

# Money Matters young people aged 16 and 17 living in semi-independent or independent accommodation (including supported lodgings)

This leaflet is designed to help you understand the financial support you can receive from Hertfordshire Children's Services if you are aged 16 or 17 and you are living in semi-independent or independent accommodation. All financial support will be based on an assessment of your needs, and in discussion with your worker.

From April 2020

## **Accommodation Costs**

Children's Service will pay for your placement or accommodation costs up to your 18th birthday. At this point you will be able to move into your own council/housing association, private accommodation (if agreed), or remain in a staying put/supported lodgings arrangement. All of these types of accommodation require you to pay rent. From 18 you may be eligible to claim Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit to help pay your rent. Children's Services may act as a financial guarantor for you, up to your 18th birthday and may provide a deposit and rent in advance if required.

## **Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance**

You are entitled to a Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA) from Children's Services up to the age of 18; these allowances vary depending on the type of accommodation you are living in. If you are not sure what rate you should get, talk to your social worker:

### **Amount per week**

- If you're living in independent accommodation and paying for your bills and food you will receive a) £71.14 of which £12.24 is the additional clothing allowance
- If you're living in semi-independent accommodation and paying for your food but not bills, you will receive b) £60.76 of which £12.24 is the additional clothing allowance
- If you're living in supported lodgings accommodation your bills are paid and food is provided, therefore you will receive c) £50.76 of which £12.24 is the additional clothing allowance.

**Note:** Due to the Coronavirus crisis and through-out the financial year 2020-2021 the three rates of allowance set out above will increase by £20.00 per week to a) £91.14, b) £80.76, c) £70.76 per week.

## **Clothing Allowance**

In addition to the LCMA, you are also entitled to the equivalent of £22.24 per week clothing allowance. For most young people, £10.00 is already included in your LCMA, so you will actually receive an additional £12.24 per week.

## **Leisure**

You can also access up to £10.00 per week for a leisure activity; the activity should be recorded in your Pathway Plan and can only be used for recognised activities that you could continue from your wages or benefits when you reach age 18 (i.e. gym membership, football club, netball team).

## **Key Documents**

In order to register for housing, apply for benefits and access other support (including opening a bank account) you will need a range of identity and key 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.

## **Travel**

If you are 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 provide 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 visits, books etc.)

For those undertaking a further education course, level 2 or above, a one-off computer grant may be available, subject to an assessment of need and income (undertaken by the Virtual School), young people may 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 21 (25).

## **Contact Allowance**

Travel costs associated with staying in contact with family, extended family, former foster carers and significant friends may be provided following an assessment of need. Your social worker will be able to give you more information.

## **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.

## **Birthday and Christmas/Festival Allowance**

Young people who are actively engaged in the pathway planning process are entitled to a £100.00 birthday allowance and a £100.00 Christmas/festival allowance. The Christmas/festival allowance can be provided at a point suitable to your faith.

## **Other Financial Needs**

All other financial support will be dependent on an assessment of your needs. Specific items linked to health, religious, cultural or exceptional needs can be provided up to the age of 18 years depending on your circumstances.

If you are in receipt of some benefits or wages, you may not be entitled to all of the allowances set out in this leaflet. Your social worker will be able to help you understand which allowances these are.

## **Questions?**

Your carer/keyworker and social worker will be able to help with most things, and if they cannot help they have access to 'experts' in money advice to help answer your questions.