



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

16 to 21 YEAR OLD

FINANCIAL POLICY

Policy updated from 1 April 2006

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Chapter One

CONTEXT

1. Introduction and Context

In an attempt to be clear and consistent in its financial dealings with young people in, and leaving care, Children's Services has operated since 1998 a written policy for teenagers called the '16-21 year old Financial Policy' with an accompanying budget of the same name.

2. The 2000 Children (Leaving Care) Act

The Children (Leaving Care) Act, came into operation in England on 1.10.2001. Amongst the various additional duties and requirements it imposed are major changes in the way Local Authorities deal financially with young people in, and leaving, care. The most important of these changes as regards financial issues are summarised as follows:-

- i. Under the Act Local Authorities act towards young people in, and leaving, their care as 'good and reasonable' parents, and to that end maintain financial responsibility towards such young people until they are aged 18. Young people should not be discharged from care as early as they had been in the past. Any financial 'incentives' for Local Authorities to discharge 'early' were removed.
- ii. For the vast majority of 16 and 17 year olds in or leaving care, entitlement to state benefits (Income Support; Job Seekers Allowance; Housing Benefit; Community Care Grants etc.) have been removed, and instead Local Authorities have a duty to maintain such young people financially until they are aged 18.
- iii. Such duties are imposed on the 'Responsible' Local Authority (i.e., the Authority which was last looking after the young person), irrespective of in which Authority that young person subsequently is/goes to live.

3. Manchester's 16-21 Policy;

In the light of the above, Children's Services revised and amended its financial policy towards teenagers in, and leaving, care to form the content of this document.

The policy applies to the following financial categories:

- Housing/Accommodation Costs
- Basic Weekly Maintenance Payments
- Incentive Allowances
- First Home Grants
- Birthday and Christmas Allowances
- Miscellaneous Payments

4. Principles of the Policy

In implementing its financial policy, Children's Services recognise the position of care leavers in general as a highly disadvantaged group in comparison to non looked after young people. Endeavouring therefore to act as a good or reasonable parent, whilst at the same time working responsibly within resources, Children's Services:

- i. Expect that whilst still living in 'care', Carers will take active steps to encourage young people to practice saving and managing some of their own money, in preparation for the time when they come to leave 'care';
- ii. Actively discourage young people from moving too soon to 'independent' accommodation;
- iii. Maximise the use of supported or semi-supported accommodation options for 16/17 year olds who wish to live 'independently';
- iv. Expect the same educational/employment/training outcomes as a good or reasonable parent might expect for their own children;
- v. Ensure that no young person is financially worse off than if they were on State Benefits;
- vi. Provide financial incentives and encouragement for young people in, or leaving, care to maximise their educational and employment potential;
- vii. Wherever possible, always pursue a young persons entitlement to State Benefits first, so that the resources of the Department can be maximised in assisting those young people who do not so qualify, or in assisting all such young people above those levels;
- viii. Write this policy in such a way that it is as simple as a very complicated situation will allow, and in such a way that clearly defines entitlement from discretion;
- ix. Expect that the spirit of this policy is written in such a way that a partnership between Children's Services, Barnardo's Leaving Care Service and Young People is continued, based on Children's Services administering the policy fairly and speedily, the Leaving Care Service always providing support to young people in the way monies are administered and spent, and young people accepting that all assistance given should be spent on the purpose for which it was intended.

Chapter Two

THE LEGAL POSITION

A) The Children (Leaving Care) Act

The Children (Leaving Care) Act introduced 3 categories of young people:-

- Eligible
- Relevant
- Formerly Relevant

For the main part, these are defined as follows:-

1. Eligible Young People

A young person who is:-

- a) Legally 'Looked After' (under whatever legislation) on their 16th birthday

AND

- b) Has previous to that 16th birthday been 'Looked After' (under whatever legislation) for a continuous or aggregated period since their 14th birthday of 13 weeks or more

AND

- c) Is still legally 'Looked After' (under whatever legislation)

2. Relevant Young People

A young person who is:-

- a) Aged between 16 and 17 (17 years, 364 days and below)

AND

- b) Who was previously an 'Eligible' young person

3. Formerly Relevant Young People

A young person who is:-

- a) Aged between 18 and 21 (*and in some cases beyond)

AND

- b) Who was previously an 'Eligible' or 'Relevant' young person

* Young people who begin 'agreed' (as in their Pathway Plans) courses of education/training before their 21st birthday, but courses which will end for whatever reason beyond their 21st birthday, remain 'formerly relevant' young people until the end of that course/period of training.

4. Further Categories and Exceptions

There is one further category of 'relevant' young person. This is any young person

- a) Aged 16 or 17

AND

b) Not subject to a Care Order

AND

c) Who at the age of 16 was either detained (on remand, in a young offenders' institution or a secure training centre) or in hospital

AND

d) Immediately prior to being detained or in hospital was accommodated by a Local Authority for a period of at least 13 weeks which began after that young person reached the age of 14.

There is one exception to becoming an 'eligible' young person. This is any young person who

e) Children's Services places in a series of short term placements, none of which individually exceeds four weeks (even though they may amount in all to an aggregate period of 13 weeks or more since that young person's 14th birthday)

AND

f) At the end of such a placement, the young person either returns to the care of her/his parent, or someone who has parental responsibility in respect of her/him.

There is one exception as to when a young person's status as a 'relevant' or 'formerly relevant' young person ends early. This is where such a young person returns home to a parent(s), or someone who holds parental responsibility in respect of her/him. For a six month continuous period such a status remains, but at the end of that period, assuming the young person remains with that parent/person with parental responsibility, their 'relevance' or 'former relevance' ends and instead they revert to being a Section 24 young person (see below).

