



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Leeds Children's Social Work Service

**Transition to
Adulthood
(Leaving Care)
Financial Policy
2016 - 2017**

16-17

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Transition to Adulthood (Leaving Care) Financial Guidance 2016-2017

Aged 16 and 17

Notes and Implementation Issues

1. All allowances should be based on an assessment of need and be set out in the young person's Pathway Plan. 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.
2. By the age of 16 all young people should have a National Insurance Number and relevant identity documents with photographic evidence to ensure they can register for housing, bank accounts and claim welfare benefits.
3. Ensure all young people have a bank account and where possible pay all allowances to young people through their account.
4. It is a statutory requirement that allowances are index-linked, reviewed annually and are aligned with annual welfare benefit increases.
5. Depending on an assessment of need, Qualifying Children may be entitled to the same level of support as Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children.

Persons Qualifying for Advice and Assistance (aged 16 to 21, and under certain circumstances aged under 25) [Section 24]

- **Young people aged at least 16, and under 21 who were subject to a special guardianship order and were looked after before the making of that order**
 - **Young people who were previously subject to a private fostering arrangement**
 - **Young people who successfully returned home for six months (aged 16/17) and were previously eligible and/or relevant**
 - **Young people who were looked after for less than 13 weeks between the age of 14 to 18, but were looked after for at least 24 hours aged 16 and 17**
- Young people aged 16, and under 21 who were looked after in a series of pre-planned short breaks.**
6. Young people (aged 16 & 17) living in fostering or residential placements will be covered by the allowances set out in the financial policy applying to foster care and residential care.
 7. Children looked after who are also unaccompanied asylum seeking children are entitled to the same allowances as any other child looked after (depending on need). Allowances to Former Relevant Children who were asylum seeking children may be affected and limited as a result of their immigration status.

8. Certain groups of children looked after and care leavers aged 16 & 17 are eligible to claim welfare benefits (lone parents and sick and disabled young people), where young people are eligible to claim, support should be provided to maximise income. Where young people aged 16 & 17 are in receipt of welfare benefits a number of the leaving care allowances cease.
9. Wherever possible, VAT should be reclaimed on all purchases. A VAT receipt is required for all purchases made with a purchase card. When purchasing with all other payment methods a receipt with a VAT number is required for items up to £250.00 and a full VAT receipt is required for items over £250.00.
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11. The headings used throughout this document are taken from the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Guidance and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance and Regulations 2010, revised 2015.

Placement key:

I	Independent Living (responsible for utilities)
SI	Semi independent (lives independently but not responsible for utilities)
SL	Supported Lodgings
H	Hospital
C	<p>Custody</p> <p>Eligible and Relevant Children who are 'detained' The Care Leavers (England) Regulations Section 23A (3) paragraph (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people who receive a custodial sentence and are subject to a Section 31 Care Order remain looked after and on reaching age 16 become Eligible. • Young people, who are Accommodated under Section 20, remain looked after during a remand to custody but cease to be looked after on receiving a custodial sentence. • Young people who have been looked after for 13 weeks from the age of 14 up to the point of receiving a custodial sentence before their 16th birthday become Relevant on reaching their 16th birthday. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Young Offender Institution (YOI). o Secure Training Centre (STC). o Secure Children's Home (SCH). <p>The Pathway Plan and Detention Placement Plan/Placement Plan for young people who are detained should set out the provision of all financial allowances.</p>

Looked After Children and those deemed Eligible and Relevant (Aged 16 and 17) who are living in semi-independent and independent placements and Eligible and Relevant placed with parents/living at home.

Eligible children: [paragraph 19(2)(b) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 and Regulation 40 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010]

- An eligible child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who is looked after and has been looked after for at least 13 weeks after the age of 14. [Can become an eligible child at any point from 16th to 18th birthday as long as they have completed 13 weeks] [must complete 24 hours looked after age 16/17]
- The 13 weeks can be continuous period or a series of episodes.
- In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.

Section 31 'Care Orders'

Eligible Children living in a semi-independent or independent placements (and those who have not been looked after for 13 weeks)

Section 20 'Accommodated'

Eligible Children living in a semi-independent or independent placements (and those who have not been looked after for 13 weeks)

Relevant children: [Section 23A(2)]

- A relevant child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who was an 'eligible' child' but is no longer looked after.
- Additional relevant children:
 - Detained, or in hospital prior to 16th birthday, and
 - Looked after for at least 13 weeks after age 14 and looked after at point of being detained or entering hospital.
- In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.
- A child who has lived with someone who has parental responsibility or a residence order for a continuous period of 6 months or more, and has ceased to be looked after (whether that period commenced before or after they ceased to be looked after) is not deemed a Relevant child (but is deemed a qualifying child).
 - If the above arrangement breaks down and the child ceases to live with the person concerned, the child becomes a relevant child.

Section 23A (2)

Relevant Children - young people previously looked after living in a semi-independent or independent setting – Relevant children Eligible Children Placed at Home (S31) / Relevant Children Living at Home (S23 A (2))

Allowance category

Accommodation

Placement and accommodation costs to be met in full for young people up to the age of 18. Where young people are moving into private sector accommodation the rent level must be within the Local Housing Allowance for that area.

Where the rent is set above the LHA level, approval for the accommodation must be sought from the Care Leavers Finance Panel. The young person's pathway plan should set out who is responsible for the rent shortfall when the young person reaches the age of 18 and claims LHA.

