can be paid from the service budget to Eligible Young people who are studying or training. This should be detailed as part of Pathway Plan. It should take into account the amount of learning agreement/bursary allowance the young person is in receipt of.

Assistance to such young people can be extensive and have a long term impact on the budget. As such staff should be mindful when requesting financial assistance that all other avenues of financial support have been exhausted

GCSE exam results or equivalent

1-2: a single payment of £25.00 regardless of grade.

3-5: a single payment of £50.00 regardless of grade.

6+: a single payment of £75 regardless of grade.

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Eligible Young People

Travel Costs

When an Eligible young person is engaged in a course of education or training additional finance may be accessed. Verification that the college or training provider do not supply finance for travel should first be obtained prior to a request for travel costs.

For those Eligible young people in full time education or training, an additional payment may be made to enable the purchase of a weekly travel pass. (Note: NUS cardholders get reduced prices).

For those on part time courses the amount will be the normal daily travel costs (day saver). If the part time hours exceed a weekly pass then a weekly pass should be provided.

It should be noted that the learning award or bursary is to be used for the purchase of a bus pass where the young person is in receipt of this.

Training

For those Eligible young people on training courses, a weekly allowance is paid directly to them by their training provider; therefore service does not pay income maintenance to the young person. (Unless the training allowance is less than £70.00 in which case the difference should be made up).

Books / equipment / essential clothing

An allowance of up to £100 per academic year **may** be paid towards books, equipment and essential clothing to Eligible young people who are attending a full time course of education or training.

A partial payment may be considered for those young people who are attending part time courses.

When requesting the above the social worker or personal advisor should be satisfied that the young person will attend the course and the equipment purchased is of a suitable type (check with course tutor where necessary). The spending must be supervised.

All costs will be met by service and where possible invoiced.

Childcare

Eligible young people who are caring for their own children may be helped with childcare costs for the duration of their course. This should be assessed by their social worker or personal advisor. The course provider should be approached in the first instance to assess what childcare support they provide.

Child Benefit

If an Eligible young person is in receipt of Child Benefit this should not be taken into consideration when making payments for education or training.



Eligible Young People

Financial assistance to Eligible young people in work: living in the community

Eligible young people who fulfil the criteria for financial assistance from service but who are in employment may still qualify for financial assistance from us. In an attempt to assist young people in work there are various options available to social workers & personal advisors:

- If the young person is working full time and; after paying a contribution to their utilities (£20.00 per week) has less than £80.00 to live on then an incentive payment to bring them up to a maximum £80.00 per week can be made.
- Pro rata assistance may be offered to those young people who take up part time employment.

Any financial assistance considered for a young person in work must have approval from a team manager.

Travel payments

A travel payment can be requested, for those young people who need to attend daily hospital appointments, visit family (where agreed in their Pathway Plan), attend job interviews etc. The payment should be, where possible in the form, of a travel/bus pass. The social worker/ personal advisor should have checked the detail of the request before referring to the budget holder.

Clothing allowances in Residential Care

For those young people who are 16+ and remain looked after in residential care, their clothing costs will be paid from the residential homes budget.

Clothing allowances in Foster Care

For those young people who are 16+ and remain looked after in foster care, their clothing costs will be met by their carers.

Clothing needs when moving into the community

Young people moving into the community should move from residential and foster care with adequate and suitable clothing. The following list is for guidance:

A winter coat
Several jumpers and sweatshirts
At least 2 pairs jeans
At least 2 skirts/dresses
Sufficient underwear
3 t-shirts
2 shirts/blouses
1 pair of trainers
1 pair of shoes



Eligible Young People

THIS IS THE BASIC MINIMUM (and should be checked prior to moving).

After living in the community for a period of 6 months and; if they are engaged in ETE, an Eligible young person may apply to service for a clothing allowance.

Eligible young people living in the community may apply for up to £200 per year clothing allowance. This will only be made when an assessment of need has been undertaken by the social worker/personal advisor and finance agreed by a team manager.

It should be noted that this allowance does not entitle young people to £200 for clothing, but is a needs led exercise and caution must prevail.

UASC, on arrival, can access a clothing allowance of £150.00 to enable the purchase of essential clothing

Social workers & PA's must not inform young people that there is a maximum spend but must inform young people that all clothing is based on a needs assessment.

All spending will be on a supervised basis.

The spending will be during the course of a year on a needs led basis. The year runs from April 1st to March 31st in line with the budget.

Interviews

Clothing for interviews, maternity etc. will come from this allowance.

Exceptional Clothing payments

In exceptional circumstances, where a young person has lost their clothing by fire or theft, the budget holder may approve a one off payment of up to £75 in any financial year. Consideration of such a request would need care as precedents could be set.

Maternity & Clothing

As there is a clothing allowance for Eligible young people there is no additional funding for maternity clothing for Eligible young women. These costs must be met from the £200 general clothing payment. A needs assessment must be undertaken prior to a request for funding, and must be agreed by a team manager. Allowances for the unborn child will be paid through the DWP 11 weeks prior to the birth.

