

**Royal Borough of Kingston  
Learning and Children's Services Directorate  
Prevention and Safeguarding Services**

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**Financial support policy for young people aged 16 to 24, who are either looked after or receive leaving care services from the Royal Borough of Kingston**

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## **Introduction**

Every young person aged 16 to 21 (or up to 24 if still in full time education), who is looked after or who receives leaving care services from the Royal Borough of Kingston, should receive a copy of this policy from their social worker or Personal Adviser (their "worker").

This policy does not apply to young people who are still living with a foster carer or in a residential home or community home.

The most recent version of this policy can be downloaded from the website [www.youngliving.org.uk](http://www.youngliving.org.uk).

The aim of this policy is to explain to young people the types of financial support they can expect to receive from the Royal Borough of Kingston ("RBK").

The Royal Borough of Kingston will look after you like a good parent until you are 18 years old, which is when the law explicitly recognises you as an adult rather than a child. However, the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 also recognises that young people continue to need parental support for the first few years of their adult lives. So, after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and until you are aged 21 (and for as long as up to age 24 if you continue in education), we will help you towards independence and support you to achieve your full potential through education, training and employment.

We want to help and support young people reach adulthood and independence successfully and most do this with varying levels of support. However it is important to remember that we can only provide financial support where the request is reasonable and our resources allow. It will be difficult for us to provide additional financial resources to young people who are not co-operating with agreed arrangements or whose behaviour leads us to believe money will be mis-spent or wasted.

The Royal Borough of Kingston is required by law to provide equal opportunities to all young people, regardless of their gender, race, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation. This financial support policy explicitly acknowledges that we have a duty to provide equal opportunities to young people who have come to the United Kingdom from

other countries, as far as legislation permits us. Where legislation makes it difficult for us to provide equal opportunities, we will always look for alternative ways to try to act equitably and fairly, where we are unable to do so, we will provide clear explanations.

At the back of this policy is a list of useful organisations which young people can contact for further advice and information.

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## **1 Young people who are eligible for financial support**

The Royal Borough of Kingston will give financial support to young people aged 16 to 21 (or up to 24 if still in full time education) who come under one of the categories defined below. These categories are defined in the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

If you are unsure which category you come under, please ask your worker to explain.

### **1.1 An *eligible child***

- Is aged 16 or 17; and
- Has been looked after by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 for at least 13 weeks since their 14th birthday (this includes having been in a remand centre, Youth Offending Institution, Secure Training Centre or other court-ordered institution or in a hospital); and
- Is still looked after by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

An *eligible child* is often described as “in care” or “looked after”. An *eligible child* is entitled to the following from RBK.

- A Personal Adviser
- A Needs Assessment
- A Pathway Plan and reviews at least every six months or more often if necessary.
- Accommodation and living expenses, paid for by RBK.
- Help with the costs associated with education, training and employment.

### **1.2 A *relevant child***

- Is aged 16 or 17; and
- Has been looked after by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 for at least 13 weeks since their 14th birthday, including at least one day on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (this includes having been in a remand centre, Youth Offending Institution, Secure Training Centre or other court-ordered institution or in a hospital); and
- Is no longer looked after by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989; and
- Is not the subject of a Care Order; and
- May be receiving financial support from the local authority as a “child in need” under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

A *relevant child* is often described as “in care” or “looked after”. A *relevant child* is entitled to the following from RBK:

- A Personal Adviser
- A Needs Assessment
- A Pathway Plan, with reviews at least every six months and more often if necessary
- Accommodation and financial maintenance if not living at home
- Help in achieving the goals of their Pathway Plan
- Help with the costs associated with education, training and employment.
- Contact, advice and support from their Personal Adviser

### **1.3 A former relevant child**

- Is aged 18 to 21 (or up to 24 if still in full time education as agreed in their Pathway Plan); and
- Was previously an eligible child or a relevant child.

A *former relevant child* is often described as a “care leaver”. A *former relevant child* is entitled to the following from RBK:

- A Personal Adviser
- A Pathway Plan, with reviews at least every six months and more often if necessary
- Help with the costs associated with education, training and employment, if agreed in the Pathway Plan
- Payment for vacation accommodation if in higher education or residential further education, if agreed in the Pathway Plan
- Contact, advice and support from their Personal Adviser

RBK may not agree to requests for financial support which have not already been agreed in the Pathway Plan.

So it is important for young people to work closely with their worker to make sure that thorough reviews of Pathway Plans are done at least every six months. If your circumstances change, then you should ask to review your Pathway Plan with your worker even if six months have not yet passed.

If you feel unclear or unhappy with the information recorded in your Pathway Plan, please ask your worker to make it clear to you as soon as possible. If you still feel unclear or unhappy, please ask to speak to your worker’s manager, or the Looked After Children’s Participation Officer. We want you to know as early as possible whether we will agree or decline financial support, so that you can make alternative plans if necessary.

## **2 Support for Eligible and Relevant young people aged 16 and 17 years**

The Royal Borough of Kingston is required by law to provide equal opportunities to all young people, regardless of their gender, race, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation. This financial support policy explicitly acknowledges that we have a duty to provide equal opportunities to young people who have come to the United Kingdom from other countries, as far as legislation permits us. Where legislation makes it difficult for us to provide equal opportunities, we will always look for alternative ways to try to act equitably and, where we are unable to do so, we will provide clear explanations.

### **2.1 Living allowance, housing and other financial support**

For most young people aged 16 and 17, we will pay for your housing, give you a Living Allowance and support you financially with a range of needs including education, training or employment.

We will pay a Living Allowance into your bank account at a rate equivalent to Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance. From April 2007 to March 2008 this amount is £46.85 per week. If you have to pay a service charge out of this to your accommodation provider, the amount should be stated in your Pathway Plan. If you do not have a bank or building society account, please talk with your worker about setting one up. Your worker will help you if you find this difficult.

If you find it difficult to manage your money, we will offer budgeting advice. If you often run out of money, we may give you smaller, more frequent sums of cash or go to the shops with you instead of paying your Living Allowance directly into your bank or building society account.

If you are on a training course (e.g. e2e) where a weekly allowance is paid directly to you, we will not pay the Living Allowance. However, if the weekly payment is less than £46.85 we will pay the difference.

If you are a 16 or 17 year old parent, you will probably claim benefits from the DWP and tax credits from HM Revenues & Customs for your family's living costs, but we will continue to pay for your housing until your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. You can still ask RBK to help you with the costs associated with education, training and employment. Please talk with your worker about the benefits and tax credits you can claim.