From 1st January 2013, all LHA claimants have their LHA rate reviewed every April. Rates will no longer be reviewed on the anniversary of the claim. This means that:

The maximum weekly Local Housing Allowance rates for Leeds from 1st April 2016 are:

- shared accommodation £62.48
- one bedroom accommodation £100.05

The maximum weekly Local Housing Allowance rates for Tyersal (Bradford and South Dales) from 1st April 2016 are:

- shared accommodation £58.26
- one bedroom accommodation £80.55

Current rates for different areas can be checked via the Rent Service website, or via <http://www.direct.gov.uk> and follow the links to Local Housing Allowance and individual council areas.

From April 2011 absolute caps on Local Housing Allowance were introduced for each property size within the private sector, £250.00 per week being the cap for a one bedroom property.

Independent accommodation should not be approved for any young person where the rent charged by a landlord is higher than the Local Housing Allowance for that given area. Young people leaving care are exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) up to the age of 22; therefore they are eligible to rent accommodation up to the one- bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate. From January 2012 the SAR has been extended from the age of 25 to the age of 35.

Deposits, rent in advance and guarantors

If a young person is in need of deposits and/or rent in advance then the worker must contact Housing Options (L.C.C) to establish if they are able to provide assistance. Housing Options may be able to assist out of authority. If the young person cannot access assistance through this avenue then Leeds Children's Social Work Service can provide assistance subject to approval by the Care Leaver Finance Panel. Arrangements for the return of the deposit to the Local Authority should be set out in the young person's pathway plan.

Leeds Children's Social Work Service can act as a guarantor for 16 & 17 year olds where a guarantor is required and where no one in the young person's family can take on the role. Where Leeds has acted as a guarantor, it needs to be made clear that Leeds cannot continue to act as a guarantor post aged 18 and confirmation needs to be sought to confirm that the young person can remain post 18 if they wish. It also needs to be agreed, prior to entering into the tenancy agreement, that a new tenancy will be created when the young person reaches the age of 18. This will transfer the tenancy and all financial responsibilities to the young person. Leeds Children's Social Work Service will pay for the new tenancy agreement.

Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance

When a young person first moves into independent or semi-independent accommodation they are entitled to an extra payment of either £50.00 or £60.00, depending on the type of accommodation.

In addition when an UASC initially arrives to Leeds and is placed in independent or semi-independent accommodation, they will also be entitled an extra payment of either £50.00 or £60.00, depending on the type of accommodation.

Independent	£60.00
Semi-Independent	£50.00
Supported Lodgings	£40.00
Hospital	Young people who are detained in hospital will be provided with a personal allowance of £15.00 per week
Custody	Where a young person is 'detained' in hospital or custody, the majority of their financial allowances will be suspended. Financial support for young people who are detained in Young Offenders Institutes is governed by the rules of the particular establishment they are detained in. In general, young people are expected to undertake education or training and are provided with pocket money for engaging in these activities. Additionally, they will often be provided with clothing, or are able to bring clothing with them. As such they will not be provided with any allowances while detained. In exceptional circumstances where education, training or work opportunities are not available or appropriate and no pocket money or remuneration scheme exists, young people will be provided with a £20.00 per month allowance.

Employment earnings thresholds and deductions

I	Young people who are working will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (16 & 17 year olds) until their wage reaches a given threshold.
SI	If special equipment is required, in the first instance the employer may provide this. If not, and depending on an assessment of need, it will be provided by Leeds Children's Social Work Service from the Further Education/Training/Employment Grant (See Further Education, Training and Employment Equipment Grant Section).
SL	<p>Young people undertaking part time or full time employment can earn up to £100.00 per week (NET) and continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (£60.00) and the Leeds Children's Social Work Service Education Top Up payment (if entitled).</p> <p>Earnings over £100.00 per week (NET) will result in the Leeds Children's Social Work Service Education Top Up payment ceasing (if entitled). Earnings of over £200.00 per week (NET) will result in the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance also ceasing.</p> <p>Full and part time employment top-ups cease when a young person reaches the age of eighteen. If young people do not provide proof of earnings the basic allowance (depending on their accommodation) will be provided for 16 & 17 year olds.</p>
C H	Not applicable

Clothing Allowance

I, SI, SL	<p>Depending on an assessment of need, a clothing allowance of up to £400.00 per year is available. Single payments should not exceed £150.00.</p> <p>In situations where young people have medical or special need requirements the single payment limit can be waived subject to an assessment of need.</p> <p>The arrangements for providing and spending the clothing allowance should be set out in the young person's pathway plan and be dependent on an assessment of need.</p> <p>Personal advisers, social workers and young people should always return receipts.</p>
H	Depending on an assessment of need; a clothing allowance of £150.00 per year, plus £150.00 on release/leaving.
C	<p>Additionally, and in exceptional circumstances a clothing allowance of £150.00 per year will be provided during the young person's detention (16 & 17 year olds). On release young people will have access to their 'Setting Up Home Allowance' and, where a young person has been detained for more than six months, and dependent on an assessment of need, a clothing allowance payment of up to £150.00 will be considered.</p> <p>The maximum clothing allowance payment for a 16 and 17 year old that is detained is £150.00 per year, plus £150.00 on release.</p>

Newly Looked after- Initial Clothing Allowance

I, SI, SL, H	In circumstances where young people become looked after following their 16th birthday they will be provided with an Initial Clothing Allowance of up to £200.00.
C	Not applicable.

