

Sefton Children's Services

Financial Arrangements - Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People

Transition to Adulthood Financial Policy, Procedures and Guidance 2024 – 2025

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Background and Context:

Sefton Children's Services has a number of responsibilities to care for and care experienced young people which include the provision of maintenance and accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds and financial support to enable young people to make a successful transition to adulthood; these responsibilities depend upon age and circumstance. In addition, there is a requirement to support young people to develop financial capability and money management skills and gradually help them to take more responsibility for their personal finances.

This policy outlines the arrangements that Sefton Children's Services has in place to meet these duties and responsibilities and how it supports young people to make a positive financial transition from care to independence.

Notes and Implementation Issues

1. All allowances should be based upon an assessment of need and the young person's social worker (up to age 18) and personal adviser (over 18) should ensure that any allowances are detailed and are set out in the young person's Pathway Plan. The Plan must also highlight any attached conditions, how payments will be made, the frequency of payments, when they will be reviewed and when they will cease. Allowances are conditional on reasonable engagement in the Pathway Plan.
2. By the age of 16 all young people (with some exceptions for UASC) should have a National Insurance Number and relevant identity documents, including photographic evidence to ensure they can register for housing, bank accounts and claim welfare benefits.
3. All young people should, where possible, have a savings/bank account by the age of 14 at the latest. All allowances will be paid to young people through their savings/bank account. If they are unable to open a savings/bank account a pre-paid card can be issued and used in the same way, only in exceptional circumstances will cash payments be made.
4. The allowances contained in section 1 of this Cared For and Care Experienced Finance Policy apply to a) young people aged 16 & 17 who are care for children, b) young people deemed Eligible, c) young people who are deemed Relevant and who are living in semi-independent homes or independent accommodation which is not registered under the Care Standards Act 2000 and therefore not inspected by Ofsted. The allowances contained in section 2 and 3 apply to all Former Relevant Children and the allowances in section four apply to all Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children (See Appendix A for definitions of the different categories of care experienced young people.
5. Subject to, depending on an assessment of need, Qualifying Children may be entitled to the same level of support as Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children.
6. Young people (aged 16 & 17) living in fostering or residential homes will be covered by the allowances set out in the financial policy applying to foster care and residential care.

7. It is a requirement that the allowances in this finance policy are reviewed annually and are aligned with current welfare benefit rates for young people under the age of 25.
8. Certain groups of cared for children and care experienced young people aged 16 & 17 are eligible to claim welfare benefits (lone parents and sick and disabled young people). Where young people are eligible to claim benefits, support should be provided to maximise their benefit income. Where young people aged 16 & 17 are in receipt of welfare benefits, several of the allowances cease. More information on this is available at page 13 which covers young people who are eligible for, and in receipt of welfare benefits/Universal Credit.
9. Cared for children and care experienced young people who are also unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are entitled to the same allowances as any other cared for children and care experienced young people. However, allowances to this group of young people may be affected and limited because of their immigration status.
10. The allowances set out in the following sections apply to all young people who are cared for and/or deemed, Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant and are dependent on an assessment of need and their legal and immigration status. All allowances can also be applied to Qualifying Children, subject to a full assessment of their circumstances and needs.
11. Wherever possible, VAT should be reclaimed on all purchases (that are VAT rated). A VAT receipt is required for all purchases made with a purchase card. When purchasing with all other payment methods a receipt with a VAT number is required for items up to £250.00 and a full VAT receipt is required for items over £250.00.

Legislation:

12. This policy has been prepared in compliance with the Children Act 1989 and supplementary guidance covering young people who are also deemed care experienced (care leavers). This includes the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 (Revised 2015 and 2022) regulations and guidance volume 3.

Document Structure:

- Section 1 – Cared for Children– Eligible and Relevant (and Qualifying) Children aged 16 & 17.
- Section 2 (A & B) – Former Relevant (and Qualifying Children) aged 18 to 21/25.
- Section 3 – Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant (and Qualifying) Children aged 16 to 21/25.
- Section 4 – Appendices - Categories of Care Experienced Young People (Care Leavers), Asylum Seeking Children & Young People, National Insurance Numbers and Leaving Care Finance Chart.

Assessing the Provision of Allowances for 16 & 17 Year Olds

- **Eligible and Relevant Children aged 16 & 17**
- **Cared for Children aged 16 & 17 who have not been cared for (looked after) for the pre-requisite 13 weeks which is required for a child to be deemed an Eligible or Relevant Children.**

Cared for, and care experienced young people aged 16 & 17 (with the exception of Qualifying Children – identified in section 24 of the Children Act 1989) are entitled to a weekly Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.

All other allowances are based on an assessment of need and will vary between young people. For example, travel allowances associated with family time will vary, depending on the location of family and the cost of travel to the specific location.

Birthday, Christmas/festival and other allowances should not be provided to children placed/living at home where it is assessed that these may create disparities within the family (see appendix D).

The payments for young people noted in the policy may be available to all 16 or 17-year olds subject to an assessment of need. Where young people are eligible to claim a means tested benefit (currently, Universal Credit) certain allowances should cease.

The Care/Pathway Plan must be used to evidence which allowances will/will not be provided (and any contribution required from the young person who is working), the level of the allowances and the reasoning behind granting/not granting the allowance.

Assessing the Provision of Allowances for 18 to 21/25 Year Olds

- **Former Relevant Children Section 23C aged 18 to 21, or until the education or training course being undertaken on their 21st birthday is completed.**

The majority of care experienced young people aged 18 should be financing themselves through the following:

- a) Employment;
- b) Education allowances;
- c) Welfare benefits (Universal Credit).

Following an assessment of need and depending on a young person being engaged in education or training some of the allowances set out in the policy may be provided. The Pathway Plan must be used to evidence which allowances will/will not be provided, the level and the reasoning behind granting/not granting the allowance: -

- **Former Relevant Children – Section 23CA and Section 23CZB - Care Leavers aged 21 to 25 (Section 23CA and Section 23CZB)**

1. Young people returning to the responsible authority (Sefton Children's Services) to resume education or training and requesting financial support will have an assessment of need undertaken by a member of the Care Experienced Team, the

outcome of the assessment and any financial request will be presented to one of the Care Experienced Team Managers.

2. Young people returning to the responsible authority to request a more general Care Experienced Service will be provided with practical support to assist them to address specific needs or requirements and become self-sustaining, rather than being provided with financial support. Financial support will be provided in very exceptional circumstances, following an assessment of need and consideration by one of the Care Experienced Team Managers.

Assessing the Provision of Allowances covering Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children Section 23C, 23CA, 23CZB - Aged 16 to 21/25.

- **Setting Up Home Allowance - Section 23C, 23CA & 23CZB**

Young people can access the Setting Up Home Allowance between the ages of 16 and 21/25 when they move to semi-independent or independent accommodation. Where a young person moves to semi-independent accommodation (supported accommodation as an adult or on a temporary return home basis) it is recommended that a proportion of the allowance is used and when they move to independent accommodation the remainder can be used. The Pathway Plan must be used to set out what items a young person needs in the semi-independent or independent accommodation that they are moving to, based on the items already contained in the accommodation and the items the young person may already have.

The Setting Up Home Allowance is divided into several components.

- Setting Up Home Allowance;
 - TV licence – provided once;
 - Household items provided over a period of time;
 - Cooker fitting, by an approved installer - provided once;
 - Contents insurance provided once;
 - Removal costs - provided once.

Cared for Children and those deemed Eligible and Relevant (Aged 16 and 17) who are living in semi-independent and independent homes.

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

Basis and Amount	Conditions and Comments
Accommodation and Home Costs	Home and accommodation costs to be met in full for young people up to the age of 18. Where young people are moving into private sector accommodation the rent level should (wherever possible) 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 through an Adolescent or Care Experienced Team Manager.
Where young people are moving into private sector accommodation the rent level must be within the Local Housing Allowance rate for the given area.	<p>Housing Benefit rates for private sector tenants who rent from a private landlord is calculated using the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The Valuation Officer sets the level of the LHA for the different types of property in each LHA designated area; these are known as Broad Rental Market Areas. This is determined by post-code, not council boundaries, as some councils might have 2 or 3 BRMA's. The same process and figures are used for Universal Credit housing costs.</p> <p>Under LHA, payments will generally be made directly to the tenant unless they are particularly 'vulnerable'. Being a care experienced young person would, in principle, qualify a young person to have his or her LHA paid directly to the landlord via a request to the DWP for an Alternative Payment Arrangement (UC47 form). The intention of paying LHA directly to tenants is to encourage responsibility for paying the rent themselves.</p> <p>Maximum weekly Local Housing Allowance rates from 1st April 2024 are:</p> <p>Sefton:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared accommodation £79.25 • one-bedroom accommodation £115.07 <p>Note:</p> <p>The postcode of the actual property address should be used to check which 'Broad Rental Market Area' rate covers that particular area. For example, some parts of Sefton may come within the Southport BRMA's.</p>

<p>Accommodation and Home Costs <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Current rates for all LHA areas can be checked via the Valuation Office Agency website: Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates applicable from April 2024 to March 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) or via http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx</p> <p>There is also an absolute cap on Local Housing Allowance rate for each property size within the private sector.</p> <p>Care experienced young people 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 1-bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate. From their 25th birthday, care experienced young people will only be eligible for housing benefit (or UC housing element costs) up to the shared room rate but may be eligible for discretionary housing payments (DHP's) in some circumstance. Some care experienced young people (those who have lived in certain hostel accommodation) may be entitled to a one-bedroom rate or higher e.g., if severely disabled or if they have a child or a partner up to age 35.</p> <p>In the majority of social housing (council and housing association) the full rent will be covered by the Housing Element of Universal Credit.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances Sefton Children's Services will act as a trustee or guarantor for young people following an assessment of need and all other possible trustees or guarantors being explored and ruled out. Prior to agreeing to act as a trustee or guarantor, the scope of what is being covered by the trustee/guarantor needs to be fully identified and authorised, i.e., a) rent b) damages etc, and the limits to any liability. In principle, Sefton Children's Services would be acting as a trustee/guarantor for the rent. In situations where Sefton Children's Services has acted as a trustee/guarantor for 16 and 17 year olds, a new tenancy agreement should be produced when the young person reaches their 18th birthday. This is particularly important where young people are living in private accommodation. The liability and responsibility for the condition and the cost of the accommodation should be transferred to the young person at age 18 (apart from NRPF cases). Where necessary Sefton Children's Services will pay for a new tenancy agreement to be drawn up. Approval to act as a trustee or guarantor is required from the Head of Service.</p> <p>When young people move into privately rented accommodation their personal adviser should take pictures on their phone or portable device that show the condition of the property and any items that are included in the rent/inventory. The pictures should be sent to the young person and landlord and also stored on the young person's LCS record. This will assist with negotiating with the landlord if there are problems regarding the condition of the property and the return of the deposit when the young person leaves the property.</p>
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<p>Deposit and Rent in Advance.</p>	<p>Where a young person has access to housing authority or housing association independent accommodation a deposit and rent in advance should not be provided. 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.</p> <p>Where young people are moving into private accommodation a deposit and rent in advance will be provided if the rent level falls within the given Local Housing Allowance rate for that area.</p> <p>Personal Advisers should check if a 'Rent Deposit Scheme' exists in the area the young person is aiming to live and/or what 'Rent Deposit Protect Scheme' the letting agent/landlord uses.</p> <p>In circumstances where Sefton Children's Services is providing the deposit, or is providing a bond guarantee, the deposit/bond guarantee should, where possible, be in the name of Sefton Children's Services. If this is not possible and the deposit is in the name of the young person, the young person should make a signed commitment to returning the deposit to Sefton Children's Services.</p> <p>Many local authority housing departments operate Deposit Guarantee Schemes that offers landlords a legally binding deposit bond in place of a cash deposit.</p> <p>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. Social Workers/Personal Advisers should check which scheme that landlord is using.</p> <p>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. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenant-fees-act-2019-guidance</p> <p>Private sector landlords are required to provide a copy of the 'How to Rent' Leaflet to all tenants. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent</p>
<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance</p> <p>£71.70 per week LCMA</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>In situations where young people are not involved in any education, training, employment or a voluntary activity and where possible, the allowance could be paid at, or in association with meeting their social worker/personal adviser or the Employability Officer. In addition, paying the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance</p>

Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance <i>Continued</i>	<p>directly to the young person (in cash or kind) may be beneficial in situations where they are reluctant to engage, at risk and/or where meeting with them directly on a regular basis would be beneficial.</p> <p>Young people who are undertaking low paid employment will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance until they earn a given threshold.</p> <p>This allowance is provided up to the age of 18 and can be paid via BACS, Pre-Paid Card, in cash or in kind (vouchers), via the accommodation/support provider, depending on an assessment of need and the requirements and circumstances of individual young people.</p> <p>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.</p>								
Semi-Independent Home and Supported Accommodation Adjustments	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Coverage and Accommodation Type</th><th>Basic Personal Element - £71.70</th></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs</td><td>£71.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation</td><td>£61.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities and food</td><td>£51.70</td></tr> </table> <p>The utilities/food deduction is made based on assisting young people to plan and budget for utilities/food for when they become responsible for budgeting for these items themselves at the age of 18.</p> <p>The utilities/food deduction is usually made prior to the allowance being paid to the young person but can be paid to the young person, with a view to them paying it to the semi-independent provider (subject to an assessment of need).</p> <p>Young people placed in emergency accommodation will continue to receive the full LCMA where cooking facilities are available. Where cooking facilities are not available consideration will be given to an additional meals allowance of £10.00 per week.</p>	Coverage and Accommodation Type	Basic Personal Element - £71.70	Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£71.70	Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation	£61.70	Young person is provided with utilities and food	£51.70
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Benefit Entitlement	<p>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 ceases for these groups.</p>								

