

Staying Put Arrangements

Young Person's Guide



Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The local authority responsible for their care should make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need, which will include offering them more than one chance as they grapple with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood.

*The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3:
Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers*

Leaving Care

From 18 years of age, young people are no longer legally 'cared for'. Whilst your social worker, personal advisor, foster carer and other people will talk to you about what support you may need and will prepare you to leave care, this can be a difficult time, and not everyone is ready to leave care when they are 18 years of age.

Young people develop family relationships with their Foster Carers and want to continue to have the same support that other young people have when they leave their family.

What is a Staying Put Arrangement?

'Staying Put' supports young people leaving care to continue to live with their foster carer/s when they reach 18 years of age. This would be a decision for you **and** your Foster Carer.

Not everyone can be considered for a 'Staying Put' arrangement. The Government has decided that young people who were an 'eligible child' or cared for and placed with a foster carer, can continue to live with that carer after 18 years of age.

An 'eligible child' is someone who is cared for by the Local Authority, is aged 16 or 17 years and has been cared for, for a total of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 years. These young people are eligible for support as a care leaver. Once a young person becomes 18 years they are known in law as a 'former relevant child'. It doesn't matter how long the young person has been living with the foster carer, even if it is only for a short period of time, but it is important that when a child or young person moves to live with a foster carer, 'Staying Put' arrangements should be considered as a possibility for the future.

It doesn't matter whether your foster carer/s are Local Authority foster carer/s, family or friend foster carer/s, foster carers who receive a skill based payment to meet your needs or foster carer/s from an Independent Fostering Agency.

Your social worker will discuss 'Staying Put' with you and will include information in your Pathway Plan.

As you will not be 'cared for' after your 18th birthday, the foster placement changes to a 'Staying Put' arrangement, and the you are effectively lodging in the carer's home, who becomes a landlord, but the nature of the support and relationship with your carer will not change. The rules of the house will stay the same but you will need to talk to the carer and social worker and agree whether there are other things that you need to agree to, as you will be 18 years of age.

'Staying Put' arrangements can continue until you are 21 years of age or stop living in the household before that time. If you leave your 'Staying Put' arrangement for any reason, you can return but this will impact the support provided. This is explained later in this guidance.

Rochdale has a duty to monitor and support all 'Staying Put' arrangements, and this will include financial support.

Why should I have a 'Staying Put' arrangement

"I am now part of the staying put agenda and that has enabled me to stay put with my foster carers that I was living with before I was eighteen. This has helped me to stay on at college and to continue to reach my goals. My carers are really supportive of what I want to do. Being able to stay put has meant pretty much everything to me. If I had gone independent at eighteen I wouldn't have lasted and would have had to go back to my parents which wouldn't have worked out. I wouldn't have

progressed as a person and I would have had different prospects.”
Young Person

There are lots of reasons why you may want to remain with your former foster carer/s. There are no additional rules about who can have a 'Staying Put' arrangement. The 'Staying Put' arrangement supports young people to develop maturity, skills and confidence and help with a gradual transition to adulthood and independent living. 'Staying Put' arrangements make sure young people don't have a sudden disruption to their living arrangement and have the support they need to continue to achieve in education or employment in support they need in making the right decisions for them at the right time.

The Children's Partnership spoke to a number of young people and asked what it was they wanted. They said they wanted: -

- To be listened to regarding their thoughts and wishes.
- To keep lines of communication open, and let their thoughts and feelings be known.
- To ask for help when needed rather than letting things build up.
- To receive emotional support from the carers, with the carers in turn being properly supported.
- To keep mutual respect for each other including each other's belongings, space and privacy.
- To be given increased responsibility.
- Carers to receive training to teach young people independent living skills like budgeting, cooking and managing bills.
- To have regular meetings between the young person, their personal adviser and staying put carer to talk about what is going well or not so well, and any extra support needs.
- Training for everyone involved in the process, including young people.
- A support worker who knows all about staying put.
- A named person who understands the benefits system.

