



SHEFFIELD LEAVING CARE SERVICE



Financial Procedures for Care Leavers

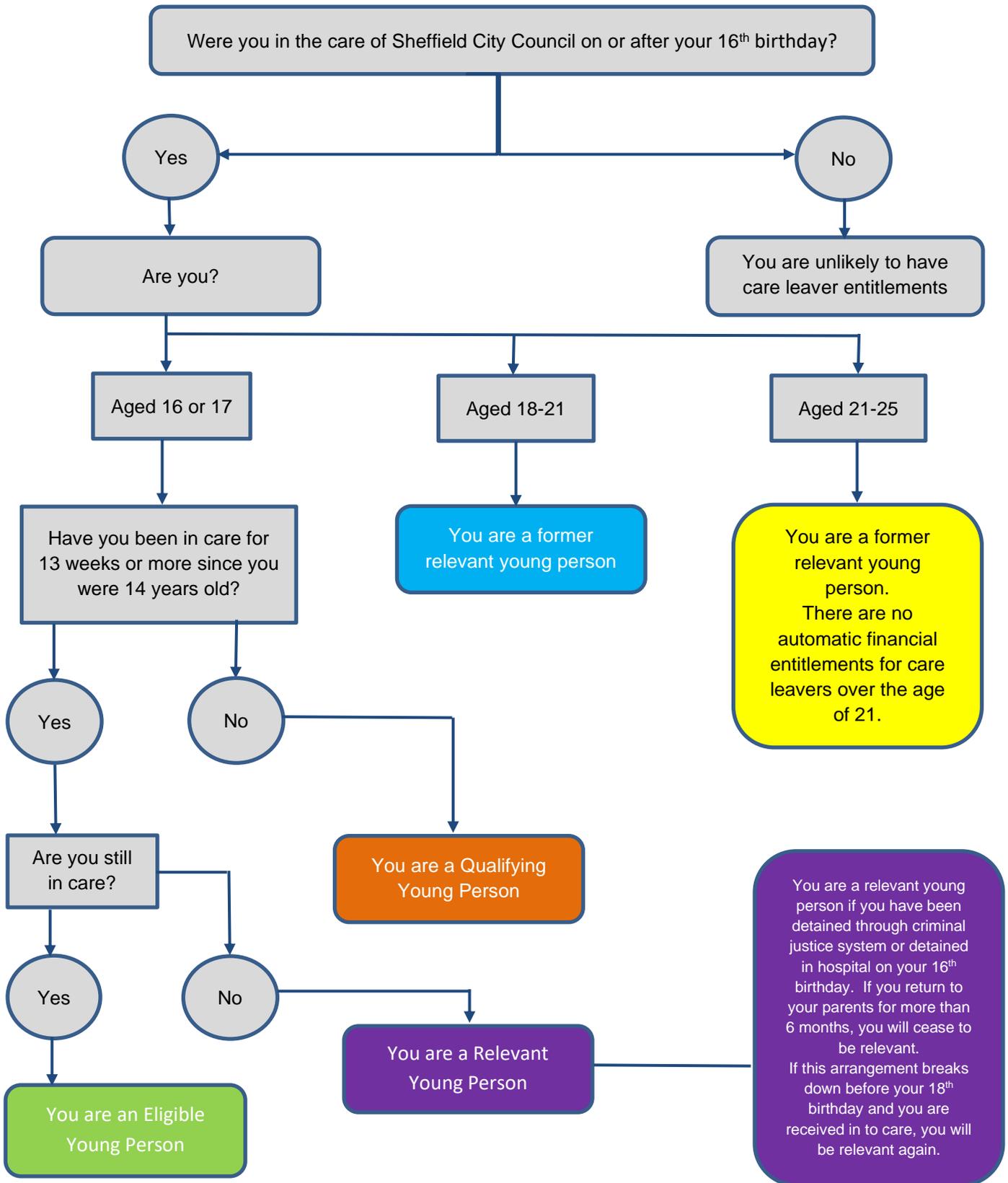
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What is your Leaving Care Legal Status?

This flow chart will help you to understand what your leaving care legal status is which will help you to understand your entitlements.



Use the colour code throughout this guide to help you identify what support you can receive.

Money

Income Maintenance (IM)

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Income maintenance payments of £61.22 a week are made if you have reached the age of 16, are living independently, or semi independently in the community (i.e., not with a foster carer or in a residential home) and are unemployed. Payments will continue until a change in your circumstances i.e., you gain employment, or you reach the age of 18 and are able to claim benefits through the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). If you are in work and earn £80 or more per week, we will no longer pay income maintenance to you.