B) Section 24 of the Children Act

The Children (Leaving Care) Act does not replace or repeal Section 24 of the Children Act. Instead it adds to it and in certain instances 'strengthens' its powers into duties but S.24 remains in place. It is important therefore to remember that there remain various categories of young people (called Section 24 young people for the purposes of simplification under this policy) to whom Children's Services continues to have either a duty or a power to provide 'advice and assistance' as it always did under that legislation. This is the category of young people who were 'Looked After' on their 16th birthdays, but not for the continuous or aggregated period of 13 weeks or more since their 14th birthdays thus meeting the Acts 'eligibility' criteria; together with privately fostered young people; young people living in residential schools; etc., as well as those previously eligible or relevant living with parents.

C) Financial Implications of being an Eligible, Relevant or Formerly Relevant Young Person under the Children (Leaving Care) Act, or Section 24 of the Children Act

1. Eligible/Relevant Young People

For the most part, no young person who is 'eligible' or 'relevant' under the Act can claim State Benefits of any type whatsoever. Instead, it falls on the 'Responsible' Local Authority (the Local Authority the young person is, or was last, 'Looked After' by) to financially maintain that young person until their 18th birthday.

However, even within the Act, there are certain categories of 'eligible' or 'relevant' young people who can still claim State Benefits. These are:-

- a) Young people who are pregnant/parents, who can claim Income Support etc., but not Housing Benefit.
- b) Young people with a disability, who can claim Income Support, Disability Living Allowance etc., etc., but not Housing Benefit.
- c) Young people who are sick/incapacitated, as certified by a doctor, who can claim Income Support, Incapacity Benefit etc., etc., but not Housing Benefit.

2. Formerly Relevant Young People

All such young people, being at least now 18 years of age, can claim the full range of State Benefits, including Housing Benefit, providing of course they otherwise meet the separate Benefits Agency etc., criteria for those payments.

3. Section 24 Young People

Section 24 young people continue to be eligible, for the full range of State Benefits - Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, Community Care Grants etc., etc.

Chapter Three

ELIGIBILITY FOR PAYMENTS UNDER CHILDREN FAMILIES & SOCIAL CARE'S 16-21 FINANCIAL POLICY

A) General Eligibility

Under Manchester's 16-21 Financial Policy, there are six different types of payment (described in detail in the following chapter). In summary however, these are:-

- i. Housing/Accommodation costs
- ii. Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowances
- iii. Incentive Allowances
- iv. First Home Grants
- v. Birthday and Christmas Allowances
- vi. Miscellaneous Payments

All six types of payment (with their separate more detailed sub-criteria, described in the following chapter) may apply to young people

- a) Who are/last were 'Looked After' by Children's Services in Manchester

AND

- b) Who are either Eligible, Relevant or Formerly Relevant young people

AND

- c) Who are living in accommodation contained on Manchester's 'Agreed List' (see Appendix One), or similar such accommodation in other Authorities.

In summary however, such young people are those living in:

- Flats/Tenancies/Bedsits
- Supported Housing Schemes
- Hostels/Foyers etc.
- Approved Lodgings placements
- Bed & Breakfast accommodation
- Mother & Baby Units
- Single Homeless or Homeless Families provision
- Staying short term or temporarily with friends

B. Exceptions

Because, however, one of the principles of Manchester's 16-21 Financial Policy is that State Benefits should always be claimed wherever possible, careful reference needs to be made to the preceding Chapter and its descriptions of the financial implications of a young person's legal status. In this regard it should be remembered that certain categories of eligible or relevant young people, otherwise meeting the general eligibility of this Policy, but who are pregnant/ parents; disabled; or sick are not eligible for Weekly Maintenance Allowances under this Policy because they qualify for this amount or more from State Benefits. Social Workers / Leaving Care Workers are expected to be proactive in ensuring that young people in these situations do claim the State

Benefits to which they are entitled, thereby also ensuring that the resources for other young people qualifying for Manchester's 16-21 Policy are maximised.

C. Other Categories of Young People

In addition, this policy does NOT apply at all to, or only applies PARTIALLY to, the following categories of young people, all of which are considered individually under their various separate headings in Chapter 5. These categories are:-

- young people in Residential Care
- young people in Foster Care
- young people in Outside Placements
- young people living with their Parents or others with 'Parental Responsibility'
- young people living with Relatives or Friends
- young people in Higher Education
- young people in Custody
- young people from another Local Authority

Chapter Four

TYPES OF PAYMENT UNDER MANCHESTER'S 16-21 YEAR OLD POLICY

1. Accommodation/Housing Costs

Eligible or relevant young people may need to go to live in independent or semi-independent accommodation such as that described in Chapter 3 - flats/ tenancies/ bedsits; supported housing projects; hostels; mother and baby units; lodgings; homelessness provision etc. Wherever this is the case, the young person is unable to claim Housing Benefit in respect of such accommodation and instead such costs, once agreed, are met from the 16-21 Budget.

For the majority of Manchester's young people, such accommodation will be in that named on Manchester's 'Agreed List' (see Appendix One). This list is periodically revised, and may be added to or taken away from as circumstances change. Because it is an 'Agreed List' however, prior approval to place a young person in any accommodation on that 'Agreed List' is not required.

Situations do arise however, where an eligible or relevant Manchester young person needs to be placed in similar accommodation which is not on Manchester's 'Agreed List'. This is most likely to arise when a Manchester young person is going to live somewhere within another Local Authority, though can also arise where a placement not on the 'Agreed List' is required in Manchester, or where special circumstances in relation to a formerly relevant Manchester young person may need Children's Services to consider paying some or all of that young person's housing costs. Wherever any of these circumstances are the case, approval needs to be sought from the relevant District Operational Principal Manager prior to the placement proceeding. This is done by the Social Worker/Leaving Care Worker completing the appropriate section of the CF/FIN 7 form, including details of that placement's cost and the reason why such a placement is necessary, and submitting that form to the said Principal Manager for approval. (The 'said' Principal Manager in all such cases will be that District's Manager to which that young person's case is/was last open, irrespective of in which District the young person is now living).