Planning a 'Staying Put' Arrangement

In order to decide whether a 'Staying Put' arrangement is what you and your carer/s want, it is important that you get clear information at an early stage. This should be something that is discussed on a regular basis by your social worker and in your review meetings. The possibility of 'Staying Put' arrangements should be considered when a decision is made about the foster carer/s you will be living with. It doesn't matter how long you have lived with your foster carer/s, but if you are aged 15 years plus then it is important that discussions start as soon as possible.

There are lots of things to consider therefore it is important that both you and your foster carer/s are aware of what is involved. The decision is not just with you, it is important that your foster carer/s is part of the discussions and receives support from their supervising social worker.

Your social worker is responsible for completing a Leaving Care Assessment of Need within 3 months of your 16th birthday or if you didn't become cared for until after your 16th birthday, within 3 months of the date you became cared for.

The Leaving Care Assessment of Need identifies the support you need in preparing for becoming an adult and working towards living independently. The Assessment of Need will consider what you need to move towards independence and when. You will be involved in the Assessment of Need and your wishes and feelings should be clearly recorded. You will receive a copy of this assessment, which will be used to develop your Pathway Plan. If your circumstances change significantly it may

be necessary to undertake a further Leaving Care Assessment of Need to make sure that you have the right support you need.

Some of the questions or issues which will be discussed are: -

- Do you wish to consider Staying Put?
- Is it likely that you will fit the criteria for Staying Put when you reach your 18th birthday?
- Have your individual support needs been considered in full?
- Do you and your Foster Carer/s understand the criteria for, and associated procedures for extending a foster placement into a Staying Put arrangement?
- Do you understand the financial and benefit responsibilities associated with remaining in a Staying Put arrangement?
- Does your Foster Carer/s understand the changes in their funding arrangements associated with a Staying Put arrangement?
- Does your Foster Carer/s understand the impact of a Staying Put arrangement on their welfare benefit income and on their Income Tax and National Insurance responsibilities and liabilities?
- Are your Foster Carer/s aware of the amount which would be paid, from whom (including the young person's contribution) and what it would cover i.e. fee element, additional discretionary payments, payments to the young person, costs of the carer supporting the young person?
- Is your Foster Carer/s aware of when payments would be reviewed and would cease?
- Is your Foster Carer/s aware what would happen if you were away from home for a temporary period, i.e. university or on holiday?
- Are you and your foster carer/s aware of what would happen if you temporarily lost your entitlement to benefits due to a sanction?
- Are your Foster Carer/s aware how payments will affect benefit entitlement, tax liabilities and Council Tax discount if applicable
- Is your Foster Carer/s aware of how their learning and development needs will be supported and addressed?
- Is your Foster Carer/s aware of where to get advice including independent advice?
- What is likely to happen to the Foster Carer's registration as a carer
- What advice, assistance and support is required to facilitate and maintain a 'Staying Put' arrangement in the future, and who will co-ordinate and provide this?
- What specialist advice and support will be in place for you due to special needs, vulnerability or disability?
- What are the contingency arrangements for you, should the Staying Put arrangement not be possible for whatever reason?

Staying Put Meeting

A 'Staying Put' meeting will be held as part of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need, which will ensure that both you and your foster carer/s understand what a 'Staying Put' arrangement would mean to you and make some early decisions. Both you and your foster carer can change your mind in the future if circumstances change. Your social worker and personal advisor would attend as would the foster carer's supervising social worker. You may want other people to attend for example your Independent Reviewing Officer, a member of your family or your advocate. A member of the Commissioning Team may be invited if you are living with Independent Fostering Agency foster carer/s as well as someone from the Independent Fostering Agency. It might be a good idea to have two meetings if you don't want these people to attend your meeting.

The 'Staying Put' Meeting will talk about your wishes and views, your foster carer/s wishes and views, what support you need for example budgeting, benefits, cooking and what support is already in place. If you need more support this will also be discussed and agree how the support will be provided. The meeting will identify who is going to do what, and when they will do it. For example the foster carer/s will receive financial assistance to pay for the 'Staying Put' arrangement, however this will be paid from a number of sources, including Children's Services, Benefit Agency and you.

