

Dorset Children's Homes

Financial Procedure for Child or young person's Residential Services

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Dorset Children's Homes aims to ensure that all our children and young people are made to feel they belong and that their needs are met, as they should be for any other child or young person.
- 1.2 This financial procedure sets out the allowances that can be used to meet the needs of children or young people we care for, and how these allowances should be managed. One of the roles that we are required to undertake when looking after a child/young person is to ensure that they are able to develop the skills to manage their own finances when they move into adulthood. Therefore, we need to meet the needs of our children/young people while encouraging them to respect their personal belongings.
- 1.3 This guidance is additional to and does not replace core Dorset Council guidance on finance. All employees should be aware of and follow Dorset Council's 'Financial Procedures and Rules'. These state that:

'All staff and members have a duty to abide by the highest standards of probity in dealing with financial issues.'

This is facilitated by ensuring everyone is clear about the standards to which they are working and the controls that are in place to ensure that these standards are met. The Council operates in an environment of ever-increasing demands on limited resources and consequently the process of budgetary control has become increasingly critical. The Council operates a cash-limited approach to directorate budget management and does not have any capacity to absorb overspends in service budgets.
- 1.4 Further guidance on handling money for children and young people is in our Petty Cash Procedure.

2. Allowances for children and young people in Dorset Children's Homes

- 2.1 These are the allowances for 2022-23. This procedure will be updated annually to reflect cost of living increases:

Clothing	
11 – 18 years old	£50.00 per month but can be increased on a needs basis.
Pocket Money	
Up to 18 years old	£15.00 per week.
Holidays	
Up to 18 years old	No fixed cost.
Birthdays and Religious Festivals	
Up to 18 years	£ 120.00

2.2 The remainder of this procedure gives details of how these allowances will be managed.

3. CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

3.1 Initial Clothing Allowance

3.1.1 Children and young people come to live with from a variety of previous situations, and one of our first tasks should be to ensure they have adequate clothing to meet their needs. An initial review of clothing should be undertaken by the key worker and clothing purchased to meet any shortfall. The Registered Manager will provide a budget to be spent for initial clothing.

3.1.2 If children or young people who come to live with us from a previous placement with insufficient clothing, a record should be shared with the social worker and or the fostering team or commissioning team for further follow up to be made with the placement provider.

3.2 Regular Clothing Allowance

The clothing allowance may be increased on a needs basis. Applications for increased allowance should be made to the Home Manager in the first instance.

4. POCKET MONEY

- 4.1 All children or young people will receive pocket money on a weekly basis. Children and young person will be encouraged to save a proportion of their pocket money (see section 9).
- 4.2 Pocket money can be deducted as a sanction only as a last resort and once all restorative approaches have been exhausted. Any such deduction must have the prior approval of the Registered Manager; no more than 66% of pocket money may be deducted.
- 4.3 Where there are concerns around a child or young person's wellbeing and their use of pocket money to buy items of harm e.g., buying drugs, a programme of supervised spending of pocket money may be put in place, if agreed by the Registered Manager.

5. RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS ALLOWANCE/ BIRTHDAY ALLOWANCE

- 5.1 Residential homes employees will ensure that religious festivals and birthday allowances are administered in a culturally sensitive and non-discriminatory manner.

6. HOLIDAYS

- 6.1 The full cost of any holidays organised by the home will be met by the home. The Registered Manager and the Responsible Individual will agree the costs.

6.2 SCHOOL OR CLUB-ORGANISED HOLIDAYS AND TRIPS

- 6.2.1 The cost of field trips and residential courses, which are an integral and necessary part of the child or young person's school curriculum, will be met by one-off payments by the home. Approval for the cost of the trip must be obtained from the Registered Manager.
- 6.2.2 Residential Services may meet the cost of school-organised holidays such as skiing holidays or visits to foreign countries, if this has been identified in the child or young person's care plan as of benefit to their development. The Residential Services Manager will make any decision.
- 6.2.3 The costs of passports should be met by the relevant social work team and all children or young people should have a passport applied for when come into care (unless this is not possible for legal reasons). This is the responsibility of the child's social worker and should be discussed at the point of placement. Once obtained a photocopy of the child or young person's passport should be placed on the child or young person's file.

6.2.4 Children and young people should be encouraged to save pocket money towards the spending money for organised school social trips.

7. ACTIVITIES

7.1 All children and young people will be able to engage in affordable leisure activities. The cost of these activities, including the cost of equipment, will be met by the home subject to the approval of the deputy or registered manager.

