

You will be asked to evidence your spend with receipts. If you are unable to do this, future support will be supervised spend.

Birthday allowance is £50 and there is a festival gift of £50, usually paid in December but, dependent on your culture, can be paid at a different time.

All of the above support ceases after your 21st birthday.

We will pay the cost of obtaining one passport for you (either new or renewal) and your provisional driving licence. If your licence is lost we will not pay for a replacement.

We will help towards the cost of Optician/Dentist if this is agreed in advance of any treatment. If you are on benefits, treatment is usually free. Please talk to your worker who will check if we can help.

We will help you to stay in touch with your family. Please discuss with your worker, who will check your plans and how often to agree to support you with travel warrants, bus fares etc.

All of the above support should be identified in your Pathway Plan so you can be clear what has been agreed and remind yourself what is promised by us.

Eligibility for support depends on age and legal status.

If you are not sure of your 'status' i.e. eligible, relevant, qualifying or former relevant young person, please ask your worker to explain.

Eligible - are those young people still in care aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14

Relevant—are young people aged 16 and 17 who have already left care and who were looked after for (a total of) at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and have been looked after at some time while 16 or 17

Former Relevant—are young people aged 18-21 who have been eligible and/or relevant Children in Care who were looked after by a Local Authority either through a compulsory Care Order or remanded/accommodated by voluntary agreement under Section 20 of the Children Act

Qualifying - Are young people 16+ and under 21 and Subject to Special Guardianship order (or was up to 18) having been in care immediately before the order or Was looked after (in care), accommodated or fostered at any time after age 16 while still a child. Discretionary financial support may be provided on the basis of assessed needs, in which case a pathway plan should be drawn up and reviewed as long as support is provided. The Local Authority must consider whether the young person needs help of a kind they can give such as— Advise and befriend, give assistance, help with education, training costs and vacation costs

**The support outlined in this leaflet is reviewed annually and is subject to change.
Last reviewed 1st September 2014.**

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This leaflet gives you the finance available to you upon becoming a Care Leaver. The financial support will be based on your assessed needs and set out in your Pathway Plan. You can obtain a full copy of the Finance Policy by using the contact details on the back page of this leaflet.

Below is outlined the support for Bath and North East Somerset Council Care Leavers. If you are not sure of your former relevant young person, please ask your worker to explain.

Maintenance (money for food, bills etc.)

AIM – to give you financial help if you are under 18 years old and living semi independently or independently.

We will be encouraging you to stay or go back into education or find training or work as part of our support plan. We will pay maintenance at the current Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) rate unless you are in receipt of benefits e.g. you are a parent. If you are working, your wage will be taken into account but we will always make sure you are better off and rewarded for working.

If you are looking for work, your worker will support you to find opportunities and may ask you to see a skills and engagement worker to also help. If you cannot evidence what you have been doing to find work, or you refuse opportunities, you will be asked to see your worker or skills worker before you receive your money. When we are concerned about how you are using your money, your support may then be in the form of food vouchers.

When you are about to turn 18, your worker will help you apply for Income Support (IS) and Housing Benefit (HB) if you are in education. It will be JSA/HB if you are not in education or employment. HB should help cover your accommodation costs. If you're working it might still be worthwhile to ask for a HB assessment to see if they will help pay some of your costs. When you are 18 you will have the responsibility of paying your rent whether you are 'staying put' with your carer, in supported lodgings, or in your own place.

Whilst waiting for benefits to come through, you will need to evidence to your worker that you have done everything necessary to progress your claim in order for us to keep financially supporting you e.g. by signing on. You can sign a letter allowing us to talk to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on your behalf.

Young people serving custodial sentences aged 16-21, may be sent up to £10 per week towards the costs of phone calls/toiletries.

Emergency and Exceptional Payments

AIM – to help you when you have not managed or have unexpected costs.

There will be a limit to this help. **If you are eligible to apply for benefits but haven't done so we will not provide an emergency or exceptional payment until you have started a claim.**

Help can be provided as money or food vouchers, food bank vouchers or supervised spending. Your worker will want to look at budgeting with you and help you to manage better in the future.

If your benefits have been stopped (sanctioned) by the DWP you will need to see your worker or the skills and engagement worker to agree a plan for us to help you.

You may be offered work experience through the skills and engagement worker which you will be expected to attend in order to continue to get our help.

Education

AIM – to support you to achieve your best and to equip you with skills for employment.

Your worker will help you access the financial support offered by Colleges to Care Leavers such as reduced course fees and access to bursaries. If you are over 19 and the College has stopped paying the bursary, we will pay it instead. We will want to check you are attending and progressing and able to succeed on the course.

If you have to pay more than £600 travelling to College in an academic year, we will pay the rest provided we have agreed on the cheapest way to get to College.

If you are going to University, your worker can help you apply for student loans and grants. If you let the University know you are a Care Leaver, they may give you a bursary plus access to other funds to reduce fees etc.

After you have registered for each academic year for University, we will give you a £2000 bursary. Payments may be made over the academic year rather than a one off. In addition we will give you maintenance (at JSA rates) and rent in the University holidays. We use the holiday dates taken from the University's website. We will provide you with travel costs at the start and end of each term if needed.

If you plan to return to education and training when you are between 21 to 25, you can contact us and ask for an assessment to consider support. We will then create with you a Post 21 Pathway Plan which will focus on:

- * You have a reasonable prospect of completing the course successfully
- * The course is likely to significantly improve your employability
- * Bursaries, grants and loans have been thoroughly explored from all sources including charities.

If support is agreed for further education or higher education, the level will be based on a case by case basis. Where higher education has been agreed, the support will be the same as those under 21.

Savings

AIM – to give you money for extra help after turning 18

We have a savings scheme for you to access after you are 18. Your worker will help you plan how to use the money.

We have agreed in the past to pay for driving lessons, (this can be agreed at 17), gap year travel, and equipment for a course, career/hobby or leisure interest. Any requests need to be agreed by the Team Manager. If you have any savings left when our service to you is ending, this will be given to you. (Some Care Leavers will be in an old savings scheme so may access a different amount. Please ask your worker for the amount you may be due).

Leaving Care Grant/Setting Up Home Allowance

AIM – to help you set yourself up in your own place.

An allowance of £2,000 is available for you when moving into independent living. The purpose of the allowance is to buy essential items for setting up home. The grant is a one off allowance, if you move home you will not receive another grant. Additionally, there is a further £500 for you in reserve to help with unexpected costs or special items.

If you have been in Higher Education over 21 and have not used the allowance, you can access it up to the age of 25 if you are moving into independence and needing essential items to set up home.

Housing Options – Social Housing

Care Leavers in Bath and North East Somerset can currently bid for social housing in Band B. For most Careleavers this eligibility lasts until age 21. After 21 it is at the discretion of the Housing Options Manager.

Housing Costs, Council Tax & Utility Bills

AIM – to help you learn to budget and manage your finances in your first year living independently.

We will pay up to £150 towards your Council Tax Bill in your first year of tenancy if you are liable to pay a contribution.

We will pay £150 towards the cost of your first year of tenancy/living independently. Help will be paid in instalments on your key/token/bill and not all at once and just for your first year of tenancy.

Rents and deposits can be paid for Care Leavers when it is agreed you need to secure suitable accommodation.

Birthdays & Festival & Clothing Allowance & Contact & Identity & Health

AIM – to help you celebrate important occasions, help you to budget for clothing, support you in staying in touch with your family.

You will be given a clothing allowance (per annum):

£300 at age 16 and 17
£200 at 18
£150 at 19