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# Staying Put Guidance

**Leicestershire County Council**

**Guidance for Children and Families Service  
When a Looked After Child Reaches the Age of 18**

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**1.** **Introduction**

**1.1 The Regulatory Framework**

The Children and Families Act 2014, part 5 Welfare of Children (98) introduced a new duty on local authorities in England to advise, assist and support fostered young people to stay with their foster families when they reached 18, if both parties agreed. Leicestershire have been promoting this for many years now.

The Staying Put Policy sets out the conditions required to extend a former fostering arrangement beyond a young person’s eighteenth birthday, the associated financial implications, the social care requirements associated with extending former fostering arrangements and the consequential Income Tax, National Insurance and Welfare Benefit issues.

From the age of eighteen young people are no longer legally in ‘Care’ and therefore fostering arrangements no longer apply. Following a young person’s eighteenth birthday, the legal basis on which they occupy the property (former foster care home) changes and they become a tenant who is effectively lodging in the Staying Put carer/s home. Whilst the term tenant is a legal one, it should not denote that the young person will be treated differently than they were as a fostered child.

The associated change from foster child to adult member of the household, and for the carer from foster carer to landlord (Staying Put carer), should be carefully and sensitively planned in order to ensure that both young people and the carer/s understand the nature of the arrangement and that the positive aspects of being in foster care are not diminished by the new legal and financial arrangements and terminology.

*This “Staying Put” policy has been developed to address the requirements of the:*

*· Children and Families Act 2014;*

*· DfE, DWP and HMRC “Staying Put” Guidance 2013;*

*· Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations and Guidance 2010, (and amendments);*

*· Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (England) Regulations and Guidance 2010 (revised 2014);*

*· Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 and related Guidance (and amendments);*

*· National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Fostering Services (2011), (and amendments).*

*Chapter 7, Para 7.19 to 7.59 - Page 66 to 72 of the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers Regulations and Guidance 2010 (revised 2014) and Chapter 3, Para 3.125, Page 34 of the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 set out a requirement that each local authority has a “Staying Put” policy and Standard 12.4, Page 26 of the National Minimum Standards sets out the service standard relating to the local authorities’ “Staying Put” policy.*

**1.2 Scope of this Policy**

The procedures outlined in this document are applicable to all young people looked after by Leicestershire County Council if they are living with foster carers on their eighteenth birthday, whether that be LCC carers, Connected Persons carers or Independent Fostering Agency carers (IFA).

The policy also applies to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who reach the age of 18. However, in circumstances where the young person is awaiting a ‘Removal Notice’ continued financial support must be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Young people who are in residential placements are not covered by the Staying Put Policy, and for further guidance please refer to the following LCC Policies:

* Supported Lodgings Policy
* Finance arrangements for Children in Care or Care Leavers (not in foster care or residential care).

**2.** **Staying Put - Criteria**

**2.1 Who can Stay Put?**

The primary aim of Staying Put is to promote a gradual transition from care to adulthood and independent living that recognises that many young people in care experience delayed maturity, and that their 18th birthday may be an arbitrary and inappropriate point to leave foster care. We know that most young people are now leaving home at a later age and we want this for our young people too.

1. Young people can remain with their foster carers for as long as there is a need. The support will be given following assessment and discussions with the carer up to and including the age of 25.
2. The arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure needs are being met and the support is being used effectively.

**2.1.3 Staying Put - Planned Move-on**

Young people who are actively bidding for a local authority (housing) tenancy can remain for up to 3 months beyond their 18th birthday, or until their tenancy is allocated. We accept that some young people will want to move to their own tenancy at 18, but for most we will encourage them to remain within the Staying Put arrangement and gain as much support in doing so. Whilst tenancies are awaited we will continue to pay the Staying Put allowance. We will actively encourage our young people to remain in their staying put placement as long as possible .

All young people will have a personal advisor from the age of 15 ¾. From this point there will be conversations regarding staying put and whether the young person wants to remain with their carers.

When a young person has made that decision with the carer, if they don’t want to stay put, housing applications can be made with the support of the PA. The PA will also assist the young person in making a claim for housing benefit.

