

16+ Service: Financial support for care leavers 2012-2013

<u>ORIGINATING SECTION/TEAM:</u>	16+ Service
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Introduction

This policy provides guidance for practitioners working with care leavers on all aspects of eligibility for financial support available from the 16 + Service. The policy sets out the type and amount of allowances that care leavers are entitled to receive based on their status and circumstances.

The figures given refer to the financial year 2012-2013 and will be updated on an annual basis in line with any agreed changes in rates. Further information regarding financial support for care leavers can be found in the division's "16+ service policy and procedures" document.

Eligibility

For the purpose of this document, entitlement to services is based on the following categories:

- Eligible young people are young people aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 [including their 16th birthday] and are still looked after. Services are designed to help them prepare for leaving care.
- Relevant young people are young people who have left care and are aged between 16 and 17 years old, and who were previously eligible.
- Former relevant young people are young people aged between 18 to 21 years old, or 24 years old if they started a designated education course before the age of 21 and were previously either eligible or relevant, or both.
- Former relevant young people aged between 21-25 who wish to return to education or take up training opportunities and who will need support to achieve this.

Notes and implementation issues

- All allowances should be based on an assessment of need and be set out in the young person's Pathway Plan. Discussion should take place with the young person as part of their financial assessment. The plan must also highlight any attached conditions, how payments will be made, the frequency of payments and when they will be reviewed.
- 16+ social workers should ensure that all young people have a bank account and where possible pay all allowances to young people through their account.
- This document and policy has been produced following consultation with young care leavers, foster carers, leaving care staff, finance staff and residential social workers.
- The allowances set out in the following sections apply to all 'Eligible', 'Relevant', 'Former Relevant' and 'Qualifying' young people dependent on their legal/immigration status and an assessment of their needs. Care leavers who are also unaccompanied asylum seeking children are entitled to the same allowances as any other care leaver. However, allowances to this group of young people may be affected and limited as a result of their immigration status.

Section 1: Eligible and Relevant Children Aged 16 & 17 who are living in semi-independent placements.

- 16 and 17 year olds who have left foster care or residential placement.
- 16 and 17 year olds (Section 31 or Section 20) living in hostels/semi-independent and independent placements not directly provided by 16 Plus Team.
- 16 and 17 year olds who were previously accommodated under Section 20 who have ceased to be looked after living in hostels/semi-independent or independent settings.

* Please note that young people in foster placements are not eligible for those allowances that are marked with an asterisk (*) as these allowances are included in the weekly allowances paid to foster carers.

Category	Weekly amount	Comments
Subsistence*	£56.25	Benefit rate for 16 and 17 year olds living independently. This is provided to young people who are studying, undertaking unpaid training or looking for employment etc. Young people who are undertaking paid training will get the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider.
	Pathways Increment	£20 payable to all 16 & 17 year olds in Pathways as an incentive to engage in education training, health assessments and comply with Pathways requirements. This is a discretionary payment and will be withdrawn if young people are non compliant. Payments will end on their 18 th birthday.
Savings	£	Any savings from whilst in foster care, will be issued on a young person's 18 th Birthday, unless otherwise appropriately assessed not to have capacity to manage their finances.
Fares	Travel cards/Freedom Pass	16+ Zip Oyster card for 16-17 year olds attending a minimum of 12 hours for 10 weeks for a free bus pass. Young people need to fund the reduced rates on Underground and Overground. Foster carers receive a weekly travel allowance of £23.24 on behalf of young people, which can be used for additional journeys.
	£10 fee	If a young person's Zip Oyster card is lost or stolen, and we will assist you to obtain one replacement card. For young people placed outside London and not in foster care we will assist you with the equivalent local entitlement.