<p>Lone Parents Entitled to Welfare Benefits</p>	<p>Transfer to Benefits from the Birth of their Baby.</p> <p>Lone parents (cared for children and care experience young people) aged 16 and 17, either Section 31 (Care Order) or Section 20 (Accommodated) are eligible to claim Universal Credit, Child Benefit and Healthy Start Vouchers from the birth of their baby.</p> <p>As they have an entitlement to benefits, they are also entitled to apply for a Sure Start Maternity Grant from the day their baby is born (or up to 11 weeks earlier if in receipt of a qualifying benefit such as Employment & Support Allowance or Universal Credit on limited capability for work grounds at that time). This includes young people living in foster care and residential care.</p> <p>The £500.00 'Sure Start' Maternity Grant is claimed from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The Sure Start Maternity Grant is only available for the oldest or first child. Lone parents should be supported and assisted to claim their full benefit entitlement.</p> <p>Due to having an entitlement to welfare benefits and when the lone parent is in receipt of benefits (Universal Credit) the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance will cease. All other allowances remain.</p>
<p>Sick or Disabled Young People Entitled to Welfare Benefits</p>	<p>Transfer to welfare benefits at age 16 or when entitled to Universal Credit on 'limited capability for work' grounds commence.</p> <p>Young people (cared for children and care experienced young people) aged 16 and 17, either Section 31 (Care Order) or Section 20 (Accommodated) who have limited capability for work due to ill-health (deemed Sick and Disabled by the DWP) are eligible to claim Universal Credit (or Employment & Support Allowance) from their 16th birthday on the grounds of 'Limited Capability for Work (LCW)'. This includes young people living in foster care and residential care. Being in receipt of a Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independence Payment at the higher rate makes claiming UC more straight forward.</p> <p>From December 2021, the LCW must have commenced prior to starting education – in affect this means must young people are unable to claim UC on LCW grounds until they leave school or reach age 18.</p> <p>Young people should be supported and assisted to claim their full benefit entitlement.</p> <p>Due to having an entitlement to welfare benefits (UC or ESA) and when the young person is in receipt of these benefits the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance will cease. All other allowances remain.</p>

<p>Travel</p> <p>Merseytravel Saveaway Ticket</p> <p>16 & 17 Year Olds</p>	<p>All young people aged 16 and 17 will be provided with a Merseytravel Saveaway Ticket.</p> <p>Where young people live outside of the Merseytravel area, they will be provided with a local area travel card.</p> <p>The Saveaway ticket/local travel pass will assist young people to access education, training, and employment opportunities, facilitate family time and have contact with their social worker/personal adviser and enable access to leisure and cultural activities.</p>
<p>Young People Placed with Parents / Living with Parents</p>	<p>Cared for children (Eligible) placed at home under 'placement with parents' regulations and care experienced young people (Relevant) living at home:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the young person is engaged in education or training and they returned to the parent before the age of 16 (and remain cared for), the parent may be eligible to claim Child Benefit and Tax Credits/Universal Credit. 2. If the young person returned to a parent after the age of 16, remains cared for, it is unlikely the parent will be able to claim Child Benefit or Tax Credits/Universal Credit and the young person is not eligible to claim benefits in their own right, in which case cared experienced financial funding will apply. For detailed guidance please see Appendix D. <p>See Appendix - D</p>
<p>Qualifying Children</p>	<p>Dependent on an assessment of need which includes an evaluation of all income, Qualifying Children may be entitled to all allowances. The assessment of need will normally be undertaken using the Assessment of Need (Pathway Plan - Part One) framework.</p> <p>See Appendix B</p>
<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance -</p> <p>Adjustments Where Young People are Earning –</p> <p>Any Adjusted Amounts are added to the Young Person's Junior ISA / Savings / SUHA</p>	<p>Suggested Adjustments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a young person has a net income of £135.00 net or more per week, his/her maintenance allowance will be reduced by 50%. • When a young person has a net income of £155.00 net or more per week, his/her maintenance allowance and clothing and leisure allowance will cease. <p>Reductions are undertaken from the principle of assisting with the development of money management and budgeting skills. As such, any reduction will be saved for the young person and added to their Junior ISA/Savings or Setting Up Home Allowance.</p> <p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, Wages and Earnings, Traineeship Allowances, Modern Apprenticeship Allowances and the 16 - 19 Bursary count as income.</p> <p>Young people should be issued with a Reductions/Savings Notice setting out the following:</p>

<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance - Reductions and Adjustments Where Young People are Earning –</p> <p>Reductions are added to the Young Person's Junior ISA / Savings / SUHA</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The level of reduction (of their allowance/s); 2. When the reduction will commence (how it will be returned to the young person via their Junior ISA, Savings, SUHA). 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. <p>The Reduction/Savings Notice (Added to Junior ISA/Savings/SUHA) should be issued in writing and signed by the young person.</p> <p><u>Reduction equation:</u></p> <p>Total income minus fares, work costs and the cost of lunches. See examples below</p> <p>Example 1 – No reduction/adjustment required</p> <table> <tr> <td>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance</td><td>£71.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>16 – 19 Bursary</td><td>£40.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Wages from part time job</td><td>£28.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td><td>£139.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>minus costs (lunches X 2)</td><td>£9.50-</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>£130.20</td></tr> </table> <p>Example 2 – Reduction/adjustment required (reduction added to savings or SUHA)</p> <table> <tr> <td>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance</td><td>£71.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Wages from part time job</td><td>£95.00</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td><td>£166.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Minus costs (lunches X 4)</td><td>£19.00-</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>£147.70</td></tr> </table> <p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance reduced by 50% -£35.85 (Saved or Added to SUHA)</p> <p><u>LCMA reduced by 50% - net income becomes = £130.85 – reduction of £35.85 – added to the young person's Junior ISA/Savings or Setting Up Home Allowance.</u></p> <p>To monitor payments/reductions and other education, training and employment related payments, social workers and personal advisers will need to maintain close liaison with a young person's education, training, and employment provider.</p> <p>Additionally, this liaison will ensure a young person receives practical assistance, if, and when required. To facilitate this process young people must sign the 'Agreement to Share Information Form' so that social workers/personal advisers can liaise with the employers and education/training providers.</p> <p>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 five weeks of employment.</p> <p>A young person will need to provide proof of income in order that his/her social worker/personal adviser can calculate the level of the reduction/saved element. If</p>	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	£71.70	16 – 19 Bursary	£40.00	Wages from part time job	£28.00	Total Income	£139.70	minus costs (lunches X 2)	£9.50-		£130.20	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	£71.70	Wages from part time job	£95.00	Total Income	£166.70	Minus costs (lunches X 4)	£19.00-		£147.70
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Total Income	£139.70																						
minus costs (lunches X 2)	£9.50-																						
	£130.20																						
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	£71.70																						
Wages from part time job	£95.00																						
Total Income	£166.70																						
Minus costs (lunches X 4)	£19.00-																						
	£147.70																						

<i>Continued</i>	proof is not forthcoming it will be assumed that earnings are exceeding £135.00 / £155.00 net per week and either 50% or 100% of the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance will be added to the young person's Junior ISA/Savings or Setting Up Home Allowance.
Clothing Allowance 16 & 17 Year Olds - £7.00 Per Week	16 & 17 year olds - £7.00 per week clothing allowance. The clothing allowance can be paid weekly, monthly or quarterly and can be paid directly to the young person or spent by the social worker, personal adviser or support worker with the young person. The arrangements for providing and spending the clothing allowance should be set out in the young person's pathway plan and placement plan and should be dependent on an assessment of need.
Initial Clothing Allowance Up-to £200.00 Depending on an Assessment of Need	In circumstances where young people become cared for and are placed into 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 cared for with insufficient clothing for everyday needs. When a young person first becomes cared for, their social worker/personal adviser/support worker 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 costings should be submitted to an Adolescent Team - Team Manager for approval.
Birthday 17 th birthday £50.00 18 th Birthday £50.00 Young People Living in Semi-independent or Independent Accommodation	A gift or gifts and/or a contribution towards the cost of celebrations to the total value of £50.00. Responsibility for the purchase of the gift/gift's rests with the social worker/personal adviser. The £50.00 includes the cost of a card and gift wrap. Only in exceptional circumstances can the £50.00 be provided as a gift voucher or gift card. The birthday allowance should not be provided in cash. The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in touch with their social worker/personal adviser and are actively engaged in the care planning/pathway planning process. Where young people are deemed to have withdrawn from active engagement with the Cared For / Care Experienced Team and their social worker/personal adviser, the birthday allowance will be suspended.
Christmas/Festivals £50.00 Age 16 and 17. Young People Living in Semi-independent or Independent Accommodation	A gift or gifts and/or a contribution towards the cost of celebrations to the total value of £50.00. The £50.00 includes the cost of a card and gift wrap. Responsibility for the purchase of the gift/gift's rests with the social worker/personal adviser. Young people of different faiths 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.

Christmas/ Festivals <i>Continued</i>	<p>Only in exceptional circumstances can the £50.00 be provided as a gift voucher or gift card. The Christmas/festival allowance should not be provided in cash.</p> <p>The Christmas/festival allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in touch with their social worker/personal adviser and who are actively engaged in the care planning/pathway planning process. Where young people are deemed to have withdrawn from active engagement with the Cared For / Care Experienced Team and their social worker/personal adviser, the Christmas/festival allowance will be suspended.</p>
Family Time and Travel Costs - Maximum £250.00 per Year.	<p>Where young people have family members who live outside of the Sefton area (outside of the Merseyside regional travel offer), telephone and travel costs may be provided following an assessment of need. Wherever possible travel arrangements should be booked in advance to reduce costs.</p> <p>Following an assessment of need Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children may be provided with a £5.00 per week phone card/internet allowance.</p> <p>The use of the allowance and frequency of travel should be set out in the pathway plan.</p> <p>Where young people have family, who live outside of the Sefton area (outside of the Merseyside regional travel offer) and travel costs may exceed £250.00 per year, agreement to exceed this limit must be sought from an Adolescent Team - Team Manager.</p>
Time with Significant Others and Travel Costs - Maximum £250.00 per Year	<p>Where young people have significant people that live outside of the Sefton area (outside of the Merseyside regional travel offer), telephone and travel costs may be provided following an assessment of need. Wherever, possible travel arrangements should be booked in advance to reduce costs.</p> <p>The use of the allowance and frequency of travel should be set out in the pathway plan.</p> <p>Where young people have family, who live outside of the Sefton area (outside of the Merseyside regional travel offer) and travel costs may exceed £250.00 per year, agreement to exceed this limit must be sought from an Adolescent Team - Team Manager.</p>
Social Activities and Leisure Maximum of £10.00 per Week. Up to £520.00 per Year	<p>Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need Sefton Children's Services will pay for the membership of a hobby or leisure club and contribute towards the cost of equipment or special clothing/fees or contribute towards the cost of a social activity. This could include the cost of trial sessions and a contribution to travel costs. Social workers / personal advisers should assist young people to obtain a 'Sefton – Active Fitness' - Leisure Pass. Young people should be encouraged and assisted to explore the leisure facilities that the 'Active Fitness' pass provides access too.</p>

<p>Social Activities and Leisure <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Where young people live outside of the Sefton area, assistance will be provided to obtain a local Passport to Leisure.</p> <p>Young people should have access to at least one leisure/hobby/sports activity per week to ensure social inclusion.</p> <p>In principle, the activity will be paid for by Sefton Children's Services rather than the allowance being paid to the young person.</p>
<p>Life Chances / Social Activity Up to £130.00 per Year – One Off Payment for 17 Year Olds</p>	<p>Children's Services will provide up to £130.00 for a major social activity/life chances activity once per year. The activity should be undertaken with a social worker, personal adviser, ex foster care or another key individual. The activity could range from a visit to the theatre, sporting event, art gallery or a day trip to a city to visit several museums etc.</p> <p>The allowance is dependent on an assessment of need and an assessment of the suitability of the activity.</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need and an assessment of the suitability of the activity/s, the allowance could be provided as two payments of up to £65.00 each.</p> <p>The allowance should be used to fund the activity and refreshments for the young person and social worker/personal adviser/foster carer and the travel costs for the young person. Travel costs for the social worker/personal adviser/foster carer should be claimed via the staff travel budget.</p>
<p>Key Documents Up To £130.00</p>	<p>Children Services will purchase a passport and 1 birth certificate for each young person, including covering the cost of photos and postage.</p> <p>One adult passport, or passport renewal age 16 to 21, one birth certificate only if the young person does not have the original. This will ensure young people will have a valid passport until at least age 25 or beyond.</p>
<p>Education, Training, Apprenticeships and Volunteering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 but will receive the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider. • Young people who are undertaking voluntary work will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.

