



Young People Leaving Care Service for Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Transition to Adulthood (Leaving Care) Financial Policy and Guidance 2025- 2026

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SECTION 1	Eligible and Relevant Young People Aged 16 and 17	
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This section applies to Children Looked After and those deemed Eligible and Relevant (Aged 16 and 17) who are living in semi-independent and independent placements i.e.

- Section 31 'Care Orders' – Eligible children (and those who have not been looked after for 13 weeks)
- Section 20 'Accommodated' – Eligible children (and those who have not been looked after for 13 weeks)
- Young people previously looked after – Relevant children - Section 23A.

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

1.2	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA)	
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This is provided to young people who are studying, undertaking unpaid training, looking for employment, or taking part in voluntary work. Young people who are undertaking paid training will get the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider. In situations where, young people are not involved in any education, training, employment, or voluntary activity and where possible, the allowance could be paid at, or in association with meeting their social worker, leaving care personal adviser and engaging with supporting services at a positive level. Leaving Care maintenance allowance can be paid directly to the young person through the Cashless system or directly into their bank. No direct cash payment to the young person will be provided.

Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Supported Accommodation Adjustments

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

bills. This money will be saved for them by the Trust and given as an additional lump sum when they reach 18.

Young people in Belinda Ferrison House or a similar accommodation (semi supported accommodation self-contained training flats) where they have to pay for their own utilities and receive leaving care maintenance allowance at £72.90 will still have a £10 per week savings contribution made to their amenities or Share foundation account until the age of 18 in line with NCT Children in Care savings policy.

Young people who are undertaking low paid employment, see link to earnings, will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance until they earn a given threshold, see page 13. This allowance is provided up to the age of 18 and can be paid via BACS, depending on an assessment of need and the requirements and circumstances of individual young people.

Sick and disabled young people and lone parents (aged 16 & 17) are able to claim means tested benefits and therefore they do not receive the majority of the 16 & 17 year-old Leaving Care Maintenance Allowances as their welfare benefits cover are provided to cover these areas.

The Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Leisure Allowance will cease for these groups. Where young people are living in semi-independent placements the following LCMA weekly rates will apply depending on the type and level of support/services provided.

Coverage	Basic Maintenance Element
Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£72.90
Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation	£62.90
Young person is provided with utilities and food	£57.90
Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation - no cooking facilities – Breakfast only	£72.90
Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation with half board – Bed, Breakfast and Evening Meal	£57.90

1.3	The Provision of Allowances and Unused and Uncollected Allowances	
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The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and related DWP guidance on benefit entitlement highlights that care leavers/ young people aged 16 and 17 living independently should be no worse off when provided with leaving care allowances than they were when they were entitled to means tested benefits (Therefore 16 & 17 year olds should be provided with a allowance of £72.90per week (minus £10 contribution made to their amenities or Share foundation account) (equivalent to basic JSA rate) which is provided to cover all of their needs.

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

1.4	Lone Parents Entitled to Universal Credit	£500 Sure Start Maternity Grant
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Transfer to Universal Credit from the Birth of the Baby. Due to having an entitlement to Universal Credit & Child Benefit and when the lone parent is in receipt of Child Benefit and Universal Credit, the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.

It should be noted that a claim for Universal Credit/Child Benefit will entitle the young person to submit a claim for 'Sure Start' Maternity Grant', this is paid for the first/oldest child and provides £500.00 for essential items associated with having a new child.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sure-start-maternity-grant-claim-form>

All other entitlements are listed in the Local Offer.

1.5	Sick or Disabled Young People Universal Credit	
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Transfer to welfare benefits at age 16 or when entitlement to Universal Credit (on limited capacity for work grounds) commences.

Due to having an entitlement to Universal Credit and when the young person is in receipt of Universal Credit, the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Leisure Allowance will cease. All other allowances remain.

1.6	Young People Detained in Youth Offending Institutions, Secure Training Centres, Secure Hospitals, in Hospital	£5/week or £100 one off clothing grant if remuneration/clothing provision not available £100 clothing grant upon release
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If young people have received a custodial sentence, they will still be eligible to support as a care leaver. Regular visits will ensure an assessment of needs is completed and will identify what financial support the young person is eligible for during their sentence. Whilst detained they will be expected to take up and engage fully with training and education programmes and earn money where possible.

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

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

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

How the allowances are provided and in what form, should be based on an assessment of need, the rules of the institution and a risk assessment of the young person's situation and clearly recorded in the pathway plan.

Different types of Secure Estate (YOI) provisions have pocket money and clothing allowance remuneration schemes linked to engagement in education, training, or positive activities. The provision of a Leaving Care Maintenance Allowances should not create a disincentive for a young person to engage in such activities. At the point of remand or sentence (custody) the placement planning meeting/planning meeting/review inline with the Beyond Custody framework, these should set out what allowances will be provided by the institution and if these will be topped up by the Children's Trust to the levels set out above.

Upon being sentenced, allowances continue for Eligible and Relevant Children subject to the remuneration provided by the establishment as mentioned above. Upon being sentenced, allowances only continue for Qualifying Children subject to an assessment of need, their parental situation, as well as the remuneration provided by the establishment as set out above.

Young people who are detained in an NHS provision or contracted out NHS service provision will be provided with the above allowances based on an assessment of need and risk (until Universal Credit is in Payment (3 weeks), how these are provided should be set out in the individual placement plan and pathway plan.

Where family members are in receipt of welfare benefits, prison visits and contact can be facilitated by the 'Assisted Prison Visits Scheme' allowances provided by the DWP. Travel costs for family members not in receipt of welfare benefits may be provided following an assessment of need and an assessment of the frequency.

[For Detailed Guidance Please See Appendix C.](#)

1.7	Young People Placed with Parents / Living with Parents	
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Looked after children (Eligible) placed at home under placement with parent regulations and care leavers (Relevant) living at home:

If the young person is engaged in education or training and was living with the parent prior to the age of 16, the parent may be eligible to claim Child Benefit and Tax Credits or Universal Credit.

If the young person returned to a parent after the age of 16, remains looked after or is a relevant care leaver, is not engaged in education or training, the parent is unlikely to be able to claim Child Benefit or Tax Credits/Universal Credit and the young person is unlikely to be eligible to claim benefits in their own right, in which case, the leaving care financial funding policy will apply. (help-with-prison-visits.service.gov.uk)

[For Detailed Guidance Please See Appendix D.](#)

1.8	Qualifying Children	
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Dependent on an assessment of need which includes an evaluation of all income, Qualifying Children may be entitled to all allowances.

[For Detailed Guidance Please See Appendix B.](#)

1.9	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance - Reductions Where Young People Are Earning	
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Reductions are undertaken from the principle of assisting with the development of money management and budgeting skills. Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA), pocket money, wages and earnings, Traineeship Allowances, Modern Apprenticeship Allowances and the 16 - 19 Bursary all count as income. Currently agreed reduction of £10 of LCMA at source, towards cost of utilities has been factored into payment plan. Those earning should not be disadvantaged by withdrawing LCMA, In order to reflect positive steps by young people taking on part time work, they will continue to receive a reduced incentivised LCMA. The reduction will be based on the amount the DWP would reduce Universal Credit by if a person was in work. This is an 8% reduction on every £10 earned after £150 per week.

Young people should be advised in writing setting out the following:

1. The level of reduction (of their allowance/s)
2. When the reduction will commence
3. What the young person can do if their circumstances change
4. What the young person can do if they do not agree with the assessed reduction.

Reductions:

- When a young person has a gross income of over £150.00 per week, their LCMA will be reduced by 8% for every additional whole £10 earned. (8% = £5.83) (LCMA divided by 100 x 8 = deduction amount)
- When a young person has a gross income of £200.00 or more per week, there will be deductions on their LCMA and their clothing and leisure allowance will cease.

Reduction equation:

See examples below:

Example 1 – No reduction required:

Income	
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	£72.90
16 – 19 Bursary	£20.00
Wages from part time job	£38.30
Total Received by Care Leaver	£131.20

Example 2 – Reduction required:

Income	Total without reduction	After 8% incremental LCMA Reductions
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	£72.90	£67.00
Wages from part time job	£96.00	£96.00
Total Received by Care Leaver	£168.90	£163.00

Reduction of LCMA is therefore £5.83 per week. This is worked out on there being £18.90 earned over the threshold of £150 per week as the YP earns £168.90 per week. £10 of this is therefore liable for the 8% reduction which is £5.83.

To assist a young person with making a successful transition to employment and managing their wages a reduction will not be applied until they have completed four weeks of employment. A young person will need to provide proof of income in order that his/her social worker/personal adviser can calculate incentive opportunities and reductions. If proof is not forthcoming it will be assumed that earnings are exceeding £200 net per week. In these circumstances the LCMA will cease on a temporary basis until proof of income is provided.

1.10	Initial Clothing Allowance	Up to £200
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In circumstances where young people become looked after and are placed in semi-independent or independent accommodation, they will be provided with an initial clothing allowance subject to an assessment of need.

The Initial Clothing Allowance is paid in situations where young people become looked after with insufficient clothing for everyday needs. When a young person is first looked after the social worker/personal adviser should make a list of the clothing that the young person has and another list setting out what clothing is required and the cost. The list and costing should be submitted to senior management for approval.

1.11	Birthdays	17th birthday: £50.00 18th Birthday: £100.00
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A gift, or gifts, to the value of £50.00/£100.00 or a contribution towards the cost of celebrations and a smaller value gift. If the allowance is not used to purchase a gift or gifts, it can be provided in the form of a gift card or gift voucher or via the cashless system.

The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in active contact with their social worker or leaving care personal adviser and are engaged in the pathway planning process. This is provided to young people living in a semi-independent or independent setting. Young people living in Foster Care or a Children's Residential Unit will receive a birthday allowance from that setting.