17 and 18th birthday allowance- £120.00

I SI SL	<p>Depending on an assessment of need the birthday allowance can be used to purchase a gift or paid directly to the young person. Alternatively, the allowance can be given to a previous foster carer/keyworker or personal adviser to purchase a gift/gifts or contribute towards the cost of a celebration. All young people should receive a card up to a maximum of £2.00.</p> <p>The Birthday Allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with Leeds Children's Social Work Service and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.</p>
H	<p>Depending on an assessment of need the birthday allowance can be used to purchase a gift or paid directly to the young person. Alternatively, the allowance can be given to a previous foster carer/keyworker or personal adviser to purchase a gift or contribute towards the cost of a celebration. All young people should receive a card up to a maximum of £2.00. This should be provided in consultation with the hospital to ensure their regulations are adhered to and the young person is not placed in a vulnerable financial position.</p> <p>The Birthday Allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with Leeds Children's Social Work Service and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.</p>
C	All young people should receive a card up to a maximum of £2.00

Christmas/festival allowance- £120.00

I SI SL	<p>Depending on an assessment of the need the Christmas/festival allowance can be used to purchase a gift or can be paid directly to the young person. Alternatively, the allowance can be given to a previous foster carer/keyworker or personal adviser to purchase a gift/gifts or contribute towards the cost of a celebration. All young people should receive a card up to a maximum of £2.00.</p> <p>The Christmas/festival allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with Leeds Children's Social Work Service and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.</p>
H	<p>Depending on an assessment of the need the Christmas/festival allowance can be used to purchase a gift or can be paid directly to the young person. Alternatively, the allowance can be given to a previous foster carer/keyworker or personal adviser to purchase a gift or contribute towards the cost of a celebration. This should be provided in consultation with the hospital to ensure their regulations are adhered to and the young person is not placed in a vulnerable financial position. All young people should receive a card up to a maximum of £2.00.</p> <p>The Christmas/festival allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with Leeds Children's Social Work Service and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.</p>
C	All young people should receive a card up to a maximum of £2.00

Social Activities and Leisure, Passport to Leisure. (Leeds Breeze Card and Junior Bodyline Card).

I SI SL H	<p>Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Leeds Children's Social Work Service will contribute towards the cost of a social activity. This would need to be considered by the Care Leavers Finance Panel.</p> <p>Leeds Children's Social Work Service will assist young care leavers to obtain a local council Passport to Leisure (Leeds Breeze Card and Junior Bodyline Card). Young people should be encouraged and assisted to explore the leisure facilities and leisure centres that accept the local passport to leisure pass (Leeds Breeze Card and Junior Bodyline Card).</p>
C	Not applicable

Holiday Allowance- £492.88 (£246.44x2)

I SI SL	<p>The Holiday Allowance is provided to young people for a holiday with their previous foster carer/s, children's home or residential boarding school. If a young person requests support for a holiday that does not come under the above criteria, this will need to be considered by the Care Leaver Finance Panel.</p> <p>All arrangements for the use of the Holiday Allowance should be set out in the young person's pathway plan, together with agreement as to how the allowance should be paid and to whom.</p>
H C	Not applicable

Further education, training and employment equipment grant- Up to £400.00

I SI SL	<p>Young people who are undertaking full time (in excess of 12 hours) further education courses, apprenticeships or are engaged in employment are entitled to a grant of up to £400.00 per year.</p> <p>The Grant is available for equipment, software, stationary, books, interview needs (i.e. clothing travel/ costs) and educational visits related to a course of further education. This should be based upon an assessment of need and set out in the young person's pathway plan.</p> <p>Where appropriate and depending on an assessment of need Leeds Children's Social Work Service will consider funding extra tuition and related expenses in order to assist young people with education goals.</p> <p>Based on an assessment of need, young people who require interview clothing/shoes can receive a one off payment of up to £75.00. This should not be given as cash and should be guided spending with the personal advisor/social worker.</p>
H C	Not applicable

Computer Grant, further and higher education- up to £300.00

I SI SL	<p>Depending on an assessment of need young people in full time (in excess of 12 hours) Further Education and Higher Education will be provided with a one off Computer Grant of up to £300.00. This allowance includes the provision of a home/student software package (word, excel, PowerPoint etc).</p> <p>The Grant is provided as a one off payment between the end of school year 11 (age 16) and ceasing to be a former relevant child at the age of 21 or beyond.</p> <p>Subject to an assessment of need and approval by the Care Leavers Finance Panel a second computer grant can be provided.</p>
H C	Not applicable

EET (Education, Employment, Training) Top-Up payments

Leeds Children's Social Work Service provides EET Top-Up payments to encourage care leavers to undertake education, training or employment opportunities and/or in order to help young people prepare to access opportunities.

I SI	<p>Young people who are undertaking a full time (minimum of 12 hours direct contact time) education/training course or an agreed activity in preparation for education, training or employment will receive a £20.00 per week Leeds EET Top Up payment. Young people who are undertaking a part time (less than 12 hours of direct contact time) education/training course or an agreed activity in preparation for education, training or employment will receive a £10.00 per week Leeds EET Top-Up payment. The activity being undertaken must be approved by a team manager and be set out in the young person's pathway plan.</p> <p>The incentive payments are subject to young people maintaining 85% attendance and having satisfactory reports from the college. Personal advisers will be required to liaise with colleges on a 6 weekly basis to ensure satisfactory attendance and progress. In practice this will often be at the end of the half-term. If the attendance falls below 85% or the level of attendance cannot be verified due to non-compliance from the young person, then the EET Top-Up payment will have to be paid weekly upon confirmation of 85% attendance. Once this has been maintained for a month payments can be reinstated as above.</p> <p>Earnings from employment are not taken into account.</p> <p>If a young person is doing a work-based apprenticeship then an EET Top Up payment can be made. In addition, an extra amount can be paid to cover rent/Council Tax charges once any benefit entitlement is established (i.e. the young person has to have made a complete claim for any benefits that they may be entitled to before a top up is considered). Any extra payments that Leeds Children's Social Services make would be disregarded for benefit purposes.</p> <p>Young people who are in receipt of the 16 – 19 bursary will also receive the Leeds EET Top Up payment.</p> <p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (not eligible for the 16 – 19 bursary) who are undertaking full time education courses or unpaid training courses will receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and a Leeds Children's Social Work Service EET Top-Up payment of £20.00 (full time) or £10.00 (part time) per week.</p> <p>The EET Top-Up payment can be paid over a vacation period in circumstances where a young person, a) hasn't completed a course and will return to the education/training course at the end of the vacation, b) where they have been accepted on to a course and will be commencing the course in the next academic year.</p>
H C SL	Not applicable

Vulnerable Young Person's Bursary.