Wherever the young person is living, the Provider of that accommodation draws up an invoice in respect of that young person's accommodation costs setting out the weekly cost of such a placement, the dates a young person has been living in such accommodation and the cost of that period of stay. For longer periods, this is expected to be a 4 weekly invoice; for shorter periods the precise number of days a young person has been in residence. The invoice goes to the Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker who initially sought approval for that placement to proceed, who checks that the details of the invoice are correct in regard to the costs of the placement and the period the young person is said to have been in the accommodation, and having done so sends the invoice to the relevant Children's Services Operational District Principal Manager confirming such details. The Principal Manager then signs the invoice and sends it to the Children's Services Accounts Section for payment.

It is important to remember that, upon reaching their 18th birthday, a young person's legal status changes to being a formerly relevant young person and as such they are eligible to claim Housing Benefit. Children's Services will therefore not pay Accommodation / Housing Costs beyond a young person's 18th birthday - as such it is incumbent upon such a young person's Social Worker/ Leaving Care Worker to ensure a Housing Benefit claim is made by that young person in adequate time.

2. Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowances

Just as eligible or relevant young people living independently or semi-independently cannot claim Housing Benefit, neither can they for the most part (see below for exceptions) claim Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, etc., etc., for their basic income. Instead such financial support comes from Children's Services in the form of a Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowance. In amount this is at least equivalent to the 16/17 year old higher rate of Income Support (see Frontispiece 'Annual Rates to accompany Children's Services 16 to 21 Financial Policy') and once a young person is living in accommodation on Manchester's 'Agreed List', or in similar accommodation otherwise agreed as in Section 1. above, such payment is a young person's entitlement.

Because they are entitlements, Weekly Maintenance Allowances commence when a young person first goes to live in independent/ semi-independent accommodation and continues to be paid until that young person's 18th birthday providing they remain living in such accommodation or their circumstances do not alter (see paragraph below). As such they necessitate approval by a Principal Manager at their commencement and thereafter at 6 monthly intervals to ensure they remain entitled. Such approval is by either a Social Worker or Leaving Care Worker completing a CF/FIN 7 form and passing this to the Children's Services Operational District Principal Manager to whose District that young person's case is/was last open, for approval.

However, it is possible that prior to the young person's 18th birthday, the Weekly Maintenance Allowance will need to cease because the young person's circumstances have changed. Such changes would be:

- a) Because the young person is pregnant/become a parent and can thus claim Income Support; such claims should be lodged 11 weeks prior to that young person's confinement
- b) Because the young person has become disabled and can thus claim Income Support/Disability Living Allowance;
- c) Because the young person has become sick and can claim Sickness Benefit/Incapacity Benefit;
- d) Because the young person has started working and has an Income of their own;
- e) Because the young person has gone to live somewhere which is not independent/ semi-independent, and is therefore financed in some other way. This would include the young person going into custody, or returning to their parent(s) or someone who has parental responsibility for them.

In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of the young person's supervising Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker to ensure the Weekly Maintenance Allowance ceases. Where this is being paid via a Children's services District Office, this will be relatively straightforward; Where the Allowance is being paid via the Accounts Section (see below) they will need to be urgently notified, via the completion of Form CF/FIN 7B.

Weekly Maintenance Allowances, which should be paid to a young person weekly in advance, can be paid in one of two ways - in cash via a Children's Services District Office (or the Leaving Care Team by arrangement) or direct into a young person's Bank/Building Society account. To some extent this method will depend upon the level of maturity, stability and ability to manage money on the part of the young person and as such there will always be some young people, temporarily or more longer term, who will best be given their money each week in person and in cash, and possibly in instalments totalling no less than the prescribed weekly Maintenance Allowance.

However, for two main reasons - minimising cash handling for Children's Services/ Leaving Care and making life more normal and convenient for young people - the preferred method of paying a young person's Weekly Maintenance Payment will be via them having their own Bank account and being able to access their own money. Bank accounts for young people can be complicated - see Appendix Two entitled 'How to Open a Bank Account and Related Issues' to which the reader should refer. However, in summary the position is as follows:-

As part of the Children's Services Preparation for Independence strategy for all young people 'Looked After', Social Workers should routinely be applying for passports for young people as ID and ensuring that by the age of 16, all young people Looked After have a Bank/Building Society account. If this has not happened by the time a young person is first referred to the Leaving Care Service, a Leaving Care Worker will provide a 'double check' to ensure this happens.

As with Accommodation/Housing Costs above, Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowances automatically cease on a young person's 18th birthday, as their legal status changes to that of a formerly relevant young person. An automatic trigger to ensure this happens is put in place by the Children's Services Accounts Section. However, wherever a young person, upon reaching such an age, becomes eligible for State Benefits - Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance etc., etc., - it is incumbent upon that young person's Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker to assist that young person to make such a claim in good time. This is complicated by the fact that a young person cannot actually make a Benefit claim prior to their 18th Birthday, but the Social Worker/Leaving Care Worker should be proactive in getting this process to take place on, or as close to, a young person's 18th Birthday as possible. In instances where there are delays in changing from one system to another, Children's Services (via a District Office / Leaving Care Service) will continue to make equivalent weekly payments in lieu of such a claim for a maximum period of 4 weeks. Such payments made by Children's Services will be loans.

3. Incentive Allowances

Incentive allowances are payable to eligible, relevant or formerly relevant young people to encourage them into some form of education/ training/ employment. They are in two amounts - £30 per week or £10 per week. Both amounts include travel costs. They are payable as follows:

To qualify for the £30 allowance, young people must be in education/training/ employment of 12 hours per week/2 full days or more. If in paid employment or paid training, they must have 'take home' pay of less than the 'baseline figure and (see Annual Rates Frontispiece), which does not include any payments towards rent or council tax. In such circumstances they would receive an Incentive payment which brought them up to the baseline figure. Likewise if they otherwise qualify for an Education Maintenance Allowance of £30 per week, they would not additionally receive an Incentive Allowance.