1.12	Christmas/Festivals	£50.00 at age 16 £50.00 at age 17.
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A gift, or gifts, to the value of £50.00 or a contribution towards the cost of celebrations and a smaller value gift. If the allowance is not used to purchase a gift or gifts, it can be provided in the form of a gift card, gift voucher or via the cashless system.

The Christmas/festival allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in active contact with their social worker or leaving care personal adviser and are engaged in the pathway planning process. Young people who do not celebrate Christmas will be given a choice as to when their festival allowance is to be provided. If they do not have a preference, the allowance should be made available at Christmas to ensure that they receive their allowance. This is provided to young people living in a semi-independent or independent setting. Young people living in Foster Care or a Children's Residential Unit will receive a Christmas/festival allowance from that setting.

£268.90 for 11+ is the fostering policy.

1.13	Travel and Family Time Costs & UASC contact	As assessed
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Travel costs associated with family contact, extended family, former foster carers and significant friends may be provided following an assessment of need.

Train and bus tickets should, where possible, always be booked, or, purchased in advance in order to obtain discounted fares. Young people should be advised on how discounts can be obtained and how tickets can be sent to mobile phones and other computer media thus achieving further discounts. In exceptional circumstance travel costs may be met via the provision of travel warrants.

UASC Contact

Following an assessment of need, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children aged 16 & 17 years will be provided with an additional £5.00 per week phone card/contact allowance

where they have significant family members overseas. This payment will cease at point young person turns 18.

1.14	Social Activities and Leisure	As assessed or up to £5/week Access to Leisure Pass
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Young people should be encouraged and assisted (via the Pathway Plan) to explore the leisure facilities. Young people should have access to at least one leisure/hobby/sports activity per week to ensure social inclusion. The allowance is only provided where young people are undertaking a named and verified leisure activity (up to the age of 18). In order to support a healthier lifestyle, the Children's trust will provide up to £50 grant for chosen sports equipment and clothing needs. This is once only, up to the age of 21.

Financial assistance provided to pursue hobbies, leisure interests and social activities should be governed by the principle that these activities can be afforded by the young person at the age of eighteen, when they take over financial responsibility for their own affairs. Please check the local offer for a free gym pass.

1.15	Key Documents	Up to £100
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The Children's Trust will purchase a passport (including the check and send facility) and 1 birth certificate for each young person. One passport, or passport renewal age 16 to 21, one birth certificate only if the young person does not have the original. The Children's Trust will purchase a travel document for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children dependent on an assessment of need

1.16	Education, Training and Employment	
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- Young people who are undertaking full time education courses or unpaid training courses receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.
- Young people who are undertaking a paid traineeship or Apprenticeship will not receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.
- Young people who are working or undertaking voluntary work will continue to receive elements of the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance until their wage reaches £200 per week. (see section 1.9)

Education and Training

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

Young people are expected to attend the nearest college for the given course they wish to undertake. In exceptional circumstances, and following an assessment of need, the nearest college rule can be waved, where it can be demonstrated that it is not in the best interest of the young person to attend the nearest college.

Where a young person is involved in training activity or education (year 12 & 13 only) that does not attract a 16 to 19 Bursary, Northamptonshire Children's Trust will provide a £10.00 per week incentive when there is evidence from the provider that they have 95% attendance for the duration of the training activity or education course up until the age of 18yrs.

Paid Training

Young people who are undertaking a paid traineeship will not receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance but will receive the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider. If the traineeship allowance is paid at a rate less than £99.20 the allowance is topped up to £99.20. The £99.20 may then be subject to a £10.00 or £15.00 deduction dependent on the type of placement and whether a) utilities or b) utilities and food are included with the placement (semi-independent accommodation or supported lodgings).

Apprenticeships

Young people who are undertaking an apprenticeship will not receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance but will be given the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider (see traineeship section).

Minimum income

National Minimum Wage 2025- 2026	
21 years and over)	£12.21
18-20 Year Old Rate	£10.00
16-17 Year Old Rate	£7.55
Apprentice	£7.55

Young people (children looked after and care leavers up to age 25) who are undertaking an apprenticeship are eligible for a £3000.00 Apprenticeship Bursary (paid via the Apprenticeship Provider).

1.18	Education, Training and Employment Related Support	
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The Children's Trust may provide equipment and travel costs for education or training courses and employment opportunities of the young person's choice depending on an assessment of need. Transport assistance will only be considered up to the age of 18.

Funding may be provided for subsequent education or training courses and/or for changed courses depending on an assessment of need and the young person demonstrating a commitment to continuing education or training and consistent attendance.

If special equipment is required for a traineeship/apprenticeship the provider should be approached in the first instance. If equipment is not provided, and depending on an assessment of need, it will be provided by the Children's Trust.

FE & HE Grant - Stationery, Educational Visits, Books and Equipment	Up to £350 per year
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Young people who are undertaking full time further or higher education courses are eligible to a grant to assist with stationery, educational visits, books and equipment, based on evidenced need.

- Stationery, Educational Visits Grant, Books and Equipment Grant up to a total of £350.00 per year.

The Grant is per academic year, is not transferable and is only available for stationery, educational visits, books, general equipment.

F.E. & H E Computer Grant	£300 one off payment
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All young people entering further education (level 2 or above), based on evidenced need and recorded in pathway plan, will be assisted to access/purchase a tablet or lap-top (one-off age 16 to 25), computer grant of £300.

In exceptional circumstances, where the course of study requires more specialist IT equipment or a printer, further costs for IT equipment will be considered when there is

evidence provided by the course tutor of this need to support the young person to successfully undertake their course of study. This is subject to a letter of supporting evidence and agreement by a senior manager.

Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc., to their social worker or leaving care personal adviser.

Commencing Work Grant	Up to £100
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The Children's Trust will purchase equipment and/or clothing to assist the young person with their chosen employment e.g. interview clothes, overalls, protective clothing, depending on an assessment of need. Maximum Commencing Work Grant £100.00. This is provided as a one off.

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

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

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

- a. 1 provisional driving licence
- b. 1 theory test
- c. 10 (1 hour) driving lessons to a maximum of £350
- d. 1 practical driving test
- e. CBT (up to a value of £200)

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

Depending on circumstances and an assessment of need, lone parents and young people with SEND may be exempt from the requirement to be engaged in education, training, or employment. Consideration of eligibility and funding of lone parents and SEND young people will be considered on an individual basis.

Lessons will not be booked if you are known to misuse cannabis, drugs or alcohol on a regular basis as safety has to be the first consideration. Any exceptions will need to be evidenced through the pathway plan.

1.20	Personal Luggage	£70
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Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between placements must have appropriate personal luggage. At least two items of appropriate personal luggage. (once only)

1.21	Consultation with Young People	Varied
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Young people will receive a financial reward when undertaking consultation exercises. Payments to young people who undertake consultation exercises can be paid by BACS (bank transfer) or in an emergency cashless system. Expenses related to enabling young people to participate in consultation exercise will be provided following an assessment of need.

1.22	Cultural needs	Varied
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Religious Needs

The Children's Trust will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their religious needs depending on an assessment of need. This will be for two events in a calendar year.

Cultural Needs

The Children's Trust will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their cultural needs depending on an assessment of need.

1.23	Pregnancy	Varied
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16 & 17 year old looked after (and care leavers) young women are not able to access benefits (Universal Credit) in advance of the birth of the baby and therefore will need essential items prior to the birth – maternity clothing, feeding equipment, bedding etc. NCT may support purchase of these items dependent on an assessment of need.

For parents not able to access '[public funds](#)' (for example, benefits) - either because of type or lack of immigration status i.e.. biometric residence permit (BRP) or your [online immigration status](#) will say if you cannot claim public funds, support may be available.

To apply, for an application form by email. Only use this email address if you think you cannot claim public funds because of your immigration status. Application for consideration and from request can be made here. Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk

16 & 17 year old looked after (and care leavers) young women are not able to access benefits (Universal Credit) in advance of the birth of the baby and therefore will need essential items prior to the birth – maternity clothing, feeding equipment, bedding etc., dependent on an assessment of need.

1.24	Corporate parenting payments	Varied
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Corporate Parent Payment

For all ages up to 21yrs. Gift for new baby the Children's Trust will support up to £50, Additionally £50 can be provided to ensure that items for a hospital bag are available. Flowers and clothing for family bereavement, terminal illness or a family-based celebration, a cost normally met by a family member, the Children's Trust will provide a payment up to £100 in a 12 month period.

1.25	Health	Varied
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Health

The Children's Trust will assist young people to access services to meet their health and developmental needs via the 'looked after' children health provision and via universal health services. Social workers/personal advisers should complete a HC1 (SC) form for all 16 & 17 year olds. The HC1 (SC) form enables young people to obtain an NHS low-income exemption certificate. This will provide free or reduced cost dental, optician and prescription services. In situations where young people require specific health items these will be considered following an assessment of need.

SECTION 2	FORMER RELEVANT YOUNG PEOPLE
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This section applies to former relevant children, i.e.:

Group A:

Care Leavers Aged 18 to 21, or until the completion of the education course being undertaken on their 21st birthday - Former Relevant Children - Section 23 C (1).

Group B:

- Care Leavers Aged 21 to 25 who return to the authority to resume or commence education or training - Former Relevant Children - Section 23 CA (1)
- Care Leavers Aged 21 to 25 who return to the authority to resume a service - Former Relevant Children - Section 23 CZB (1).

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

1. Young people living in foster care who meet the Staying Put criteria can remain in their placement. NCT will pay the Staying Put Host £168.33 per week. The host will also receive £100 per week and will be paid directly or indirectly by the young person in one of the following ways: Where a young person is claiming Housing Element of Universal Credit this will be paid directly to the host, any shortfall will be paid by NCT. Where a young person is not entitled to Housing Element of Universal Credit because they are employed the young person will pay up to £100 to the staying put host. Any shortfall will be paid by NCT. In addition, the young person will pay a £15 per week utility contribution NCT would not expect any young person to contribute more than 25% of their income whether they are in employment or claiming benefits. When a young person is awaiting an outcome to an asylum claim, NCT will pay the £100 Additional expenditure. (See Staying Put policy)
2. Those young people who remain in placement and are in employment will be asked to contribute towards placement costs in line with the Staying Put financial guidelines.

