

Financial Entitlements for Care Leavers

Help we provide for Care Leavers

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and should be read alongside our Care Leaver Local Offer which sets out more practical support from lots of services. All financial requests must be based on a needs assessment and will be linked to your pathway plan. It is really important that you engage in this so we can support you in your future aspirations and in your day to day life. There will always be new areas we had not thought about, so rather than struggle, if in doubt ask us, we might have a helpful solution, or you might give us a new area to work on.

There is sometimes different help on offer based on your age and your care leaver status and that can be confusing, so if you are unsure if you are Eligible, Relevant, Former Relevant or Qualifying please speak with your personal advisor or try the following useful link on the Care leaver Local offer page to help find this out.

We hope to have made this clear in the guidance but if in doubt do ask your personal advisor.

Some payments are discretionary. This means they are not given to everyone. They are based on an assessment of need, your pathway plan, engagement with services to help you and the potential positive outcomes they could bring.



1 General Living costs

Subsistence – What you need to buy food and pay for day to day living	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
1.1 If you are under 18 and living within Homestay/semi-supported living or independent living and not working you may need some extra help. We will provide the equivalent benefit rate (Subsistence element of Universal Credit) where it is clear you are not eligible to claim this in your own right. This would not be available for young people who are living with parents.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Team Manager
1.2 An additional clothing allowance of up to £30 per month is also payable for those young people in 1.1.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Team Manager
1.3 Emergency subsistence can also be paid whilst awaiting benefit claim to be established but only if evidence of claim being made for up to 3 weeks.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
1.4 If you are living in Homestay/semi-supported living or independent living your weekly income may also be provided or 'topped up' to the subsistence element of universal credit if through gaining employment or starting further education/apprenticeship you become ineligible for benefits or your income falls below the subsistence element of universal credit benefit level. Apprenticeships or jobs will be tested via www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/entitlement-calculator . nb: For Former Relevant - Where returning to education post 21 this is discretionary and assessment of needs will be considered as part of pathway assessment.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Discretionary	No	Team Manager

Subsistence – What you need to buy food and pay for day to day living	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
1.5 Heating & Electric -For those living independently or semi-independently. This is a discretionary payment and based on an assessment of need. These payments would only be offered alongside an additional detailed budget session with the young person. This work will be completed before the payment is given and followed up before any further payment was agreed. In these circumstances we may fund up to a maximum of £30 (£15 gas, £15 electric). NB : As of 1st October 2022 there is further support available via the household fund. Please discuss with your personal advisor.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
1.6 Food Voucher or supervised spends (not cash). This is a discretionary payment and based on emergency need. If agreed this would be up to a maximum of £30. Food Bank vouchers may also be used in line with local protocols. This would only be offered to you alongside additional detailed budget session with your worker. This work will need to be completed before the payment is given and followed up before any further payment given. Budgeting is hard and not having enough money is worrying. We want to help you plan so this doesn't happen again. NB : As of 1st October 2022 there is further support available via the household fund. Please discuss with your personal advisor.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager

Subsistence – What you need to buy food and pay for day to day living	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
1.7 Resettlement Clothing Payment A payment of up to £100 is available on the basis of assessed need and pathway planning. This is discretionary. Examples of where this may be used include those leaving custody who have not maintained possessions and those who have fled domestic violence.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
1.8 Emergency Winter Clothing Payment This is discretionary but may be provided on the basis of assessed need up to the value of £50 to purchase things like a warm winter coat. NB : As of 1st October 2022 there is further support available via the household fund. Please discuss with your personal advisor.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
1.9 Council Tax Exemption If you are a Care Leaver living in Cumbria and you get a council tax bill please speak to your PA as you will qualify for Council Tax exemption up to the age of 25. If you live outside of Cumbria please discuss with your personal advisor. The authority you live in may provide a similar service and if not we would look at your individual needs.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager

2. Education, Employment and Training support

We are really keen to support you to get you back into work or training where we can and remove some of the barriers to this. Finance provided in this section would be via an individual assessment of need and be linked with your aims and aspirations in your pathway plan/PEP.

Talk to us about your aspirations and we will try our best to help. We have lots of links with people who can provide you with work experience, help with writing CV's or application forms and even practicing interviews. If you are anxious about getting back into it we can also help plan those steps with you too.

