

**Developing Services for Young
People Looked After by Sunderland
Children's Services**

**Sunderland Children's Home
Financial Allowances Policy
2016 – 2017**

Introduction

The primary aim of this finance policy is to provide a clear, consistent and equitable framework for the provision of allowances to children looked after across the five Sunderland children's homes. The allowances set out in the policy are linked to both age and need and are intended to reflect an equitable and positive approach to 'corporate parenting' across the range of homes.

As children/young people reach the end of school year 11, mature and begin to prepare for independent living, the provision of allowances also needs to be linked to the development of financial capability, budgeting and life skills.

Notes and Implementation Issues

1. All allowances should be linked to an assessment of need and should be set out in the child/young person's Placement Plan. The Placement Plan should highlight any attached conditions, how payments will be made, the frequency of payments and when they will be reviewed.
2. 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.
3. A yearly audit should be undertaken to ensure that children/young people have received their entitlement and there is evidence of the allowances made and the use of the allowance.
4. Develop a set of financial procedures and payment processes linked to the financial policy.
5. Develop leaflets/information for children/young people.
6. Ensure the allowances are applied across the five children's homes in an equitable manner.
7. Review the financial policy yearly and in-line with inflation/budget changes.

Allowances for Children Looked After aged 12 to 18 Living in Sunderland Children's Homes.

Allowance/ Basis	Amount	Conditions and Comments														
Pocket Money Allowance	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;">Age</td> <td style="text-align: left;">Per Week</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td> <td>£10.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>£9.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>£8.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>£7.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>£7.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>£6.50</td> </tr> </table>	Age	Per Week	17	£10.50	16	£9.00	15	£8.00	14	£7.50	13	£7.00	12	£6.50	<p>The pocket money allowance is provided to all children/young people, to be used as they choose. The amount varies and is dependent on age. Pocket money is usually provided on a Friday and following a check to ensure that the child/young person's bedroom has been tidied and all required household tasks and chores being completed.</p> <p>In situations where it is thought that the pocket money is being miss-used (i.e. it is spent on alcohol/cigarettes etc.) or a child/young person is being bullied for their pocket money, a planning meeting will be held to explore how the child/young person should be supported to manage the pocket money allowance appropriately. All arrangements for the provision of the pocket money allowance should be set out in the child/young person's placement plan.</p>
Age	Per Week															
17	£10.50															
16	£9.00															
15	£8.00															
14	£7.50															
13	£7.00															
12	£6.50															
Toiletries Allowance	£2.50 Per week	The toiletries allowance is provided to ensure that the child/young person has their own supply of toiletries. Where the toiletries allowance is not being used to purchase such items, the child/young person's Keyworker will use the allowance on their behalf a buy items/brands that the child/young person uses.														
Clothing Allowance	£12.50 Per Week	<p>Initially the clothing allowance should be saved and used by the Keyworker for a supervised shop with the child/young person.</p> <p>Once the child/young person has demonstrated that they are able to budget and manage their clothing requirements, the clothing allowance can be paid directly to them. At which point the allowance can be paid weekly, monthly or quarterly in cash or directly into their savings/bank account. The arrangements for providing and spending the clothing allowance should be set out in the child/young person's placement plan.</p>														
Mobile Phone	£10.00 – Initial Top-up	<p>All children/young people are provided with an initial £10.00 mobile phone top-up when the move to a children's home.</p> <p>Subsequent top-ups are provided as part of the individual home incentive system.</p>														
Personal Luggage	<p>As Required</p> <p>£35.00 One-Off</p>	Luggage – all young people moving to semi-independence, independence or between placements must have at least two items of appropriate personal luggage.														

Travel	<p>12 to 15 Year Olds</p> <p>Agreed by home manager.</p> <p>16/17 Year Olds</p> <p>Agreed by home manager.</p>	<p>Children aged 12 to 15 are provided with a £5.00 discount travel pass. The travel pass allows children discounted/reduced rate travel. Children will then be provided with a travel allowance, up to the cost of the required/assessed journeys to enable them to access education, training, family contact, leisure and cultural issues as required. Children will need to pay the £5.00 replacement cost if the travel pass is lost or damaged.</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need, all young people aged 16 and 17 who are required to travel for an education/training/employment activity will be provided with up to £69.30 per four weeks for an all zone bus pass. The bus pass is conditional on young people attending the designated activity and returning the expired pass.</p> <p>The travel card will assist young people to access education, training and employment opportunities, facilitate family contact and enable access to leisure and cultural activities.</p> <p>Where a young person is provided with a travel allowance/pass by their education/training/employment provider they will not be provided with the allowance by the children's home. All expired bus passes must be returned to Sunderland Children's Services for audit purposes. In circumstances where a bus pass is misused the provision of a pass will be temporarily withdrawn.</p>
Initial Clothing Allowance	Up To £200.00	<p>In circumstances where children/young people become looked after and are placed into a children's home they will be provided with an initial clothing allowance subject to an assessment of need and what clothing they have and require.</p> <p>The initial clothing allowance is paid in situations where children/young people become looked after with insufficient clothing for everyday needs.</p> <p>When a child/young person is first looked after their social worker/Keyworker should make a list of the clothing that the child/young person has and another list setting out what clothing is required and the cost. The list and costing should be submitted to the Children's Homes Service Manager for approval.</p> <p>See Appendix Three.</p>
School, College, Employment, – Uniform/ Clothing Allowance	Yearly Allowance Up To £100.00	<p>The school/college/employment - uniform/clothing allowance is provided to ensure all children/young people have appropriate clothing to undertake school/college/employment.</p> <p>The school/college/employment - uniform/clothing allowance should be used during the summer period to ensure the</p>