Young People aged between 16 & 19 who are in care, care leavers or claiming income support or getting both ESA and DLA/PIP will be guaranteed an education/training bursary of £1,200.00 spread over the academic year, for those attending college or sixth form (payments of £40.00 per week over a 30 week teaching year).

Key Documents

<p>I SI SL H C</p>	<p>Leeds Children’s Social Work Service will purchase a provisional driving license for ID purposes.</p> <p>Based on an assessment of need, Leeds Children’s Social Work Service will purchase a passport (including the check and send facility) and 1 birth certificate for each young person. Young people are eligible for one passport renewal or 1 passport application between the ages of 16 to 21/25. Up to £115.00, including passport photographs.</p> <p>Leeds Children’s Social Work Service will purchase a travel document for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. The amount is dependent on what document is required- up to £382 for a certificate of travel.</p> <p>Leeds Children’s Social Work Service will cover the full cost of the nationality and citizenship process for young people who gain citizenship (£936.00 for 16 & 17 year olds - £1236.00 for young people aged 18 and above).</p>
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Introduction to driving

<p>I SI SL</p>	<p>Depending on an assessment of need, Leeds Children’s Social Work Service will provide the funding for one provisional driving licence (see key documents section), one theory test, one practical test and the cost of 10 (1 hour) motor car driving lessons to introduce young people to driving.</p> <p>The allowance is conditional on the young person having the funds for 10 lessons (£250.00) or having paid for 10 lessons. Once the young person has evidenced this Leeds Social Work Service can fund a further 10 lessons up to £250.00.</p> <p>As an alternative, if the young person would like to do an intensive course and has evidenced that they have the funds to cover the remainder of the costs, Leeds Social work Service can provide a lump sum amount of £250.00. Where possible a VAT receipt should be obtained.</p> <p>This is only available to young people who have been continuously engaged in education, training or employment for 3 months and do not have any driving convictions. Depending on circumstances, lone parents and sick and disabled young people may be exempt from the 3 months in education, training or employment condition.</p> <p>Additionally, Leeds Children’s Social Work Service will pay for one practical driving test. This is dependent on an approved driving school recommending that the young person is ready to take the test.</p> <p>This can also be provided for young people in residential care and foster care.</p> <p>The Introduction to Driving Allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with Leeds Children’s Social Work Service and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.</p>
<p>H C</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

Cultural, religious and special needs

I SI SL H C	Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Leeds Children's Social Work Service will fund services in relation to a young person's cultural, religious, special needs.
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Child care costs

I SI SL	<p>Lone parents, who wish to return to education, start a traineeship/apprenticeship or take up employment opportunities, will be assisted to identify funds from universal services to cover or contribute to child care costs. In the first instance, the Care to Learn Fund, individual colleges, Sure Start, HMRC (through working tax credits), the Job Centres Flexible Support Fund and other universal services must be approached as sources of potential child care funding. Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need, with all options having been explored without success, Leeds Children's Social Work Service may contribute towards the costs of child care. The young person needs to provide proof that all avenues have been explored.</p> <p>The Care to Learn Fund provides financial support to assist young parents under the age of 20 to undertake education.</p> <p>From April 2009 the majority of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who have applied for asylum and have an initial decision such as Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave can apply for a Care to Learn Fund grant.</p>
C H	Not applicable

Child Maternity/paternity Grant

I SI SL H	<p>Leeds Children's Social Work Service will provide a one- off £200.00 maternity grant. This is available from 8 weeks before the baby is due. This is intended to assist young people with preparing for the birth of their first baby and should be used to purchase essential equipment. The PA/support worker must accompany the young person to obtain the required items and obtain a receipt.</p> <p>If a lone parent, eligible and relevant young people are normally entitled to claim Income Support, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit from the birth of their baby (please seek advice). Once benefit entitlement has been established the young person may be able to claim the Sure Start Maternity Grant of £500.00 which is available from the DWP. This is only available for the first child or if there is no other child living with them. Asylum seeking lone parents who are not eligible to claim the Sure Start Maternity Grant will be provided with the equivalent amount for their first child.</p> <p>A voucher or gift to the value of £20.00 is available when a young person has a new baby.</p> <p>Subject to the above criteria, the grant and the voucher/gift are available for all new parents (whether male or female). This would be based on an assessment of need and if both parents were eligible it would only be paid once.</p>
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	This is also available to young people in foster care/residential care.
C	If a young person is in custody when they give birth and the baby remains with them until release, they are entitled to the grant once they are released. Please see box above for criteria.