The meeting will also need to discuss what will be expected of you and whether there are any rules that may change. It is important that both you and your foster carer/s are able to discuss this and are supported in developing an agreement. This is called a 'Living Together' Agreement and is explained later in this guidance.

Finally, if the meeting agrees that a 'Staying Put' arrangement is a positive option, this will be recorded in your Pathway Plan. The 'Staying Put' Meeting will agree the date of the next meeting and when you will have the 'Staying Put' Progress Meeting. These don't have to be extra meetings but could fit in with care planning meetings or reviews that are already taking place.

Remember neither you nor your foster carer/s have to make a final decision at this time. It is important therefore to think about what you would want to do if you were not going to remain with your foster carer/s. These are called contingency plans.

The meeting may decide that a 'Staying Put' arrangement will not go ahead. This could be because you don't think it is right for you, the foster carer/s don't think it is right for them or Children's Services don't think it is in your best interests. If it is felt that the 'Staying Put' arrangement is not able to meet your needs, you could be given the opportunity to move to a foster carer who could then offer the support you need and a 'Staying Put' arrangement could be planned. It is rare that Children's Services would think that a foster placement would not be suitable as a 'Staying Put' arrangement, and the reasons will be explained to you and put in writing. You may wish to appeal against this decision and this will be explained later in this guidance.

Whatever the decision of the meeting, you can change your mind at any time. Your foster carer/s will still have an important role to play in supporting you towards gaining the skills and knowledge you will need to become more mature and prepare you for adulthood and independence.

Staying Put Progress Meeting

A 'Staying Put' Progress Meeting will be arranged by your social worker around your 17th birthday to review the support you have received and the plans to have a 'Staying Put' arrangement following your 18th birthday. This meeting should take place after the second to last Cared for Children Review before your 18th birthday.

If you or your foster carer/s were unsure about a 'Staying Put' arrangement, this won't stop ongoing discussions during visits and reviews.

The Staying Put Progress Meeting will consider how you have progressed and whether a 'Staying Put' arrangement is still what you and your foster carer/s want.

The people attending the Staying Put Progress Meeting should be you, your social worker and personal advisor, your foster carer/s and their supervision social worker. You may want other people to attend, for example your Independent Reviewing Officer, family member or advocate. If you are living with an Independent Fostering Agency Foster Carer, someone from the Commissioning

Team and the Independent Fostering Agency will need to be involved but the meeting could be held in two parts if you don't want to be involved in that bit of the meeting.

The Staying Put Progress Meeting will cover what was discussed at the Staying Put Meeting and check what has happened since. It will make sure that everyone has up to date information and understands that is involved in a 'Staying Put' arrangement. Discussions will have been ongoing between these meetings with both you and your foster carer/s and this meeting will make sure that you are clear about the information shared and pull this together into a more formal agreement, for example in respect of financial support and a 'Living Together' agreement.

Living Together Agreement

All 'Staying Put' arrangements must be supported by a written agreement or a 'living together' agreement. This agreement is developed between you, your carer, your social worker and personal advisor and the supervising social worker for the carer. The agreement covers the ground rules and expectations about you and your 'Staying Put' carer.

Many of these issues will not be new to you, as you will have been living by the 'house rules' for some time but there may be some changes once you are an adult, therefore the agreement will cover what will stay the same and what, if anything will change. The agreement could be part of your Pathway Plan or it could be a separate document. You don't have to call it a 'Living Together' agreement however you will need to have some form of agreement which will provide evidence of the 'Staying Put' arrangement, what rent has been set, what is being provided, for example meals, heating and lighting et cetera. This will be very important if you wish to claim Housing Benefit.

The agreement can include anything that you and your carer feel is important, but there are some things that need to be included, for example if the 'Staying Put' carer is also continuing to be a foster carer, you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check because you are over 18 years of age. You will need to agree to this check and understand what it means for you.

Some of the things that might be included in your agreement are listed below but this should be developed over time and with your carer, to make sure that you both know what is expected of you.