<p>Learner Agreements Education, Training, Apprenticeships Volunteering <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>All education, training, and employment support (practical and financial) will be based on an individual learner agreement developed between the young person and their social worker/personal adviser and including input from the Employability Officer. The agreement will set out the level of practical and financial support to be provided by all parties and will include learning goals and targets and attendance/academic requirements. Failure to comply with the learner agreement may result in financial and practical support ceasing and a requirement to leave the course or activity.</p>
<p>£1,200.00 Per Year, £40.00 Per Week Incentive (Govt)</p>	<p>Education and Training Young people who are undertaking an education course or training activity will receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.</p> <p>Additionally, young people who are undertaking full time education courses or unpaid training courses (minimum 12 hours study/training and contact time) are a priority group and 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).</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>£1,200.00 Per Year, £40.00 Per Week Incentive (Sefton)</p>	<p>Where a young person is involved in a full-time education or training activity (or a voluntary/positive activity that will lead to education/training/employment) that does not attract a 16 to 19 Bursary, Sefton Children's Services will provide a £40.00 per week incentive – maximum £1,200.00 per year). Young people will receive the Government Bursary or the Sefton Incentive, not both.</p> <p>Social workers/personal advisers should liaise with the Virtual School to check if arrangements are in place with Further Education Colleges regarding piloting Pupil Premium Plus for cared for children and care experienced young people. The Department for Education are supporting the Virtual Schools to pilot the use of Pupil Premium Plus in Further Education Colleges.</p> <p>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 £117.70 per week the allowance is topped up to £117.70.</p> <p>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.</p>

Education, Training, Apprenticeships Volunteering <i>Continued</i>	<p>The National Minimum Wage of £6.40 per hour applies to apprentices from April 2024. The wage applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all apprentices aged under 19• apprentices aged 19 or over in the first year of their Apprenticeship <p>This should mean that apprentices get a weekly wage of at least £243.20 (38 hours per week).</p> <p>National Minimum Wage 2024-2025</p> <table><tr><td>21 Plus</td><td>18 to 20</td><td>Under 18</td><td>Apprentice</td></tr><tr><td>£11.44</td><td>£8.60</td><td>£6.40</td><td>£6.40</td></tr></table> <p>Young people (cared for children and care experienced young people up to age 25) who are undertaking an apprenticeship are eligible for a one-off £3000.00 Apprenticeship Bursary (paid via the Provider), in addition, the Apprenticeship Provider also receives £1,000.00 to support the apprentice, this is provided once and usually within the first three months.</p> <p>Voluntary Work</p> <p>Young people who are undertaking voluntary work up to 15 hours per week will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, plus the £40.00 per week incentive - £1,200.00 maximum per year.</p>	21 Plus	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice	£11.44	£8.60	£6.40	£6.40
21 Plus	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice						
£11.44	£8.60	£6.40	£6.40						
Employment	<p>Young people who are working will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance until their wage reaches a given threshold.</p> <p>See employment reductions/adjustments/savings section.</p>								
Digital Connectivity	<p>Young people who are seeking employment and claiming Universal Credit may be eligible for six months of free broadband internet access. Several broadband and mobile providers also have reduced rate tariffs (£10.00 per month) for those claiming Universal Credit (Talk Talk, BT, Virgin Money).</p> <p>Where a young person is on a low wage or has a low income and doesn't qualify for a reduced rate tariff, Children's Services will provide six months of digital access (age 16 to 18). This may be provided via the Care Experienced Young Persons Covenant Offer or directly by Children's Services.</p> <p>Subject to an assessment of need and where young people require a mobile phone to remain in touch with their personal adviser, and/or, to make/sustain a Universal Credit claim they will be provided with a basic Smart Phone. This can be provided once and in an emergency.</p>								

Education, Training, Apprenticeships Employment - Related Support	<p>Depending on an assessment of need, including the suitability of the course/activity, Children's Services may provide equipment and travel costs for education or training courses and employment opportunities of the young person's choice. Where appropriate, Children's Services will also consider funding extra tuition.</p> <p>In circumstances where young people are withdrawing from courses and equipment has been provided, this should be returned to Children's Services. Young people who are entering second courses will be loaned equipment until they have demonstrated consistent attendance. When they have demonstrated consistent attendance, new equipment will be purchased following an assessment of need. 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.</p> <p>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 Children's Services.</p>
FE & HE - Stationery, Educational Visits, Books and Equipment	<p>Education</p> <p>Young people who are undertaking full time further or higher education courses are entitled to a grant to assist with:</p> <p>Up to £50.00 Stationery Grant; Up to £75.00 Educational Visits Grant; Up to £100.00 Books and Equipment/IT Equipment Grant; The Grant is per academic year, is not transferable and is only available for stationary, educational visits, books, equipment and I.T. equipment.</p>
Computer Grant	<p>All young people entering full time further education (level 2 or above academic courses) will be provided with a one-off Computer Grant of up to £300.00 for a notepad, laptop or desktop computer (£360.00 where the computer is NET of VAT). Computers should be purchased by social workers/personal advisers in order to reclaim VAT. - One off – age 16 to 21/24, regardless of home type.</p> <p>Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc (to be verified), and return receipts to their social worker/personal adviser.</p>
Child Care Costs	<p>Childcare costs should be accessed through the Care to Learn Fund. https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn</p>
Commencing Work Grant	<p>Employment</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need, Children's Services will purchase equipment and/or clothing to assist the young person with their chosen employment e.g., interview clothes, overalls, protective clothing. Additionally, Sefton Children's Services may assist with the cost of travel to interviews, subject to an assessment of need.</p>

<p><i>Continued</i></p> <p>Prom Activity Up To £200.00</p>	<p>Maximum Commencing Work Grant/Allowance £100.00 – Provided Once.</p> <p>Children’s Services will support young people to participate in a ‘Prom Activity’, costs can include dress/suit hire or purchase, transport, prom tickets and associated costs. This is provided once to enable children/young people to take part in their school prom (generally at the end of year 11 or 13). The school leaver’s prom allowance can be used to cover the cost of attendance, clothing, and photographs etc.</p>
<p>Introduction to Driving Allowance Age 17 (to 21)</p>	<p>Sefton Children Services will provide the following Introduction to Driving package to assist a young person’s employability and to provide an additional identity document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. 1 provisional driving licence; B. 1 theory test; C. 1 theory test resource (booklet or App) D. 10 (1 hour) driving lessons; E. 1 practical driving test. <p>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 6 months, having no driving convictions and the young person also paying for 5 car driving lessons. Young people must pay the cost of their 5 lessons to their social worker/personal adviser who will then book the 15 lessons. In general, by paying for 15 lessons in a block, driving schools provide an extra lesson free.</p> <p>Young people must provide their contribution before the overall package is provided. Young people can use their birthday or Christmas/festival allowance to pay for their five lessons. No other allowances are transferable for this purpose.</p> <p>The lessons must be provided by an approved instructor and should be used for motor car lessons.</p> <p>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 (and having completed at least 6 months). Consideration of eligibility and funding of lone parents and SEND young people should be presented to a Care Experienced Team Manager.</p> <p>Children’s Services will pay for the practical driving test at the point where an approved driving school recommends that the young person is ready to take the test.</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need, which must be linked to the need to travel to an education, training, or employment opportunity the driving package can be used to fund a moped/motor bike training programme. Young people must attend a CBT programme prior to driving on public roads.</p> <p>Personal advisers should also check what additional support may be available from the Rees Foundation to supplement the Introduction to Driving package.</p>

Counselling and Therapeutic Needs	Children's Services will assist young people to access counselling and/or therapeutic services via CAMHS or universal health services.
Health Maximum of £100.00 per Year (£250.00 for Hearing Aid equipment)	<p>Children's Services will assist young people to access services to meet their health and developmental needs via the 'cared for' children health provision and via universal health services.</p> <p>Social workers/personal advisers should complete NHS Form HC1 (SC) 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 costs may be considered following an assessment of need and in specific and exceptional services.</p> <p>In situations where young people require glasses and receive an NHS Voucher, Children's Services will match the value of the voucher (£37.50), total value £75.00.</p> <p>For hearing aid equipment, the maximum allowance is £250.00 per Year.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances and dependent on an assessment of need, Sefton Children's Services may provide funds to secure additional health services. Funding above £100.00/£250.00 per year requires the authorisation of an Adolescent Team Manager.</p>
Hospitalisation Grant Essential Items - £40.00	Young people who have a hospital stay of over one week, or are anticipated to have such a stay, will be provided with a £40.00 Hospital Pack containing slippers, night wear and a dressing gown etc.
Cultural Needs Maximum of £100.00 per Year	<p>Children's Services will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their cultural needs. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Children's Services will fund services aimed at meeting identified needs i.e., skin and hair care needs, dietary needs, and requirements.</p> <p>Funding above £100.00 per year requires the authorisation of an Adolescent Team Manager.</p>
Religious Needs Maximum of £100.00 per Year	<p>Children's Services will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their religious needs. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Children's Services will fund services aimed at meeting identified religious needs i.e., travel to religious venues.</p> <p>Funding above £100.00 per year requires the authorisation of an Adolescent Team Manager.</p>

Child Care Costs	<p>Lone parents, who wish to return to education, start a traineeship/apprenticeship or take up employment opportunities, will be assisted to identify funds to cover or contribute to childcare costs. In the first instance the Care to Learn Fund and other universal services should be approached for funding.</p> <p>The Care to Learn Fund provides financial support to assist young parents under the age of 20 to undertake education. https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn</p>
Special Needs Costs Maximum of £100.00 per Year	<p>Sefton Children's Services will assist young people to access services to meet their special needs and depending on the outcome, may assist in providing resources to address the identified need.</p> <p>Funding above £100.00 per year requires the authorisation of an Adolescent / Care Experienced Team Manager.</p>
Personal Luggage £45.00	<p>Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between homes must have appropriate personal luggage (subject to not having any and needing luggage). At least two items of appropriate personal luggage. Prior to the move to independence/semi-independence the social worker should check that the young person has suitable luggage.</p>
Subsistence	<p>Depending on an assessment of need social workers/personal advisers can purchase refreshments to enable a keywork session to be inclusive.</p> <p>As a general principle, keywork session refreshments should be agreed in advance by an Adolescent / Care Experienced Team Manager and should not exceed £14.50 in total (up to £7.25 each) and occur relatively infrequently.</p> <p>Alternatively, social workers/personal advisers can purchase ingredients and prepare a meal with a young person as part of a keywork preparation for independence/life skills session.</p>
Consultation with Young People	<p>Making A Difference Group - £20.00 per session paid into the young person's bank account.</p> <p>Young people who take part in general consultation exercises will be provided with a £10.00 voucher and opportunity to take part in a Samsung Tablet prize draw.</p> <p>Expenses related to enabling young people to participate in consultation exercise will be provided following an assessment of need.</p>

Emergency Payments	<p>Children's Services will provide a maximum of 3 emergency payments in any 6-month period (via BACS transfer or vouchers). These payments will be dependent on an assessment of need and will not exceed £10.00 per payment and will not be provided in cash, but in the form of vouchers.</p> <p>Where a young person requests an emergency payment due to difficulties with budgeting, the social worker/personal adviser will explore with the young person how their £71.70 weekly maintenance allowance is provided (split into several BACS payments).</p> <p>The second request for an emergency payment will result in the young person being given two choices on how their £71.70 will be provided (BACS or Vouchers):</p> <p>Option 1 Two payments of £15.00 and one payment of £41.70 per-week (BACS).</p> <p>Option 2 Personal adviser accompanying the young person shopping, ensuring that £35.00 is spent on food, £15.00 is spent on utilities/bills and the remaining £21.70 is transferred by BACS.</p> <p>Where a young person requests more than three emergency payments in any 6-month period, they can be assisted with a maximum of three food parcels each of which will have a utilities component. Each food parcel and utility component should not exceed £20.00 in value, i.e., £10.00 utility top-up and £10.00 food and never be provided in cash.</p> <p>Emergency payments and food parcels are discretionary and will only be provided following an assessment of need. In situations where young people make regular requests for emergency payments their Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance will be provided as three weekly payments (see above); this will mean young people will have a maximum of three days between payments.</p>
Exceptional Needs Payment	<p>Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Children's Services may provide funds for exceptional needs as a one-off payment. These payments should be agreed by an Adolescent or Care Experienced Team Manager.</p>

SECTION 2

Former Relevant Children

Group A

Care Experienced Young People Aged 18 to 21, or until the completion of the education course being undertaken on their 21st birthday - Former Relevant Children - Section 23C

Group B

- Care Experienced Young People Aged 21 to 25 who return to the authority to resume or commence education or training - Former Relevant Children - Section 23CA

- Care Experienced Young People Aged 21 to 25 who return to the authority to resume a service - Former Relevant Children – Section 23CZB

Basis and Amount	Conditions and Comments
Accommodation and Homes	<p>Accommodation costs for young people aged 18 and older will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. Home and accommodation costs for exceptionally vulnerable young people aged 18 and older (who do not meet the Care Act 2014 eligibility criteria) may be funded in part or full following an assessment of need and the case being considered by the Next Steps Panel and a case management decision being authorised. Where possible young people should claim housing benefit/local housing allowance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See Staying Put policy – young people living in foster care who meet the Staying Put criteria can remain in their home. 2. Supported Lodgings homes are available to all care experienced young people aged 18 to 21 (as well as 16 & 17 year old, cared for children). 3. Failed Asylum Seekers (all rights exhausted) with no recourse to public funds will continue to be provided with accommodation subject to a human rights assessment. <p>In the majority of situations Children's Services is not able to act as a trustee/guarantor for care experienced young people aged 18 and older. In exceptional circumstances and with agreement from one of the Care Experienced Team Managers considerations will be given to Sefton Children's Services acting as a trustee or guarantor, for example acting as a trustee/guarantor for university accommodation (see guidance on page 11).</p> <p>See Section One – Accommodation and Homes for current LHA rates page 9 & 10.</p>
Deposit and Rent in Advance	See Section One – Deposits and Rent in Advance – page 11.