Birthday, Christmas and other Cultural celebrations

Eligible young people who live in supported housing will receive their birthday gift from 16+. This will be £100 and should be a gift.

For those young people in residential care, they will receive their gifts from their home.

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Eligible Young People

For those young people in foster care they will receive their gifts from their foster carers.

For those young people living in supported housing at Christmas or at times of other cultural celebrations such as Eid, the social worker/personal advisor will purchase gifts (with advice) to the value of £100.

Child care equipment

A grant of up to £500 can be claimed from the DWP at 11 weeks prior to the due date of the baby. **This must be claimed in all cases.**

Where a young person is unable to access this money then consideration may be given to an allowance of **up to £250** for childcare equipment.

A suggested list of necessary items is:

Cot plus 3 sets of bedding

Sterilizer

Buggy & cover

Safety gate

Dental / Optical assistance

It should be noted that all looked after children in Herefordshire can access a NHS dentist at no cost

Eligible young people can use **form HG10** to entitle them to dental and optical care. The forms are available at 16+ and the social worker/PA should help the young person complete the form.

Emergency Support payments

Emergency payments are usually payments made to alleviate a particular crisis where a young person has no other access to finance. Such payments should only be made after careful consideration of the circumstances. Typically, some of the most vulnerable and demanding young people will be those in most need of emergency payments.

An emergency payment must only be made after consultation with a team manager when an agreed amount may be made on a one off basis.

A reasonable suggestion is that a young person is given £5 per day, or that they are given £5 worth of food until they are due their next income maintenance payment.

A weekend payment of cash should not exceed £15 and food parcels should always be given as an alternative to cash where possible. This is the preferred option.

It is important to remember that in circumstances where the emergency payment is for gas or electricity the spending must be supervised.

It is generally unacceptable to approve more than 2 emergency payments in any 6 month period. However such guidance should not be used as an acceptable course of action for a young person, nor should it be viewed as definitive if the young person is considered to be at extreme risk despite having received previous payments.

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Eligible Young People

It should be noted that no young person is entitled to 2 payments in a 6 month period and, as with all financial support the allowances are discretionary and based on an assessment of need and discussion with a team manager.

Gym membership

HALO will provide for all young people in Hereford. We will pay for those out of county

Debts / Fines

Service does not give financial assistance towards debts or fines incurred by young people.

Loans

As we are funded by the public purse, is not in a position to be able to loan money.

YOI

Young people in prison/ young offenders serving custodial sentences are not deemed to be living independently and therefore do not qualify for income maintenance.

However, service will support these young people financially by paying them an allowance of £20 per month. This is to enable them to buy toiletries, phone cards etc. payments must be by postal order and made payable to the Governor with the young person's details entered on the reverse.

On release

Eligible Young people who have been granted financial support whilst serving a custodial sentence may apply for a clothing grant on release, of up to £75, but only if detained for a period of 6 months or over. This must follow the supervised spending procedure and will be deducted from the maximum figure available

There are no other financial allowances made to young people whilst they are serving their sentence.

Damages

Damages to the property of a third party (landlord, supported accommodation provider, etc), resulting from malicious, careless or intentional action of a young person may lead to a situation where the young person needs to pay for said damage. In such circumstances, and where the third party is not pressing charges, or claiming against their insurance, and there is no other source of finance apart from the young person's Setting Up Home Allowance this is from where such payments must, unfortunately, be made.

Replacements for items of clothing removed by the police will not be agreed from the budget.



Relevant Young People

Driving Lessons

Eligible young people will need to be engaged in ETE, have purchased their own provisional licence & passed their theory test before lessons will be considered. 16+ will pay for up to 20 lessons at this point.

Definition

Under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, a Relevant Child is one who was previously an Eligible child but who is no longer a child in care, and is under the age of 18.

(Note: young people on Care Orders remain Eligible until such time as they reach age 18 or the Care Order is discharged)

Young people detained or in hospital

The Regulations provide for an additional category of Relevant children. These are young people who, on reaching 16 are detained in a remand centre, young offender institution, or any other institution ordered by the Court and, immediately prior, to being detained or in hospital having been looked after for 13 weeks since the age of 14. This extension applies even if the child is detained only overnight.

Young Parents

Relevant young people who are single parents can claim Income Support, (Universal Credit) but not Housing Benefit. For all other purposes of the Act they are considered Relevant.



Relevant Young People

Financial assistance

Income Maintenance

This is a payment made by service to “maintain a young person’s income”. Generally the payments mirror a similar equivalent to the rates paid by the DWP. The implementation of the payments is as described in the young persons Pathway Plan.

It should be noted that the income maintenance level can be “paid” in kind as well as cash, and for some young people food, fuel tokens etc can be used to replace cash.

From 2nd April 2024 the weekly income maintenance level is £70.00 per week.

How young people are paid

Ideally, all young people should be paid directly into a bank account.