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Course equipment		Young people will need to apply to the Learning Support Fund during the 1 st week of enrolment for course equipment. The college administrates this fund. If funding is refused proof will be needed from the college. Camden 16+ Service may then contribute towards equipment costs for education courses and enrolment, depending on assessment of need.
Apprenticeships	Weekly allowance	We will pay the rent for 16&17 year olds whilst doing an apprenticeship, young people must pay their service charge.
Accommodation*	Cost of move	Additional assistance will be provided following a needs assessment of a young person's current circumstances to ensure they have £20 above the weekly benefit rate. Prior to 18 th birthday advice must be sought from Under 25s team to assess Housing Benefit entitlement.
Moving cost Moving to tenancy or pathways*		Placement & accommodation costs to be met in full for young people up to the age of 18.
Clothing*	a) £200	The move on cost will be met by the 16+ service and is subject to individual circumstances and need. If a young person is moving from foster care, then their carer should ensure they have all the essential items for the move from any savings.
	b) £50 (one off)	The clothing allowance is payable in two instalments (£100) at the beginning of summer & winter. The clothing allowance is only available to young people aged 16 or 17 in semi/independent accommodation. Where young people have a job interview; and have no suitable clothing they might be entitled to a discretionary payment.
	c) up to £200	Discretionary emergency one off payment for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who have just arrived in the country & have a limited amount of clothing [This is not an automatic entitlement]
Maternity payments	£150	For those in semi-independent placements they will be given financial assistance once they have passed the 20 week period.
Health in Pregnancy Grant (benefits agency)	£190	This can be obtained from the 25 th week of pregnancy once expectant mothers have had the appropriate health advice from a health professional such as a midwife.

Leaving care financial support rates

		<p>The majority of items required for the new baby can be purchased from the 'Sure Start' Maternity Grant (£500) that is available from the birth of the baby (Social Fund SF100 form).</p> <p>16+ service will assist young people who are parents to maximise their income from all available sources such as benefits, Sure Start etc. Eligible & relevant young people are entitled to claim Income Support from the day their child is born. Submitting a claim for Income Support is a pre-requisite for a Sure Start Maternity Grant.</p> <p>Expectant mother's who are UASC with no recourse to public funds will be provided with the above grants from the 16+ Service.</p>
Social activities & Leisure*	£9.95 monthly	Membership for free activities. Young people will be eligible to apply for a Camden Cool Card; or the equivalent Leisure Card if they live outside Camden. Young people should be encouraged and assisted to explore the leisure facilities and where necessary the 16+ service will make a weekly contribution to enable young people to pursue a physical activity to enable them to enjoy and achieve.
17 th birthday	£30	Responsibility for the purchase of the gifts rests with the social worker. A discussion with the young person should take place in order to give them a choice of gift or voucher. Gift vouchers should be provided as an alternative to cash. The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with Camden 16+ service.
18 th birthday	£60	
Family contact or contact with significant others*	Train tickets	Where young people have family members or significant contacts that live outside of London travel costs may be provided following an assessment of need. The procedure for obtaining tickets needs to be requested a month in advance.
Contact	Activity Money	To be assessed depending on need, for those in semi/independent accommodation, for activities during any contact that exceeds a day.
Emergency payments*	£varies	<p>Camden 16+ service will provide a maximum of 3 cash payments in any 6-month period. These payments will be dependent on an assessment of need and will not exceed £10.00 per payment.</p> <p>Emergency payments and food parcels are discretionary and will only be provided following an</p>

Leaving care financial support rates

		assessment of need. In situations where young people make regular requests for emergency payments, their subsistence will be paid in 2 instalments over the course of the week (see above); this will mean young people will have a maximum of three days between payments.
Child Care Costs*	£varies	Lone parents, who wish to return to education, start a traineeship or take up employment opportunities will be assisted to identify funds to cover or contribute to child-care costs. Colleges, the Care to Learn Fund, E2E, Sure Start, the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and Department of Work and Pensions (benefits agency) must be approached as sources of potential child-care funding as lone parents are a priority group for their support.
Key documents	£varies	Camden 16+ service will purchase a copy birth certificate for each young person. A passport/travel document will also be funded on a discretionary basis after an assessment of need.

Further Education

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 placements or children's homes. For those placed in Semi Independent accommodation the cost of enrolment fees and equipment will be assessed by 16+ Service.

