

# Corporate Parenting Panel Agenda



To: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair)

Councillors Shafi Khan, Bernadette Khan, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Maria Gatland and Helen Redfern

## Co-optee Members

Virtual School: Shelley Davies, Angela Griffiths, Sarah Bailey  
CLA Designated Health Professionals: Dr Julia Simpson, Fiona Simmons  
Health Commissioners: Pasquale Brammer, Roneeta Campbell-Butler  
Health Providers: Sue Goode  
EMPIRE: Young People and Council Staff  
Care Leaver Representative; Ashleigh Searle  
Foster Carer Representatives: Angela Christmas, Manny Kwamin

A meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Wednesday, 3 March 2021** at **5.00 pm**. This meeting will be held virtually and a meeting link will be circulated in due course.

JACQUELINE HARRIS BAKER  
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London Borough of Croydon  
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Tuesday, 23 February 2021

The agenda papers for all Council meetings are available on the Council website [www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings)

If you require any assistance, please contact Michelle Ossei-Gerning  
020 8726 6000 x84246 as detailed above

## **AGENDA – PART A**

**1. Apologies for absence**

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Panel.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 January 2021 as an accurate record.

[To Follow]

**3. Disclosures of interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the statutory provisions of the Localism Act, Members and co-opted Members of the Council are reminded that it is a requirement to register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and gifts and hospitality to the value of which exceeds £50 or multiple gifts and/or instances of hospitality with a cumulative value of £50 or more when received from a single donor within a rolling twelve month period. In addition, Members and co-opted Members are reminded that unless their disclosable pecuniary interest is registered on the register of interests or is the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer, they are required to disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests at the meeting. This should be done by completing the Disclosure of Interest form and handing it to the Democratic Services representative at the start of the meeting. The Chair will then invite Members to make their disclosure orally at the commencement of Agenda item 3. Completed disclosure forms will be provided to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion on the Register of Members' Interests.

**4. Urgent Business (if any)**

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

**5. Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)**

**6. Children in Care Performance Scorecard (Pages 5 - 6)**

The Children in Care Performance Scorecard for January 2021 is attached.

**7. Care Leavers and Support for Care Leavers - Care Leavers' Local Offer (Pages 7 - 98)**

The report of the level of support for care leavers and the revised local offer is attached.

**8. Review of Missing Children (Pages 99 - 104)**

The review of Missing Children report is attached.

**9. How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?**

For the panel to consider how its work at the meeting will improve services for children in care.

**10. Work Programme (Pages 105 - 106)**

To consider and approve the Panel's work programme for the municipal year 2020/21.

**11. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

“That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.”

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Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2020/21										2020-21 Target	RAG	RAG- Based on (YTD/LATES)	Comparative Data				
			Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21				2020-21 YTD or latest	DfE Published Croydon 2019-20	Stats Nbr Average 2019-2020	London 2019-20	England 2019-20
CLA 1	Number of CLA at the end of the month		787	788	777	767	765	764	747	741	730	699	NA	Grey	NA	699	791	509	10,010	80,080
CLA 2	Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population		82.9	83.2	82.0	80.8	80.6	80.5	78.7	78.1	76.9	73.6	NA	Grey	NA	74	83.0	52.8	49.0	67.0
CLA 2a	Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population excluding UASC		54.6	55.0	54.6	53.8	53.7	54.2	52.9	53.2	52.9	51.1	NA	Grey	NA	51	55.6			
CLA 3	Number of CLA at the end of the month who are Local CLA (Non-UASC)		518	521	517	511	510	515	502	505	502	485	NA	Grey	NA	485	528			
CLA 3b	Number of Ceased CLA in the month who are Local CLA (Non-UASC)		24	9	14	21	12	21	13	16	18	18	NA	Grey	NA	166	172			
CLA 4	Number of CLA at the end of the month who are UASC		269	267	260	256	255	249	245	236	228	214	NA	Grey	NA	214	279	270	53	5000
CLA 4b	Number of Ceased CLA in the month who are UASC		9	5	9	5	7	9	11	7	14	22	NA	Grey	NA	98	127			
CLA 5	Number of new CLA in month (total)		22	7	22	17	20	15	12	19	20	13	NA	Grey	NA	167	357	219	5160	30970
CLA 6	Number of new CLA in month who are UASC		2	3	3	4	6	3	3	4	7	4	NA	Grey	NA	39	152			
CLA 10	Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weekly Visits)	BIB	96%	93%	93%	88%	98%	93%	94%	94%	94%	95%	95%	Green	LATEST	94%	94%			
CLA 11	Percentage of CLA children with an up to date review	BIB	94%	95%	96%	97%	96%	95%	95%	96%	97%	97%	95%	Green	YTD	96%	92%			
CLA 12	Percentage of CLA who have participated in Reviews (aged 4+) in the month	BIB	76%	68%	80%	73%	77%	68%	73%	77%	80%	84%	80%	Green	YTD	76%	73%			
CLA 13	CLA 13 - Percentage of CLA at SSA (Statutory School Age) with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviewed & completed in the last 6 months.	BIB	83%	85%	89%	95%	95%	94%	92%	89%	96%	97%	85%	Green	LATEST	91%	87%			
CLA 14	Percentage of eligible CLA with an up-to-date Care Plan (6 months)	BIB	82%	79%	76%	86%	89%	91%	92%	91%	83%	74%	95%	Red	LATEST	74%	87%			
CLA 15	Percentage of eligible CLA with an up-to-date Pathway Plan	BIB	83%	81%	81%	72%	74%	74%	78%	85%	76%	70%	95%	Red	LATEST	70%	86%			
CLA 16	% of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments are up to date.	BIB	82%	80%	83%	86%	88%	87%	85%	86%	89%	93%	95%	Amber	LATEST	93%	84%	93%	92%	90%
New	Number of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments were due in the month (RHA's completed in the year to								42/128	47/124	20/81	17/41	NA	Grey	NA	TBC				
CLA 17	% initial health assessments requested for health service within 3 working days of date child become looked after.	BIB	13%	33%	63%	30%	65%	50%	50%	50%	41%	TBC	NA	Grey	NA	44%	49%			
CLA 18	% initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after.	BIB	56%	67%	89%	50%	65%	67%	70%	71%	59%	TBC	95%	Grey	NA	66%	67%			
CLA 19	Percentage of CLA that have been in care for 12+ months, that have had same social worker for last 6 months	BIB	69%	71%	72%	68%	71%	72%	68%	62%	67%	71%	65%	Green	LATEST	71%	59%			
CLA 20	Percentage of CLA under 16 in care for more than 2.5 years: in the same placement for 2+ years	BIB	70%	70%	66%	73%	74%	72%	72%	69%	69%	73%	75%	Amber	LATEST	73%	77%			
CLA 21	Percentage of CLA at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	SIB	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	6%	8%	Green	LATEST	6%	8%			
CLA 22	Percentage of CLA placed <20 miles from home	BIB	84%	83%	84%	84%	84%	83%	83%	82%	83%	84%	90%	Amber	LATEST	84%	84%			
CLA 23	Number of CLA allocated to CWD		28	29	29	29	28	26	26	28	26	24	NA	Grey	NA	24	28			

Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2020/21										2020-21 Target	RAG	RAG Based on (YTD/LA)	2020-21 YTD or latest	Comparative Data			
			Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21					DfE Published Croydon 2019-20	Stats Nbr Average 2019-2020	London 2019-20	England 2019-20
F 1	Total number of foster carer households	BIB	234	235	240	238	235	238	236	229	227	223	NA	Grey	NA	223	240	106	3,365	42,125
F 2	Percentage of DBS Checks within time	BIB	96%	96%	96%	97%	97%	96%	95%	97%	97%	97%	95%	Green	LATEST	97%				
F 3	Percentage of Annual Reviews of Foster Carers completed on time	BIB	97%	98%	98%	98%	95%	95%	98%	96%	96%	97%	95%	Green	LATEST	97%				
F 4	Percentage of Foster Carers' most recent announced visit within timescales	BIB	92%	96%	94%	95%	92%	96%	95%	84%	84%	83%	95%	Amber	LATEST	83%				
AD 1	Number of children for whom the agreed plan is adoption (ADM)	BIB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	NA	Grey	NA	2				
AD 2	Number of children waiting to be matched to an adopter		24	24	24	20	16	13	16	14	12	13	NA	Grey	NA	13				
AD 7	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with the adoptive family , for children who have been adopted (days) (12 Months rolling average)	SIB	548	548	553	553	538	562	548	555	501	504	558	Green	YTD	504				
AD 8	Average time between the LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days) (12 months rolling average)	SIB	263	263	265	253	249	262	274	277	214	208	226	Green	YTD	208				
CL a	Care Leavers with an Up-to-date Pathway plan	BIB	83%	91%	91%	77%	83%	84%	78%	78%	75%	78%	85%	Amber	LATEST	78%				
CL 1	Number of Care Leavers in employment, education, or training (EET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday		377	384	367	358	347	405	347	339	335	336	NA	Grey	NA	336				
CL 1a	Percentage in employment, education, or training (EET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday	BIB	63%	63%	61%	60%	58%	62%	59%	57%	58%	58%	85%	Red	LATEST	58%				
CL 2	Number of Care Leavers not in employment, education, or training (NEET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday	SIB	220	224	236	236	242	245	244	260	246	242	NA	Grey	NA	242				
CL 2a	Percentage not in employment, education, or training (NEET) on their 17th to 21st Birthday	SIB	37%	37%	39%	40%	42%	38%	41%	43%	42%	42%	NA	Grey	NA	42%				
CL 3	Number of Care Leavers in suitable accommodation on their 17th to 21st Birthday		576	585	581	572	573	573	565	577	560	557	NA	Grey	NA	557				
CL 3a	Percentage in suitable accommodation on their 17th to 21st Birthday	BIB	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	90%	Green	LATEST	96%				
CL 4	Number not in suitable accommodation on their 17th to 21st birthday	SIB	26	25	25	24	21	23	26	24	21	21	NA	Grey	NA	21				
CL 5	Percentage in touch with the authority from 17th to 21st birthday	BIB	94%	92%	91%	89%	89%	91%	91%	93%	92%	89%	95%	Amber	LATEST	89%				
CL 6	Care Leavers - LOCAL (non-UASC)		335	337	333	334	352	348	344	346	336	339	NA	Grey	NA					
CL 7	Care Leavers - UASC (non-LOCAL)		513	523	526	528	495	459	444	434	429	444	NA	Grey	NA					

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Parenting Panel 3 March 2021
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Care Leavers and Support for Care Leavers Care Leavers' Local Offer
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Hannah Doughty Head of Service –Social Work with Children Looked After and Care Leavers
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
<b>WARDS:</b>	All
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

This report describes the current position regarding the levels of support for care leavers in the key areas of housing; education, training and employment; health; involvement and the transition from being a looked after child to young adulthood. The report also refers to the revised local offer and the new Care Leavers' financial policy and guidance.

**POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

To offer a clear commitment to children in care and offer to our young adults leaving care is fully aligned to our Corporate Plan for Croydon (2018-2022) in the following areas

- Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential
- Everyone feels safer in their street, neighbourhood and home
- Everyone has the opportunity to work and build their career.

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Contained within the body of the report

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Contained within the body of the report.

## 1. Care Leavers and Support for Care Leavers - Care Leavers' Local Offer

### 1.1. *Demographics*

1.2. The care leavers monthly report of January 2021 informs us that:

Gender			Age			UASC		
Male	573	75%	18-20	501	65%	18-20	285	57%
Female	192	25%	21-25	264	35%	21-25	144	55%
Total	765	100%	Total	765	100%	Total	429	56%

1.3 The total number of young people open to the Service has reduced from 848 in March 2020 to 765 in January 2021. We had seen a dramatic rise in numbers due to the implementation in 2018 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Section 3 of the Act extends services to former relevant children up to the age of 25, even if they are not in education or training. A review of our young people aged 21+ carried out during 2020 demonstrated that a high number had remained open to us without active involvement so this was closed but can be re-opened should a new need arise. This has enabled the Service to work towards fulfilling our commitment to become involved with young people, with joint allocation of a social worker and personal adviser from 16.5 years old. Presently there is joint allocation from age 17 but this will be extended within the next 6 – 12 months. This enables joint working to ensure that planning and preparation for adulthood begins much earlier.

1.4 56% of all care leavers are former unaccompanied children; two thirds of these young people are male. The Home Office has recently consulted with local authorities on changes to the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). Currently the NTS voluntary agreement is that each local authority accepts up to 0.07% of their child population as UASC. This would mean that Croydon would have 66 UASC; as of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 we have 210. In order for the scheme to function efficiently it ought to be made mandatory, with other Local Authorities accepting more unaccompanied children, which would mean a reduction for Croydon. If the recommended changes are approved we would see a gradual reduction of the number of care leavers over time, with an aim for the full effect to be seen by 2031/32

1.5 The Council is introducing Human Rights Assessments to determine whether young people who have all their Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE), and have no legal right to remain in the UK should continue to receive a leaving care service. If it is assessed that they should not be provided with a service then they will be referred to the Home Office who will provide accommodation and to charities who will be able to support them whilst repatriation is considered. Approximately 66 young people aged 21-25 have this status at present, with an average cost of £11,500 per annum to the Service. It is likely that the introduction of these assessments will result in a further reduction to the care leaver population.



## 2. Accommodation and Housing

<b>Age 18-21</b>		
Independent Living (Guaranteed rent scheme/block purchase)	427	73%
Staying Put	69	12%
With parents or relatives	18	15%
Semi-independent, transitional accommodation	21	
Supported lodgings	3	
Social Housing (RSL/LBC)	12	
Residence not known	2	
No fixed abode / homeless	2	
Foyers	3	
In custody	14	
Other accommodation	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>581</b>	

2.1 The majority of our young people live in private sector accommodation which is procured by housing. Historically Children's Services also commissioned some private landlords to provide accommodation through block purchase arrangements for young people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). This is part of the review that is being undertaken by our Commissioning Department with Housing to find a better solution. It is estimated that this review will be completed, with recommendations and actions, within the next 12 months.

<b>Age 18-25</b>			
<b>Procured by</b>		<b>Children's Services cost</b>	<b>Housing Dept Costs</b>
Housing	412	£1,868,835	TBC
Children's services	168	£1,480,500	
<b>Total</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>£3,265,969</b>	

2.2 The cost to Children's Services for young people in accommodation procured by Housing is due to a surcharge of the equivalent of 25% of the rent of each young person with Recourse to Public Funds (£875,605). This charge was agreed to offset non-payment of rent, mainly due to a shortfall in housing benefit claims. Part of the reason for this is the type of work that many care leavers acquire such as casual work like deliveries, which are problematic when making benefit claims because of their nature, with no guaranteed stable income. This is an area of work that the new service manager will be taking forward, looking at how best to advise and support young people in their search for work that will sustain them in the longer term.

2.3 Children's Services cover the rent of those who are NRPF (£909,684), and fund two members of housing staff for these young people (£83,546). The Home Office grant does not cover the cost of all young people who are former unaccompanied children and those who are NRPF, and not engaged in education or training, or ARE are not included in our claim to them.

- 2.4 All care leavers are offered accommodation on or shortly after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Three to six months prior to their birthday, their social worker will present their situation to a panel of housing and leaving care management. Accommodation is allocated in keeping with an assessment which includes the views of the young person. Should a young person require independent accommodation, they will be allocated a room in a shared house. In situations where it is agreed that shared accommodation is not appropriate then a self-contained studio accommodation is made available. However, these are in short supply. Young people with NRPF will normally only be offered shared accommodation.
- 2.5 From consultation that has taken place with care leavers and our own observations, we know there is still work to be done to ensure that our housing offer is good enough for our young people. This is an area that the Head of Service is working on with housing and commissioning colleagues and it will form part of an improvement plan that is being developed and will be in place within the next month.
- 2.6 69 young people are currently living with their former foster carers under a Staying Put arrangement (remaining in foster care after the age 18). The fostering service manager is reviewing the current policy and procedures with a view to encouraging carers, young people and social workers to consider Staying Put as the preferred first step towards independence. The revised policy will be completed within the next three months. Work is needed to raise the profile of Staying Put to ensure that young people do not leave the security and support of their carers until they are better prepared to manage the responsibilities of independent living.
- 2.7 It is an issue for us that the majority of our care leavers do not live in affordable, permanent accommodation which they can maintain themselves once our support ends, or after the housing element of their welfare benefit payments drops at age 22 (single room rate of £878 pm to shared rate of £448 pm). The cost of private sector housing in Croydon prohibits young people in education or low wage employment from managing well financially. Monthly rent in the accommodation we provide can range from £600 - £1200 pm. The majority of young people are liable for a rent of approximately £800. As we know social housing is much more affordable at £378 for self-contained accommodation but hard to secure. These issues of affordability will form part of the accommodation review.
- 2.8 The review of accommodation options for care leavers began during the summer of 2020 and is concentrating on:
- Commissioning that is effectively informed by the voice of our care leavers, along with data analysis
  - Sustainable long-term affordable housing options for independence
  - Effective, outcome focussed and value for money supported accommodation options and community support options, with clearer exit strategies
  - More effective transition work, and tenancy training to from age 16 to prepare young people for adulthood

- Processes which are as simple as possible, supported by the correct services and resources that are clear to our care leavers

2.9 The work since the summer has identified the need to better prepare young people for the rigours of living independently. The following steps have been agreed but yet to be implemented:

- A recommendation that Money House, a charitable organisation be commissioned to provide tenancy management training to young people. This requires an initial set up cost of £15,000 and the provision of a venue.
- Workshops for personal advisers, social workers and carers run by Housing and Children’s Services on tenancy management, including managing rent arrears
- A drive to increase the number of young people in Staying Put arrangements

### 3 Education, Training and Employment

Full time education	301	46.5%
Full time employment with/without training	36	5%
Part time employment	68	9.5%
Training	2	1%
Unemployed as a result of ill-health or disability	24	4%
Unemployed for other reason	219	34%
Total	650	
Total in EET		62%
Total NEET		38%

3.1 The overall percentage of young people in ETE has risen from 60% to 62% which is a slight increase since the last report to the CPP in November 2020. Progress can be attributed to:

- A NEET prevention officer was appointed in May 2020 to the Post 16 Participation & NEET Service. She is based in leaving care and is the conduit with external providers and employers and personal advisers. She also carries out direct work with young people to link them with opportunities.
- A new group – CLIPP (Care Leavers in Poverty Prevention) was established with representatives from the DWP, Youth Engagement and NEET services, leaving care and educational establishments. It has not met since lockdown and will be resumed once this is lifted.
- Five apprentices have been in post since October 2020, two are based in the Virtual School and will be championing mentoring schemes for young people which will promote education and mentoring opportunities. One is working with the NEET prevention officer and actively supporting care leavers to maintain their ETE.

- As part of the new local offer, incentives such as driving lessons are available to young people if they remain in education.

Supporting our young people to remain in education or to find suitable employment remains a priority for the Council.

#### **4 Next Steps and Future Plans**

- 4.1 Establish a NEET panel for 16+ to support young people while they transition to leaving care with internal and external stakeholders by 01.04.21.
- 4.2 Strengthen the role and influence of personal advisers for young people aged 16+ through earlier joint allocation. This will improve post 18 planning, including access to education, training and employment, by 01.07.21.
- 4.3 Work with care leavers to look at how to gain employment that is sustainable and long term to avoid falling into a 'benefit trap', by 01.04.21.
- 4.4 Work and support care leavers with skills to help them to maintain accommodation, including budgeting, maintenance and understanding commitments, by 01.04.21.
- 4.5 Plan to develop an Educational Championship Scheme across Croydon Council's senior leadership team and members by 01.07.21.
- 4.6 We believe that young people are more likely to achieve if they remain with their foster carers beyond age 18. As a result we are revising our Staying Put policy and procedures, alongside providing a package of training to foster carers and their staff support with a view to increasing the number of young people Staying Put. This revision will be completed by 01.05.21, with training provided over the following six months.
- 4.7 Accommodation strategy to be completed by the end of March 2021.

#### **5 Transition from CLA to Leaving Care Service**

- 5.1 Our 'Pathways to Independence' is now available and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the social worker and personal advisor in the transition to adulthood for children looked after and care leavers (appendix 1).
- 5.2 Discussions have been taking place with Adult Services/Transitions Team to determine the roles and responsibilities of respective services as we want to ensure that young people are receiving the support they are entitled to under the Care Act 2014 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. This will be reported back at the next CPP as to progress.

#### **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 That the CPP is presented with the arrangements confirming the role of Adult

Services at the next panel meeting.

## **7. Health and Well being**

- 7.1 As a matter of policy, young people can now expect a copy of their health history when they turn 18.
- 7.2 With the support of DfE funding there have been staff appointed within the Virtual School to complete direct work around emotional and mental health for previously unaccompanied children. Funding from the same source has also been allocated to Off the Record to increase the number of counselling sessions to care leavers. Further information will be available on this at the next CPP.

## **8. Local Offer (appendix 2)**

- 8.1 The local Offer has now been revised and is available on our website <https://new.croydon.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/children-looked-after-and-care-leavers/local-offer-care-leavers-support-children-looked-after-and-young-people>
- 8.2 A group of young people from E.M.P.I.R.E. and the care leavers' forum were consulted and contributed to the revision.
- 8.3 A request has been to have the revised local offer to be translated into five languages including Albanian, Pashto, Tigrinyan, Dari and Arabic.