<i>Continued</i>		<p>child/young person has the appropriate clothing to commence the next school year or college year. Where a young person is commencing employment, the allowance should be used to ensure they are appropriately dressed for their employment activity.</p> <p>In situations where a child/young person moves between schools during term time, the children's home Keyworker should assess any new uniform/clothing requirements.</p>
School Leavers Prom Allowance	Up to £200.00 – One-Off	This is provided once to enable children/young people to take part in their school prom (generally at the end of year 11 or 13). The school leaver's prom allowance can be used to cover the cost of attendance, clothing and photographs etc.
Winter Clothing	Yearly Allowance in September Up To £120.00	The winter clothing allowance is available in September each year and is dependent on an assessment of need. The allowance should be used to ensure that the child/young person has sufficient winter clothing/footwear.
Life Chances, Hobbies and Leisure Allowance	Up to £10.00 Per Week Assessment Based Agreed by the Home Manager.	<p>The life chances/hobbies/leisure allowance is provided to enable children/young people to take part in hobby and leisure activities. Children/young people should be encouraged to access a wide range of subsidised activities provided in Sunderland by the use of the Max-Card and Life-Card.</p> <p>Keyworkers should support children/young people to obtain a Max Card and Life Card and also explore what activities these will provide access to.</p> <p>The allowance could be used to pay for the membership of a hobby, sporting or leisure club and/or contribute towards the cost of a social activity. Children/young people should be supported to take part in at least one social/leisure activity per week.</p>
Holidays and Outings.	£750.00 Per Resident Per Year	<p>All children/young people have the opportunity to take part in a children's home holiday and/or a range of major outings and activities.</p> <p>Each children's home will decide with the resident group the holiday/outings/activities to be undertaken over the following year. The holiday/outings/activities should be agreed by all residents and/or will be set by the children's home manager/service manager where there is no consensus.</p> <p>Children/young people should also save for day to day holiday/outing/activity spend. Depending on an assessment of need and the length of the holiday, a contribution to day to day holiday spend may be available.</p>

Savings	£5.00 Per Week	<p>As a positive corporate parenting principle; Sunderland Children's Services is working to encourage children/young people to develop a custom of saving money for their future life and needs.</p> <p>All looked after children are provided with a weekly savings allowance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 to 10 year olds £2.50 per week. • 11 to 17 year olds £5.00 per week. <p>For the first 52 weeks that a child/young person is looked after the savings will be accrued centrally by the Children's Services Finance Team on behalf of the child/young person.</p> <p>When a child/young person has been looked after for 52 weeks, The Share Foundation will open a Junior Individual Savings Account (Junior ISA) on behalf of the child/young person with an initial government payment of £200.00. At which point the 52 weeks of accumulated savings and subsequent savings will be added to the Junior ISA.</p> <p>Children/young people should be provided with a yearly statement setting out the level of savings in their Junior ISA.</p> <p>See separate guidance on the transfer of savings to a responsible adult where a child/young person ceases to be looked after prior to their 18th birthday and the transfer of savings to young people leaving care on their 18th birthday.</p>
Incentives and Rewards	Assessment - Individually Set	<p>In order to provide a system of positive rewards, acknowledge positive achievements and to promote positive behaviour, each children's home has a system of incentives and rewards.</p> <p>Examples of rewards could include: tickets for sports events, a trip to a nail care saloon, a mobile top-up, an outing to the cinema or venue of a child/young person's choice. Each children's home has an equitable set of incentives and allowances and produces a list that sets out what is required, or to be achieved, for a given reward.</p> <p>Individual rewards and incentives will be set out in the child/young person's placement plan, which will also set out the behaviour, activity/activities they are working towards achieving.</p>
Birthday Allowance	<p>£100.00 – Gift/Gifts</p> <p>£30.00 – Celebration Costs</p>	<p>The birthday allowance should be used to purchase a gift or gifts to the value of £100.00 and provide a £30.00 contribution towards the cost of celebrations. The responsibility for the purchase of the gift/gifts rests with the Keyworker and all arrangements should be set out within the child/young person's placement plan.</p>