If this is not possible, cash will be issued to the young person. Payments will be made on Tuesdays one week in arrears.

In circumstances where a young person is assessed as being extremely vulnerable, payments can be split between Monday and the following Thursday.

Accommodation costs

The accommodation costs of Relevant young people will, in all circumstances will be met by the 16+Service.

This is the case wherever the young person resides. Relevant young people are not entitled to Housing Benefit.

Where young people are in employment a contribution from the 16+ budget may be calculated on an individual basis with the budget holder.

Accommodation costs for Relevant young people will be paid directly from the 16+ budget to the provider.

The contribution from a young person towards utilities when living in supported accommodation is expected to be paid by the young person from their income maintenance. However, this money can be deducted at source and paid directly to the accommodation provider. This should be as described in the young persons’ Pathway Plan.

Supported Lodgings

Where a young person is accommodated with a Supported Lodgings providers, 16+will pay the costs of the accommodation. The young person is expected to pay a contribution to their keep, which is currently £20.00 per week, directly to the provider. This amount can however be deducted at source and paid directly to the provider by 16+



Relevant Young People

This contribution covers food costs. Where a young person wishes to do their own cooking then this contribution will be reduced. All such decisions should be written in to the Pathway Plan.

Setting up Home allowance

The Setting up Home allowance is a payment which is used to enable a young person to move to a more independent living situation, and can only be accessed at this time. This is when a young person secures the tenancy of a flat or house. The preferred option is for the accommodation to be provided by Housing Solutions, a Housing Association or a Voluntary Sector Housing Scheme. In some circumstances it may also include a private rented tenancy. In these circumstances extra care is required to ensure furniture can easily be removed when the tenancy is terminated. Private rented accommodation is never the preferred option.

The Setting up Home Allowance should only be requested when it is considered appropriate for the young person to move to a more independent form of accommodation. The accommodation should be in the name of the young person (the tenant) who is furnishing the property with their allowance.

Any joint tenancy/ accommodation should be jointly furnished and, as such, furnished with up to 50% of the Setting up Home Allowance. This will need to be assessed.

The Setting up Home allowance is set at a maximum discretionary £3000

All payments must be recorded and totalled on the young person's file. Where possible, goods should not be paid for by cash.

All expenditure from the Setting up Home allowance must be supervised by the social worker or personal advisor from 16+. Other colleagues or responsible persons may be involved in the spending of the allowance, but accountability for receipts/balancing/supervision remains with 16+staff.

When a young person first moves into supported accommodation they can access up to a maximum of £300 of their Setting up Home allowance. This allowance should be agreed only after an assessment of need had been undertaken and must be used for essential items only.

Young people in foster care and residential care cannot access their Setting up Home allowance.

Exceptional circumstances

In rare instances where a young person has suffered exceptional circumstances of material loss or, where their Setting Up Home Allowance has been used in an inappropriate manner by a professional, then a further discretionary payment may be considered but limited to the cost of a reasonable furniture package from one of the charitable agencies which provide essential furnishings and electrical goods.



Relevant Young People

The maximum figure in the financial year that the young person accesses their Setting up Home allowance is the maximum they can expect, even if the figure increases the following financial year.

Setting up Home Allowance

Suggested list of basic equipment

Items on this list are a priority and must be purchased before luxury items

Guidance re reasonable costs should be made to a team manager

Furniture

Double Bed
Wardrobe
Chest of drawers
Sofa
Easy chair
Dining table & chairs

Kitchen& household equipment

Cooker & fitting of
TV
Fridge / freezer
Cutlery
Crocery
Pans
Kettle
Iron
Ironing board
Bowl / drainer / bin etc
Vacuum cleaner
Washing machine & fitting of
Mop & bucket

Linens & soft furnishings

Carpets
Curtains & Curtain tracks
Duvet
Duvet sets x 2
Sheets x 2 pairs
Pillows x 2
Towels x 6
Tea towels x 6
Lamps & lampshades

Smoke alarms– must have – contact fire service

Contents insurance - must have x 1 year

Television licence - must have x 1 year

Delivery / removal costs – must have



Relevant Young People

Assistance for further education and training courses

Financial assistance for local further education and training courses may be paid from the 16+ budget to Relevant Young people who are studying or training. This should be detailed as part of their Pathway Plan.

Assistance to such young people can be extensive and have a long term impact on the budget. As such staff should be mindful when requesting financial assistance that all other avenues of financial support have been exhausted. In the first instance a learning allowance should be applied for.

It is the responsibility of the Relevant young person to furnish details of the course, the college and the hours. This evidence is expected every 12 weeks to enable financial enhancements to be made. Attendance should be monitored by the Social Worker/PA termly.