## **9. Financial Policy and Procedures (appendix 3)**

- 9.1 A financial policy to guide and oversee expenditure and entitlements to young people has now been implemented. The policy is accompanied by guides for young people and a comprehensive quick guide to ensure that young people and staff are aware of entitlements.
- 9.2 The policy was approved in 2020 and funding made available within the base budget.
- 9.3 The revised entitlements improve the financial circumstances of young people. Some of the highlights are:
- Support to young people in education, training and employment has increased with payments for stationery and IT equipment
  - A grant to cover HE graduation costs and support to set up in accommodation locally
  - Leaving care maintenance allowance for 16/17 year olds living semi-independently has increased and any payments made post 18, while waiting for benefits, will no longer be deducted from setting up home allowance
  - A clothing allowance is now available
  - Driving lessons will now be funded for those in education or training

- Birthday and festival allowances are now available to young people aged 19 - 21
- Young people on remand will now receive an allowance
- Setting up home allowance is now £2000

9.4 A group of young people from E.M.P.I.R.E. and the care leavers' forum were consulted and contributed to the final versions.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.1 Young people from E.M.P.I.R.E. have been involved in the key areas outlined in this report. The service manager attends monthly care leavers' forum meetings to give progress reports against an action plan devised by the young people.

## **11 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

**Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations**  
N/A

**12 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**  
N/A

**13 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**  
N/A

**14 EQUALITIES IMPACT**  
N/A

**15 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**  
N/A

**16 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**  
N/A

## **17 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

**WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

**NO**

**HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

**NO**

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** *Hannah Doughty, Head of Service, Social Work for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.*

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

1. Local Offer
2. Leaving Care Finance Policy and Procedures

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# Financial policy and guidance transition to adulthood 2020/21

November 2020



## Transition to Adulthood (Leaving Care) Financial Policy and Guidance 2020 – 2021

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## Notes and Implementation Issues

- 1. All allowances should be based on an assessment of need and be set out in the young person's Pathway Plan. The Plan must also highlight any attached conditions, how payments will be made, the frequency of payments, when they will be reviewed and when they will cease. Allowances are conditional on reasonable engagement in the Pathway Plan.**
2. By the age of 16 all young people (with some exceptions for UASC) should have a National Insurance Number and relevant identity documents, including photographic evidence to ensure they can register for housing, set up a bank account and prepare for a welfare benefit claim.
3. All young people should, where possible, have a savings/bank account by the age of 14 at the latest, and where appropriate all allowances should be paid to young people through their account.
4. The allowances contained in section one of the Leaving Care Finance Policy apply to young people aged 16 & 17 who are looked after and/or deemed Eligible and/or Relevant and who are living in semi-independent placements and independent accommodation which is not registered under the Care Standards Act 2000 and therefore not inspected by Ofsted. The allowances contained in section two and three apply to all Former Relevant Children and the allowances in section four apply to all Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children.
5. Subject to, and depending on an assessment of need, Qualifying Children may be entitled to the same level of support as Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children, this will be dependent on their individual circumstances.
6. Young people (aged 16 & 17) living in fostering or residential placements will be covered by the allowances set out in the financial policy applying to foster care and residential care.
7. It is a requirement that allowances are reviewed annually and are aligned with current welfare benefit rates.
8. Certain groups of children looked after and care leavers aged 16 & 17 are eligible to claim welfare benefits (lone parents and sick and disabled young people). Where young people are eligible to claim, support should be provided to maximise their benefit income (Universal Credit). Where young people aged 16 & 17 are in receipt of welfare benefits, a number of the leaving care allowances cease.
9. Looked after children and care leavers who are also unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are entitled to the same allowances as any other looked after child or care leaver. However, allowances to this group of young people may be affected and limited because of their immigration status.

10. The allowances set out in the following sections apply to all young people who are deemed Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant and are dependent on an assessment of need and their legal and immigration status. All allowances can also be applied to Qualifying Children, subject to a full assessment of their circumstances and needs.
11. Wherever possible, VAT should be reclaimed on all purchases (that are VAT rated). A VAT receipt is required for all purchases made with a purchase card. When purchasing with all other payment methods a receipt with a VAT number is required for items up to £250.00 and a full VAT receipt is required for items over £250.00. Young people will have a choice of how the setting up home allowance is used; a) supported shop, b) items purchased by the department that have been identified/chosen by the young person, c) where assessed as appropriate, young people will be provided with a cash allowance to purchase items, this will be undertaken where the young person has been able to evidence financial capability and robust money management skills.
12. The headings used below are taken from the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Guidance and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance and Regulations 2010 (revised 2015).
13. Document Structure:
  - Section 1 – Children Looked After – Eligible and Relevant (and Qualifying) Children aged 16 & 17.
  - Section 2 (A & B) – Former Relevant (and Qualifying Children) aged 18 to 21/25.
  - Section 3 – Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant (and Qualifying) Children aged 16 to 21/25.
  - Section 4 – Appendices - Categories of Care Leavers, Asylum Seeking Children & Young People, National Insurance Numbers and Leaving Care Finance Chart.

### **Assessing the Provision of Allowances for 16 & 17 Year Olds**

- **Eligible and Relevant Children aged 16 & 17**
- **Children Looked After aged 16 & 17 who have not been looked after for the pre-requisite 13 weeks which is required for a child to be deemed an Eligible or Relevant Children.**

Young people leaving care aged 16 & 17 (except for Qualifying Children – identified in section 24 of the Children Act 1989) are entitled to a weekly Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, which is paid at three different rates depending on the type of semi-independent placement and whether utility and/or food is provided within the placement.

**All other allowances are based on an assessment of need and will vary between young people.** For example, travel allowances associated with family contact will vary, depending on the location of family/parents and the cost of travel to the specific location.

Birthday, Christmas/festival and other allowances should not be provided to children placed/living at home and with parents. (See Appendix B).

The payments for young people noted in the policy may be available to all 16 or 17-year olds subject to an assessment of need. Where young people are eligible to claim a means tested benefit (universal Credit) certain allowances should cease. The Care/Pathway Plan **must** be used to evidence which allowances will/will not be provided (and any reductions for a young person who is working), the level of the allowances and the reasoning behind granting/not granting the allowance.

### **Assessing the Provision of Allowances for 18 to 21/25 Year Olds**

- **Former Relevant Children Section 23C aged 18 to 21, or until the education or training course being undertaken on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday is completed.**

The majority of young people leaving care aged 18 should be financing themselves through the following:

- a) Employment;
- b) Education allowances;
- c) Welfare benefits (Universal Credit).

Following an assessment of need and depending on a young person being engaged in education or training some of the allowances set out in the policy may be provided. The Pathway Plan **must** be used to evidence which allowances will/will not be provided, the level and the reasoning behind granting/not granting the allowance: -

- **Former Relevant Children – Section 23CA and Section 23CZB - Care Leavers aged 21 to 25 (Section 23CA and Section 23CZB)**
  1. Young people returning to the responsible authority (Croydon Children's Services) to resume education or training and requesting financial support will have an assessment of need undertaken by a member of the leaving care team;
  2. Young people returning to the responsible authority to request a more general leaving care service will be provided with practical support to assist them to address specific needs or requirements and become self-sustaining, rather than being provided with financial support.

### **Assessing the Provision of Allowances covering Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children Section 23C, 23CA, 23CZB - Aged 16 to 21/25**

#### **Setting Up Home Allowance - Section 23C, 23CA & 23CZB**

Young people can access the Setting Up Home Allowance between the ages of 16 and 21/25 when they move to semi-independent or independent accommodation. Where a young person moves to semi-independent accommodation it is recommended that a proportion of the allowance is used and when they move to independent

accommodation the remainder can be used. The Pathway Plan **must** be used to set out what items a young person needs in the semi-independent or independent accommodation that they are moving to, based on the items already contained in the accommodation and the items the young person may already have.

The Setting Up Home Allowance is divided into several components.

- Setting Up Home Allowance;
  - TV licence – provided once;
  - Household Items provided over a period of time;
  - Contents insurance provided once;
  - Cooker fitting, by an approved installer - provided once;
  - Removal costs - provided once;
  - Health and Safety Pack – provided once;
  - Setting Up Home Starter Pack – provided once.

## Section 1

### Children Looked After and those deemed Eligible and Relevant (Aged 16 and 17) who are living in semi-independent and independent placements.

- Section 31 'Care Orders'– Eligible children (and those who have not been looked after for 13 weeks)
- Section 20 'Accommodated' – Eligible children (and those who have not been looked after for 13 weeks)
- Young people previously looked after – Relevant children - Section 23A

Basis and Amount	Conditions and Comments
<p>Accommodation and Placements.</p> <p>Where young people are moving into private sector accommodation the rent level must be within the Local Housing Allowance rate for the given area.</p>	<p>Placement and accommodation costs to be met in full for young people up to the age of 18. <b>Where young people are moving into private sector accommodation the rent level must be within the Local Housing Allowance for that area.</b> Any requirement to provide a deposit and rent in advance must be clarified prior to the tenancy agreement being authorised by senior management.</p> <p>Housing Benefit for private sector tenants who rent from a private landlord is calculated using the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The Valuation Officer sets the level of the LHA for the different types of property in each LHA designated area; these are known as Broad Rental Market Areas. This is determined by post-code, not council boundaries, as some councils might have 2 or 3 BRMA's. The same process and figures are used for Universal Credit housing costs.</p> <p>Under LHA, payments will generally be made directly to the tenant unless they are particularly 'vulnerable'. Care leaver status would, in principle, qualify a young person to have his or her LHA paid directly to the landlord. The intention of paying LHA directly to tenants is to encourage responsibility for paying the rent themselves.</p> <p>Maximum weekly LHA rates in Croydon from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 are:</p> <p>Croydon (Inner South East London):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shared accommodation £118.87</li> <li>• one-bedroom accommodation £264.66</li> </ul> <p>Croydon (Outer South London):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shared accommodation £103.56</li> <li>• one-bedroom accommodation £201.37</li> </ul>



<p>Accommodation and Placements. <i>Continued</i></p>	<p><b>Please note:</b> The postcode of the actual property address should be used to check which 'Broad Rental Market Area' rate covers that area and address. For example, some parts of Croydon may come within neighbouring BRMA's. The LHA rates have increased during 2020-2021 due the Coronavirus Pandemic.</p> <p>Current rates for all LHA areas can be checked via the Valuation Office Agency website (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-housing-allowance-lha-rates-applicable-from-april-2020-to-march-2021">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-housing-allowance-lha-rates-applicable-from-april-2020-to-march-2021</a>), or via <a href="http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx">http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx</a></p> <p>There is also an absolute cap on Local Housing Allowance for each property size within the private sector.</p> <p>For general information about care leavers and the Local Housing Allowance visit: <a href="https://lha-direct.therentservice.gov.uk/Secure/pdfs/TRSHB(LHA)2CL.pdf">https://lha-direct.therentservice.gov.uk/Secure/pdfs/TRSHB(LHA)2CL.pdf</a></p> <p>Young people leaving care living in the private rented accommodation are exempt from the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) up to their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday; therefore, they are eligible to rent accommodation up to the 1-bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate. From their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, care leavers will only be eligible for housing benefit (or UC housing element costs) up to the shared room rate but may be eligible for discretionary housing payments (DHP's) in some circumstance. Some care-leavers may be entitled to a one-bedroom rate or higher e.g. if severely disabled or if they have a child or a partner.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances Children's Services may act as a guarantor for young people following an assessment of need and all other possible guarantors being explored and ruled out. Prior to agreeing to act as a guarantor, the scope of what is being covered by the guarantor needs to be fully identified and authorised, i.e. a) rent b) damages etc, and what are the limits to any liability. In principle, Children's Services would be acting as a guarantor for the rent. In situations where Children's Services has acted as a guarantor for 16 and 17 year olds, a new tenancy agreement should be produced when the young person reaches their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is particularly important where young people are living in private accommodation. The liability and responsibility for the condition and the cost of the accommodation should be transferred to the young person at 18 (apart from NRPF cases). Where necessary Children's Services will pay for the new tenancy agreement.</p> <p>When young people move into privately rented accommodation their social worker or personal adviser should take pictures on their phone or portable device that show the condition of the property and any items that are included in the rent/inventory. The pictures should be sent to the young person and landlord and stored in their case records. This will assist with negotiating with the landlord if there are problems regarding the condition of the property and the return of the deposit when the young person leaves the property.</p>
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<p>Deposit and Rent in Advance.</p>	<p>Where a young person has access to housing authority or housing association independent accommodation a deposit and rent in advance should not be provided.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances and depending on an assessment of need a deposit and rent in advance may be considered if a young person would be at risk in housing authority or housing association independent accommodation or where it can be demonstrated that a private sector option is preferable and appropriate.</p> <p>Where young people are moving into private accommodation a deposit and rent in advance will be provided if the rent level falls within the given Local Housing Allowance rate for that area.</p> <p>Personal Advisers should check if a 'Rent Deposit Scheme' or 'Bond Scheme' exists in the area the young person is aiming to live and/or what 'Rent Deposit Protect Scheme' the letting agent/landlord uses.</p> <p>In circumstances where Children's Services is providing the deposit, or is providing a bond guarantee, the deposit/bond guarantee should be in the name of Croydon Council. Many local authority housing departments operate Deposit Guarantee Schemes that offers landlords a legally binding deposit bond in place of a cash deposit.</p> <p>From April 2007, landlords and agents have, by law, had to sign up to one of three Government-backed schemes when they take a deposit. These schemes aim to ensure that letting agents, landlords and tenants have access to independent deposit protection.</p> <p>The Tenant Fees Act 2019 came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019 and as result tenancy deposits are capped, and most fees charged in connection with a tenancy are banned.  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenant-fees-act-2019-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenant-fees-act-2019-guidance</a></p> <p>Private sector landlords are required to provide a copy of the 'How to Rent' Leaflet to all tenants.  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-rent</a></p>
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<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA)</p> <p>£60.00 per week LCMA</p> <p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Supported Accommodation Adjustments</p>	<p>This is provided to young people who are studying, undertaking unpaid training, looking for employment, or taking part in voluntary work. Young people who are undertaking paid training will get the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider. In situations where, young people are not involved in any education, training, employment or voluntary activity and where possible, the allowance could be paid at, or in association with meeting their social worker, leaving care personal adviser or a service/accommodation provider. Where a young person is not engaging with the leaving care service the method of payment will be reviewed and established following a meeting involving the leaving care personal adviser and young person. In addition, paying the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance directly to the young person may be beneficial in situations where they reluctant to engage, at risk and/or where meeting them directly on a regular basis would be beneficial.</p> <p>Young people who are undertaking low paid employment will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance until they earn a given threshold.</p> <p>This allowance is provided up to the age of 18 and can be paid via BACS, a card payment or in vouchers, depending on an assessment of need and the requirements and circumstances of individual young people.</p> <p>Sick and disabled young people and lone parents (aged 16 &amp; 17) are able to claim means tested benefits do not receive the majority of the 16 &amp; 17 year-old leaving care allowances as their welfare benefits are provided to cover these areas. The Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Leisure Allowance cease for these groups.</p> <p>Where young people are living in semi-independent placements the following LCMA weekly rates will apply depending on the type and level of support/services provided.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="358 1213 1166 1759"> <thead> <tr> <th>Coverage and Accommodation Type</th> <th>Basic Maintenance Element Per Week</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs</td> <td>£60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation</td> <td>£60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities and food</td> <td>£40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young person placed in emergency accommodation, no cooking facilities – breakfast only</td> <td>£60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young person placed in emergency or planned accommodation with half board – bed, breakfast and evening meal</td> <td>£40</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Coverage and Accommodation Type	Basic Maintenance Element Per Week	Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£60	Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs - semi-independent accommodation	£60	Young person is provided with utilities and food	£40	Young person placed in emergency accommodation, no cooking facilities – breakfast only	£60	Young person placed in emergency or planned accommodation with half board – bed, breakfast and evening meal	£40
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<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA) <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>The utilities/food deduction is made based on assisting young people to plan and budget for utilities/food when they become responsible for budgeting for these at the age of 18.</p> <p>The utilities/food deduction can be made prior to the allowance being paid to the young person or can be paid by the young person to the semi-independent provider.</p>
<p>The Provision of Allowances and Unused and Uncollected Allowances</p>	<p>The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and related DWP guidance on benefit entitlement highlights that care leavers aged 16 and 17 living independently should be no worse off when provided with leaving care maintenance allowances than they were when they were entitled to means tested benefits (in cash or kind). Therefore 16 &amp; 17 year olds should be provided with a minimum allowance of £60 per week which is provided to cover all of their needs. Children Looked After &amp; Care Leavers in Croydon are always provided with a higher rate than the above, which may in part be provided via paying for utilities and service charges on their behalf.</p> <p>Most young people are paid a Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance via BACS payments. Where young people are paid in person or via placement providers and fail to collect allowances, the following principles should apply to how any unused allowance should be managed. Where the allowances have been provided linked to engagement in specific activities set out in their pathway plan, the subsequent pathway plan should set out what is required of the young person in order to release the allowances to the young person. Alternatively, any unused or uncollected allowance could be added to the young person's Setting Up Home Allowance. Where it is felt that any uncollected allowance should be withheld permanently, the decision should be taken to senior management for ratification.</p>
<p>Clothing Allowance  £5.00 per week</p>	<p>£5.00 per week clothing allowance. This should normally be paid in 2x6 monthly payments of £130 (e.g. summer and winter). Balance to be paid to young person if placement ends within a 6 month period.</p> <p>The arrangements for providing and spending the clothing allowance should be set out in the young person's pathway plan.</p>
<p>Savings Allowance  £10.00 per Week</p>	<p>£10.00 per week savings allowance.</p> <p>See Croydon Savings Policy.</p>

<p>Lone Parents Entitled to Welfare Benefits</p>	<p>Transfer to welfare benefits from the Birth of the Baby.</p> <p>Due to having an entitlement to welfare benefits and when the lone parent is in receipt of benefits (Child Benefit and Universal Credit) the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Leisure Allowance will cease. All other allowances remain.</p> <p>It should be noted that a claim for a means tested benefit will entitle the young person to submit a claim for 'Sure Start' Maternity Grant, this is paid for the first/oldest child and provides £500.00 for essential items associated with having a new child.</p> <p>See Croydon DWP Protocol.</p>
<p>Sick or Disabled Young People Entitled to Welfare Benefits</p>	<p>Transfer to welfare benefits at age 16 or when entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance/Universal Credit commences.</p> <p>Due to having an entitlement to welfare benefits and when the young person is in receipt of benefits the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, Clothing Allowance and Leisure Allowance will cease. All other allowances remain.</p> <p>See Croydon DWP Protocol.</p>
<p>Young People Detained in YOI, STC, SCH or in Hospital</p>	<p>Young people who are remanded, sentenced and/or detained (16 &amp; 17 year Olds) will be provided with up to a £10.00 per week pocket money allowance and up to £5.00 per week clothing allowance.</p> <p>Different types of Secure Estate (YOI) provision have pocket money and clothing allowance remuneration schemes linked to engagement in education, training or positive activities. The provision of a leaving care maintenance allowances should not create a disincentive for a young person to engage in such activities. At the point of remand or sentencing (custody) the placement planning meeting/planning meeting/review should set out what allowances will be provided by the institution and if these will be topped up by Croydon to the levels above.</p> <p>Where no remuneration scheme (remanded or sentenced) exists, the allowances will be provided by Croydon. How the allowances are provided and in what form, should be based on an assessment of need, the rules of the institution and a risk assessment of the young person's situation.</p> <p>On being sentenced allowances continue for Eligible and Relevant Children subject to the remuneration issues above. On being sentenced allowances only continue for Qualifying Children subject to an assessment of need, their parental situation, as well as the remuneration issues set out above.</p> <p>Young people who are detained in a NHS provision, or contracted out NHS service provision will be provided with the above allowances based on an assessment of need and risk, how these are provided should be set out in the individual placement plan and pathway plan.</p>

<p>Young People Detained in YOI, STC, SCH or in Hospital</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Where family members are in receipt of welfare benefits prison visits and contact can be facilitate by the 'Assisted Prison Visits Scheme' allowances provided by the DWP. Travel costs for family members not in receipt of welfare benefits may be provided following an assessment of need and an assessment of the frequency.</p>
<p>Young People Placed with Parents / Living with Parents</p>	<p>Looked after children (Eligible) placed at home under placement with parent regulations and care leavers (Relevant) living at home.</p> <p>If the young person is engaged in education or training and was living with the parent prior to the age of 16, they may be eligible to claim Child Benefit and Tax Credits or Universal Credit.</p> <p>If the young person returned to a parent after the age of 16, remains looked after, is not engaged in education or training, the parent is unlikely to be able to claim Child Benefit or Tax Credits/Universal Credit and the young person is unlikely to be eligible to claim benefits in their own right, in which case leaving care financial funding will apply.</p> <p>For detailed guidance please see Appendix C.</p>
<p>Qualifying Children</p>	<p>Dependent on an assessment of need, which includes an evaluation of all income, Qualifying Children may be entitled to all allowances.</p>
<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance - Reductions Where Young People are Earning</p>	<p>Earnings and Maintenance Allowance Reductions:</p> <p>Maintenance Allowance Reductions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a young person has a net income of £125.00) net or more per week, his/her leaving care maintenance allowance will be reduced by 50%.</li> <li>• When a young person has a net income of £145.00 net or more per week, his/her leaving care maintenance allowance and clothing and leisure allowance will cease.</li> </ul> <p>Reductions are undertaken from the principle of assisting with the development of money management and budgeting skills.</p> <p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance, Wages &amp; Earnings, Traineeship Allowances, Apprenticeship Allowances and the 16 - 19 Bursary count as income.</p> <p>Young people should be issued with a Reductions Notice setting out the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The level of reduction (of their allowance/s);</li> <li>2. When the reduction will commence;</li> <li>3. What the young person can do if their circumstances change;</li> <li>4. What the young person can do if they do not agree with the assessed reduction.</li> </ol>