<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance</p> <p>Failed Asylum Seekers with No Recourse to Public Funds</p>	<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance provided to young people aged 18 during the five-week initial Universal Credit claim period and to failed asylum seeking young people with no recourse to public funds will depend on the level of allowance paid prior to their 18th birthday which depends on what is provided within their semi-independent setting.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="367 369 1292 714"> <tr> <td>Coverage and Accommodation Type</td><td>Basic Personal Element - £71.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs</td><td>£71.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation</td><td>£61.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities and food</td><td>£51.70</td></tr> </table> <p>See Barking and Dagenham Case Law Judgement.</p> <p>Failed asylum seekers and ‘all rights/appeals exhausted cases’ with no recourse to public funds are provided with the above allowances only after a human rights assessment and until the removal date is reached or the age of 21/25, whichever comes first. It should be noted that a local authority does not necessarily have to wait until the removal date or age 21/25 to withdraw support, for example, support could be withdrawn when the former UASC turns 18 if they are (‘ARE’) and have, by then, been given a reasonable time to return home.</p>	Coverage and Accommodation Type	Basic Personal Element - £71.70	Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£71.70	Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation	£61.70	Young person is provided with utilities and food	£51.70
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Young person is provided with utilities and food	£51.70								
<p>Initial Benefit Claim</p> <p>(Provided Once for the Initial Benefit Claim on Reaching Age 18).</p>	<p>Children’s Services will provide up to five weeks of Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (£71.70, £61.70, £51.70) to assist young people whilst they wait for their initial Universal Credit claim to be processed.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="367 1262 1292 1606"> <tr> <td>Coverage and Accommodation Type</td><td>Basic Personal Element - £71.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs</td><td>£71.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation</td><td>£61.70</td></tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities and food</td><td>£51.70</td></tr> </table> <p>The allowance should only be paid following checking the progress of the young person’s Universal Credit claim with the DWP and on the basis that the young person does not take up a Universal Credit Advance. Young people making their initial claim for Universal Credit will have to wait for around 5 weeks for their first payment (a calendar month plus 7 days). Provided once for the initial claim at age 18.</p> <p>As a 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</p>	Coverage and Accommodation Type	Basic Personal Element - £71.70	Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£71.70	Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation	£61.70	Young person is provided with utilities and food	£51.70
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Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation	£61.70								
Young person is provided with utilities and food	£51.70								

<p>Initial Benefit Claim <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>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, obtaining the first benefit payment in such a timescale would be exceptional. As such, Children's Services extend the pre 18 allowance for up to five weeks whilst a young person's Universal Credit claim is established and in payment, only where the young person does not take up a Universal Credit Advance.</p> <p>Supporting information and identity documents should have been obtained prior to a young person's 18th birthday, in preparation for a claim that should be started 4 weeks in advance of the 18th birthday and workers should contact the DWP one week after the young person's birthday to verify the completion of the claim and the first payment date.</p> <p>If the young person has not received their first benefit payment after five weeks, Children's Services will consider extending an interim payment, subject to the young person having complied with all the DWP requirements.</p> <p>If the young person applies for a Universal Credit Advance at the start of their claim, the 5-week benefit waiting allowance will not be provided. The aim of the 5-week benefit waiting allowance is to ensure young people do not need to use the Universal Credit Advance, and subsequently have a reduced benefit rate to repay the advance.</p> <p>For the first Universal Credit claim, the 5-week initial benefit claim waiting period allowance will apply, i.e., 5 weeks at the applicable LCMA rate.</p> <p>For the second and subsequent claims: If claiming Universal Credit, the young person can immediately ask for an advance payment, of up to 100% of the likely Universal Credit award. This will then be recovered directly from their Universal Credit payment in 12 equal parts over the next year.</p>
<p>Council Tax Exemption / Allowance</p>	<p>All care experienced young people aged 18 to 21/25 who are the responsibility of Sefton Children's Services and who are living within the Sefton area, will be exempt from any Council Tax Liability. Where the care experienced young person is solely liable for council tax, they will be entitled to 100% discount after all statutory discounts, exemptions and before Council Tax Support have been applied. Where a care experienced young person is jointly liable for council tax, a proportionate award will be made, i.e.: if there are two occupiers, a 50% award will be made.</p> <p>Care experienced young people who are living outside of Sefton will be assisted to claim any local council tax exemption or council tax support available.</p> <p>Where care experienced young people remain liable for all, or part of their council tax liability, Sefton Children's Services will pay the liability on their behalf, subject to the young person applying to the local council tax support scheme and agreeing to the personal adviser verify their application. Where the care experienced young person is solely liable for the council tax, a 100% payment will be made, where they are liable for 50% of the council tax, that percentage will be paid (after all exemptions & support payments have been made).</p>

<p>Incentive Payments</p> <p>Government 16 – 19 Bursary</p> <p>Apprenticeship Bursary</p>	<p>Young people who are undertaking full time education courses or unpaid training courses (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 6th form colleges or further education colleges).</p> <p>Young people (cared for children and care experienced young people) up to age 25) who are undertaking an apprenticeship are eligible for a one-off £3000.00 Apprenticeship Bursary (paid via the Provider), in addition, the Apprenticeship Provider also receives £1000.00 to support the apprentice, this is provided once and usually within the first three months.</p>
Travel	<p>Depending on an assessment of need, consideration will be given to providing support with travel for education, training, employment, health, and family time.</p> <p>Where young people are undertaking an education or training activity the cost of travel may be provided by the education or training provider subject to the terms of the young person's learner agreement. Young people who are in receipt of the 16 to 19 bursary should use the bursary award to cover travel costs. Young people who are in receipt of Universal Credit will have access to reduced cost travel linked to employment/training activities.</p>
Qualifying Young People	Dependent on an assessment of need which includes an evaluation of all income, Qualifying Young People may be entitled to all allowances. The assessment of need will normally be undertaken using the Assessment of Need (Regulation 42) framework – Pathway Plan Part One.
Asylum Seekers with NRPF – Keeping in Touch	Following an assessment of need failed asylum seekers with no recourse to public funds will be provided with a keeping in touch allowance where they have significant family members overseas.
Key Documents Up To £130.00	<p>Children Services will purchase a passport and 1 birth certificate for each young person, including covering the cost of photos and postage.</p> <p>One adult passport, or passport renewal age 16 to 21, one birth certificate only if the young person does not have the original. This will ensure young people will have a valid passport until at least age 25 or beyond.</p>
<p>Introduction to Driving Allowance</p> <p>Age 17 to 21</p>	<p>Sefton Children Services will provide the following Introduction to Driving package to assist a young person's employability and also to provide an additional identity document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. 1 provisional driving licence; B. 1 theory test; C. 1 theory test resource (booklet or App) D. 10 (1 hour) driving lessons; E. 1 practical driving test.

<p>Introduction to Driving Allowance</p> <p>Age 17 to 21 <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>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 6 months, having no driving convictions and the young person also paying for 5 car driving lessons.</p> <p>Young people must pay the cost of their 5 lessons to their social worker/personal adviser who will then book the 15 lessons. In general, by paying for 15 lessons in a block, driving schools provide an extra lesson free.</p> <p>Young people must provide their contribution before the overall package is provided. Young people can use their birthday or Christmas/festival allowance to pay for their five lessons. No other allowances are transferable for this purpose.</p> <p>The lessons must be provided by an approved instructor and should be used for motor car lessons.</p> <p>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 (and having completed at least 6 months). Consideration of eligibility and funding of lone parents and SEND young people should be presented to a Care Experienced Team Manager.</p> <p>Children's Services will pay for the practical driving test at the point where an approved driving school recommends that the young person is ready to take the test.</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need, which must be linked to the need to travel to an education, training, or employment opportunity the driving package can be used to fund a moped/motor bike training programme. Young people must attend a CBT programme prior to driving on public roads.</p> <p>Personal advisers should also check what additional support may be available from the Rees Foundation to supplement the Introduction to Driving package. https://www.reesfoundation.org/</p>
<p>Personal Luggage £45.00</p>	<p>Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between homes must have appropriate personal luggage (subject to not having and needing luggage). At least two items of appropriate personal luggage. Prior to the move to independence/semi-independence the social worker should check that the young person has suitable luggage.</p>
<p>Birthday £25.00 £50.00</p>	<p>19th and 20th birthday 21st birthday</p> <p>A gift or gifts and/or a contribution towards the cost of celebrations to the value of £25.00/50.00. The £25.00/£50.00 includes the cost of a card and gift wrap.</p>

<p>Birthday <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Young people will be provided with £25.00 (19th & 20th birthday) and £50.00 (21st birthday) allowance. The allowance can be provided as a gift or as a gift card/voucher, (or as a contribution towards the cost of a celebration). Responsibility for the purchase of the gift/gift's rests with the social worker/personal adviser.</p> <p>The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in touch with their social worker/personal adviser and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process. Where young people are deemed to have withdrawn from active engagement with the Care Experienced Team and their personal adviser, the birthday allowance will be suspended.</p>
<p>Christmas/ Festivals</p> <p>£25.00 Gift/Gifts £25.00 Food Hamper</p>	<p>£25.00 - Age 18 - 21</p> <p>Young people will be provided with a Christmas/Festival allowance of £25.00. The allowance can be provided as a gift, as a gift card or voucher. In addition, young people will receive a £25.00 food hamper. The £25.00 includes the cost of a card and gift wrap.</p> <p>Young people who are non-Christians 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.</p> <p>The Christmas/Festival allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in touch with their social worker/personal adviser and are actively engaged in the pathway planning process. Where young people are deemed to have withdrawn from active engagement with a Care Experienced Team and their personal adviser, the Christmas/Festival allowance and food hamper will be suspended.</p>
<p>Winter Utilities and Heating Allowance</p> <p>£15.00 per Week</p> <p>1st Winter of Independent Living</p>	<p>Young people living in semi-independent or independent accommodation who are responsible for and pay variable utility/service and heating costs will be provided with a £15.00 per week (£390.00) winter utilities and heating allowance during their 1st year (winter) of independent living. The allowance is available for October, November, December, January, February, and March of the first winter they are living independently.</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need the allowance can be provided on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. The allowance should be paid directly to the young person's utility provider or credited to his or her electricity/gas payment key/card.</p> <p>Total payment £390.00 during the first year of independent living.</p> <p>For most young people this allowance will be provided between their 18th and 19th birthday.</p> <p>Personal advisers should also support young people to access other forms of support to assist with bills, utility and service charges and the cost of living. Personal advisers</p>

<p>Winter Utilities and Heating Allowance <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>should assess what support may be available in the area that they young person lives and through any support provided by their landlord and/or via Sefton Council.</p> <p>The Citizens Advice provides information about support available: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills/ https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/sefton-support-hub/</p> <p>https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/emergency-limited-assistance-scheme.aspx</p> <p>Personal advisers should also check what additional emergency support may be available from the Rees Foundation. https://www.reesfoundation.org/</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Personal advisers should support young people to complete a NHS HC1 form for all 18 to 21/25 year olds who are not employed and/or not registered for welfare benefits.</p> <p>This is particularly important for care leavers who are maintained by Children's Services (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.</p> <p>Personal advisers will support young people to attend their GP in order to assist and support them to access counselling, therapeutic and health services.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Sefton Children's Services may provide funds to secure additional health services. This will require consideration and approval from the care experienced team manager.</p> <p>The Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB) for Sefton provide all care experienced young people with a prepayment prescription certificate up to the age of 25. Personal advisers should ensure all young people have a prepayment prescription certificate and are aware of what it can provide.</p> <p>NHS Prescription Prepayment Certificates (PPCs) NHSBSA</p>
<p>Special Needs Costs</p> <p>Maximum of £100.00 per Year</p>	<p>Children's Services will assist young people to access services to meet their special needs and depending on the outcome, may assist in providing resources to address the identified need.</p> <p>Funding above £100.00 per year requires the authorisation of a Care Experienced Team Manager.</p>