To qualify for the £10 allowance, a young person must be doing something 'useful' and constructive of an organised nature, e.g. attending a recognised course, volunteering etc., etc., of at least one full morning or afternoon per week but which is less than the 12 hours/2 days which would qualify that young person for the full allowance.

In both cases, Incentive Allowances are paid retrospectively (usually in the week after the activity has taken place), and upon some form of proof by the young person that they have actually attended that activity. It is incumbent upon Social Workers/ Leaving Care Workers to proactively satisfy themselves that young people have therefore attended and to withhold such payments either if a young person has not or the situation

needs clarifying. Because of this need for actual proof of attendance, Incentive Allowances, like Education Maintenance Allowances, are not paid in Christmas, Easter or Summer holiday periods, where they relate to a young person at college, etc.

Incentive Allowances can either be paid, as with Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowances, in cash via a Children's Services District Office (or by arrangement with the Leaving Care Team) or through a young person's Bank account in the way described in Section 2 above.

Approval for Incentive Allowances is by Social Workers or Leaving Care Workers completing a CF/FIN 7 and passing this to the relevant Children's Services Operational District Principal Manager for approval. Such approval is granted for a maximum period of 12 weeks. Monies are then made available via the relevant Children's Services District Office or if they are to be paid into a young person's Bank account, a CF/FIN 7A also needs to be sent to the Children's Services Accounts Section in the Town Hall as in Section 2. above to activate payment.

3A. Young People Over 19 In Full Time Education

Because of current national rules relating to young people aged 19 plus in full time relevant "non advanced" ie not university education (16 hours or more per week) such young people are not entitled to claim state benefits of any kind – Income Support, Housing Benefit etc. Though a discussion does need to take place with the relevant Children's Services District Principal Manager as to young person's individual circumstances, Children's Services will fully support that young person in completing an agreed course of study, and in so doing will financially support the young person by paying a weekly maintenance payment, the Incentive Allowance and that young person's Housing Benefit.

However, as from 10/04/06, the "law" (Social Security –Young Persons-Amendment Regulations 2006 SI No 718/2006) says that a young person who becomes 19 after that date and who is in full time "relevant, non advanced" education that began before that young person was 19, can continue to claim Income Support and Housing Benefit up until the age of 20, or when the course ends (at which point such entitlements to benefits would cease). Obviously therefore young people in this position who so qualify for such benefits should claim them instead of relying on Children's Services for financial support as in the paragraph above, meaning that in such circumstances Children's Services would only pay the young person's Incentive Allowance.

4. First Home Grants

First Home Grants (FHGs) are a sum of money paid by the Children's Services to help a young person establish themselves in their own independent accommodation. They are not an 'entitlement' in the sense of being automatically payable to all young people leaving care irrespective of circumstances. Instead they depend upon an assessment being made of each young person's circumstances in relation to the particular accommodation they are about to move to.

FHGs are only payable to eligible, relevant or formerly relevant young people. In the main they are intended to assist such a young person when they are about to move to a flat/tenancy/bedsit of their own, but occasionally lesser amounts (still to come out of the same overall sum) are agreed to allow a young person to buy certain personalised items

e.g. a television/dvd/bed etc., etc., when such items are necessary to personalise a semi-supported situation such as one's own room in a hostel, the foyer etc., etc.

FHGs have 2 amounts, both supplemented by a further set amount if the young person has a child living with them (see 'Annual Rates Frontispiece' for amounts). The lower amount is the maximum payable to 16/17 year olds (eligible and relevant young people) who go to live in independent accommodation at that age.

The higher amount is the maximum payable to formerly relevant young people as they move to such accommodation after the age of 18. Wherever possible under the Benefit Regulations, all such young people must first make application to the Social Fund for a Community Care Grant (never a loan). Wherever a loan is offered, or a grant refused, such a decision should be routinely appealed. If successful in such an application, the amount granted will be deducted from the maximum amount of FHG payable by Children's Services.

Eligible or relevant young people who later become 18 qualify at that age or thereafter for the remainder of their FHG. They too however are first expected, wherever appropriate, to apply for a Community Care Grant though it is acknowledged that as they will often by then be already living independently it is unlikely they will receive any such Grant. Should they do so, this too is deducted from their remaining money from Children's Services.

It is expected that a full FHG will cover roughly the following items. Some will necessarily be second-hand but in relation to all electrical appliances and beds, such items should either be new and/or come with a properly recognised guarantee:-

- Cooker and installation
- Fridge/Freezer
- Bed and Bedding
- 3 piece Suite
- Chest of Drawers
- Wardrobe
- Table and Chairs
- Colour TV and Licence for 1 year
- CD/DVD
- Curtains/Window Blinds
- Carpets
- Kitchen/Bathroom Linen
- Kitchen equipment (pots, pans, cutlery)
- Washer and installation
- Mop and Bucket
- Vacuum Cleaner
- Iron and Ironing Board
- Brush and Pan
- Plugs and Bulbs
- Towels and Tea Towels
- Clothes Horse / Washing Line and Pegs

- Alarm Clock
- Starter Pack - domestic / personal toiletries
- Household Contents Insurance (1 year)

(For parents)

Extra carpets, cot/bed, furniture for child's room

Where young people wish to move into privately rented accommodation, where the issue of deposits etc., may occur the following additional points apply. If such a young person is eligible or relevant, a judgement needs to be made whether the deposit is reasonable and whether the rent is in line with that property's 'local reference rent'. To this end, a pre-tenancy determination from Manchester Benefits Service is also sought. Providing then that the rent is reasonable, that young person's rent will be paid by Children's Services as a Housing/ Accommodation cost and any deposit will come out of the young person's FHG. The Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker will help the young person to enter into a written agreement with the landlord as to what that deposit covers and to draw up a written inventory of items covered.

If a formerly relevant young person wants to move into a privately rented tenancy, similar steps should be taken by the Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker to ensure the rent and deposit are reasonable. However, by getting a pre-tenancy determination first, an assessment is made as to whether that young person will be able to afford the rent (which will now come from Housing Benefit unless the young person has substantial income of their own). Any deposit still comes out of the young person's FHG.