If you are working, we will probably expect you to contribute to your living and housing costs. The amount you will contribute will depend on your pay, but we will not leave you with less than £95 per week to live on. If you are working, you can still ask RBK to help you with the costs associated with education, training and employment. Always make sure that any request for financial help is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

## **2.2 National Insurance Number**

If you are aged 16 or over and you do not have a National Insurance number, please talk to your worker about how you can get one before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It will be very difficult to get a job or welfare benefits without a National Insurance Number.

## **2.3 Discretionary payments**

All payments above the Living Allowance and housing costs are discretionary and not an entitlement. The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 sets out the priority areas for discretionary funding above the Living Allowance. The priority areas are:

- Travel costs e.g. for education, training and employment
- Education materials and special equipment
- Other educational costs
- Costs associated with needs (such as a disability or pregnancy)
- The costs of childcare
- Clothing
- Contact with family or other significant relationships
- Cultural and religious needs
- Counselling and therapeutic needs
- Hobbies and holidays

It is important to talk to your worker about any needs or plans you have and make sure that your Pathway Plan records any requests or agreed funding.

Discretionary payments must be agreed by the Team Manager or Strategic Manager. All such payments will be monitored and reviewed to ensure no individual or group is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by the administration of discretionary payments. A record of such payment will be kept on the general budget system and individually on file.

If you have any specific needs that are not covered in this policy, we encourage you to talk with your worker. Your worker will talk with the Team Manager about your request and do an assessment if necessary.

## **2.4 Allowances for education and training**

We will encourage you to attend college or take up training and employment opportunities. We will help you claim any funds you may be entitled to, as explained below.

## **2.5 Education Maintenance Allowance**

Most young people aged 16 and 17 (and 18) who attend college or certain employment and training programmes can claim Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) worth £30 per week from the Government. All young people who are eligible will be supported by their worker to apply for EMA.



You should apply for EMA as soon as possible, ideally before your course begins. To apply for EMA you must have a bank account, so if you don't have one, ask your worker to help set one up.

If you have applied for EMA but it has not yet been paid by the time your course starts, RBK will pay you £30 until your EMA payments begin. We will ask you to repay the money we have lent you once your EMA is paid.

## **2.6 Allowance for Education and Training**

Some young people are not eligible for EMA, for example people who have Discretionary Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom, or who have applied for further leave to remain. Please check with your worker if you think you might not be able to get EMA.

If you want to do an educational or training course which has been agreed in your Pathway Plan, and are not eligible for EMA, RBK may pay you an Allowance for Education and Training (AET) of £30 per week instead. You should record a request for AET in your Pathway Plan as soon as possible, ideally before the course begins.

To get AET, your course tutor must confirm that you have attended for at least 85% of your college or training course during the previous term. We will pay the AET into your bank or building society account.

During college vacations, we will pay you £15 per week so long as your attendance has been over 85% and you intend to continue your course during the following term.

If you think your circumstances or additional needs may mean you will not consistently manage 85% attendance on your college or training course, you should discuss this with your worker as soon as possible. Your specific circumstances can then be considered. Some evidence of your additional needs, ie. Doctors note may be required.

The AET is made up as follows:

- Travel costs - £15 per week. You must have an Oyster Card so that you can get the cheapest ticket. We will not pay for travel costs above £15 per week unless agreed in your Pathway Plan.
- Course materials - £5 per week
- Lunch money - £10 per week

If you are in part time education you will receive pro rata payments e.g.

1 day - £7.50  
2 days - £15  
3 days - £22.50

## **2.7 Course fees**

When researching what course you want to do, ask the college about tuition fees. If you will have to pay tuition fees, you must discuss this with your worker and have the discussion recorded in your Pathway Plan and reviews. This discussion should ideally begin at least three months before your course begins, so that you and your worker have enough time to fully explore all potential sources of funding. For example, you may be eligible for Discretionary Learner Support Funds (DLSF). You can also get advice on funding from the Educational Grants Advisory Service, whose details are listed at the end of this policy.

If you cannot find any other funder to pay your course fees, you can ask us to pay. We will pay for your course fees only if:

- You have fully explored alternative sources of funding; and
- You have begun discussing this with your worker before the course begins (ideally at least three months before); and
- Your Pathway Plan shows that the course is essential for you to progress along your chosen career path; and
- You can demonstrate at least 85% attendance on any previous course of education or training.

## **2.8 Essential equipment and activities**

Your college has special funds to help students pay for essential equipment and activities connected to your course of education or training. If eligible, you should apply to your college's Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF). Your worker will help you make the application.

If your DLSF application is refused, you can ask for RBK to help you instead. We can give an allowance of up to £100 per academic year to help you buy essential equipment or pay for activities connected with your course. Before we agree to pay, we will check with your college that the item or activity is essential and that your attendance has been over 85%. You should make sure that your request is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you want to start a course for which essential equipment and activities will cost more than £100, and you intend to ask RBK to pay for these, please speak with your worker and record the request in your Pathway Plan as soon as possible (ideally at least three months) before the course begins.

To raise more funds, we can help you apply to educational trusts and charities. Organisations listed at the back of this policy (e.g. Educational Grants Advisory Service) can give further information.

## **2.9 Books**

We will pay up to £50 per academic year for books which your course tutor confirms are essential, and which you cannot get from the library or pay for by other means, such as DLSF, on condition that your attendance is at least 85%.

## **2.10 Child care costs while studying or training**

If you are a parent of a young child and you are on a college or training course, you will probably be eligible for the Care to Learn scheme. Care to Learn will pay up to £175 per child per week. This money includes costs for childcare (you will need to use an Ofsted registered childcare provider), registration fees and travel costs. Whilst on the Care to Learn scheme you will also be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance or Allowance for Education and Training. You should apply for Care to Learn before the course begins and your worker will help you with this.

If you are not eligible for the Care to Learn scheme, you can ask RBK to help you with the costs of child care while you are attending your course. You should talk to your worker about this before you begin any course and ensure that this is recorded in your Pathway Plan. To encourage you to participate in education and training RBK will always try to meet reasonable costs. Your worker will talk to the Team Manager about your request.

We will disregard Child Benefit payments when deciding whether to give you extra financial support.