<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance -</p> <p>Reductions Where Young People are Earning</p> <p><i>Continued</i></p>	<p><u>Reduction equation:</u></p> <p>Total income minus fares, work costs and the cost of lunches. See examples below</p> <p>Example 1 – No reduction required</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance</td> <td>£60.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 – 19 Bursary</td> <td>£40.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wages from part time job</td> <td>£28.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td> <td>£128.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>minus costs (lunches X 4)</td> <td>£20.00-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>£108.00</td> </tr> </table> <p>Example 2 – Reduction required</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance</td> <td>£60.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wages from part time job</td> <td>£93.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td> <td>£153.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Minus costs (lunches X 4)</td> <td>£20.00-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>£133.00</td> </tr> </table> <p>LCMA reduced by 50% - net income becomes = £103.00</p> <p><u>See Appendix B</u></p> <p>In order to monitor payments/reduction and other education, training and employment related payments, social workers and personal advisers will need to maintain close liaison with a young person’s education, training and employment provider.</p> <p>Additionally, this liaison will ensure a young person receives practical assistance, if, and when required. To facilitate this process young people must sign the ‘Agreement to Share Information Form’ so that social workers/personal advisers can liaise with the above.</p> <p>To assist a young person with making a successful transition to employment and managing their wages a reduction will not be applied until they have completed six weeks of employment.</p> <p>A young person will need to provide proof of income in order that his/her social worker/personal adviser can calculate incentive opportunities and reductions. If proof is not forthcoming it will be assumed that earnings are exceeding £145.00 net per week. In these circumstances the allowance of £60.00 will cease on a temporary basis until proof of income is provided. Food Parcels/Vouchers can be provided where the young person is working and is unable to provide proof of income. Additionally, all other allowances can be suspended.</p>	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	£60.00	16 – 19 Bursary	£40.00	Wages from part time job	£28.00	Total Income	£128.00	minus costs (lunches X 4)	£20.00-		£108.00	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	£60.00	Wages from part time job	£93.00	Total Income	£153.00	Minus costs (lunches X 4)	£20.00-		£133.00
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	£133.00																						

<p>Initial Clothing Allowance</p> <p>Up-to £100.00 Depending on an Assessment of Need</p>	<p>In circumstances where young people become looked after and are placed in semi-independent or independent accommodation, they will be provided with an initial clothing allowance subject to an assessment of need.</p> <p>The Initial Clothing Allowance is paid in situations where young people become looked after with insufficient clothing for everyday needs. When a young person is first looked after the social worker/personal adviser should make a list of the clothing that the young person has and another list setting out what clothing is required and the cost. The list and costing should be submitted to senior management for approval.</p>
<p>Birthday 17<sup>th</sup> Birthday £100.00</p> <p>18<sup>th</sup> Birthday £100.00</p> <p>Residential Rate &amp; Foster Rate</p>	<p>A gift, or gifts, to the value of £100.00 or a contribution towards the cost of a celebration and a smaller value gift. If the allowance is not used to purchase a gift or gifts, it can be provided in the form of a gift card, gift voucher or paid via BACS into the young person's account.</p> <p>The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in active contact with their social worker or leaving care personal adviser and are engaged in the pathway planning process.</p> <p>This is provided to young people living in a semi-independent or independent setting. Young people living in Foster Care or a Children's Residential Unit will receive a birthday allowance from that setting.</p>
<p>Christmas/ Festivals £100.00 - at age 16 £100.00 - at age 17</p>	<p>A gift, or gifts, to the value of £100.00 or a contribution towards the cost of celebrations and a smaller value gift. If the allowance is not used to purchase a gift or gifts, it can be provided in the form of a gift card, gift voucher or paid via BACS into the young person's account.</p> <p>The Christmas/festival allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in active contact with their social worker or leaving care personal adviser and are engaged in the pathway planning process.</p> <p>Young people who are non-Christians will be given a choice as to when their festival allowance is to be provided. If they do not have a preference, the allowance should be made available at Christmas to ensure that they receive their entitlement.</p> <p>This is provided to young people living in a semi-independent or independent setting. Young people living in Foster Care or a Children's Residential Unit will receive a Christmas/festival allowance from that setting.</p>
<p>Travel and Contact Costs</p>	<p>Travel costs associated with remaining in contact with family, extended family, former foster carers and significant friends may be provided following an assessment of need.</p> <p>All young people living within the Transport for London area (TfL) will be supported to obtain a 16+ Zip Oyster Photocard which will provide free travel on buses, trams and trains.</p>



<p>Travel and Contact Costs <i>Continued</i></p> <p>UASC Contact</p>	<p>Where young people are placed or living outside of Croydon (and the TfL area), family contact and education/training travel allowances will be provided following an assessment of need.</p> <p>Travel may also be funded by an education or training provider subject to compliance with any requirements in their Learner Agreement.</p> <p>Where one off travel is approved train, tram and bus tickets should, where possible, always be booked, or, purchased in advance in order to obtain discounted fares. Young people should be advised on how discounts can be obtained and how tickets can be sent to mobile phones and other computer media thus achieving further discounts. In exceptional circumstance travel costs may be met via the provision of travel warrants.</p> <p>Where young people are engaged in education, training or employment (ETE) and are not provided with a 16 to 19 Bursary, travel costs will be provided by Croydon Children’s Services subject to satisfactory attendance (85%).</p> <p>Following an assessment of need, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children aged 16 &amp; 17 years will be provided with a £5.00 per week phone card/contact allowance where they have significant family members overseas.</p>
<p>Social Activities and Leisure</p> <p>One-off £5.00 per year – Local Council Passport to Leisure (or actual cost). Plus up to £5.00 per week. – Verified Activity.</p>	<p>Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need, Children’s Services will pay for the membership of a hobby or leisure club and contribute towards the cost of equipment or special clothing/fees or contribute towards the cost of a social activity. This could include the cost of trial sessions and a contribution to travel costs.</p> <p>Children’s Services will assist young people to obtain a local council Passport to Leisure pass (Better Pass in Croydon). Young people should be encouraged and assisted (via their Pathway Plan) to explore the leisure facilities that accept the Council Leisure Pass, if a scheme exists in that area. <a href="https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/london/croydon">https://www.better.org.uk/leisure-centre/london/croydon</a></p> <p>Financial assistance provided to pursue hobbies, leisure interests and social activities should be governed by the principle that these activities can be afforded by the young person at the age of eighteen, when they take over financial responsibility for their own affairs.</p> <p>Young people should have access to at least one leisure/hobby/sports activity per week to ensure social inclusion.</p> <p>The allowance is only provided where young people are undertaking a named and verified leisure activity.</p>

<p>Key Documents £110.00</p> <p>Up To £280.00</p> <p>Up To £1500.00</p>	<p>Children's Services will purchase a passport (including the check and send facility) and 1 birth certificate for each young person.</p> <p>One passport, or passport renewal age 16 to 21, one birth certificate only if the young person does not have the original.</p> <p>In circumstances where an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child loses their Biometric Card, Children's Services will pay for one replacement (£75.20), subject to an assessment of need.</p> <p>Children's Services will purchase a travel document for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children dependent on an assessment of need (£49.00 to £280.00).</p> <p>Children's Services will provide up to £1500.00 to young people who have a negative immigration status and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) where it is assessed that they are likely to be able to make a successful application that will give them access to public funds and services.</p>
<p>Education, Training, Voluntary Work and Employment.</p> <p>Learner Agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people who are undertaking full time education courses or unpaid training courses receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance.</li> <li>• Young people who are undertaking a paid traineeship or Apprenticeship will not receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance but will receive the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider.</li> <li>• Young people who are working or undertaking voluntary work will continue to receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance until their wage reaches a given threshold (see page 11).</li> </ul> <p>All education, training and employment support (practical and financial) will be based on an individual learner agreement developed between the young person and their social worker/personal adviser and including input from the virtual school and the young person's education / training tutor/mentor. The agreement will set out the level of practical and financial support to be provided by all parties and will include learning goals and targets and attendance/academic requirements. Failure to comply with the learner agreement may result in financial and practical support ceasing and a requirement to leave the course or activity.</p> <p><b>Education and Training</b></p> <p>Young people who are undertaking an education course or training activity will receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance. Additionally, young people who are undertaking full time education courses or unpaid training courses (minimum 12 hours study/training and contact time) are eligible for the 16-19 bursary (£1,200.00 per year, usually paid for 30 weeks at £40.00 per week) scheme (administered by individual schools and colleges).</p> <p>Young people are expected to attend the nearest college for the given course they wish to undertake. In exceptional circumstances, and following an assessment of need, the nearest college rule can be waived, where it can be demonstrated that it is not in the best interest of the young person to attend the nearest college.</p>

<p><i>Continued</i> £10.00 Per Week.</p> <p>Minimum Income.</p>	<p>Where a young person is involved in a full-time education or training activity that does not attract a 16 to 19 Bursary, Croydon Children's Services will provide a £10.00 per week incentive.</p> <p><b>Paid Training</b> Young people who are undertaking a paid traineeship will not receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance but will receive the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider. If the traineeship allowance is paid at a rate less than £98.90 the allowance is topped up to £98.90. The £98.90 may then be subject to a £10.00 or £20.00 deduction dependent on the type of placement and whether a) utilities or b) utilities and food are included with the placement (semi-independent accommodation or supported lodgings).</p> <p><b>Apprenticeships</b> Young people who are undertaking an apprenticeship will not receive the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance but will be given the equivalent or a higher allowance from their training provider (see traineeship section). The National Minimum Wage of £4.15 per hour applies to apprentices from April 2020. The wage applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all apprentices aged under 19</li> <li>• apprentices aged 19 or over in the first year of their Apprenticeship</li> </ul> <p>This should mean that apprentices get a weekly wage of at least £157.70 (38 hours per week).</p> <p>National Minimum Wage 2020-2021:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>25 and over</td> <td>21 to 24</td> <td>18 to 20</td> <td>Under 18</td> <td>Apprentice</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£8.72</td> <td>£8.20</td> <td>£6.45</td> <td>£4.55</td> <td>£4.15</td> </tr> </table> <p>Young people (children looked after and care leavers up to age 25) who are undertaking an apprenticeship are eligible for a one-off £1000.00 Apprenticeship Bursary (paid via the Provider), in addition, the Apprenticeship Provider also receives £1000.00 to support the apprentice, this is provided once and usually within the first three months.</p> <p>From April 2020, Further Education Colleges (previously only available to 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges) will receive Pupil Premium Plus (£2,345.00 per year) in order to provide additional support to children looked after and care leavers.</p>	25 and over	21 to 24	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice	£8.72	£8.20	£6.45	£4.55	£4.15
25 and over	21 to 24	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice							
£8.72	£8.20	£6.45	£4.55	£4.15							
<p>Education, Training and Employment Related Support</p>	<p>Children's Services may provide equipment and travel costs for education or training courses and employment opportunities of the young person's choice depending on an assessment of need. Where appropriate, Children's Services will consider funding extra tuition.</p>										
<p>Education, Training and</p>	<p>Funding may be provided for subsequent education or training courses and/or for changed courses depending on an assessment of need and the young person</p>										

<p>Employment Related Support <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>demonstrating a commitment to continuing education or training and consistent attendance (minimum 85%).</p>
<p>FE &amp; HE Grant - Stationery, Educational Visits, Books and Equipment</p>	<p>If special equipment is required for a traineeship/apprenticeship the provider should be approached in the first instance. If equipment is not provided, and depending on an assessment of need, it will be provided by Croydon Children's Services.</p> <p>Young people who are undertaking full time further or higher education courses are entitled to a grant to assist with (at least 12 hours of attendance/contact time): Stationery, educational visits, books and equipment, Computer and I.T. equipment, interview clothing, commencing work clothing/equipment – based on evidenced need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stationery, Educational Visits Grant, Books and Equipment Grant and I.T. Grant Equipment of up to £225.00 per year.</li> </ul> <p>The Grant is per academic year, is not transferable and is only available for stationery, educational visits, books, general equipment and I.T. equipment.</p>
<p>Commencing Work Grant £100.00</p>	<p>Children's Services will purchase equipment and/or clothing to assist the young person with their chosen employment e.g. interview clothes, overalls, protective clothing, depending on an assessment of need. Maximum Commencing Work Grant £100.00. This is provided as a one off.</p>
<p>Child Care</p>	<p>Childcare costs should be accessed through the Care to Learn Fund</p>
<p>F.E. &amp; H E Computer Grant Up-To £300.00 – One-Off</p>	<p>All young people entering further education (level 2 or above) or higher education will be assisted to access/purchase a tablet or lap-top (one-off age 16 to 21/25), computer grant, one-off, up-to £300.00.</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need and income young people may be required to contribute to the cost of additional equipment from their education allowances and bursaries.</p> <p>Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc., to their social worker or leaving care personal adviser.</p>
<p>Introduction to Driving Allowance  Age 17 (to 21)</p>	<p>Subject to an assessment of need, Children's Services will provide the following 'Introduction to Driving' package to assist a young person's employability and to provide an additional identity document:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 provisional driving licence;</li> <li>1 theory test;</li> <li>10 (1 hour) driving lessons;</li> <li>1 practical driving test.</li> </ol> <p>The Introduction to Driving package is available to young people aged 17 to 21 and is conditional on the individual young person having been engaged in education, training or employment (full time) for at least 6 months. The lessons must be provided by an approved instructor and should be used for motor car lessons.</p>

<p><i>Continued</i></p> <p>The Introduction to Driving Offer is subject to the young person covering the cost of 10 (1 hour) lessons.</p>	<p>The package is also dependent on the young person covering the cost of 10 (1 hour) lessons. The young person must provide their contribution (the cost of 10 (1 hours) lessons) prior to the personal adviser booking the overall package.</p> <p>Depending on circumstances and an assessment of need, lone parents and young people with SEND may be exempt from the requirement to be engaged in education, training or employment (and having completed at least 6 months). Consideration of eligibility and funding of lone parents and SEND young people should be presented to senior management.</p>
<p>Counselling and Therapeutic Needs</p>	<p>Croydon Children’s Services will assist young people to access counselling and/or therapeutic services via universal health services and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).</p> <p>Young people living in Croydon can use the ‘Off The Record Counselling Service’ which provides free, independent and professional counselling for 14 to 25 year olds in the Croydon area.</p> <p>Personal advisers will support young people to attend their GP in order to assist and support them to access counselling, therapeutic services</p> <p>Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need and where CAMHS services and universal services are not available a request for additional support should be submitted to a senior manager for consideration and approval.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Croydon Children’s Services will assist young people to access services to meet their health and developmental needs via the ‘looked after’ children health provision and via universal health services.</p> <p>Social workers should complete form HC1 (SC) for all 16 &amp; 17 year olds. The HC1 (SC) form enables young people to obtain an NHS low income exemption certificate. This will provide free or reduced cost dental, optician and prescription services. In situations where young people require specific health items these will be considered following an assessment of need.</p> <p>Personal advisers will support young people to attend their GP in order to assist and support them to access counselling, therapeutic and health services</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances and where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children’s Services may provide funds to secure additional health services. This will require consideration and approval from a senior manager.</p>

Cultural Needs	Croydon Children's Services will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their cultural needs. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children's Services will fund services aimed at meeting identified needs i.e. skin and hair care, dietary requirements. This will require consideration and approval from a senior manager.
Religious Needs	Croydon Children's Services will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their religious needs. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children's Services will fund services aimed at meeting identified religious needs. This will require consideration and approval from a senior manager.
Personal Luggage £35.00	Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between placements must have appropriate personal luggage. At least two items of appropriate personal luggage.
Consultation with Young People	Young people will receive a financial allowance of £5.00 per hour plus expenses when undertaking consultation exercises.  Payments to young people who undertake consultation exercises can be paid in cash or vouchers.
Travel Expenses	Expenses related to enabling young people to participate in consultation exercise will be provided following an assessment of need.
Emergency Payments	Young people may apply for two emergency food parcels in any six-month period. Each food parcel and utility component will not exceed £15.00 in value, i.e. £5.00 utility top-up and £10.00 food. Emergency food parcels are discretionary and will only be provided following an assessment of need.
Payment Process	<i>Young people will be given a food parcel of £10.00 value or their social worker/personal adviser, or the duty worker will purchase food to the value of £10.00. The social worker/personal adviser or duty worker will ensure £5.00 of credit is placed on the young person's utility key or card. Unless the circumstances are exceptional, Young people should not be provided with cash or vouchers.</i>  <b>Food Parcel to the value of £10.00</b> Pasta, Rice, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Baked Beans (or culturally appropriate equivalent) Tinned Baked Beans and Sausages, Tinned Mixed Vegetables (or equivalent) Tinned Tuna, Packet Noodles, Long Life Milk (or equivalent) Tea Bags, Small bag – split large box into bag Sugar, Small bag – split bag into small bag Packet of Cereals Tinned Fruit Salad Small Packet of Biscuits

Exceptional Needs Payment	Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children's Services may provide funds for exceptional needs as a one-off payment. This will require approval from a senior manager.
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## SECTION 2

### Former Relevant Children

#### Group A

- Care Leavers Aged 18 to 21, or until the completion of the education course being undertaken on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday - Former Relevant Children
- Section 23 C (1)

#### Group B

- Care Leavers Aged 21 to 25 who return to the authority to resume or commence education or training - Former Relevant Children - Section 23 CA (1)
- Care Leavers Aged 21 to 25 who return to the authority to resume a service - Former Relevant Children - Section 23 CZB (1)

Basis and Amount	Conditions and Comments
Accommodation and Placements	<p>Accommodation costs for young people aged 18 and older will only be provided in exceptional circumstances. Placements and accommodation costs for exceptionally vulnerable young people aged 18 and older may be funded in part or full following an assessment of need and the case being considered by senior management. Where possible all young people should claim the housing element of universal credit or housing benefit.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. See Staying Put policy – young people living in foster care who meet the Staying Put criteria can remain in their placement.</li> <li>2. Supported Lodgings placements are available to all care leavers aged 18 to 21.</li> <li>3. Failed Asylum Seekers (all rights exhausted) with no recourse to public funds will continue to be provided with accommodation subject to a human rights assessment.</li> </ol> <p>In the majority of situations Children’s Services is not able to act as a guarantor for care leavers aged 18 and older. In exceptional circumstances and with agreement from senior management consideration will be given to Children’s Services acting as a guarantor, such as acting as a guarantor for university accommodation. The nature and scope of the guarantor must be clarified before any agreement is given, i.e. what is being covered, rent, damages and what liabilities the guarantor agreement establishes.</p> <p>See Section One – Accommodation and Placements for LHA rates - page 8 &amp; 9</p>
Deposit and Rent in Advance	See Section One – Deposits and Rent in Advance – page 10



<p>Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Rates.</p>       <p>Failed Asylum Seekers with no Recourse to Public Funds.</p>	<p>LCMA is provided to young people aged 18 and above during the five-week initial benefit claim period and to failed asylum seeking young people with no recourse to public funds:</p> <p>The following weekly rates will apply, depending on the type of accommodation and level of support provided:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="357 409 1166 724"> <tr> <td>Coverage and Accommodation Type</td> <td>Basic Maintenance Element - £60.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs</td> <td>£60.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs</td> <td>£50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Young person is provided with utilities and food (staying put/supported lodgings)</td> <td>£35</td> </tr> </table> <p>See Barking and Dagenham Case Law Judgement.</p> <p>Failed asylum seekers who are ‘all rights/appeals exhausted’ with no recourse to public funds are provided with an allowance of £45 per week but a human rights assessment must be completed to determine ongoing support. It should be noted that a local authority does not necessarily have to wait until the removal date or to the age of 21 to withdraw support, for example support could be withdrawn when the former UASC turns age 18, if they are (‘ARE’) and have, by then, been given a reasonable time to return home.</p> <p>Please see Appendix E.</p>	Coverage and Accommodation Type	Basic Maintenance Element - £60.00	Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£60.00	Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs	£50	Young person is provided with utilities and food (staying put/supported lodgings)	£35
Coverage and Accommodation Type	Basic Maintenance Element - £60.00								
Young person is responsible for all utility and food costs	£60.00								
Young person is provided with utilities but is responsible for food costs	£50								
Young person is provided with utilities and food (staying put/supported lodgings)	£35								
<p>Initial Benefit Claim</p>       <p>Initial Benefit Claim</p>	<p>Subject to the type of accommodation the young person is living in on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday the allowances (see table above) will continued for a maximum of 5 weeks whilst a claim for Universal Credit is being established. The allowance should only be paid following checking the progress of the young person’s Universal Credit claim with the DWP and on the basis that the young person does not take up a Universal Credit Advance. Young people making their initial claim for Universal Credit will have to wait for around 5 weeks for their first payment (a calendar month plus 7 days).</p> <p>As a general rule, the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance is always paid in advance and welfare benefits are always paid in arrears. Even where a benefit claim is submitted in advance of the young person’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and verified on the young person’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, they will have to wait at least 5 weeks for the first Universal Credit payment, obtaining the first benefit payment in such a timescale would be exceptional. As such, Children’s Services extend the pre 18 allowance for up to five weeks whilst a young person’s Universal Credit claim is established and in payment, only where the young person does not take up a Universal Credit Advance.</p> <p>Supporting information and identity documents should have been obtained prior to a young person’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, in preparation for a claim that should be started 4 weeks in advance of the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and workers should contact the DWP one week after</p>								