Income maintenance will not be paid if you are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment's (PIP) will not affect the financial support that you will receive from the Leaving Care Service as these are non means tested benefits.

The £61.22 payment will be paid directly into your bank account on a weekly basis, unless detailed otherwise in your pathway plan. Where it is felt to be in your best interest, payments may be made in the form of food vouchers, or the Leaving Care Service can top up your utility payment cards.

The Leaving Care Service is able to make arrangements, on your behalf, to deduct money and pay accommodation service charges from your weekly income maintenance. This would be agreed with your personal advisor and detailed in your pathway plan.

Young people living in foster care, or a residential home will receive pocket money and financial support supervised by the Fostering Service or Residential Service.

If you have returned to live at home, your entitlement to income maintenance will reduce to £10 per week and be paid for a period of 6 months at which point you will become a Qualifying young person. If you are on a full care order and return home, these payments will continue at this rate until your 18th birthday.

Income Maintenance (IM)

FRYP

At the age of 18-years-old, you become entitled to claim benefits if you are not in work or you are in education. Your personal advisor will support you with this process. It is expected that a benefits claim will be started 28 days prior to your 18th birthday and submitted on or just after your 18th birthday. Provided this has been completed, the Leaving Care Service will offer financial support at the rate of £61.22 per week, for the first five weeks. This will allow time for your benefits claim to be processed and for you to receive your first payment. This financial support will be provided for the first Universal Credit claim only. This support will be given with the understanding that you do not make a claim from the Jobcentre for an "Universal Credit advance payment". If, at any point your circumstances change your personal advisor will complete a needs assessment with you.

Income Maintenance (IM)

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Financial support will be considered if you are moving from “heritage benefits”, such as JSA or ESA, on to Universal Credit for the first time. This will be for the first five weeks only. This will allow time for your benefits claim to be processed and for you to receive your first payment. This financial support will be provided for the first Universal Credit claim only and will be given on the understanding that you do not make a claim from the Jobcentre for an “Universal Credit advance payment”.

Emergency support in exceptional circumstances

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In exceptional circumstances or emergencies, your personal advisor will explore financial help dependant on your situation. An assessment will be completed by your personal advisor to determine underlying issues. Any financial support offered will be at the discretion of the senior fieldwork manager and may be in the form of a food parcel or utility top up.

Living Independently

Accommodation Costs

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Up until the age of 18, accommodation costs will be supported by the Leaving Care Service. Payments will be based on circumstances. In most cases, property rental costs will be met in full. However, if you are in employment and earning above Income Maintenance levels (£61.22), an individual assessment will be made, and an appropriate level of contribution will be agreed by a senior fieldwork manager. This applies to care leavers living both in and out of the city. The Leaving Care Service will make payments to the accommodation provider on your behalf.

Accommodation Costs

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If you are accommodated in Supported Lodgings or with a Staying Put provider, there is an expectation that you pay a contribution to your board (approximately £20 per week). Payment is expected to cover food costs. If you have chosen to do your own cooking, this payment may be reduced. All details will be agreed and recorded in your living together agreement.

Housing Bonds/Rent /Deposits

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When looking to secure your own tenancy, the preferred option is for you to secure accommodation in social housing (local authority), through a housing association or voluntary sector housing scheme. The Leaving Care Service work closely with these organisations, making each better placed to support your journey to independent living.

The Leaving Care Service encourages tenancies with Sheffield City Council, as the preferred option. Support for private tenancies will be considered on an individual basis.

If you decide to take up a tenancy with a private landlord, they will need to accept housing benefit/Universal Credit. Bonds and deposits can be taken from your setting up home allowance with the agreement of a senior fieldwork manager in the Leaving Care Service.

As a service, we are unable to be a guarantor for private tenancies.

Setting-up Home Allowance

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Dependent on your circumstances, you could receive **up to a maximum of £3200** setting up home allowance from the Leaving Care Service. Your personal advisor will need to have a copy of your tenancy agreement before money can be released. You may also be eligible for the Local Assistance Scheme. If you meet their criteria, you may be able to apply for up to £1000 worth of goods to set up your home and support your transition to independent living. **If you qualify for the Local Assistance Scheme, the maximum setting up home allowance available from the Leaving Care Service will be up to £2500.**

What it pays for?