Section 2

Former relevant children

- Young people aged 18 to 21st Birthday.

Category	Weekly amount	Comments
Subsistence	£Nil*	<p>Young people will be claiming Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, training allowance or working.</p> <p>Young people who remain in a foster care placement post 18 are eligible to claim Department of Work and Pensions benefits as they are defined as 'independent in their own right'. Young people who remain in foster care placements may also be eligible to claim housing benefits up to the level of the local reference rent. Tax relief is available to foster carer. (see Staying Put guidance fostering network) This is dependent on the circumstances of the foster carers.</p> <p>Allocated Social Workers must ensure that all benefits have been applied for before the case is transferred to a Personal Advisor.</p>
	£56.25	<p>Initial Benefit Claim*</p> <p>16+ team will provide up to 4 weeks subsistence payments a year to assist young people whilst they wait for their initial benefit claim to be processed. If the young person has complied with all the requirements of the Department of Work and Pensions and they have not received their first benefit payment after 4 weeks they will continue to receive the equivalent of the subsistence payment at Benefit Rate. The young person must sign a Benefit Waiting Loan agreement form and repay the loan on receipt of their backdated benefit. Additionally, young people must sign the 'Agreement to Share Information Form' so that Personal Advisers can liaise with the Department of Work and Pensions regarding the progress of their claim. If the loan is not repaid, any further request for financial assistance will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and any amount not paid back will be deducted from their Leaving Care Grant.</p> <p>If young people have not complied with the requirements of the Department of Work and Pensions the subsistence payment will cease after four weeks. Young people must liaise with the D.W.P. and apply for a Social Fund Crisis Loan.</p>
Fares	Freedom Pass	<p>Freedom Passes are only provided to young people engaging in full time or part time education, training and employment or those who have children in their care.</p> <p>Freedom passes provide free travel at all times on</p>

Leaving care financial support rates

	£10 fee	<p>London buses, Underground and Overground. Journeys on National Rail are only covered off peak within the London area, peak rates fares need to be covered by the student.</p> <p>The cost of a replacement freedom pass will be covered by the Young Person, unless a crime reference number is obtained for a stolen card.</p> <p>Fares for other purposes i.e. university students will be limited to 6 visits per year for contact in London. Open days need to be confirmed in writing and journeys need to be booked on line in advance so that the printed email can be taken to the train station.</p> <p>Freedom pass will be cancelled when your case is closed.</p>
Course equipment & enrolment fees	£varies	<p>Young people will need to apply to the Learning Support Fund during the 1st week of enrolment for course equipment. The college administrates this fund. If funding is refused proof will be needed from the college. Camden 16+ service <i>may</i> then provide equipment costs for education courses, depending on assessment of need. Request for enrolment fees will need to be made 4 weeks in advance of your attended course.</p>
Apprenticeships	£20	<p>To be paid to young people on an apprenticeship following a Budget Plan, to ensure their income is £20 a week above the benefit rate. Where they are on benefits prior to joining an apprenticeship then Housing Benefit will continue to pay their rent for the first month.</p> <p>For those turning 18 where 16+ have paid their rent, we will continue to do so until they have received their first month's pay.</p>
Accommodation	£varies	<p>Only in exceptional circumstances will accommodation costs for young people over age of 18 be provided. Post 18 placements for exceptionally vulnerable young people may be funded in part or full following an assessment of need. Housing Benefit will need to be applied for and Service Charges paid by the young person.</p>
	Rent Deposit Schemes (non University)	<p>Where young people are moving into private sector accommodation the rent level must be within the local Housing Benefit Reference Rent; this can be ascertained via a pre-tenancy determination.</p> <p>Funds for first month's rent and deposit will be advanced from their Setting Up Home allowance as they will get a back dated payment Housing Benefit and from the landlord at the end of the tenancy. Monies can be returned to the Setting Up Home allowance if requested.</p>

