

HOMES2INSPIRE

POLICY No.: P 9-1

VERSION No.: 2022/1

MONEY, SHOPPING & ALLOWANCES

1. Policy

The Home aims to promote and maintain the independence of children and young people in all aspects relating to the care and services they receive and believes that control of money matters and the ability to exercise responsible choice as to how money is spent, are key elements of independence. There will be many instances, however, when support is needed, and given, and it is in these situations in particular where simple good practice needs to be implemented and observed, so as to promote trust and avoid disputes, misunderstanding or suspicion. These measures are described below.

Staying Close arrangements will also offer young people access to accredited financial management courses, as part of their plans.

This Policy also extends to the issue of conducting business transactions either in association with, or for, a child or young person. Such business transactions are expressly forbidden.

2. Cross Reference

P 7-1: Supporting Young People

P11-2 Positive Behaviour Support and Risk Management

P14-4 Care Planning

P14-5 Leaving Care

3. Legislation:

[Children Homes Regulations 2015 \(including the Quality Standards\)](#)

Standard 9 Enjoyment and Achievement
Standard 2 Promoting Diversity, a positive identity
and potential through individualised care
Regulation 4 Promotion of welfare
Regulation 2 Health needs of the young person

[The Children's Act 2004](#)

4. Allowances

All children and young people will be provided with clear information about the allowances they will receive on admissions to the Home, what expenditure the allowance is intended to cover, (e.g. for clothing, toiletries, general pocket money etc.) and how the allowances will be given to them.

The home will open a 'pocket money management account', which can be managed by the home and replaces the need for any cash handling between the child/ young person and home. Example of a pocket money management account is 'Gohenry'. *Gohenry is the pocket money management tool that helps children learn how to earn, save and spend money responsibly. Children aged 6-18 get their very own prepaid Visa debit card (just like a bank card), while parents use the app to manage the account and set spending limits.*

This will be explained and opened upon admission to the home to manage pocket money and other weekly allowance where appropriate.

Staff will, where possible support each child and young person to open a current bank account. Permission and identification will be sought from the Placing Authority and/or parents to assist with opening an account. The Home will hold savings for a child/ young person which will be issued to their social worker/ parent when they leave the care of the home if under 18years old. When a child reaches their 18th birthday they can request their savings; this should be a discussion held with their parent/ PA regarding whether they require additional support to manage their savings responsibly.

Where there is concern for the young persons' ability, understanding or vulnerability to manage their savings this should be considered prior to releasing the savings to the young person directly.

Savings will not be held in the home; the amount will be recorded internally for auditing purposes and upon discharge a cheque will be raised from the organisational finance department. On occasions when this is a minimal amount (under £25) this may be issued from the homes' 'Petty Cash' and receipt completed.

This amount saved will be in accordance with the child/ young person's Local Authorities expectations for savings which is either indicated by

the Individual Placement Agreement or within the Placing Contract. This should be clarified at the 72hr review/ Placement /LAC Review Meeting.

Where a young person has, a personal bank account the Home will, where it is deemed necessary, and reflecting the child's/ young person's abilities and wishes, monitor cash withdrawals / transactions and support the child/ young person around financial management.

Where any concerns are identified that indicate the child/ young person is at risk of exploitation or fraudulent activity, the home will notify the relevant authorities.

Where a young person wishes to make a special purchase, then consideration will be given by the Home to making an advance of allowances so that the purchase may be made.

The Home will, from time to time, introduce incentives, which will allow children to top up their allowances by undertaking specific tasks or duties, or as a reward for a special achievement. Where an allowance is increased on a temporary basis (to cover higher expenditure, such as the purchase of an expensive item of clothing or equipment) then it may be subsequently reduced.

Allowances may also be reduced or delayed due to risk-taking behaviours, including deliberate damage to property.

If this should occur, it will be recorded in the home records as a sanction or reparation and be shared with social worker/ parent/ carer as part of the weekly progress reporting.

A maximum of 25% of the total cost of damage can be deducted from a child/ young person; this should be spread over a period of time and not be more than £100.

Where significant or persistent damage is caused this should be discussed with relevant parties and consider involvement of police and other agencies to help reduce behaviours.

Any allowances not issued at the time will be saved for the child / young person.

All transactions involving allowances will be recorded.

All young people who enter into a Staying Close Arrangement, will be given full information about their benefit and monies allocated, staff will support young people with budgeting and money management as part of their pathway to independence.

All young people who have Staying Close Arrangement will have a bank account in place; this is to support their pathway to independence and will be reviewed regularly.

5. Handling Cash

The home must have a secure safe located within an area where children do not have any access.

The management of, and authorised access to, the homes' safe is the responsibility of the Home Manager. Where homes have a 'key operated' safe the Home Manager must implement a system to record access to the safe by individuals.

Where homes have a 'code operated' safe the Home Manager must implement a system of changing the code at least monthly, and following any departure of children or staff from the home.