<p>Child Care Costs</p>	<p>Lone parents, who wish to return to education, start a traineeship/apprenticeship or take up employment opportunities, will be assisted to identify funds to cover or contribute to childcare costs. In the first instance the Care to Learn Fund and other universal services should be approached for funding.</p> <p>The Care to Learn Fund provides financial support to assist young parents under the age of 20 to undertake education.</p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions (Jobcentre Plus and Work Coaches) should be consulted as to which education and training courses are eligible for Universal Credit and have childcare costs provided.</p> <p>Care to Learn: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>Disabled Students' Allowances (D.S.A.s')</p>	<p>Disabled Students' Allowances are grants to help meet the extra course costs students can face as a direct result of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. They are aimed at helping disabled students to study on an equal basis with other students. Full-time, part-time and postgraduate students can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances. The amount they get doesn't depend on their household income. Disabled Students' Allowances are paid on top of the standard student finance package, and don't have to be paid back.</p> <p>What they are for</p> <p>Disabled Students' Allowances can help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist equipment they need for studying - for example, computer software • A non-medical helper, such as a note-taker or reader • Extra travel costs they have to pay because of their disability • Other costs - for example, tapes or Braille paper <p>Eligibility</p> <p>Young people can apply if they are doing:</p> <p>A full-time course that lasts at least one year (including a distance-learning course)</p> <p>A part-time course that lasts at least one year and doesn't take more than twice as long to complete as an equivalent full-time course (can include an Open University or other distance-learning course).</p> <p>Checking if they are eligible for student finance.</p> <p>To apply for financial help through Disabled Students' Allowances, both the young person and the course must be eligible. It is important to check this before an application is made. Information is available at:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa</p>
<p>Digital Connectivity</p>	<p>Young people who are seeking employment and claiming Universal Credit may be eligible for six months of free broadband internet access. Several broadband and mobile providers also have reduced rate tariffs (£10.00 per month) for those claiming Universal Credit (Talk Talk, BT, Virgin Money).</p>

<p>Digital Connectivity <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Where a young person is on a low wage or has a low income and doesn't qualify for a reduced rate tariff, Sefton Children's Services will provide six months of digital access (once 18 to 21). This may be provided via the Care Experienced Young Person's - Covenant Offer or directly by Children's Services.</p> <p>Subject to an assessment of need and where young people require a mobile phone to remain in touch with their personal adviser, and/or, make/sustain a Universal Credit claim they will be provided with a basic Smart Phone. This can be provided once and in an emergency.</p>
<p>Further and Higher Education</p>	<p>Financial Support for Further and Higher Education courses is available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to the young person's 21st birthday; • or until the completion of the course following the young person's 21st birthday where the course commenced before their 21st birthday; • between the 21st and 25th birthday where a young person wishes to resume or commence education or training between those dates; • until the education or training course is completed following the 25th birthday where the course commenced prior to the 25th birthday. <p>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.</p> <p>For full details see page 33 to 46.</p>

Education, Training, Apprenticeships Employment - Related Support	<p>Depending on an assessment of need, including the suitability of the course/activity, Children's Services may provide financial assistance/equipment and travel costs for education or training courses and employment opportunities of the young person's choice. Where appropriate, Children's Services may consider funding for extra tuition.</p> <p>In circumstances where young people are withdrawing from courses and equipment has been provided, this should be returned to Children's Services. Young people who are entering second courses will be loaned equipment until they have demonstrated consistent attendance. When they have demonstrated consistent attendance, new equipment will be purchased following an assessment of need.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 Children's Services.</p>
Learner Agreements	<p>All education, training, and employment support (practical and financial) will be based on an individual learner agreement developed between the young person and their social worker/personal adviser and including input from the Employability Officer. The agreement will set out the level of practical and financial support to be provided by all parties and will include learning goals and targets and attendance/academic requirements. Failure to comply with the learner agreement may result in financial and practical support ceasing and a requirement to leave the course or activity.</p>
FE & HE Grant - Stationery, Educational Visits, Books and Equipment	<p>Further and Higher Education Equipment</p> <p>Young people who are undertaking full time further or higher education courses are entitled to a grant to assist with:</p> <p>Up to £50.00 Stationery Grant; Up to £75.00 Educational Visits Grant; Up to £100.00 Books and Equipment/IT Equipment Grant;</p> <p>These Grants are per academic year, are none transferable and are only available for stationery, educational visits, books, equipment and I.T. equipment (assessed each year of the course).</p>
F.E. & H E Computer Grant	<p>All young people entering full time further education (level 2 or above academic courses) and higher education courses will be provided with a one-off Computer Grant of up to £300.00 for a notepad, laptop or desktop computer (£360.00 where the computer is NET of VAT). One off – age 16 to 21/24, regardless of home type.</p>
Child Care	<p>Childcare costs should be accessed through the Care to Learn Fund. https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn</p>

Prom Activity – Up To £200.00	Children's Services will support young people to participate in a 'Prom Activity', costs can include dress/suit hire or purchase, transport, prom tickets and associated costs. This is provided once to enable children/young people to take part in their school prom (generally at the end of year 11 or 13). The school leaver's prom allowance can be used to cover the cost of attendance, clothing, and photographs etc.
Commencing Work Grant	Children's Services 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. Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc (to be verified). to their social worker, personal adviser.
16 to 19 Bursary	Care experienced young people are a priority group for the Vulnerable Young Person's 16 to 19 Bursary, £1200.00 per year paid by the 6 th form or college.
Apprenticeships	Care experienced young people are eligible for a £3000.00 Apprenticeship Bursary paid by the apprenticeship provider, in addition, the providers get £1000.00 to support the young person. The Bursary is paid once by the provider between 16 and up to 25.
Pupil Premium Plus and Further Education	Social workers/personal advisers should liaise with the Virtual School to check if arrangements are in place with Further Education Colleges regarding piloting Pupil Premium Plus for cared for children and care experienced young people. The Department for Education are supporting the Virtual Schools to pilot the use of Pupil Premium Plus in Further Education Colleges.

Education & Training (16 & 17 year olds) Young People Aged 18 and Older

Further Education Courses

Sefton Children's Services is committed to assisting and supporting young people to maximise their potential through educational and training opportunities.

1. Eligible and Relevant young people (16 and 17 year olds) who are studying at sixth form college or further education colleges will be supported via their foster care home or children's homes and for those living in semi-independent and independent via their Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.
2. From the age of 18 to the end of the academic year following their 21st birthday, care experienced young people who are 'without parental support' (estranged from their families) and who are studying full time (12 hours or more of 'guided learning') can claim Universal Credit on the grounds of being in 'Relevant Education' and they do not have to be available for employment. Young people can start or change courses at any point up until their 21st birthday.
3. Where young people aged 21 to 25 who wish to resume or commence education or training the following guidelines in regard to financial support will apply (see page 33 to 46);
 - Young people should contact the duty worker for the Care Experienced Team.
 - Funding will be considered by the **Care Experienced Young Person's - Education and Training Panel** 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 £71.70 per week, up to £3,728.40 per year and registration fees grant of up to £1000.00, full time and £500.00 part time. Young people will be expected to work part time to cover their rent costs. These grants are subject to young people maintaining 85% attendance, having satisfactory reports from the college, and not having access to other financial resources. Personal advisers will liaise with colleges and/or training providers to ensure satisfactory attendance and progress. As young people will be on a low income, personal advisers should support their students to apply for reduced rate fees. As young people will not be receiving a means tested benefit; will be in receipt of a low income and because care experienced young people are a priority group for learner support funds, personal advisers and students should make timely applications for these funds. Personal advisers and young people should also check if they qualify for Universal Credit, some non-degree education courses may qualify the young person for Universal Credit where it is deemed that the course is improving their employability and it does not interfere with their commitment to look for work if they are getting Universal Credit on that basis. Lone parents with children under 3 and disabled young people can also undertake courses, as they should be receiving benefits without having to seek work.
 - 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, in the first instance young people should access Adult Learner Grants to cover fees. 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 pre-existing education qualifications.
 - A key priority will be to ensure all young people hold a level 2 qualification.

Education & Training (21 to 25)

Access arrangements to Higher Education courses are the same as young people aged 18 to 21.

The following activities immediately prior to the start of a resumed or new course will be taken as evidence of motivation and commitment: -

1. Courses of study leading to a level 1 qualification or above;
2. Employment in the field relating to the requested education/training course;
3. Voluntary work relating to the requested education/training course;
4. Training courses relating to the requested education course.

Young people may also be required to demonstrate that they can contribute to the funding package via part time employment and/or by accessing Learner Support or Advanced Learner Loans available from Student Finance England (<https://www.gov.uk/further-education-courses/financial-help>). In such circumstances an assessment of financial need will be completed in order to assist the young person with their weekly maintenance.

Following the assessment of need, the request for financial support will be presented to the Care Experienced Young Person's - Education and Training Panel.

Following agreement to funding, each case will be allocated to a Personal Adviser who will develop a Pathway Plan, a payment transfer system (generally by regular BACS payments) and a system for monitoring the young person's education/training progress.

Financial Support - Traineeships and Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships

The majority of apprenticeships are classed as employment with a study component. These types of apprenticeships are generally secured by young people gaining employment with a company or organisation that is a registered apprenticeship provider. The young person is employed and also undertakes a study component towards a:

- National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)
- Technical Certificate
- Functional Skills (Mathematics, English)
- Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)
- ERR (Employment Rights and Responsibilities) Workbook

From the 1st April 2024, the minimum wage rate is £6.40 per hour for apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. All other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age and can be found on

www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

As the apprenticeship is deemed employment, young people will be eligible for a range of benefits, including housing benefit and tax credits (Universal Credit) depending on their circumstances. If the apprenticeship is deemed employment, the young person would not be covered by the age 21-25 Education and Training - Care Experienced Young Person's entitlements.

Traineeships and Programme Led Apprenticeships

These types of traineeships and apprenticeships are provided by a training provider or college, with work experience provided at the establishment site, and are therefore deemed education/training rather than employment. Young people may be eligible for Welfare Benefits, Tax Credits or Universal Credit depending on their age and circumstances. In general, young people aged 21 to 25 will not be able to access benefits (unless they are parents or have a disability). Young people undertaking these courses are eligible for the '21-25 – Sefton Education and Training' Care Experienced Young Person's Entitlements (subject to an assessment of need and the pre-requisite conditions above being met).

National Minimum Wage

The National Minimum Wage of £6.40 per hour applies to apprentices from April 2024. The wage applies to:

- all apprentices aged under 19;
- apprentices aged 19 or over in the first year of their Apprenticeship.

This should mean that apprentices get a weekly wage of at least £243.20 (38 hours per week).

National Minimum Wage 2024-2025

21 Plus	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
£11.44	£8.60	£6.40	£6.40

Financial Support

Access to financial support will always be dependent on an assessment of the young person's financial circumstances. Where appropriate; young people will be provided with practical support to help them access education, training, or benefits funding, rather than with the provision of direct grants. The level of practical support and financial support should be set out within the young person's pathway plan and highlight any conditionality to the support being provided.

Higher Education

Student Finance

The level of fees, loans, grants, and bursaries for higher education students change each academic year. The most accurate and up to date information is available via the following link:

<http://www.gov.uk/studentfinancesteps>

Tuition Fees and Tuition Fee Loans

From September 2024 the maximum tuition fees and tuition fee loan per year is:

- New full-time students £9,250.00
- New full-time students at private university or college £6,165.00

To qualify for a tuition fee loan the part time course needs to be at least 25% of an equivalent full-time course each year (e.g., four years instead of one year full time). The tuition fee loan is provided by Student Finance England and is paid directly to the university to cover the full cost of the course.

Maintenance Grants

Maintenance grants have been discontinued for new students starting courses after the 1st August 2016.

Maintenance Loans

The maintenance loan is provided by Student Finance England and is paid directly to the student, normally in three instalments and is provided to help with living costs such as rent, food, bills and equipment and books.

The maximum maintenance loan in 2024-2025 for students starting courses after the 1st August 2016 (per year) is set out below:

- Students studying in London £13,348.00
- Students studying outside of London £10,227.00
- Students living at home £8,610.00

➤ In the final year of the course the maximum loan rate is reduced by approximately 10%.

Loan Repayment

Graduates repay the combined tuition fee and maintenance loan when they have finished studying and are earning over a given threshold per year. The given threshold, how much is repaid, and the level of interest charged, depends on which 'Loan' Plan (four types) the student is on. This link provides detailed information – [types of student loan plan](#). The monthly repayments are linked to the person's income. After a certain amount of time (30 years for those starting courses in 2022 and earlier, and 40 years for those starting courses in 2023), any outstanding loans will be written off if the money has not been repaid.

The threshold for repayment and the level of repayment also depends on which Plan applies and the prevailing interest rates – check below:

[Student Loans Interest Rates and Repayment Threshold Announcement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Higher Education Continued

Support from Individual Universities

In addition to the financial support provided by Student Finance England, most Higher Education Institutions will offer their own financial support. Each university will have its own eligibility criteria and any awards may only be available to a limited number of students:

- **Bursaries**
- **Scholarships**
- **Fee Waivers**

Bursaries and Scholarships will generally not have to be repaid and Fee Waivers are applied to part, or all of the course costs.

Access to Learning Fund

Most universities also have an 'Access to Learning Fund' which is available to students who are experiencing financial hardship. Some universities offer care experienced young people priority access to Access to Learning Funds. Sometimes known as Fair Access Funds. 'Propel' is hosted by the 'Become' Charity and sets out or links to the support (including financial support) that each higher education institution provides and includes a named contact at the majority of educational settings.

