

3. As care leavers you are also entitled to receive a Government Care Leavers Higher Education Bursary paid through Children's Services - £2,000.00 per course (£500.00 per year 4 year course, £666.67 per year 3 year).

Driving

If driving lessons are agreed and set out in your pathway plan linked to improving your employability or employment needs, Children's Services will provide the funding for 1 provisional driving licence, 1 theory test, 1 practical test and the cost of ten 1 hour driving lessons. This is dependent on you matching the cost of the ten 1 hour driving lessons, being engaged in education, training or employment for at least 3 months, having no driving convictions and being engaged in education or training at the time of the application. Lone parents and young people with disabilities may be exempt from the 3-month education/work requirement where driving will assist with future employability.

Other Financial Needs

All other financial support will be dependent on an assessment of your needs. Specific items or issues linked to exceptional needs can be provided up to the age of 21/25 years depending on your circumstances.

If you are in receipt of welfare benefits or wages, you may not be entitled to all of the allowances set out in this leaflet.

Questions?

Your personal adviser will be able to help you understand which allowances these are. If you are unsure about any financial matter or allowance you can talk it through with your worker.

Money Matters 18yrs plus

This leaflet is designed to help you understand the financial support you can receive from Hertfordshire Children's Services when you reach the age of 18. Your entitlements should be explained to you by your social worker or personal adviser. All financial support is based on an assessment of your needs, and will be set out in your pathway plan.

From April 2020

Depending on your individual circumstances and any wages you are earning, you could be eligible at the age of 18 for a range of support from the government; these may be called benefits, universal credit and/or council tax support. Your worker will help you to apply for anything that you are entitled to.

Initial Benefit Claim Waiting Period

Your worker will support you to apply for Universal Credit (and other benefits) and will try to make sure these are in place by your 18th birthday. Sometimes the Department for Work and Pensions may take a little longer to set up your benefits.

Therefore when you make your first claim, Children's Services will support you by continuing to pay your leaving care maintenance allowance for a maximum of 5 weeks whilst you wait for your first payment (only if you do not take a Universal Credit Advance).

Key Documents

In order to access any benefits or other support (including opening a bank account) you will need a range of documents. Children's Services will pay for 1 copy of your Birth Certificate and 1 passport renewal, if you do not already have these documents.

Accommodation - Rent and Deposits

When you leave care, Children's Services will help you find accommodation, in most cases this will be provided through your local council housing department. In exceptional cases the accommodation may be provided through the private rented sector, if this is the case Children's Services may pay the deposit for your accommodation and up to 4 weeks rent in advance, this is dependent on your personal circumstances.

Staying Put Arrangements

Where it is agreed under the Staying Put policy that you can stay in your current foster accommodation after the age of 18, Children's Services will help pay for some of the costs including support for the period set out in your pathway plan. In order to Stay Put you will need to claim some benefits, contribute to the rent and cover some other costs.

Supported Accommodation

Children's Services works with a number of registered accommodation and support providers who help care leavers move from care to independence. Your worker will explain these accommodation choices and help you to apply for a place if it meets your needs. One of these options could also include supported lodgings.

Setting up Home Allowance

When you are moving to independence and setting up home, you could be eligible for up to £2,137.00 which is available up to the age of 25, or beyond if you are in education/training to purchase essential household items to make your house a home.

If you are undertaking Education, Training or Employment

Education or Training Travel

For 18 year olds in education or training Children's Services will, depending on your assessed travel needs, provide you with a student bus travel card (which will provide a reduction in fares), and/or a student train travel card which also provides a reduction in fares.

Education or Training Equipment

Depending on your needs and the type of education/training activity you are undertaking, you may be entitled to a grant of up to £475.00 per year to cover all of your equipment needs (e.g. stationary, software, education, books etc.) Young people entering further education (level 2 or above) or higher education will be assisted to access a tablet or lap top. Depending on an assessment of need and income (undertaken by the Virtual School), young people will be required to contribute to the cost of the equipment from their education allowances and bursaries. This is available once and can be used between the age of 16 and 25.

Higher Education

Young people entering higher education receive a tuition fees loan, a maintenance grant (only for students who started courses before 1st August 2016) and a maintenance loan for use during term time, through Student Finance England.

- Up to £9,250.00 per year tuition fee loan
- Up to £12,010.00 per year maintenance loan - students studying in London
- Up to £9,203.00 per year maintenance loan - students studying outside London

In addition, Children's Services will provide a higher education vacation, living allowance and bursary package (up to £5,500.00) made up of number of elements per year:

1. £58.90 Maintenance Allowance for 22 weeks
2. A rent allowance of up to the level of the Local Housing Allowance one-bedroom self-contained accommodation rate, or the level of university accommodation for 22 weeks. The LHA rate and therefore the level of the grant is dependent on the area you live.