Leaving care financial support rates

		The Local Authority will only act as Rent Guarantor for young people assessed as being ready to hold to tenancy and only once an agreement drawn (up with their Personal Advisor) has been signed to notify us if their rent has not be paid/accounted for after 1 month.
Clothing*	£50 (one off)	Where young people have a job interview; proof will be required of interview.
19th birthday	£30	Responsibility for the purchase of the gifts rests with the Personal Advisor. A discussion with the young person should take place in order to give them a choice of gift or voucher. Gift vouchers should be provided as an alternative to cash. The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with Camden 16+ service.
20 th birthday	£30	
21 st birthday	£75 cash	Cash will be given on a discretionary basis on 21 st birthdays.
Key Documents	£varies	Where not issued prior to their 18 th birthday, Camden 16+ service will purchase a copy birth certificate for each young person. A passport/travel document will also be funded on a discretionary basis after an assessment of need.
Moving cost Moving to tenancy	Cost of move	The move on cost will be met by the 16+ service and is subject to individual circumstances and need. More than 24hr notice will need to be given to cancel, failing that the cancellation fee will be deducted from the young person setting up home allowance.
Setting up Home Allowance	£1700 or £1900 (single parents)	Available only to young people who have been nominated for their own tenancy/approved long term private rented property before their 21 st birthday. The setting up home allowance should always be used to purchase household items. At least £50 should be used to buy a health & safety pack [smoke detectors etc]. Or contact their local fire brigade to get advice on H&S. Up to £250 can be accessed in advance to securing a tenancy, to purchase essential household items. A portion of money should be used to purchase a T.V licence and one year's contents insurance.

Further Education [Non-advanced courses i.e. GCSE & A levels, BTEC etc.] from the age of 18 to 21st birthday.

19+ young people can apply for Discretionary Learners Support.

Young people who are studying full time (16 hours or more of 'guided learning') or training can claim Income Support and Housing Benefit on the grounds of being in 'relevant education'. In order to qualify for Income Support on the grounds of 'relevant education' up to the age of 21.

For those who do not have a level 2 or 3 Btec it is still possible to study part and have fees paid.

Prior to starting education courses at the age of eighteen or above, young people should be encouraged to explore Work Contracts consisting of 8 weeks work experience to maintain their benefits.

Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Camden 16+ service may provide assistance for specific grants and one off payments to young people who are studying, for items such as books and equipment, if funding from the Learning Support Fund has been refused.

The majority of young people over the age of 21 who undertake further education courses will be ineligible for welfare benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit. In these cases it is important to map out in the pathway plan how the young person will be supported financially if continuing with their further education.

Higher Education [Advanced Courses, HND, One Degree Course and or Masters, or combined HE Diploma-Degree course per Care Leaver]

4 years funding of £3000 a year will be provided in total to complete Higher Education Training, be that starting with a HND course or ending with a Masters.

For UASC young people wishing to attend university, details of their current immigration status and eligibility of student loan application will need to be confirmed prior to any agreement of funding from 16+ service.

Tuition Fees and Tuition Fee Loans

Full-time undergraduate students have to pay fees to cover their tuition costs.

Universities that charge the maximum tuition fees must provide a minimum bursary. Students should check with universities to find out about non-repayable bursaries.

Students do not have to pay these fees before they commence their university course, or whilst they are studying but they will need to apply for a Loan for fees to cover these costs. The fees will be paid direct to the university or college, on their behalf. Students will repay these Loans once they have left university and are earning over £15,000.00.

Student Maintenance Loans

Student Maintenance Loans to help with living costs and equipment/books etc are available from the Student Loans Company (Student Finance England, apply online). They attract a very low rate of interest, at inflation levels. The amount students can borrow is higher if they are studying in London.

Student Maintenance Grant

Care leavers and young people from a low-income background are eligible for a new £2906.00 non-repayable Maintenance Grant as part of their loan. If young people select the "parents income to be assessed" option, when asked to submit evidence of household income, the 16+ team can do a supporting letter to explain they are a care leaver, living on their own, are responsible for themselves and have no contact with their family.