With eligible, relevant or formerly relevant young people who later move on to further non-private independent or semi-independent accommodation the deposit reverts to them to spend on further needed FHG items in that situation. If however the deposit was to cover rent in advance, that money reverts to Children's Services.

It is to be remembered that a FHG can be spent at any time from the young person first becoming eligible to the end of their period of being formerly relevant (* see below). As such, if appropriate, the money can be staggered to reflect a young person's situation as they mature and are likelier to stay in one place. Whatever the young person's situation however, the expectation is that the spending of their FHG is done in conjunction with a Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker (or exceptionally another responsible adult such as a Foster Carer).

*Very occasionally, for exceptional reasons, a young person may first request their FHG beyond their 21st birthday / beyond the end of their period of former relevance. In such circumstances, a report outlining those exceptional circumstances written by a Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker is submitted first to that young person's relevant District Operational Principal Manager for approval.

FHGs are generally approved by a Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker completing a CF/FIN 7, with an accompanying Minute Sheet outlining the young person's circumstances, and submitting this to the relevant District Operational Principal Manager for approval. In instances when a Community Care Grant Application needs to be made first, a sum not exceeding £500 from a young person's FHG can nevertheless be agreed pending this. Upon Principal Manager approval, the money is made available in whatever format is most appropriate from the relevant Children's Services District office and spending supervised by the Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker etc. However, other than awaiting the outcome of such a situation, no 'maximums' are imposed on any individual FHG request (up to obviously the overall maximum), as all requests are treated on the merits of each young person's situation.

5. Birthday and Christmas Allowances

Birthday and Christmas Allowances are payable to all eligible and relevant young people living in situations on Manchester's Agreed List or otherwise agreed independent /semi-independent accommodation up to and including a young person's 18th birthday. Thereafter, they cease. The amount of these allowances is the same as those laid out in the annually revised Children's Services "Fostering Allowances for Children placed with Manchester Foster Carers" document. Approval of such payments is made by the Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker submitting a request for such a payment to the relevant District Operational Principal Manager on a CF/FIN 7.

6. Miscellaneous Payments(MP's)

Miscellaneous payments are all the other types of 'one off' or emergency payments that may need to be paid to young people. By definition, they involve discretion rather than entitlement because of their varying nature. However, the following guidelines prevails:-

MPs are not expected to cover travel, clothing or basic maintenance, all of which are included in the varying types of other payments outlined above.

MPs should routinely be made to ensure a young person has the necessary documentation they may need, e.g., passports, birth certificates etc.

Some young people have varying 'health' needs e.g., glasses, dental treatment, prescriptions, etc., etc. In the first instance recourse should always be made to the Health Service to try to get such assistance free but there will be circumstances in which a case will need to be made to an appropriate Children's Services Manager (see below).

Likewise, in the pursuit of their education or employment, young people may need special materials or assistance to help them pursue such activity. In the first instance, recourse should always be made, where possible, to the relevant Educational Authority/Institution etc., for assistance, but it is recognised there will be circumstances in which a case will need to be made to an appropriate Children's Services Manager (see below).

Finally, there will always be situations where young people present as having no money because they have lost it/had it stolen or simply spent it all too soon. In such circumstances, it is expected that a Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker makes an assessment of the situation as to its genuineness, checking for example if a crime has been reported to the Police. On some occasions therefore small amounts of cash may be given. In other situations, especially where this starts to happen regularly or becomes a pattern with certain young people, assistance may be refused altogether or help given in the form of kind (e.g., a food parcel) rather than cash.

MPs are considered by a Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker completing a CF/FIN 7, together with supporting information outlining the young person's circumstances, and submitting this to the relevant District Operational Principal Manager for approval. Given the emergency nature of some of these requests, verbal approval from Children's Services will often need to be made on that same day in response to a particular request. This must be followed by a CF/FIN7.

Other than in the most exceptional circumstances, MPs should be agreed or not agreed on their merits and, if awarded, not deducted from other allowances.

Chapter Five

YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN OTHER SITUATIONS AGED 16-21 TOWARDS WHOM THIS POLICY EITHER PARTIALLY RELATES, HAS A RELATIONSHIP TO, OR DOES NOT APPLY AT ALL

1. Introduction

Preceding chapters identify the types of payment that can be made from the 16-21 Financial Policy; the eligibility concerned; and the situations towards which the majority of that Policy applies.

However, it is also necessary to consider other groups of young people to which the Policy either partially applies or at least relates to. Likewise, there are situations which need clarification as to whether young people in those positions qualify for financial assistance or not under a different Children's Service policy / eligibility criteria.

Situations falling into either of these categories are as follows:-

- young people in foster care;
- young people in residential care;
- young people in 'outside' placements;
- young people living with parents/persons with parental responsibility
- young people living with relatives or friends
- young people in custody
- young people in higher education
- young people from other Local Authorities

Each of these is now considered in turn to clarify the position.

2. Young People in Foster Care, Residential Care or Outside Placements

Young people living in any of the above situations do not qualify for payments from the 16-21 Budget as all payments/allowances etc., in respect of them come from the Fostering budget, the Residential Unit's budget in which they are living, or the monies paid to the Outside Placement Provider in respect of that placement.

However, in keeping with the spirit of the 16-21 Financial Policy, all young people remaining in such situations beyond Year 11 at school (and preferably before) will be practising saving and having control themselves over certain amounts of money. Likewise, financial incentives in line with those contained in the Policy should be made available to young people who participate in education, training or employment. Full details of these types of payments can be found in the annually issued and updated Children's Services document, 'Fostering Allowances for Children Placed with Manchester Foster Carers..

3. Young People Living with their Parents / Someone with Parental Responsibility

Young people who are either eligible, relevant or formerly relevant could return home to live with their parent(s) or someone who has parental responsibility for them. However, the 'status' of relevant or formerly relevant under the Children (Leaving Care) Act only remains for a 6 month period, at which point it ceases (though the young person then reverts to the status of Section 24 under the Children Act.