For example: -

- The time you will return home by at night
- Whether friends, family and partners can visit or stay at the address
- Whether you can stay out overnight, is this by agreement, with whom, how many nights (Remember the financial support provided to your carer may be affected if you are not living in the home on a consistent basis)
- Attending education, training or being in employment – not staying at home all day
- Swearing
- Drinking alcohol inside and outside the home
- Smoking inside the home
- Health arrangements and appointments
- Your behaviour if there are other younger children in the home – you may be expected to be a positive role model
- How your room should be kept – clean and tidy
- Doing your own washing and ironing
- Whether meals are provided or you are expected to cook for yourself and / or others
- Jobs around the house for example vacuuming, washing dishes, shopping et cetera.

- DBS check to be completed and updated as required
- Whether you are allowed a Pet
- Ensuring that you paying rent on time and regularly
- Notifying the carer of damage or things that are broken
- Paying for loss or damage to furniture or belongings in the home
- Making use of the support provided
- Keeping to the agreement
- Moving on arrangements
- What notice period you would need to give if you wanted to move on.

What happens next?

Once you and your carer have agreed that you want a 'Staying Put' arrangement and your social worker has also agreed that this is in your best interests, you will need to develop your 'Living Together' agreement. You will also have a licence agreement, which is specifically about your 'Staying Put' arrangement and will also help you if you need to claim for benefits. These agreements make sure that all the arrangements are clearly recorded.

The social worker will then take all the relevant information to the Placement Panel after the Staying Put Progress Meeting and request that your foster placement continues into a 'Staying Put' arrangement. The Placement Panel may ask for more information in order to make a decision, and will set a review date for the social worker to return and provide that additional information. It is therefore important that the social worker presents your information and that you and your carer get a decision as soon as possible to help you plan for your future.

The Placement Panel will approve the 'Staying Put' arrangement once they are confident that everything has been considered and it is in your best interests. They will set a further review period within 6 months of you becoming 18 years of age to make sure that everything is working in your best interests.

Where the social worker does not believe that a 'Staying Put' arrangement is in your best interest this will also be presented to the Placement Panel, as they make the final decision. As you are 18 years of age, you could still reside in your former foster carer's home however this would not be a 'Staying Put' arrangement and Children's Services would not financially support you or your carer/s. You would still receive support in other aspects of your care leaver's status.

Whatever the outcome of the Placement Panel you will receive a letter advising you of their decision. If you are not happy with the decision you can appeal by speaking to your Independent Reviewing Officer and requesting a review of your Pathway Plan. You can access an independent advocate if you feel this would be helpful. All complaints from young people are treated seriously and will be investigated according to the Procedure. You will have been given information about the **Complaint Procedure** as part of your ongoing support from your social worker.

Your Independent Reviewing Officer will ensure throughout you being cared for, that you aware of your options, rights and have the opportunity to contribute your wishes and feelings. They will also monitor your Pathway Plan and ensure that it clearly sets out what support you should be receiving and where you will be living following your 18th birthday.

At the final cared for children review before your 18th birthday, the Independent Reviewing Officer will review all of the information gathered in the Leaving Care Assessment of Need, Pathway Plan, Staying Put Meeting, Staying Put Progress Meeting, care planning meetings and your Living Together

and Licence agreement and ensure that the right information, guidance and support has been provided to both you and your carer/s. They will also discuss your contingency plans. This is not because they don't feel that the 'Staying Put' arrangement is not appropriate, but because they want to make sure that you have options should you or your carer decide that the 'Staying Put' arrangement is not for you.

Financial Arrangements and Support

Children's Services fully supports foster carers becoming 'Staying Put' carers and will continue to provide financial support to cover reasonable costs to support you staying with them. Former foster carer/s shouldn't be financially disadvantaged by being a 'Staying Put' carer. However once you are 18 years of age there may be other types of financial assistance, which can be claimed or used to help the 'Staying Put' carer for example, Housing Benefit and contributions from you.

The 'Staying Put' carer will be financially supported equivalent to the rate they were paid when they were a foster carer minus the pocket money and clothing allowance element, which you will be responsible for.

