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**Departmental Policy Guidelines**

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1. **INTRODUCTION**
	1. The Pathway Plan and post 16 PEP’s will set out plans for Higher Education in consultation with the Social Worker, Personal Advisor and Virtual School. A good deal of planning is needed between the young person, Social Worker, Personal Adviser and other educational advisors to ensure the best possible choices are available to the young person. This education and career planning support should help young people recognise the relevance of their studies to their future career and life chances and should encourage young people to reflect regularly on their skills, strengths and aspirations.
	2. At any time after the age of 18, the young person can discuss with their allocated Personal Advisor any ambitions to access Higher Education course and appropriate advice will be given.
2. **FUNDING**
	1. **Higher Education Entitlement**

Once accepted onto a Higher Education/ University course we will pay the annual contribution of up to £6,200 to be used towards your student accommodation and living costs. The Local Authority can administer this on a weekly/ termly basis OR hold some payments for over the summer holidays, but are not able to ‘save’ this for the young person after the end of the financial year when accessed.

An additional maximum annual contribution of up to £2,500 will be paid if you are studying and living within the Borough of London.

The Local Authority will have discretion if there is a recurrent or repeated year. This would be based on an up-dated Pathway Plan/ PEP.

The Local Authority will fund up to a maximum of £150 contribution towards the costs of graduation which can be used to fund the event, a celebratory meal or the costs of photographs.

 2.2 **Holiday Accommodation**

If a young person requires Holiday Accommodation the amount available will be up to a maximum of £2,100. Young people may use this money to return to former foster carers or supported lodgings hosts. This is a discretionary payment, subject to assessment of need, and will need to be planned with your Personal Advisor.

2.3 **Duration of Funding**

We will pay the normal duration of the course with the additional year for a foundation course or PGCE. Funding is for a maximum of a 4 year period and for Undergraduate Courses. Where the Young Person needs to repeat a year, this is subject to assessment of need and will be planned with your Personal Advisor.

1. **TRANSFERRING COURSES**

It is expected that the young person will discuss transferring courses with their tutor and Personal Adviser within a reasonable time scale to ensure the continuation of study.

1. **ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

Young People will be expected to discuss with their tutor and Personal Adviser any difficulties they are having with attendance and/or coursework. This is to ensure that extra support may be sought.

In order to retain funding we will need to receive confirmation that you are attending from your College/University and the Young Person needs to provide explicit permission to the University to provide this information. The frequency of this should be needs led but as a minimum termly.

1. **ACCOMMODATION**
	1. Whilst the allocated Personal Advisor/ Care and Support Service will deal directly with the Halls of Residence or landlord to pay a young person’s rent, it is the responsibility of the young person to ensure that they take care of the property and eventually secure the return of the deposit, where applicable.
	2. If the young person lives in Halls (which people generally do in the first year) their utility bills are included (gas, electric, water). They may need to purchase their own TV licence dependent on use.
2. **FURTHER GUIDANCE NOTES**
	* A student can apply for a Maintenance Loan from Student Finance. They will also have to apply for a Tuition Fee Loan. This can be done on the same form.
	* The application forms, PN1 (New Students) and PR1 (Continuing Students) are downloadable, however they recommend applying on line. An application for finance has to be made each year.
	* The Student Finance website can be accessed through [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). This has lots of information as well as being the place to apply. There are downloadable guides that are very good and are easy to understand.
	* Applications can usually be made from mid-March. The website will advise of the date and also the date the applications have to be in by. If a student changes their course they will need to inform Student Finance.
	* Payments are made in three instalments – one at the start of each term.
	* The amount a student will receive for their Tuition Fee Loan will cover their fees and will be paid directly to the university (there are a few exceptions but the university website would say if a course has higher than usual fees).
	* A student will receive a financial notification letter and can keep track of their application on line.
	* A student should also usually get some sort of bursary (a one off payment) from the university – this varies depending on which university they are at. They will get details of this from the university once they are enrolled there.
	* Some universities have a support worker for Care Leavers to go to if they need any advice or support – whether they use this or not is up to them. However the advice should always be to take this up as it can be a gateway to additional support, including financial.
	* Certain courses pay an annual bursary. These are usually NHS courses or Social Work courses. These are not applied for in the same ways as grants and loans. The website will explain how to apply and has links to the relevant sites.
	* If the student is a parent with a dependent child they may be able to apply for additional help for childcare costs. The website and guides will let them know what they can apply for.
	* All universities have an Access to Learning Fund. Whether students are allocated anything from this is the decision of the University itself. They can give money as either a grant or a loan and in a lump sum or in instalments. Students need to apply to the Student Services Department when they have started their course.
	* Disabled students can claim additional allowances. These are to cover such things as special equipment or support/helper. These are known as Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs) and an assessment has to be undertaken before any money is awarded. These allowances are grants not loans.

**Higher Education Bursary - Leaving Care Act**

The 2008 Act amended Section 23C of the 1989 Act to introduce a requirement for local authorities to pay a Higher Education Bursary to former relevant children who pursue a Higher Education course in accordance with their Pathway Plan. The new duty is in addition to their duty to provide assistance for education and training under Section 23C (4) of the 1989 Act. The Children Act 1989 (Higher Education Bursary) (England) Regulations 2009 deal with the payment arrangements which local authorities need to put in place to former relevant children who pursue such a course of higher education. The regulations set the amount of the one-off higher education bursary at £2,000. They prescribe the meaning of higher education for the purpose of determining eligibility for the bursary and set out the broad framework for arrangements in relation to the timing of payments and the circumstances in which payments may be withheld or recovered by a local authority.

The required payment of £2,000 is included in the payments to young people for their accommodation and living costs.

**Payment Arrangements**

It is the responsibility of the Personal Advisor to support the Young Person to identify how their Higher Education Allowance will be administered, either within a PEP or a Pathway Plan, which will depend on clear accommodation costs being identified. A funding application (C61) is to be completed detailing these arrangements for Strategic Lead agreement.