<p><i>Continued</i></p>	<p>the young person's birthday to verify the completion of the claim and the first payment date. The rules that enable care leavers to submit a claim 28 days prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is contained in ADM – A-2048.</p> <p>If the young person has not received their first benefit payment after five weeks, they should be supported to claim a Universal Credit Advance from the DWP.</p> <p>If the young person applies for a Universal Credit Advance at the start of their claim, the 5-week benefit waiting allowance will not be provided. The aim of the 5-week benefit waiting allowance is to ensure young people do not need to use the Universal Credit Advance, and subsequently have a reduced benefit rate to repay the advance.</p> <p>For the first Universal Credit claim, the 5-week initial benefit claim waiting period allowance will apply, i.e. 5 weeks at the applicable LCMA rate.</p> <p>For the second and subsequent claims: If claiming Universal Credit, the young person can immediately ask for an advance payment, of up to 100% of the likely Universal Credit award. This will then be recovered directly from their Universal Credit payment in 12 equal parts over the next year.</p>
<p>Council Tax Exemption / Allowance</p>	<p>All care leavers aged 18 to 25 living in Croydon will be exempt from any Council Tax Liability. Care leavers who are living outside of Croydon will be assisted to claim any local Council Tax Exemption or Council Tax Support available. Where care leavers living outside of Croydon remain liable for all, or part of their Council Tax Liability, Croydon Children's Service will pay the liability on their behalf.</p>
<p>Travel</p>	<p>Where young people are undertaking an education or training activity the cost of travel may be provided by the education or training provider subject to the terms of the young person's learner agreement.</p> <p>Where young people are undertaking an education or training activity that does not provide free or reduced cost travel, Children's Service may provide the cost of an 18 plus Zip-Oyster Card £25.00 or weekly travel costs of £14.80 (student/apprentice), subject to an assessment of need, satisfactory attendance (85%) and an agreed learner agreement. The Zip-Oyster Card and weekly travel pass may be provided to young people in low paid employment subject to a satisfactory assessment and for an agreed probationary period.</p> <p>Young people who are registered with the Jobcentre Plus qualify for a TfL £10.60 weekly job search pass.</p> <p>Asylum seeking care leavers will be provided with travel costs to attend Home Office meetings subject to evidence of an appointment.</p>
<p>Qualifying Young People</p>	<p>Dependent on an assessment of need which includes an evaluation of all income, Qualifying Young People may be entitled to all allowances.</p>

<p>Key Documents Up to £110.00</p> <p>Up to £280.00</p> <p>Up to £1500.00</p>	<p>Children's Services will purchase a passport (including the check and send facility) and 1 birth certificate for each young person.</p> <p>One passport or passport renewal - aged 16 to 21, one birth certificate only if the young person does not have the original.</p> <p>In circumstances where an Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young Person loses their Biometric Card, Children's Services will pay for one replacement (£75.20), subject to an assessment of need.</p> <p>Children's Services will purchase a travel document for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Young People) dependent on an assessment of need (£72.00 to £280.00).</p> <p>Children's Services will provide up to £1500.00 to young people who have a negative immigration status and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) where it is assessed that they are likely to be able to make a successful application that will give them access to public funds and services.</p>
<p>Introduction to Driving Allowance</p> <p>Age 17 (to 21)</p> <p>Introduction to Driving Allowance is subject to the young person covering the cost of 10 (1 hour) lessons.</p>	<p>Children's Services will provide the following Introduction to Driving package to assist a young person's employability and to provide an additional identity document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. 1 provisional driving licence;</li> <li>B. 1 theory test;</li> <li>C. 10 (1 hour) driving lessons;</li> <li>D. 1 practical driving test.</li> </ul> <p>The Introduction to Driving package is available to young people aged 17 to 21 and is conditional on the individual young person having been engaged in education, training or employment (full time) for at least 6 months. The lessons must be provided by an approved instructor and should be used for motor car lessons.</p> <p>The package is also dependent on the young person covering the cost of 10 (1 hour) lessons. The young person must provide their contribution (the cost of 10 (1 hours) lessons) prior to the personal adviser booking the overall package.</p> <p>Depending on circumstances and an assessment of need, lone parents and young people with SEND may be exempt from the requirement to be engaged in education, training or employment (and having completed at least 6 months). Consideration of eligibility and funding of lone parents and SEND young people should be presented to senior management.</p>
<p>Personal Luggage £35.00</p>	<p>Luggage – all young people moving to independence or between placements must have appropriate personal luggage. At least two items of appropriate personal luggage.</p>

<p>           Birthday:            19<sup>th</sup> &amp; 20<sup>th</sup>            Birthday £50.00             21<sup>st</sup> Birthday            £100.00         </p>	<p>The Pathway Plan should specify whether the allowance is given to the young person directly as a cash gift into their account (via BACS), or is used by the personal adviser, staying put carer or previous carer to purchase a gift.</p> <p>The birthday allowance covers the cost of a gift, wrapping and a card.</p> <p>The birthday allowance will only be paid to young people who remain in contact with their leaving care personal adviser and who are actively engaged in the pathway planning process.</p>
<p>Counselling and Therapeutic Needs</p>	<p>Croydon Children's Services will assist young people to access counselling and/or therapeutic services via universal health services and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or Community Mental Health Services.</p> <p>Young people living in Croydon can use the 'Off The Record Counselling Service' which provides free, independent and professional counselling for 14 to 25 year olds in the Croydon area.</p> <p>Personal advisers will support young people to attend their GP in order to assist and support them to access counselling, therapeutic services</p> <p>Where appropriate and dependent on an assessment of need and where CAMHS or CMHT services and universal services are not available a request for additional support should be submitted to a senior manager for consideration and approval.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Croydon Children's Services will assist young people to access services to meet their health and developmental needs via the 'looked after' children health provision and via universal health services.</p> <p>Personal advisers should complete a NHS HC1 form for all 18 to 21 year olds who are not employed and/or not registered for welfare benefits. This is particularly important for care leavers who are maintained by Children's Services (or undertaking higher education courses) and who need to demonstrate their level of income in order to access free, or reduced cost NHS services. The HC1 form enables young people to obtain an NHS low income exemption certificate. This will provide free or reduced cost dental, optician and prescription services.</p> <p>Personal advisers will support young people to attend their GP in order to assist and support them to access counselling, therapeutic and health services</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances and where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children's Services may provide funds to secure additional health services. This will require consideration and approval from a senior manager.</p>

Cultural Needs	Croydon Children's Services will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their cultural needs. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children's Services will fund services aimed at meeting identified needs i.e. skin and hair care, dietary requirements. This will require consideration and approval from a senior manager.
Religious Needs	Croydon Children's Services will assist young people to access services aimed at meeting their religious needs. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children's Services will fund services aimed at meeting identified religious needs. This will require consideration and approval from a senior manager.
Further and Higher Education - Overview	<p>Financial Support for Further and Higher Education courses is available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• up to the young person's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday;</li> <li>• or until the completion of the course following the young person's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday where the course commenced before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday;</li> <li>• between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> birthday where a young person wishes to resume or commence education or training between those dates;</li> <li>• until the education or training course is completed following the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday where the course commenced prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.</li> </ul> <p>All financial support is dependent on an individual assessment of need and on the young person complying with any conditionality attached to the financial support set out in the Pathway Plan.</p> <p>Courses should be full time and funding will only be available to repeat the same course, or a course of the same or similar level in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>Children's Services will fund up to five visits to universities where young people are predicted to get grades that are sufficient to apply for university. The visits can be undertaken with social workers, personal advisers, foster carers or residential workers and are aimed at enabling young people to make a choice of university and course.</p> <p>For full details see pages 30 to 39.</p>

Education, Training and Employment Related Support	Children's Services may provide financial assistance for costs associated with education or training courses or employment opportunities of the young person's choice, depending on an assessment of need which includes the course/activity suitability. Where appropriate, Children's Services may consider funding for extra tuition.
Learner Agreements	All education, training and employment support (practical and financial) will be based on an individual learner agreement developed between the young person and their social worker/personal adviser and including input from the virtual school and the young person's education/training tutor/mentor. The agreement will set out the level of practical and financial support to be provided by all parties and will include learning goals and targets and attendance/academic requirements. Failure to comply with the learner agreement may result in financial and practical support ceasing and a requirement to leave the course or activity.
FE & HE Grant - Stationery, Educational Visits, Books and Equipment	<p>Further and Higher Education Equipment</p> <p>Young people who are undertaking full time further or higher education courses are entitled to a grant of up to:</p> <p>- £225.00 Stationery, Educational Visits, Books and IT Equipment Grant</p> <p>These Grants are per academic year, are none transferable and are only available for stationery, educational visits and books and equipment (assessed each year of the course).</p>
F.E. & H E Computer Grant Up-To £300.00 – One-Off	All young people entering further education (level 2 or above) or higher education will be assisted to access a tablet or lap-top. The grant of up-to £300.00 will be provided once between age 16 and 21.
Child Care	Childcare costs should be accessed through the Care to Learn Fund.
Commencing Work Grant	<p>Children's Services will purchase equipment and/or clothing to assist the young person with their chosen employment e.g. interview clothes, overalls, protective clothing, depending on an assessment of need. Maximum Commencing Work Grant £100.00. This is provided as a one off.</p> <p>Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc to their social worker, or leaving care personal adviser.</p> <p>Care leavers are a priority group for the Vulnerable Young Person's 16 to 19 Bursary, £1200.00 per year paid by the 6<sup>th</sup> form or college.</p> <p>Care leavers are eligible for a £1000.00 Apprenticeship Bursary, paid by the apprenticeship provider, in addition, the providers get £1000.00 to support the young person. The Bursary is paid once by the provider between 16 and up to 25.</p> <p>Further education colleges (in addition to 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges) are eligible (from April 2020) for Pupil Premium Plus - £2,345.00 per year in order to provide additional support to children looked after and care leavers.</p>

## **Education & Training (16 & 17 year olds) Young People Aged 18 and Older**

### **Further Education Courses**

Children's Services is committed to assisting and supporting young people to maximise their potential through educational and training opportunities.

1. 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 and for those living in semi-independent and independent via their leaving care maintenance allowance.
2. From the age of 18 to the end of the academic year following their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, care leavers who are 'without parental support' (estranged from their families) and who are studying full time (12 hours or more of 'guided learning') can claim Universal Credit on the grounds of being in 'Relevant Education' and they do not have to be available for employment. Young people can start or change courses at any point up until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
3. In situations where young people aged 21 to 25 wish to resume or commence education or training, the following guidelines in regard to financial support will apply (see page 32 & 40);
  - Young people should contact the leaving care duty worker;
  - Funding will be considered by senior management following an assessment of need (including access to financial resources) and will be based on the motivation and commitment of the young person to undertake, sustain and complete the course in line with the following principles:
    - Full time courses – Following an assessment of need young people may be provided with a maximum weekly maintenance grant of £60.00 per week, up to £3,062.80 per year and a registration fees grant of up to £1000.00, full time and £500.00 part time. Young people will be expected to work part time in order to cover their rental costs. These grants are subject to young people maintaining 85% attendance, having satisfactory reports from the college and not having access to other financial resources. Personal advisers will liaise with colleges and/or training providers to ensure satisfactory attendance and progress. As young people will be on a low income, personal advisers should support their students to apply for reduced rate fees. As young people will not be receiving a means tested benefit; will be in receipt of a low income and because care leavers are a priority group for learner support funds, personal advisers and students should make timely applications for these funds. Personal advisers and young people should also check if they qualify for Universal Credit, some non-degree education courses may qualify the young person for Universal Credit where it is deemed that the course is improving their employability and it does not interfere with their commitment to look for work if they are getting Universal Credit on that basis. Lone parents with children under 3 and disabled young people can also undertake courses, as they should be receiving benefits without having to look for work anyway.
    - Part time courses – One off grants will be made following an evaluation of the course and an assessment of need of the young person and their financial circumstances. Grants may range from £20.00 to £1,000.00 to be used to assist with registration fees and equipment costs. Grants will be based on need, motivation to gain educational qualifications and whether the candidate has any education qualifications.
    - A key priority will be to ensure all young people hold a level 2 qualification.

## **Education & Training (21 to 25)**

Access arrangements to Higher Education courses are the same as young people aged 18 to 21.

The following activities immediately prior to the start of a resumed or new course will be taken as evidence of motivation and commitment: -

1. Courses of study leading to a level 1 qualification or above;
2. Employment in the field relating to the requested education/training course;
3. Voluntary work relating to the requested education/training course;
4. Training courses relating to the requested education course.

Young people may also be required to demonstrate that they can contribute to the funding package (rental needs) via part time employment and/or by accessing Learner Support or Advanced Learner Loans available from Student Finance England (<https://www.gov.uk/further-education-courses/financial-help>). In such circumstances an assessment of financial need will be completed in order to assist the young person with their weekly maintenance.

Following the assessment of need, the request for financial support will be presented to a senior manager and each case will be allocated to a Leaving Care Personal Adviser who will develop a Pathway Plan a Learning Agreement and a payment transfer system (generally by regular BACS payments) and a system for monitoring the young person's education/training progress and attendance.

All young people attending further, and higher education will be required to sign an authorisation to share information form and will need to agree to their personal adviser liaising with the educational establishment in order to support the course and monitor attendance and learning.

## **Financial Support - Traineeships and Apprenticeships**

### **Apprenticeships**

The majority of apprenticeships are classed as employment with a study component. These types of apprenticeships are generally secured by young people gaining employment with a company or organisation that is a registered apprenticeship provider. The young person is employed and also undertakes a study component towards a:

- National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)
- Technical Certificate
- Functional Skills (Mathematics, English)
- Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)
- ERR (Employment Rights and Responsibilities) Workbook

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, the minimum wage rate is £4.15 per hour for apprentices aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. All other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age and can be found on

[www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates)

As the apprenticeship is deemed employment, young people will be eligible for a range of benefits, including housing benefit and Universal Credit (housing element of Universal Credit) depending on their circumstances. If the apprenticeship is deemed employment, the young person would not be covered by the age 21-25 Education and Training Care Leaver entitlements.



**Traineeships and Programme Led Apprenticeships**

These types of traineeships and apprenticeships are provided by a training provider or college, with work experience provided at the establishment site, and are therefore deemed education/training rather than employment. Young people may be eligible for benefits/Universal Credit depending on their age and circumstances. In general, young people aged 21 to 25 will not be able to access benefits (unless they are parents or have a disability). Young people undertaking these courses are eligible for the '21-25 Croydon Education and Training' care leaver entitlements (subject to an assessment of need and the pre-requisite conditions above being met).

**Financial Support**

Access to financial support will always be dependent on an assessment of the young person's financial circumstances. Where appropriate; young people will be provided with practical support to help them access education, training or benefits funding, rather than with the provision of direct grants. The level of practical support and financial support should be set out within the young person's pathway plan and highlight any conditionality to the support being provided.

# Higher Education

## Student Finance

The level of fees, loans, grants, and bursaries for higher education student's change each academic year. The most accurate and up to date information is available via the following link:

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

## Tuition Fees and Tuition Fee Loans

From September 2020 the maximum tuition fees and tuition fee loan per year is:

- New full-time students £9,250.00
- New full-time students at private university or college £6,165.00

To qualify for a tuition fee loan the part time course needs to be at least 25% of an equivalent full-time course each year (e.g. four years instead of one year full time). The tuition fee loan is provided by Student Finance England and is paid directly to the university to cover the full cost of the course.

## Maintenance Grants

Maintenance grants have been discontinued for new students starting courses after the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016; existing students will continue to receive a maintenance grant, but a lower level of student loan.

## Maintenance Loans

The maintenance loan is provided by Student Finance England and is paid directly to the student, normally in three instalments and is provided to help with living costs such as rent, food, bills and equipment and books.

The maximum maintenance loan in 2020-2021 for students starting courses after the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 (per year) is set out below:

- Students studying in London £12,010.00
- Students studying outside of London £9,203.00
- Students living at home £7,747.00
- Students studying overseas £10,539.00

➤ In the final year of the course the maximum loan rate is reduced by approximately 10%.

## Loan Repayment

Graduates repay the combined tuition fee and maintenance loan when they have finished studying and are earning over £25,000.00 per year. The monthly repayments are linked to the person's income. After a certain amount of time (30 years), any outstanding loans will be written off, if the money has not been repaid.

## **Higher Education Continued**

**Interest** - Until the April after you finish or leave a course the interest rate is the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 3%. From the April after you finish your course the interest will be based on income: £21,000 or less = RPI. Between £21,000 and £41,000 = RPI plus up to 3%, depending on your income. Over £41,000 = RPI plus 3%.

### **Support from Individual Universities**

In addition to the financial support provided by Student Finance England, most Higher Education Institutions will offer their own financial support. Each university will have its own eligibility criteria and any awards may only be available to a limited number of students:

- **Bursaries**
- **Scholarships**
- **Fee Waivers**

Bursaries and Scholarships will generally not have to be repaid and Fee Waivers are applied to part, or all of the course costs.

### **Access to Learning Fund**

Most universities also have an 'Access to Learning Fund' which is available to students who are experiencing financial hardship. Some universities offer care leavers priority access to Access to Learner Funds. Sometimes known as Fair Access Funds. 'Propel' is hosted by the 'Become' Charity and sets out or links to the support (including financial support) that each higher education institution provides and also includes a named contact at the majority of educational settings.

<https://propel.org.uk/Search/>

### **National Scholarship Programme (NSP)**

The National Scholarship Programme is designed to offer support to students from low income backgrounds. The NSP is funded jointly between the government and individual universities. Individual universities can make their own decisions as to who receives a National Scholarship. Some universities may offer care leavers priority access to the NSP. Support may be offered in a variety of ways including cash grants, reduced cost accommodation or a fee waiver. Any funds received from the NSP are non-repayable.

### **The Care Leavers Higher Education Bursary**

The Care Leavers Higher Education Bursary is provided by the student's local authority (Croydon Children's Services) and is provided as a minimum grant of £2,000.00 throughout the length of the whole course.

### **Grants and Awards From Charitable Trusts**

Trusts and charities provide financial grants and awards to students. Advice about what may be available is available through individual universities or through the Educational Grants Advisory Service (EGAS).

Public libraries should have directories of charitable trusts that provide grants and awards:

- The Educational Grants Directory;
- The Charities Digest;
- The Grants Register;
- The Directory of Grant Making Trusts.

## **Higher Education Continued**

### **General Information**

Care leavers considering attending university should check with the universities that they are thinking about applying to, for information about the support that each institution will provide. This information can then assist when making a final choice about which university to apply for as a first, second or third choice.

The students' support service should be able to provide information on both the practical and financial support that may be available.

Information about additional support to care leavers can be found on the Access and Participation Plans that each institution is required to have. Information can be found on the web site of each institution or via: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>

### **Welfare Benefits**

The majority of young people who undertake higher education courses are ineligible for welfare benefits such as Universal Credit, tax credits, Income Support and Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance. Certain limited groups of young people who undertake higher education courses such as lone parents and sick and disabled young people may remain or are eligible for welfare benefits whilst studying. If a young person is entitled to welfare benefits (mostly likely Universal Credit for all new applicants) they are not eligible for the full Croydon Higher Education Grant but continue to receive the HE Bursary element and the Computer and Equipment element.

Lone Parents and Sick and Disabled Students who are in receipt of Welfare Benefits should check with the Department for Work and Pensions regarding the rules about student finance. Being in receipt of student finances may cause disqualification and/or a reduced entitlement to welfare benefits. Generally, lone parents and sick and disabled young people will be assumed by the DWP to have taken out Student Loans including the Special Support Loan element for those on benefit-level income. Their level of welfare benefit will be calculated by taking into account the loans they receive but not the Special Support element.

Lone Parents (and certain couples with children) may be eligible for the Government's **Childcare Grant** (£174.22 per week for one child and up to £298.69 per week for more than one child) and/or **Parents' Learning Allowance** (up to £1,766.00 per year). Disabled students may be eligible for the **Disabled Students' Allowance**. Students who have adult dependents may be eligible for an **Adult Dependents' Grant (ADG)** (up to £3,094.00 per year) (2020-2021). These grants do not affect welfare benefits.