The maximum amount of cash held at the home for daily operational needs (petty cash) should be £100 for one/two bed homes, £150 for 3bed homes, £200 for 5 bed homes and £250 for 6 bed homes.

The home must retain a log of all transactions that is stored with the petty cash.

When cash 'changes hands' it must be counted and a receipt must always be completed. Change may be noted and initialled on the same receipt.

Petty cash must be counted at every shift handover and recorded as part of the handover on Charms. This should be consistent with the log of transactions. Managers should audit the petty cash flow every week.

Children have access to a lockable metal cash box, which is allocated to them and should be kept in their rooms. Children should be encouraged to keep any personal cash or valuables locked in their 'cash box' for safe keeping.

Staff should not hold cash for children and explain to social workers/ parents/ carers that the home cannot be responsible for the safe keeping of cash held by the child in their rooms (see section 7)

6. Shopping

Where a child / young person is able, they will be allowed to shop alone if that is their wish. There will be occasions, however, when assistance with shopping is required, and the following general guidelines apply:

- Children and young people can use the Homes' IT facilities to research the better deals for their shopping choices; this will also be promoted to support independent living focussing on positive life-skills.

- For young people aged 15- 18yrs resident at the Home and in agreement with the young person; the young people, will be encouraged to gain accreditation for skills with budgeting the Home provides “The Independent Livings Skills Programme” is our own bespoke Level 2 programme accredited by OCN.
- All young people with Staying Close Arrangements will be required to complete “The independent Living Skills Programme” as part of their pathway to independence.
- The programme consists of two standalone units, Managing Time and Money and Healthy Lifestyle. Topics covered include: Budgeting, Basic Housekeeping, Benefits, House Maintenance and Housing. The guided learning hours of each unit is 40 hours although could be less with prior learning knowledge. Completed work is assessed and internally verified prior to submission to Youth achievement awards
- Where a choice of shop is available, it is the responsibility of the child / young person to make that choice, and in no circumstances should a young person be “directed” to any particular shop / outlet without their agreement
- Particular attention should be paid to supporting and meeting any cultural, ethnic or religious needs that young people may have, with respect to their clothing and personal requisites;
- Where a particular shop / outlet is used on a regular basis it makes sense to take advantage of any “loyalty” cards, bonuses or promotions that may be on offer. Assistance should be given to a child / young person in taking advantage of such offers, although the staff member must ensure that all advantages fall to the child / young person
- Where special offers exist, such as “buy one get one free”, or “extra points” (loyalty cards) the staff member must ensure that as with all other shopping opportunities, the benefits fall only to the child / young person
- In circumstances, for example, where the child / young person indicates that the staff member may benefit from any special offer or promotion, then such an offer should be respectfully declined.

Where a child/ young person is unable to shop, or does not wish to, then the Home will ensure that appropriate purchases are made on the child’s / young person’s behalf, taking into account their views, and ensuring

that all necessary toiletry and clothing products of the right type are purchased in a timely fashion and in adequate quantities.

All young people with Staying Close arrangements will undertake their own shopping as part of their plan, this may include at times support from staff as they gain their confidence in planning and budget management.

7. Money and Valuables

Safety and insurance of a personal property in the Home is the child/ young person's responsibility.

If the security of cash and other valuable objects left around the Home, or in the child/ young person's bedroom, causes concern, the risk should be brought politely to the child/ young person's attention.

If the child/ young person decides not to take precautions, staff should notify their Line Manager but should not take further action or press the matter.

The Manager will record the concern and, if appropriate, take the matter up with the child/ young person, his/her Social Worker, advocate, etc. This would be recorded within their behaviour and risk plan if appropriate.

The home will not keep money for a child, whether this be upon admission or earned/ given to them during their stay. If this request should arise then it should be discussed with the child's social worker/ parent/ carer to make arrangements for the security of the amount elsewhere. Only in exceptional circumstances would the home retain money for a child; this would require authorisation from the finance department.

Where young people are in Staying Close arrangements they are responsible for their personal property, staff will support and guide young people. Any concerns can be raised with the Home manager and as part of the young person's reviews.

8. Commercial Transactions

Staff **must not** enter into any business transactions either with, or on behalf of a child/ young person. Such transactions may include:

- Mail order purchasing, and acting as "Agent"
- Lottery syndicates
- Holiday clubs
- Saving schemes, etc.

This list is indicative and not intended to be exhaustive.

9. Loans

Staff must never borrow from or lend money to children/ young people.

10. Giving Advice

Children / young people will be encouraged to save a proportion of their allowance, although this will never be a requirement.

11. Confidential

All aspects of a child's/ young person's financial affairs are strictly confidential.

12. Governance

The Home/ Deputy Manager is responsible for governing how this policy is implemented into their homes and be able to evidence compliance for any internal or external audits.

Staff have free access to all policies, they are held on Charms.

Policies should be read in conjunction with the homes risk register.

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