<https://propel.org.uk/Search/>

National Scholarship Programme (NSP)

The National Scholarship Programme is designed to offer support to students from low income backgrounds. The NSP is funded jointly between the government and individual universities. Individual universities can make their own decisions as to who receives a National Scholarship. Some universities may offer care experienced young people priority access to the NSP. Support may be offered in a variety of ways including cash grants, reduced cost accommodation or a fee waiver. Any funds received from the NSP are non-repayable.

The Care Experienced Young People - Higher Education Bursary

The Care Experienced Young People - Higher Education Bursary is provided by the student's local authority (Sefton Children's Services) and is provided as a minimum grant of £2,000.00 throughout the length of the whole course.

Grants and Awards from Charitable Trusts

Trusts and charities provide financial grants and awards to students. Advice about what may be available is available through individual universities or through the Educational Grants Advisory Service (EGAS).

Public libraries should have directories of charitable trusts that provide grants and awards:

- The Educational Grants Directory;
- The Charities Digest;
- The Grants Register;
- The Directory of Grant Making Trusts.

Higher Education Continued

General Information

Care experienced young people considering attending university should check with the universities that they are thinking about applying to, for information about the support that each institution will provide. This information can then assist when making a final choice about which university to apply for as a first, second or third choice.

The students' support service should be able to provide information on both the practical and financial support that may be available.

Information about additional support to care experienced young people can be found on the Access and Participation Plans that each institution is required to have. Information can be found on the web site of each institution or via: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>

Welfare Benefits

The majority of young people who undertake higher education courses are ineligible for welfare benefits such as Universal Credit, tax credits, Income Support and Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance. Certain limited groups of young people who undertake higher education courses such as lone parents and sick and disabled young people may remain or are eligible for welfare benefits whilst studying. If a young person is entitled to welfare benefits (mostly likely Universal Credit for all new applicants)) they are not eligible for the full Sefton Higher Education Grant but continue to receive the HE Bursary element of the Sefton Higher Education Allowance and Offer.

Lone Parents and Sick and Disabled Students who are in receipt of Welfare Benefits should check with the Department for Work and Pensions regarding the rules about student finance. Being in receipt of student finances may cause disqualification for welfare benefits. Generally, lone parents and sick and disabled young people will be assumed by the DWP to have taken out Student Loans including the Special Support loan element for those on benefit-level income. Their level of welfare benefit will be calculated by taking into account the loans they receive but not the Special Support element.

Lone Parents (and certain couples with children) may be eligible for the Government's **Childcare Grant** (£192.62 per week for one child and up to £331.95 per week for more than one child – 2024-2025) and/or **Parents' Learning Allowance** (up to £1,963.00 per year – 2024-2025). Disabled students may be eligible for the **Disabled Students' Allowance**. Students who have adult dependents may be eligible for an **Adult Dependents' Grant (ADG)** (up to £3,438.00 per year - 2024-2025). These grants do not affect welfare benefits.

Sefton Children's Services – Higher Education Financial Support

The Sefton Children's Services Higher Education Grant which includes the Government's Higher Education Bursary can be accessed once (for up to 4 years) at any point between a young person's 18th and 25th birthday.

All young people entering higher education will be provided with a Sefton Children's Services Higher Education Grant of up to £6000.00 per year (for a maximum of four years) which includes:

- The Government Higher Education Allowance/Bursary which is mandatory and set at £2000.00 over the whole length of the course. Depending on the length of the course the £2000.00 per course will be constituted of £1000.00 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.
- Higher Education Stationary, Books, IT and Equipment Grant of up to £225.00 per year.
- A £71.70 Per Week Living Allowance Grant.
- A Vacation Accommodation Allowance - Up to the level of the LHA one-bedroom self-contained rate and/or the level of university accommodation (if staying in university accommodation in the vacation). This is provided where there is a demonstratable liability for rent in the young person's name. Subject to approval by a care experienced team manager, and where there is no liability for rent, but a contribution to living costs is required, a percentage of the contribution can be provided subject to an assessment of need.

How the Grant is provided to each young person should be set out in their Pathway Plan.

- Additional One-Off Grants:
 - A one-off UCAS Application Grant of £27.00 to support university applications.
 - A one-off Computer Grant of up to £300.00 (£360.00 where the computer is NET of VAT) [if not used prior to starting university].
 - A one-off Virtual School – Commencing Higher Education Grant of £500.00 (paid at the start of the first academic year).
 - A Graduation Ceremony Grant of up to £300.00 to cover the cost of attending the graduation ceremony and the hire of a cap and gown and official photographs.
 - A Graduation Grant of £500.00. This is paid once and is paid on graduation in order to assist young people make the transition from Higher Education to employment.

The Higher Education Grant is available for a maximum of four years in total and can be used for a second degree or post graduate award. The Care Experienced Young Person's - Education and Training Panel will consider requests for the Higher Education Grant that involves exceptional and/or specific circumstances.

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.

Young people eligible for means tested welfare benefits are provided with the, 1) the computer grant, 2) stationary/books/equipment and visits grant, 3) graduation grant and 4) the H. E. Bursary.

Open University Courses:

Open university courses are designed for those who want to take a flexible approach to studying, particularly those who are working full or part time or those with personal commitments. Courses are designed with a modular approach. Part time study is generally a 60 credit module per year and full time is two 60 credit modules per year. To obtain an honours degree students need to complete 360 credits/modules.

[Fees](#) | [Funding](#) | [Bursaries](#) | [The Open University](#)

Over 80% of Open University students in England fund their studies with a part-time tuition fee loan. If a single person/household has income of less than £25,000.00 the Open University will provide an introductory access module for free. Care experienced young people may also be eligible for an Open University bursary to help with study-related costs.

Open University courses provide a flexible way to build up study credits/modules over a number of years to achieve a honours degree.

Given the flexible nature of Open University study Sefton Children's Services will provide the Higher Education bursary of £2,000.00 over the period of the course via 9 payments of £222.22 each. Following the first payment, and in order to receive subsequent payments, young people will need to achieve 40 credits as an Open University honours degree is achieved with 360 credits.

Sefton Children's Services will also provide three Higher Education Stationary, Books, IT and Equipment Grants of up to £225.00 each (subject to verification of what books/equipment is needed). After the initial grant, subsequent grants will be released on completion of 120 credits/modules.

Sefton Children's Services will also provide a Graduation Ceremony Grant of up to £300.00 to cover the cost of attending the graduation ceremony and the hire of a cap and gown and official photographs.

Sefton Children's Services will also provide a Graduation Grant of £500.00. This is paid once and is paid on graduation in order to assist young people make the transition from Higher Education to employment.

Higher Education - Payment Process

Sefton Children's Services, as corporate parents, wants to ensure that all care experienced young people 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.

The frequency and amount of each payment as well as the method of paying the allowance should be set out in the young person's Pathway Plan.

All payments are dependent on, and subject to young people agreeing to the following arrangements:

- Maintaining regular and ongoing contact with their Personal Adviser;
- Attending all pre-arranged meetings with their Personal Adviser;
- Complete 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 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 the Personal Adviser to monitor progress, attendance, and attainment.
- To inform the Personal Adviser/Employability Officer of any change of circumstances (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 'Home Students'.
- To focus on educational activities by not undertaking more than fifteen hours of employment during term time. To understand that in circumstances where more than fifteen hours of employment is 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 personal adviser liaising with the educational establishment to support the program of study and monitor attendance and learning.

See Appendix K Consent to Share/Disclose Information Form.

The Higher Education Grant is available for a maximum of four years in total and can be used for a second degree or post graduate award.

Asylum Seeking Young People

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 Sefton Children's Services 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.

Post Graduate Courses

Sefton Children's Services will assist young people to identify financial support and resources to undertake post graduate courses.

Types of Postgraduate Study:

1. Taught MA or MSc courses
2. Research Degrees, PhD
3. Masters Programmes by Research, MSc, MPhil, MRes

Generally, postgraduate courses are funded by sponsorship, secondment from an employer, or by individual universities providing a bursary to cover course/tuition fees and living costs.

Sources of funding:

Search for postgraduate funding on the [Scholarship Search website](#) or [Prospects website](#).

Students can also apply for post graduate funding via [Funding for postgraduate study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

In addition, Sefton Children's Services will provide the following support to assist postgraduate students, this will include practical support to explore funding, bursary, and sponsorship opportunities and financial support of around £6,000.00 per year.

The Sefton Children's Services Postgraduate Grant can be accessed for up to 4 years (for full time courses/study) starting at any point between a young person's 18th and 25th birthday.

Postgraduate Grant and Offer:

- A One-Off Commencing Postgraduate Studies Grant of £500.00 (paid at the start of the first academic year).
- A Postgraduate Education Stationary, Books, and Equipment/IT Grant of up to £225.00 per year.
- A Postgraduate Contribution to Living and Accommodation Costs Grant of £110.00 per week (paid for 52 weeks).
- A Postgraduate Graduation Ceremony Grant of up to £300.00 (paid to cover the cost of attending the graduation ceremony and the hire of a cap and gown and official photographs).
- A Postgraduate, Graduation Grant of £500.00 (paid on graduation in order to assist young people to make the transition from study to employment).

How the Grant is provided to each young person should be set out in their Pathway Plan and will be dependent on the young person agreeing to their personal adviser checking attendance and engagement with the course of study/research. This is done to ensure the institution is supporting the young person appropriately and that the young person is fully engaged in the study/research programme.

All requests for postgraduate funding will be subject to an assessment of need, which should include checking the start and end dates of the course/research, whether the course/research represents a progression from a previous course/employment, the likely outcome at the end of the course/research.

Additional Funding/Second Chance Funding for Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People

The following information provides additional guidance on financial support that may be available to cared for children and care experienced young people.

The Princes Trust: Young people may be eligible for a grant if you are a UK resident, and they are:

- Aged 14-17 still in compulsory education and do not have/are not expecting to achieve five GCSEs grades A-C (or equivalent)
- Aged 17-25 and unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours a week, or in education fewer than 14 hours a week

Examples of what can be funded include:

- tools or equipment for a job or qualification e.g., hairdressing kit, carpentry tools, chef's whites
- course fees
- interview clothes
- license fees e.g., CSCS card (construction) or SIA license (security)
- childcare costs to help single parents access short term education
- transport to a new job until a young person receives their first wages/salary.

Young People Returning to the Local Authority Aged 21 to 25 for General Support	<p>Young people are entitled to resume or continue a Care Experienced Service from the age of 21 to 25 on request.</p> <p>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) will be considered. The assessment and request will be considered by a Care Experienced Team Manager.</p>
Subsistence	<p>Depending on an assessment of need social workers/personal advisers can purchase refreshments to enable a keywork session to be inclusive. As a general principle, keywork session refreshments should be agreed in advance by a Care Experienced Team Manager and should not exceed £14.50 in total (up to £7.25 each) and occur relatively infrequently.</p> <p>Alternatively, social workers/personal advisers can purchase ingredients and prepare a meal with a young person as part of a keywork preparation for independence/life skills session.</p>
Consultation with Young People	<p>Making A Difference Group - £20.00 per session paid into the young person's bank account.</p> <p>Young people who take part in general consultation exercises will be provided with a £10.00 voucher and opportunity to take part in a Samsung Tablet prize draw.</p>

Consultation with Young People <i>Continued</i>	Expenses related to enabling young people to participate in consultation exercise will be provided following an assessment of need.
Exit Interview - Service Evaluation / Questionnaire	Young people will receive a £10.00 voucher for taking part in a Care Experienced exit interview/questionnaire/evaluation. The evaluation will be undertaken between the ages of 21/25 when a young person is ceasing their involvement with the Care Experienced Service.
Emergency Payments	<p>In emergency situations Sefton Children's Services may provide a food parcel following an assessment of need. The food parcels should not exceed £20.00 in value and should include a £10.00 utility component. No more than three emergency food parcels will be provided in any twelve-month period. In exceptional circumstances and dependent on an assessment of need a cash payment may be considered.</p> <p>Emergency food parcels and cash payments are discretionary and will only be provided following an assessment of need.</p> <p>For information about Food Banks and support in Sefton follow the links below: https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/sefton-foodbank-network/ https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/sefton-support-hub/ https://www.sefton.gov.uk/advice-benefits/emergency-limited-assistance-scheme.aspx</p> <p>Personal advisers should also check what additional emergency support may be available from the Rees Foundation. https://www.reesfoundation.org/</p> <p>In situations where young people have lost or had money/items stolen they must obtain a crime reference number before an assessment of need and compensatory/emergency payment is considered.</p> <p>Personal advisers should assess what support may be available in the area that they young person lives and through any support provided by their landlord and/or via Sefton Council.</p> <p>The Citizens Advice provides information about support available: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills/</p>
Exceptional Needs Payments	Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Sefton Children's Services may provide funds for exceptional needs as a one-off payment. These payments can only be agreed by a Care Experienced Team Manager.