3. Asylum Seekers with all rights exhausted, (ARE) with no recourse to public funds will continue to be provided with accommodation funded by the Children's Trust subject during the human rights assessment process. The Human rights assessment will identify the appropriate pathway for ongoing financial and accommodation support.
4. Asylum seekers who at the point they turn 21yrs old and remain without confirmed status, will no longer receive financial and accommodation support by the Childrens Trust and will be assisted with seeking support from Home office.

Where there is a clear assessment of need, The Children's Trust will consider acting as a trustee or guarantor for care leavers aged 18 and older. In exceptional circumstances and with agreement from the Service Manager following panel agreement, consideration will be given to the Children's Trust acting as a trustee/guarantor, such as acting as a trustee/guarantor for university accommodation. The nature and scope of the trustee/guarantor must be clarified before any agreement is given, i.e. what is being covered, rent, damages and what liabilities the trustee/guarantor agreement establishes. In all cases, either the landlord's guarantor agreement, or an agreement produced by the legal services team should be used and checked by the legal services team with clear recommendations that trustee/guarantor be for a minimum period only.

See Section One – Accommodation and Placements for LHA rates. Also see Section one, Deposits and Rent in Advance.

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

Young people will be required to be engaged fully in the support offered by education, placement providers and PA to be eligible for the full LCMA. Those not engaging will be incentivised by a weekly reduction of £5 until re-engagement occurs. Assessment of this will be monitored monthly and agreed by PM/TM prior to financial authorisation.

The young person's PA can submit for authorisation a maximum of 12 weeks payment plan to ensure that LCMA is constantly assessed as required and appropriate.

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

Arrangement	Value
Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£72.90
Young person is provided with utilities and is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation	£57.90
Young person is provided with utilities and is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation and not engaging with support services	£52.90
Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation - no cooking facilities – Breakfast only	£77.90
Young person placed in Emergency Accommodation with half board – Bed, Breakfast and Evening Meal	£57.90

See R (SO) v London Borough of Barking & Dagenham 2010 Case Law Judgement: [R \(SO\) v London Borough of Barking and Dagenham - Case Law - VLEX 793713717](#)

Failed Asylum Seekers with no Recourse to Public Funds Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Rates

Failed asylum seekers and 'all rights/appeals exhausted young people' with no recourse to public funds are provided with £49 weekly allowance until outcome of a human rights assessment and until the removal date is reached. (notice of withdrawal of support and adoption by Migrant support) It should be noted that a local authority does not necessarily have to wait until the removal date or age 21 to withdraw support, for example support could be withdrawn when the former UASC turns 18 if they are All Rights Exhausted ('ARE') and have, by then, been given a reasonable time to return home of young person has disengaged with support offered by the Children's Trust or Migrant support.

2.3	Initial Benefit Claim	See table above for amounts Payable for maximum of 3 weeks
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Subject to the type of accommodation the young person is living in on their 18th birthday the following allowances - £72.90, or £57.90 or £52.90 (see table above) will continue for a maximum of 3 weeks whilst a claim for Universal Credit is being established. Young people making their initial claim for Universal Credit will have to wait approximately 5 weeks for their first payment (a calendar month plus 7 days). The allowance should only be paid after

checking the progress of the young person's Universal Credit claim with the DWP and on the basis that the young person has taken up a Universal Credit Advance.

As a general rule, the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance is always paid in advance and welfare benefits are always paid in arrears. Even where a benefit claim is submitted in advance of the young person's 18th birthday and verified on the young person's 18th birthday, they will have to wait at least 5 weeks for the first Universal Credit payment. As such, and where the young person does not take a Universal Credit Advance, the Children's Trust will extend the pre 18 allowance for only 3 weeks whilst a young person's Universal Credit claim is established and in payment.

Every young person who is eligible to claim should be supported to claim a Universal Credit Advance from the DWP by their personal adviser and placement provider. The young person can immediately ask for an advance payment from the DWP, of up to 100% of the likely Universal Credit award. This will then be recovered directly from their Universal Credit payment (by the DWP) in 12 equal parts over the next year.

If the young person applies for a Universal Credit Advance at the start of their claim, the 3-week benefit waiting allowance will not be provided.

Any delays from point of eligibility due to process issues, further YPA/LCMA will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If delays related to applying for benefit claim, is identified as a result of non-engagement by young person, young person will be supported by PA and placement provider to access local food bank.

2.4	Qualifying Young People	
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Dependent on an assessment of need which includes an evaluation of all income, Qualifying Young People may be entitled to all allowances.

For Detailed Guidance Please See Appendix B.

2.5	Asylum Seekers with no Recourse to Public Funds	£49.00 per week
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Asylum seekers and 'all rights/appeals exhausted young people (ARE) with no recourse to public funds are provided with £49 in line with UKBA guidelines. A human rights assessment

should be conducted to ascertain if financial support should continue alongside UKBA procedures.

2.6	Key Documents	Up to £110
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The Children's Trust will purchase a passport (including the check and send facility) and 1 birth certificate for each young person. One passport or passport renewal - aged 16 to 21, one birth certificate only if the young person does not have the original. The local authority need to use the gov.uk verify to register the young person's ID which then makes renewing a passport or other government processes much easier.

[Gov UK Verify.](#)

[Government guidance for applying for passports for looked after children.](#)

The Children's Trust will purchase a travel document for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children dependent on an assessment of need.

2.7	Further and Higher Education	£2000 Higher education bursary over period of 2-4 year course Up to £350 per year plus one off £300 equipment grant Accommodation Allowance Travel Allowance
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Financial Support for Further and Higher Education courses is available until the education or training course is completed. Where the course commenced prior to the 25th birthday, Care leavers will be supported until the end of the academic term post 25th birthday.

All financial support is dependent on an individual assessment of need and on the young person complying with any conditionality attached to the financial support set out in the Pathway Plan.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust as corporate parents, wants to ensure all care leavers have the best possible chance of success when undertaking a higher education and university

course. The following guidance has been developed to provide clarity about the higher education payments process and the eligibility requirements that young people are expected to follow.

Young people should only be supported to progress to university/higher education if they have a form of status that gives them access to 'Home Student Status and Fees' and Student England Finances and have a positive status that continues until the course is completed. All support from the Children's Trust and other source should be clearly set out in the Pathway Plan. Where young people do not have status that gives them access to the above forms of financial support, personal advisors will support young people to apply for scholarships, grants and bursaries from voluntary organisations. The Children's Trust will not provide costs of tuition or accommodation connected with university/higher education in accordance with Schedule 12 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Where young people aged 21 to 25 who wish to resume or commence education or training the following guidelines regarding financial support will apply. Young people should contact the duty worker for the leaving care team that supported them prior to their 21st birthday (or, up to the end of their previous education/training course if completed after 21).

Young people should only be supported to progress to university/higher education if they have a form of status that gives them access to 'Home Student Status and Fees' and Student England Finances and have a positive status that continues until the course is completed. All support from the Children's Trust and any other source should be clearly set out in the Pathway Plan. . Where young people do not have a status that gives them access to the above forms of financial support, personal advisers will support young people to apply for scholarships, grants and bursaries from voluntary organisations. The Children's Trust does not have a responsibility to undertake the costs of tuition or associated accommodation costs in accordance with Schedule 12 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Funding will be considered by senior management following an assessment of need (including access to financial resources) and will be based on the motivation and commitment of the young person to undertake, sustain and complete the course in line with the following principles:

Full time courses – Following an assessment of need young people may be provided with a maximum weekly maintenance grant of £72.90 per week, up to £3790.80 per year and registration fees grant of up to £1000.00, full time and £500.00 part time. These grants are subject to young people signing information sharing agreement with college and PA, maintaining 85% attendance, having satisfactory reports from the college and not having access to other financial resources.

Part time courses – One off grants will be made following an evaluation of the course and an assessment of need of the young person and their financial circumstances. Grants may range from £20.00 to £1,000.00 to be used to assist with registration fees and equipment costs. Grants will be based on need, motivation to gain educational qualifications and whether the candidate has any education qualifications,

- A key priority will be to ensure all young people hold a level 2 qualification.
- Those undertaking Open university courses will only receive resource support on an assessed need.
- Post graduate courses will not receive financial support by the Leaving Care Service.

FE & HE Grant - Stationery, Educational Visits, Books and Equipment	Up to £350 per year
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Eligible young people who are undertaking full time further or higher education courses are entitled to a grant to assist with stationery, educational visits, books and equipment, Computer and I.T. equipment – based on evidenced need.

Stationery, Educational Visits Grant, Books and Equipment Grant up to £350.00 per year.

The Grant is per academic year, is not transferable and is only available for stationery, educational visits, books, general equipment and I.T. equipment (assessed each year of the course).

Further Education & Higher Education Computer Grant	£300 one off equipment grant
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All eligible young people entering further education (level 2 or above), Open University Course or higher education will be assisted to access a tablet or lap-top. One off grant of £300.00

In exceptional circumstances, where the course of study requires more specialist IT equipment or a printer, further costs for IT equipment will be considered when there is evidence provided by the course tutor of this need to support the young person to successfully undertake their course of study. This is subject to a letter of supporting evidence and agreement by a senior manager.

Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc., to their social worker or leaving care personal adviser. Depending on an assessment of need and income, young people attending FE or HE over the age of 18 may be required to contribute to the cost of the additional equipment from their education allowances and bursaries.

1. Part time courses – One off grants will be made following an evaluation of the course and an assessment of need of the young person and their financial circumstances. Grants may range from £20.00 to £1,000.00 to be used to assist with registration fees and equipment costs. Grants will be based on need, motivation to gain educational qualifications and whether the candidate has any education qualifications,
2. A key priority will be to ensure all young people hold a level 2 qualification.
3. Those undertaking Open university courses will only receive resource support on an assessed need.
4. Post graduate courses will not receive financial support by the Leaving Care Service.