## **2.11 Looking for work**

We can help you while you are looking for work. Here are some examples:

- We can help to complete applications forms and CVs.
- We can practice interview skills with you.
- We can put you in touch with Connexions.
- We can give you information on education, employment and training opportunities.
- We can pay for your travel costs to job interviews (please make sure you have an Oyster card).
- We can give you one-off payments of up to £200 to buy suitable clothing for an interview or for a job.
- We can give you advice and support to get onto a college course which may increase your work opportunities.

Any funds and support agreed must be recorded in your Pathway Plan and reflect your efforts to seek employment in a chosen field.

After you get a job, you may still be able to get financial help from RBK. Make sure that you speak with your worker and record the request and the decision in your Pathway Plan. If you get a job, you will need to pay towards your rent and we will agree an amount with you (Paying your rent if in work gives more detail).

## **2.12 Young people with a disability**

We will work closely with RBK's Disabled Children's Services to make sure you are know about and are able to get the support and services you need. We will have strong links with the RBK Transition Team who work with disabled young people leaving care.

If you have a disability, language difficulty or specific additional needs then these will be taken into consideration when assessing the level of financial support you will need.

## **2.13 Clothing**

The minimum amount of clothing we consider suitable for young people aged 16 and 17 is listed below:

- ☐ A winter coat
- ☐ 2 jumpers or sweatshirts
- ☐ At least 2 pairs of jeans
- ☐ At least 2 skirts
- ☐ Sufficient underwear
- ☐ 3 t-shirts
- ☐ 2 shirts or blouses
- ☐ 1 pair of trainers
- ☐ 1 pair of shoes
- ☐ A large holdall, rucksack or suitcase (we will never expect you to move your clothes in a plastic bag or bin liner)

Young people who are leaving foster care or a residential home should leave with at least the minimum set out above. If you do not have all these items, please speak with your worker.

Any payment for clothing will only be agreed after your worker has visited your accommodation and assessed your clothing needs. Your worker will probably ask to go shopping with you and will need you to give receipts.

RBK can give 16 and 17 year olds up to a maximum of £360 for clothing over the course of a year. The clothing allowance is an assessed allowance and not an entitlement, so it will be paid for specific items. After your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, RBK will not give you money for clothes, unless they are needed for your college course or job, and the cost has been agreed in your Pathway Plan.

## 2.14 Maternity Grant

If you are a *former relevant child* and you give birth to a baby while you are still 16 or 17, you will probably be able to claim Income Support. As soon as you are in receipt of Income Support, and certainly within three months of the baby's birth, you should apply to the Jobcentre for a Sure Start Maternity Grant worth £500. This money is for you to buy essential items for your baby.

If you are not eligible for the Sure Start Maternity Grant, RBK will pay you a £500 Maternity Grant instead. We consider essential items for a newborn baby to be:

- ❑ Cot
- ❑ 3 sets of bedding
- ❑ 4 sets of clothing
- ❑ Sterilisers and bottles, if needed (we encourage breastfeeding)
- ❑ Buggy, rain cover and cosy-toes
- ❑ Baby bath
- ❑ Baby wipes and baby toiletries
- ❑ Nappies (disposable or re-usable)

If possible, you should try to save some of your Maternity Grant for when your baby gets bigger and you need to buy items such as larger clothing, safety equipment and toys.

Your worker will also offer to help you get good quality, second hand baby and toddler items if you would like. Your baby will grow out of things very quickly, so if you can get some things for free you can make your Maternity Grant last for much longer.

## 2.15 Contact with family or other significant relationships

We will support you to maintain contacts with people who are important to you. For young people who are not from the United Kingdom, and who have family and friends in other countries, we can give a monthly international calling card worth up to a maximum of £10. We will support you to use the Red Cross International Tracing and Messaging Service.

For young people who have significant relationships with family and friends in the United Kingdom, we may give you a travel warrant for you to visit loved ones. We will also consider other requests. We will ask to speak with the person you want to visit before we give you the travel warrant. Your worker will need to talk with the Team Manager about your request.

## 2.16 Birthdays

On your 16th, 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays, we will give you a gift to the amount of £40. This could be in vouchers, an item or (if agreed) cash.

## **2.17 Birth certificates**

We will help you and pay for you to obtain a certified copy of your birth certificate, if possible.

## **2.18 Religious celebrations**

Whatever your religion, faith or belief, we will give you a cash payment of £20 once a year to contribute towards any celebration you may wish to make. This payment will be made on July 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

## **2.19 Physical and mental health needs**

We will help you get services for any physical or mental health needs you may have. For example, we may pay for your travel costs to appointments and we may accompany you if you wish. Please talk to your worker and make sure any request for help is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

Most 16 and 17 year olds are eligible for free health services. If you are not automatically entitled to free health services, you should complete an HC1 form. The HC1 takes about a month to be processed and then you will receive a HC2 certificate giving you free or very low cost health services. The HC2 has to be renewed every six months.

## **2.20 Special interests, special aptitudes, holidays and passports or travel documents**

We encourage you to take part in a range of activities. We give all 16 and 17 year old *eligible children* a Re:active Card which offers discounts on RBK leisure services. We hope to give a Re:active Card to all 16 and 17 year old *former relevant children* soon.

If you have a special talent in music, sport, the arts or another field, which you need extra money to pursue, we can consider a wide range of requests. You should talk with your worker about any request for funding and make sure this is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

We cannot usually pay for young people to go on holiday. However, we may pay for trips which form part of your educational course or which give you an important opportunity to pursue a special interest or aptitude. We will ask you to apply to your college's Discretionary Learners' Support Fund before we consider your request. Please make sure that your request is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you do not already have a passport or travel document by the age of 16 or 17, and you are eligible for one, we will pay for your application. Please talk to your worker if you think you may be eligible for a passport or travel document.

## 2.21 Driving and cycling

We cannot usually pay the full cost of the provisional driving licence, lessons and test. However, if you can show that you need to learn to drive in order to follow your education, training or career path, then we will consider contributing up to a maximum of £350. You will need to discuss your request with your worker and you must ensure that your request and reasons are recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you can show that you need to cycle to your place of education, training or employment, RBK will consider making a contribution up to a maximum of £350 for the cost of a bicycle, helmet, lock and lights.

We cannot fund driving lessons and the cost of a bicycle.

## 2.22 Approaching Eighteen

After your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, we expect you to become more independent, although we will continue to encourage and support you. More details of support for young people aged 18+ are set out later in this policy.