The different financial assistance will start on your 18th birthday unless you are still in Year 13 of education, are 18 years in that academic year and are due to take final examinations. The new financial assistance will not start until 2 weeks after your final exam.

Depending on your circumstances you may need to apply for Benefits to support you whilst you seek employment. You will be supported to make a claim for Benefits but not until you have finished your examinations. Whether you are claiming Benefits, in employment or attending University or a Higher Education Course you will be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of your 'Staying Put' arrangement.

If you join the Army or attend University and are away from your 'Staying Put' arrangement for a period of time, your carer will be paid a retainer fee to ensure that your home remains available to you, for example when you are on leave or during holiday periods at University. You will not be expected to contribute towards a retainer fee.

Benefits

The guide below has been published to support you understanding what you are entitled to claim.



There are some complicated arrangements, which are affected by whether your 'Staying Put' carer/s are in receipt of benefits or in employment. This affects the type of 'Staying Put' arrangement. Your social worker will explain this information to you depending on your circumstances and that of your 'Staying Put' arrangements.

Universal Credit replaces Jobseekers's Allowance (JSA), Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Income Support and is due to be introduced in Rochdale in 2014. Information regarding Universal Credit can be obtained from the following website <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

Until Universal Credit is introduced, you could be entitled to claim the following Benefits: -

- Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) <https://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance>
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/overview>
- Income Support <https://www.gov.uk/income-support/how-to-claim>
- Disability Benefits <https://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled> including Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Industrial Injuries Benefit and Constant Attendance Allowance. You may also be entitled to extra support regarding exemption from paying vehicle tax, parking (Blue Badge), disabled person's bus pass or railcard and help to buy or lease a car from the Motability Scheme. If you need care and support services you may be entitled to Direct Payments or Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Housing Benefit <https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit/further-information>

Depending on the circumstances of the "Staying Put" carer/s, you will be expected to claim Housing Benefit from your 18th birthday. Your social worker, personal advisor or carer will help you with this. If you are granted Housing Benefit, this may be paid directly to Children's Services to fund the accommodation element of the 'Staying Put' arrangement.

If your former foster carer is a family member you are not able to claim Housing Benefit. If your 'Staying Put' carer/s is claiming means tested benefit, you will not be expected to claim Housing Benefit. All young people are required to claim housing benefit if their "Staying Put" carers are not claiming a means tested benefit. If you are working part-time, and do not claim a means tested personal benefit you will need to claim housing benefit. Earnings over a certain amount will result in a reduction of housing benefit, which will need to be made up by a contribution from you. Housing Benefit will not be paid for heating, hot water, energy or food.

Where a 'Staying Put' carer is in receipt of a means tested benefit you will not be expected to claim Housing Benefit as the carer is not able to set a commercial rent. The rent element of 'Staying Put' arrangement would be funded by the Children's Services under S23C therefore the carer's benefits are not affected. Where a 'Staying Put' carer is not in receipt of means tested benefits, you are able to claim Housing Benefit without impacting on the 'Staying Put' carers.

Your carer/s, social worker or personal advisor will help you to understand the rules around Housing Benefit and making a claim if you are entitled. Your social worker or personal advisor will also confirm to the Housing Benefit Team that you are liable to pay rent. The amount of rent for your 'Staying Put' arrangement will be included in the 'Living Together' agreement and Licence Agreement, identifying the full cost of the rent and the cost of your meals and utilities (heating, hot water and lighting), which is explained later in this guidance. Your contributions will also be set out in these agreements and will depend on your circumstances.

Your 'Staying Put' arrangement will provide all meals (full board basis, including breakfast, lunch and evening meal), which will impact the level of support you are entitled to. This is based on you being a 'boarder' in the 'Staying Put' arrangement.