If you meet the criteria for the Local Assistance Scheme, you will be able to select white goods (fridge, washing machine etc.), as well as other basic furnishings (carpets, bed, sofa, table and chairs, curtains etc). Any remaining balance will not be available in cash or towards items outside this scheme. Your personal advisor will be able to work with you in order to identify how best to access this scheme. **Please note this element of finance will only be available to young people living in Sheffield.** If you do not live in Sheffield your personal advisor will be able to support you to apply to any similar scheme available in your area.

The setting up home allowance is a grant that is intended to support you to move to a more independent living situation. This grant is held by the Sheffield Leaving Care Service, your individual needs will be assessed by your personal advisor and an agreed amount will be available to support you with the purchase of additional items to set up your home. A list of suggested items can be found at the end of this document. Whilst your wishes and feelings will be taken into account, the Leaving Care Service will make the final decision in relation to setting up home allowance being issued.

If you are a young person entering supported lodgings or living in staying put, you can access up to £500 to personalise your room.

A record of items you receive will be made and this will be taken off any later setting up home allowance you may receive if you move to your own tenancy.

Insurance

The service expects that all young people take out the necessary contents insurance to protect their belongings. The service will not be liable to replace an individual's belongings in the case of damage or theft. Payment for insurance should come from a young person's setting up home allowance or their general income.

Education and Training

Assistance for Education and Training

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As an eligible, relevant or former relevant young person, you may be able to receive financial support of £1200 a year direct from your school, Further Education College or learning provider. This is known as the 16-19 Bursary. Discretionary learner support may be available for older learners. These payments are in addition to your income maintenance payment if you are an eligible or relevant young person.

If you have been unable to access a bursary from your education provider, the Leaving Care Service will support you with travel costs and course materials. If you are engaged in a full-time course (16hrs or more per week) you could receive up to £30 per week during **term time**. For young people on part-time courses this amount will be adjusted accordingly:

- 16 hours - £30
- 8 hours - £15
- 4 hours - £7.50

This payment is conditional, and **you must** provide consent for the service to share information to confirm attendance on the course to ensure continuation of payments.

If your course equipment requirements are particularly expensive, then a further allowance of up to £100 may be granted. In such cases, we would ask you to provide the full equipment list required in order to thoroughly assess your needs.

If you are an eligible or relevant young person and are caring for your own child/ren whilst undertaking further education, your need for support with childcare costs will be considered. In the first instance the education provider should be approached to understand what support they offer.

Your personal advisor will support you to apply for 'Care to Learn' (<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>) to help with childcare costs while you study.

Celebration of Educational Achievement

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On achieving significant educational success, the Leaving Care Service will give the young person a gift or voucher to the value of £50 to acknowledge and celebrate their achievement. This can be given once per financial year.

Apprenticeships:

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If you are on an apprenticeship, you will be able to request a care leavers bursary from your employer after you have completed the first 60 days. The bursary can only be claimed once, and it is a one-off payment of £1000.

The Leaving Care Service will offer additional financial support if you live independently. We will top up your apprenticeship wage in line with the National Minimum Wage for your age. The rates can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Income Top Up:

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If you are in employment, living independently and are on a low income, you may still qualify for some financial assistance depending on how much you earn and your bills. Your personal advisor will complete a financial assessment with you to help determine your incomings and outgoings. Income top up will be considered if you have less than £80 a week to live-on, once the following items have been paid for:

- Rent
- Utilities
- Water rates

After these items have been deducted and you have less than £80 a week to live on, we will top up your income to £80 a week.

Higher Education Assistance (University)

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Sheffield Leaving Care Service are happy to support you to pursue higher education up to the age of 25. This will be detailed in your pathway plan throughout your education. The below guidance is based around studying for a three-year degree course. If you wish to study part-time, please discuss your circumstances with your personal advisor. Any changes of study will need to be agreed by the Senior Leadership Team before any commitment is made.

All university students will need to sign a consent form to agree for their personal advisor to maintain contact with university at least once per term. Funding will be withdrawn if you no longer remain on the course, or if attendance is below the acceptable standard set by each university.

Bursaries, Grants and Loans

As a young person attending university, you will be expected to claim all bursaries and grants available to you through the academic institution of your choice. Your personal advisor will be able to help you to do this.