Did you know that if you apply for a job in Cumbria County Council, identify yourself as a care leaver on the application form and meet the essential criteria you are guaranteed an interview?

College and Higher Education	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
2.1 Bursary in Further Education Up to £1,200 payable by college/FE. We don't provide this but your PA can help you to find out if you are eligible and about it and how to claim.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Your further education provider
2.2 DFE Bursary if in Higher education £2000 over life of the course (£500 per annum at end of each year (if 3 years) plus £500 on course completion). (Discretionary for Former Relevant returning post 21).	No	No	Yes	Discretionary	No	Team Manager

University package (in addition to University loan and grant (course fees) which the student will apply for themselves):	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
2.3 Travel costs to university interview and supported overnight stay based on assessment of need.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.4 Computer, guarantee and software grant of up to £500 before start of first year of study.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.5 Funding for Initial and return trip to university each academic year.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.6 Travel costs for up to 4 visits home per year in line with pathway assessment and plan.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.7 Help with accommodation, subsistence and living costs up to £4500 a year (£5200 in London). (NB: This is based on a 3 or 4 year standard full time degree) This is our basic commitment. If the costs for your area of study exceed this then this will need to be discussed further to consider the financial feasibility for you and help explore alternative sources of funding. If a year has to be re-taken you will need to seek further approval for this at service managers discretion and is not guaranteed. If you plan to study part time then this may be a pro rata amount.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Service Manager
2.8 Equipment costs of up to £250 per academic year (based on assessment of need).	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.9 Vacation costs (This means accommodation costs during university holidays where it is not covered by university accommodation and you are not in a staying put arrangement).	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.10 Emergency payment (up to £15 x 3 per year) at discretion of team manager and in conjunction with budgeting work with personal advisor. NB : As of 1st October 2022 there is further support available via the household fund. Please discuss with your personal advisor.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager

University package (in addition to University loan and grant (course fees) which the student will apply for themselves):	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
2.11 Graduation costs (Up to £250).	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.12 If you plan to complete your degree in a different way (for example via open university) then talk to us about what the university package may look like for you.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager

Helping you get back into learning and employment Did you know that we offer a guaranteed interview scheme. If you apply for a Cumbria County Council vacancy, tick the box to say you are a care leaver and meet the essential criteria we will make sure you get an interview. Ask your PA about it. We can also help with interview practice and CV writing.	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
2.13 Incentive Payment This is discretionary and available up to £25 per week where the course of study or engagement in education/employment and training does not attract a bursary (eg ASDAN, volunteering, work experience). It may also be used for completion of courses that will help you to progress your plan, for example pre tenancy and independent living courses. This is to help encourage and support you to get back into work and training. It will be part of a plan of engagement, agreed in advance and closely monitored. It should be reviewed at least monthly by the Team Manager, PA and Positive engagement officer with your input.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager (when they have seen and signed off the plan)

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2.14 Vocational Courses Not everyone wants to go to University or continue into higher education. Sometimes you may want to pursue a more vocational route. We want to help you get the job you aspire to and help you with the courses that will get you there. It might include things like food hygiene courses, CSCS card, football coaching etc. We might help fund some of these or highlight other organisations that can help you.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager up to £100 Service Manager above this amount
2.15 Uniform or equipment for course/employment We can help with essential equipment for your course is it cannot be sourced from partner organisations. This would be up to the value of £250 and may be in instalments.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Team Manager
2.16 Clothing for interview (college/work etc). If it is not available from elsewhere (for example your DWP work coach) we will provide up to £50 as part of your engagement in a plan to get into/or back into work and training.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team Manager
2.17 Young people in custody YOI/Prison (including remand) If you are in custody and are engaged in your pathway planning and sentence plan we will provide £1 per day (up to £7 per week) for you. The prison must confirm you are engaged in a programme of training or employment or that you are medically confirmed as being unable to work do to ill health. Working with your PA and offender manager you can decide if you wish to have all the amount or some held back to help you with setting up home when you are released.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