There are some situations where the Local Authority may treat you as if you are not responsible for paying rent, even though you have to pay it and you will not get Housing Benefit. For example, if you have a rental agreement and the Local Authority thinks this is non-commercial because it is not legally enforceable; you pay rent to a close relative who lives in the home; to a former partner or where the Local Authority believe the rent has been set up only to get Housing Benefit, that is you

are taking advantage. This can relate to an adult living in someone else's home who is not a tenant or a boarder.

http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/scotland/benefits_s/benefits_help_if_on_a_low_income_s/help_with_your_rent_-_housing_benefit.htm#when_you_will_be_treated_as_not_paying_rent

If you are a student in full time education, you cannot usually claim Housing Benefit, unless you are aged 21 years and on a course below degree level, are in receipt of Income Support, ESA or JSA, get Universal Credit (unless this already includes an amount for housing), are a single parent or are disabled. You can claim if you are a part time student. If you are attending Higher Education the following link may help: - [Financial support for higher education students](#)

The Housing Benefit Guidance discusses commercial and non-commercial arrangements. In order to make a decision regarding Housing Benefit, the Local Authority must consider whether there is a rent liability. In order to evidence that you are liable to pay rent, you would need to provide a tenancy agreement, rent book, your previous address, whether there is a shortfall in rent, whether you are related to the landlord. The Living Together and Licence Agreements will provide the evidence. Once the Local Authority decides that you are liable to pay rent, they then need to decide whether it is one of a commercial nature, and will need to know whether you have tried to pay any portion of the rent, you have received an arrears / eviction notification, you have paid any of the shortfall, you applied for a pre tenancy determination, look at any other properties for let, have an up to date rent book, how many people occupy the property, whether services are provided, whether you socialise or dine with your landlord, that is whether the relationship is more akin to family relationships as opposed to an arm's length commercial agreement.

It is therefore important that a licence agreement and living together agreement is completed and that you seek a pre tenancy determination to explain your circumstances very clearly and prove the 'Staying Put' arrangement. The rent should be set at a reasonable level. The 'Staying Put' arrangement is recognised as good practice and there is no intention to abuse the Housing Benefit System.

If you have been awarded a payment or have savings above a certain amount of money this will affect whether you are able to claim Housing Benefit. You are also not entitled to Housing Benefit if you are an asylum seeker.

Housing Benefit can be claimed up to 13 weeks in advance, for example in respect of a planned move. Housing Benefit can pay for part or all of the rent; the amount will depend on your income and circumstances.

If you were in receipt of benefits and obtain a job, start working more hours or earn more money, some of your benefits may stop, but Housing Benefit could carry on for an extra 4 weeks if you have received certain benefits continuously for at least 26 weeks up to the time you started work. There is also 'In work Housing Benefit' which could be considered.

In setting the level of rent, the Local Authority will base this on the Local Housing Allowance rate for a room in a shared house, excluding meals/food and utilities. In 2014 the rent would be at the following rates, excluding meals and utilities: -

Heywood	£46.80 per week
Middleton	£66.62 per week
Rochdale	£57.75 per week

This is based on the Local Housing Allowance rate for a room in a shared house. These figures are to help calculate the financial assistance to be paid. You will still need to make a claim for Housing Benefit and depending on your circumstances and that of your 'Staying Put' carer/s the figures may go up or down. The cost of meals (based on full board, that is breakfast, lunch and evening meal being provided) is £26.55 and for utilities (that relates to heating, hot water and lighting) it is £36.15.

There is a benefit cap limit, which affects the maximum amount you can receive from the age of 16 to 24 years. Not all benefits are affected, however Carer's Allowance, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance (unless the support component is paid), Housing Benefit, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support, JSA, Maternity Allowance and Severe Disablement Allowance are affected. In 2014 the benefit cap is

- £500 per week for couples – with or without children living with them
- £500 per week for single parents who children live with them
- £350 per week for single adults who don't have children, or whose children don't live with them

This may mean the amount paid for certain benefits will be reduced to ensure that the total amount is not more than the cap level. There are some exceptions to this and the website link above will help to find out how you are affected.