All young people should also enquire at the Student Finance Dept at their University if they offer a grant for Care Leavers, if so this usually can be applied in January, after attending for a term.

Maintenance Loan: if you started on or after 1 September 2008

Maximum rates in 2011/12 or 2010/11 for non-final year students who started on or after 1 September 2008

- £6,928 for students living away from home in London
- £4,950 for students living away from home outside London
- £3,838 for students living at home

Maximum rates in 2011/12 or 2010/11 for final year students

- £6,307 for students living away from home in London
- £4,583 for students living away from home outside London
- £3,483 for students living at home

Maintenance Loan: if you started before 1 September 2008

Maximum rates in 2011/12 or 2010/11 for non-final year students

- £6,643 for students living away from home in London
- £4,745 for students living away from home outside London
- £3,673 for students living at home

Maximum rates in 2011/12 or 2010/11 for final year students

- £6,048 for students living away from home in London

- £4,391 for students living away from home outside London
- £3,319 for students living at home

Camden 16 Plus service's Support

Camden 16+ service will provide a £3,000 non- repayable accommodation & living expenses grant, which will also cover expenses incurred during Christmas, Easter and Summer vacation [Personal advisors should make sure that the payments are staggered over the year so that the young person is better able to manage his/her money]. This includes the one off bursary payment of £2000.

16+ team will provide a Freedom Pass for young people studying in London. Young people studying outside of London will be given a travel grant to purchase an annual travel pass.

Travel ticket will be issued for visits, open days & interviews to University

Young people will also be provided with a laptop computer if they have not already been given one by the Local Authority.

Welfare Benefits

The majority of young people who undertake higher education courses are ineligible for welfare benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit. Certain limited groups of young people who undertake higher education courses such as lone parents and sick and disabled young people may remain/be eligible for welfare benefits while studying.

Lone parents may be eligible for the Government's Childcare Grant and/or Parents' Learning Allowance. Disabled students may be eligible for the Disabled Students' Allowance. Additionally, lone parents and disabled students are eligible for the equivalent of the Student Maintenance Grant.

Lone Parents and Sick and Disabled Students who are in receipt of Welfare Benefits should check with the Department of Work and Pensions regarding the rules about student loans. Being in receipt of a student loan may cause disqualification for welfare benefits.

Additional Funding and Information

Care leavers are a 'priority group' in terms of university and college 'Access Funds' which are sometimes called Learner Support Funds. Many universities and colleges also have bursaries and specific welfare grants which care leavers may be able to apply for. The individual university or college should have information about these. The students' support service should be able to provide information on both the practical and financial support that may be available. Information about the range of financial help available to students is covered by the following websites:

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

<http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk>

<http://www.support4learning.org.uk>

Former Relevant Young People pursuing education, further education or training from the age of 21 to 25th birthday.

Financial assistance will be provided to care leavers pursuing a programme of education or training, following an assessment of their current income and the type of support needed. Financial assistance up to £300 a year is available to cover enrolment fees and equipment.

Receipts will also need to be provided and all payments will be direct payments, no cash payments will be available.

For those undertaking an apprenticeship scheme a needs assessment will be undertaken to review what additional assistance is required to support them to effectively manage their weekly expenses.

Former Relevant Young People pursuing higher education from the age of 21 to 25th birthday.

Tuition Fees and Tuition Fee Loans

Full-time undergraduate students have to pay fees to cover their tuition costs.

Universities that charge the maximum tuition fees must provide a minimum bursary. Students should check with universities to find out about non-repayable bursaries.

Students do not have to pay these fees before they commence their university course, or whilst they are studying but they will need to apply for a Loan for fees to cover these costs. The fees will be paid direct to the university or college, on their behalf. Students will repay these Loans once they have left university and are earning over £15,000.00.

Student Maintenance Loans

Student Maintenance Loans to help with living costs and equipment/books etc are available from the Student Loans Company (Student Finance England, apply online). They attract a very low rate of interest, at inflation levels. The amount students can borrow is higher if they are studying in London.