## **Croydon Children's Services - Higher Education Financial Support**

The Croydon Higher Education Grant which includes the Government's Higher Education Bursary can be accessed once (for 4 years) at any point between a young person's 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

All young people entering higher education are entitled to:-

- A one-off Computer Grant for a note-pad or lap-top depending on an assessment of need and if not previously accessed – up to £300.00.
- A Stationery Grant, Educational Visits and Books and Equipment Grant of up to £225.00

The Grant is per academic year (assessed each year), is not transferable and is only available for stationery, educational visits and books and equipment. Young people should submit a list of requirements regarding equipment, course books etc. and return receipts to their school worker or leaving care personal adviser.

1. A Higher Education Bursary of £2,000.00 which is provided over the period of a two, three or four year course. Depending on the length of the course the £2,000.00 per course will be constituted of £1,000.00 per year (2 year course) H.E. Bursary, £666.67 per year (3 year course) H. E. Bursary, £500.00 per year (4 year course) H. E. Bursary.
  2. A Vacation Accommodation Allowance of up to 22 weeks – Up to the level of the LHA one-bedroom self-contained rate and/or the level of university accommodation (in the vacation). This is provided where there is a demonstrable liability for rent in the young person's name and a need for vacation accommodation.
  3. A Travel Grant to enable young people to get to and return to university (three return journeys per academic year). The travel grant will be paid at the off-peak rate and at the advanced and pre-booked rate of at least one month before the journey.
  4. A Graduation Grant of up to £1000.00 to cover the cost of the graduation ceremony and gown hire etc., and to cover relocation, deposit and rent in advance costs when leaving university.
- Young people applying to and undertaking higher education courses will be required to apply for all available universal student funding i.e. maintenance loans, tuition fee loans, as well as individual establishment bursaries. These loans and grants and the H.E. Bursary should be used by students as their main source of income through-out their term time course of study. This will fund their higher education accommodation, living expenses and travel etc.
- This amounts to a payment of approximately £4,500.00 per year – depending on location (rent) and type of course.

How the Vacation Maintenance Allowance and the H. E. Bursary are to be provided should be set out in the young person's pathway plan.

- Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma courses are defined as Higher Education Courses. Both HNC and HND courses often attract a bursary and/or a grant from the individual university.

Young people who remain eligible for means tested welfare benefits are provided with the:

- Computer Grant (one-off); Equipment Grant (per year); H. E. Bursary (per course) and Graduation Grant (one-off).

## **Higher Education – Requirements and Payment Process**

The frequency and amount of each payment as well as the method of paying the allowance should be set out in the young person's Pathway Plan. All payments are dependent on, and subject to young people agreeing to the following arrangements:

- Maintaining regular and ongoing contact with their leaving care personal adviser;
- Attending all pre-arranged meetings with their leaving care personal adviser;
- Completing all actions and agreed tasks within the Learning Agreement;
- Identification of a suitable contact within the university staff/support service to take part in joint meetings to ensure educational goals and targets are met and appropriate practical, educational, pastoral and financial support is being provided. To agree to regular liaison between the university and the leaving care personal adviser to monitor progress, attendance and attainment.
- To inform the leaving care personal adviser of any change of circumstances (contact details, course details) as soon as possible;
- Student Finance England have confirmed that they will fund the course and the young person is deemed a 'Home Student' for the Tuition Fee Loan;
- The young person has an asylum status that enables them to receive Student Finance England loans and that they are deemed 'Home Students'.

Agree to focus on educational activities by not undertaking more than twenty hours of employment during term time. To understand that in circumstances where more than twenty hours of employment is undertaken this income will be considered when calculating the level of financial support.

All young people attending further, and higher education will be required to sign an authorisation to share information form and will need to agree to their personal adviser liaising with the educational establishment in order to support the program of study and monitor attendance and learning.

### Asylum Seeking Young People

Young people should only be financially supported to progress to university/higher education if they have a form of status that gives them access to 'Home Student Status and Fees' and Student England Finances and have a positive status that continues until the course is completed. Young people will be provided with practical support to help them identify funding opportunities outside of Children's Services. All support from Children's Services and any other source should be clearly set out in the Pathway Plan. Where young people do not have a status that gives them access to the above forms of financial support, personal advisers will support young people to apply for scholarships, grants and bursaries from voluntary organisations.

## **Post Graduate Courses**

Children's Services will assist young people to identify financial support and resources to undertake post graduate courses. Generally, vocational post graduate courses are funded by secondment from an employer, or by individual universities providing a bursary to cover course/tuition fees. Children's Services may consider a contribution to post graduate courses following a needs assessment and all avenues of funding being explored. All requests for post graduate funding will be considered by senior management following an assessment of need, which includes checking the start and end dates, whether the course represents a progression from a previous course and the likely outcome at the end of the course.

<p>Young People Returning to the Local Authority Aged 21 to 25</p>	<p>Young people are entitled to resume or continue a leaving care service from the age of 21 to 25 on request.</p> <p>The primary purpose of the support from age 21 to 25 is to provide continuity and on-going practical support and guidance. Where young people require financial support, personal advisers will assist the young person to identify universal sources of financial support to enable young people to be self-sustaining. In very exceptional circumstances and following an assessment of need, a request for financial support (usually provided in kind) will be considered. The assessment and request will be considered by senior management.</p>
<p>Consultation with Young People</p> <p>Travel Expenses</p>	<p>Young people will receive a financial allowance of £5.00 per hour plus expenses when undertaking consultation exercises.</p> <p>Payments to young people who undertake consultation exercises can be paid in cash or vouchers.</p> <p>Expenses related to enabling young people to participate in consultation exercise will be provided following an assessment of need.</p>
<p>Exit Interview - Service Evaluation / Questionnaire</p>	<p>Young people will receive a £10.00 reward for taking part in a leaving care exit interview/questionnaire/evaluation. The evaluation will be undertaken between the ages of 21/25 when a young person is ceasing their involvement with the leaving care service.</p>
<p>Emergency Payments</p> <p><i>Payment Process</i></p>	<p>Young people may apply for two emergency food parcels in any six-month period. Each food parcel and utility component will not exceed £15.00 in value, i.e. £5.00 utility top-up and £10.00 food. Emergency food parcels are discretionary and will only be provided following an assessment of need.</p> <p><i>Young people will be given a food parcel of £10.00 value or their social worker/personal adviser, or the duty worker will purchase food to the value of £10.00. The social worker/personal adviser or duty worker will ensure £5.00 of credit is placed on the young person's utility key or card. Unless the circumstances are exceptional, young people should not be provided with cash or vouchers.</i></p> <p><b>Food Parcel to the value of £10.00</b></p> <p>Pasta, Rice, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Baked Beans (or culturally appropriate equivalent)</p> <p>Tinned Baked Beans and Sausages, Tinned Mixed Vegetables (or equivalent)</p> <p>Tinned Tuna, Packet Noodles, Long Life Milk (or equivalent)</p> <p>Tea Bags, Small bag – split large box into bag</p> <p>Sugar, Small bag – split bag into small bag</p> <p>Packet of Cereals</p> <p>Tinned Fruit Salad</p> <p>Small Packet of Biscuits</p>
<p>Exceptional Needs Payment</p>	<p>Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Croydon Children's Services may provide funds for exceptional needs as a one-off payment. This will require approval from a senior manager.</p>

## Section 3

Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children Aged 16 to 21/25 or until completion of an agreed programme of education or training being undertaken on the young person's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday

<b>Setting Up Home Allowance</b>	
£157.50 Not Transferable	For TV licence. (First licence paid for by Children's Services from the allowance and subsequent ones paid for by young person).
Up to £1800.00	To be spent on items for equipping accommodation. This allowance will be spent in stages; initially on semi-independent setting needs and subsequently, on independent accommodation needs. The allowance will always be spent collaboratively between the personal adviser and young person. Original receipts should be retained by social workers/personal adviser for audit purposes, reclaiming VAT and in case defective items need to be returned.
Up to £80.00 Not Transferable	Fitting of a gas/electric cooker by an approved fitter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once</li> </ul>
Up to £80.00 Not Transferable	Contents insurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the first year</li> </ul>
Up to £100.00 Not Transferable	Removal costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For one move</li> </ul>
Up to £80.00 Not Transferable	Health & safety pack and security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two smoke detectors, one carbon monoxide detector, door security chain, chub lock, fire blanket and first aid kit.</li> </ul>
Up to £40.00 Not Transferable	Setting up home starter pack. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coffee, tea, washing-up liquid, light bulbs, laundry and cleaning equipment utility key/card top-up, etc.</li> </ul>
As a general principle up to £500.00 can be used prior to the young person's 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday whilst they are living in semi-independent accommodation (furnished) and the remainder can be used after the age of 18 when they move to independent accommodation (unfurnished).	
The Setting Up Home Allowance is available up to the age of 25 or, until the completion of an education or training programme extending beyond 25, where young people are attending further education/training or higher education courses on their 25 <sup>th</sup> birthday.	



The Setting Up Home Allowance is provided to ensure that the accommodation the young person is living in is homely and furnished and should always be used to purchase household items. The Setting Up Home Allowance is based on an assessment of need, taking account of any items provided with the accommodation.

The entitlement to the Setting Up Home Allowance extends to the age of 25, or until the end of the agreed program of education/training being undertaken on the 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. The entitlement is to household items/furnishings not to a cash payment.

The final Pathway Plan should also set out a timescale and process for obtaining the final items.

Young people will have a choice of how the setting up home allowance is used; a) supported shop, b) items purchased by the department that have been identified/chosen by the young person, c) where assessed as appropriate, young people will be provided with a cash allowance to purchase items, this will be undertaken where the young person has been able to evidence financial capability and robust money management skills.

VAT may be reclaimed on all purchases, where items are VAT rated and where Croydon, Children's Services purchase the goods. Original receipts must be kept by Children's Services.

Where young people have No Recourse to Public Funds, a temporary asylum status, or are 'All Rights Exhausted', they are likely to be living in temporary and/or semi-independent accommodation and therefore will only need to use part of their Setting Up Home Allowance until they obtain permanent status as the accommodation provided will usually contain the majority of household items.

It should be noted that the purpose of the Setting Up Home Allowance is to ensure that young people have the household items that they need to furnish their home rather than an entitlement to a cash amount.

Where young people have had several moves and may have lost, misplaced or had items damaged, additional resources/items may be made available subject to an assessment of need.

Where young people are living in unsettled or temporary accommodation, the Setting Up Home Allowance should be used to purchase essential items, with the majority of the Allowance being held back until more settled/permanent accommodation is available.

## Section 4

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Categories of Care Leavers

#### Categories of Young People Eligible for Leaving Care Services and Support

##### **Eligible children: [paragraph 19(2)(b) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 and Regulation 40 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010]**

- An eligible child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who is looked after and has been looked after for at least 13 weeks after the age of 14. [Can become an eligible child at any point from their 16th to 18th birthday as long as they have completed 13 weeks] [must complete 24 hours looked after age 16/17]
- The 13 weeks can be a continuous period or a series of episodes.
- In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.
- Young people who are remanded into custody become looked after at the point of remand. This group may then become an eligible children or relevant children if they complete 13 weeks of being looked after.

##### **Relevant children: [Section 23A(2) ]**

- A relevant child is a young person aged 16 or 17 who was an 'eligible' child' but is no longer looked after.
- Additional relevant children:
  - Detained (sentenced), or in hospital prior to 16th birthday, and
  - Looked after for at least 13 weeks after age 14 and looked after at point of being detained (sentenced) or entering hospital (and still in custody/detention/hospital).
- In calculating the 13 weeks no account is taken of pre-planned short breaks amounting to no more than 4 weeks and where a child returns to their parent, or someone with parental responsibility.
- A child who has lived with someone who has parental responsibility or a residence order for a continuous period of 6 months or more, and has ceased to be looked after (whether that period commenced before or after they ceased to be looked after) is not deemed a Relevant child (but is deemed a Qualifying child).
  - If the above arrangement breaks down and the child ceases to live with the person concerned, the child becomes a relevant child.

**Former Relevant children (age 18 to 21, or, until the education or training programme being undertaken on their 21st birthday is completed): [Section 23C (1)]**

- A young person who was previously an 'Eligible' child or a 'Relevant' child

**Former Relevant children (age 21, and under 25) [Section 23CA (1)]**

- Young people who inform the local authority that they want to pursue education or training between the age of 21 and 25 and where previously a former 'Relevant' child.

**Former Relevant children (age 21, and under 25) [Section 23CZB (1)]**

- Young people who inform the local authority that they want to continue or resume a leaving care service between the age of 21 and 25 and where previously a former 'Relevant' child.

**Persons Qualifying for Advice and Assistance (aged 16 to 21, and under certain circumstances aged under 25) [Section 24]**

- Young people aged at least 16, and under 21/25, who were subject to a special guardianship order and were looked after before the making of that order.
- Young people who were previously subject to a private fostering arrangement
- Young people who successfully returned home for six months (aged 16/17) and were previously 'Eligible' and/or 'Relevant'.
- Young people who were looked after for less than 13 weeks between the age of 14 to 18 and were looked after for at least 24 hours aged 16 and 17.
- Young people aged 16, and under 21/25, who were looked after in a series of pre-planned short breaks.
- Young people aged 16 and under 21/25 who spent at least 3 months in a special school with residential provision (with an EHCP), between the ages of 16 and 18.

Appendix B

**Financial Assessment Form and Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Reduction Notice**

Income:

Calculation Date:

Item	Amount (£)
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance	
16-19 Bursary	
Traineeship Allowance	
Apprenticeship Allowance	
Earnings (Part and Full Time)	
Other	
Total Income (Subtotal 1)	

Less fares related to work/training/study	
Total Costs (Subtotal 2)	

Deduct Subtotal 2 from Subtotal 1 to produce Subtotal 3

Net Income (Subtotal 3)	
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If subtotal 3 is over £125.00, the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance is reduced by 50%. If subtotal 3 is over £145.00 the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and Clothing and Leisure Allowance cease.

This form should be completed by the young person and their social worker/personal adviser and/or their semi-independent support worker.

Date LCMA (CA/LA) Reduction to Commence.	
The Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance is reduced by 50%.	
The Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and Clothing and Leisure Allowance cease.	
Income Retained.	

## Appendix C

### **Guidance on the Provision of Financial Support to Children aged 16 or 17 who are A) Placed with Parents, or B) Return to Live with Parents in a Planned, or Unplanned Manner**

#### **Principles:**

- Wherever possible, parents should be financially responsible for their own children and should not be funded by the local authority to support their own children.
- Where financial allowances are provided to parents, these should not create inequalities with other siblings and children within the family/household who have not been looked after.
- The rules on a parent's eligibility for benefits for a child placed at home or returning home after the age of 16 is complex and is dependent on whether they are eligible, relevant or qualifying, being resident with the parent and whether the child is undertaking education or training.

## Section 1

### Placement with Parents – Children Reaching the Age of 16 Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order (Living with a Parent)

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010 (revised 2015) and associated Guidance sets out that the Responsible Local Authority is required to assess and meeting the needs, including the financial needs of an 'Eligible' (and 'Relevant') child.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Guidance sets out that where a child is aged under 16 and is resident with a parent and is undertaking full-time education or training, the parent will normally be eligible for child benefit. As a result of being eligible for child benefit, the parent should also be eligible for either child tax credit and/or working tax credit (depending on income) or Universal Credit (UC), and any benefits arising from a child's disability such as DLA/PIP. Where a child is placed with a parent, a transitional payment equivalent to the indicative level of child benefit and either child tax credit/working tax credit or UC that a parent would be entitled to will be provided for a period of up to six weeks. On average it takes five to six weeks to establish a child benefit and either a child tax credit / working tax credit claim or Universal Credit claim.

The rules of benefit entitlement where children return to parents after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday are complex, and entitlement should be checked with the DWP and HMRC.

Transitional payment example (the amounts set out below are based on Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit indicative amounts, the amount paid under Universal Credit may differ):

Child benefit equivalent -	£21.05	£13.95 (second child)
Child tax credit:		
Child element -	£54.42	£54.42
<b>Total Paid – 6 weeks maximum</b>	<b>£75.47</b>	<b>£68.37</b>

For a parent to be eligible for child benefit and either tax credits or Universal Credit no part of the child's accommodation or maintenance costs should be met by the local authority, as such Children's Services should set a date to cease any transitional payments. The date to cease financial support should be set at a point between five and six weeks after a placement with a parent or a return home (prior to age 16).

Child benefit can continue or be reinstated if a child is residing with a parent on a regular basis, generally on at least 2 nights per week from Monday to Sunday or is home for a complete week. – HMRC Guidance.

- Where a child was placed with a parent/s prior to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday a review of the financial support for the child and parent/s must take place when the child becomes an '**Eligible**' child. The review must be undertaken within the framework of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need.

- If the child/young person is engaged in education or training the child benefit and tax credits/Universal Credit will continue once the child reaches the age of 16.

The majority of 'Eligible' children will be living in foster care, residential care or, in a placement deemed 'Other Arrangements'. The financial support provided to the child will be set out in the fostering financial policy, residential financial policy and leaving care financial policy.

1. In situations where a child aged 16 or 17 is placed with a parent or returns home to live with a parent and is not engaged in any education or training, the leaving care financial policy provides guidance on the provision of any allowances.
2. In situations where a child aged 16 or 17 is placed with a parent or returns home to live with a parent and is engaged in education or training, the leaving care financial policy provides guidance on the provision of any allowances, if the young person remains eligible (due to the child being on a care order), the parent is likely to be become eligible for benefits, if the care order is revoked, the parent is unlikely to be eligible for benefits for the first 6 months of the return home, thereafter the parent is likely to be able to apply for child benefit and tax credits/Universal Credit.
3. In situations where a child aged 16 or 17 is placed at home or returns home and is not engaged in education or training a parent will not be eligible to claim child benefit or benefits. Therefore, the local authority will need to provide an allowance.

In circumstances where the child is living with a parent/s and the Care/Pathway Plan is focused on revoking the Care Order, or Interim Care Order, both the assessment of, and financial support should be based on assisting the transition to parental financial support (generally 6 months) and for the child to enter/resume or continue education or training.

The primary aim of leaving care financial support for 16 & 17 year olds is to enable young people to prepare for independent living and develop money management skills; as such, each young person should have an assessment of their individual leaving care financial needs and any subsequent allowance provided to those not in education or training should be provided to the young person in a manner that assists with the development of these skills and a return to education or training.

Young people aged 16 & 17 placed with parents who are not engaged in education or training should therefore be provided with the standard Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance of £60.00 per week (2020-2021).

To avoid any inequalities within the family, by the provision of leaving care support, an assessment must be undertaken regarding the need for supplementary allowances, i.e. those in addition to the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance. For example, where there are children in the family who have not been looked after, it may be inappropriate to provide any allowances other than the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance if these

allowances create disparities, inequalities and potentially undermine parenting responsibilities.

The provision of a leaving care birthday allowance for one child would potentially create an inequality if other family members do not receive a similar allowance, as such, the leaving care birthday allowance should not be provided, and parents therefore take responsibility for the level of all birthday allowances to their children. The assessment of, and the reason behind this decision should be made using the guidance contained at the start of this document in the section 'Assessing the Provision of Allowances for 16 & 17 Year Olds' and should be set out in the young person's Care/Pathway Plan.

When developing a Care/Pathway Plan for a young person placed with parent/s or living with a parent/s who is not engaged in education or training, consideration should be given to whether the young person should provide a percentage of their Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance to their parent/s as a contribution to living costs. The level of the contribution should be set out in the young person's Care/Pathway Plan. For example, it may be appropriate that the young person retains an amount for pocket money and clothing i.e. (pocket money £10.00 and clothing allowance £20.00) and provide a contribution to the parent of £30.00 per week (2020-2021) – Total £60.00.

In circumstances where a contribution has been set and the young person does not make the necessary contribution, the amount set can be deducted from the young person's Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and paid directly to the parent/s.

As noted above, there is an obligation on the local authority to provide financial assistance to young people leaving care that would normally fall on parents, and/or on the welfare benefit system. Being an Eligible or Relevant child not engaged in education or training (regardless of them being placed at home) disqualifies parents from welfare benefits/tax credits/universal credit (or recently returned – within the last 6 months). In situations where the child is not engaged in education or training, or has returned within the last 6 months, the leaving care finance policy framework should be used as the framework for the provision of allowances to the child and/or parent).

The majority of Eligible or Relevant children (living outside of the parental home), regardless of being engaged in education or training are disqualified from welfare benefits/tax credits/universal credit, with the exception of sick and disabled children and children who are also lone parents.

In circumstances where a care leaver aged 16 or 17 is placed/living with a parent who is in receipt of a welfare benefit/tax credit/universal credit, the difference between the young person's Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and the level of the welfare benefit/tax credits/universal credit that the parent would be entitled to in respect of that child, (if they were not an Eligible or Relevant child) can be provided directly to the parent/s. This would only apply to a child not engaged in education or training, or initially returning home.

## **Care Order Revocations and Ceasing Financial Allowances**

Where an 'Eligible' child has lived with a person with parental responsibility for at least 6 months and they cease to be looked after, due to the revocation of the Care Order, or Interim Care Order they become a 'Qualifying' child (a Qualifying child is a 16 to 21/25 year old subject to Section 24 of the Children Act 1989). The 6-month period living with parents that is required to be deemed a Qualifying child, can include time both prior to and after the revocation of the Care Order.

