

**Staying Put**

*Briefing for professionals*

**V2.0 120324**

* **Staying Put** should be considered at the earliest opportunity as permanency planning starts.

**Staying Put** is an arrangement where care leavers continue to live with their foster carers after they reach the age of 18 for any period, until they are ready for greater independence.

**Staying Put** can be in place until the young person reaches the age of 21. When a young person reaches 18, they are no longer a child in care and the focus is on pathway planning and supporting towards independence and adulthood.

* **Staying Put** ensures that the care leaver can experience a transition to adulthood in a supportive home environment where relationships

have already been established. This helps the young person to maximise their Education, Employment and Training opportunities as well

as allowing them to develop the necessary emotional and practical skills before they move to live independently.

* **Staying Put** is generally considered the best option for a young person in foster care. Children’s social workers, personal advisers, and foster carers can contact the Supported Lodgings team for an informal discussion at any time and should be confirming arrangements no later than when a young person reaches their 16th birthday.

As a young person turns 18 significant legal and financial changes occur. Children’s services no longer have, or share, parental or financial responsibility for a young person. **Staying Put** is an independent arrangement between the young person and their former foster carers, facilitated by children’s services.

* There are three financial elements for

providers of **Staying Put.**

- Rent paid by the young person from their income usually via Universal Credit. Depending on a young person’s

budgeting ability, provision may be made for the rent to be paid directly to the provider. Universal Credit, and therefore rent, is paid in arrears. Care leavers’ service pay the equivalent of 4 weeks upfront as an initial one off payment.

* Contribution to household bills from the young person’s income. As Universal Credit is paid in arrears,

young people are encouraged to retain some of their fostering allowances to see them through the initial period, with bridging payments being made from the care leaver’s personal budget if there is no alternative.

* Fee from children’s services.

Please note that the clothing allowance and all other fostering allowances cease.

* Before the young person’s 18th birthday, a licence agreement is drawn up in advance and arrangements made for an initial Support Plan meeting.
  + A licence Agreement - a formal agreement between the former foster carer and the young person, evidencing the rental arrangement and including ground rules. Both parties sign the licence agreement.
  + A Support Plan – Alongside the pathway plan, this records

arrangements between the young

person, **Staying Put** provider, personal adviser, social worker and **Staying Put** worker where the young person will be able to identify the support they will need and from whom to gain the necessary life skills ready for

independence. This will be reviewed in

3 months and thereafter at 6 monthly intervals. The life skills are budgeting, including costs of living, cooking including a healthy diet, how to manage their laundry, personal care, organising their correspondence, and using public transport.

* Following the young person’s 18th birthday the **Staying Put** worker will support the **Staying Put** provider and will undertake a support contact every 6 weeks. Training and peer support is provided.
* The Personal Adviser’s statutory commitment is to review the pathway plan with the young person and significant others at least every 6 months and contact the young person at least every 8 weeks. However, contact is more frequent during the transition

period around the 18th birthday and then determined by individual need.

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