Section 3

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

Setting Up Home Allowance	
£169.50 Not Transferable	For TV licence. (First licence paid for by Sefton Children's Services and subsequent ones paid for by young person).
Up to £2530.50	<p>To be spent on items for equipping the accommodation including a setting up home starter pack, i.e., coffee, tea, washing-up liquid, light bulbs, laundry and cleaning equipment, utility key/card top-up, etc.</p> <p>This allowance should always be spent in stages; initially on semi-independent accommodation needs and subsequently, on independent accommodation needs. The allowance will always be spent collaboratively between the social worker/personal adviser and young person. Original receipts should be retained by the social worker/personal adviser for audit purposes, reclaiming VAT and in case faulty items need to be returned. Any health & safety and household security items should be provided by the landlord.</p>
Up to £110.00 Not Transferable	<p>Fitting of a gas/electric cooker by an approved fitter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided once
Up to £100.00 Not Transferable	<p>Contents insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided once for the first year living independently
Up to £110.00 Not Transferable	<p>Removal costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided once for a move to independent accommodation
Up To £3020.00	Total Amount
<p>As a general principle up to £500.00 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).</p> <p>The Setting Up Home Allowance is available up to the age of 25 or, until the completion of an education or training programme extending beyond 25, where young people are attending further education/training or higher education courses on their 25th birthday.</p> <p>The Setting Up Home Allowance is provided to ensure that the accommodation the young person is living in is homely and furnished and should always be used to purchase household items. The Setting Up Home Allowance is based on an assessment of need, taking account of any items provided with the accommodation.</p>	

The Setting Up Home Allowance is provided to ensure that the accommodation the young person is living in, is homely and furnished and should always be used to purchase household items. The Setting Up Home Allowance is based on an assessment of need, taking account of any items provided within the accommodation.

The entitlement to 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 entitlement is to household items/furnishings not to a cash payment. The purpose of the Setting Up Home Allowance is to ensure that young people have the household items that they need to furnish their home rather than an entitlement to 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 Sefton Children's Services that have been identified/chosen by the young person, c) where assessed as appropriate, young people will be provided with a cash allowance to purchase items, this will be undertaken where the young person has been able to evidence financial capability and robust money management skills.

VAT may be reclaimed on all purchases, where items are VAT rated and where Sefton Children's Services has purchased the goods. Original receipts must be kept by Sefton Children's Services.

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 Allowance 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.

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

Young people are entitled to one set of removal costs, cooker fitting costs, insurance costs, health and safety equipment costs and one setting up home starter pack. Where a young person requires a second set of one-off costs, these will only be provided subject to an assessment of need and approval of a Care Experienced Team Manager.

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 adult service home, the Setting Up Home Allowance will not be needed. Where young people move to supported living, an assessment of need will be undertaken, and the Setting Up Home Allowance 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 Allowance will be accessed and used, if the young person does not

have a discharge or release date by their 25th birthday, the Care Experienced Service and the provision of the Allowance will cease, the use of the Setting Up Home Allowance should be completed by 25½, where young people cease to receive a service at 25, for those engaged in education on their 25th birthday the use of the Allowance should be completed 6 months after the ending of the education course. The final Pathway Plan at age 21/25 should also set out a timescale and process for obtaining any final items.

£2530.50 for Setting Up Home Equipment (Accommodation Items):

This Allowance should be spent 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 (or foster carer / staying put carer / residential keyworker / supported accommodation support worker) and young person. Original receipts should be retained by social worker/personal adviser for audit purposes, reclaiming VAT and in case faulty items need to be returned.

Section 4

Appendices

Appendix A

Categories of Care Experienced Young People (Care Leavers)

Categories of Young People Eligible for a Leaving Care Services and Support

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 (revised 2015 and 2021)]

- An eligible child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who is cared for (looked after) and has been cared for (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 cared for (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 cared for (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 cared for (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 cared for (looked after).
- Additional relevant children:
 - Detained (sentenced), or in hospital prior to 16th birthday, and
 - Cared for (looked after) for at least 13 weeks after age 14 and cared for (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 cared for (looked after) (whether that period commenced before or after they ceased to be cared for (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 cared for (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 cared for (looked after) for less than 13 weeks between the age of 14 to 18 and were cared for (looked after) for at least 24 hours aged 16 and 17.
- Young people aged 16, and under 21, who were cared for (looked after) in a series of pre-planned short breaks.
- Young people aged 16 and under 21/25 who were accommodated (provided with accommodation) for at least three months, which ended after the age of 16, i.e. they were provided with accommodation by a health authority, a local authority in the exercise of an education function or by a private children's home.

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 Young People'.

Depending on an assessment of need, Sefton Children's Services 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. Personal Advisers should assist young people to maximise financial support available from employment, benefits and education allowances and opportunities.

Sefton Children's Services has a duty to provide vacation accommodation, or the means to secure it, to any care experienced young person qualifying for advice and assistance, who is between the ages of 16 and 25, who is in higher education or in residential further education and who needs it.

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

The assessment of need will normally be undertaken using the Assessment of Need framework – Pathway Plan Part One.

See Volume 3 Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance – Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (revised 2015 and 2022). – 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 cared for (looked after) on entering custody (on being remanded and being sentencing) and on reaching age 16 (if completing 13 weeks as a cared for child (looked after child) they become 'Eligible' care experienced young people (care leavers).
- Young people who are Accommodated under Section 20, remain cared for (looked after) when 'remanded' and cease to be cared for (looked after) if they receive a custodial sentence.
- Young people who are remanded become cared for (looked after) under Section 21 on being remanded and cease to be cared for (looked after) on being sentenced.
- Young people who have been cared for (looked after) (Section 20 & Section 21) for 13 weeks from the age of 14 (either remand or non-remand) and receive a custodial sentence before their 16th birthday become 'Relevant' care experienced young people (care leavers) on reaching their 16th birthday.
 - Young Offender Institution (YOI).
 - Secure Training Centre (STC).
 - Secure Children's Home (SCH).

Young Offender Detentions

Where a young person is 'detained' because 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 automatically provided with any allowances while detained but will be provided with allowances subject to an assessment of need. 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 £10.00 per week pocket money allowance (up to age 18) and/or have their engagement in education/training allowance topped up to £10.00. This will be provided in-line with any recommendations of the individual establishment and should be set out in the young person's pathway plan.

Additionally, and in exceptional circumstances, a clothing allowance commensurate with the care experienced clothing allowance of £12.85 per week may be provided – this will be provided as clothing items, rather than as an allowance.

A risk assessment should always be undertaken with the establishment to assess if the provision of a pocket money allowance or clothing will create disincentives to engage in education/training and may create opportunities to exploit or bully the young person.

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. The use of the Birthday/Christmas/Festival Allowance can only be authorised by a Care Experienced Team Manager.

On release young people will have access to their 'Setting Up Home Allowance' and, where a young person has been detained for more than six months, and dependent on an assessment of need, an Exceptional Needs Payment for clothing etc will be considered. The maximum clothing payment for 16 and 17 year olds who are being released from custody (after a remand/sentence) is linked to the Initial Clothing Grant of £200.00.

The Pathway Plan for young people who are detained should set out the provision of all financial allowances.

Where pocket money and clothing allowances are being provided these will cease at age 18.

Hospital Detentions

Young people (aged 16 & 17) 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 Care Experienced clothing allowance of £12.85 per week (paid quarterly).

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 (Universal Credit) the allowances will not be provided once benefits are in

payment (those detained in hospital). See page 13. In addition, those detailed in hospitals will be provided with the Birthday and Christmas/Festival Allowances.

On discharge young people can have access to their 'Setting Up Home Allowance' and, where a young person has been detained for more than six months, and dependent on an assessment of need, an Exceptional Needs Payment for clothing etc will be considered. The maximum clothing payment for 16 and 17 year olds who are being released from custody (remand/sentenced) is linked to the Initial Clothing Grant of £200.00.

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 (if before age 25) young people will have access to their 'Setting Up Home Allowance' 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 family members are in receipt of welfare benefits, prison visits and keeping in touch 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

Guidance on the Provision of Financial Support to Children aged 16 or 17 who are A) Placed with Parents, or B) 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 Sefton Children's Services 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 cared for.
- 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 eligible,

relevant, or qualifying, 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

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 (revised 2015 & 2021) and associated Guidance sets out that the Responsible Local Authority is required to assess and meeting the needs, including the financial needs of an 'Eligible' (and 'Relevant') child.

Children Under 16:

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Guidance sets out that where a child aged 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 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 UC 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 claim or Universal Credit claim.

The rules of 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 (Table One) and Universal Credit (Table Two) rates:

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, Sefton Children's Services should set a date to cease any transitional payments. The date to cease financial support should be set at a point between five and six weeks after a 'placement with a parent' or a return home.

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

Table One

Parent/s Eligible For:	First Child/Oldest Child	Second Child
Child Tax Credits	£66.44 per week	£66.44 per week
Child Benefit	£25.60 per week	£16.95 per week
Total	£92.04 per week	£83.39 per week

Table Two

Parent/s Eligible For:	First Child/Oldest Child	First/Second Child
Universal Credit	£76.92 (born before 6 th April 2017) per week	£66.44 per week
Child Benefit	£25.60 per week	£16.95 per week
Total	£102.52 per week	£83.39 per week

- Where a child was placed with a parent/s prior to their 16th birthday a review of the financial support for the child and parent/s must take place when the child becomes an **‘Eligible’** child. The review must be undertaken within the framework of the Regulation 42 - Assessment of Need (Pathway Part One).
- 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 home deemed ‘Other Arrangements’. The financial support provided to the child will be set out in the fostering financial policy, residential financial policy and Sefton Cared For & Care Experienced Financial Policy.

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 care experienced financial policy provides guidance on the provision of any allowances (standard allowances).
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 care experienced financial policy provides guidance on the provision of any allowances, if the young person remains an eligible care experienced young people (due to the child being on a care order), the parent is likely to be 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 experienced young person (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 (Sefton Council) will need to provide an allowance.

In circumstances where the child is living with a parent/s and the Care/Pathway Plan is focused on revoking the Care Order, or Interim Care Order, both the assessment of, and

financial support should be based on assisting the transition to parental financial support and for the child to enter/resume or continue education or training.

The primary aim of the cared for and care experienced 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 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 placed with parents who are not engaged in education or training should therefore be provided with the standard Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance of £71.70 per week (2024-2025).

To avoid any inequalities within the family, by the provision of care experienced financial 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 cared for, 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 Care Experienced birthday allowance for one child would potentially create an inequality if other family members do not receive a similar allowance, as such, the care experienced 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 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. For example, it may be appropriate that the young person retain an amount equivalent to pocket money and a clothing allowance element i.e., £32.85 (pocket money £20.00 and clothing allowance £12.85) and provide a contribution to the parent of £51.70 per week (2024-2025) – Total £71.70 + £12.85).

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 cared for and care experienced young people that would normally fall on parents, and/or on the welfare benefit system. Being an Eligible or Relevant child (regardless of them being placed at home) generally disqualifies parents from welfare benefits/tax credits/universal credit (or where they have recently returned – within the last 6 months).

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

Alternatively and where assessed as appropriate, and in circumstances where a cared for or care experienced young person 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 the returned child, (if they were not an Eligible or Relevant child) can be provided directly to the parent/s.

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 cared for (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 (subject to meeting any conditions).

'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 care experienced 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 care experienced 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 Parent/s

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 home arrangement (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 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 aged 16 & 17 Accommodated under Section 20 Returning to Live with a Parent/s in a Planned Manner who Cease to be Cared For (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.

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 cared for (looked after) must be sought from the Director of Children's Services, Sefton Council – 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 parent/s are entitled to claim welfare benefits/tax credits/universal credit like other parents. 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 care experienced 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 Care For & Care Experienced 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 cared for (looked after) must be sought from the Director of Children's Services, Sefton Council – Regulation 39.

Financial support should only be provided to the child in line with the Cared For & Care Experienced Finance Policy. 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.

An assessment should also be undertaken regarding withholding financial support (if the young person is staying with parents against the wishes of Sefton Children's Services) in case the withholding of financial support may put the young person at risk of exploitation.

Summary

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

- where a child/young person is Eligible or Relevant it is unlikely that parents will qualify for child benefit/child tax credits/universal credit.
- Once the child/young person becomes Qualifying parents will qualify for child benefit/child tax credits/universal credit.
- An assessment should be undertaken as to whether financial support is required based on the allowances provided within the cared for & care experienced finance policy provide.

Eligibility Chart

1	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 prior to the age of 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit when child placed.
2	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 prior to the age of 16, reaching age 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

3	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 after the age of 16.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent unlikely to be able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit.
4	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 – care order revoked when the child is aged 16/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 order is revoked (can claim on becoming Qualifying). • If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.
5	Child – returning to live with a parent, person with PR (section 20 ending)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Award 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, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and 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 Citizen's Advice and choose an independent solicitor and financial adviser to explore opportunities to use their award in a positive manner and/or place it in a 'Discretionary Trust Fund'.

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.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Award Payments Standard Letter

Care Experienced Team Address

YOUNG PERSON'S NAME:

D.O.B:

N.I. NUMBER:

ADDRESS:

Criminal Injuries Compensation Award Payments

This pro-forma is used to verify that a young person has been provided with advice, assistance and guidance regarding his/her responsibilities associated with receiving a Criminal Injuries Compensation Award Payment.

Universal Credit and Housing Benefit 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 Injuries Payment.