You will most likely need to apply for a student loan to cover your course fees known as a 'Tuition Fee Loan' this is paid directly to your chosen university. In addition, you will need to apply for a

'Maintenance Loan', this is available to all full-time students and is means tested. This loan is expected to support the costs of things such as food and bills. Your personal advisor will need a copy of your statement of student finance in order to set up finance from the Leaving Care Service.

Accommodation Costs

In order for you to attend university, the Leaving Care Service will support your accommodation costs on an annual basis up to **£7,500** outside London. For accommodation costs inside London, Bristol, Cambridge or Oxford, this will be up to **£10,000** per year. You will be supported by your personal advisor to find a property that best suits your needs and will help you connect with the university of your choice for local support and knowledge around accommodation options.

Income Maintenance Payments

The Leaving Care Service will help you with your living costs whilst at university by paying you an income maintenance payment of £50 per week for the duration of your course. Consent for the university to share information with the Leaving Care Service must be given.

University Graduation

The university you attend may provide a grant, for care leavers, to pay for gowns and photos at a graduation ceremony. If this is not the case, the Leaving Care Service will pay £100 contribution for University Graduates towards gowns and photos if you are attending a graduation ceremony.

Higher Education Bursary

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In addition, the Leaving Care Service will pay a bursary of £2000 to any Former Relevant young person attending higher education. This payment will be made in three instalments across the duration of the course. Payment arrangements will be agreed and detailed in your pathway plan.

Vacation Accommodation and Staying Put

Depending on your living arrangements whilst at university, you may require accommodation support during holiday periods. The Leaving Care Service will meet the cost of this accommodation, and this will need to be agreed with your personal advisor. This will include covering the cost of staying put for the duration of your course.

Note: young people without settled status in the United Kingdom, will need to discuss university applications with their personal advisor at the earliest opportunity to ensure their eligibility for funding. You may not be entitled to higher education support until you have been granted leave to remain in the country.

Master's Degree

If you wish to study for a master's degree, please discuss this with your personal advisor. Consideration will be given to funding accommodation costs to support you with further studies.

Other Help

Clothing Allowance

EYP

RYP

If you are an eligible or relevant young person living independently, you are entitled to a clothing allowance of up to £400 per year. Your needs will be assessed by your social worker or personal advisor.

If clothing is lost or damaged, you may apply to the Leaving Care Service for assistance. Any assistance will be based on an assessment of your personal circumstances.

Maternity Clothing

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If you are pregnant and require maternity clothing, your needs will be assessed by your personal advisor. Following assessment, a clothing allowance of up to £100 may be granted post 25 weeks gestation.

If you are unemployed, you may be entitled to the Sure Start Maternity Grant. This will be a one-off government grant of £500 to help you to purchase items for your baby. The grant is only available for your first child.

Your personal advisor will make a request to Baby Basics (if available in your local area) to support you to gain items for your baby. This can include a Moses basket, clothes and toiletries.

Pregnant young women receiving Universal Credit are entitled to claim Healthy Start Vouchers and may be entitled to further benefits under government schemes. Your personal advisor will be able to support you with this.

Birthday & Cultural Celebrations

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If you are an eligible or relevant young person living independently, you are entitled to a birthday gift to the value of £150. This should preferably be a gift that can be bought in discussion with your personal advisor or can be made available via a selection of gift vouchers. You will also receive £150 for Christmas or other cultural celebrations such as Eid (1 payment per year).

For Former Relevant young people, the value of the gift you receive is dependent on your age. If in foster care, your 18th birthday payment will come from your foster carer:

Age	Birthday payment	Celebration payment
18	150	50
19	50	50
20	50	50
21	150	

Driving Lessons

EYP

RYP

FRYP

The Leaving Care Service will purchase a provisional driving licence for all young people.

For 17 – 21-year-olds engaged in education, training or employment, the Leaving Care Service will support you in learning how to drive by paying for ten driving lessons, one theory and one practical test. If you choose to complete an 'intensive driving course', you will be expected to contribute towards the increased cost. The Leaving Care Service will only provide funds for 10 singular driving lessons. You must pass your theory test before lessons will be paid for. You can search for an approved driving instructor by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/find-driving-schools-and-lessons>.

Passport

EYP

RYP

FRYP

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The Leaving Care Service will pay the cost of a passport application or renewal (first adult passport). This would usually be purchased if you are going on a holiday abroad, or at the point that you are no longer involved with Leaving Care. Leaving Care will purchase one adult passport only.