		In exceptional circumstances the £100.00 can be given to the child/young person in the form of a gift card/voucher. The birthday allowance can also be saved on behalf of the child/young person in order to accumulate an amount required for the purchase of a specific and more expensive item.
Christmas/ Festival Allowance	£150.00 – Gift/Gifts £30.00 – Celebration Costs	<p>The Christmas/festival allowance should be used to purchase a gift or gifts to the value of £150.00 and provide a £30.00 contribution towards the cost of celebrations. The responsibility for the purchase of the gift/gifts rests with the Keyworker and all arrangements should be set out within the child/young person's placement plan.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances the £150.00 can be given to the child/young person in the form of a voucher.</p> <p>Children/young people who are non-Christians should 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 alongside their peers. In addition, they should also be offered the choice of having a proportion of the allowance at their festival of choice and a proportion at Christmas.</p>
Family Contact Costs.	Assessment Agreed by home manager and social worker.	Where children/young people have family members who live outside of the Sunderland area, travel costs may be provided following an assessment of need which will be undertaken in conjunction with the child/young person's social worker.
Contact with Significant Others.	Assessment Agreed by home manager and social worker.	Where children/young people have significant contacts that live outside of the Sunderland area, travel costs may be provided following an assessment of need which will be undertaken in conjunction with the child/young person's social worker.
Religious, Cultural and Gender Needs.	Assessment Agreed by home manager.	Sunderland Children's Services will assist children/young people to access services and items aimed at meeting their cultural, religious and gender needs. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Children's Services will fund services and provide items aimed at meeting identified needs i.e. skin and hair care, dietary requirements, travel to religious/faith settings and provide/fund gender related sanitary where.

Health.	<p>Assessment</p> <p>Agreed by home manager.</p>	<p>Children's Services will assist children/young people to access services to meet their health and developmental needs via the 'looked after' children health provision and via universal health services. Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Children's Services may provide funds to secure additional health services. Young people aged 16 & 17 should complete form HC1 (SC) which provides access to the reduced costs/free NHS provision.</p>
Introduction to Driving.	<p>Licence, 1 theory test, 5 lessons and 1 practical test.</p> <p>Available to 17 to 21 year olds.</p>	<p>Children's Services will provide the funding for one provisional driving licence, one theory test, one practical test and the cost of 5 (1 hour) motor car driving lessons to introduce young people to driving.</p> <p>This is available to 17 year olds and is conditional on the young person matching the cost of the 5 car driving lessons provided by the Sunderland Children's Services. This will enable the young person to have 10 trial lessons. Where this provision is used whilst living in a children's home it cannot be accessed again as part of the leaving care finance package.</p> <p>This is only available to young people who have been engaged in education, training or employment for 3 months and do not have any driving convictions. Young people must pay the cost of the 5 lessons to their social worker/Keyworker who will then book the 10 lessons. In general, by paying for 10 lessons in a block, driving schools provide an extra lesson free.</p> <p>Additionally, Children's Services will pay for one practical driving test. This is dependent on an approved driving school recommending that the young person is ready to take the test.</p> <p>Young people must provide their contribution before the overall package is provided. Young people can use their birthday or Christmas/festival allowance to pay for their five lessons. No other allowances are transferable for this purpose.</p> <p>Depending on an assessment of need, which must be linked to the need to travel to an education, training or employment opportunity the driving package can be used to fund a moped/motor bike training programme. Young people must attend a CBT programme prior to driving on public roads.</p>
Farewell Celebration	<p>Farewell Celebration Meal/Party</p> <p>£50.00 One-Off</p>	<p>Where a child/young person has been living in a children's home for more than 3 months, the children's home/Keyworker will ensure the achievements and time living in the home are acknowledged and celebrated. This could be undertaken as a party for all residents (and friends of the child/young person) or via a celebration meal with child/young person and Keyworker.</p>

Exceptional Needs.	Assessment Agreed by home manager.	Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Children's Services may provide funds for specific grants and one off payments that are not covered within the scope of this policy.
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Supplementary Information

Appendix One

Children/young people living in children's homes who are working - pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowance - reductions and contributions (16 and 17 year olds)

Children/Young People Living in a Children's Homes who are Working - Pocket Money, Toiletries and Clothing Allowance - Reductions and Contributions (16 and 17 year olds)

From the end of academic school year eleven (usually July in the academic year of a young person's sixteenth birthday) until their eighteenth birthday, young people living in a children's homes who are working can retain a net income of £84.00 per week before adjustments are made to their allowances, or contributions are required. This principle and the £84.00 threshold is intended to act as an incentive for young people to be involved in education, training and/or employment activities. The aim of adjusting allowances is undertaken from the principle of assisting with the development of budgeting and money management skills, preparation for adulthood and enabling young people to becoming accustomed to making payments for rent and bills.