Young people undertaking these courses are eligible for the '21-25 - Northamptonshire Children's Trust - Education and Training' care leaver entitlements (subject to an assessment of need and the pre-requisite conditions above being met).

1. A Higher Education Bursary of £2,000.00 which is provided over the period of a two, three or four year course. Depending on the length of the course the £2,000.00 per course will be constituted of £1,000.00 per year (2 year course) H.E. Bursary, £666.67 per year (3 year course) H. E. Bursary, £500.00 per year (4 year course) H. E. Bursary.
2. A holiday Accommodation Allowance up to 22 weeks – Up to the level of the LHA one-bedroom self-contained rate.
3. A Travel Grant to enable young people to get to and return to university (one return journey per academic year). Max cost £350.

This amounts to a payment of approximately £4,500.00 per year – depending on location (rent) and type of course.

How the Vacation Maintenance Allowance, Accommodation Allowance and the H. E. Bursary are to be provided should be set out in the young person's pathway plan.

Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma courses are defined as Higher Education Courses. Both HNC and HND courses often attract a bursary and/or a grant from the individual university.

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

Young people should only be supported to progress to university/higher education if they have a form of status that gives them access to ‘Home Student Status and Fees’ and Student England Finances and have a positive status that continues until the course is completed. All support from the Children’s Trust and any other source should be clearly set out in the Pathway Plan.

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

All payments are dependent on, and subject to, a young person agreeing to the following requirements:

- Maintaining regular and ongoing contact with their leaving care personal adviser
- Attending all pre-arranged meetings with their leaving care personal adviser
- Completing all actions and agreed tasks within the Learning Agreement and education section of the pathway plan.
- Identification of a suitable contact within the university staff/support service to take part in joint meetings in order to ensure educational goals and targets are met and appropriate practical, educational, pastoral and financial support is being provided
- To agree to regular liaison between the university and leaving care personal adviser, in order to monitor progress, attendance and attainment
- To inform their leaving care personal adviser and local authority of any change of circumstances (for example contact details, course details) as soon as possible
- Student Finance England have confirmed that they will fund the course and the young person is deemed a ‘Home Student’ for the Tuition Fee Loan
- Having an asylum status that enables them to receive Student Finance England loans and that they are deemed a ‘Home Student’
- To focus on educational activities by not undertaking more than fifteen hours of employment per week during term time. To understand that in circumstances where more than fifteen hours per week of employment is be undertaken, this income will be considered when calculating the level of financial support.

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

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

See Appendix H for Consent to Share/Disclose Information Form.

Commencing work grant	Up to £100
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Jobcentre Plus work coaches have access to a discretionary fund (Flexible Support Fund) which can be used to address barriers to employment, such as travel expenses to attend interviews and tools and clothing/uniform to start work. It is a discretionary award based on the work coaches' assessment of the young person's needs. Care leavers should speak with their work coach ahead of starting work if they require any assistance.

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

Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc. to their social worker, or leaving care personal adviser.

2.10	Introduction to Driving Allowance	
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A requirement to be engaged in education, training, or employment (and having completed at least 3 months) enables those who aged 17 (to 21). Subject to the young person covering the cost of 10hrs of lessons and evidenced need through assessment in the Pathway plan, will be eligible for financial support for employability and to provide an additional identity document:

- a) 1 provisional driving licence
- b) 1 theory test
- c) 10hrs of driving lessons to a maximum of £350
- d) 1 practical driving test
- e) 1 CBT (compulsory basic training) up to a maximum of £200. The certificate is valid for two years

The Introduction to Driving package is available to young people aged 17 to 21 and is conditional on the individual young person having been engaged in education, training, or employment (full time) for at least 3 months. The package is dependent on the young person covering the cost of 10hr lessons. The young person must provide their contribution (the cost of 10hrs prior to the personal adviser booking the overall package).

The lessons must be provided by an approved instructor and should be used for motor car or motor bike lessons.

Financial support will be limited to the initial choice of mode of transport and is not transferable from bike to car.

Depending on circumstances and an assessment of need, lone parents and young people with SEND may be exempt from the requirement to be engaged in education, training, or employment. Consideration of eligibility and funding of lone parents and SEND young people should be presented to senior management.

2.11	Personal Luggage	£70
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Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between placements must have appropriate personal luggage. At least two items of appropriate personal luggage. (If not received previously)

2.11	Birthdays	19th & 20th Birthday: £50.00 21st Birthday: £100.00
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The birthday allowance covers the cost of a gift, wrapping and a card. The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who are engaged fully in the support offered by education, placement providers, PA and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.

The Pathway Plan should specify whether the allowance is given to the young person directly as a cash gift or is used by the personal adviser, staying put host or previous carer to purchase a gift.

2.12	Christmas/Festivals	Age 18, 19 & 20: £50.00.
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Young people who do not celebrate Christmas will be given a choice as to when their festival allowance is to be provided. If they do not have a preference, the allowance should be made available at Christmas to ensure that they receive their entitlement. Additionally, they should also be offered the choice of having a proportion of their allowance at their festival of choice and a proportion at Christmas.

The Pathway Plan should specify whether the allowance is provided to the young person directly as a cash payment or will be used by the personal adviser, staying put host or previous carer to purchase a gift. The Christmas/festival allowance will only be paid to young people who are engaged fully in the support offered by education, placement providers, PA and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.

2.19	Young People Returning to the Local Authority Aged 21 to 25	
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Young people are entitled to resume or continue a leaving care service from the age of 21 to 25 on request.

The primary purpose of the support from age 21 to 25 is to provide continuity and on-going practical support and guidance. Where young people require financial support, personal advisers will assist the young person to identify universal sources of financial support to enable young people to be self-sustaining. In very exceptional circumstances and following an assessment of need, a request for financial support (usually provided in kind) can be considered. Agreement from the Service Manager is required.

2.20	Consultation with Young People	Varied
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Young people will receive a financial reward when undertaking consultation exercises. Payments to young people who undertake consultation exercises can be paid via Cashless system or vouchers. Expenses related to enabling young people to participate in consultation exercise will be provided following an assessment of need.

2.21	Exceptional Needs and Emergency Payments	Up To £300
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All areas are dependent on an assessment of need. From the age of 18 until the age of 25 Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant young people living in semi-independent or

independent accommodation are entitled to a total annual payment up to £300.00 of exceptional needs / emergency payments.

Health

Personal advisers should complete an NHS HC1 form for all 18- to 21-year-olds who are not employed and/or not registered for welfare benefits. This is particularly important for care leavers who are maintained by the Children's Trust (or undertaking higher education courses) and who need to demonstrate their level of income in order to access free, or reduced cost NHS services. The HC1 form enables young people to obtain an NHS low income exemption certificate. This will provide free or reduced cost dental, optician and prescription services.

[Apply-for-help-with-nhs-costs/apply-online](#)

Emergency Payments Including Utilities

Emergency payments are provided following an assessment of need in situations where a young person does not have any access to money or food etc. The payment can be provided as a food parcel, a food voucher, an assisted shopping trip or in exceptional circumstances a cash or utility payment to maximum of £30. This will be recorded on the financial tracker.

Corporate Parent Payment

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

SECTION 3	ELIGIBLE, RELEVANT AND FORMER RELEVANT CHILDREN
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This section applies to Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children Aged 16 to 21/25, or until completion of an agreed programme of education or training being undertaken on the young person's 25th birthday.

3.1	Deposit and Rent in Advance	Taken from SUHA
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Where a young person has access to housing authority or housing association independent accommodation a deposit and rent in advance may be required.

In exceptional circumstances and depending on an assessment of need a deposit and rent in advance may be considered if a young person would be at risk in housing authority or housing

association independent accommodation. Where young people are moving into private sector independent accommodation, workers should check if homeless prevention or discretionary housing payment (DHP) funding can be applied. Where needed, a deposit and rent in advance can be provided if the rent level falls within the given Local Housing Allowance rate for that area.

Personal Advisers should check if a 'Rent Deposit Scheme' or 'Bond Scheme' exists in the area the young person is aiming to live and/or what 'Rent Deposit Protect Scheme' the letting agent/landlord uses. In circumstances where Northamptonshire Children's Trust is providing the deposit, or is providing a bond guarantee, the deposit/bond guarantee should be in the name of Northamptonshire Children's Trust. Many local authority housing departments operate Deposit Guarantee Schemes that offers landlords a legally binding deposit bond in place of a cash deposit.

From April 2007, landlords and agents have, by law, had to sign up to one of three Government-backed schemes when they take a deposit. These schemes aim to ensure that letting agents, landlords and tenants have access to independent deposit protection. The Tenant Fees Act 2019 came into force on the 1st June 2019 and as result tenancy deposits are capped, and most fees charged in connection with a tenancy are banned. [Tenant Fees Act Guidance 2019](#).

Private sector landlords are required to provide a copy of the 'How to Rent' Leaflet to all tenants. [Government guidance: How to Rent](#).

Current rates for all LHA areas can be checked via the Valuation Office Agency website ([Local housing allowance rates](#)), or via [Direct Gov LHA Search](#). For information for Staying Put: [Direct Gov LHA Search](#).

Young people leaving care living in the private rented accommodation are exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) up to their 25th birthday (from 1st June 2021); therefore, they are eligible to rent private sector accommodation up to the one-bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate. From their 25th birthday, care leavers will only be eligible for housing benefit (or Universal Credit housing element costs) up to the shared room rate but may be eligible for discretionary housing payments (DHP's) in some circumstance. Some care-leavers (those who have lived in certain hostel accommodation for at least 3 months) may be entitled to a one-bedroom rate. Some care leavers may also get the one-bedroom rate or a higher rate e.g. if severely disabled, those in receipt of DLA - middle or higher rate care, PIP – daily living component or if they have a child or a partner up to age 35. In the majority of social housing (council and housing association) the full rent will be covered by the Housing Element of Universal Credit.