Whilst a young person is still eligible (i.e., under a Care Order) or for the period they are relevant, neither they nor their parents can claim any State Benefits. Instead during this period, Children's Services pay to the parent/person with parental responsibility, the lower rate of Income Support as a Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowance in respect of that young person. In the case of a relevant young person, such a payment ceases at the end of the 6 month period when the relevant status expires, and thereafter the parent/person with parental responsibility is expected to claim Income Support etc., in respect of that young person.

Birthday and Christmas Allowances, as well as any agreed Miscellaneous Payments, continue to be paid to eligible or relevant young people living with their parents.

Likewise, young people living with their parent(s) etc., who are either eligible, relevant or formerly relevant qualify, as appropriate, for Incentive Allowances under the 16-21 Policy.

All such Allowances are approved in the same way as described in previous Chapters by Social Workers / Leaving Care Workers submitting a CF/FIN 7 to a Children's Services Principal Manager for approval. Payments are then administered to the parent/young person via a Children's Services District Office / Leaving Care Team.

4. Young People Living with Relatives or Friends

Essentially, young people living with relatives/friends fall into one of two categories - those placed there formally by Children's Services or those who make their own arrangements to live in such situations / go there informally / short term / simply find a place to stay for a few days etc., etc.

Those placed formally do not qualify for payments under the 16-21 Policy, but are instead dealt with separately under the Relative/Friends Policy and related Departmental Budget.

The latter category do however qualify for payments under the 16-21 Policy and are treated in the majority of respects like young people living independently in situations equivalent to those on Manchester's 'Agreed' List. The one exception to this, however, is that no Housing/Accommodation cost is payable to the Friend/Relative. The young person however, so long as they are otherwise eligible or relevant, qualifies for the Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowance, Incentive Allowances, Birthday and Christmas Allowances and Miscellaneous Payments.

All such Allowances are approved and administered in exactly the same way as described elsewhere in this Policy.

5. Young People in Custody

Eligible, relevant or formerly relevant young people otherwise qualifying for payments under the 16-21 Policy could spend periods of time in custody. In such circumstances, the following situation prevails:-

Housing/Accommodation costs; Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowances; Incentive Allowances; and (obviously) First Home Grants are all suspended whilst a young person

is in custody and are not paid. Birthday and Christmas Allowances are however paid but, depending on the rules of the particular institution, are given to the young person whilst they are there or retained/ banked for them to access upon their release. If in addition, a young person spends 6 months or more in custody, a request for a Miscellaneous Payment for clothing may be considered by a Social Worker / Leaving Care Worker submitting such a request outlining the young person's circumstances on a Minute Sheet with accompanying CF/FIN 7 to the relevant Operational District Principal Manager for approval. Likewise, though this depends upon the individual circumstances of differing YOIs, applications of a miscellaneous payment nature can be made for toiletries etc that a young person may need whilst in custody. A guideline amount of £20 per month (£5 per week) should be applied.

6. Young People in Higher Education

Manchester young people going to University/Higher Education are subject to the following financial arrangements in respect of the 16/21 Policy. However a definition of 'higher education' here only applies to situations where young people are otherwise expected to apply for student loans to finance themselves for the duration of their course. If they can claim Housing Benefit/Income Support in respect of the course they are doing because it is classed as "relevant, non advanced" education (see Section 3A above) they should do so. They would not then qualify under this part of the 16/21 Policy.

The following paragraph (a) then applies to young people at University etc who are living "independently" –ie in flats, bedsits, halls of residence etc

(a) Such young people are given a 52 week per year (ending however at the end of the young person's course in their final year) payment (known as the 'Manchester HE Allowance'), of the existing maintenance plus full incentive allowance, together with a weekly contribution towards their accommodation costs. This means that a student loan becomes optional for the young person, in the respect that if they decide to apply for a full or part loan the young person keeps this amount on top of their 'Manchester H.E allowance.' Likewise if a student works at any point during their study, such earnings will be disregarded for any purposes to do with payments/income under this Policy. An assumption will further be made that as a means tested young person with no income of their own, in all but the most exceptional cases young people will have their student fees met for 'free' via the student loan company/local education authority.

The following paragraph (b) applies to young people in higher education who continue to live with their "ex foster carer/friend relative carer, who themselves for this reason are in receipt of a Continuing Care Allowance in respect of that young person. In such circumstances, for any week or part thereof that the Carer is receiving such an Allowance, the young person will only receive the maintenance and incentive part of the "Higher Education" Allowance, and not the accommodation element, as this is included in the Continuing Care Allowance being paid to the Carer.

In addition to the above, and in the period of a young person's course, Children's Services additionally pay for 6 return journeys between Manchester and the young person's place of study in any one academic year. Such payments are classified as Miscellaneous payments on the CF/FIN7, but are a young person's entitlement. Sympathetic attention is also be given to the young person's need for books/course materials.

If a young person begins an agreed course of higher education before their 21st birthday, but the period of study and the course they are to undertake will take them

beyond their 21st birthday, they remain a formerly relevant young person for this period under the Children (Leaving Care) Act. As such they remain entitled to the 'Manchester H.E Allowance' together with any associated Miscellaneous payments as described above under this policy.

Approval for all payments under this Section come from a Social Worker/Leaving Care Worker completing a CF/FIN 7, and submitting it to the relevant District operational Principal Manager for approval. How the money is then administered to the young person is a matter of negotiation but is likely to be by regular payment into a young person's bank account and, especially whilst a 'student' is in halls of residence, direct to that accommodation provider, at least so far as the 'accommodation' element is concerned.

7. Young People from Other Local Authorities

Some young people, otherwise eligible, relevant or formerly relevant, but still/ previously looked after by other Local Authorities are living in Manchester and perhaps in receipt of a Social Work / Leaving Care service from Manchester on behalf of that other Local Authority.