Welfare benefit legislation relating to 'Qualifying' children sets out that both parents and children are entitled to welfare benefits/tax credits/universal credit in their own right.

'Qualifying' child status does not have any impact on either the child, or parents benefit or tax credit (Universal Credit) entitlements. Once a child is deemed a 'Qualifying' child and following a financial re-assessment of their financial needs, the majority, if not all, of the leaving care financial support being provided should cease. The primary responsibility for meeting a 'Qualifying' child's financial needs rests with the parent/s.

The detailed financial and practical arrangements to support the child and parent should be set out in the Care/Pathway Plan and Placement Plan. The level of the leaving care financial support should be based on an assessment of need and set out in the Care/Pathway Plan.

## **Placement with Parents – Children aged 16 or 17 Subject to Care Order or Interim Care Order Being Placed with Parent/s**

In circumstances where, following an assessment of suitability, it is deemed appropriate to place a child with a parent/s at the age of 16 or 17, the assessment of financial support to the child and parent should be completed prior to the placement being made and should be set out in the Care/Pathway Plan and Placement Plan.

The principles and financial approach set out above in section 1, i.e. the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance being provided to the young person (if not engaged in education or training (and for the initial 6 months)), and, an assessment of the need for any additional allowances being undertaken to consider the types and level of financial support to be provided should be followed. The Care/Pathway Plan should be used to evidence and explain the level of, and the types of financial support to be provided.

## **Section 2**

### **Children aged 16 & 17 Accommodated under Section 20 Returning to Live with a Parent/s in a Planned Manner who Cease to be Looked After and Become 'Relevant' children**

In circumstances where it is deemed appropriate for a child to return to a parent/s at the age of 16 or 17, following an assessment of suitability, the evaluation of financial support to the child and/or parent should be completed prior to the child returning to the parent/s. On the child returning to the parent/s the child becomes a 'Relevant' child. Where the young person is undertaking an education or training activity, financial responsibility should transfer to the parent as set out in section 1 (after 6 months).



Transitional financial support will be provided for a period of four to six weeks once the parent becomes eligible for a means tested benefit.

In circumstances where a young person (subject to section 20) aged 16 & 17 returns to live with a parent, agreement to, and approval of the ceasing to be looked after must be sought from the Director of Children's Services – Regulation 39.

In circumstances where the 'Relevant' child is living with a parent/s as part of planned return to a parent/s, both the assessment of, and financial support should focus on assisting the transition to parental financial support. The principles set out above in section 1 should be used to assess the type and level of financial support. The Pathway Plan should be used to evidence and explain the level of, and the types of financial support to be provided (for those not engaged in education or training).

Where a child remains living with a parent/s for six months (after a planned return) the child's status changes from a 'Relevant' child to that of 'Qualifying' child. Once a child becomes a 'Qualifying' child, both parent/s and child are entitled to claim welfare benefits/tax credits like other parents/children. See above section 1.

Once a child is deemed a 'Qualifying' child and following a financial re-assessment of their financial needs, the majority, if not all of the leaving care financial support being provided should cease. The primary responsibility for meeting a 'Qualifying' child's financial needs rests with the parent/s.

### **Section 3**

#### **Children Subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order Returning to a Parent/s Against the Assessment of the Child's Needs and the Wishes of the Local Authority**

Social workers and personal advisers will need to undertake an assessment and risk assessment of the appropriateness of the child remaining with the parent/s where the child has returned to a parent/s against the wishes of the authority and follow due procedure.

Financial support should only be provided to the child in line with the Leaving Care Finance policy. No payment or any percentage of the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance should be made to the parent/s until it is deemed an authorised placement with parent/s.

The Pathway Plan and the provision of financial support should focus on positive engagement or re-engagement with the child.

### **Section 4**

#### **Children Accommodated Section 20 Returning to a Parent/s Against the Assessment of the Child's Needs and the Wishes of the Local Authority**

Social workers will need to undertake an assessment and risk assessment of the appropriateness of the child remaining with the parent/s where the child has returned to a parent/s against the wishes of the authority and follow due process. A statutory review should take place to approve the decision to cease the child's Section 20 status.

In circumstances where a young person (subject to section 20) aged 16 & 17 returns to live with a parent, agreement to, and approval of the ceasing to be looked after must be sought from the Director of Children’s Services – Regulation 39.

Financial support should only be provided to the child in line with the Leaving Care Finance policy (where the young person is not engaged in education or training). No payment or any percentage of the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance should be made to the parents until it is deemed appropriate for the ‘Relevant’ child to remain living with the parent/s.

The Pathway Plan and the provision of financial support should focus on positive parental engagement or re-engagement with the child/young person and should support the child/young person to continue/resume education or training.

### Summary

In essence, financial support to 16 & 17 year olds living at home should be provided by parents:

- where a child/young person is engaged in an education or training activity, the parent/parents are entitled to claim child benefit/child tax credits (after 6 months with the parent/ceasing to be looked after or on reaching age 16 if placed prior to age 16);
- where children/young people are not engaged in education or training the guidance above and the leaving care finance policy provides the framework for the provision of allowances.

### Eligibility Chart

1	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 prior to the age of 16:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit when child placed.</li> </ul>
2	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 prior to the age of 16, reaching age 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit when child placed, these will continue into school year 12 if the child is undertaking education or training.</li> <li>• If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.</li> </ul>
3	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 after the age of 16.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent may be eligible to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit when child placed, these will continue into school year 12 if the child is undertaking education or training.</li> <li>• If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.</li> </ul>
4	Child – Placed with P – Section 31 – care order revoked when the child is aged 16/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent unlikely to be able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit even if the child is undertaking an education or training activity for 6 months after the order is revoked.</li> <li>• If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.</li> </ul>

5	Child – returning to live with a parent, person with PR (section 20 ending)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent unlikely to be able to claim child benefit and tax credits/universal credit even if the child is undertaking is education or training for 6 months after the return.</li> <li>• If the child is undertaking education or training – parent is eligible to claim benefits after the child has been at home for 6 months.</li> <li>• If the child is not undertaking education or training – parent is not eligible to claim.</li> </ul>
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## Appendix D

### **Criminal Injuries Compensation Award Payments**

The rules on Criminal Injuries Compensation Award (C.I.C.A.) payments allow a young person a 52 week ‘grace period’ regarding eligibility for means tested benefits after receipt of the award. The following guidance should still be followed.

Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit legislation sets out that a C.I.C.A. payment is disregarded in terms of calculating benefit entitlement for the first 52 weeks after receipt of the award as it is deemed a personal injury payment.

Young people who receive a C.I.C.A. payment should be assisted to seek independent financial advice regarding establishing a Discretionary Trust Fund. Additionally, young people should be made aware of the implications of the C.I.C.A. payment for any benefit claim they may make or have after the 52 week disregard period. Young people should visit the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and choose an independent solicitor and financial adviser to explore opportunities to use their award in a positive manner.

Generally, young people will receive their C.I.C.A. payment on their eighteenth birthday. If a young person establishes a ‘Discretionary Trust Fund’ prior to, or within 52 weeks of receiving their payment they continue to be eligible for benefits. Establishing a ‘Discretionary Trust Fund’ results in their award payment being ‘tied up’ until they reach the age of 21 or older.

If a C.I.C.A. award has not been placed in a Trust Fund or used after 52 weeks the following will apply; if the award was less than £6000.00 it will not affect a claim for benefit. If the award is between £6000.00 and £16,000.00, it will result in a reduced benefit payment and an award of over £16,000.00 will disqualify a young person from benefit. Strict benefit rules apply in regard to spending the award after the 52-week disregard period, consideration should be given to the DWP rules on the inappropriate disposal of ‘capital’. It is important that young people are given

independent advice regarding C.I.C.A. payments and that social workers/personal advisers are not responsible for choosing who gives advice.

Where a young person has been awarded a sum in compensation for a criminal injury, Children, Schools and Families is required to disregard that capital entirely. See page 62 para 4 - Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 Guidance.

## Appendix E

### **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)**

#### **Eligible and Relevant Children (UASC)**

##### **Key Guidance**

Social Workers and Personal Advisers must ensure that an UASC has applied to extend their leave to remain and the application is submitted to the Home Office before their leave status expires. In the majority of UASC cases their leave status expires at the age of 17½, or on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If this task is completed and submitted within time, the young person is eligible to claim means tested benefits on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. See section on - Access to Public Funds and Welfare Benefits at the end of this appendix.

Consideration should also be given to appealing an initial asylum decision where a young person is granted limited leave to remain.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) are covered by the Children Act 1989 and the provisions of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Guidance and Regulations 2010 [16 & 17 year olds] and the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Guidance 2010 (revised 2015) and the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (revised 2015) [16 to 21/25 year olds] in exactly the same way as other children in this country.

However, they will also have an immigration status:

1. Applying for Asylum;
2. Accepted as a Refugee;
3. Granted Exceptional Leave to Remain [divided into:
  - a. Humanitarian Protection, or
  - b. Discretionary Leave],
4. Indefinite Leave to Remain;
5. Refused Leave to Remain,

all of which will need to be taken into account when undertaking their Leaving Care Assessment of Need and developing their subsequent Pathway Plan.

It should be noted that applicants who are granted refugee status may not automatically receive indefinite leave to remain. Applicants granted refugee status may be given limited leave to remain for five-year periods. At the end of each five-year period their circumstances will be reviewed and if the conditions in their home country have improved, they will be expected to return.

Most Eligible and Relevant (16 & 17 year olds) unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will receive the same entitlements as any other young person. However, there may be some differences in entitlement, which will need to be acknowledged in their Pathway Plan. For example, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who are applying for asylum and are awaiting an initial decision or have been granted exceptional leave to remain are not automatically entitled to the 16 - 19 Bursary.

When developing Pathway Plans with Eligible and Relevant (UASC) particular attention must be paid to their immigration status and contingency plans developed which take account of their possible status options at the of age eighteen.

Department for Education guidance highlights that pathway planning for the majority of UASC who do not have a permanent immigration status, should initially take a dual or triple planning perspective, which, over time should be refined as the young person's immigration status is clarified.

Planning may be based on:

- a transitional plan during the period of uncertainty when the young person is in the United Kingdom without permanent immigration status;
- longer term perspective plan in the United Kingdom should the young person be granted long term permission to stay (for example through the grant of Refugee Status); or
- a return to their country of origin at any appropriate point or at the end of the immigration consideration process, should that be necessary because the young person decides to leave the UK or is required to do so.

## **Failed Asylum Seekers aged 18 to 21/25**

### **Former Relevant Children**

Where young people have an immigration status that means they have permission to work and/or have recourse to public funds they will be expected to be working or claiming benefits like other Former Relevant Children. Additionally, Croydon Children's Services will apply all of the aspects of the Former Relevant Children section of the leaving care financial policy with some exceptions to the Higher Education and Further Education sub-section.

Where young people have:

- limited leave to remain;
- exceptional leave to remain;
- (are) appealed an adverse decision;

they are only eligible for a Croydon Children's Services Higher Education Grant for higher education courses that finish in the academic year prior to their status expiring.

Croydon Children's Services will provide a Higher Education Grant to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people only if all of the following circumstances are met:

- a) they have been offered a higher education place;

- b) Student Finance England have award them a student loan;
- c) they are classified as a home student.

Croydon Children's Services will work with education establishments and training providers to ensure that young people who have limited leave to remain have access to purposeful activities such as short education courses, training opportunities and courses and voluntary activities.

Croydon Children's Services will support young people to apply for discretionary grants and bursaries to support attendance in education.

Where asylum seeking young people:

- have lodged an asylum application, but do not have an initial decision;
- have no recourse to public funds;
- are all rights exhausted;

they will not be eligible for higher education funding.

Croydon Children's Services will fund one ESOL course and will only consider funding a second course under exceptional circumstances.

Consideration will be given to supporting young people with short term universal access courses that provide enhanced education and training skills.

Young people who have exhausted all 'avenues and rights' regarding appealing an adverse asylum decision, and/or are unable to extend their exceptional leave to remain, and/or lose access to public funds/the right to work are deemed 'end of line cases' or 'all appeal rights exhausted' cases (at this point the young person will usually receive a removal directions notice).

Where young people lose access to welfare benefits and are deemed 'end of line cases' or 'all appeal rights exhausted' cases, Croydon Children's Services will provide an allowance commensurate with benefits following the completion of a Human Rights Assessment. Support will consist of accommodation and £45.00 as the accommodation will include the provision of utilities and services.

This allowance can continue to be paid until the removal date or the young person's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, whichever comes first [in principle funding for education or training courses should cease as soon as a young person receives a NRPF or ARE status]. In addition, the provision of an allowance and accommodation is dependent on the young person remaining in contact with their personal adviser and actively engaging in the pathway planning process.

(See London Borough of Barking and Dagenham [2010] EWCA Civ 1101 - Case Law)

## **Pathway Planning Guidance**

When undertaking the Leaving Care Assessment of Need with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at age fifteen and a half and subsequently developing their Pathway Plans, personal advisers must take account of young people's immigration

status and how this may limit access to public funds and services at the age of eighteen. Every effort must be made to clarify a young people's immigration status as soon as possible in order to develop clear plans for their future e.g. ensure that extensions to Discretionary Leave and Humanitarian Protection are applied for within timescale i.e. six to eight weeks before expiry.

Pathway Plans should explore how an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child's immigration status may limit future support and financial opportunities. Pathway Plans for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children should always incorporate a dual or triple plan approach. For example, Pathway Plans should highlight what support would be given if the young person gains indefinite leave to remain, and an alternative Pathway Plan should highlight what support would be available should they be granted limited leave to remain and/or receive removal directions.

### **Appealing an Initial Asylum Decision**

When young people receive their initial asylum decision consideration should be given to lodging an appeal against the decision if they receive a status other than Indefinite Leave to Remain/Refugee Status. In effect, Limited Leave to Remain is a failed asylum decision. Young people are more likely to obtain a positive decision if they appeal at the first decision stage rather than wait until their limited leave status expires. Social workers and personal advisers should liaise with the young person's solicitor to support/consider an appeal. Young people have to lodge an appeal within a very limited time (14 days of the initial decision). Evidence highlights that a high percentage of initial decision appeals are successful.

Young people who receive an initial decision giving them Limited Leave to Remain for a year or less may not be able to appeal the initial decision.

### **Summary**

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) making the transition from care to adulthood have both a leaving care status and an asylum and immigration status in addition to their placement and accommodation, education, health, financial and religious and cultural needs.

Planning transition to adulthood for UASC is a particularly complex process that needs to address young people's care needs in the context of wider asylum and immigration legislation and how these changes over time. Pathway planning to support a UASC's transition to adulthood should cover all areas that would be addressed within all young people's plans as well as any additional needs arising from their specific refugee and immigration status and issues.

The majority of young people making the transition from care to independence, will, with support and assistance develop a settled life in the U.K. Whilst this may be the case for some UASC this may not always apply due to the outcomes of their asylum claim. Planning for many UASC may have to be based around short term achievable goals whilst entitlement to remain in the UK is being determined.

Planning for a return home may be difficult (for both young people and staff working with them), but care and pathway plans should include contingencies for durable and best interest plans for UASC who are likely to have to return to their country of origin. It will be essential that arrangements for returns should be managed in a sensitive and consistent way.

Transition to adulthood planning and pathway planning for the majority of UASC who do not have, a permanent immigration status; should initially take a dual or triple planning perspective which overtime should be refined as the final asylum outcome becomes known:

- Longer term perspective plan in the United Kingdom should the young person be granted Refugee Status;
- A transitional plan during the period of uncertainty when they are in the United Kingdom without permanent immigration status;
- A return to their country of origin at an appropriate point or at the end of the process should that be necessary due to their immigration status.

Claiming asylum can be a complex process and social workers/personal advisers should work with the young person's legal representative and the dedicated case owner at the Home Office to ensure that the young person understands the process of claiming asylum, the possible outcomes and to provide them with necessary support.

Pathway plans should always consider the implications for the young person if their application to extend their leave to remain or their appeal against refusal of that application is dismissed. In such circumstances the person will become unlawfully present in the United Kingdom and be expected to make plans for return to the country of origin. Pathway plans should highlight the risks associated with young people disappearing ('going underground') to avoid returning and the difficulties associated with returns that occur quickly with little or no planning. Liaison with the Home Office case owner may be necessary to manage these risks.

### **Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002**

It is important that Personal Advisers and others working with the young people understand that their immigration status may affect their eligibility to leaving care support after they turn 18 because of the provisions of Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (and Immigration Act 2016 when the guidance is applied).

This is especially the case for any of the young people who are "unlawfully present in the UK" – which includes those who have been refused asylum and have either not applied for an extension of further Discretionary Leave to remain or have applied for an extension, but that application and any appeal has been rejected.

Liaison with the legal adviser may be required to establish whether Schedule 3 applies in a particular case, as refusal of asylum does not necessarily indicate that a young person is 'unlawfully present in the UK' (but may do).



In these cases, the young people can generally only be supported to the extent necessary to avoid a breach of their human rights (under the European Convention of Human Rights).

For example, If an adult is unlawfully present in the UK, i.e. they have no form of leave to be in the UK and are not an asylum seeker (as they are failed), a local authority is prohibited from providing them with support under the leaving care provisions (and other statutes) unless this is necessary in order to avoid a breach of their human rights, whether in their home country or in the UK.

The following guidance should be considered when assessing the support to be provided to a failed asylum seeker. If a former UASC has turned 18 and is (or becomes) appeal rights exhausted ('ARE'), at which point they cease to be an asylum seeker, Schedule 3 applies to them. It is important to note that any human rights case that the young person may have had, about not returning to their home country will have been dismissed by the specialist tribunal. Additionally, it would be very difficult for a local authority to disagree with the decision of the tribunal. For example, if the specialist tribunal has set out and established that there is no human rights reason why the young person cannot return, because the tribunal is vested by the State with the responsibility for making the decision (subject to challenge to a higher tribunal or court) and due to its expertise, it would be difficult for the local authority to contradict the tribunal's decision (on human rights grounds). Finally, there would be little scope for a further human rights assessment as the tribunal will already have carried out a human rights assessment. This assessment should be obtained, and the tribunal's determination followed and in effect a repeat assessment would be carried out.

The only support therefore the local authority could, or should provide, is short-term pending a return home, which should not take long to organise. The authority does not have to wait until the person concerned is deported; i.e. if they choose to remain unlawful in this country without support it is not a breach of Article 3 on the part of the authority, because the authority has not caused them to be destitute, their refusal to leave has done so.

Therefore and thereafter, support could only be provided if something happens in the life of the former UASC or in their home country (following the tribunal) that gives rise to a fresh human rights debate, in which case the authority must insist on seeing any representation made to the Home Office about this and comparing this to the tribunal's determination.

The section above will be updated when the Immigration Act 2016 Guidance has been issued and the full timescales for implementation are issued.

## **Access to Public Funds and Welfare Benefits**

Young people must apply to extend their leave to remain at least two months before their immigration leave status expires. If this task is completed by a young person's eighteenth birthday and they have proof that the Home Office has received their application, the young person is then eligible to apply for benefits. Personal Advisers should obtain a letter from the young person's solicitor that includes details of the young person's immigration status; the date of the application to extend the leave to remain was submitted. The solicitor submits the renewal/extension by recorded post. The recorded post item will have a tracking number that can be used to verify that the Home Office received the application. The letter from the solicitor and a print out of the Post Office tracking statement should be submitted with the young person's benefit claim.

### **Failed Asylum Seekers, No Recourse to Public Funds, All Rights Exhausted and Human Rights Assessments**

Young people reaching the age of 18 who 1) do not have an immigration status and/or 2) young people who are failed asylum seekers and/or 3) young people who have No Recourse to Public Funds or services and/or 4) young people who are deemed All Rights Exhausted will only be provided with practical and financial support following a Human Rights Assessment and the outcome of the assessment being that the ceasing of support would breach their human rights. Personal Advisers (and those undertaking Human Rights Assessments) will always support young people to explore options of living with family and friends, identifying charitable sources of funding and options for returning to a country of originate.

In all situations where support has been extended as a result of a Human Rights Assessment, the assessment will be reviewed whenever there is a change of circumstances and on a three-monthly basis. Where a young person is detained and subject to a Deportation Order or is subject to the Administrative Removal process financial support will cease. Where support is provided as a result of a Human Rights Assessment, the support will cease on the young person reaching age 21.

## Appendix F

### **National Insurance Numbers**

All young people should automatically receive a National Insurance Number at the age of 15 and 9 months. The National Insurance Number is sent to the address where Child Benefit is being claimed for the young person. As the majority of children looked after do not have a Child Benefit claim, National Insurance Numbers do not automatically get issued. At the age of 15 and 9 months the social worker for the young person needs to contact the New Registrations Section of the National Insurance Number Office – HMRC.

Children who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will have their National Insurance Number issued linked to their DLA claim.

Where a young person does not have a National Insurance Number by the age of 17, social workers/personal advisers should contact the Income Maximisation Team who will liaise with the Department for Work and Pensions to try to obtain a Number in advance of the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

For detailed guidance see:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/nimmanual/NIM39310.htm>

## Appendix G

### Standard Benefit Claim Letter 2020 - 2021

ADD LOGO

ADD ADDRESS

CLIENT NAME:  
(Tenant)

D.O.B:

N.I. NUMBER:

CURRENT ADDRESS:

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION AND TENANCY: (Licence Agreement/Assured Shorthold)

PLACEMENT TYPE

NAME OF LANDLORD  
ADDRESS OF LANDLORD

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is provided to verify the identity of the above-named young person and to confirm and clarify **(his/her)** circumstances in support of their welfare benefit claim.