Dental and Optical Assistance

If you are under the age of 19 and in full time education, you are unlikely to pay the majority of NHS dental and prescription charges. If not, you can claim assistance using an HC1 form which will entitle you to dental and optical care. Your personal advisor will support you in completing this.

If you have to pay for your prescriptions and need more than four prescriptions in a three-month period, you may wish to consider a prepayment prescription card. A card can be purchased for a three-month period or annually (with monthly payments). <https://www.gov.uk/get-a-ppc>

Young People in Custody

EYP

RYP

If you are under 18 years old, you will receive £40 a month to enable you to purchase toiletries and phone cards. Your personal advisor will detail how this will be given to you, dependant on the local rules of the Youth Offending Institution (YOI) you are in. This may be provided in the form of a postal order which is then processed by the YOI and credited to your prison account.

If you have been released from serving a custodial sentence up to the age of 18, you will be given a clothing grant of £100. This will be a supervised spend with your personal advisor and will be deducted from any further clothing grant allocations you may receive at a later date.

Young People in Custody

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On your birthday, your personal advisor will assess your needs and where appropriate and in line with individual prison procedures, you will be given a payment or gift to the value of £50. This will also apply for cultural celebrations such as Christmas or Eid to the amount of £50.

On release from custody, your personal advisor will assess your transport needs in advance. A plan will be put in place for you to return to your home. If you have spent 12 months or more in prison. Your personal advisor will assess your clothing needs. If appropriate, a clothing grant of £100 will be allocated to your personal advisor to purchase relevant clothing upon your release.

Summary of Payments

		Eligible Young Person	Relevant Young Person	Former Relevant Young Person 18-21 Living Independently	Qualifying Young People (up to 21)	Former Relevant Young Person 21-25
General Income	Income maintenance (IM)	£61.22 pw dependent on circumstances	£61.22 pw (£10 if living at home) dependent on circumstances	IM of £61.22 available if not entitled to Universal Credit		IM Support if moving from heritage benefits to UC for 5 weeks
	Wage top up available for low earners	✓	✓			
	Clothing allowance (up to - based on needs assessment)	£400	£400			
Further Education	If unable to access bursary	up to £30 pw dependent on course hours	up to £30 pw dependent on course hours	up to £30 pw dependent on course hours		
	Equipment Grant	up to £100	up to £100	up to £100		
Higher Education	HE Bursary			£2000 (spread over duration of course)		£2000 (spread over duration of course)
	HE Accommodation			£7500-£10000	£7500-£10000	£7500-£10000
	HE IM			£50 pw	£50 pw	£50 pw
	Graduation Costs			£100	£100	£100
Accommodation & setting up home allowance (SUHA)	Accommodation allowance	Costs met	Costs met			
	Bonds/Deposit	From SUHA	From SUHA	From SUHA		From SUHA
	Local Assistance Scheme (if eligible)	Up to £1000	Up to £1000	Up to £1000		Up to £1000
	Leaving Care Service Contribution	£2,500 - £3,200	£2,500 - £3,200	£2,500 - £3,200		£2,500 - £3,200
	Supported Lodgings	£500*	£500*	£500*		£500*
Learning to drive	Driving Lessons x 10 if in education or employment	✓	✓	✓		
	Provisional License	✓	✓	✓		
	Theory Test if in education or employment	✓	✓	✓		
	Driving Test if in education or employment	✓	✓	✓		
Other	Passport	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Celebration of achievement award	up to £50	up to £50	up to £50		
	Birthday money	£150 if living in community	£150 if living in community	18 £150, 19/20 £50, 21 £150		
	Xmas/Eid money	£150 if living in community	£150 if living in community	£50 (under 21)		

What you might need when setting up home

Furniture	White Goods	Kitchen Equipment	Soft Furnishings	Other Essentials
Bed	Washing Machine	Plates and Bowls	Duvet & Pillows	Smoke Alarms
Wardrobe	Fridge/Freezer	Glasses and Mugs	Bedding x 2 sets	Contents Insurance
Chest of Drawers	Cooker	Cutlery	Towels x 6	TV Licence
Sofa/Armchair	Microwave	Pots & Pans	Lamp/Lampshade	Removal Costs
Table and Chairs	Vacuum Cleaner	Ironing Board	Curtains/blinds & fittings	Cooker fitting
TV stand	Iron	Bin	Bathmat	Washing machine plumbing
	Kettle/toaster	Washing Up Bowl	Shower curtain	
	TV	Tea Towels	Carpets/flooring	