In such circumstances, however, Children's Services make no payments whatsoever from the 16-21 Budget in respect of such young people. Instead all financial expenditure of whatever nature, however small, remain the responsibility of that young person's 'Responsible Authority' (i.e. the Authority that is/last looked after them). As such all requests for payments/financial assistance towards that young person must be referred immediately to that Authority for guidance as to what, if anything, to pay and later for payment itself.

APPENDIX ONE

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

'AGREED' LIST FOR 16/17 YEAR OLDS RELATING TO PLACEMENTS THAT CAN BE MADE UNDER THE 16/21 FINANCIAL POLICY.

APRIL 2006

1. Flats/Tenancies/Bedsits

- Council Tenancies
- Housing Association Tenancies
- Private Flats/Bedsits (where checks have first been made to ensure the rent is reasonable and affordable for the young person, with regard to that property's 'local reference rent')

2. Supported Housing Projects

- CCP Tenancies
- Spenser Court
- Manchester Foyer
- Salford Foyer
- Settlement Housing
- Creative Support Tenancies and Projects
- Manchester Project
- New Day
- Victoria House
- Starting Out
- East Manchester Floating Support Service
- Cromwell Road Project
- Irwell Valley floating Support Service(Trafford)

3. Hostels

- Stopover
- The Beeches
- Brydon Court
- Sash
- Project 34
- New Beswick House
- Greenbank
- Liberty House
- Safestop
- The Limes
- Burnage Lane project
- William House
- Positive Lifestyles
- Shepley House

- Copperdale
- NACRO Hostels
- Women's Aid Refuges

4. **Mother & Baby Units**

- Marillac House
- Lorna Lodge
- Annie Kenny Project
- Nathans Road
- Olivia Lodge

5. **'Homelessness' Provision**

- Men's and Women's Direct Access Centres
- Young People's Shared Houses
- Woodward Court
- Homeless Family Provision
- Bed & Breakfast (emergency/short stay only)
- Shared Houses

6. **Approved Lodgings Placements**

- Adult Homefinding Scheme
- CFSCD Scheme (but consult Family Placement Service for both placement arrangements and financial arrangements)

APPENDIX TWO

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

HOW TO OPEN A YOUNG PERSON'S BANK ACCOUNT AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adults opening a Bank account need some form of ID with a picture on it (Passport, New Style Driving Licence, Company ID Card, etc., etc.), plus something to confirm their address, e.g., a utility bill etc.
2. Young people under the age of 18 are also able to open a Bank account in their name but besides the same ID as above, they need a parent or guardian to sign their consent as well. The Bank will require a parent/guardian to themselves show proof of their identity (identity cards and proof of address).
3. Young people under the age of 18 should be given what is called a 'cash card' account. With this account, they get a cash card which can be used in any Bank or outlet belonging to the 'Link' system, i.e., they do not have to use the same Bank as they actually opened the account at. Providing they use an outlet that does belong to the Link system, they will not incur any charges for taking out money.
4. With a cash card account you are only able to take out whatever money is actually in the account and no more, i.e., you cannot get credit, overdraw etc. You do not get a cheque book or a cheque guarantee card. Instead you get a cash card, which has its own PIN number.
5. Once the Bank has agreed to open a cash card account, they either send the cash card to the person's address a few days later, or it can be collected in person by arrangement. However, the PIN number is sent separately, to the person's address, and cannot be collected in person.
6. Money can then be taken out of any machine, using the cash card and PIN, or by going into the Bank and showing proof of ID.
7. Money can obviously be paid into a young person's account via cash, or BACS system, using that Bank's sort code plus the young person's account number.
8. Children's Services Accounts Section can pay money into a young person's Bank account via the BACS system. To do this they will have to have a CF/FIN 7A form, duly authorised by the relevant Children's Services Principal Manager, with the young person's Bank account details (sort code plus account number) and amount to be paid, filled in on the form. Payments into a young person's account will be made on a Tuesday, but to guarantee a payment for that week, the relevant paperwork needs to be with the Accounts Section by 4.00 p.m. on the preceding Thursday. This system is most likely to apply to a young person's Basic Weekly Maintenance Allowance, which, in keeping with the 16-21 Financial Policy, can be authorised for a maximum period of 6 months.
9. The BACS system is apparently fairly infallible if all the correct details are inputted, so if Accounts confirm they have been given the correct details and sent the information to the City Treasurer's Department it is as certain as anyone can be that the money will have gone into the young person's Bank account.

10. Social Workers should routinely be applying for passports for young people Looked After, at least when they are 15 years of age. This is because currently in the UK passports are the most useful form of ID. Wherever possible, Social Workers should be doing their best to open Bank accounts for young people in the way described above.

10. However, because of the problems with ID mentioned above, Barnardo's Leaving Care Service have come to an arrangement with Barclays Bank for a young person to go to one of the branches on the list (see following page) and take with them a certificated letter on Barnardo's headed paper to confirm their ID, signed by one of Barnardo's MLCS designated managers. If the young person has additional ID all well and good, but the Bank will accept the letter in lieu of ID.

11. In such circumstances, the young person should always be accompanied by their Leaving Care Worker in keeping the appointment to open their Bank account. Thereafter, the Leaving Care Worker should always make an arrangement for the young person to collect their cash card in person and go with them, partly to ensure they get the card and partly to ensure the young person knows how to use it, once they have received their PIN number.

12. Remember that in the circumstances above, although the young person is opening an account with whatever branch of Barclays and that therefore will be the place where the account (and relevant sort code) is held, nevertheless they can actually use their cash card at any Bank, Building Society machine etc., participating in the Link system.

APPENDIX THREE

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

16 – 21 Financial Policy ANNUAL RATES FRONTISPIECE Operational from 1 April 2006

1. Weekly Maintenance Allowance

£45.50 per week.

2. Incentive Allowance

£10.00 per week (2 days or less).
£30.00 per week (3 days or more).

3. Baseline Amount

£75.50 per week.