3.2	Setting Up Home Allowance	Total incorporating Items all £3000
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Item	Amount	Comments
TV Licence	£170	Payable once
Equipping Accommodations	Up to £2200	Can be paid in stages. initially on semi-independent setting needs and subsequently, on independent accommodation needs. 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.
Fitting of a gas/electric cooker by an approved fitter	Up to £150	Payable once
Removal Costs	Up to £140	Payable once
Health & safety pack and security	Up to £190	Two smoke detectors, one carbon monoxide detector, door security chain, chub lock, fire blanket and first aid kit, doorbell security camera. Payable Once
Contents insurance	Up to £100	Payable Once
Setting up home starter pack	Up to £50	Coffee, tea, washing-up liquid, light bulbs, laundry and cleaning equipment utility key/card top-up, etc. Payable Once
Total Amount	£3000	

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

Original receipts should be retained by social workers/personal advisers for audit purposes, reclaiming VAT and in case defective items need to be returned. As a general principle up to £300.00 can be used prior to the young person's 18th birthday whilst they are living in semi-independent accommodation (furnished) and the remainder can be used after the age of 18 when they move to independent accommodation (unfurnished).

A Young person's eligibility for the Setting Up Home allowance extends to the age of 25, or until the end of the agreed program of education/training being undertaken on the 25th birthday. The purpose of the Setting Up Home Allowance is to ensure that young people have the essential household items that they need to furnish their home rather than being provided a cash amount.

Young people will have a choice of how the Setting Up Home Allowance is used:

a) supported shop

b) items purchased by the Children's Trust that have been identified/chosen by the young person

c) in exceptional circumstances where assessed as appropriate, young people will be provided with a cash grant to purchase items.

We recognise that some young people may have turned 18 prior to April 2023, but not received their Setting Up Home Allowance at that point because, for example, they were in a Staying Put arrangement. In circumstances such as this, they would receive a £3,000 Setting Up Home Allowance as they are moving into their first independent tenancy after the date that the SUHA was increased from 2022-2023 financial policy.

- Young people who have received their setting up home grant prior to April 2023 are not eligible to access the 2024-2025 SUHA increase.
- Young people who received less than half of their SUHA prior to 1 April 2023, the balance will reflect the new higher (£3,000) level.

Where young people have No Recourse to Public Funds, a temporary asylum status, or are 'All Rights Exhausted', they are likely to be living in temporary and/or semi-independent accommodation and therefore will only need to use part of their Setting Up Home Grant until they obtain permanent status as the accommodation provided will usually contain the majority of household items.

Where young people have had several moves and may have lost, misplaced or had items damaged, additional resources/items may be made available subject to an assessment of need and agreement by the Service manager.

Where young people are living in unsettled or temporary accommodation, the Setting Up Home Allowance should be used to purchase essential items only, with the majority of the Grant being held back until more settled/permanent accommodation is available.

Where young people have additional needs and are being supported by an Adult Service under the Care Act 2014 the Setting Up Home Allowance will continue to be available if it is required. Where a young person is placed into residential care and all items are provided through the residential placement, the Setting Up Home Grant will not be needed. Where young people move to supported living, an assessment of need will be undertaken, and the Setting Up Home Grant will be provided if the accommodation requires additional furnishings.

The final Pathway Plan at age 21/25 should also set out a timescale and process for obtaining the final items. Where young people are being discharged from hospital or being released from custody immediately prior to, or immediately after their 25th birthday, the final pathway plan should set out when and how the Setting Up Home Grant will be accessed and used, if the young person does not have a discharge or release date by their 25th birthday, the service and the provision of the Grant will cease, the use of the Setting Up Home Grant should be completed within six months after their 25th birthday.

A rough guide to costings:

Cooker £250.00 Fridge £250.00 Washing Machine £250.00 Crockery £40.00 Saucepans £50.00 Bin £10.00 Cutlery £20.00 Iron £20.00 Kettle £20.00 Microwave £50.00 Mop/Bucket £15.00 Toaster £10.00 Television £100.00- £300. TV stand £30.00	Curtains /Blinds £80.00 Carpet / Floor Coverings £400.00 Mirror £20.00 Cabinet £20.00 Bath mat £6.00 Towels £10.00 Bed (Sofa King) £300.00 Bedding £55.00 Wardrobe £60.00 Chest of drawers £60.00 Bedside Table £30.00 Double Bedding £50.00 £50.00 Table/Chairs £100.00
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Appendix A: Categories of Care Leavers

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 their 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 a 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.
- Young people who are remanded into custody become looked after at the point of remand. This group may then become an eligible children or relevant children if they complete 13 weeks of being looked after.

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 (sentenced), 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 (sentenced) 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.

Former Relevant children

- Age 18 to 21, or, until the education or training programme being undertaken on their 21st birthday is completed. Section 23C (1).
 - A young person who was previously an 'Eligible' child or a 'Relevant' child.

- Former Relevant children (age 21, and under 25) [Section 23CA (1)].
 - Young people who inform the local authority that they want to pursue education or training between the age of 21 and 25 and where previously a former 'Relevant' child.

- Former Relevant children (age 21, and under 25) [Section 23CZB (1)]
 - Young people who inform the local authority that they want to continue or resume a leaving care service between the age of 21 and 25 and where previously a former 'Relevant' child.

[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 and 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.

Appendix B: 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 Children and Young People'.

Depending on an assessment of need, Northamptonshire Children's Trust 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 personal advisers should assist young people to maximise financial support available from employment, benefits and education allowances and opportunities.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust 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 accommodation.

Depending on an assessment of need Qualifying Children and Young People may require and may be provided with the same level of service as Eligible, Relevant or Former Relevant young people.

See Volume 3 Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance – Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (revised 2015). – Para 2.6 to 2.11 Page 15 & 16. Para 8.43 to 8.51 Page 84 & 85.

Appendix C: Young People who are Detained

Eligible and Relevant Children who are 'detained'

The Care Leavers (England) Regulations Section 23A (3) paragraph (2) (3).

- Children and young people who are detained and are subject to a Section 31 Care Order remain looked after on entering custody (on being remanded and being sentencing) and on reaching age 16 they become 'Eligible' care leavers.
- Young people who are Accommodated under Section 20, remain looked after when 'remanded' and cease to be looked after if they receive a custodial sentence.
- Young people who are remanded become looked after (Section 21) on being remanded and cease to be looked after on being sentenced.
- Young people who have been looked after for 13 weeks from the age of 14 (on remand or looked after in the community) and receive a custodial sentence before their 16th birthday become 'Relevant' care leavers on reaching their 16th birthday.
 - Young Offender Institution (YOI).
 - Secure Training Centre (STC).
 - Secure Children's Home (SCH).
- Young people who are detained in an NHS hospital setting remain section 31
- Young people who are accommodated under section 20 and who are detained in certain NHS settings cease to be looked after but will become a) a 'Relevant' care leavers if aged 16 & 17 and have completed 13 weeks as a child looked after, or b) become a 'Relevant' care leaver on reaching their 16th birthday if they completed 13 weeks as a child looked after immediately prior to being detained.

Young Offender Detentions (16 & 17 Year Olds)

Where a young person is 'detained' as a result of a 'remand' or 'sentence', the majority of their financial allowances will be suspended. Financial support for young people who are detained (remand/sentence) 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 situations where education, training or work opportunities are not available and no pocket money or remuneration scheme exists, young people will be provided with a £ 5.00 per week pocket money allowance. This will be provided in-line with any recommendations of the particular establishment and should be set out in the young person's pathway plan.

Additionally, and in exceptional circumstances, a clothing allowance commensurate with the leaving care clothing allowance of £5.00 per week may be provided.

Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Birthday and Christmas/festival allowances will continue to be provided and depending on the rules of the institution, will be provided to the young person or retained until their release.

On release, young people aged 16 & 17 may have access to the £200.00 initial clothing allowance subject to an assessment of need.

Hospital Detentions

16 & 17 year olds who cease to be looked after and are deemed Relevant Children.

Young people who are detained in an NHS provision or contracted out NHS provision will be provided with an allowance of £10.00 per week and the standard leaving care clothing allowance of £5.00 per week (if they are not in receipt of Universal Credit).

The allowances are based on an assessment of need and risk, how these are provided should be set out in the individual placement plan and pathway plan. Where benefits can be claimed (UC) the allowances will not be provided once benefits are in payment (those detained in hospital). In addition, those detained in hospitals will be provided with the birthday and Christmas/festival allowances.

On discharge, young people aged 16 & 17 may have access to the £200.00 initial clothing allowance subject to an assessment of need.

Former Relevant Children who are 'detained'

The Care Leavers (England) Regulations Section 23C (1).

Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Birthday and Christmas/Festival allowances will continue to be paid and depending on the rules of the institution, will be given to the young person or retained until their release. On release young people will have access to their 'Setting Up Home Grant' and if they are claiming Universal Credit, they can apply for a Universal Credit Advance. Young people who are being released from custody can submit a claim for Universal Credit 28 days in advance of their release date.

Where young people are being discharged from hospital or being released from custody immediately prior to, or immediately after their 25th birthday, the final pathway plan should set out when and how the Setting Up Home Grant will be accessed and used, if the young person does not have a discharge or release date by their 25th birthday, the service and the provision of the Grant will cease, the use of the Setting Up Home Grant should be completed by six months after 25th birthday.

Where family members are in receipt of welfare benefits, prison visits and contact can be facilitated by the 'Assisted Prison Visits Scheme' allowances provided by the DWP. Travel

costs for family members not in receipt of welfare benefits may be provided following an assessment of need.