For most young people aged 18+, we no longer expect to pay for your housing or to give you a Living Allowance. So before your eighteenth birthday you need to talk with your worker about the welfare benefits you need to claim and the documents you need to start collecting before you submit your benefit claims.

Instead of receiving a Living Allowance from RBK, from the age of 18 most *former relevant children* will claim Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance from the Jobcentre. To get Income Support, you need to be studying for 12 hours or more per week, or be a lone parent, or be able to provide medical certificates from your GP confirming that you are too sick to work. Otherwise, you will need to claim Jobseeker's Allowance. The amount of money you receive on Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance is the same - £46.85 per week paid directly into your bank account. But to get Jobseeker's Allowance, you will need to sign at the Jobcentre every two weeks and show that you are actively seeking full time work.

Instead of your housing being paid by RBK Children's Services, you will become responsible for your housing costs, but you can claim Housing Benefit from the local authority where you live if you are getting Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance, or if you are working on a low income.

You should also ask your worker whether you will be responsible for Council Tax and whether you need to apply for Council Tax Benefit or Council Tax exemption.

If you know what your address will be on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, you can claim Housing Benefit up to 13 weeks before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

You will need a National Insurance number to claim welfare benefits. If you do not have a National Insurance number, please ask your worker to help you apply for one urgently.

If you are eligible for welfare benefits, then you are not eligible for any Living Allowance after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, as we know that the Jobcentre usually takes around two weeks to process claim for Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance, we will lend you, on a discretionary basis, Living Allowance for up to two weeks after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. You will be asked to repay this money when welfare benefits are subsequently backdated so that you are not paid twice for the same period.

If your claim for Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance has not been processed within two weeks of your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and you have no money to live on, we will help you apply to the Jobcentre for a Crisis Loan. If the Jobcentre refuses to give you a Crisis Loan, you can ask us for an Emergency Payment. Your worker will discuss your request with the Team Manager.

If you are an unaccompanied asylum seeking child who has been granted leave to remain only until you are 17 ½ or 18 years old, you should ask your legal representative if you can apply for further leave to remain before your original period leave expires. You will only be able to claim welfare benefits after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if you have made an application for further leave to remain before your original period of leave to remain has expired.

If you have exhausted all your immigration appeal rights and you are unlawfully present in the United Kingdom, you will not be able to claim welfare benefits after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It may become unlawful for RBK to continue supporting you financially after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. RBK must carry out an assessment under the European Convention on Human Rights to decide whether it is lawful to continue to give you a Living Allowance and pay for your housing, as well as additional financial support.

### **3 Support for Former Relevant young people aged 18+**

The Royal Borough of Kingston is required by law to provide equal opportunities to all young people, regardless of their gender, race, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation. This financial support policy explicitly acknowledges that we have a duty to provide equal opportunities to young people who have come to the United Kingdom from other countries, as far as legislation permits us. Where legislation makes it difficult for us to provide equal opportunities, we will always look for alternative ways to try to act equitably and, where we are unable to do so, we will provide clear explanations.

Our support to young adults aged 18 plus focuses mainly on encouraging you to become independent and on helping you to fulfil your potential through education, training and employment.

For most young adults aged 18 plus, we will no longer pay your Living Allowance or your housing. Most of you will claim welfare benefits or work or get a maintenance grant while at university. But we will still help you with costs associated with



education, training and employment. We may also be able to help you with other needs.

Our duties to give you financial help under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 usually end on your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. However, we can continue to give you financial help past your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, until your 24<sup>th</sup> birthday at the latest, if we have agreed this in advance in your Pathway Plan.

### **3.1 Money to live on after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday**

After your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, we expect you to become more independent, although we will continue to encourage and support you.

For most young people aged 18+, we no longer expect to give you a Living Allowance. So before your eighteenth birthday you need to talk with your worker about the welfare benefits you will need to claim and the documents you need to start collecting before you submit your benefit claims.

Instead of receiving a Living Allowance from RBK, from the age of 18 most *former relevant children* will claim Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance from the Jobcentre. To get Income Support, you need to be studying for 12 hours or more per week, or be a lone parent, or be able to provide medical certificates from your GP confirming that you are too sick to work. Otherwise, you will need to claim Jobseeker's Allowance. The amount of money you receive on Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance is the same - £46.85 per week paid directly into your bank account. But to get Jobseeker's Allowance, you will need to sign at the Jobcentre every two weeks and show that you are actively seeking full time work.

You will need a National Insurance number to claim welfare benefits. If you do not have a National Insurance number, please ask your worker to help you apply for one urgently.

If you are eligible for welfare benefits, then you are not eligible for any Living Allowance after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, as we know that the Jobcentre usually takes around two weeks to process claim for Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance, we will lend you, on a discretionary basis, Living Allowance for up to two weeks after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. You will be asked to repay this money when welfare benefits are subsequently backdated so that you are not paid twice for the same period.

If your claim for Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance has not been processed within two weeks of your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and you have no money to live on, we will help you apply to the Jobcentre for a Crisis Loan. If the Jobcentre refuses to give you a Crisis Loan, you can ask us for an Emergency Payment. Your worker will discuss your request with the Team Manager.

If you are an unaccompanied asylum seeking child who has been granted leave to remain only until you are 17 ½ or 18 years old, you should ask your legal representative if you can apply for further leave to remain before your original period leave expires. You will only be able to claim welfare benefits after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if

you have made an application for further leave to remain before your original period of leave to remain has expired.

If you have exhausted all your immigration appeal rights and you are unlawfully present in the United Kingdom, you will not be able to claim welfare benefits after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It may become unlawful for RBK to continue supporting you financially after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. RBK must carry out an assessment under the European Convention on Human Rights to decide whether it is lawful to continue to give you a Living Allowance and pay for your housing, as well as additional financial support.

If you get welfare benefits and your circumstances change, you must immediately tell the Jobcentre and the Housing Benefit department (and any other agency from which you receive money or benefits). Otherwise, you might be overpaid benefits, which the Jobcentre or Housing Benefit department could make you pay back. A large overpayment of Housing Benefit could lead to your housing provider evicting you from where you live. A few common examples of changes of circumstances (there are lots more) which you must tell benefit agencies about are:

- Starting work, even if you only work a few hours per week. (Some young people believe that if they work for under 16 hours per week this will not affect their benefits and that they do not need to tell the Jobcentre. This belief is false.)
- A change in your immigration status.
- Moving home.
- Starting or finishing a full time college or university course.