Personal Luggage- up to £35.00

I SI SL SP	Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between placements must have appropriate personal luggage. At least two items of appropriate personal luggage.
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Emergency Payments for those in independent and semi-independent accommodation

Principles:

- All avenues for DWP support should be explored and exhausted initially, for example hardship payments/short term benefit advance.
- Each office will maintain a stock of First Day travel vouchers (off peak).
- Where a young person requests emergency payments their Pathway Plan will require immediate amendment to include an agreed piece of work to address budgeting. The initial stages of this work should be completed within the first two weeks of the request being made.
- Where a young person requests an emergency payment their PA/SW should explore education/training options and refer to Connexions (if not already done so).

When a young person presents for assistance with emergency payments the following Steps should be followed:

Step A:

A young person can access this from any office (whichever may be closer to where they live) though the assistance has to be authorised by the appropriate team manager.

Assistance would cover the immediate need (1-2 days). Support can be given for food, utilities and travel (day ticket). The amount is set at £10.00 per week, for gas and electricity and the young person can receive this 3 times in a 6 month period. The PA/SW must add the credit to the young person's card/key. Cash payments can only be made up to a maximum of £5.00 and the young person can only receive 3 in a 6 month period.

If the need is likely to go beyond 1-2 days then an ASDA delivery can be arranged (up to 2 weeks-worth of food). This can be delivered to the young person's home or to the (convenient) office. Only 2 parcels can be provided in a 6 month period.

Step B:

If, after the above provision has been made, the young person is still in need then a referral to a food bank would be completed and ticket issued, if appropriate. Refer to the list of food banks in your area.

Step C:

If the young person is assessed as still being in need then the social worker or personal adviser should support the young person with an application to the Local Welfare Support Scheme or give them the claim number.

The final option, after all of the above steps are exhausted would be referral to St George's Crypt (food bank), or other provider of food, though only if the young person is not placed at risk by attending.

When a young person presents in an emergency on the first occasion, the above steps should be followed. If a young person returns on a separate occasion, please consult the flow chart.

This emergency payments policy should be followed in order to support young people with everyday living expenses (food/gas/electric/bus travel) in an emergency.

Exceptional Needs payments are not for emergency, everyday living expenses.

Subsistence

I SI SL H	Depending on an assessment of need personal advisers can purchase refreshments to enable a keywork session to be inclusive. The subsistence allowance is for the young person's refreshments, refreshments for staff should be processed through the standard staff subsistence route and subject to the standard subsistence conditions. Young people that attend Care Leaver's Social Groups will be entitled to a payment of £4.00 for each time they attend.
C	Not applicable

Consultation with Young People

I SI SL H C	Expenses and remuneration related to enabling young people to participate in consultation exercises will be provided following an assessment of need.
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Exceptional Needs Payments

I SI SL H C	Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Leeds Children's Social Work Service may provide funds for exceptional needs grants and one off payments. Examples of exceptional needs include costs associated with family bereavement. Any requests for exceptional needs payments that are not required immediately need to be authorised by the Care Leavers Finance Panel.
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Setting up Home Allowance

Setting Up Home Allowance – Payment Process

The amount of the Setting Up Home Allowance available to individual young people is set by the budget for the year the Setting Up Home Allowance is first used. For example, the amount available to young people who first access their Setting up Home Allowance during 2016-2017 is the rate prevailing in that year (£2290.50).

The rate set for those first accessing their Setting Up Home Allowance in:

- 2015-2016 is £2250.50
- 2014-2015 is £2250.50
- 2013-2014 is £2130.50.
- 2012-2013 is £1662.50.

This amount is the total they can access up until the point they cease to be a Former Relevant young person.

In most instances, the Setting Up Home Allowance will be used by the time that the young person reaches aged 21, or once they have completed an education programme extending beyond aged 21 (whether that be further or higher education).

In situations where part, or all of the Setting Up Home Allowance is unused by the age of 21 (or the completion of the post 21 education programme) a list of requirements should be included in the final Pathway Plan. The Pathway Plan should set out a timescale for obtaining the items and this information should be noted in the case closure letter that is sent to the young person. The Setting Up Home Allowance cannot be accessed after the young person's 25th birthday.

If a young person returns to the authority between the ages of 21 and 25 and wish to access the remainder of their Setting up Home Allowance, they are entitled to do so without having to be engaged in training or education.

The Setting Up Home Allowance should always be used to purchase household items and the initial spending should be for the young person's first permanent home or for items that are transferable (i.e. furniture/white goods).

Young people must be supported by staff to purchase items via guided spending. Young people should not be given money to purchase items on their own. VAT must be reclaimed on all purchases. Original receipts must be kept by Leeds Children's Social Work Service.

Depending on an assessment of need, an additional Setting Up Home Allowance (or part Allowance) may be available; this would be subject to agreement of the Care Leaver Finance Panel and alternative options, such as charity grants should be considered.

£145.50 Not Transferable	For TV licence. (First licence paid for by Leeds Children's Social Work Service and subsequent ones paid for by young person).
£1800.00	To be spent on items for equipping accommodation. The allowance will always be spent collaboratively between the personal adviser and young person. Original receipts should be retained by social workers/personal adviser for audit purposes, reclaiming VAT and in case defective items need to be returned.
Plus	
Up to £80.00 Not Transferable	One years contents insurance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is provided for the first year of independent living age 18 plus (Check level of cover required)
Up to £45.00 Not Transferable	Health and safety pack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two smoke detectors, one carbon monoxide detector, door security chain, chub lock, fire blanket and first aid kit.
Up to £100.00 Not Transferable	Decorating grant – This must only be awarded based on an assessment of need and is subject to the condition of the property. This should not be used to decorate temporary accommodation or those with a short-hold tenancy if the décor is appropriate (unless the Landlord stipulates that it is the tenant's responsibility to decorate). If required this grant can be provided in addition to decorating vouchers from Local Authority Housing Departments/Housing Associations.
£120.00: £60.00 for 1st Winter £60.00 for 2nd Winter Not Transferable	For the first and second winter of independent living (where they are responsible for utility bills) young people will be provided with a £60.00 utility allowance. This should be paid in instalments of £20.00 for the months December, January and February and should be paid directly to the utility/ies provider or added to the young person payment card/key.
Separate Budget	Removal and transport costs based on an assessment of need.
Separate Budget	Cooker and washing machine connection cost.
Up To £2290.50	Total Amount

Qualifying children and young people over 16

Section 24 (advice and assistance) of the Children Act 1989 [as amended by the Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 Guidance and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010] covers 'Qualifying Young People'.