Student Maintenance Grant

Care leavers and young people from a low-income background are eligible for approx. £3000.00 non-repayable Maintenance Grant as part of their loan. If young people select the "parents income to be assessed" option, when asked to submit evidence of household income, the 16+ team can do a supporting letter to explain they are a care leaver, living on their own, are responsible for themselves and have no contact with their family.

Camden 16 Plus service's Support

Camden 16+ service will provide a £3,000 non-repayable accommodation & living expenses grant, including travel expenses, which will also cover expenses incurred during Christmas, Easter and Summer vacation [Personal advisors should make sure that the payments are staggered over the year so that the young person is better able to manage his/her money]

Former Relevant Young People pursuing post graduate education from the age of 21 to 24.

£3000 a year funding is available for 4 years study in total, to cover a 3 year degree and 1 year Masters. This includes any repeat years or change of courses.

Appendix A

Care leavers who are “detained”

Eligible Children

Eligible children who are subject of care orders and are detained will remain looked after and the Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2010 will apply. A needs assessment should look at what financial support the young person will need to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Eligible children who are voluntarily accommodated and are then detained are entitled to a needs assessment under the Visits to Former Looked After Children in Detention Regulations 2010 to look at what financial support the young person will need to safeguard and promote their welfare.

Relevant Children

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Section 23A (3) paragraph (2)

Where a young person is ‘detained’ in hospital or custody, the majority of their financial allowances will be suspended. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, young people will receive a pocket money allowance of £20 every six weeks, which is commensurate with the rules of the particular institution. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, birthday and Christmas allowances will continue to be paid and depending on the rules of the institution, may be given to the young person or retained until their release. On release young people will have access to their ‘Setting Up Home Allowance’ and, where a young person has been detained for more than six months, and dependent on an assessment of need, a miscellaneous payment for clothing etc will be considered. The maximum clothing payment for 16 and 17 year olds who are being released from detention is linked to the clothing allowance of £ 200.00.

The Pathway Plan for young people who are detained should set out the provision of all financial allowances. Financial support for young people who are detained in Young Offenders Institutes is governed by the rules of the particular establishment they are detained in. In general, young people are expected to undertake education or training and are provided with pocket money for engaging in these activities. Additionally, they will often be provided with clothing, or are able to bring clothing with them. As such they will not be provided with any allowances while detained.

Young people who are detained in hospital will be provided with pocket money commensurate with the fostering pocket money rate (£16.44 per week) and the standard leaving care clothing allowance.

Former Relevant Children who are ‘detained’

Any young person in custody between the age of 18 and 21 years old, will be allocated a Personal Advisor, who will support them up until their 21st birthday. On release young people who require accommodation, will return to the Young People’s Pathway or Adult Pathway.

Appendix B

Eligible and relevant children living at 'home' with family

Young people who return home as part of a planned reconciliation process and who are eligible or relevant children will be given financial assistance whilst their responsible parent re-applies for benefits such as Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits and other welfare benefits. In general, young people will be working, undertaking a traineeship, or a modern apprenticeship, or receiving an education bursary and/or will be supported by their family who may also be receiving Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits and other welfare benefits. Where specific difficulties arise, and dependent on an assessment of need, young people may be provided with an allowance commensurate with the Job Seekers Allowance/Income Support – Usual Rate for 16 and 17 year olds £53.45 [2011-2012].

In essence eligible and relevant young people living at home on a long-term basis should be supported by their family and do not receive leaving care financial support. The majority of eligible young people are only eligible due to Section 31 Care Orders not being discharged. Financial support for this group of young people should come from education, training and employment opportunities as well as their families. Supporting this group of young people as 'Standard Care Leavers' is not appropriate as it creates disparities within families, particularly in relation to siblings who are not, or have not been looked after.

Young people who return home on a short-term emergency basis will continue to receive the standard eligible and relevant young person entitlements.

If a relevant young person returns home and remains at home for 6 months their status under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is changed to that of a qualifying child and young person over 16. If an eligible young person is placed at home, or lives at home as part of a planned reconciliation process for six months or more and his or her Care Order is discharged, their status is changed to that of a qualifying child and young person over 16.