If the Local Authority supports your 'Staying Put' carer under Section 23C of the Children Act 1989, this is disregarded when calculating the carer's entitlement to means tested benefit, as long as you continue to live as a member of your former foster carer's family under a 'Staying Put' arrangement under a non-commercial basis. This doesn't apply if it is a commercial arrangement

You may need to make a claim in relation to Council Tax, but this depends on your 'Staying Put' carers circumstances. If the 'Staying Put' carers are not claiming Council Tax benefit and pay full Council Tax, the 'Staying Put' arrangement will not affect their Council Tax Liability, however you should submit a claim for Council Tax Benefit for administrative purposes. If the 'Staying Put' carer is working and in receipt of the 25% single person reduction, this may continue in respect of a 'Staying Put' arrangement and you are a student, you will be counted as 'invisible' in regard to the 'Staying Put' carer's discount. Where the 'Staying Put' carer is working and in receipt of the 25% single person reduction, and you are not counted as 'invisible', a Second Adult Rebate could be considered, which compensates people who lose a 25% single person discount when a low income person moves in.

If the 'Staying Put' carer/s are in receipt of Council Tax benefit, and a commercial rate is charged in respect of the 'Staying Put' arrangements, the carer's benefits are likely to be impacted. In certain circumstances you may be treated as a Non-Dependent in terms of the "Staying Put" carers Council Tax Benefit. If this is the case there are set amounts of non-dependent deductions or (NDD's) that are deducted from Council Tax Benefit according to age, status and income.

Your Contributions

Children's Services will support and encourage you in being involved in education, employment or training. This will help you to achieve independence and be self sufficient however there may be occasions when you will need to claim benefits.

Where you are in receipt of benefits, you will be responsible for your day to day expenses, clothing and contributing towards your meals and utility costs. You will be expected to contribute 50% of

your benefits to your 'Staying Put' carer each week. The Local Authority will also provide financial support to the carer.

For example: -

Based on 2014 rates, you would receive £57.35 per week. You would be expected to contribute £28.67 of your benefits directly to your 'Staying Put' carer/s towards the cost of your meals and utilities. The remainder of your benefit would be to support your day to day costs, toiletries and clothing.

Where you are in employment, your contributions will be based on additional income or earnings above the benefit rate at 50 pence in every pound or 50% up to a maximum of £100. The JSA rate in 2014 is £57.35, which would be deducted from your weekly earnings or income, leaving an amount which would then be further divided by 2 to identify 50% and this would be the amount you would contribute.

For example: -

You are aged 18 years and involved in an Apprenticeship. The minimum wage (Apprenticeship) in 2014 is £2.73. Working 36 hours per week, although this would be reduced if you are working part time, you would earn £98.28. Take away the JSA allowance (£57.35) gives the amount you would be assessed against, that is £40.93. You would pay 50 pence in every pound as a contribution which equates to £20.46. You would have £77.81.

If you are aged 18 – 20 years and earning the minimum wage, which is £5.13 (2014), you would earn £184.68 per week (36 hours). Take away the JSA allowance gives the amount you would be assessed against, that is £127.33. You would pay 50 pence in every pound as a contribution which equates to £63.66. You would have £121.01.

Your social worker will help you work out your circumstances and what you would be expected to contribute to your 'Staying Put' arrangement. Your 'Staying Put' carer will not receive financial assistance in respect of clothing and day to day expenses therefore you will need to fund this yourself.

Your carer's circumstances will also be reviewed against the amount of money they used to receive when you were cared for. Your social worker will then deduct the pocket money and clothing element, and any contribution from you. The information regarding your 'Staying Put' carer/s and your financial circumstances will be recorded by your social worker and they will ask the Finance Officer to identify how much will be paid and by whom.

The following examples show how financial assistance is calculated. If your circumstances are not covered in these examples, your social worker will talk to you and show you how your contributions will be worked out.