Appendix D: Financial Support to Children aged 16 or 17 who are placed with Parents, or Return to Live with Parents in a Planned or Unplanned Manner

Principles

- Wherever possible, parents should be financially responsible for their own children and should not be funded by the local authority to support their own children.
- Where financial allowances are provided to parents, these should not create inequalities with other siblings and children within the family/household who have not been looked after.
- Subject to an assessment of need, a one-off payment, or the purchase of an item will be considered where it is deemed it would assist with a positive transition home.
- The rules on a parent's eligibility for benefits for a child placed at home or returning home after the age of 16 is complex and is dependent on whether they are an eligible, relevant or qualifying care leaver, being resident with the parent and whether the child is undertaking education or training.

Section 1: Placement with Parents

Children Reaching the Age of 16 Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order (Living with a Parent).

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review, Regulations 2010 (revised 2015) and associated Guidance sets out that the Responsible Local Authority is required to assess and meet the needs, including the financial needs of an 'Eligible' (and 'Relevant') child.

Her Majesties Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Guidance sets out that where a child is aged under 16 and 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 either child tax credit and/or working tax credit (depending on income) or Universal Credit (UC), and any benefits arising from a child's disability such as DLA/PIP. Where a child (under 16) is placed with a parent, a transitional payment equivalent to the indicative level of child benefit and either child tax credit/working tax credit or Universal Credit that a parent would be entitled to will be provided for a period of up to six weeks. On average it takes five to six weeks to establish a child benefit and either a child tax credit / working tax credit or Universal Credit claim.

The rules on benefit entitlement where children return to parents after their 16th birthday are complex, and entitlement should be checked with the DWP and HMRC. Transitional

payment example (the amounts set out below are based on Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit indicative amounts, the amount paid under Universal Credit may differ):

Child benefit equivalent: £25.60, £16.95 (second child)

Child tax credit:

Element	Yearly amount
The basic amount (this is known as ‘the family element’)	Up to £545
For each child (this is known as ‘the child element’)	Up to £3,455
For each disabled child	Up to £4,170 (on top of the child element)
For each severely disabled child	Up to £1,680 (on top of the child element and the disabled child element)

For a parent to be eligible for child benefit and either tax credits or Universal Credit no part of the child’s accommodation or maintenance costs should be met by the local authority, as such the Children’s Trust should set a date to cease any transitional payments. The date to cease financial support should be set at a point between five and six weeks after a placement with a parent or a return home (prior to age 16).

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. – HMRC Guidance.

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 (care leaver). The review must be undertaken within the framework of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need. If the child/young person is engaged in education or training the child benefit and tax credits/Universal Credit will continue once the child reaches the age of 16.

The majority of ‘Eligible’ children will be living in foster care, residential care or, in a placement deemed ‘Other Arrangements’. The financial support provided to the child will be set out in the fostering financial policy, residential financial policy and leaving care financial policy.

Young people returning home after their 16th birthday:

The DWP rules on benefit entitlement for children looked after and care leavers aged 16 & 17 living with parents and the entitlement for parents is complex and will depend on a range of variables.

1. In situations where a child aged 16 or 17 is placed with a parent or returns home to live with a parent and is not engaged in any education or training, the leaving care financial policy provides guidance on the provision of any allowances (benefit entitlement for young person or parents unlikely).
2. In situations where a child aged 16 or 17 is placed with a parent or returns home to live with a parent and is engaged in education or training, the leaving care financial policy provides guidance on the provision of any allowances, if the young person remains an eligible care leaver (due to the child being on a care order), the parent is likely to become entitled to claim benefits after, a) the care order is revoked, and b) the young person has been living with the parent for 6 months (parent is unlikely to qualify for benefits for the first 6 months of the return home), thereafter the parent is likely to be able to apply for child benefit and tax credits/Universal Credit. If the young person (section 20) returns home and becomes a relevant care leaver, the parent is unlikely to be able to apply for benefits until the young person has been at home for 6 months and become qualifying (and is engaged in education/training).
3. In situations where a child aged 16 or 17 is placed at home or returns home and is not engaged in education or training a parent will not be eligible to claim child benefit or benefits. Therefore, the local authority will need to provide an allowance, based on benefit rates to support the young person to remain at home when this is assessed to meet their needs.

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 (generally 6 months) 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.

Young people aged 16 & 17 placed with parents who are not engaged in education or training should therefore be provided with the standard Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance of £57.90.

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 made using the guidance contained at the start of this document in the section 'Assessing the Provision of Allowances for 16 & 17 Year Olds' and should be set out in the young person's Care/Pathway Plan.

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. See NCT's Finance Guidance: Foster Carers Allowances.

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.

As noted above, 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 (or recently returned – within the last 6 months). In situations where the child is not engaged in education or training, or has returned within the last 6 months, the leaving care finance policy framework should be used as the framework for the provision of allowances to the child and/or parent).

The majority of Eligible or Relevant children (living outside of the parental home), regardless of being engaged in education or training are disqualified from welfare benefits/tax credits/universal credit, with the exception of sick and disabled children and children who are also lone parents.

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, or initially returning home.

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 21/25 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 (Universal 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.

Placement with Parents – Children aged 16 or 17 Subject to Care Order or Interim Care Order Being Placed with Parents.

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.

The principles and financial approach set out above in section 1, i.e. the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance being provided to the young person (if not engaged in education or training (and for the initial 6 months)), and an assessment of the need for any additional allowances being undertaken to consider the types and level of financial support to be provided should be followed. The Care/Pathway Plan should be used to evidence and explain the level of, and the types of financial support to be provided.

[Section 2: Children under Section 20 Returning to Live with a Parent/s.](#)

This refers to children aged 16 & 17 Accommodated under Section 20 Returning to Live with a Parent/s in a Planned Manner who cease to be Looked After and Become 'Relevant' children.

In circumstances where it is deemed appropriate for a child to return to a parent/s at the age of 16 or 17, following an assessment of suitability, the evaluation of financial support to the child and/or parent should be completed prior to the child returning to the parent/s. On the child returning to the parent/s the child becomes a 'Relevant' child. Where the young person is undertaking an education or training activity, financial responsibility should transfer to the parent as set out in section 1 (after 6 months). Transitional financial support will be provided for a period of four to six weeks once the parent becomes eligible for a means tested benefit.

In circumstances where a young person (subject to section 20) aged 16 & 17 returns to live with a parent, agreement to, and approval of the ceasing to be looked after must be sought from the Director of Children's Services – Regulation 39.

In circumstances where the 'Relevant' child is living with a parent/s as part of planned return to a parent/s, both the assessment of, and financial support should focus on assisting the transition to parental financial support. The principles set out above in section 1 should be used to assess the type and level of financial support. The Pathway Plan should be used to evidence and explain the level of, and the types of financial support to be provided (for those not engaged in education or training).

Where a child remains living with a parent/s for six months (after a planned return) the child's status changes from a 'Relevant' child to that of 'Qualifying' child. Once a child becomes a 'Qualifying' child, both parent/s and child are entitled to claim welfare benefits/tax credits like other parents/children. See above section 1.

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.

Section 3: Children Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order Returning to a Parent/s against the Assessment of the Child's Needs and the Wishes of the Local Authority

Social workers and personal advisers will need to undertake an assessment and risk assessment of the appropriateness of the child remaining with the parent/s where the child has returned to a parent/s against the wishes of the authority and follow due procedure.

Financial support should only be provided to the child in line with the Leaving Care Finance policy. No payment or any percentage of the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance should be made to the parent/s until it is deemed an authorised placement with parent/s.

The Pathway Plan and the provision of financial support should focus on positive engagement or re-engagement with the child.

Section 4: Children Accommodated Section 20 Returning to a Parent/s Against the Assessment of the Child's Needs and the Wishes of the Local Authority

Social workers will need to undertake an assessment and risk assessment of the appropriateness of the child remaining with the parent/s where the child has returned to a parent/s against the wishes of the authority and follow due process. A statutory review should take place to approve the decision to cease the child's Section 20 status. In circumstances where a young person (subject to section 20) aged 16 & 17 returns to live with a parent, agreement to, and approval of the ceasing to be looked after must be sought from the Director of Children's Services – Regulation 39.

Financial support should only be provided to the child in line with the Leaving Care Finance policy (where the young person is not engaged in education or training). No payment or any percentage of the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance should be made to the parents until it is deemed appropriate for the 'Relevant' child to remain living with the parent/s.

The Pathway Plan and the provision of financial support should focus on positive parental engagement or re-engagement with the child/young person and should support the child/young person to continue/resume education or training.

Summary

In essence, financial support to 16 & 17 year olds living at home should be provided by parents:

- where a child/young person is engaged in an education or training activity, the parent/parents are entitled to claim child benefit/child tax credits (after 6 months with the parent/ceasing to be looked after or on reaching age 16 if placed prior to age 16)
- where children/young people are not engaged in education or training the guidance above and the leaving care finance policy provides the framework for the provision of allowances

Eligibility chart

Situation	Eligibility
Child – Placed with P – Section 31 prior to the age of 16:	Parent able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit when child placed.
Child – Placed with P – Section 31 prior to the age of 16, reaching age 16	Parent able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit when child placed, these will continue into school year 12 if the child is undertaking education or training. If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.
Child – Placed with P – Section 31 after the age of 16.	Parent may be eligible to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit when child placed, these will continue into school year 12 if the child is undertaking education or training. If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.
Child – Placed with P – Section 31 – care order revoked when the child is aged 16/17	Parent unlikely to be able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit even if the child is undertaking an education or training activity for 6 months after the order is revoked. If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.
Child – returning to live with a parent, person with PR (section 20 ending)	• Parent unlikely to be able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit even if the child is undertaking education or training for 6 months after the return. • If the child is undertaking education or training – parent is eligible to claim benefits after the child has been at home for 6 months. • If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.

Appendix E: Criminal Injuries Compensation Awards Payments

The rules on Criminal Injuries Compensation Award (C.I.C.A.) payments allow a young person a 52 week 'grace period' regarding eligibility for means tested benefits after receipt of the award. The following guidance should still be followed.