The above-named young person was previously placed in **(private accommodation /semi-independent accommodation/foster care/residential provision)** by Croydon Children's Services at the above address. As the young person has now reached the age of eighteen and **(he/she)** is deemed 'independent in **(his/her)** own right' and is liable for accommodation costs of **(£00.00 per week)**, excluding utility and support charges **(he/she)** is submitting a claim for **(set out benefits being claimed)**. The information provided below sets out **(his/her)** legal status and financial circumstances

I can confirm that **(Add Full Name)** was previously an 'Eligible' child, or an 'Eligible' and/or 'Relevant' child and became a 'Former Relevant' child on **(Add Date)** as defined by the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010 (Revised 2015) and Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (Revised 2015).

A. I can also confirm that **(Add Full Name)** was previously 'Looked After' by Croydon Children's Services and was 'Accommodated' under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

B. I can also confirm that (**Add Full Name**) was previously 'Looked After' by Croydon Children's Services and was subject to a Section 31 Care Order under the terms of the Children Act 1989.

(**Add Full Name**) ceased to be 'Looked After' on (**Add Date- 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or actual date if earlier**) and will continue to receive practical support and, in specific circumstances, financial help from Croydon Children's Services under Section 24 of the Children Act 1989 or Section 23C of the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010.

Section 23C and Section 24 payments must be declared when claiming benefits but are not be counted as income for any welfare benefit purposes.

Whilst (**Add Full Name**) is establishing (**his/her**) welfare benefit claim (**he/she**) will be provided with a: (**Delete as Applicable**)

- **leaving care maintenance allowance of £60.00** (independent accommodation)
  - **semi-independence allowance of £50.00** (supported accommodation)
  - **supported lodgings allowance £35.00** (supported lodgings)
  - **fostering - pocket money and clothing allowance of £35.00** (staying put)
- under these powers for 5 weeks.

1. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child and ceased to be 'Looked After', I believe (**he/she**) will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £251.77 per month (£342.70 – 2020-2021) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element. (**He/she**) will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.
2. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After' and is engaged on a traineeship at the rate of (**ADD £ per week**), I believe (**he/she**) will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £256.05 per month (£342.70 – 2020-2021) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element, minus any income received from his training allowance, apart from the payment of travel and childcare expenses. (**He/she**) will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.
3. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After', is without parental support and is entitled to claim whilst receiving non-advanced education, I believe (**he/she**) should receive Universal Credit at the rate of £256.05 per month (£342.70 – 2020-2021) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element. He/she will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.
4. As (**Add Full Name**) has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After', and has been given a 'Fit Note' by (**his/her**) Doctor, I believe

**(he/she)** will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £256.05 per month (£342.70 – 2020-2021) (if single without dependent children) and the relevant Housing Costs element. **(He/She)** should also be assessed for Limited Capacity for Work and Limited Capacity for Work-Related Activity. **(He/she)** will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority.

5. As **(Add Full Name)** has now become a 'Former Relevant' child, has ceased to be 'Looked After' and is earning a low income, I believe **(he/she)** will be entitled to claim Universal Credit at the rate of £256.05 per month (£342.70 – 2020-2021) (if single without dependent children and not having limited capacity for work or work-related activity) and the relevant Housing Costs element. **(He/she)** will also be eligible to apply for Council Tax Support from the relevant local authority. Please find attached relevant wage slips/prove of income.

As **(Add Full Name)** was 'Looked After' on/or after **(his/her)** sixteenth birthday **(he/she)** and is under 22 years of age, **(he/she)** is currently exempt from the shared accommodation rate of local housing allowance, and therefore should receive the one-bedroom rate as **(his/her)** housing cost element.

As **(Add Full Name)** is a care leaver and is also within 28 days of **(his/her)** eighteenth birthday, I understand they can commence and submit a claim for Universal Credit as set out in ADM – A-2048.

- A As **(Add Full Name)** was previously 'Looked After' and remains vulnerable, I would request that the 'Housing Costs' element of Universal Credit' is paid under a 'Tier 1 Vulnerability - Alternative Payment Arrangement' directly to Children's Service as an agent of the landlord.
- B As **(Add Full Name)** was previously 'Looked After' and remains vulnerable, I would request that the 'Housing Costs' element of Universal Credit' is paid under a 'Tier 1 Vulnerability - Alternative Payment Arrangement' directly to their landlord.

**(Add specific information)**

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

**Approved Signatures**

**Service Manager**

**Team Manager**

**Assistant Team Manager**

**\* Please complete, or delete, either section A or B, the subsequent three bullet points and complete the bold text sections and the relevant sections 1 to 6. All other sections must be completed.**

Information about disregarding Social Services payments to care leavers.

**Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook; Child Poverty Action Group:  
2018/19 edition**

**Chapter 7 Universal Credit – What Counts as Income**

**Page 122**

**Payments by Social Services**

Universal Credit operates differently to other means-tested benefits, where all income is counted unless specifically disregarded. Under universal credit, only income that is specifically mentioned in the regulations counts as income. There is no mention of payments under the Children Act, and therefore any payments made under that legislation will be disregarded as income.

## Appendix H

### CROYDON - LEAVING CARE FINANCIAL SUPPORT CHART

- If you have left Foster Care or a Children’s Home, and you are an Eligible, Relevant, or a Former Relevant young person, this chart provides information about the financial support that Children Services can offer you. It is important to talk to your Social Worker/Leaving Care Personal Adviser about the allowances that may be available to you and what your responsibilities are when receiving them.
- With your Social Worker/Leaving Care Personal Adviser, explore what you may be entitled to and complete the chart.

Entitlements	Comments	Amount
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance		
Accommodation or Placement Support		
Education/Training/Employment Costs		
Clothing		
Birthday/Christmas and Festival Allowances		
Health		
Key & Identity Documents		
Travel & Contact Costs		
Exceptional Needs Costs		
Setting Up Home Allowance Costs		
Other Payments and Allowances		
		<b>Your Weekly Total</b> <b>Your Monthly Total</b> <b>Your Yearly Total</b>

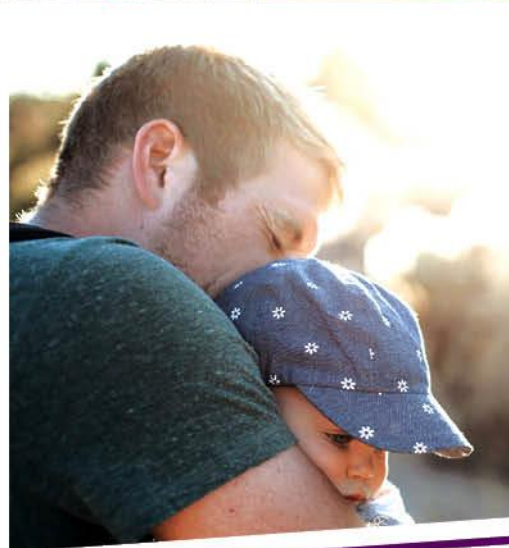


Early Help and Children's Social Care

# Leaving care finance policy – quick guide

November 2020

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for children and young people in croydon



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**Croydon – Leaving Care Finance Policy.**

**Section 1 - Eligible and Relevant Young People Aged 16 and 17**

Accommodation and Placements	Deposit and Rent in Advance	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance (LCMA)	LCMA - Semi-Independent and Emergency Accommodation Adjustments	The Provision of Allowances and unused and Uncollected Allowances	Clothing Allowance	Savings	Lone Parents Entitled to Welfare Benefits	Sick or Disabled Young People Entitled to Welfare Benefits	Young People who are Detained – YOI, STC, SCH or Hospital
Provision of a placement or accommodation costs. If moving to private sector, up to level of one-bed LHA rate	Available if no access to social housing, or social housing not suitable. Must be within LHA rates, i.e. 1 month's deposit, 1 month in advance.	LCMA– 2020-2021 - £60.00	Young person provided with utilities = £60.00 Utilities and food = £40.00	In principle all allowances should be paid to young person, if uncollected add to SUHA and/or seek authorisation to withdraw payment.	Equivalent of £5.00 per week, paid twice yearly	See savings policy	Once Universal Credit and Child Benefit in payment the LCMA, clothing and leisure allowance cease.	Once Universal Credit and Child Benefit in payment the LCMA, clothing and leisure allowance cease.	Depends on the rules of the specific institution. See page 13 of policy

Young People Placed with Parents / Living with Parents	Qualifying Children and Young People Aged 16 and Older See Page 15 and Appendix B	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance Reductions - Young People who are Earning	Initial Clothing Allowance	Birthday Allowances 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas and Festival Allowance	Travel and Contact Costs	Social Activities and Leisure	Key Documents	Education, Training, Apprenticeships and Volunteering
See Page 14 and Appendix C of the Finance Policy. Wherever possible and where it is a planned return home, parents should fund.	All allowances and support can be available – subject to an assessment of need, principle is to facilitate access to universal services.	Disposable income over a given threshold = LCMA reduced by 50% or ceasing altogether. See P.15.	Up to £100.00 – subject to an assessment of need.	£100.00 for a gift/gifts and/or for a celebration provided to those living in semi-independent or independent accommodation.	£100.00 for a gift/gifts and/or for a celebration provided to those living in semi-independent or independent accommodation.	Support provided to obtain a 16+ Zip Oyster Card. If living outside of Croydon, provision of the equivalent of a Zip Card or financial allowance (subject to an assessment)	Obtain Croydon Better Pass or local Passport to Leisure (cover cost). Up to £5.00 per week, to undertake at least one leisure activity.	£110.00 – to ensure the young person has a birth certificate and passport. Up to £280.00 for UASC travel document. Up to £1500.00 to support legal process – UASC.	£1,200.00 16 to 19 bursary. £10.00 per week incentive (P.19) £1000.00 apprenticeship bursary. £2,345.00 pupil premium plus.

Education, Training, Apprenticeship and Employment – Related Support	Child Care Costs	Employment	Introduction to Driving	Counselling and Therapeutic Needs	Health	Cultural Needs	Religious Needs	Personal Luggage	Consultation with Young People
Up to: • £225.00 grant per year for stationery, educational visits, book, general equipment & i.t. equipment; • £300.00 computer grant (once).	Use the Care to Learn Fund.	See LCMA reductions section - commencing work grant up to £100.00, provided once.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 provisional driving licence;</li> <li>1 theory test;</li> <li>5 (1 hour) driving lessons (matched by young person);</li> <li>1 practical driving test. Young person pays for 5 lessons.</li> </ul>	Explore access to CAMHS and universal services. Young people aged 14 to 25 can access the 'Off The Record Counselling Service'. PA to support access via universal services and GP.	Obtain HC1 (SC) and related exemption certificate – support may be provided subject to an assessment of need.	Support to assist young people to access, funding available subject to an assessment of need – approval via team manager / service delivery manager.	Support to assist young people to access, funding available subject to an assessment of need – approval via team manager / service delivery manager.	£35.00 to ensure all young people have suitable luggage for each accommodation move.	£5.00 per hour.  Travel expenses at cost

Emergency Payments	Exceptional Needs Payment
Two £15.00 emergency food parcels in any 6-month period.	Depending on an assessment of need – consideration of one-off exceptional payments.

**Croydon – Leaving Care Finance Policy.**

**Section 2 – Former Relevant Young People Aged 18 to 21/25**

Accommodation	Deposits and Rent in Advance	Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance – Failed Asylum Seekers with NRPF	Initial Benefit Claim	Council Tax Exemption / Allowance	Travel	Qualifying Children and Young People Aged 16 and Older See Page 28 and Appendix B	Key Documents	Introduction to Driving
Staying put, Supported accommodation, Social housing. Private sector to LHA local rates; shared £118.87/£103.56, one-bedroom £264.86/£201.37.	Available if no access to social housing, or social housing not suitable. Must be within LHA rates, i.e. 1 month's deposit, 1 month in advance.	£45.00	Young person provided with utilities = £60.00 Utilities and food = £40.00. Provided for 5 weeks whilst UC claim being processed.	Croydon Council exempt young people up to 25 who live locally and will consider paying the Council Tax charges for those living outside of the area - young person must claim Council Tax Support first.	Personal Advisers will support young people to apply for a Zip Oyster Card, or local equivalent. Depending on an assessment of need, financial support will be considered - priority = education, training, employment, health and family contact.	All allowances and support can be available – subject to an assessment of need, principle is to facilitate access to universal services.	£110.00 – to ensure the young person has a birth certificate and passport. Up to £280.00 for UASC travel document. Up to £1500.00 to support legal process – Immigration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 provisional driving licence;</li> <li>• 1 theory test;</li> <li>• 5 (1 hour) driving lessons (matched by young person);</li> <li>• 1 practical driving test.</li> </ul>

Personal Luggage	Birthday Allowances	Counselling and Therapeutic Needs	Health	Cultural Needs	Religious Needs	Further and Higher Education	Education (FE & HE), Training, Apprenticeships, Employment - Related Support	Further Education	Higher Education
£35.00 to ensure all young people have suitable luggage for each accommodation move.	£50.00 on the 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> birthdays and £100.00 on the 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday.	Explore access to CMHT and universal services. Young people aged 14 to 25 can access the 'Off The Record Counselling Service'. PA to support access via universal services and GP.	Obtain HC1 and related exemption certificate – support may be provided subject to an assessment of need.	Support to assist young people to access, funding available subject to an assessment of need – approval via team manager / service delivery manager.	Support to assist young people to access, funding available subject to an assessment of need – approval via team manager / service delivery manager.	See pages 32 to 42 of the Finance Policy for an overview.	Up to: £225.00 grant per year for stationery, educational visits, book, general equipment & i.t. equipment; £300.00 computer grant (once); £100.00 commencing work grant (once).	18 - 21-year olds - Universal Credit if undertaking education of over 12 hours week.	See Universal HE Offer, page 38. Fair Access Offer; Tuition fee loan - £9,250.00; Maintenance loan – £9,203.00. (Student Finance)

Croydon - Higher Education Financial Support	Higher Education Payment Process	Post Graduate Courses	Young People Returning to the Local Authority Aged 21 to 25	Consultation with Young People	Exit Interview - Service Evaluation / Questionnaire	Emergency Payments	Exceptional Needs	Setting Up Home Allowance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2000.00 – HE Bursary - per course;</li> <li>• Vacation Accommodation costs, up to the level of hall of residence or one-bedroom LHA rate;</li> <li>• Travel grant – 3 return journeys at pre-booked and off-peak rate;</li> <li>• Graduation grant - £1000.00 (once).</li> </ul>	See page 39. Completion of learner agreement; Liaison with personal adviser; Authorisation to liaise with higher education establishment;	Assistance to identify financial and practical support.	Support to access universal service. Education & Training support based on an assessment of need, registration fees up to £1000.00 (FT) & £500.00 (PT). See page 32	£5.00 per hour.  Travel expenses at cost	£10.00 voucher on completion of a service exit questionnaire.	Emergency food parcel £15.00, two in 6-month period.	Depending on an assessment of need – one-off payments.	£2,000 – total See page 41 & 42.

Appendix A	Appendix B	Appendix C	Appendix D	Appendix E	Appendix F	Appendix G	Appendix H
Categories of Care Leaver	Financial Assessment Form – LCMA Reduction if Earning – see pages 44 & 45.	Young people living or placed with parents – see pages 45 to 52.	CICA Awards and Discretionary Trust Funds – See page 52.	UASC - See pages 53 to 59	Guidance on National Insurance Numbers – See page 66	Standard Benefit Claim Letter – Template – See pages 61 to 64.	Personal Finance Chart & Form for the Pathway Plan – page 65.

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# Money matters – for young people aged 16&17 and living semi/independently

Nov 2020



# A Guide to Money Matters for Young People aged 16 & 17 Living in Semi Independent or Independent Accommodation

This leaflet is designed to help you understand the financial support you can receive from Croydon Council - Children's Services if you are aged 16 or 17 and you are living in semi independent or independent accommodation. Some of the financial support is dependent on where you live; other support will be based on an assessment of your needs. It is important to talk to your social worker or personal adviser about the allowances that may be available to you, and what your responsibilities are when you are receiving them.

## **Placement/Accommodation Costs**

Croydon Children's Services will ensure you have a suitable placement or have your accommodation costs covered up to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, after which point you may remain living with your foster carers under a "Staying Put" arrangement, in supported accommodation or move to your own council, housing association or private sector accommodation. From the age of 18 you will need to pay rent on your accommodation and you will be eligible to claim Universal Credit (housing element) to help with your rent costs. If it is assessed as appropriate for you to move to private rented accommodation, Croydon Children's Services may act as a financial trustee or guarantor for you up to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and may provide a deposit and rent in advance if required.

If you are seeking asylum in the UK and do not have access to public funds or services at the age of 18, Croydon Children's Services will undertake an assessment of your needs and may continue to provide accommodation and subsistence once you reach 18, depending on the outcome of the assessment.

## **Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance**

You are entitled to a Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance payment from Croydon Children's Services up to the age of 18 (and for 5 weeks after your birthday). Depending on which type of accommodation you live in, you may have a small contribution deducted from your allowance (usually between £10.00 and £20.00 per week). The deduction is done to get you used to having to pay for services and utilities when you reach age 18 as the services and utilities will be provided within your accommodation. If you are not sure what rate you should get, talk to your social worker or personal adviser or accommodation support worker.

## **Education, Training, Employment Equipment**

Depending on an assessment of your education or training needs, Croydon Children's Services will provide a grant of up to £225.00 per year to cover all of your equipment needs (e.g. stationary, education visits, books, general equipment and I.T equipment). In addition, there is a one-off computer grant of up to £300.00 for those in full time further education at level 2 or above or higher education.

When you are starting a new job and if you need specific clothing or equipment for the job, you will be able to access a commencing work grant of up to £100.00.

In addition, if you are aged 16 to 19 you may be eligible for the governments' vulnerable young person's bursary of £1200.00 per year. This is paid by your local college or training provider and is usually given as a weekly payment of £40.00 for 30 weeks. Your social worker or personal adviser will help you to apply for the bursary. If you are undertaking an Apprenticeship you will receive a £1000.00 Apprenticeship Bursary that is provided by the organisation who is supporting, you on the Apprenticeship.

### **Clothing Allowance**

You are entitled to the equivalent of £5.00 per week clothing allowance, which will be paid you twice per year. This allowance is generally provided via a supervised shop undertaken by your social worker, personal adviser or accommodation support worker.

### **Savings Allowance**

To provide you with a 'lump sum' when you reach 18 which can help you make a successful transition to independence, Croydon Children's Services are working with foster carers and other care providers to support them to save £10.00 per week whilst you are in their care (£5.00 per week up to your 11<sup>th</sup> birthday). The savings are usually deducted from the maintenance allowance paid. Savings might be more complex if the maintenance allowance is paid directly to you. After you have been in care for a year the money that Croydon save for you will be added to your Junior ISA which the government set up for you and open with an initial payment of £200.00. The Junior ISA will be transferred to you when you reach the age of 18 and the transfer usually takes about three months to be completed. You can use the lump sum for something that you want and that will help you being independent.

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

Young people who are in touch with their social worker or personal adviser and who are actively engaged in the pathway planning process are entitled to a £100.00 birthday allowance on their 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> birthday and a £100.00 per year Christmas/festival allowance. The Christmas/festival allowance can be provided at a point suitable to your faith.

### **Travel**

Croydon Children's Services will assist you to obtain a local Zip – Oyster Travel Card to ensure you can attend any local services or drop-in services, remain in contact with your family, extended family, former foster carers, significant friends and your personal adviser. If you live outside of the Croydon area, a travel card for the area you live will be provided.

In situations where you have family, extended family, former foster carers and significant friends outside of the Croydon area, a travel allowance will be provided following an assessment of your needs. Your social worker or personal adviser will be able to give you more information.

If you are seeking asylum in the UK and subject to an assessment of need, an allowance of up to £5.00 per week will be provided so that you can remain in touch with family and friends.

### **Social Activities and Leisure**

Croydon Children's Services will provide a weekly leisure allowance of up to £5.00 per week to ensure that you are able to pursue a sport, hobby or leisure activity. The

allowance is provided following an assessment of your needs, and as long as you are undertaking an approved activity.

### **Key Documents**

In order to register for housing, open a bank account and claim any benefits/Universal Credit at the age of 18, you will need a range of identity and key documents. Croydon Children's Services will help you to get these and will pay for one copy of your birth certificate and one passport renewal up to the value of £110.00, if you do not already have these documents.

If you are seeking leave to remain in the UK, Croydon Children's Services will consider supporting you with legal fees to try to ensure you have a positive immigration status that allows you to remain in the UK and gives you access to public funds or service. The provision of this support is dependent on an assessment of need. In addition, you will be provided with a travel document, subject to an assessment of need.

### **Introduction to Driving**

If you have been in employment, education or training for a minimum of 3 months Croydon Children's Services will provide an allowance to cover one provisional driving license, one theory test, one practical test and ten driving lessons as long as you match the cost of the ten lessons and you don't have any driving convictions.