1. The Planned Move-on ‘Actively Bidding’ extension is available in exceptional circumstances where young people are registered on a housing authority waiting list, are bidding on a ‘reasonable’ range of areas within the housing authority boundaries and have not been allocated a property by their 18th birthday;
2. Some housing authorities in Leicestershire occasionally allow young people to bid and move to a social tenancy prior to their 18th birthday;
3. The report for the Service Manager should focus on the reasons why the young person has not been able to bid prior to their 18th birthday and/or why they have not been successful when bidding.
4. **3.** **Extending Placements (Staying Put) – Children’s Review Procedure**

**3.1 Age 15¾ to 16 years old**

The Pathway Plan provided for the Children’s Review at age 16 should identify the timescale required for young people to move to independence and should be used as the framework for beginning to explore the following issues:

1. Is it likely that the young person will fit the criteria for Staying Put when they reach their 18th birthday;
2. Does the young person and the foster carer/s understand the criteria for, and associated procedures for extending a foster placement into a Staying Put arrangement;
3. Does the young person understand their financial and benefit responsibilities associated with remaining in a Staying Put arrangement;
4. Does the foster carer/s understand the changes in their funding arrangements associated with a Staying Put arrangement;
5. Does the 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;
6. What is the parallel plan for the young person should the Staying Put arrangement not be viable, e.g. a supported lodgings placement or other accommodation options.

The Children’s Review of Arrangement should include the foster carer/s, supervising social worker and leaving care social worker/personal adviser and should establish the viability and likelihood of a Staying Put arrangement occurring. The meeting should identify all key tasks and roles and responsibilities related to extending the former fostering arrangement.

When a Review of Arrangement agrees Staying Put is the preferred care plan a Staying Put professionals meeting is to be held to explore in detail the financial circumstances and support needs including:

* The requirement to apply for housing benefit how this will be paid.
* Care leavers financial contribution – should their income meet the threshold
* Support needs and visiting pattern of Personal Advisor

(if Where the Children’s Review has identified the need for the young person to receive more support, possibly including the Shared Lives Service, the Professionals Meeting should also include a member of the A&C Transitions Team, and a member from the A& C Shared Lives Service. The shared lives carer approval can take up to 6 months, so it is important to involve the Adult Transitions Team at this early stage if appropriate, especially as for those young people who reside with carers who do not want to become shared lives carers there is a lengthy planning period to identify future accommodation. This review will begin an ongoing process that continues at the time of each Children’s Review up to the time of the young person reaching the age of 18.

**3.2 Age 17 to 17½ years old**

Review of Arrangement before age 18 – agreement is required confirming that Staying Put is the preferred plan. The meeting should ensure that any final arrangements and requirements are in place by the young person’s 18th birthday, including a DBS check if there are other foster children in the household.

The Staying Put Professionals Meeting should be repeated. The outcome of this meeting, agreed with the carer, should form the basis of a Staying Put Funding Request Report (Appendix A) presented to the Children in Care and Fostering Service Manager who is responsible for any decision regarding extending a former fostering arrangement.

The report should set out the grounds for the Staying Put arrangement as applicable *(see Section 2 for more detail)*.

* Education – the type of course and end date.
* Vulnerability – level of vulnerability and move-on arrangements.
* Planned move-on – or other arrangements.
* Disability – transition arrangements to the Adults & Communities (A&C) department.

The report should also set out the cost of the Staying Put arrangement, stating who will:

* Assist the young person to claim benefits and when the arrangement is planned to end.
* Collate identity documents (passport, birth certificate, driving licence and proof of address) and letter from young person’s school or college setting out the course type, length and qualification.
* Ensure there is a signed tenancy agreement.

All meetings should make reference to the criteria and financial framework for extending the Staying Put arrangement and the National Insurance, Income Tax and Welfare Benefits issues for the foster carer/s and Welfare Benefit issues for the young person. The outcome of these meetings should be discussed at the subsequent looked after statutory review.

**3.3 Age 18 years old**

When a young person reaches the age of 18 they should be supported to claim:

* Universal Credit *or*
* Employment and Support Allowance (if not already) *and*
* Housing Benefit (paid direct to Leicestershire C.C.)
* Council Tax exemption

Where it is proposed that a young person may remain Staying Put, the Fostering Team and Children in Care, Welfare Rights Officer will undertake, on request, an initial visit with carers to discuss the implications. The process is then agreed and monitored by the young person’s allocated personal advisor and the carers support worker (Supported Lodgings Co-Ordinator), or if other fostered children remain in the home, the fostering social worker.