Travel costs

When a Relevant young person is engaged in a course of education or training additional finance may be accessed. Verification that the college or training provider do not supply finance for travel should first be obtained prior to a request for travel costs. For those young people in full time education or training an additional payment will be made to enable the purchase of a weekly travel pass. (Note: NUS card holders get a reduced price)

For those on part time courses the amount will be the normal daily travel costs, (day saver). If the part time course exceeds a weekly pass then a weekly pass should be provided. Where the young person is in receipt of a bursary or learners allowance then this should be used for transport costs.

Training

For those young people on training courses, a weekly allowance is paid directly to them by their training provider; therefore 16+ does not pay any income maintenance to the young person. (Unless the training allowance is less than £70.00 in which case the difference should be made up).

Incentive payments are at the same rate as for education incentives.

For those in receipt of the learning allowance/bursary this will not be paid.

Books / equipment / essential clothing

An allowance of up to £100 per academic year may be paid towards books, equipment and essential clothing to Relevant young people who are attending a full time course of education or training.



Relevant Young People

A partial payment may be considered for those young people who are attending part time courses.

When requesting the above the Personal advisor should be satisfied that the young person will attend the course and the equipment purchased is of a suitable type (check with course tutor where necessary). The spending must be supervised.

All costs will be met by 16+.

Childcare

Relevant young people who are caring for their children may be helped with childcare costs for the duration of their course. This figure will be dependant on needs assessment and be paid directly by 16+ to the provider. The course provider should be approached in the first instance to assess what childcare support they provide.

Child Benefit

If a Relevant young person is in receipt of child benefit this should not be taken into consideration when making either income maintenance payments or incentive payments for education or training.

Financial assistance to young people in work

Relevant young people who fulfil the criteria for financial assistance from 16+ but who are in employment may qualify for financial assistance from 16+ in an attempt to assist young people in work there are various options available to social workers/support workers:

- If the Relevant young person is working full time and, after paying a contribution to their utilities (£30.00 per week) has less than £80.00 to live on then an incentive payment to bring them up to £80.00 per week can be made.
- Pro rata assistance may be offered to those young people who take up part time employment

Any financial assistance considered for a young person in work must have approval from a team manager.

Gym membership

HALO will provide for all young people in Hereford. We will pay for those out of county

Travel payments

A travel payment may be requested, in exceptional circumstances, for those Relevant young people who need to attend daily hospital appointments, visit family (where agreed in their Pathway Plan), attend job interviews etc. The payment should be, where possible in the form, of a travel/bus pass. The social worker/personal advisor should have checked the detail of the request before referring to the budget holder.

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Relevant Young People

Clothing allowances

Relevant Young people may apply for up to £200 a year clothing allowance if they are engaged in ETE and living in the community and are not living with a foster carer or in a residential home. This payment will only be made when an assessment of need has been undertaken by the social worker/PA

This payment can only be accessed 6 months after the young person has moved into supported accommodation unless there are exceptional circumstances.
All payments must be supervised.

It should be noted that this allowance does not entitle young people to £200 for clothing, but is a needs led exercise and caution must prevail.

The spending will be during the course of a year on a needs led basis. The year runs from April 1st to March 31st in line with the budget.

Interviews

Clothing for interviews etc must now come from this allowance. It should be noted that some agencies provide finance for interview clothing and the social worker/personal advisor should attempt to access this finance in the first instance.

Exceptional Clothing payments

In exceptional circumstances where a Relevant young person has lost their clothing by fire or theft, the budget holder may approve a one off payment of up to £75 in any financial year. Consideration of such a request would need care as precedents could be set.

Maternity Clothing

As there is a clothing allowance for relevant young people there is no additional funding for maternity clothing for Relevant young women.

Birthday, Christmas and other Cultural celebrations

Birthday

Those Relevant young people who are living in the community will receive their birthday gift from 16+ this will be £100 and will preferably be a gift. This amount will be spent with guidance from the young person. Cash gifts should be only given in extreme circumstances.

Clothing

Young people living in the community may apply for up to £200 per year clothing allowance. This will only be made when an assessment of need has been undertaken by the social worker/personal advisor and finance agreed by a team manager.

Christmas and other religious celebrations

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Relevant Young People

For those Relevant young people in the community the social worker/ personal advisor at 16+ will buy gifts (with advice) up to a maximum of £100 It should be noted that gifts are preferential to cash.

Child care equipment

A grant of up to £500 can be claimed from the DWP at 11 weeks prior to the due date of the baby. **This must be claimed in all cases.**

Where a young person is unable to access this money then consideration a may be given to an allowance of up to £250 for child care equipment.

A suggested list of necessary items is:

Cot plus 3 sets of bedding

Sterilizer

Buggy & cover

Safety gate

Emergency payments

Emergency payments are usually payments made to alleviate a particular crisis where a young person has no other access to finance. Such payments must only be made after careful consideration of the circumstances. Typically, some of the most vulnerable and demanding young people will be those in most need of emergency payments.

An emergency payment must only be made after consultation with a team manager and an amount may be made on a one off basis. A reasonable suggestion is that a young person is given **£5 per day**, or that they are given **£5 worth of food per day**, until they are due their income maintenance. A weekend payment of cash should not exceed **£15** and food parcels should always be given as an alternative to cash where possible. This is the preferred option.