Housing Benefit, Universal Credit legislation sets out that a C.I.C.A. payment is disregarded in terms of calculating benefit entitlement for the first 52 weeks after receipt of the award as it is deemed a personal injury payment.

Young people who receive a C.I.C.A. payment should be assisted to seek independent financial advice regarding establishing a Discretionary Trust Fund. Additionally, young people should be made aware of the implications of the C.I.C.A. payment for any benefit claim they may make or have after the 52 week disregard period. Young people should visit the Citizen's Advice Bureau and choose an independent solicitor and financial adviser to explore opportunities to use their award in a positive manner.

Generally, young people will receive their C.I.C.A. payment on their eighteenth birthday. If a young person establishes a 'Discretionary Trust Fund' prior to, or within 52 weeks of receiving their payment they continue to be eligible for benefits. Establishing a 'Discretionary Trust Fund' results in their award payment being 'tied up' until they reach the age of 21 or older.

If a C.I.C.A. award has not been placed in a Trust Fund or used after 52 weeks, the following will apply; if the award was less than £6000.00 it will not affect a claim for benefit. If the award is between £6000.00 and £16,000.00, it will result in a reduced benefit payment and an award of over £16,000.00 will disqualify a young person from benefit. Strict benefit rules apply in regard to spending the award after the 52 week disregard period, consideration should be given to the DWP rules on the inappropriate disposal of 'capital'. It is important that young people are given independent advice regarding C.I.C.A. payments and that social workers/personal advisers are not responsible for choosing who gives advice.

Where a young person has been awarded a sum in compensation for a criminal injury, Children, Schools and Families is required to disregard that capital entirely. See page 62 para 4 - Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Guidance.

Appendix F: Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Key Guidance

Social Workers and Personal Advisers must ensure that an UASC has applied to extend their leave to remain, and the application is submitted to the Home Office before their leave status expires. In the majority of UASC cases their leave status expires at the age of 17½, or on their 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. See section on - Access to Public Funds and Welfare Benefits at the end of this appendix. Consideration should also be given to appealing an initial asylum decision where a young person is granted limited leave to remain.

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 (revised 2015) and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (revised 2015) [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:

1. Applying for Asylum
2. Accepted as a Refugee
3. Granted Exceptional Leave to Remain [divided into:
 - Humanitarian Protection, or
 - Discretionary Leave]
4. Indefinite Leave to Remain
5. Refused Leave to Remain

all of which will need to be considered when undertaking their Leaving Care Assessment of Need and developing their subsequent Pathway Plan.

It should be noted that applicants who are granted refugee status may not automatically receive indefinite leave to remain. Applicants granted refugee status may 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 will be expected to return.

Most Eligible and Relevant (16 & 17 year olds) unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will receive the same opportunities as any other young person. However, there may be some differences in assessed need, 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 automatically entitled to the 16 - 19 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 eighteen.

Department for Education guidance highlights that pathway planning for the majority of UASC who do not have, a permanent immigration status, should initially take a dual or triple planning perspective, which, over time should be refined as the young person's immigration status is clarified.

Triple Planning may be based on:

- a transitional plan during the period of uncertainty when the young person is in the United Kingdom without permanent immigration status
- longer term perspective plan in the United Kingdom should the young person be granted long term permission to stay (for example through the grant of Refugee Status); or
- a return to their country of origin at any appropriate point or at the end of the immigration consideration process, should that be necessary because the young person decides to leave the UK or is required to do so.

Failed Asylum Seekers

Former Relevant Children

Where young people have an immigration status that means they have permission to work and/or have recourse to public funds they will be expected to be working or claiming benefits like other Former Relevant Children. Additionally, Northamptonshire Children's Trust will apply all of the aspects of the Former Relevant Children section of the leaving care financial policy with some exceptions to the Higher Education and Further Education sub-section.

Where young people have:

- limited leave to remain
- exceptional leave to remain
- (are) appealed an adverse decision

they are only eligible for a Northamptonshire Children's Trust Higher Education Grant for higher education courses that finish in the academic year prior to their status expiring.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust will provide a Higher Education Grant to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people only if all of the following circumstances are met:

- a) they have been offered a higher education place

- b) Student Finance England have award them a loan and/or grant
- c) they are classified as a home student.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust will work with education establishments and training providers to ensure that young people who have limited leave to remain have access to purposeful activities such as short education courses, training opportunities and courses and voluntary activities.

Where asylum seeking young people:

- have lodged an asylum application, but do not have an initial decision
- have no recourse to public funds
- are all rights exhausted

they will not be eligible for higher education funding.

Consideration will be given to supporting young people with short term universal access courses that provide enhanced education and training skills.

Young people who have exhausted all 'avenues and rights' regarding appealing an adverse asylum decision, and/or are unable to extend their exceptional leave to remain, and/or lose access to public funds/the right to work are deemed 'end of line cases' or 'all appeal rights exhausted' cases (at this point the young person will usually receive a removal directions notice).

Where young people lose access to welfare benefits and are deemed 'end of line cases' or 'all appeal rights exhausted' cases, Northamptonshire Children's Trust will provide an allowance commensurate with benefits following the completion of a Human Rights Assessment. Support will consist of accommodation and £39.60 to appeal rights exhausted young people in line with UKBA rates.

This allowance can continue to be paid until the removal date or the young person's 21st/25th birthday, whichever comes first [in principle funding for education or training courses should cease as soon as a young person receives a NRPF or ARE status]. In addition, the provision of an allowance and accommodation is dependent on the young person remaining in contact with their personal adviser and actively engaging in the pathway planning process.

(See London Borough of Barking and Dagenham [2010] EWCA Civ 1101 - Case Law).

Pathway Planning Guidance

When undertaking the Leaving Care Assessment of Need with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at age fifteen and a half and subsequently developing their Pathway Plans, social workers and personal advisers must take account of young people's immigration status and how this may limit access to public funds and services at the age of 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 the triple planning approach. For example, Pathway Plans should highlight what support would be given if the young person gains indefinite leave to remain, and an alternative Pathway Plan should highlight what support would be available should they be granted limited leave to remain and/or receive removal directions whilst advising of the post 21 process of cessation of financial support from local authority.

Appealing an Initial Asylum Decision

When young people receive their initial asylum decision consideration should be given to lodging an appeal against the decision if they receive a status other than Indefinite Leave to Remain/Refugee Status. In effect, Limited Leave to Remain is a failed asylum decision. Young people are more likely to obtain a positive decision if they appeal at the first decision stage rather than wait until their limited leave status expires. Social workers and personal advisers should liaise with the young person's solicitor to support/consider an appeal. Young people have to lodge an appeal within a very limited time (14 days of the initial decision). Evidence highlights that a high percentage of initial decision appeals are successful.

Young people who receive an initial decision giving them Limited Leave to Remain for a year or less may not be able to appeal the initial decision.

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 these 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 status and 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 always apply due to the outcomes of their asylum claim. Planning for many UASC may have to be based around short term achievable goals whilst eligibility to remain in the UK is being determined.

Planning for a return home may be difficult (for both young people and staff working with them), 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 the majority of UASC who a permanent immigration status do not have, should initially take a dual or triple planning perspective which over time should be refined as the final asylum outcome becomes known:

Triple planning:

- Longer term perspective plan in the United Kingdom should the young person be granted Refugee Status
- A transitional plan during the period of uncertainty when they are in the United Kingdom without permanent immigration status. Transitional to move to Migrant support aged 21.
- A return to their country of origin at an 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 Home Office 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 become unlawfully present in the United Kingdom and be expected to make plans for return to the country of origin. 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 Home Office case owner may be necessary to manage these risks.

Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

It is important that Personal Advisers 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).

For example, if an adult is unlawfully present in the UK, i.e. they have no form of leave to be in the UK and are not an asylum seeker (as they are failed), a local authority is prohibited from providing them with support under the leaving care provisions (and other statutes) unless this is necessary in order to avoid a breach of their human rights, whether in their home country or in the UK. This will be decided through a human rights assessment conducted by the Trust

Access to higher education for young people without status

The Immigration Act 2016 Schedule 12

1A(1)A person to whom this paragraph applies is not eligible for assistance under section 23C(4)(b), 23CA(4) or 24B(2)(b) of the Children Act 1989 (grants to meet expenses connected with education or training) which consists of a grant to enable the person to meet all or part of the person’s tuition fees.

(2)The duty in section 23C(4)(b) or 23CA(4) of that Act and the power in section 24B(2)(b) of that Act may not be exercised or performed in respect of a person to whom this paragraph applies so as to make a grant to enable the person to meet all or part of the person’s tuition fees.

(3)This paragraph applies to a person in England who is aged 18 or over and who—

(a) has leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom which has been granted for a limited period,

(b) is an asylum-seeker, or

(c) has made an application for leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom which has not been withdrawn or determined.

(4) In this paragraph “tuition fees” means fees payable for a course of a description mentioned in Schedule 6 to the Education Reform Act 1988.”

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/19/schedule/12/enacted>

Access to Public Funds and Welfare Benefits

Young people must apply to extend their leave to remain at least two months before their immigration leave status expires. If this task is completed by a young person’s eighteenth birthday and they have proof that the Home Office has received their application, the young person is then eligible to apply for benefits. Personal Advisers should obtain a letter from the young person’s solicitor that includes details of the young person’s immigration status; the date of the application to extend the leave to remain was submitted. The solicitor submits the renewal/extension by recorded post. The recorded post item will have a tracking number that can be used to verify that the Home Office received the application. The letter from the solicitor and a printout of the Post Office tracking statement should be submitted with the young person’s benefit claim.

Failed Asylum Seekers, No Recourse to Public Funds, All Rights Exhausted and Human Rights Assessments

Young people reaching the age of 18 who 1) do not have an immigration status and/or 2) young people who are failed asylum seekers and/or 3) young people who have No Recourse to Public Funds or Services and/or 4) young people who are deemed All Rights Exhausted will only be provided with practical and financial support following a Human Rights Assessment and the outcome of the assessment being that the ceasing of support would breach their human rights. Personal Advisers (and those undertaking human rights assessments) will always support young people to explore options of living with family and friends, identifying charitable sources of funding and options for returning to a country of originate.