I **ADD FULL NAME** confirm that I have been advised that if I do not place my C.I.C.A. Payment in a Discretionary Trust Fund within a year of receiving it (generally by the age of nineteen (if the payment is over £6000.00), the payment may result in me have no entitlement to a means tested welfare benefits/universal credit or having a reduced entitlement to benefits.

I confirm that my social worker/personal adviser has set up and/or taken me to appointments at the Citizens Advice or other independent welfare benefit advice agencies/financial advice agency. I confirm that after being given advice that my C.I.C.A. Payment may affect my means tested welfare benefits, I have chosen to receive the full payment on my eighteenth birthday. I have been advised that if I set up a Discretionary

Trust Fund before the age of eighteen/nineteen and place my C.I.C.A. Award in to a Discretionary Trust Fund, I will remain eligible to claim/receive means tested welfare benefits/universal credit. I am aware that my social worker/personal adviser are duty bound to inform the Department for Work and Pensions and Housing Benefits Section that I am in receipt of a C.I.C.A. Award. I am also aware of the DWP rules on the disposal of capital.

Signed

Young Person.....
Social Worker/Personal Adviser.....

Appendix F

Capital and Trust Funds Other Than Criminal Injuries Compensation Award Payments

Eligible and Relevant Children

If young people have funds of their own, such as legacies, trust funds or money in savings and bank accounts the following guidance should apply. Children's Services, as set out in Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Guidance (page 62, para 3) will treat capital according to the Department for Work and Pensions regulations governing Income Support (the Income Support (IS) (General) Regulations 1987).

This sets out a scale whereby capital up to £6000.00 is disregarded and someone with capital assets of £16,000.00 or more is not entitled to assistance. Where a young person's capital exceeds £6000.00 but is not more than £16,000.00 an amount corresponding to the excess is treated as a weekly contribution against council support. For every £250.00 of capital above £6000.00 young people will lose £1.00 (Tariff Income) per week of their Sefton Children's Services allowance. Housing Benefit regulations sets out a similar scale whereby capital up to £6000.00 is disregarded and someone with capital assets of £16,000.00 or more is not entitled to assistance.

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

Appendix G

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Eligible and Relevant Children

Key Guidance

Social Workers and Personal Advisers must ensure an UASC has applied to extend their leave to remain, and 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 (revised 2025 & 2021) [16 & 17 year olds] and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance 2010 (revised 2015 & 2022) and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 [16 to 21/25 year olds] in exactly the same way as other children in this country.

However, they will also have an immigration status:

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

all of which will need to be taken into account when undertaking their Assessment of Need (Pathway Plan Part One) 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 entitlements as any other young person. However, there may be some differences in entitlement, which will need to be acknowledged in their Pathway Plan. For example, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are applying for asylum and are awaiting an initial decision or have been granted exceptional leave to remain are not entitled to certain education allowances and loans.

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 immigration status situation on reaching the age of eighteen.

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

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 aged 18 to 21/25

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, Sefton Children's Services will apply all of the aspects of the Former Relevant Children section of the Cared For & Care Experienced 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 Sefton Children's Services Higher Education Allowance/Grant for higher education courses that finish in the academic year prior to their status expiring.

Sefton Children's Services will provide a Higher Education Grant to unaccompanied asylum seeking young people 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 tuition fee and maintenance loan;
- c) they are classified as a home student.

Sefton Children's Services 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.

Sefton Children's Services will fund one ESOL course and will only consider funding a second course under exceptional circumstances.

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, Sefton Children's Services will provide an allowance commensurate with benefits following the completion of a Human Rights Assessment.

This allowance can continue to be paid until the removal date or the young person's 21st/25th birthday (or the end of their education course following their 21st 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 touch 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 Assessment of Need (Regulation 42) – Pathway Plan – Part One with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at age fifteen and a half and subsequently developing their Pathway Plans, personal advisers must take account of young people's immigration status and how this may limit access to public funds and services at 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 dual plan approach. For example, Pathway Plans should highlight what support would be given if the young person gains indefinite leave to remain, and an alternative Pathway Plan should highlight what support would be available should they be granted limited leave to remain and/or receive removal directions.

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 'cared for' status and an asylum and immigration status in addition to their home 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 peoples cared for needs in the context of wider asylum and immigration legislation and how this changes over time. Pathway planning to support a UASC's transition to adulthood should cover all areas that would be addressed within all young people's plans as well as any additional needs arising from their specific refugee and immigration 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 entitlement 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 do not have a permanent immigration status, should initially take a dual or triple planning perspective which over time should be refined as the final asylum outcome becomes known:

- 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.
- 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, in part because of the provisions of Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (and Immigration Act 2016 if and when the guidance is applied – this may be superseded by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022).

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' (but may do).

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.

Note:

The section above will be updated when the Immigration Act 2016 guidance, the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 guidance, and/or the Illegal Migration Act 2023 guidance have been issued and the full timescales for implement are set out.

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 print out of the Post Office tracking statement should be submitted with the young person's benefit claim.

Given the number of asylum applications over the last few years, many young people will not have received an initial decision by their 18th birthday.

Failed Asylum Seekers, No Recourse to Public Funds, All Rights Exhausted and Human Rights Assessments (Sefton Children's Services Approach)

Young people reaching the age of 18 who, A) do not have an immigration status and/or B) young people who are failed asylum seekers and/or C) young people who have No Recourse to Public Funds or Services and/or D) 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.

This section will be updated when the guidance associated with the Immigration Act 2016 is issued/applied. It is likely the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 will supersede and replace the Immigration Act 2016.

Appendix H

Standard Benefit Claim Letter 2024 - 2025

Care Experienced Team
Sefton Children's Services
ADD ADDRESS

CLIENT NAME:
(Tenant)

D.O.B:

N.I. NUMBER:

CURRENT ADDRESS:

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION/HOME AND TENANCY: (Licence Agreement/Assured
Shorthold)

HOME TYPE

NAME OF LANDLORD
ADDRESS OF LANDLORD

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is provided to verify the identity of the above-named young person and to confirm and clarify **(his/her)** circumstances in support of their welfare benefit claim.

The above-named young person was previously placed in **(private accommodation /semi-independent accommodation/foster care/residential provision)** by Sefton Children's Services at the above address. As the young person has now reached the age of eighteen and **(he/she)** is deemed 'independent in **(his/her)** own right' and is liable for accommodation costs of **(£00.00 per week ADD)**, excluding utility and support charges **(he/she)** is submitting a claim for **(set out benefits being claimed)**. The information provided below sets out **(his/her)** legal status and financial circumstances

I can confirm that **(Add Full Name)** was previously an 'Eligible' child, or an 'Eligible' and/or 'Relevant' child and became a 'Former Relevant' child on **(Add Date)** as defined by the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010 (Revised 2015 & 2021) and Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (Revised 2015 & 2022).

A. I can also confirm that **(Add Full Name)** was previously 'Looked After' by Sefton Children's Services and was 'Accommodated' under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

B. I can also confirm that (**Add Full Name**) was previously 'Looked After' by Sefton Children's Services and was subject to a Section 31 Care Order under the terms of the Children Act 1989.

(**Add Full Name**) ceased to be 'Looked After' on (**Add Date- 18th birthday or actual date if earlier**) and will continue to receive practical support and, in specific circumstances, financial help from Sefton Children's Services under Section 24 of the Children Act 1989 or Section 23C of the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010.

Section 23C and Section 24 payments must be declared when claiming benefits but are not counted as income for any welfare benefit purposes.

Whilst (**Add Full Name**) is establishing (**his/her**) welfare benefit claim (**he/she**) will be provided with a Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance of £71.70 (2024-2025) per week under these powers for 5 weeks.

1. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child and ceased to be 'Looked After', I believe (**he/she**) will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £311.68 per month (2024-2025) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element. (**He/she**) will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.
2. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After' and is engaged on a traineeship at the rate of (**ADD £ per week**), I believe (**he/she**) will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £311.68 per month (2024-2025) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element, minus any income received from his training allowance, apart from the payment of travel and childcare expenses. (**he/she**) will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.
3. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After', is without parental support and is entitled to claim whilst receiving non-advanced education, I believe (**he/she**) should receive Universal Credit at the rate of £311.68 per month (2024-2025) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element. He/she will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.
4. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After', and has been given a 'Fit Note' by (**his/her**) Doctor, I believe (**he/she**) will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £311.68 per month (2024-2025) (if single without dependent children) and the relevant Housing Costs element. (**he/she**) should also be assessed for Limited Capacity for Work and Limited Capacity for Work-Related Activity. (**he/she**) will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.

5. As **(Add Full Name)** has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After' and is earning a low income, I believe **(he/she)** will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £311.68 per month (2024-2025) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element. **(he/she)** will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority. Please find attached relevant wage slips/prove of income.

As **(Add Full Name)** was 'Looked After' on/or after **(his/her)** sixteenth birthday **(he/she)** and is under 25 years of age, **(he/she)** is currently exempt from the shared accommodation rate of local housing allowance, and therefore should receive the one-bedroom rate as **(his/her)** housing cost element.

As **(Add Full Name)** is a care experienced young person (care leaver) and is within 28 days of **(his/her)** eighteenth birthday, I understand they can commence a claim for Universal Credit as set out in ADM – A-2048.

- As **(Add Full Name)** was previously 'Looked After' and remains vulnerable, I would request that the 'Housing Costs' element of Universal Credit is paid under a 'Tier 1 Vulnerability - Alternative Payment Arrangement' directly to their landlord (UC47).

(Add specific information)

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Approved Signatures

Team Manager

*** Please complete, or delete, either section A or B, the subsequent three bullet points and complete the bold text sections and the relevant sections 1 to 6. All other sections must be completed.**

Information about disregarding Social Services payments to care experienced young people (care leavers).

Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook; Child Poverty Action Group: 2018/19 edition

Chapter 7 Universal Credit – What Counts as Income
Page 122

Payments by Social Services

Universal Credit operates differently to other means-tested benefits, where all income is counted unless specifically disregarded. Under universal credit, only income that is specifically mentioned in the regulations counts as income. There is no mention of

payments under the Children Act, and therefore any payments made under that legislation will be disregarded as income.

Appendix I

National Insurance Numbers

All young people should automatically receive a National Insurance Number at the age of 15 and 9 months. The National Insurance Number is sent to the address where Child Benefit is being claimed for the child/young person. As the majority of cared for children do not have a Child Benefit claim, National Insurance Numbers do not automatically get issued. At the age of 15 and 9 months the social worker for the child/young person needs to contact the New Registrations Section of the National Insurance Number Office – HMRC. For detailed guidance see: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/nimmanual/NIM39310.htm>

Children who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will have their National Insurance Number issued linked to, and with their DLA claim.

Appendix J

Financial Assessment Form and Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Reduction and Savings Notice

Income:

Calculation Date:

Item	Amount (£)
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	
16-19 Bursary	
Traineeship Allowance	
Apprenticeship Allowance	
Earnings (Part and Full Time)	
Other	
Total Income (Subtotal 1)	

Less fares related to work/training/study	
Total Costs (Subtotal 2)	

Deduct Subtotal 2 from Subtotal 1 to produce Subtotal 3

Net Income (Subtotal 3)	
-------------------------	--

If subtotal 3 is over £135.00, the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance is reduced by 50%.
If subtotal 3 is over £155.00 the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and the Clothing and Leisure Allowance cease (also added to Savings or SUHA)

Any reduction amount will be added to the young person's Junior ISA or Setting Up Home Allowance – the reduction is applied to assist the young person develop money management and budgeting skills.

This form should be completed by the young person and their social worker/personal adviser and/or their semi-independent support worker.

Date LCMA Reduction (Transfer to Savings or SUHA) to Commence.	
The Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance is reduced by 50% (Added to Savings or SUHA).	
The Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and Clothing and Leisure Allowance cease (Added to Savings).	
Income Retained and Amount to be Saved.	

Appendix K

ADD Sefton Children's Services Logo

Consent to Share / Disclose Information under the Data Protection Act 2018 & GDPR.

Name of Student:	
Name of University:	
Student ID Number:	
Title of Course:	

Please read the following statement carefully:

I, the above-named Student, consent to Sefton Care Experienced 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 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 Sefton Children's Services to ensure you have the right level of support and financial assistance for the duration of your degree course.

Date From:	<i>The Information Sharing Agreement should have a start and end date.</i>
Date To:	<i>The Information Sharing Agreement should have a start and end date.</i>
Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	

Appendix L

SEFTON – CHILDREN’S SERVICES - FINANCIAL SUPPORT CHART

- If you have left Foster Care or a Children’s Home, and you are an Eligible, Relevant, or a Former Relevant young person, this chart provides information about the financial support that Sefton Children’s Services can offer you. It is important to talk to your Social Worker/Personal Adviser about the allowances that may be available to you and what your responsibilities are when receiving them.
- With your Social Worker/Personal Adviser, explore what you may be entitled to and complete the chart.

Entitlements		Comments	Amount
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance			
Accommodation or Home Costs			
Education/Training/Employment Costs			
Clothing			
Birthday/Christmas and Festival Allowances			
Health			
Key & Identity Documents			
Travel & Family Time Costs			
Exceptional Needs Costs			
Setting Up Home Allowance Costs			
Other Payments and Allowances			
		Your Weekly Total Your Monthly Total Your Yearly Total	