Where a young person has a wage which means they cannot claim any benefits they will be expected to pay the housing element of the Staying Put/Supported Lodgings rate (£380 per months 2021) and LCC will pay the support cost to ensure carers receive £254 per week (2022) £380 per month is £87.69 per week leaving £152.31 as the care element. There is a sliding scale calculation which identifies the level of contribution towards the £380 per month dependent on the level of their earnings – See Section 6. Finance

**4.** **Independent Fostering Agency**

Requests to extend young people placed in Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements will be considered against the same criteria as Leicestershire foster carer placements (vulnerability, education, disability, moving on).

1. Negotiations should commence with the IFA when a young person reaches the age of 16 regarding whether they would accept the LCC rate being paid after their 18th birthday;
2. Benefit maximisation should take place in line with the LCC foster carer policy, clothing and pocket money should cease at age 16, and the personal allowance should end at age 18. Housing benefit should be claimed at age 18;
3. In circumstances where a young person can claim housing benefit in an IFA, the housing benefit will be paid to LCC Placements Budget. If, due to the placement being outside of Leicestershire it is not possible to pay the housing benefit directly to Leicestershire, it will be paid to the IFA or Staying Put carer and the rate paid to the IFA adjusted;

**5.** **Staying Put – Making it Work**

**5.1 Ongoing Carer Monitoring**

Whilst fostering regulations no longer formally apply when a young person reaches the age of 18 the local authority procedures for reviewing the Staying Put arrangements are:

* A return to fostering panel when there is a significant change of circumstances in the carers lives;
* Yearly reviews and monitoring of the carer/s (including health and safety checks); Dedicated placement Support team will complete health and safety checks annually.
* New DBS Check every three years on all adult members of the household, regular visitors and children of the carers aged eighteen and older if the carers continue as foster carers for other children.;
* If there are other foster children in the house, the Young person will be discussed as part of the fostering household in supervision with the Supervising Social Worker. If there are no other children in placement this is no longer a fostering placement. Twice yearly supervision or more if required) from the supervising social worker from The Dedicated Placement Support Team. worker;
* Attending required training. To ensure the carers are aware of the expectations of Supported Accommodation.

Maintaining these standards is relatively straight forward when Staying Put carers / foster carers have placements of both under and over 18 year old young people. In circumstances where Staying Put carers only have an over 18 year old young person living with them, the allocated social worker from the Dedicated Placement Support Team will need to assess individual circumstances and consider the appropriateness of all of these checks, particularly where it is envisaged that no further foster children will be placed. Support and monitoring visits will take place on a six monthly basis.

It should be noted that young people remaining with foster carer/s post eighteen will become adult members of the household and will require a valid DBS check in households where foster children are living. To ensure the check is completed by the young person’s 18th birthday the process will need to commence in sufficient time.

**5.2 Staying Put – Placement Guidance – Living Together Agreements**

Young people, Staying Put carer/s, leaving care personal advisers and supervising social workers should meet to develop a ‘Living Together Agreement’ prior to a young person’s 18th birthday. The agreement should set out the expectation of all parties and clarify roles and responsibilities. The agreement should be incorporated into the young person’s pathway plan. The agreement should cover:

1. Preparation for independence tasks;
2. Finance, including young people having credit cards, loan agreement and mobile phone contracts registered at the address;
3. Income and benefit claims;
4. Friends and partners visiting and staying at the address;
5. Staying away for nights/weekends and informing carers of movements;
6. Education, training and employment activities;
7. Health arrangements.
8. Move-on arrangements;
9. Issues related to younger foster care children in the placement, safeguarding, role modelling and time keeping.

**6. Young Persons Financial Arrangements**

**6.1 Sliding Scale Calculation for financial contribution to Housing element**

The following is the sliding scale the benefits office use for the decision regarding the housing benefit young people can receive. This will be used should a young person have a wage above the minimum wage. The housing element of Universal credit is £280 per month. LCC are paying the extra £660 per month should the young person be in Staying Put or Supported Lodgings. Should a young person for example is earning £1K per month would not be entitled to any housing benefit. Due to the complexity of the calculations it is really important that guidance is taken from welfare rights officer to ensure the carers and young people know what the financial expectations are.