In all situations where support has been extended as a result of a Human Rights Assessment, the assessment will be reviewed whenever there is a change of circumstances and on a three-monthly basis. Where a young person is detained and subject to a Deportation Order or is subject to the Administrative Removal process financial support will cease. Where support is provided as a result of a Human Rights Assessment, the support will cease on the young person reaching age 21/25.

Appendix G: Consent to Share or Disclose Information

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 & GDPR.

Item	Detail
Name of Student:	[enter details]
Name of University:	[enter details]
Student ID Number:	[enter details]
Title of Course:	[enter details]

Please read the following statement carefully:

I, the above-named Student, consent to Northamptonshire Children's Trust, Leaving Care Team sharing information and liaising with the above-named University in order to co-ordinate and maximise the support that I receive. I agree to the above-named university releasing and sharing information with my leaving care personal adviser regarding the following areas:

- My general participation at university
- My attendance
- My grades (by term or semester)
- Any other information that is deemed necessary

Obtaining this information will enable Northamptonshire Children's Trust to ensure you have the right level of support and financial assistance for the duration of your degree course.

Item	Detail
Date From:	[enter details]
Date To:	[enter details]
Name:	[enter details]
Signed:	[enter details]
Date:	[enter details]

Appendix H : YOUNG PEOPLE CONTRIBUTIONS LETTER

Financial Contributions from Young People

Under 18 preparation information

Support for Your Transition into Adulthood

As you approach your 18th birthday, we would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Northamptonshire Children's Trust's commitment to supporting you through your transition to adulthood. This is a significant milestone, and we want to ensure that you continue to receive the guidance and support necessary for your development into independent living.

We will remain available to provide assistance as you move forward, helping you navigate the challenges and opportunities that come with this new stage in your life. However, as part of this transition and your development of independence, there are new responsibilities that come with turning 18.

One of these responsibilities is contributing toward the costs of your placement. This is an important step in fostering financial independence and managing the responsibilities of adulthood. Your PA will be working closely with you to explain how these contributions will be calculated and provide guidance on how to manage these new financial responsibilities.

You will be expected to pay towards your rent for your accommodation. You will pay a maximum of £100 a week towards placements. In addition, you will need to pay a £15 per week utility contribution. We would not expect you to contribute more than 25% of your income.

Please discuss this letter as it contains a lot of information about what is required. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your allocated PA, Social worker, or our Duty team if you have any questions or need further clarification. We are here to support you every step of the way, ensuring that this transition is as smooth as possible.

Once again, congratulations on reaching this important milestone, and we look forward to continuing our work together in this next chapter of your life.

Yours sincerely,

Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Young Person's Allowance and Universal Credit

Until young people turn 18, they will receive a Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA), based on NCT's Care Leavers Finance Policy, and will be expected to buy food, toiletries with this weekly allowance. Young People get a clothing allowance from their social worker every 6 months.

Note: Young People will not be expected to contribute for accommodation or utilities before they turn 18.

The provider will be expected to support the young person to apply for Universal Credit and the Housing Element of Universal Credit once they turn 18, where there is an entitlement. The Provider will be expected to support young people to explore their options with the DWP even if they are in employment. The young people will then be responsible to pay for their food, toiletries and clothes as well as contributing to utilities – see following section.

Separated Young People stay on LCMA after 18 until they get status to remain or All Rights Exhausted (ARE).

Housing Element of the Universal Credit and contribution to utilities

Ahead of young people turning 18, providers will be expected to sign a license agreement with the young person, that they can present at point of application for Universal Credit and the Housing Element of Universal Credit, if eligible.

Young people will contribute to accommodation costs, paying the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate:

- Where a young person is claiming ***Housing Element of Universal Credit*** this will be **used to reduce cost of placement**.
- Where a young person is **not entitled to *Housing Element of Universal Credit*** because they are employed, the young person will pay a maximum of £100 a week towards placements.
- In addition, the **young person will pay a £15 per week** utility contribution.

Personal Advisors can consult how much is the LHA of the local authority the accommodation is in in [this link](#).

Note: NCT would not expect any young person to contribute more than 25% of their income whether they are in employment or claiming benefits. NCT will pay for the difference.

In cases where the young person is not entitled to the housing element of the universal credit for any other reason other than being employed, PA's are expected to contact the NCT placements team and with evidence from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) of reason of decline and NCT will pay for the rent until any issues are resolved.

Young People will be informed of these expectations well ahead of their 18th birthday by their PA and social worker and discussed at every CiC Review leading to their 18th birthday, and an agreement will be signed by the young person and the provider to ensure weekly payments will be made.

Instances of noncompliance:

If a young person refuses to sign a licence agreement or refuses to pay contributions, they are to be issued with a notification of expectation and warning of placement cessation considerations letter.

If a young person subsequently refuses to make payment on specified date, a placement stability meeting will be arranged with PA supported by PM / TM. This meeting will explore barriers/ difficulties to assist young person. If no agreement is reached then placement end notification is undertaken and young person given date of placement ending.

Housing will be required to be informed that young person no longer requires supported element offered by NCT LCT and that temporary accommodation is required.

If a young person begins to accrue rent arrears, we will expect a meeting to be arranged with personal Advisor, supported by PM / TM and young person to seek a resolution, continued non-payment can result in placement cessation.

Any young person claiming UC housing element or housing benefit and not passing onto the Childrens Trust is committing fraud and will be advised of this by provider and PA, repeated incidents will need to be reported as an offence has been committed.

This guide should support staff in consistently and fairly implementing the contribution process, with clear documentation and sensitivity to each young person's circumstances.

Young people's contribution 10 week warning process

- At failure to make first payment of either rent contribution or utility costs the young person is to receive an expectation letter advising them formally of their requirement to make contributions and that failure to make further payments will place their ISA at risk.
- At the next month if there is a further failure, warning letter advising that they need to set up a payment plan for that month giving two weeks' deadline, within same letter will be a planned meeting two weeks after the deadline with PA and manager.
- If they fail to make a payment plan or continue to refuse payments at point of meeting then they will be served 28 days' notice, PA will be required to submit a jigsaw referral
- If they fail to set up a payment plan the notice period 28 days they will be required to leave their placement address at the end of the 28 days.
- If they agree a payment plan during the notice period, this will then move to rolling notice and reviewed to prevent further instances of non-payment. If additional

payment is not received, then notice will be undertaken as agreed within rolling notice period.

Council Tax

When a young person in a setting turns 18 years-old they will be liable for council tax unless exempt or qualify for a reduction.

Both North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) understand that the transition out of care for young people can be very challenging. Without the support of a family and the need to manage their own finances, care leavers may be more susceptible to financial difficulties. As a result, both councils are keen to offer support to those young people who may be liable for Council Tax by giving further financial support in addition to the other discounts that may be available such as single person discount and Local Council Tax Support. Details of the process to apply for discounts and exemptions for each council can be found in appendix 7.

The provider is responsible for the payment and management of any Council Tax payments on behalf of the young person and the additional cost should be treated as an add-on to the quoted price.

Providers are expected to proactively deal with council tax in advance of the young person's 18th birthday and do the following:

- Obtain written consent from the young person to allow the provider to act on the young person's behalf with regards to council tax and for the relevant Local Authority to share council tax information, including bills, with the provider.
- Keep the relevant Local Authority informed of occupants in accommodation.
- Support the young person in applying for reductions and exemptions
- Arrange for payment for council tax bill
- Support the Young Person in reporting any changes of circumstances

Providers are expected to explain the reason for paying council tax and support young people to apply for any discounts and exemptions as part of their independence living skills, when they move on their own accommodation.

Failure to do this will result in the relevant unitary council (or other council if out of county) implementing the debt collection process and this might include the young person becoming liable for full amount as a result of non-payment or engagement, a court summons or bailiffs visiting the accommodation. This may also impact the young person's ability to move into their own tenancy. **This must be avoided at all costs.**

The provider must cover the cost of any additional council tax charge payable as a result of the young person turning 18 years old if exemptions and reductions do not apply and this can be requested as an add-on to the cost of the Placement.

Housing Application

As per section 7 on Preparing for Independence, young people are expected to start gradually working towards independence from the age of 14 and therefore, be ready to apply for housing/ seek their own accommodation once they turn 18, with support from the provider and/or their PA. It is likely this process will take a while from point of application to being offered housing, and therefore, the sooner young people apply the better chances they have to be absolutely ready to live independently once an offer is accepted.

Housing applications should be completed by the time the young person is 18 and 2 months, unless there is an agreement as part of the Pathway Plan that the young person requires further support / training to enable them to be ready for their own accommodation.

Exceptions for Separated Young People

Separated Young People will not be able to apply for housing benefit or universal credit until they have leave to remain status and get a BRP (Biometric Residence Permit) card, therefore NCT will continue to pay for their accommodation costs until they are able to apply. Providers should support the young people to apply for Universal Credit and the Housing Element as soon as their BRP card arrives and inform NCT when housing element costs can be deducted.

Council tax must be paid in full until the young people have status to remain and the process above will be applied once young people receive their BRP Identification.

Housing applications should be completed as soon as the young person receives their BRP identification.

What if Young People don't engage?

After young people turn 18 years-old, and they are not engaging with expectations mentioned above, including not engaging with their PA and their pathway plan, not paying their weekly contribution to providers, not applying for universal credit and housing element or not completing their housing application, providers will be expected to escalate this to their PA. Providers will be expected to evidence all their attempts and different strategies used to engage with young people. Professionals will be sensitive to the young people's circumstances, however, if non-engagement continues, 28 days' notice will be given to the young person, by the personal advisor.

Note: providers will not be expected to serve notice on a placement due to non-engagement and this should come from the PA, following a professionals' decision.