8. BANK ACCOUNTS

8.1 All looked after children/young people within Dorset children's homes should have a bank account; it is the responsibility of the keyworker to ensure that this is in place for all young people. Registered managers will monitor this.

9. SAVINGS, LEGACIES AND INVESTMENTS

9.1 All children who have been in care for a year or more should have a Junior ISA unless they have a Child Trust Fund.

9.2 When a Junior ISA is first opened for a child in care, the government will contribute £200 to it.

9.3 Junior ISAs for children in care are managed by the Share Foundation. The point of contact for the Share Foundation at Dorset Council is the Service Manager, Corporate Parenting and Care Leavers.

9.4 The Share Foundation will usually liaise with the Service Manager, Corporate Parenting and Care Leavers to ensure that Junior ISAs are opened for all eligible children. If you believe a child has missed out on a Junior ISA, please contact the Service Manager, Corporate Parenting and Care Leavers.

9.5 Keyworkers should help or encourage the children and young people in their care to add to their savings on a regular basis wherever possible. The appropriate amount to save will vary according to each child's circumstances.

9.6 When Junior ISA holders reach the age of 16, they may take control of the account. This means they can make investment decisions for themselves, though they still cannot access funds until their 18th birthday. Those supporting young people in Dorset Children's Homes should, as they deem appropriate, use materials provided by The Share Foundation so that 16

(and 17) year olds they are looking after, and care leavers, may assume investment control in this way.

- 9.7 When a child is no longer being looked after because they have reached the age of 18, those supporting young people in Dorset Children's Homes should use the materials provided by The Share Foundation and work with the Service Manager, Corporate Parenting and Care Leavers to ensure they may access their matured accounts.
- 9.8 Special procedures will be implemented where a child in care inherits a legacy or is made the beneficiary of investments by a third party. In either of these situations, the Corporate Director, Care and Protection must be advised immediately.

10. INDEPENDENCE PLANNING

- 10.1 All children or young people regardless of age will be encouraged to develop skills to allow them to eventually live independently. It is our duty to prepare children and young people for independence, and this will form part of their pathway plan.
- 10.2 As part of a child or young person's pathway plan money can be paid directly to them. This should be agreed by the Home Manager, with the child or young person and their social worker and the purpose and amount of any money to be paid should be made clear to the child or young person. Consideration should be given as to whether this money is paid directly into the child or young person's bank account.
- 10.3 Where and whether a young person may require assistance with accessing their Bank Account, refer to the pathway plan and authorising individuals and permissions.
- 10.4 Any money allocated directly to the young person will be in line with current allowances and this will be to cover the cost of food, travel, mobile phone, activities and personal allowance.

11. Ordering of Goods and Services

- 11.1 Wherever possible, employees making purchases on behalf of children or young people should use Dorset Council's Source to Pay Purchasing Hub. Further information on this is at:

[Buy something - tasks and guides \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

- 11.2 Where P-cards are used to make purchases on behalf of children and young people, this must be in accordance with 'P-Cards Guidance Notes for Directorates and Card Holders' (available from Dorset Council Accounts Payable Department). The child's initials should be used as part of the order reference (as per 5.2d of the guidance).

12. Recording and reconciling expenditure

- 12.1 It is the expectation that staff will record and provide receipts for any monies they spend whether via cash or procurement cards before they end their shift, save in exceptional circumstances. All staff should ensure they record the initials of the child or young person for whom spending was incurred, and the purpose of the spending. Please be sensitive to how we record how money is being spent e.g., 'Pregnancy test' may be better described as 'Personal items.'
- 12.2 It is the responsibility of each individual staff member to be accountable for the money that is spent during their working day. Audits will be undertaken on a regular basis and failure to comply with procedures will be addressed by the appropriate supervisor and could lead to disciplinary action.
- 12.3 It is the responsibility of Registered Managers to electronically authorise all of the procurement card transactions and ensure that all expenditure is in accordance with the authority's budgets and procedures.
- 12.4 At least monthly the p-card Reconciler will ensure they reconcile all their entries and at least monthly the p-card Approver will ensure they approve all their entries.
- 12.5 Guidance on reconciling p-card entries is at:
[Financial Services - P-Card \(sharepoint.com\)](http://sharepoint.com)

13 Unspent Allowances – Year End

- 13.1 Any unspent personal allowances will be paid into the young person's bank account which they will take with them when they leave.