It is important to remember that in circumstances where the emergency payment is for gas or electricity then the spending must be supervised.

It is generally unacceptable to approve more than **2 emergency payments** in any **6 month** period. However such guidance should not be used as an acceptable course of action for a young person, nor should it be viewed as definitive if the young person is considered to be at extreme risk despite having received previous payments.

It should be noted that no young person is entitled to 2 payments in a 6 month period as with all financial support the allowances based on assessment of need.

Dental / optical assistance

It should be noted that all looked after children in Herefordshire can access an NHS dentist. Relevant young people can use **form HG10** to entitle them to dental and optical care. The forms are available at 16+ and the PA should help the young person complete the form.



Relevant Young People

YOI

Relevant young people in young offenders institutes serving custodial sentences are not deemed to be living independently and therefore do not qualify for income maintenance. However 16+ will support these young people financially by paying them an allowance of £20. This is to enable the purchase of toiletries, phone cards etc. payments must be by postal order and made payable to the Governor with the young person's details entered on the reverse.

There are no other financial allowances made to young people whilst they are serving their sentence.

On release

Relevant Young people who have been granted financial support whilst serving a custodial sentence may apply for a clothing grant on release, of up to £75 if detained for a period of over 6 months. This must follow the supervised spending procedure and will be deducted for the maximum figure available.

Debts / Fines

16+ will not give financial assistance towards debts or fines incurred by young people.

Loans

16+ as it is funded by the public purse, is not in a position to be able to loan money.

Damages

Damages to property of a third party (landlord, supported accommodation provider, etc), resulting from malicious, careless or intentional action of a young person may lead to a situation where the young person needs to pay for said damage. In such circumstances, and where the third party is not pressing charges, there is no other source of finance part from the young person's Setting up Home Allowance, from where such payments must, unfortunately, be made.

Replacements for Items of clothing removed by the police will not be agreed from the 16+ budget.

Driving Lessons

Relevant young people will need to be engaged in ETE, have purchased their own provisional licence & passed their theory test before lessons will be considered. 16+ will pay for 20 lessons at this point



Relevant Young People

Definition

Former Relevant young people are those young people who have reached 18, and who were Eligible or Relevant **prior to** becoming 18.

If someone is being helped with an agreed course of education or training, as detailed in their Pathway Plan, they remain a Former relevant child to the end of their agreed programme, even if that takes them past the age of 21 and up to age 25

Income maintenance (Universal Credits)

Former relevant young people need to make a claim for Universal Credit. Proof that this has been done must be seen by the PA, prior to any request for financial assistance from the 16+ budget (the claim should be made with the assistance of a PA and with liaison between 16+ and the JCP+).

An application for benefits generally takes up to 2-4 weeks to process and is paid in arrears. This will leave the young person without money for this period. In these circumstances a request may be made for income maintenance to be paid from the 16+ budget. This can be for a 2- 4 week period at the full rate of £70.00 per week, payable on a week commencing basis from the date of confirmation of “signing on”. If the period prior to receipt of payment from the JC+ is less than 2 weeks, then a proportional payment can be made at a rate of £5 per day.

This also applies to Former Relevant young people who lose their jobs and need to apply for benefit.

Delays in Benefit Agency (JC+) payments

Situations may arise where the young person has fulfilled all the requirements to make the appropriate claim but the JC+ has subsequently lost, postponed a decision or failed to receive necessary information. If this leads to a delay in payments being made and, it is not due to the actions of the young person, then a request may be made for a continuation of income maintenance at the full rate of £70.00. If this is approved the claim must be monitored on a weekly basis.

Higher Education post September 2024

Young people attending University **post September 2024** will be expected to claim all the bursaries and grants available to them through the Academic Institution of their choice. They should be supported in making these applications by their PA. Tuition fees will need to be paid by way of a Student Loan. The application for this loan should be supported by their PA



Former Relevant Young People

16+ will pay £2000 per year bursary, the instalments for which must be discussed with the young person and mapped in their Pathway Plan. All financial support must be agreed by a 16+ team manager.

Other Financial assistance

Former Relevant young people are able to claim Universal Credits including Housing Benefit and therefore should claim in the usual way.

Staying Put Scheme

Where a young person is Staying Put arrangement 16+ will seek to fund the placement through a mixture of Housing Benefit and financial support from the 16+ budget. Most young people will be eligible for Housing Benefit. For Staying Put see Staying Put leaflet. The young person is expected to pay a contribution to their keep, which is currently £20.00 per week, directly to the carer. This contribution covers food costs. Where a young person wishes to do their own cooking then this contribution will be reduced. All such decisions should be written in to the Pathway Plan.

Further Education and Benefits

If a Former Relevant young person is in further education, full time, post their 18th birthday but prior to their 19th birthday, they are entitled to Universal Credits including Housing Benefit. Their PA should help them to make this claim.