4. First Home Grant

16/17 years old £1050.00
16/17 years old with children £1,250.00
18 plus years old £1,550.00
18 plus years old with children £1,750.00

5. Birthday Allowance

16/17/18 years old £198.11

6. Christmas Allowance

16/17 years old £198.11

7. Manchester 'Higher Education' Allowance (Operational from 01/09/06)

£75.50 per week (Maintenance and Incentive)
£50 per week (Accommodation element)

CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CF/FIN 7; 16-21 FINANCIAL POLICY
(Please print all details using block capitals)

1. NAME OF YOUNG PERSON
2. ANY OTHER NAMES KNOWN BY
3. DATE OF BIRTH
4. CURRENT ADDRESS
5. DISTRICT OF ORIGIN (tick box)
NORTH CENTRAL SOUTH
6. LEGAL STATUS (tick box)
ELIGIBLE FORMERLY RELEVANT
RELEVANT SECTION 24
7. TYPE OF PAYMENT REQUESTED (tick box)
 ACCOMMODATION/HOUSING COST (not on Manchester agreed list)
 WEEKLY MAINTENANCE PAYMENT
 INCENTIVE ALLOWANCE
 FIRST HOME GRANT
 BIRTHDAY/CHRISTMAS ALLOWANCE
 MISCELLANEOUS PAYMENT
8. AMOUNT OF PAYMENT REQUESTED
9. HOW CALCULATED (Applies to Incentive Allowances only)
'Base Line' Amount
- Income of Young Person
- Difference
10. FOR WEEKLY MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS / INCENTIVE ALLOWANCES ONLY
To commence, week commencing
- To cease, week ending
- 10A. DATE OF REVIEW OF WEEKLY MAINTENANCE / INCENTIVE ALLOWANCE
.....

11. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12. SECTION TO BE COMPLETED FOR FIRST HOME GRANT APPLICATION ONLY

Address Young Person is Moving To

.....

Type of Accommodation (Furnished/Unfurnished).....

Deposit and/or Rent in Advance required? How Much?

.....

If Furnished Flat, What is already there?

.....

.....

.....

Does Young Person Already Have Any Household Items? What?

.....

.....

.....

Has Community Care Grant Been Applied For/Refusal Appealed?

.....

.....

.....

Amount Given via Community Care Grant

Has Young Person Already Had Any First Home/Leaving Care Grant?

.....

How Much?

Amount of First Home Grant Being Requested?

.....

13. SOCIAL WORKER/LEAVING CARE WORKER
 (Print Name)..... DATE
 (Sign).....
14. COUNTER SIGNED, TEAM MANAGER
 (Print Name)..... DATE
 (Sign)
15. APPROVED, PRINCIPAL MANAGER
 (Print Name)..... DATE
 (Sign).....
AMOUNT APPROVED
16. COMMENTS OF TEAM MANAGER/PRINCIPAL MANAGER

17. IF WEEKLY MAINTENANCE/INCENTIVE ALLOWANCE, DATE OF REVIEW

18. FOR ADMIN PURPOSES ONLY
DATE OF PAYMENTS
AMOUNT OF PAYMENTS
PERSON MAKING PAYMENT

REQUEST TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACCOUNTS SECTION
TO PAY A YOUNG PERSON MONEY VIA THE 16-21 POLICY
DIRECT INTO A BANK ACCOUNT

This form only needs to be completed where payment is to be made to a young person via Children's Services Accounts Section rather than a District Office. Once completed and authorised, this form needs to be sent to Children's Services Accounts section, 6th Floor, Town Hall Extension, Manchester M60 2AF for payments to commence. Top copy to Accounts, bottom copy child's file, (all details need to be completed in block capitals).

1. YOUNG PERSON'S SURNAME

2. FIRST NAME

3. ANY OTHER NAME KNOWN BY

4. DATE OF BIRTH

5. CURRENT ADDRESS

.....

6. BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS
YOUNG PERSONS BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER

BANK SORT CODE

NAME OF BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY

ADDRESS OF BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY

.....

7. PAYMENT DETAILS WEEKLY MAINTENANCE, INCENTIVE ALLOWANCE,
Amount £.....per week To commence, week beginning Tuesday.....
To cease, week ending

8. ONE OFF PAYMENT (specify details.....)
Amount £..... Date to be paid

9. APPROVAL OF PAYMENT
CF/FIN 7 Signed by which Principal Manager

On which date

10. AUTHORISATION TO COMMENCE PAYMENT
SOCIAL WORKER/LEAVING CARE WORKER (Print name).....

(Sign)..... DATE.....

PRINCIPAL MANAGER (Print Name)

(Sign)..... DATE

NOTIFICATION TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACCOUNTS SECTION TO CEASE
PAYING A YOUNG PERSON MONEY VIA THE 16-21 POLICY
DIRECT INTO A BANK ACCOUNT

Once completed this form needs to be sent to Children's Services Accounts Section, 6th Floor, Town Hall Extension, Manchester, M60 2AF. Top Copy to Accounts, bottom copy child's file. All details need to be completed in block capitals.

1. YOUNG PERSON'S SURNAME

2. FIRST NAME

3. ANY OTHER NAME KNOWN BY

4. DATE OF BIRTH

5. CURRENT ADDRESS

.....

6. BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS
YOUNG PERSON'S BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER

BANK SORT CODE

NAME OF BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY

ADDRESS OF BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY.....

7. CURRENT PAYMENT DETAILS

WEEKLY MAINTENANCE PAYMENT INCENTIVE ALLOWANCE

Amount £ per week
Commenced, week beginning Tuesday

8. DATE PAYMENT IS TO CEASE

Week ending

Last payment to be made on Tuesday

9. AUTHORISATION TO CEASE PAYMENT

SOCIAL WORKER/LEAVING CARE WORKER

(Print Name).....

(Sign).....DATE

PRINCIPAL MANAGER (Print Name).....

(Sign).....DATE.....