Depending on an assessment of need, Leeds Children's Social Work Service has a responsibility to provide practical and financial support and assistance to Qualifying Children and Young People over 16. Individual young people may be given practical support and financial assistance (Children Act 1989 (Section 24A (5)) and Section 24B) with priority being given to support relating to education, training and employment opportunities. Leaving care social workers/personal advisers should assist young people to maximise financial support available from employment, benefits and education allowances and opportunities.

Leeds Children's Social Work Service has a duty to provide vacation accommodation, or the means to secure it, to any care leaver qualifying for advice and assistance, who is between the ages of 16 and 25, who is in higher education or in residential further education and who needs it.

Depending on an assessment of need Qualifying Children and Young People may require, and should be provided with the same level of service as Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant young people. All financial decisions will have to be approved by the Care Leavers Finance Panel.

See Volume 3 Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance – Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 – Para 2.6 to 2.11 Page 10 & 11. Para 8.43 to 8.51 Page 67 to 69.

Young people deemed Qualifying Children and Young People over 16

- Young people aged 16 & 17 who are subject to a Special Guardianship Order
- Young people aged 18 to 21, or up to 25 who were previously subject to a Special Guardianship Order.
 - The young person must have been looked after immediately prior to the making of the Special Guardianship Order.
- Young people who were privately fostered
- Young people who were looked after for less than 13 weeks between their 14th and 18th birthdays, but for at least 24 hours aged 16 or 17.
- Young people who returned home and are subject to a Section 31 Care Order and were looked after for a minimum of 13 weeks (age 14 or 15) become an 'Eligible' child on reaching their 16th birthday. If they live at home successfully for 6 months or more and their care order is revoked they become Qualifying on the revocation of their order.
 - If the arrangement at home breaks down before the age of 18, they automatically become 'Relevant' children.
- Young people aged 16 or 17 who are deemed 'Eligible' and are Accommodated under Section 20 cease to be looked after and become 'Relevant' children on returning to parents or those with parental responsibility. After a stable and settled six month period as 'Relevant' children this group become Qualifying.
 - If the arrangement at home breaks down before the age of 18, they automatically revert to being 'Relevant' children.
- Young people subject to respite care arrangements do not become Eligible or Relevant even where their period of being looked after exceeds 13 weeks between their 14th and 18th birthday. The respite periods must all be planned periods with no individual period exceeding 4 weeks. This group are deemed Qualifying.

Special Guardianship Orders– Qualifying Children and Young People over 16

Responsibility for providing a Leaving Care Services

The local authority responsible for the provision of leaving and aftercare services for the first three years after the making of the Special Guardianship Order is the local authority that last looked after the young person. The Special Guardianship Order can be made at any age, however the child/young person must have been looked after prior to the Special Guardianship Order being granted and must be over 16 when requesting leaving and aftercare services. If financial support is being provided, the responsibility remains with the 'originating' local authority until the young person has lived in the 'host' local authority for three years and no financial support has been provided for at least three years. Thereafter, in general the local authority where the young person (previously subject to a special guardianship order) is living is deemed the responsible authority.

Financial support will be provided as agreed in the original SGO Support Plan. Any variation of that support should be agreed within a review of the SGO Support Plan.

Vacation support will be provided to the level of the Local Housing Allowance within the area that the young person is residing during the vacation period. This level of support will be provided to young people who were subject to a Special Guardianship Order and are subsequently deemed a Qualifying Child and Young Person and become the responsibility of Leeds Children's Social Work Service.

Please refer to the Special Guardianship policy and Special Guardianship leaflets for further details.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Eligible and relevant children

Key Guidance

Social Workers and Personal Advisers must ensure an UASC has applied to extend their leave to remain and their application is submitted to the UK Border Agency before their leave expires. In the majority of UASC cases, the leave expires at the age of 17½, or, on the 18th birthday. If this task is completed and submitted within time the young person is eligible to claim means tested benefits on their 18th birthday.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) are covered by the Children Act 1989 and the provisions of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Guidance and Regulations 2010 [16 & 17 year olds] and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance 2010 and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 [16 to 21/25 year olds] in exactly the same way as other children in this country. However they will also have an immigration status: applying for asylum, accepted as a refugee, granted exceptional leave to remain [divided into a) Humanitarian Protection and b) Discretionary Leave], indefinite leave to remain or refused leave to remain which will need to be taken into account when undertaking their Leaving Care Assessment of Need and developing their subsequent Pathway Plan.

It should be noted that from September 2005, applicants who are granted refugee status may not automatically receive indefinite leave to remain. Applicants granted refugee status will be given limited leave to remain for five year periods. At the end of each five year period their circumstances will be reviewed and if the conditions in their home country have improved they may be expected to return.

Most Eligible and Relevant unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will receive the same entitlements as any other young person. However, there may be some differences in entitlement, which will need to be acknowledged in their Pathway Plan. For example, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are applying for asylum and are awaiting an initial decision, or have been granted exceptional leave to remain are not entitled to the education/training bursary.