If you are getting Income Support because you are studying for 12 hours or more per week in further education (not university), you can continue to get Income Support if your course continues past your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Your Income Support will continue until either your 20<sup>th</sup> birthday or until the 'terminal date' following the end of your course (usually 31 August).

However, if you start a different course of 12 hours or more per week after your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, you cannot continue to get Income Support. You will not be able to get Jobseeker's Allowance or Housing Benefit either. It is very important that you talk to your worker as soon as possible if you think you will want to start a new course or move to a different college after your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. You must show your worker how a new course or a different college is essential for you to make progress towards your chosen career. Your worker can explain the financial implications and will record the discussion in your Pathway Plan. It is unlikely that RBK will pay you a Living Allowance or pay for your housing if this has not been agreed well in advance by the Team Manager and Principal Manager and recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you start a course of 12 hours or more per week before your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, which continues after you turn 20 years old, you will not be able to get Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or Housing Benefit from your 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. If you want to continue your course after your 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, you must talk to your worker at least six

months before your birthday (ideally before the course begins). Your worker will ask the Team Manager whether RBK can pay you a Living Allowance and pay for your housing for the rest of your course. The Team Manager will ask the Principal Manager, and the decision will be recorded on your Pathway Plan. If you do not make sure that your request for financial support is agreed in your Pathway Plan at least six months before you need it, RBK is unlikely to agree, and you may have to leave your course before it finishes.

### **3.2 Emergency payments**

If you urgently need money for basic living costs you should talk to your worker.

If your benefits have stopped, your worker will help you to contact the Job Centre to resolve any problems. If it takes time to resolve problems with the Job Centre, your worker may, with the approval of their manager, lend you money for basic living costs for a short period of time. You must agree in writing to repay any money we lend you to help you survive while your benefits are not being paid. Your worker will help you to contact the Job Centre to resolve any problems.

You must also do everything your worker asks to ensure that your benefits are reinstated as soon as possible. Any lack of cooperation with your worker's efforts to help you with your benefit problems will lead to us stopping emergency loans.

If you urgently need money for a different reason, for example your money has been stolen or lost, or your belongings have been damaged in an accident, your worker will help you to apply to the Job Centre for a Crisis Loan. If you cannot get a Crisis Loan, your worker may, under exceptional circumstances and with their manager's approval, give you a small amount of money to help you cope.

### **3.3 Maternity Grant**

If you are getting Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance, you can apply to the Jobcentre for a Surestart Maternity Grant up to 11 weeks before your baby is due until 3 months after the baby is born. You will get a Grant worth £500 for you to buy essential items for your baby.

If you are not eligible for the Sure Start Maternity Grant, RBK will pay you a £500 Maternity Grant instead. We consider essential items for a newborn baby to be:

- ☐ Cot
- ☐ 3 sets of bedding
- ☐ 4 sets of clothing
- ☐ Sterilisers and bottles, if needed (we encourage breastfeeding)
- ☐ Buggy, rain cover and cosytoes
- ☐ Baby bath
- ☐ Baby wipes and baby toiletries
- ☐ Nappies (disposables or re-usables)

If possible, you should try to save some of your Maternity Grant for when your baby gets bigger and you need to buy items such as larger clothing, safety equipment and toys.

Your worker will also offer to help you get good quality, second hand baby and toddler items if you would like. Your baby will grow out of things very quickly, so if you can get some things for free you can make your Maternity Grant last for much longer.

### **3.4 Loans, debts and fines**

We strongly advise young people not to take loans or credits cards from banks or building societies. If you run into problems, we will help you get advice from a debt advice organisation but we will not pay your debts.

If you are fined for a civil or criminal offence, we can help you negotiate with the relevant organisation for a manageable way to pay your fine. We will not pay your fines.

### **3.5 Housing**

Until your eighteenth birthday, your housing will have been paid by RBK Children's Services. However, from your eighteenth birthday almost all young people become responsible for paying their own rent. (If your immigration status prevents you from working or claiming Housing Benefit, we may agree to continue paying your rent.)

If you are getting Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance, or if you are working on a low income, you can claim Housing Benefit from the local authority where you live.

You should also ask your worker whether you will be responsible for Council Tax and whether you need to apply for Council Tax Benefit or Council Tax exemption.

If you know what your address will be on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, you can claim Housing Benefit up to 13 weeks before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

After your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, RBK Children's Service has no duty to house you (except for providing and/or funding vacation accommodation if you are at university or in residential further education).

However if you are not ready to live independently on your own, we may offer you a room in one of our shared houses.

Our housing is not free. You must pay your rent yourself or make sure that you get Housing Benefit to pay your rent. You must cooperate with your worker to resolve any problems you might have with your rent or Housing Benefit. If your rent is not paid, you will lose your home.

Our housing will give you support and prepare you for living independently, as we hope that later on you will be ready to move into your own housing. If you do not stay

in the housing we provide, or you do not accept our support, we may ask you to leave the housing.

If you lose your home because you behave badly, we cannot promise to find alternative housing for you. If you lose your home because you have behaved badly or you have not paid your rent, it is unlikely that the local authority's Homelessness Assessment Team will help you to find somewhere new to live.

### **3.6 Paying your rent if you are working**

If you are working, you will need to pay all or some of your rent, depending on how much you earn. If you do not earn much money, your worker can help you to apply for Housing Benefit to help with your rent.

If you are living in supported housing which we rent to you, we will make sure that you have at least £95 to live on after you have paid your rent. For example:

If your take home pay is under £95 per week, you will not need to pay anything towards your rent.

If your take home pay is between £96 and £125 per week, you will need to pay between £1 and £30 towards your rent.

If your take home pay is between £126 and £145 per week, you will need to pay between £31 and £50 towards your rent.

If your take home pay is £146 or more per week, you will need to pay £51 or more per week towards your rent.

Your worker will ask you to sign a written agreement specifying the amount you must pay plus the method of payment. The best way of paying is by direct debit from your bank account. If you prefer to pay by cash, you will need to pay at one of the RBK cashier offices.

If you find you are having problems paying your rent, you must talk to your worker as soon as possible to agree on a plan to help you stay in your home. If you do not pay your rent you will lose your home.