The £84.00 threshold is set by adding the clothing allowance (£12.50 per week), the pocket money allowance (£9.00 or £10.50 per week), the toiletry allowance (£2.50 per week), the 16-19 year old bursary allowance (£1,200.00 per year, which equates to £40.00 per week in term time) and up to £20.00 or £19.50 from part time or full time employment.

Young people will continue to receive their pocket money (£9.00 or £10.50 per week 2016-2016), clothing allowance (£12.50 per week 2016-2017) and toiletry allowance (£2.50 per week), plus the 16 – 19 bursary or earnings, until a net income of £84.00 is reached. When the £84.00 threshold is reached, young people will be required to complete a Financial Assessment Form with their social worker or children's home Keyworker. Young people should add their net income (from the list below), minus any fares/costs related to study or work. When the total after adjustments for fares/costs is higher than £84.00, a third of the amount over £84.00 is set as the young person's reduction/contribution.

The pocket money/toiletries/clothing allowance reduction will be deducted from the weekly allowances provided and if the required amount is over the pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowance (£24.00 or £25.50); the amount over the pocket money/toiletries/clothing allowance should be paid directly to the children's home. The assessed amount over these allowance should be paid directly to the children's home budget.

Children's homes Keyworkers should acknowledge the reduction in pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowance and any payment made to Sunderland by providing a "rent book" as proof of the reduction/contribution.

The following payments are considered as income:

- Pocket money;
- Toiletries allowance;
- Clothing allowance;
- 16-19 year old bursary scheme;
- Wages and salary from part time or full time employment;
- Traineeship allowance;
- Apprenticeship allowance.

Lone parents (aged 16 or 17) receiving Income Support, Child Tax Credits and Child Benefit and sick and disabled young people (aged 16 or 17) claiming Employment & Support Allowance cease to receive the pocket money, clothing and toiletries allowance when their benefit is being paid. Universal Credit is likely to replace Income Support, Child Tax Credit and E&SA during 2016/2017.

Young people receiving these benefits are unlikely to be working and therefore will not be making contributions but will have their pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowances reduced

To assist a young person with making a successful transition to education or employment, and managing their income, they will not be expected to have a pocket money, toiletries or clothing allowance reduction or make any contributions until they have completed six weeks of employment. A young person will need to provide proof of income in order that his/her social worker/keyworker can calculate any contributions.

To assist a young person with making a successful transition to education or employment, and managing their income, they will not be expected to have a pocket money, toiletries or clothing allowance reduction or make any contributions until they have completed six weeks of employment. A young person will need to provide proof of income in order that his/her social worker/Keyworker can calculate any contributions.

If proof of income is not forthcoming, it will be assumed that earnings are exceeding £108.00 or £109.50 (£84.00 + £12.50 + £9.00 or £10.50 + £2.50) net per week and therefore the pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowance will be suspended until proof is forthcoming.

Financial Assessment Form and Contributions Notice

Income:

Calculation Date:

Item	Amount (£)
Clothing Allowance	
Pocket Money	
16-19 Bursary Scheme	
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	
Surplus/Short Fall (Subtotal 3)	

If subtotal 3 is over £84.00, one third of the surplus amount above the £84.00 figure is the young person's contribution. This will be deducted from their pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowance until it exceeds this amount. When this occurs, the pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowance will cease, and the social worker or the Keyworker will collect the amount of contribution exceeding the pocket money, toiletries and clothing allowance.

This form will need to be completed by the young person living in a children's home (16 and 17 year olds) with their Keyworker or social worker.

Date Reduction/Contribution To Commence	
Reduction to Pocket Money and Clothing Allowance (= $\frac{1}{3}$ [sub-total 3] above £84.00)	
Contribution (where the applicable amount is above the pocket money and clothing allowance level)	
Income Retained	

Appendix Two

Opening Savings Accounts

Keyworkers / social workers should support children/young people to open a savings account in the child/young person's name from the age of 7, when they will be able to open a savings account without an adult sponsor (staff cannot act as an account sponsor). It is expected that all children/young people would have an account by their 14th birthday in readiness for when they reach adulthood and move to independence.

These savings accounts can be used for the management of pocket money, clothing, toiletry and day to day spending. The arrangements for a child/young person opening and managing an account should be discussed with the child/young person's social worker and set out in the child's care and placement plan.

To open such an account, the child/young person requires a letter from their social worker on Sunderland City Council headed paper, stating that they are a looked after child and setting out their children's home address. The child/young person will also need a proof of identity, birth certificate/passport and will need to be accompanied to the building society to open the account. The account being in the child/young person's name means that it can transfer with them should they move placement.

For advice on which building societies (Nationwide/Halifax) provide accounts for children age 7 and above see additional guidance.