When developing Pathway Plans with Eligible and Relevant (UASC) particular attention must be paid to their immigration status and contingency plans developed which take account of their possible status options at the of age 18.

Pathway Planning Guidance

When undertaking the Leaving Care Assessment of Need with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at age fifteen and, subsequently developing their Pathway Plans, personal advisers must take account of young people's immigration status and how this may limit access to public funds and services at age eighteen. Every effort must be made to clarify young people's immigration status as soon as possible in order to develop clear plans for their future e.g. ensure that extensions to Discretionary Leave and Humanitarian Protection are applied for within timescale i.e. six to eight weeks before expiry.

Pathway Plans should explore how an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child's immigration status may limit future support and financial opportunities. Pathway Plans for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children should always incorporate a dual plan approach. For example, Pathway Plans should highlight what support would be given if the young person gains indefinite leave to remain, and an alternative Plan should highlight what support would be available should they be granted limited leave to remain or are refused altogether and receive removal directions. Pathway Plans should also explore the 'Voluntary Assisted Returns programme' and the implications of staying in the UK without leave to remain.

Summary

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) making the transition from care to adulthood have both a leaving care status and an asylum and immigration status in addition to their placement and accommodation, education, health, financial and religious and cultural needs.

Planning transition to adulthood for UASC is a particularly complex process that needs to address young people's care needs in the context of wider asylum and immigration legislation and how this changes over time. Pathway planning to support a UASC's transition to adulthood should cover all areas that would be addressed within all young people's plans as well as any additional needs arising from their specific refugee and immigration issues.

The majority of young people making the transition from care to independence, will, with support and assistance develop a settled life in the U.K. Whilst this may be the case for some UASC this may not apply to others due to the outcomes of their asylum claim. Planning may have to be based around short term achievable goals whilst entitlement to remain in the UK is being determined.

Planning for a return home may be difficult but care and pathway plans should include contingencies for durable and best interest plans for UASC and young people who are likely to have to return to their country of origin. It will be essential that arrangements for returns should be managed in a sensitive and consistent way.

Transition to adulthood planning and pathway planning for UASC who do not have permanent immigration status should initially take a dual or triple planning perspective which over time should be refined as the final outcome becomes known:

- Longer term perspective plan in the United Kingdom should the young person be granted Refugee Status or Indefinite Leave to Remain.
- A transitional plan during the period of uncertainty when they are in the United Kingdom without permanent immigration status.
- A return to their country of origin at any appropriate point or at the end of the process should that be necessary due to their immigration status.

Claiming asylum can be a complex process and social workers/personal advisers should work with the young person's legal representative and the dedicated case owner at the UK Border Agency to ensure that the young person understands the process of claiming asylum, the possible outcomes and to provide them with necessary support.

Pathway plans should always consider the implications for the young person if their application to extend their leave to remain or their appeal against refusal of that application is dismissed. In such circumstances the person will be expected to make plans for return to the country of origin or face an enforced removal by the UK Border Agency. Pathway plans should highlight the risks associated with young people disappearing ('going underground') to avoid returning and the difficulties associated with returns that occur quickly with little or no planning. Liaison with the UKBA case owner may be necessary to manage these risks.

Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

It is important that Personal Advisors and others working with the young people understand that their immigration status may affect their eligibility to leaving care support after they turn 18 because of the provisions of Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

This is especially the case for any of the young people who are "unlawfully present in the UK" – which includes those who have been refused asylum and have either not applied for an extension of further Discretionary Leave to remain or have applied for an extension but that application and any appeal has been rejected. Liaison with the legal adviser may be required to establish whether Schedule 3 applies in a particular case, as refusal of asylum does not necessarily indicate that a young person is 'unlawfully present in the UK'.

In these cases, the young people can generally only be supported to the extent necessary to avoid a breach of their human rights (under the European Convention of Human Rights).

Capital and Trust Funds Other Than Criminal Injuries Compensation Award Payments

If young people have funds of their own, such as legacies, trust funds or money in savings and bank accounts the following guidance should apply. Leeds Children's Social Work Service, as recommended in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Guidance (page 62, para 3) will treat capital according to the Department for Work and Pensions regulations governing Income Support (the Income Support (IS) (General) Regulations 1987). This sets out a scale whereby capital up to £6000.00 is disregarded and someone with capital assets of £16,000.00 or more is not entitled to assistance. Where a young person's capital exceeds £6000.00 but is not more than £16,000.00 an amount corresponding to the excess is treated as a weekly contribution against council support. For every £250.00 of capital above £6000.00 young people will lose £1.00 (Tariff Income) per week of their Leeds Children's Social Work Service allowance. Housing Benefit regulations sets out a similar scale whereby capital up to £6000.00 is disregarded and someone with capital assets of £16,000.00 or more is not entitled to assistance.

The details will be recorded in the Pathway Plan. Where a young person has been awarded a sum in compensation for a criminal injury, Leeds Children's Social Work Service is required to disregard that capital entirely.

Placement with Parents – Children Reaching the Age of 16 Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 and associated Guidance sets out that the Responsible Local Authority is required to assess and meeting the needs, including the financial needs of an 'Eligible' (and 'Relevant') child.

Where a child was placed with a parent/s prior to their 16th birthday a review of the financial support for the child and parent/s must take place when the child becomes an 'Eligible' child. The review must be undertaken within the framework of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need.

In circumstances where, following an assessment of suitability, it is deemed appropriate to place a child with a parent/s at the age of 16 or 17, the assessment of financial support to the child and parent should be completed prior to the placement being made and should be set out in the Care/Pathway Plan and Placement Plan.