### **3.7 Setting Up Home Allowance**

If we are satisfied that you are ready to move into independent housing, and you are moving into a new home which is unfurnished or only partly furnished, we will give you a Setting Up Home Allowance. The maximum we will pay is £1000.00 but is likely to be a lot less than this. You will need to show your worker your tenancy agreement. If you are moving into shared accommodation, we will reduce the amount we give you according to how many items you need to buy for your new home.

Before we give you a Setting Up Home Allowance, you must apply to the Department of Work and Pensions for a Community Care Grant. Your worker will help you with

this. A Community Care Grant is money which the Government gives to you to buy essential items for your new home. Whatever amount you are awarded will be deducted from the Setting Up Home Allowance we give you.

If you are moving to a bed and breakfast hotel where most furniture and appliances are provided but you need to supply certain items such as bedding and cooking utensils yourself, we will give you a Setting Up Home Allowance. The maximum amount we will give you is £250.00 but it is likely to be a lot less than this.

Before buying any items for your new home, you must get agreement from your worker, and provide receipts to your worker. Orders for furniture and household items can be placed and invoiced through the Royal Borough of Kingston.

We encourage you to obtain as much furniture as possible from the furniture project in New Malden. The furniture project provides good quality, second hand furniture which complies with British safety standards for an exceptionally low price.

You must buy essential items for your home before buying non-essential or luxury items. Essential items include (if not provided with your accommodation):

- ☐ bed and mattress
- ☐ storage for clothing e.g. wardrobe and/or chest-of-drawers and/or clothes rail
- ☐ sofa or armchair
- ☐ table and chairs
- ☐ fridge and cooker (which must be fitted by an approved and registered contractor)
- ☐ carpets or rugs
- ☐ curtains
- ☐ bedding and towels
- ☐ lamp and lampshade
- ☐ alarm clock
- ☐ TV (if you have a TV you must also, by law, buy a TV licence)
- ☐ cutlery, crockery, cooking utensils and kettle
- ☐ iron and ironing board
- ☐ mop, broom, dustpan and brush plus a Hoover if you have carpets
- ☐ washing bowl and dish drainer
- ☐ bin

### **3.8 Deposits and rent in advance for private rented housing**

We help young people to find somewhere decent to live. We prefer to help you find housing through the Royal Borough of Kingston or another local authority, or from a housing association or voluntary sector housing scheme.

However, in exceptional circumstances we may consider helping you to get privately rented housing. Your worker would need to get the agreement of the Strategic Manager before we can advance you any money to pay a landlord or letting agency for a deposit and/or rent in advance. Any money we advance to you for this purpose would be deducted from your Setting Up Home Allowance and would be written into

your Pathway Plan. We cannot act as a rent guarantor. If you fail to pay your rent, we will not pay it on your behalf.

### **3.9 Damage to housing or property**

You must not damage your housing or your landlord's or neighbours' property. You are also responsible for the behaviour of your friends and guests. You may have to pay for any damage you or your guests cause to your home or your landlord's or neighbours' property. Ideally, you will agree to pay for any damage in a payment plan set up by your worker. However, if you or the landlord or neighbour disagrees with the proposed plan, the victim of the damage will be advised to claim damages against you through legal means.

### **3.10 If you are in hospital**

If you are in hospital for longer than a few days, your welfare benefits will stop. We can give you up to £20 per month to help you buy toiletries and phone cards etc. We will visit you regularly, help you with any problems and help you to plan ahead for leaving hospital. While you are in hospital, we can help you to safely store your belongings. However we cannot be held liable for any loss or damage to your belongings.

### **3.11 If you are in prison or a young offenders' institution**

If you are in prison or a young offenders' institution, your welfare benefits will stop. We can give you up to £20 per month to help you buy toiletries and phone cards etc. We will pay you by postal order to the Governor with your name on the reverse. We will visit you regularly and help you plan ahead for leaving prison. While you are in custody, we can help you to safely store your belongings. However we cannot be held liable for any loss or damage to your belongings.

### **3.12 Employment**

We can help you while you are looking for work. Here are some examples:

- We can help to complete applications forms and CVs.
- We can practice interview skills with you.
- We can put you in touch with Connexions.
- We can give you information on education, employment and training opportunities.
- We can pay for your travel costs to job interviews (please make sure you have an Oyster card) although we will check first whether you can get help with this from the Jobcentre.
- We can give you one-off payments of up to £200 to buy suitable clothing for an interview or for a job, although we will check first whether you can get help with this from the Jobcentre.
- We can give you advice and support to get onto a college course which may increase your work opportunities.
- We can help you with information on employment training schemes or apprenticeships.

- We can help you negotiate with the Jobcentre to get onto the New Deal for Young People or the New Deal for Lone Parents.

Any funds and support agreed must be recorded in your Pathway Plan and reflect your efforts to seek employment in a chosen field.

After you get a job, you may still be able to get financial help from RBK. Make sure that you speak with your worker and record the request and decision in your Pathway Plan. For example, you may wish to study part time alongside your job in order to improve your future job prospects. If you need help paying the course tuition fees or you need extra money to pay for travel, books or equipment, and there are no other sources of funding, please talk with your worker. Make sure that your request for financial help, and the decision from the Team Manager, is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you get a job, you will need to pay towards your rent. As soon as you start work, you must tell the Housing Benefit department. If you work part time or your job is low paid, you may still be able to get some Housing Benefit to help you with your rent. You must give your payslips to the Housing Benefit department so that they can work out your Housing Benefit entitlement. You will have to pay the proportion of your rent which is not paid by Housing Benefit. You must tell the Housing Benefit department immediately if your wages or salary go up or down or if you leave or change your job.

If a RBK Service or someone acting on RBK's behalf is your landlord, we will tell you how much money you must pay us towards your rent (Paying your rent in work gives more detail).

If you do not pay the right amount towards your rent, you risk being evicted from your housing. If you become "intentionally homeless" because you have not paid your rent, it may be very difficult for you to find somewhere else to live.

### **3.13 Education Maintenance Allowance**

Most young people aged 18 (and 16 and 17) attending college and some employment and training programmes can claim Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The EMA is worth £30 per week. All young people who are eligible will be supported by their worker to apply for EMA.

You must apply for EMA before your course begins. EMA will be paid into your bank or building society account, so ask your worker to help you open an account if you do not already have one.

If you have applied for EMA but it has not yet been paid by the time your course starts, RBK will pay you £30 until your EMA payments begin. We will ask you to repay the money we have lent you once your EMA is paid.

