

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE: FINANCIAL SUPPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 11 MARCH 2004	Ref: JD/SD/DC	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval for the basic rates of financial support to be paid to young people leaving care in North Lanarkshire. The financial rates require to be set as part of the April 2004 implementation of The Support and Assistance of Young People Leaving Care (Scotland) Regulations 2003.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 From the 1 April 2004, all local authorities in Scotland will have new duties and responsibilities for the continued support of young people leaving care. This will include duties to undertake Pathway Plans, to ensure that care leavers are supported with their accommodation, education, employment and to provide financial support.
- 2.2 The Regulations stipulate that local authorities must provide for the financial support of young people who have been accommodated for longer than thirteen weeks and who have left care after the age of sixteen. Eligible young people will no longer receive financial support from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) until they are eighteen years of age.
- 2.3 The Regulations for Throughcare have been reported to Operations and Services Sub Committee in February 2004.
- 2.4 The DWP transfer of monies to local authorities has now been completed. Authorities will be responsible for care leavers living expenses and accommodation costs that might otherwise have been covered by Job Seekers Allowance and housing benefits.
- 2.5 The Regulations stipulate that the financial package of support should not be less than the equivalent of the DWP benefits available to 16 and 17 year olds.
- 2.6 With the new responsibilities for financial support there will be a requirement to provide a swift and transparent system for appeals and resolution in relation to the manner in which care leavers are provided with services.

3 PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The DWP transfer of monies to North Lanarkshire Council is:

2004/05	£292,841.00
2005/06	£366,051.00

3.2 The proposed basic rate of financial support from April 2004 is detailed below:

Type of Payment	Amount	Comment
Basic Living Allowance	£44.05 p.a.	Payable to young people not at work, school, college, or training course Equivalent to the 2004/05 rate for Job Seekers Allowance
Living Allowance – on training scheme	£5-21	Payable as a top-up to the Training Allowance paid by training provider, to a maximum of £65 per week.
Living Allowance – at school/college	£21	This ensures the same income as a training scheme
Emergency payment	£250 per annum	This would be the maximum amount, spread over a year eg. to cover unexpected bills, accessed in agreement with the Pathway Co-ordinator

3.3 In addition to the allowances paid under the Regulations, the Social Work Department will continue to be able to offer support in cash or kind under Section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 for clothing allowances, education experiences, bus passes, leisure activity and furnishing a tenancy.

3.4 It is anticipated that there will be 30 young people leaving care and eligible for financial support during 2004/05.

4 FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The costs associated with the above payments will be met from the transfer of monies as outlined in paragraph 3.1.

4.2 Budget projections indicate that the Department will be able to review the living allowance rate at six monthly intervals during the first year with a view to the setting of allowances in the second year.

4.3 Payments will be made via the BACS (electronic transfer) system. Young people will be able to open an account with Post Office counters, the Municipal Bank or a Bank/Building Society of their own choice.

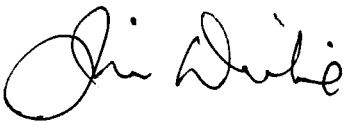
4.4 The Social Work Department will require to have a nominated officer who will be responsible for overseeing an appeals and resolution service for care leavers. This service will be complementary to

the existing complaints procedure with a nominated officer identified in line with said procedure. This will be a fast, transparent system and will be published in leaflet format to all care leavers.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Committee is asked to

- (i) Approve the proposals for financial support to care leavers
- (ii) Request the Director of Social Work to provide further reports to the Committee on the implications of the new regulations
- (iii) Note the content of this report



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
March 2004

For further information on this report please contact David Carver, Co-ordinator, Throughcare, TEL: 01698 332277