If the young person becomes a qualifying child and young person over 16 and his or her situation at 'home' breaks down prior to his or her eighteenth birthday they become a relevant young person.

If an eligible young person is placed at home, or lives at home as part of a planned reconciliation process for six months or more and he or she reaches the age of eighteen he or she becomes a qualifying child and young person.

The young person and their family must be informed of any changes in entitlements which may arise, should the young person's status change to that of a qualifying child and young person over 16.

Appendix C

Qualifying children and young people over 16

Section 24 (advice and assistance) of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

Where appropriate, and depending on an assessment of need, FSSW has a power to provide financial assistance to qualifying children and young people over 16. Individual young people may be given financial assistance in “exceptional circumstances” (Children Act 1989 (Section 24A (5)) and Section 24B) with priority being given to support relating to education, training and employment opportunities. The presumption should be that such assistance should be provided where this is necessary to protect the young person’s welfare and it cannot be made available by any other agency. The personal advisers will assist to maximise financial support available from the employment opportunities, the benefits and tax system, college and university access funds etc.

Qualifying children and young people over 18 (special guardianship orders)

Young people aged between 16 and 21 who were looked after by Camden directly before the making of a special guardianship order can be provided with advice and assistance as a qualifying child if the special guardianship order is in force (where they are under 18) or remained in force until their 18th birthday (where they are above 18).

Appendix D

Staying Put

Camden's "Staying Put" policy aims to allow some young people to remain with their foster carer post 18 where they are assessed as vulnerable or in order to ensure continuity of support whilst undertaking higher or further education. As part of the Staying Put guidance the same tax relief for Qualifying Care Relief/Shared Lives Carers is available, which provides £10,000 pa exemption + £250 per week.

The Supported Lodging payment of £150 a week is payable for any young person pursuing further education (Btec level 1 or 2 and or full time training) for a year beyond their 18th birthday.

Post 18 placements – vulnerable young people

Where it is assessed that a young person (former relevant child) is extremely vulnerable (emotional delay/issues of mental health/learning disability, that fall outside the remit of the Adults Division), receiving multi-agency input and unable to leave a FSSW foster placement by the age of eighteen, the following principles should apply:

- The Pathway Plan undertaken prior to the young person's 16th birthday should identify the timescale required for young people to move to independence. All changes in placement funding arrangements and placements that require funding beyond the young person's eighteenth birthday must be agreed at this stage.
- The young person's Pathway Plan must identify arrangements regarding the extension of the placement beyond the age of eighteen and/or arrangements for move-on accommodation and support. Plans should also include arrangements for transfer of case responsibility, placement responsibility and funding responsibility to Adult Services, if applicable.
- The carer/s' allowance will remain at the over 16 'basic' fostering rate, (£332.07 per week 2012-2013).
- The placement is no longer deemed a foster care placement but will be an adult care placement. The carer will be eligible for qualifying care relief and will not pay income tax on profits. Carers must be made aware of the Income Tax and National Insurance regulations relating to post eighteen placements that are set out in the National Association of Adult Placement Schemes (N.A.A.P.S.) simplified arrangements leaflet and Inland Revenue Help Sheet 236.

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/hs236.pdf>

- The Income tax and National Insurance regulations highlight that payments and allowances made by the Local Authority of up to £400 per week for the care of the young person do not count as income for tax purposes (2008-2009). For the first vulnerable young person/adult the allowance is £400 per week for the second and third vulnerable young person/adult the allowance is £250 each per week.
- In certain circumstances payments for post eighteen placements may require the completion of a relevant tax declaration. Additionally, the payment may affect any state benefit the carer/s are receiving, particularly Housing Benefit, Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance and will need to be declared to the Department of Work and Pensions and specialist advice sought.
- Specialist financial, benefit and tax advice should be sought in all circumstances to ensure that carers are fully aware of the implications of providing a placement to a young person over eighteen.