When a young person is in further education, full time, post their 19th birthday they are not entitled to Universal Credits including Housing Benefit. If such a young person chooses to go into education this must be agreed and detailed in their Pathway Plan, be for an approved course, and monitored and reviewed regularly. Agreement for funding must be gained from the budget holder prior to the onset of the course.

Clothing payments

Clothing payments are only made when a needs assessment has been undertaken and it is deemed that the young person is in great need. Decisions re financial assistance must be made in discussion with a 16+ team manager

Interview clothing - young people living in the community may apply for up to £100 per year clothing allowance. This will only be made when an assessment of need has been undertaken by the personal advisor and finance agreed by a team manager.

In exceptional circumstances, the budget holder may approve a payment for clothing, up to a maximum of £75 where the young person has lost their clothing by fire or theft or there are other exceptional circumstances

Replacements for Items of clothing removed by the police will not be agreed from the 16+ budget.

Generally Former Relevant young people are expected to clothe themselves from their Universal Credit or wages.



Former Relevant Young People

Birthday, Christmas and other Cultural Celebrations

All former relevant young people will receive:

18th x £150

19th and 20th X £50

21st x £150

Christmas and other Cultural celebrations payments will be assessed on a needs basis. Where it is assessed that the young person is “needy at Christmas /Eid“, etc., then gifts may be approved to the value of up to £30.

Cash will no longer be given to young people on these occasions. It is at the discretion of the personal advisor as to what this money should be spent on, gifts, food etc.

Gym membership

HALO will provide for all young people in Hereford. We will pay for those out of county

Setting up Home Allowance

The Setting up Home allowance is an allowance to enable a Former Relevant young person to move to an independent living situation. This is when a young person secures their own tenancy of a flat or house. The preferred option is for the accommodation to be provided by the Local Authority, Housing Association or Voluntary Sector Housing Scheme. In some circumstances it may also include a Private rented tenancy. In such circumstances extra care is required to ensure furniture can easily be removed when the tenancy is terminated.

The Setting up Home allowance should only be requested when it is considered appropriate for the young person to move to an independent form of accommodation. The accommodation should be in the name of the young person (the tenant) who is furnishing the property with their allowance.

Any joint tenancy should be jointly furnished and as such, furnished with up to 50% of the Setting up Home allowance

The Setting up Home allowance is set at a discretionary maximum £3000.

All payments must be recorded and totalled on the young person's file. Wherever possible goods should not be paid for in cash.

All cash expenditure from the Setting up Home Allowance must be supervised, by the personal advisor from 16+. Other colleagues or responsible persons may be involved in the spending of the allowance but accountability for receipts/balancing/supervision remains with the personal advisor



Former Relevant Young People

If in the first instance, a young person moves into supported accommodation, supported lodgings, then they can access up to 25% of their Setting up Home allowance. This allowance would be agreed only after an assessment of need.

When a young person moves into a tenancy, their own tenancy, they are able to access the bulk of their allowance. To ensure that it is the young person's tenancy 16+ must be provided with a copy of the tenancy agreement which must bear the name of the young person.

If the tenancy is a private let then the personal advisor must assess the need, and at most, 50% of the agreed Setting up Home allowance will be released to help furnish the accommodation. The allowance must be spent on items that the young person will be able to take with them when they move on. Items such as carpets should not be purchased for private lets.

In rare circumstances where a young person has suffered exceptional circumstances of material loss, or where their Setting Up Home allowance has been used in an inappropriate manner by a professional, then a further discretionary payment may be considered but limited to the cost of a reasonable furniture from one of the charitable agencies which provide essential furnishings and electrical goods.

The maximum figure in the financial year that the young person accesses their Setting up Home Allowance is the maximum they can expect, even if the figure increases the following financial year.



Former Relevant Young People

Setting up Home Allowance

Suggested list of basic equipment

Items on this list are a priority and must be purchased before luxury items such as sound equipment.

Furniture

Bed

Wardrobe

Chest of drawers

Sofa

Easy chair

Dining table & chairs

Kitchen & household equipment

Cooker & fitting – must have

Fridge / freezer

Cutlery

Crockery

Pans

Kettle

Iron

Ironing board

Bowl / drainer / bin etc

Vacuum cleaner

Washing machine & fitting - must have

Mop & bucket

Linens & soft furnishings

Carpets

Curtains

Curtain tracks

Duvet

Duvet sets x 2

Sheets x 2

Pillows x 2

Towels x 6

Tea towels x 6

Lamps & lampshades

Delivery / removal costs – must have

Contents insurance - must have x 1 year

Television licence - must have x 1 year

Smoke Alarms – must have – fire service

16+

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Former Relevant Young People

Incentive payments for further education and training courses.

Books / equipment / essential clothing

An allowance of up to £100 per academic year may be paid towards books, equipment and essential clothing to relevant young people who are attending a full time course of education or training.