Some young people are not eligible for EMA, for example people who have Discretionary Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom, or who have applied for further leave to remain. If this applies to you, ask your worker whether RBK can pay you an



Allowance for Education and Training (AET) instead. You should record a request for AET in your Pathway Plan as soon as possible, ideally before the course begins.

To get either EMA or AET, your course tutor must confirm that you have attended for at least 85% of your college or training course during the previous term.

If you think your circumstances or additional needs may mean you will not consistently manage 85% attendance on your college or training course, you should discuss this with your worker as soon as possible. Your specific circumstances can then be considered. Some evidence of your additional needs, ie. Doctors note, may be required.

### **3.14 Adult Learning Grant and Allowance for Education and Training**

After your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, you can no longer get EMA.

If you are working full time or part time, and your income is under £19,513 per year, and you are on your first level 2 or level 3 course for at least 12 hours per week, you can apply for an Adult Learning Grant from the Government worth up to £30 per week. You cannot get an Adult Learning Grant if you get Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance.

If you have Discretionary Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom or you have applied for further leave to remain, the Government will not give you an Adult Learning Grant. If this applies to you, ask your worker whether RBK can pay you an Allowance for Education and Training instead. Make sure your request is recorded in your Pathway Plan as soon as possible, ideally before the course begins. Your course tutor must confirm that you have attended for at least 85% of your college or training course during the previous term.

### **3.15 Course fees**

When researching what course you want to do, ask the college about tuition fees. If you will have to pay tuition fees, you must discuss this with your worker and have the discussion recorded in your Pathway Plan and reviews. This discussion should ideally begin at least three months before your course begins, so that you and your worker have enough time to fully explore all potential sources of funding. For example, you may be eligible for Discretionary Learner Support Funds (DLSF). You can also get advice on funding from the Educational Grants Advisory Service, whose details are listed at the end of this policy.

If you cannot find any other funder to pay your course fees, you can ask us to pay. We will pay for your course fees only if:

- You have fully explored alternative sources of funding; and
- You have begun discussing this with your worker before the course begins (ideally at least three months before); and

- Your Pathway Plan shows that the course is essential for you to progress along your chosen career path; and
- You can demonstrate at least 85% attendance on any previous course of education or training.

### **3.16 Essential equipment and activities**

Your college has special funds to help students pay for essential equipment and activities connected to your course of education or training. You can ask your worker to help you apply to your college's Discretionary Learner Support Fund (DLSF).

If your DLSF application is refused, you can ask for RBK to help you instead. We can give an allowance of up to £100 per academic year to help you buy essential equipment or pay for activities connected with your course. Before we agree to pay, we will check with your college that the item or activity is essential and that your attendance has been over 85%. You should make sure your request is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you want to start a course for which essential equipment and activities will cost more than £100, and you intend to ask RBK to pay for these, please speak with your worker and record the request in your Pathway Plan as soon as possible (ideally at least three months) before the course begins.

To raise more funds, we can help you apply to educational trusts and charities. Organisations listed at the back of this policy (e.g. Educational Grants Advisory Service) can give further information.

### **3.17 Books**

We will pay up to £50 per academic year for books which your course tutor confirms are essential, and which you cannot get from the library or pay for by other means, such as DLSF, on condition that your attendance is at least 85%.

### **3.18 Child care costs while studying or training**

If you are a parent of a young child, and you are on a college or training course, you will probably be eligible for the Care to Learn scheme. To get Care to Learn, you must be under 20 years old on the day your course begins. As long as you begin your course before you are 20, Care to Learn will contribute towards your childcare costs until your course has finished.

Care to Learn will pay up to £175 per child per week. This money includes costs for childcare (you will need to use an Ofsted registered childcare provider), registration fees and travel costs. Whilst on the Care to Learn scheme you will also be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance or Allowance for Education and Training. You should apply for Care to Learn before the course begins and your worker will help you with this.

If you are over 20 when your course begins, you could get help with your child care costs from the Sixth Form College Childcare Scheme or from your college's Discretionary Learner Support Fund.

If you cannot get help with child care costs from anywhere else, you can ask RBK to help you. You should talk to your worker about this before you begin any course and ensure that this is recorded in your Pathway Plan. To encourage you to participate in education and training RBK will always try to meet reasonable costs. Your worker will talk to the Team Manager about your request. We will disregard Child Benefit payments when deciding whether to give you extra financial support.

### **3.19 Financial help for higher education and university**

Your worker will offer to accompany you to university open days and admission interviews. You can ask your worker to help you pay travel costs.

As soon as you have been offered a university place, make sure you meet with your worker to apply for Student Finance via your local authority Education Department to the Student Loans Company. It is important to do this as early as possible so that your application can be processed before your course starts.

You should apply for the maximum standard loan, the maximum standard grant (this does not have to be repaid) and a tuition fee loan. The standard loan and standard grant are intended to cover your living costs and your housing costs.

You should also apply for a tuition fee loan. The maximum tuition fee charges are currently £3,070 per year. However, if you receive the maximum standard grant, most universities will give you a bursary of around £1000 per year which will reduce the amount you need to borrow to pay your tuition fees. You must make sure you apply for a bursary.

You must make an appointment to meet with your university's welfare department to discuss whether there are any extra grants, bursaries or financial support for care leavers. Some universities give large bursaries to care leavers, but you will not know unless you ask.

The Frank Buttle Trust offers grants to young care leavers now at university. Your worker can help you to apply for this grant if and other similar grants if eligible.

If your university does not give any extra financial support to care leavers, and you cannot get extra money from the Frank Buttle Trust or anywhere else, RBK will consider paying you a Higher Education Allowance (hEa) of £30 per week during term time and £15 per week during holidays. The hEa is intended to assist with your food, bills and travel costs. To get hEa, your tutor must confirm that you have attended for at least 85% of your course, so you should apply for the first time during the vacation following your first term. Please make sure your request for hEa is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

### **3.20 Vacation accommodation while in higher education or university**

We will help you negotiate with your university to stay in student accommodation during vacations. If this is not possible, we will help you find alternative short-term accommodation during vacations. We will pay for your accommodation during vacations.

When you graduate from university, we will pay for your cap, gown and two photographs, one of which will be for RBK.

You must meet with your worker at least once a term and once during holidays. We will pay for your travel costs for these meetings.