Leaving care financial support rates

- The final allowance rate should be set to ensure compatibility with the carer/s' benefit and tax situation.
- The allowance paid to a carer/s covers all household expenses, food for the young person and travel expenses other than contact and hospital visits.
- Placements for young people over the age of eighteen will be reviewed every three months and the young person's Pathway Plan must highlight move-on arrangements.
- Post eighteen placements should not be extended by more than one year. Where it is assessed that young people will continue to be vulnerable beyond the age of nineteen, the Pathway Plan should explore a transfer to Adult Services and/or a transfer to supported accommodation in the community, accessed via the Housing Department and/or Adult Social Care.

Post Eighteen Placements - Young people remaining in placement prior to undertaking a course of higher or residential further education

Where a young person (former relevant child) has been offered a place on a higher education, or a residential further education course and it is assessed as appropriate for them to remain with their carer/s until they commence their course, the following principles should apply:

- From the young person's eighteenth birthday until the end of June when they complete their 'A' levels or equivalent Btec level 3 course, the carer/s' allowance will remain at the over 16 'basic' fostering rate, (£332.07 per week 2012-2013).
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- From the beginning of July to the point when the young person commences his or her education course (usually early October) the carer/s' allowance will reduce to a £150 supported lodging allowance.
- The placement is no longer deemed a foster care placement but will be a staying put placement. Carers will be eligible for qualifying care relief and will not pay income tax on profits. Carers must be made aware of the Income Tax and National Insurance regulations relating to post eighteen placements that are set out in the National Association of Adult Placement Schemes (N.A.A.P.S.) simplified arrangements leaflet and Inland Revenue Help Sheet 236.
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/hs236.pdf>
- The Income tax and National Insurance regulations highlight that payments and allowances made by the local authority of up to £10, 000 per annum and up to £250 per week per child for the care of the young person do not count as income for tax purposes.
- In certain circumstances payments for post eighteen placements may require the completion of a relevant tax declaration. Additionally, the payment may affect any state benefit the carer/s are receiving, particularly Housing Benefit, Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance and will need to be declared to the Department of Work and Pensions and specialist advice sought.
- Specialist financial, benefit and tax advice should be sought in all circumstances to ensure that carers are fully aware of the implications of providing a placement to a young person over the age of eighteen.
- The final allowance rate should be set to ensure compatibility with the carer/s' benefit and tax situation.
- The allowance paid to a carer/s covers all household expenses and food for the young person.

Leaving care financial support rates

- All boarding out and maintenance payments cease from the date the young person commences their education course, or leaves their placement (usually mid September to the beginning of October).

If the young person decides not to attend university, or takes a gap year prior to the start of their degree course, and wishes to remain within the foster carer/s' home, this will be deemed as a private arrangement.

Post 18 placements - Private arrangement between young people and foster carers where both parties wish to extend the placement.

Where it is assessed that a young person (former relevant child) is not vulnerable and can leave their foster placement, but both the carer and young person wish to extend the arrangement this will become a private lodgings arrangement. FSSW will cease to fund the placement and the young person and their carer/s will need to agree both the level of payment and practical arrangements. Personal advisers can assist with this process and help broker an agreement; however the responsibility for all arrangements rests with the young person and the carer/s.

- When a young person and their carer/s are negotiating a rent level, a contribution of approximately £75.00 per week could be a starting point. This amount is based on the local housing benefit reference rate for a room in a shared house and a contribution to household bills and food costs.
- The young person should pay their contribution from employment, their training allowance or benefits.
- Carers must be aware that payments from the young person may affect any state benefit they are receiving, particularly Housing Benefit, Income Support/Job Seekers Allowance and will need to be declared to the Department of Work and Pensions and specialist advice sought.

The Income Tax and National Insurance regulations covering this arrangement are set out in the Inland Revenue 'rent a room' scheme (helpsheet 223) that allows a carer/s to receive a tax-free allowance of £4250.00 per year (2008-2009). Carers may need to complete a relevant tax declaration and should seek specialist advice. <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/hs223.pdf>

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