A partial payment may be considered for those young people who are attending part time courses.

When requesting the above the personal advisor should be satisfied that the young person will attend the course and the equipment purchased is of a suitable type (check with course tutor where necessary). The spending should be supervised.

Where possible all spending should be invoiced to 16+

Childcare

Former Relevant young people who are caring for their children may be helped with childcare costs for the duration of their course. Payments will be made directly to the provider from 16+. This should be assessed by their PA. The course provider should be approached in the first instance to assess what childcare support they provide.

Child Benefit

If a Former relevant young person is in receipt of child benefit this should not be taken into consideration when making either income maintenance payments or incentive payments for education or training.

Financial assistance to young people in work

Former relevant young people who fulfil the criteria for financial assistance from 16+ but who are in employment may qualify for financial assistance from 16+ in an attempt to assist young people in work there are various options available to support workers:

- If the young person is working full time and after making a contribution to their utilities (£20.00 per week) has less than £80.00 to live on then an Incentive payment to bring them up to £80.00 per week can be made.
- Pro rata assistance may be offered to those young people who take up part time employment.

Any financial assistance considered for a young person in work must have approval from a team manager.



Former Relevant Young People

Travel payments

A travel payment can be requested, in exceptional circumstances, for those young people who need to attend daily hospital appointments, visit family (where agreed in their Pathway Plan), attend job interviews etc. The payment should be, where possible in the form, of a travel/bus pass. The personal advisor should have checked the detail of the request before referring to the budget holder.

Child care equipment

A grant of up to £500 can be claimed from the Benefits Agency at 11 weeks prior to the due date of the baby. This **must be** claimed in all cases.

Where a young person is unable to access this money then consideration may be given to an allowance of up to £250 for childcare equipment.

A suggested list of necessary items is:

Cot plus 3 sets of bedding

Sterilizer

Buggy & cover

Safety gate

Emergency Support payments

Emergency payments are usually payments made to alleviate a particular crisis where a young person has no other access to finance. Such payments should only be made after careful consideration of the circumstances. Typically, some of the most vulnerable and demanding young people will be those in most need of emergency payments.

An emergency payment should only be made after consultation with a team manager and an amount may be made on a one off basis. A reasonable suggestion is that a young person is given £5 per day, or that they are given £5 worth of food until they are due their income maintenance. A weekend payment of cash should not exceed £15 and food parcels should always be given as an alternative to cash where possible. This is the preferred option.

It is important to remember that in circumstances where the emergency payment is for gas or electricity then the spending **MUST** be supervised.

It is generally unacceptable to approve more than 2 emergency payments in any 6 month period. However such guidance should not be used as an acceptable course of action for a young person, nor should it be viewed as definitive if the young person is considered to be at extreme risk despite having received previous payments.

It should be noted that no young person is **ENTITLED** to 2 payments in a 6 month period as with all financial support the allowances based on assessment of need.

Dental / optical assistance

Former Relevant young people can use form HC1 to entitle them to dental and optical care. The forms are available at 16+ and the PA should help the young person complete the form. In addition and where necessary, additional funding from 16+ can be sought to a maximum of £100.

16+

Guide to Financial Assistance



Former Relevant Young People

Debts / Fines

16+ will not give financial assistance towards debts or fines incurred by young people.

Loans

16+ as it is funded by the public purse, is not in a position to be able to loan money.

Prison

Former Relevant Young people in prison serving custodial sentences are not deemed to be living independently and therefore do not qualify for income maintenance.

There are no other financial allowances made to young people whilst they are serving their sentence.

On release

Former Relevant Young people who have been granted financial support whilst serving a custodial sentence may apply for a clothing grant on release, of up to £75, if detained for a period of over 6 months. This must follow the supervised spending procedure and will be deducted from the maximum figure available. The young person must be under the age of 21 on release.

Damages

Damages to the property of a third party (landlord, supported accommodation provider, etc), resulting from malicious, careless or intentional action of a young person may lead to a situation where the young person needs to pay for said damage. In such circumstances, and where the third party is not pressing charges, and there is no other source of financial support this cost will be taken from the young person's Setting Up Home allowance, from where such payments must, unfortunately, be made.

Bonds

A Bond may be required by the accommodation provider to cover breakages etc. This is to be paid by way of the Guarantor scheme and should be written into their Pathway Plan. However, an undertaking must be taken from the provider to ensure that the Bond is returned to 16+ and not to the young person on termination of the tenancy.

Rent in advance

Rent in advance can be paid. This money will be accessed through the Guarantor Scheme and should be written into the young person's Pathway Plan. As with bonds there must be an undertaking from the provider to ensure that the rent is returned to 16+ and not the young person.

Driving Lessons

Former Relevant young people will need to be engaged in ETE, have purchased their own provisional licence & passed their theory test before lessons will be considered. 16+ will pay for 20 lessons at this point.



Qualifying Young people

Definition

A “person qualifying for advice and assistance”, as defined in Section 24 of the Children Act 1989.

