

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE: FINANCIAL SUPPORT	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK			
Date: 10 MARCH 2005	Ref: DC/MF		

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

The report is to seek Committee's approval for the increase in the basic rates of financial support to young people leaving care in North Lanarkshire.

2. Background

- 2.1. On 01.04.04 The Regulations of Care Act was implemented giving duties to local authorities to provide for the financial support of young people who have been accommodated for longer than 13 weeks and who have left care after the age of 16.
- 2.2. Eligible young people no longer receive financial support from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) until they are 18 years of age.
- 2.3. The DWP transfer of monies to Local Authorities was completed in February 2004. They are now responsible for the Care Leavers living expenses and accommodation costs that might otherwise have been covered by Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefits.
- 2.4. 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. Committee agreed the present rate on 11 March 2004.
- 2.5. With the new responsibilities for financial support comes 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.
- 2.6. The Social Work Department has a nominated officer (Co-ordinator Throughcare) who is responsible for overseeing the appeals and resolution service for Care Leavers. It is a complementary to the existing complaints procedure.

3. Proposals/Considerations

- 3.1. The allocation of DWP transfer monies will increase from £293,000 in 2004/05 to £366,051 in 2005/06.

3.2 The proposed increase in basic rates of financial support from 01.04.05 will be:

Type of Payment	Amount		Comment
	Current	Proposed	
Basic Living Allowance	£44.05	£44.50	Payable to young people not at work/school/college/training course
Life Improvement Allowance	NIL	£10.00	A new incentive for 2005. Payable as a top up to the basic allowance if a young person is engaging in pre-vocational activities that do not offer training allowances
Living Allowance – On Training Scheme	£5.00 to £21.00	£10.00 to £26.00	Payable as top-up to Training Allowance paid by training provider, to a maximum of £70.00 per week
Living Allowances – At School/College	£21.00	£26.00	This ensures the same income as someone on a training scheme
Emergency Payment	£250.00	£250.00	This would be the maximum amount, spread over a year, to cover unexpected expenses such as bills, accessed in agreement with Pathways Coordinator.

3.3 In addition to these allowances under the Regulations, the Social Work Department will continue to offer care, exercise duties and powers in terms of Section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 for clothing allowances, education experiences, bus passes, leisure activity and furnishing a tenancy.

4. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

4.1 The funding for these proposals can be met from the resources transferred from the DWP.

4.2 All payments are made by the BACS system. Young people are encouraged to open an account in a bank of their own choice.


5. Recommendation

5.1. Committee is asked to:

- i Approve the increases for financial support to care leavers as detailed in paragraph 3.2.
- ii Request the Director of Social Work to provide further reports to the Committee on the progress of the financial support responsibilities under the Regulations of Care.

And

- iii Otherwise note the content of this report


Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
10 February 2005

For further information on this report please contact David Carver, Co-ordinator, Looked After and Accommodated Children Telephone: 01698 332651