Hours Worked Minimum wage-Monthly minimum wage- Max UC credit they can receive

10 £65.60 £284.26 £458.25

15 £98.40 £426.40 £369.14

20 £131.20 £568.53 £279.59

25 £164.00 £710.67 £190.05

30 £196.80 £852.80 £100.51

35 £229.60 £994.93 £8.97

e**6.2 Benefits for Young People**

All of the following benefits (1 to 4) can be claimed regardless of the circumstances of the young person’s former foster carer. Young people can claim Income Support under the ‘Relevant Education’ rules if they remain ‘estranged’ from their family and are undertaking a full time (over 12 hours) education or training course which is under the higher education level;

1. Lone Parents can claim Income Support until their child is 5 years old, Healthy Start Vouchers and a Sure Start Maternity Grant when the baby has been born. From the birth of their baby they will also be eligible to claim Child Tax Credits and Child Benefit. (Eligible and Relevant lone parents aged 16 and 17 can also claim the above benefits, but only from the birth of their baby);
2. Employment and Support Allowance can be claimed in circumstances where young people are deemed ‘sick or disabled’. (If the young person fits the eligibility criteria this benefit can be claimed from their 16th birthday regardless of being section 20, or section 31, or living in foster care);
3. **6.3 Housing Benefit for Young People**
4. Depending on the circumstances of the Staying Put carer, all young people are expected to claim Housing Benefit from their 18th birthday which is paid directly to the Leicestershire Placement Team budget and is used to cover the accommodation element of the Staying Put arrangement *(See Appendix 2 for tips on claiming)*;
5. Young people living in Kinship Staying Put placements with sisters, brothers and certain extended family members who are formally approved as foster carers are not eligible to claim housing benefit on reaching the age of 18;
6. Young people who are living with Staying Put carers who are in receipt of a means tested benefit will not be expected to claim Housing Benefit.

**6.4 Other Support and Allowances for Young People**

For details of other allowances available to young people in a Staying Put arrangement see the Sections on Young People aged 18+ in the LCC ‘Finance arrangements for Children in Care or Care Leavers (not in foster care or residential care)’

Payments from Children’s Services to young people under section 17, section 20, section 23, section 24 and section 31 do not count as income for benefit purposes.

**7. Carers Financial Arrangements**

See also the: Finance arrangements for Children in Care or Care Leavers (not in foster care or residential care)

**7.1 Post 18 Providers Allowance**

Staying Put carers become entitled to a Post 18 Providers Allowance. This means the carers will be entitled to receive **£254 per week**. ( Subject to change as there is an annual allowance increase) This covers accommodation, heating, lighting, rent, food and associated placement costs. The carers are not expected to provide the young person with a personal allowance.

A final birthday allowance equivalent to the basic weekly maintenance allowance will be paid to the carer for the young person’s 18th Birthday. Thereafter, the birthday, Christmas, and holiday allowances paid to carers will cease.

Young people are expected to apply for housing benefit once they are 18 and they will be given help with this *(See Section 6)*. If the claim is successful, the amount received is deducted from the carers Post 18 Providers’ allowance.

If a young person is in employment, they will be supported to arrive at a private arrangement to remain with their ex-foster carers, but they will not receive funding from LCC.

Carers should seek independent tax advice about their income tax. Information is available from the Fostering Network’s Foster line on 0800 040 7675, from the local tax office, or online at [http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/hs236.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/hs236.pdf%20)

Young people who remain in foster homes after they are 18 need to have a DBS check if there are other younger foster children within the home. A risk assessment should be considered if other younger children are not siblings of the young person.

**7.1.1 Independence Preparation**

As young people in foster care become older they should not only receive their recommended level of pocket money but also some of their clothing and personal allowances. These should be gradually increased to encourage them to take more responsibility for their self-care and eventual independence. Carers should make sure that the young person opens and manages a bank account to help them to develop budgeting skills.

**7.1.2 Children at University**

When the young person is in residence with the carers in the summer holidays, Christmas or Easter , carers can receive the post 18 allowance of £254 per week pro rata ( usually 12 weeks)

*If a young person remains with their carer rather than living in university accommodation then they will be expected to claim all grants and loans as per the finance policy. They will however not receive £4K per year bursary, instead local authority will pay £254 per week to the carers whilst the young person remains with the for the duration of their university course, this applies to both staying put and supported lodgings.*

**7.2 Section 23C Payments and Housing Benefit Issues for Staying Put Arrangements**

Where a Staying Put carer is in receipt of a means tested benefit the young person will not be expected to claim Housing Benefit and an amount equivalent to the Housing Benefit level will be paid to the young person’s Staying Put carer.

Payments made to young people and passed to former foster carer/s from section 23C (Children Act 1989) are disregarded in the assessment of the former foster carer/s’ income for benefit purposes, if the young person was formerly in the claimant’s care, is aged 18 or over and continues to live with the claimant within a non-commercial family type arrangement. If the arrangement is a commercial one the section 23C disregard ceases.