Apprenticeships We have lots on offer in the local authority	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
2.18 Care Leaver supplement if you are in a Cumbria County Council Apprenticeship We are really keen for you to come and work for us. Young people have told us that for some the apprenticeship wage is a barrier to doing that. If you are a Cumbrian Care Leaver 16-24 and are successful in gaining a Cumbria County Council apprenticeship your leaving care team will give you a care leaver supplement to bring the amount up to the national minimum wage for your age for that first year.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager
2.19 DFE 16-24 Apprenticeship Bursary If you are a care leaver and start any apprenticeship the Government will help you with a £1000 bursary to help with practical costs as you move into work based learning. This will come as a one off payment from your training provider. Your training provider and PA will help you to access this. NB this will increase to £3000 from August 2023. Details will be updated as soon as made clear.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Your training provider

3. Getting mobile

Getting Mobile	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
3.1 Application for a provisional driving licence	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager
3.2 Driving Lessons (car or bike) We will match fund up to 10 lessons. This means you pay for one and we pay the next. It must be linked to the current training and employment elements of your pathway plan. Agreement is based on you having no current driving offences or ongoing drug/alcohol use identified as a concern within your pathway plan.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager
3.3 Driving Test We recognise not everyone gets this right first time. We will therefore fund up to two driving tests (2 x Practical and 2 x Theory).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager
3.4 Travel passes If you are starting a new job or course which involves travel not covered by your employer, education provider or other sources it can be really hard. We recognise it can be a barrier to starting work. We can support you with some initial travel costs for the first month. This might be a bus pass, young person's railcard or an equivalent. Talk to us and we can look at the best options with you. If the travel costs are such that this would not be financially viable or is seen as unreasonable (eg you take a job so far away that you would not be able to afford the commute even after you have been paid) then this may be refused.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Team manager

Getting Mobile	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
3.5 Family Time – maintaining relationships with siblings, parents or significant people Where a young person has siblings in the care of the local authority the team responsible for them should cover a young person's travel costs to attend family time as agreed in the siblings care plan. Those with no siblings in care may be funded to see family or significant relationships up to twice a year dependent on their circumstances (e.g. if in receipt of universal credit, not working and is agreed in their pathway plan).	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Team manager
3.6 Passport/Birth certificate We will fund the cost of a passport or passport renewal up until you are 21. We will also fund up to two birth certificates for you.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Team manager

4. Setting up home

This is an exciting and also scary time and we want to do our very best in supporting you to make this move successfully. Talk to your PA about all the training and support we can offer you to help.

Setting up home	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
<p>4.1 Setting up home allowance - this is a total of £3000</p> <p>All spends from this allowance are planned as part of your pathway plan. The fund is to equip your home.</p> <p>We will work with you on this because although it might sound a big amount, it has to cover a lot of things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your first food shop for store cupboard essentials • Cleaning materials • First TV licence • Pots and pans • Furniture and white goods (cooker, fridge etc) • Bedding and towels <p>Young people can request funding for items (up to the remaining balance) until their 25th birthday. Please note: The previous setting up home amount was £2205. The £3000 came into effect on 1st April 2024 is available to all those born after 1st April 2006. All those before this date will remain at the £2205 amount.</p>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager
<p>4.2 Removal costs of up to £250</p> <p>This is discretionary and finite amount. It might be used for a delivery van, petrol costs etc. Talk to your PA about how this can be used to help you move home.</p>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager

Setting up home	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
4.3 Rent deposit - only one payment 1 month rent/bond at local reference rent/local housing allowance plus up to £125 admin fee payable to estate agent. In addition where required to secure tenancy, up to 1 months advance rent payment to the housing agent/landlord (The team manager must see a copy of the tenancy agreement before agreeing (copy to go on file)).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

5. Celebrations

Celebrations	Eligible 16-17 and looked after	Relevant 16-17 not looked after but you have previously been looked after for 13 weeks including some time after you were 16	Former Relevant age 18 20	Former Relevant age 21-25	Qualifying	Who agrees this?
5.1 Birth of Baby £50 to be used for gift and or equipment for the baby.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Team manager
5.2 Cultural and religious requirements. For those in semi supported housing, homestay or independent living. This will be dependent on specific needs and will be evident within pathway assessment and plan (up to £20 per month).	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Team manager
5.3 Birthday celebration £20 budget for a celebration (meal out, cake etc) for those in semi- supported housing, homestay or independent living up to age 21.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Team manager
5.4 Birthday gift Up to £50 each for an 18th or 21st Birthday gift for those in semi-supported housing, homestay or independent living.	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Team manager