### **3.21 Working while studying in higher education**

You can work for as many hours as you wish as long as you do not harm your studies. Many students take part time jobs to increase their income and

### **3.22 Students from other countries**

If you have lived in the United Kingdom for under three years, you must have Refugee Status or Humanitarian Protection to be eligible for Student Finance.

If you have Discretionary Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom, or you have applied for further leave to remain, you will only be eligible for Student Finance if you have lived in this country for at least three years by 1 September before the first year of your university course begins. If you cannot get Student Finance for this reason, we will ask you to defer entry to your course until you have completed three years' residency in the United Kingdom. If you are not eligible for Student Finance, RBK cannot support you financially through university.

If you know you want to go to university, you should plan well ahead to make sure it will be possible. If you think you might not be eligible for Student Finance, you should research alternative ways of using your time well. For example, if you have to defer university entry for a year, consider finding work in your chosen field or studying part time. Please talk to your worker as early as possible if you hope to go to university to avoid the possibility that you may be disappointed at the last minute.

### **3.23 Discretionary payments**

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 sets out the priority areas for discretionary funding. The priority areas are:

- Travel costs e.g. for education
- Education materials/special equipment
- Other educational costs
- Costs associated with needs (such as a disability or pregnancy)
- The costs of childcare
- Clothing

- Contact with family or other significant relationships
- Cultural/religious needs
- Counselling and therapeutic needs
- Hobbies/holidays

Discretionary payments must be agreed by the Team Manager or Strategic Manager. All such payments will be monitored and reviewed to ensure no individual or group is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by the administration of discretionary payments. A record of such payment will be kept on the general budget system and individually on file.

It is important to talk to your worker about any needs/plans you have and make sure that your Pathway Plan records any requests/agreed funding.

Should you have any needs that are not covered in this policy we would encourage you to talk with your worker. Your worker will talk with the Team Manager about your request.

### **3.24 Young people with a disability**

We will work closely with RBK's Disabled Children's Services to make sure you are know about and are able to get the support and services you need. We will have strong links with the RBK Transition Team who work with disabled young people leaving care.

If you have a disability, language difficulty or specific additional needs then these will be taken into consideration when assessing the level of financial support you will need.

### **3.25 Contact with family or other significant relationships**

We will support you to maintain contact with people who are important to you.

For young people who have loved ones in other countries, we will support you to use the Red Cross International Tracing and Messaging Service.

For young people who have significant relationships with family and friends in the United Kingdom, we may give you a travel warrant for you to visit loved ones. We will also consider other requests. We will ask to speak with the person you want to visit before we give you the travel warrant. Your worker will need to talk with the Team Manager about your request.

### **3.26 Physical and mental health needs**

We will help you get services for any physical or mental health needs you may have. For example, we may pay for your travel costs to appointments and we may accompany you if you wish. Please talk to your worker and make sure any request for help is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

Most 16 and 17 year olds are eligible for free health services. If you are not automatically entitled to free health services, you should complete an HC1 form. The HC1 takes about a month to be processed and then you will receive a HC2 certificate giving you free or very low cost health services. The HC2 has to be renewed every six months.

### **3.27 Special interests and aptitudes, holidays and passports or travel documents**

We encourage you to take part in a range of activities. We hope to offer a Re:active Card to all 18 to 21 year old *former relevant children* soon. The Re:active Card offers discounts on RBK leisure services.

If you have a special talent in music, sport, the arts or another field, which you need extra money to pursue, we can consider a wide range of requests. You should talk with your worker about any request for funding and make sure this is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

We cannot usually pay for young people to go on holiday. However, we may pay for trips which form part of your educational course or which give you an important opportunity to pursue a special interest or aptitude. We will ask you to apply to your college's Discretionary Learners' Support Fund before we consider your request. Please make sure that your request is recorded in your Pathway Plan.

Most young people will already have a passport by the age of 18. However, you cannot get a passport or travel document if you are an asylum seeker or if you only have Discretionary Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom. If you are granted Refugee Status or Humanitarian Protection, please ask your worker to pay for your application for a passport or travel document.

### **3.28 Provisional driving licence, driving lessons, driving test, cycling**

We cannot usually pay the full cost of the provisional driving licence, lessons and test. However, if you can show that you need to learn to drive in order to follow your education, training or career path, then we will consider contributing up to a maximum of £350. You will need to discuss your request with your worker and you must ensure that your request and reasons are recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you can show that you need to cycle to your place of education, training or employment, RBK will consider making a contribution up to a maximum of £350 for the cost of a bicycle, helmet, lock and lights.

### **3.29 Approaching your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday**

From your 20<sup>th</sup> birthday onwards, your worker should talk with you about what will happen after your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

After you turn 21, our duties towards you under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 will usually end. However, if you are still doing a course of education or training which

has been agreed in your Pathway Plan, we can continue to give you financial help past the age of 21 and for as long as your 24<sup>th</sup> birthday.

We will have given you a lot of support and encouragement for the first three years of your adult life from 18 to 21. Once you reach 21, we will expect most young people to be able to live and support themselves independently.

However, if you still have support needs, for example you have a physical or learning disability, substance misuse or mental health problems, we will help you get appropriate services from other organisations. Please make sure that your needs are recorded in your Pathway Plan.

If you are living in RBK supported housing, we will help you plan where to live after your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. You may wish to apply for the Setting Up Home Allowance.

If we have been paying your Living Allowance and housing costs because your immigration status prevents you from working or claiming welfare benefits or Student Finance, we will advise you on whether you can apply for support from somewhere else after your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

**4 The following legislation, documents and organisations have been referred to in the formulation of this policy.**

Children Act 1989

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Regulations and Guidance

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Supporting Care Leavers: A Training and Resource pack for people working with young people leaving care (DH)

Care Matters: Time for Change

Children's Rights Officer's Association

London Borough of Hounslow: Young People's Guide to Financial Assistance 16 – 17 year olds

London Borough of Hounslow: Young People's Guide to Financial Assistance 18 + years old

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames: Financial Provision for Care Leavers

City of London: Allowances (for 16+ looked after children and care leavers)

Can the State be a Good Parent?

## **The National Leaving Care Advisory Service (NLCAS)**

If this were my Child - A Councillor's Guide to being a Good Corporate Parent  
Rainer Foundation - What Makes the Difference?

Quality Protects Programme – to ensure that young persons leaving care, as they enter adulthood, are not isolated and participate socially and economically as citizens

RBK Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2010

RBK Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2006

National Leaving Care Advisory Service

The Fostering Network