Example 1 - Foster Carer is a Level 1 carer receiving £175 per week. Deduct £30.63 (pocket money and clothing allowance) = £144.37. Young Person is claiming maintenance allowance and contributes £28.67 = £115.70. Housing Benefit is paid at the rent rate identified above, for example for Rochdale at £57.75 = £57.95. Local Authority pays £57.95, Housing Benefit pay £57.75, Young Person contributes £28.67 and also is responsible for clothing and pocket money. NB Housing Benefit can be paid to the Local Authority therefore they would pay £115.70 and be reimbursed £57.75

Example 2 - Foster Carer is a Level 2 carer receiving £266.07 per week. Deduct £30.63 (pocket money and clothing allowance) = £235.44. Young Person is on minimum wage (£5.13) working full time (36 hours) = £184.68, minus £57.35 = £127.33, of which 50% = £63.66 and therefore contributes £63.66 = £171.78. Young Person has no savings. Young Person is not entitled to Housing Benefit. Local Authority pays £171.78, Housing Benefit pay £0.00, Young Person contributes £63.66 and also is responsible for clothing and pocket money

Example 3 - Foster Carer is a Level 1 carer receiving £175 per week. Deduct £30.63 (pocket money and clothing allowance) = £144.37. Young person is at university and receives £57.35 maintenance and £50 rent per week. During holiday times they would contribute £28.67 plus £50 rent = £78.67 = £65.70. Young Person has no savings. NB young person may be entitled to Housing Benefit and any claim will be paid to the Local Authority and deducted from Local Authority payment. Local Authority pays £65.70, Housing Benefit pay £0.00 however the young person may be entitled to claim, Young Person contributes £78.67 and also is responsible for clothing and pocket money

Example 4 - Foster Carer is a Level 4 carer receiving £638.27. Deduct £30.63 (pocket money and clothing allowance) = £607.64. Young person has savings from Criminal Injuries payment which takes them over the benefit rate. Calculate the contributions on the weekly allowance for the young person from their savings or allowance agreed by financial consultant. Deduct £57.35 from the weekly allowance and divide the remaining amount by 2 (50%) – this would be the young person’s contribution. NB once the young person’s savings falls below the benefit amount they would revert to the examples given above.

You will receive a letter letting you know how much you will pay in your ‘Staying Put’ arrangement and this will also be included in the ‘Living Together’ agreement and ‘Licence’ agreement.

As the rules around benefits will change depending on your circumstances and that of your ‘Staying Put’ carers it is difficult to provide examples however your social worker will discuss this with you and help you understand what you are entitled to.

Monitoring ‘Staying Put’ arrangements

Your Pathway Plan will be reviewed, supported and updated on a regular basis and you will continue to receive visits from your Personal Advisor. You and your Personal Advisor will agree how often they will visit you. You will continue to have a review meeting at least every 6 months. Your ‘Staying Put’ carer/s will also receive support and will be visited. Support will continue even if you are not living under a ‘Staying Put’ arrangement.

Your safety and the safety of any other children and young people in the home will be monitored whilst you are in the ‘Staying Put’ arrangement. If there are any concerns about you these will be reported to your Personal Advisor and Adult Social Care. You will be involved in any discussions about your safety and your consent is needed to report any concerns. If the concerns are about other children or young people in the home because of your behaviour, Children’s Services will be involved and will investigate these concerns.

Ending a ‘Staying Put’ arrangement

Your ‘Staying Put’ arrangement will provide you with the support you need to learn from your experiences and mistakes in a safe place. It will allow you to choose the time that is right for you to move on to independence.

Your ‘Staying Put’ arrangement can continue until you are 21 years of age but you don’t have to stay until you are 21. Both you and your ‘Staying Put’ carer can end the arrangement at any time but you will both need to give notice.

If you leave your 'Staying Put' arrangement at any time before your 21st birthday, following the notice period, you can return but it will no longer be considered as a 'Staying Put' arrangement and the support your 'Staying Put' carer will receive in respect of finance will be affected.

It is therefore important that you think about when you would like to move on, and use the support available to you for as long as possible.

Your 'Living Together' agreement will include the arrangements for you and your carer to end the 'Staying Put' arrangement.

Questions

You may have a number of questions following reading this guidance, and your social worker, personal advisor and carer will be able to help you. It might be a good idea to write down your questions so that you are able to remember what you need to know.

Rochdale would like to support you to leave care when you are ready, by way of a 'Staying Put' arrangement and are happy to provide information and assistance to help you to make the decision that is right from you.

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