### **Lone Parents**

Lone parents aged 16 and 17 are eligible to claim Universal Credit, Child Benefit and Healthy Start Vouchers from the birth of your baby. You will then be able to apply for a Sure Start Maternity Grant of £500.00 from the day your baby is born. The Sure Start Maternity Grant is only available for your oldest or first child.

If you would like to return to education, you can get assistance from the 'Care to Learn' fund which can assist you with childcare costs.

Due to having an entitlement to Universal Credit, lone parents will cease to get the Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance and Clothing Allowance once Universal Credit is in payment. All other allowances continue.

### **Other Financial Support**

Support is also available to meet your health needs and your religious & cultural needs and in cases of an emergency or in exception situations. In addition, there is also a range of support available to help you to take part in consultation events and when you move to a new home. Your social worker or personal adviser will undertake an assessment with you to explore what you need and how it may be provided.



**Talk to your social worker or Personal Adviser who will help you fill in the chart.**

<b>Entitlements</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Placement & Accommodation Costs		
Leaving Care Maintenance Allowance		
Education/Training/Employment Costs		
16 – 19 Vulnerable Young Person’s Bursary		
Apprenticeship Bursary		
Clothing Allowance		
Savings		
Travel and Contact		
Key Documents		
Birthday/Christmas and Festival Allowances		
Health Needs		
Social Activities and Leisure		
Introduction to Driving		
Religious and Cultural Needs		
Other Payments and Allowances – 1		
Other Payments and Allowances - 2		

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# Money Matters

## 18 to 21-25 year olds

November 2020



## **A Guide To Money Matters For 18-21/25 Year Olds**

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

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 Universal Credits or Welfare Benefits. Your social worker and/or personal adviser will help you to apply for anything that you are entitled to. In addition, the leaving care team can also provide support, depending on your circumstances and an assessment of what you need.

If you are seeking asylum and don't have access to public funds or services when you reach age 18, Croydon Children's Services will continue to provide you with accommodation and subsistence whilst your claim is finalised. The support provided will be based on an assessment of need and your immigration status and claim.

## **Benefits**

### **Initial Benefit Claim - Waiting Period**

Your social worker and/or personal adviser will support you to apply for Universal Credit and welfare benefits and will try to make sure your claim is in place from your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. As it will take some time (5 weeks) before you receive your first Universal Credit payment from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Croydon Children's Services will support you with an allowance at least equivalent to what you were receiving immediately prior to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for up to 5 weeks.

### **Rent and Deposit Allowance**

When you leave care, Croydon Children's Services will help you find accommodation, in most cases this will be provided through the Council's Housing Department and through the private rented sector. On occasion, Croydon Children's Services may pay the deposit for the accommodation (1 month's rent) and provide up to 1 month's rent in advance, depending on your personal circumstances and an assessment of your needs.

### **Council Tax Support and Exemption**

Young people under to the age of 25 living within the Croydon area will be exempt from paying Council Tax charges, this will help you to make a successful transition from care to independence. If you are living outside of the Croydon area, the leaving care team will pay your Council Tax charges as long as you apply for and claim any Council Tax Support that is available in your area.

### **Staying Put Accommodation**

If it has been agreed under the Staying Put policy that you can remain living with your foster carers after the age of 18, Croydon Children's Services will help cover most of the costs of the arrangement. In order to 'Stay Put' with your foster carer, you will be expected to cover the rent costs; this could be from your earnings and/or the housing element of Universal Credit. If you have no recourse to public funds and Staying Put is agreed for you, Children's Services will cover your rent costs.

## **Education, Training & Employment**

### **Croydon Grants**

Depending on an assessment of your education or training needs, Croydon Children's Services will provide a grant of up to £225.00 per year to cover all of your equipment needs (e.g. stationary, education visits, books, general equipment and I.T equipment). In addition, there is a one-off computer grant of up to £300.00 for those in full time further education at level 2 or above or higher education.

When you are starting a new job and if you need specific clothing or equipment for the job, you will be able to access a commencing work grant of up to £100.00.

### **Benefits**

If you want to undertake a further education or training course after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday you are entitled to claim Universal Credit (and the housing element of UC) which can continue until the end of the academic year after your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

### **Accessing education, training and employment incentive payments**

If you are aged 16 to 19 you may be eligible for the government's vulnerable young person's bursary of £1200.00 per year. This is paid by your local college or training provider and is usually given as a weekly payment of £40.00 for 30 weeks. Your personal adviser will help you to apply for the bursary. If you are undertaking an Apprenticeship you will be entitled to a one-off Apprenticeship Bursary of £1000.00 which is provided by the Apprenticeship organisation.

If you are involved in an approved education, training or voluntary work activity and the provider does not provide you with a travel pass, and a bus or train journey is required in order to attend the course/activity, Croydon Children's Services will support you to obtain a travel pass for the area between your home and the course/activity.

### **Higher Education**

If you attend university your personal adviser will help you to apply for a number of loans and bursaries that are available to all students -

- £9,250.00 (up-to) per year tuition fee loan;
- £12,010.00 per year maintenance loan - students studying in London;
- £9,203.00 per year maintenance loan - students studying outside of London;

In addition, Croydon Children's Services will provide you with a range of support:

- A £2,000.00 Higher Education Bursary provided over the two, three or four years of your course;
- A £300.00 one-off Computer Grant (if not already provided);
- A Vacation Accommodation Allowance for 22 weeks - up to the level of your halls of residence, or up to the level of the one-bedroom local housing allowance rate (at the rate set for where you are at university) which will help with your accommodation costs;

- A Graduation Grant of £1000.00 to help you when you finish your course (provided once).

### **Returning to or resuming, education or training between the ages of 21 to 25**

You can also return to Croydon Children's Services at any point after your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and up to your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday if you want to resume or return to an education or training activity. Subject to an assessment of need, you may be entitled to a one-off grant or ongoing funding to support you with education, training or higher education.

## **Other allowances and benefits**

### **Birthday Allowance**

Young people who are in touch with their personal adviser and who are actively engaged in the pathway planning process are entitled to a £50.00 birthday allowance on their 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> birthday and £100.00 on your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

### **Key Documents**

In order to register for housing, open a bank account and claim any benefits you are entitled to, you will need a range of identity and key documents. Croydon Children's Services will pay for one copy of your Birth Certificate and one passport renewal up to £110.00, if you do not already have these documents.

If you have an unsettled immigration status, Croydon Children's Services will consider supporting you with legal fees to try to ensure you have a positive immigration status that allows you to remain in the UK and gives you access to public funds or service. The provision of this support is dependent on an assessment of need. In addition, you will be provided with a travel document, subject to an assessment of need.

### **Introduction to Driving**

If you have been in employment, education or training for a minimum of 3 months Croydon Children's Services will provide an allowance to cover one provisional driving licence, one theory test, one practical test and ten driving lessons as long as you match the cost of the ten lessons and you don't have any driving convictions.

### **Setting Up Home Allowance**

When you are setting up home, you will be eligible for a grant of up to £2,000 which is available up to the age of 25 to purchase essential household items and the costs will be up to:

- £1800.00 for expenses associated with setting up and equipping a new home;
- £157.50 for your first TV License;
- £80.00 for a health and safety pack;
- £40.00 for a home starter kit;
- £80.00 for your first contents insurance;
- £80.00 for cooker/washing machine connection costs. (Electrical and gas installation should only be undertaken by a registered and approved fitter);
- £100.00 for removal and transport costs (for your first move).

### **Returning for General Support between the Ages of 21 and 25**

You can return to Croydon Children's Services at any point after your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and up to your 25<sup>th</sup> birthday if you feel you need support. The leaving care team will



help you to access universal services and assess what support and help you need from organisations which may be able to help you.

### **Other Financial Needs**

Support may also be available to meet your particular health, religious, cultural or special needs and also in emergency situations. Your personal adviser will undertake an assessment with you to explore what you need and how it may be provided.

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Parenting Panel
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Review of Missing Children
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Nana Bonsu Head of Service for Systemic, Clinical Practice, Adolescent Services and Workforce Development
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Cllr Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning
<b>WARDS:</b>	All
<b>PUBLIC/EXEMPT:</b>	

## 1. REVIEW OF MISSING CHILDREN

### Background

#### Overall numbers

Between 1st January and 31st December 2020, 392 Croydon children were reported missing (including Croydon CLA placed out of borough). These children accounted for 2,628 missing episodes in this period. The number of missing episodes reported for 2020 is 15% lower than for 2019 (3095 missing episodes in 2019). The cohort of children where there are risks of child exploitation evidenced/suspected concerns, the following themes have been noted:

- 48% were discussed at Complex Adolescent Panel (CAP) in 2020 (190 out of 392 children).
- 1 in 3 children missing at least once in 2020 have been subject to MACE protocol (which is configured within the CAP) at some point since 1 April 2019 (34%; 133 out of 392 children).
- 1 in 4 children missing at least once in 2020 have been subject to MACE at some point since 1 April 2019 in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation concerns (mainly county lines drug dealing).
- The above is indicative of a clear correlation with exploitation and children who are missing.

#### Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on numbers

There is a direct link between a lower volume of missing episodes in 2020 and long periods of lockdown in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. If comparing the April-December periods of 2020 and 2019 (lockdown period started in 2020 back in late March 2020) – the reduction in missing episode numbers is more pronounced – 27% reduction for that period. Greater reductions in numbers logged during April 2020 (1st lockdown), November 2020 (2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown) and December 2020 (current 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown).

#### Croydon CLA missing in 2020 – Key insights

Croydon Children Looked After account for 79% of all the missing episodes recorded in 2020 (2074 out of 2628 missing episodes). Some key findings re: CLA missing cohort:

- 17yr olds account for 41% of all CLA missing episodes logged (1078 out of 2628 missing episodes).
- 16yr olds account for 28% of all CLA missing episodes logged (723 out of 2628 missing episodes)
- Therefore children aged 16+ account for 2/3's of all missing episodes.
- 55% of all the Croydon CLA missing episodes in 2020 related to children placed out of borough (1135 out of 2074 CLA missing episodes).
- 55% of all the Croydon CLA missing episodes in 2020 relate to children missing from Semi-Independent Placements.
- Of the 20-30 children repeatedly missing each month (3+ missing episodes started in month) around 85-90% are CLA.
- The above demonstrates that our CLA who are older, have an increased number of missing episodes.

### **Top 20 missing children – frequency of missing episodes**

The top 20 missing children in 2020 account for 38% of all missing episodes in period (998 out of 2628 missing episodes). Some key findings re: the top 20 repeat missing individuals:

- 100% CLA (20 out of 20).
- 60% Male (12 out of 20).
- 85% children from BAME backgrounds (17 out of 20).
- 14 Local/6 UASC children.
- 75% have at some point been subject to MACE Protocol due to evidenced risk of either CSE or CCE.
- 19 out of 20 have been discussed at Complex Adolescent Panel in this period
- 12 out of 20 have evidenced either recent/current CCE risk via MACE Protocol.
- This data demonstrates that our CAP has good oversight of risk and social workers are duly concerned to complete referrals.

### **Missing Episodes lasting longer than 7 days in duration**

- There were 162 missing episodes lasting longer than 7 days reported in 2020 – 80 children with at least one missing episode lasting longer than 7 days. Of these 80 children, 88% were discussed at Complex Adolescent Panel – with 66% being added to MACE Protocol.
- Again the above is indicative of the CAP having sufficient oversight of risk.

### **How do we compare to other authorities/London/Nationally re missing numbers?**

- Based on 2019-20 benchmarking data provided via ADCS CSC Benchmarking Tool – Key findings are CLA missing were:
  - 228 Croydon CLA missing during 2019-20 FY – compared to 86 for Statistical Neighbours (Average).

- Higher proportion of all Croydon CLA (20%) had at least one missing episode in 2019-20 FY compared with Stats Neighbours (13%), London (15%), and England (11%).
- Average number of missing episodes per looked after child reported missing during 2019-20 FY was higher for Croydon CLA (12 episodes per child) than stats neighbours (7 episodes per child), London (8 episodes per child) and England (7 episodes per child).
- We have to be mindful however we do not know the diligence of recording of our comparators, so direct comparisons regarding practice is unclear.

### **Children missing – engagement with Return Home Interview Process**

- In terms of RHIs 98% missing episodes occurring during 2020 where RHI was offered to child.
- RHI completion rate was 71% for missing episodes occurring during 2020 (where child returns from a missing episode and accepts RHI).
- However, RHI completion rate varies widely depending on age of child/where they are residing/type of placement for CLA:
  - CLA in Croydon – 77% (742 out of 960)
  - CLA out of borough – 64% (721 out of 1124)
  - CLA – In-House Fostering – 83% (253 out of 305)
  - CLA – Agency Fostering – 77% (417 out of 541)
  - CLA – Semi Independent Living – 64% (729 out of 1148)
  - CLA – Semi Independent Living – Out of Borough – 60% (436 out of 731)
  - CLA – Local Children – 65% (943 out of 1450)
  - CLA – Local Children – White British – 55% (182 out of 331)
  - CLA – Local Children – BAME – 68% (761 out of 1119)
  - CLA – UASC – 82% (520 out of 634)
  - CLA – UASC – Albanian – 84%(250 out of 297)
  - All – Male – 71% (922 out of 1294)
  - All – Female – 68% (541 out of 790)
  - All – Aged 12 or Under (78% 63 out of 81), 13-15 (77%; 419 out of 542), 16 (70%; 593 out of 844), 17 (69%; 807 out of 1174), 17 (last three months before 18 64%; 204 out of 319)
  - The data above indicates that if a young person is residing out of borough, is white British and aged 17, there is a less likelihood of a RHI being completed.

### **Ethnicity Disproportionality Findings – Missing/CE Data – 2020-21 Q1**

- Black Caribbean children disproportionately over-represented in relation to the below areas when compared against the Croydon Secondary School Population - Missing from Home episodes, Missing from Home children, Complex Adolescent Panel, Child Sexual Exploitation (via MACE) & Child Criminal Exploitation (via MACE).
- More pronounced disproportionality in relation to Black Caribbean males - Compared to 2019-20 FY –Black Caribbean males are becoming more disproportionately over-represented in all our vulnerable adolescent groups.

- White British females disproportionately over-represented in relation to the below areas when compared against Croydon Secondary School Population, Missing from Home episodes, Complex Adolescent Panel, Child Sexual Exploitation (via MACE)
- White British males under-represented in majority of vulnerable adolescent cohorts mapped compared against Croydon Secondary School Population.
- Albanian and Eritrean UASC children disproportionately over-represented in relation to missing episodes compared to the UASC CLA population.
- The disproportionality for Black Caribbean children on all indices of risk, is potentially informed by unhelpful racist ideas regarding crime and children from this ethnic background. These ideas will inevitably influence practice and we are aware of the need to address these. The systemic training, the foundation of our practice framework; is one means of doing so. The training enables self-reflexivity, curiosity, with attention to power and difference. The race equality board at a strategic level is also looking at matters pertaining to matters of racial discrimination and impact.
- In conjunction with this, one has to be mindful of social economic factors that adversely impact sections of the communities we serve and consider how well services are ameliorating these inequalities.

#### **Key Issues identified from the data**

- **Linked to the data above – the key issues Croydon currently faces in relation to missing children are:**
- **High volume of missing episodes/children despite pandemic lockdown (although lower than 2019).**
- **High proportion of all episodes for Croydon CLA.**
- **High proportion of Croydon missing children at risk of criminal exploitation.**
- **Practice issues to be addressed with regards to compliance in recording of missing risk assessment forms and missing strategy meetings.**
- **Top 20 repeat missing account for large volume of episodes.**
- **Issue with RHI compliance/engagement with CLA 17+/Semi Independent/Out of Borough placements.**
- **Over-reporting of CLA missing episodes via Emergency Duty Team**
  - Possible issue with over-reporting of CLA episodes via EDT – argument that thresholds are too low for some of these episodes to be reported as missing.
  - The challenge here is ensuring that every EDT notification regarding a CLA child is counted as missing. There is an expectation that the social worker can rectify this on CRS, if it transpires the young person was away from placement without authorisation. A current hypothesis is that social

workers are perhaps not rectifying the child's file and this accounts for an over inflation of recording.

- The culture of practice, whereby placements are only contacting CSC via EDT and not police adds to a challenge with accurate reporting.
- Operation Philomena, a joint initiative by the police and social care, is in place to encourage placements to take more responsibility in their corporate parenting in undertaking an assessment when children and young people are missing from placements, to discourage a reliance and responsibility being held by CSC and the police.
- Operation Philomena Initiative needs to continue to gain momentum. This is a joint initiative with our police colleagues to encourage placements to make use of 'grab packs'. Social workers should ensure that every child placed, where this is appropriate the placement has completed a 'grab pack'.

### **High volume of Other LA CLA missing from Croydon based placements**

- The great unknown – initial findings suggest around 150 additional missing episodes each month linked to Other LA CLA residing in Croydon.
- Need a process map for analysing OLA CLA data including DPIA update.

### **Ethnicity disproportionality across repeat missing/long duration and CE cohorts via CAP/MACE**

- **Black Caribbean children over-represented in all CE/Missing cohorts** compared to resident/LAC teenage populations
- Albanians over-represented (missing episodes)
- (Disproportionality, against resident populations)

### **Options/Recommendations**

- These recommendations will need to be overseen in tandem with a broader scope of practice development as a result of the realignment of the adolescent service. Analysis needs to be undertaken of the top 20 children who have been missing for a long duration and cross reference this analysis with the VAR undertaken. It is possible that recurrent themes may be indicative of changes needed in practice improvement and resource alignment.
- Encouraging greater mobilisation of Operation Philomena protocol to reduce a potential inflated number of reported missing episodes to police/EDT. It is important that regardless of the type of placement a young person resides in, there is agreed expectations regarding curfew times and the process of contacts to be made to try and ascertain the young person's whereabouts. These arrangements will need to be ongoing collaborative conversations with young people that are subject to reviews.
- Changing the threshold for a CLA episode to be regarded as missing – cut down on over-reporting CLA 17+ short episodes as missing

- Change the process for RHIs being administered for Out of Borough CLA – less spot purchasing more case ownership from social workers. Identify specific young people where the data is clearly indicating concerns with respect of missing, with an outreach approach privileging relationships as a means of addressing matters of risks.
- Revise the RHI interview template so that key data is reportable and insights can be gathered quickly rather than a manual trawl. Deciphering information to ascertain trends is key in early identification of needs.
- Amalgamate the missing/CE risk assessment/CAP forms so that social workers can complete one form rather than several to evidence/update on risks.
- Refresher training on Missing strategy meeting forms/discussion – emphasise the importance of these meetings taking place, even if the police are not able to attend. Workshops are imminently to be rolled out to all managers to consider themes and best practice with respect to matters pertaining to missing and exploitation.
- CAP/MACE to have oversight of all CE/missing risk regardless of placement in or out of the borough.
- Consideration of 17+ CLA panel – maybe slightly different to CAP with focus/membership around transition to leaving care/housing/adult services /18-25 CAP.
- Consider utilising more voluntary sector/regional resources for missing/CE given the local financial constraints.
- Ethnicity disproportionality findings to be reviewed as part of the race equalities board.
- Engage the views of our young people as a means of enabling them to be collaborators with respect to best practice guidelines.

**CONTACT OFFICER** Nana Bonsu

Head of Service for Systemic, Clinical Practice, Adolescent Services and Workforce Development



# Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme 2020/21

Meeting date	Wed 1 July 20 <b>CANCELLED</b>	Tues 29 Sept <b>RESCHEDULED</b>	Wed 11 Nov <b>POSTPONED</b> Held – 24 Nov	Thurs 10 Dec <b>NEW</b>	Wed 13 Jan 21	Wed 3 Mar	Wed 28 Apr
Theme	SUFFICIENCY	EDUCATION	HEALTH	SUFFICIENCY	ADOPTION	CARE LEAVERS	FOSTERING
Item	Terms of Reference	Exam Results Exclusion SEN	Initial Health Assessment and Review Health Assessment Report	<del>Residential Care (Part B paper – Regulation 34)</del> [Move to March?]	Summary of ASL Adoption activity	Care Leavers and Support for Care Leavers	Annual Report of Fostering Service and Panel  Statement of Purpose
Officer							
Item	<del>Residential Care (Part B paper – 34 Regulation)</del>	Mentoring and Careers guidance for LAC an CL Mentoring and IV work	Update on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Offer for Children Looked After	Update on the South London Commissioning Programme (Service/Strategy)	Croydon Social Care update on children with a plan for adoption	Leaving Care Offer and pledge	Recruitment and Deregistration
Officer							
Item	Update on the South Commissioning Programme	Engagement Achievement (inc. complaints and leaving opportunities)	CIC Performance Scorecard	IRO Annual Report	CIC Performance Scorecard	CIC Performance Scorecard	Review of Fostering Services Escalation Policy for Foster Carers
Officer							
Item	IRO Annual Report	Annual Report of Virtual School	Annual Report of Corporate Parenting (19/20)	CIC Performance Scorecard	Renewal Plan and the Impact on Children	Missing Children	CIC Performance Scorecard
Officer							
Item	CIC Performance Scorecard	CIC Performance Scorecard		Children's Social Care Placement Sufficiency			Annual Report of Corporate Parenting Panel
Officer							
Item							

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