When a young person is in full time education/training

Her Majesties Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Guidance sets out that where a child aged 16 or 17 is resident with a parent and is undertaking full-time education or training, the parent will normally be eligible for Child Benefit. As a result of being eligible for child benefit, the parent should also be eligible for Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit (depending on income), and any benefits arising from a child's disability. Where a child is placed with a parent, a transitional payment equivalent to the level of Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit/Working Tax Credit that a parent would be entitled to will be provided for a period of up to six weeks. On average it takes four to six weeks to establish a Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit claim.

Transitional payment example:

Child Benefit equivalent -	£20.70
Child Tax Credit:	
Family element -	£10.48
Child element -	£53.46
Total Paid – 6 weeks maximum	£84.64

For a parent to be eligible for Tax Credits no part of the child's accommodation or maintenance costs should be met by the local authority, as such Children's Services should set a date to cease any transitional payments. The date to cease financial support should be set at a point between four and six weeks after a placement with a parent or a return home.

Child Benefit can continue, or be reinstated if a child is residing with a parent on a regular basis, generally on at least 2 nights per week from Monday to Sunday or is home for a complete week.

When a young person is not in full time education/training

There is an obligation on the local authority to provide financial assistance to young people leaving care that would normally fall on parents, and/or on the welfare benefit system. Being an Eligible or Relevant child not engaged in education or training (regardless of them being placed at home) disqualifies parents from welfare benefits/Tax Credits/Universal Credit

In situations where a young person aged 16 & 17 is placed with a parent or returns home to live with a parent and is not engaged in any education or training they should be provided with the standard Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance of £60.00 per week (2016-2017).

When developing a Care/Pathway Plan for a young person placed with parent/s or living with a parent/s who is not engaged in education or training, consideration should be given to whether the young person should provide a percentage of their Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance to their

parent/s as a contribution to living costs. The level of the contribution should be set out in the young person's Care/Pathway Plan. It may be appropriate that the young person retain a certain amount and provide a contribution to the parent.

In circumstances where a contribution has been set and the young person does not make the necessary contribution, the amount set can be deducted from the young person's Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and paid directly to the parent/s.

In circumstances where the child is living with a parent/s and the Care/Pathway Plan is focused on revoking the Care Order, or Interim Care Order, both the assessment of, and financial support should be based on assisting the transition to parental financial support and for the child to enter/resume or continue education or training.

The primary aim of leaving care financial support for 16 & 17 year olds is to enable young people to prepare for independent living and develop money management skills; as such, each young person should have an assessment of their individual leaving care financial needs and any subsequent allowance provided to those not in education or training should be provided to the young person in a manner that assists with the development of these skills and a return to education or training.

Additional Financial Support in line with the supplementary allowances detailed in this policy

In order to avoid any inequalities within the family, by the provision of leaving care support, an assessment must be undertaken regarding the need for supplementary allowances, i.e. those in addition to the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance. For example, where there are children in the family who have not been looked after, it may be inappropriate to provide any allowances other than the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance if these allowances create disparities, inequalities and potentially undermine parenting responsibilities.

The provision of a leaving care birthday allowance for one child would potentially create an inequality if other family members do not receive a similar allowance, as such, the leaving care birthday allowance should not be provided and parents therefore take responsibility for the level of all birthday allowances to their children. The assessment of, and the reason behind this decision should be set out in the young person's Care/Pathway Plan.

Leeds Children's Social Work Service will assist young care leavers to obtain a local council Passport to Leisure (Leeds Breeze Card and Junior Bodyline Card). Young people should be encouraged and assisted to explore the leisure facilities and leisure centres that accept the local passport to leisure pass (Leeds Breeze Card and Junior Bodyline Card). This should only be considered providing it does not cause inequalities within the family.

If it is considered that the young person requires financial assistance in addition to the Maintenance Allowance, in line with the allowances set out in this policy, the personal advisor or social worker would be expected to fully explore all benefit options for the young person and their parents (if appropriate) and other routes for funding. Any financial requests will need to go to the Care Leavers Finance panel.

In circumstances where a care leaver aged 16 or 17 is placed/living with a parent who is in receipt of a welfare benefit/tax credit/universal credit, the difference between the young person's Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and the level of the welfare benefit/tax credits/universal credit that the parent would be entitled to in respect of that child, (if they were not an Eligible or Relevant child) can be provided directly to the parent/s. This would only apply to a child not engaged in education or training.

Care Order Revocations and Ceasing Financial Allowances

Where an 'Eligible' child has lived with a person with parental responsibility for at least 6 months and they cease to be looked after, due to the revocation of the Care Order, or Interim Care Order they become a 'Qualifying' child (a Qualifying child is a 16 to 21/24 year old subject to Section 24 of the Children Act 1989). The 6 month period living with parents that is required to be deemed a Qualifying child, can include time both prior to and after the revocation of the Care Order.

Welfare benefit legislation relating to 'Qualifying' children sets out that both parents and children are entitled to welfare benefits/tax credits/universal credit in their own right.

'Qualifying' child status does not have any impact on either the child, or parents benefit or tax credit entitlements. Once a child is deemed a 'Qualifying' child and following a financial re-assessment of their financial needs, the majority, if not all, of the leaving care financial support being provided should cease. The primary responsibility for meeting a 'Qualifying' child's financial needs rests with the parent/s.

The detailed financial and practical arrangements to support the child and parent should be set out in the Care/Pathway Plan and Placement Plan. The level of the leaving care financial support should be based on an assessment of need and set out in the Care/Pathway Plan.