



# **A guide to money matters**

## **for looked after young people aged 16 and 17 living in semi independent or independent accommodation**

This leaflet is designed to help you understand the financial support you can receive from Hillingdon Children's Services if you are a looked after young person aged 16 or 17 and you are living in semi independent or independent accommodation. Some of the financial support is dependent on where you live; other support will be based on an assessment of your needs. It is important to talk to your social worker/personal adviser (PA) about the allowances that may be available to you and what your responsibilities are when you are receiving them.



## Accommodation costs

- We will provide and pay for your accommodation up until your 18th birthday. On your 18th birthday you will either move to shared accommodation, YMCA or remain with your foster family under a 'Staying Put' arrangement this will have been discussed with you before you turn 18 as part of your pathway plan.
- From the age of 18, you will be responsible for your rent, this may mean claiming housing benefit or using the wages from your full time job. This is will be discussed with you during your pathway planning meetings.
- If it is agreed, following assessment that you are able to move into a privately rented property with your own tenancy agreement, the rent level must be within the Local Housing Allowance for that area, this must be discussed with your social worker/PA before the tenancy agreement is authorised.

## Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance

- You are entitled to a Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance payment of a maximum of £57.90 a week until you turn 18. This amount may be lower, dependent on where you live and what services and utilities are provided to you at your placement as specified below:



Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£57.90
Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs – semi-independent accommodation	£47.52
Young person is provided with utilities and food	£37.52
Young person placed in emergency accommodation – bed and breakfast, no cooking facilities – breakfast only	£67.90
Young person placed in bed and breakfast with half board – bed, breakfast and evening meal	£37.52

## Education, training and employment equipment

- Depending on an assessment of your needs, we can provide a grant of up to £150 per year to cover your equipment needs; like stationery or books. There is also a one-off computer/laptop grant of up to £420 (including VAT) for those in full time further education at Level 1 or ESOL Level 3 and above. You will need to speak to your social worker/PA to apply for this.
- If you start a new job and need specific clothing or equipment, you may be able to access a commencing work grant of up to £75. Speak to your social worker/PA for more details.
- If you are aged 16 to 19 and in full time education or unpaid training course you may be eligible for the government's 16-19 bursary. This is a weekly payment, administered and paid by your school/college or training provider. Your social worker/PA will help you speak to school/college or training provider about this.

## Clothing allowance

- You are entitled to a £10 per week clothing allowance. Your placement plan or pathway plan will set out the arrangements for receiving this money.

## Birthday and Christmas/festival allowance

- If you are in touch with your social worker and actively engaged in the pathway planning process you are entitled to a £75 gift or contribution towards the cost of celebrations for your 17th birthday and a £50 per year gift or contribution towards the cost of celebrations at Christmas/other festival. The Christmas/festival contribution can be provided at a point suitable to your faith. Speak to your social worker/PA about when is best for you.

## Travel

- We will support you to get a 16-17 Oyster Card. If you live outside of the Hillingdon area, a travel card for the area you live will be provided, subject to an assessment of need.

- A travel allowance can be provided if you are in contact with your social worker/PA and engaging in the pathway planning process.

## Contact allowance

- If you have family, or significant people (i.e extended family, former foster carers and significant friends) outside of Hillingdon travel costs can be provided to enable you to remain in contact with them following an assessment of your needs. The use and frequency of travel should be laid out in your pathway plan.

## Social activities and leisure

- We may pay for membership of a hobby or club of up to £7.50 per week to make sure you are able to take part in a sport, hobby or leisure activity. Speak to your social worker/PA for more information.

## Documents

- We will purchase one passport and one birth certificate for you prior to you turning 21.
- Dependant on an assessment of need we can provide a travel document for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- We can contribute 50% of the cost of nationality and citizenship process for young people who gain citizenship.

## Introduction to driving

- If you have been in employment, education or training for at least three months we can provide an allowance to cover the cost of a provisional driving licence, one theory test, one practical test and five, one hour driving lessons as long as you match the cost of the five lessons and you don't have any driving convictions. This will be provided following an assessment of affordability to own and drive a motor vehicle.

## Emergency payments

- We may provide a maximum of three voucher payments/food parcels in a 12 month period. Each will be based on an assessment of need and not exceed a value of £10 per payment.



## Exceptional needs

- We may provide funds for exceptional needs or in cases of emergency as a one off payment. Your social worker/PA will discuss this with you should the need arise.









*All allowances are subject to assessment of need.*


Entitlements	Comments	Amount
Placement and accommodation costs		
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance		
Education/training/employment costs		
16-19 Vulnerable Young Person's Bursary		
Clothing allowance		
Travel		
Key documents		
Birthday and Christmas/festival allowances		
Social activities and leisure		
Introduction to driving		
Other payments and allowances (A)		
Other payments and allowances (B)		



## Useful websites

The following websites provide useful information about benefits and education support.

-  [www.support4learning.org.uk](http://www.support4learning.org.uk)  
Information about education grants, loans and student support.
-  [www.gov.uk/student-finance/overview](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance/overview)  
Information on all aspects of student funding
-  [www.direct.gov.uk/MoneyTaxAndBenefits](http://www.direct.gov.uk/MoneyTaxAndBenefits)  
Information on Tax and Benefits
-  [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)  
Information on Benefits
-  [www.surestart.gov.uk](http://www.surestart.gov.uk)  
Information about the Sure Start initiative
-  [www.direct.gov.uk/CareToLearn](http://www.direct.gov.uk/CareToLearn)  
Information about the Care to Learn initiative
-  [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
-  0845 850 1166 (Info line)  
Information about the HC1 (SC) and HC1 form.

When applying for benefits it is important to seek expert advice regarding entitlements and any conditions attached to particular benefits. A useful source of information is the Citizens Advice Bureau  [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk).