In order to ensure Staying Put carers and young people are supported to claim housing benefit appropriately, Leicestershire approaches Staying Put in one of two ways:

1. ***Where carers are not in receipt of any means tested benefits*** - setting a commercial rent, and young people claiming Housing Benefit would not have an impact on the Staying Put carers. In these cases the young person claims Housing Benefit as a contribution towards the Staying Put arrangement. The fact that this is a commercial arrangement and the Staying Put carers lose their section 23C disregard is immaterial as the carer is not claiming any benefits;
2. ***Where carers are in receipt of a means tested benefit*** - where CYPS pay the young person’s rent element. In these cases, the whole payment to the Staying Put carer is provided by CYPS from section 23C of the Children Act 1989. Therefore, the Staying Put carer’s benefits are not affected as payments made to the carers from the Local Authority Children’s Services from section 23C via the young person, or directly to the carer/s on behalf of the young person are disregarded when calculating the carer’s entitlement to means tested welfare benefits

**7.3 Council Tax and Council Tax Benefits**

1. Care Leavers are exempt within Leicestershire from paying council tax. This is not yet a national standard.
2. Where a young person is living in a Staying Put arrangement with two or more adults who are not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit and who pay full Council Tax a Staying Put young person will not have any impact on the Council Tax liability. If the young person is claiming benefits they should submit a claim for Council Tax Benefit for administrative purposes;
3. In circumstances where a Staying Put carer is working and in receipt of the 25% single person reduction, this discount may continue when a Staying Put young person aged 18 plus is living in the arrangement. If the young person is a student they are counted as ‘invisible’ in regard to the Staying Put carer’s 25% discount;
4. In circumstances where a Staying Put carer is working and is in receipt of the 25% single person reduction and a Staying Put young person reaches the age of 18, or moves in, and they are not counted as ‘invisible’ it is possible, although unlikely, that a Second Adult Rebate may apply. The Second Adult Rebate is designed to 'compensate' people who lose a 25% single-person discount when a low-income person moves in;
5. In certain circumstances a young person 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;
6. Where a commercial arrangement applies and the Staying Put carer is receiving Council Tax Benefit the payment received for the Staying Put arrangement is likely to have an impact on their benefits, including Council Tax Benefit.

**7.4 Income Tax and National Insurance Issues for Staying Put Arrangements**

1. Where young people remain living with their former foster carer/s under a Staying Put arrangement, the Income Tax and National Insurance framework and liabilities that apply are set out in the new H.M. Revenue and Customs Guidance (see below).
2. All foster carers and Staying Put carers must register as self-employed.
3. The ‘Shared Lives’ - ‘Qualifying Care Relief Guidance’ sets out that Staying Put carers receive tax exemptions up to a given qualifying amount for each Staying Put young person living with them. The Staying Put qualifying rate mirrors the system and amounts that applied when the placement was previously a foster care placement.
4. H.M. Revenue and Customs Help sheet (hs) 236 sets out information about the ‘Shared Lives’ - ‘[**Qualifying Care Relief Guidance**](http://search2.hmrc.gov.uk/kb5/hmrc/forms/view.page?record=6N0xYCRFe_E&formId=3686)’ - Fostering and Staying Put Income Tax and National insurance framework.
5. The Help sheet highlights that:
6. If the total receipts from Staying Put care in the tax year (the period from 6 April to 5 April) do not exceed the qualifying amount, those receipts will be free from Income Tax for that year. This means that, for tax purposes, it will be treated as having made no profit or loss from Staying Put care for that year.

Your qualifying amount consists of two parts which add together:

* An annual fixed amount:
  + If two or more carers within the same household separately receive payments for Staying Put care, the fixed amount should be applied to their combined receipts;
  + If a registered foster carer for less than a full year they can claim an appropriate proportion of your fixed amount.
* **Plus** a weekly amount for each Staying Put young person. For the tax year 2021-22, the amount is £254 per week for each young person aged 18 or over.

The qualifying amount does not affect the personal tax allowance. If Staying Put care receipts are exempt, the full amount of the personal allowance is available to use against any other income.

The Staying Put exemption does not affect any income from other sources, for example, from employment or from investments. Such other income will be taxed in the normal way.

Staying Put carer/s as well as foster carer/s should note that they may be able to claim Working Tax Credits which are administered by HMRC. Fostering/”Staying Put” care is counted as work for tax credit purposes. The carer’s taxable income is used to assess the amount of tax credits that they are entitled to. So, where the carer is paid less than their tax free allowance, their income from caring for Working Tax Credit purposes is also nil.