A person who is at least 16 but under 21, and;

- With respect to whom a Special Guardianship Order is in force or was in force by age 18.
- At any time after reaching the age of 16, but while still a child, but is no longer looked after, was accommodated or fostered.

Young people who have been Privately Fostered qualify for advice and assistance if they were privately fostered for 13 weeks and were looked after on their 16th birthday.

Financial Assistance

Powers to assist with payments for education and training to these young people can be made under Sections 24A & 24B of the Children Act 1989 up to the age of 24 where young people are taking further or higher education courses.

Qualifying young people are able to claim Universal Credits and Housing benefit and therefore should claim in the usual way.



Young People who Return Home

Young people who return home

Young people who, who were accommodated S20, and are living with a parent, or someone who has parental responsibility for them, for a period of 6 months or more will become Qualifying after this time.

Until the young person has been at home for 6 months or more then they remain Relevant dependant upon their legal status.

Young people at home on Care Orders

If a young person is on a Care Order and living at home with family, they remain Eligible Children under the Act.

If they are on a Care Order, they will remain Eligible until the Care Order is discharged, either by the Court or by the young person reaching age 18.

If a young person is living at home, the person with parental responsibility is expected to claim child benefit, if the young person is in continuing education. This should be used to support the child.

Income maintenance is not paid to those young people who live at home. However 16+ will pay the equivalent of pocket money to the young person.

Education and training incentives may also be applied for when a young person lives at home. All the normal procedures apply when requesting this allowance.

Young people who return home will be paid pocket money as per their age.



Appendix C: young people aged over 18

Young people who have achieved the age of 21 years and have still not moved into an independent living situation will need to have an agreement re access to their Setting up Home Allowances signed off in their file the Service Manager.

It should be noted that whilst an agreement may be made in principle, if the young person does not access the grant before the age of 24 this will need to be agreed by Service

This generally applies to young people at University or in the Armed Forces.

Young people detained in hospital.

Eligible and Relevant young people who are detained in hospital should be support paid an allowance as per the guidance for pocket money. This is determined annually and will be processed by the PA. This gives the young person access to funds to enable them to purchase items other than essential items such as food etc. As the young person is not living independently they will not receive income maintenance.

Former Relevant and Qualifying young people will be able to claim Benefits during this period.



The Role of the Social Worker or Personal advisor

For **Eligible** and **Relevant** young people under 18 the **Social Worker** will be involved in the overall support offered to a young person, including the preparation and review of the Pathway Plan. The **Personal advisor** will contribute to this plan. The Pathway plan will detail the financial support that will be provided to the young person.

Former Relevant young people will have an allocated Personal advisor who will be responsible for the Pathway plan.

The Social worker will undertake an assessment of the young person's financial situation and on-going financial support needs.

In respect of financial responsibilities the Social Worker/ Personal advisor should ensure they:

- Make every effort to help the young person to open and manage a bank/building society account and, as far as possible, channel financial assistance through it.
- Agree methods of payments, types of payments and times of payments with the relevant team manager and with the young person.
- Maintain records of all financial assistance using the Spending Authorisation Form (SAF).
- Manage access to any Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA).
- Ensure that the package of financial support for the young person is one which best meets their needs while also recognising that the Local Authority operates within limited resources and restricted budgets.
- All payments over and above Income Maintenance (IM) and Accommodation Costs are discretionary and not an entitlement



Appendix B: young people aged under 18

Type of young person	Social worker	Personal advisor	Income maintenance	Clothing	ETE support: FE	Birthday money	Xmas/ Eid money	SUHA	Pathway plan	Advice & Assist
Eligible young person	X	X	X Post school leaving age if in community Not if in residential or foster care	X Not if in residential or foster care	X FE & HE	X Not if in residential or foster care	X Not if in residential or foster care	X Not if in residential or foster care	X	X
Relevant young person		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eligible and relevant Young person at home	X	X	X Pocket money £10 per week		X			Post 6 months at home the yp becomes a Qualifying young person	X	X
Young people in custody	X	X	X Monthly payment of £20	X on release post 6 month sentence	X	X	X	X	X	X
LASPO+ Guide to Financial Assistance	X	X If CIC for 13 weeks	£10 per week pocket money	X If CIC for 13 weeks	X If CIC for 13 weeks	X If CIC for 13 weeks	X If CIC for 13 weeks	X If CIC for 13 weeks	X If CIC for 13 weeks	X



Appendix B: young people aged under 18

Type of young person	Social worker	Support worker	Income maintenance	Clothing	ETE support: HE	Birthday money	Xmas/Eid money	SUHA	Pathway plan	Advice & assist
Former Relevant Young person		X			X	X	X If assessed as "needy" at this time	X	X	X
Qualifying Young person										X
SGO Young person					X					X
RO young person					X					X
Young person in custody post 18		X			X	X		X	X	X

16+

Guide to Financial Assistance



Appendix B: young people aged under 18

16+
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