Appendix A

**CYPS: Staying Put – Funding Request Report**

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| **1. Young Person’s Details** |

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| **Name** |  | **Date of Birth** |  | **Gender** |
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| **Disabled** | | **Mosaic Ref.** |  | **Time with current carer** |  |
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| **2. Foster Carer Details** |

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| **Name** |  | **Date of Birth** |  | **Gender** |
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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mosaic Ref.** |  | **Mosaic Ref.** |  | **Type of Carer**  **(LCC Mainstream, LCC Connected Person, IFA)** |
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| **3. Current Foster Carer Household Details** |

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| **Other Household Occupants** | |  |  |  |
| **Name** | **DOB** | | **Gender** | **Relationship to Carers** |
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| **Weekly Foster Carer Allowance for the Young Person who is approaching 18** |
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| **4. Details of Involved Professionals (e.g. Adults & Communities, Health)** |

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| **Name** | **Role** | **Agency** |
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| **5. Young Person’s Review/Staying Put Professionals Review Outcomes** |

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| **5.1 Which Staying Put Criteria is met?**   1. *Education (maximum 2 years)* 2. *Vulnerability (maximum 1 year)* 3. *Planned Move On (maximum 3 months)* 4. *Transition to Adults & Communities* |
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| **5.2 Young Persons Wishes & Feelings** |
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| **5.3 Foster Carer’s Wishes & Feelings** |
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| **5.4 Professionals Assessment / Recommendation** |
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| **5.5 Financial Factors**  *(Carer Allowance paid at Supported Lodgings provider rate, Housing Benefit, Employment & Support Allowance [for Yong Person with a disability], Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance – considered, discussed & agreed?)* |
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| **5.6 Other Factors Considered**  *(e.g. Immigration Status, Disclosure & Barring Service Checks Required )* |
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| **6. Moving On Plan** |

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**7. Summary Recommendations**

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| **7.1 Accommodation** |
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| **7.2 Funding Package** |
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| **7.3 Agreed Time Period** |
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| **7.4 Next Review Date** |
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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Report Author** | | |
| Name: | Position: | Date: |
| **Locality Service Manager Approval** | | |
| Name: | Position: | Date: |
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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Placements Service Manager Ratification** | | |
| Name: | Position: Service Manager | Date: |
|  |  |  |

**Appendix 2 - Housing Benefit**

**Tips for claiming Housing Benefit for Care Leavers who are Staying Put**

The first thing to do is to get a tenancy agreement signed. We have a model tenancy agreement which can be used.

Then get hold of a Housing Benefit claim form. Some councils have downloadable forms on their website, some give out paper forms, and some insist on a personal interview. If you can get the council to give you a form or post one out they will date stamp it on the front.

Complete the form. Some of the answers are obvious, like name and address, but here are some tips for some of the other questions.

| **Question** | **Answer** |
| --- | --- |
| Other people who live with you | The correct answer to the question ‘Does anybody else live with you?’ is **NO**. I recommend that you handwrite the following somewhere near where you have written NO: **The other people in the house are the landlady and her family** (adapt this as appropriate). Leave the rest of the question blank. |
| What type of tenancy do you have? | **Supported lodgings**. |
| How long is the tenancy?  When did your tenancy start  When did your rent liability start  How often you have to pay the rent  Your rent breakdown – how much is the rent, how much of it is for food, how much for cleaning, heating etc | These are all on the tenancy agreement. |
| Your landlord’s name and address | This is the supported lodgings provider. |
| Bank account for payments  *NB We ask for the payments to be made direct to us, and we act as the landlord’s agent by passing the payments on to the landlord. This safeguards the young person’s tenancy.* | Account name: **Leicestershire County Council**  Bank: **National Westminster plc**  Sort code: **60-60-06**  Account No: **87418460** |
| Any further information | ‘**I have been in Local Authority care so I am exempt from the Shared Room Rate Restriction. For further information please contact my Social Care worker** …..(insert worker’s name and contact details)’  \*\*\*\*\*\*  ‘**I am vulnerable and inexperienced with finances. To safeguard my tenancy please make payments to my landlord’s agent**.’  \*\*\*\*\*  ‘**Correspondence about payments should be sent to landlord’s agent:**  **Leicestershire County Council**  **Children and Families service**  **Placements & Commissioning**  **Room 500**  **County Hall**  **Glenfield**  **Leicester**  **LE3 8RL**’ |