



London Borough of Brent
Children and Young People's Service

Leaving Care Financial Support
2024 – 2025
Categories and Entitlements

Guide for Care Leavers

Introduction

This financial guide gives you the information on all aspects of eligibility for financial support available from Brent Children and Young People's Service. The guide sets out the type and amount of allowance that you are entitled to receive based on your status and circumstances. **Please also refer to the 'Brent Local Offer 2024-2026' you can ask your personal advisor for a copy or look on the Brent website.**

The figures given refer to the financial year April 2024 – March 2025 and will be updated on an annual basis.

Eligibility

Entitlement to services is based on the following categories:

- Former relevant young people are young people aged between 18 to 25 years old.

Notes and Implementation Issues

- The financial policy has been produced following consultation with care leavers, foster carers, social care staff and other professionals
- The allowances set out in the following sections apply to all 'Former Relevant' and 'Qualifying' young people dependent on their legal/immigration status and an assessment of their needs. If you are a Care leaver who is also unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, you are entitled to the same allowances as any other care leaver. However, some allowances may be affected if you're living in supported accommodation where you are not responsible for paying utility bills.
- Your personal advisor is there to advise and assist you and will map out what financial support or entitlements we can offer in your pathway plan, please ask them if you are not sure about your entitlements.

Section 1

Former Relevant Young People

- If you are aged 18 to 25 if they commenced a designated further education or higher education course before the age of 21.

Category	Weekly amount	Comments
Subsistence	£71.92 paid by DWP.	<p>You will be claiming Income Support, Universal Credit, training allowance or working.</p> <p>If you remain in a foster care placement post 18 are eligible to claim welfare benefits as they are defined as 'Independent in their own right'. Young people who remain in foster care placements may also be eligible to claim housing benefits up to the level of the local reference rent. This is dependent on the circumstances of the foster carers.</p> <p>Initial Benefit Claim*</p> <p>Leaving Care Service will provide up to 4 weeks Subsistence payments to assist you whilst you wait for your initial benefit claim to be processed (evidence will be needed to be provided). If you have complied with all the requirements of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and you have not received your first benefit payment after 4 weeks, a further 2 weeks subsistence will only be agreed by the Service Manager. You must sign the 'Agreement to Share Information Form' so that your personal advisor or social worker can liaise with the Department of Works and Pension (DWP) regarding your claim.</p> <p>If you have not complied with the requirements of the DWP the Subsistence payment will cease after four weeks. You will need to your job coach and apply for a advance payment.</p>
Fares	Oyster Card Or travel warrants	You will be given 70% discount towards an Oyster Card if you are in full-time education, training or employment during term-time only to cover up to zone 1-6. You will need to have a current education learning agreement or enrolment letter to confirm this. You can also apply for half price bus and tram through London Transport (please speak to your PA)
Birthday Celebration 19 th , 20 th & 21 st birthday	£40	The birthday/religious allowance will only be paid if you remain in contact with Brent Children & Young Peoples Service & including those in YOI.
Religious Celebration (one off payment for Christmas or other Religious Celebration	£30	Only one payment is made annually up to the age of 21.

Support with education, training or employment

Category	Amount	Comments
Course equipment & enrolment fees.	£100 (if not provided by College)	Young will need to apply to the Learning Support Fund during the 1 st week of enrolment for course equipment, the college administers this fund. If funding is refused proof will be needed from the college. LB Brent may then provide equipment costs for education courses, depending on assessment of need. Enrolment fees will be paid subject to verification of course details. Interview for clothing will only be paid if funding is not available for any other source i.e. DWP
Interview for Clothing	£100 (if not provided by DWP)	

Further Education [Non-advanced courses i.e. GCSE & A levels, BTEC etc.]

From the age of 18 to 20, if you are studying full time (12 hours or more of 'guided learning') can claim Income Support and Housing Benefit on the grounds of being in 'Relevant Education'.

To qualify for Income Support on the grounds of 'Relevant Education' up to the age of 20 you must commence an education course before his or her 19th birthday.

Where appropriate, and dependent on an assessment of need, Brent Children & Young Peoples Service may help with specific grants and one-off payments to young people who are studying, for items such as books and equipment, if funding from the Learning Support Fund has been refused.

The majority of young people over the age of 19 who undertake full time further education courses may be ineligible for welfare benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit. In these cases, it is important to map out in the pathway plan how the young person will be supported financially. Certain limited groups of young people over the age of 20 such as lone parents and sick and disabled young people, who undertake further education courses, may remain eligible for welfare benefits.

If you are entitled to welfare benefits (Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Housing Benefit and Child Benefit/Child Tax Credits) he/she is not eligible for Brent's further education support as this is intended to replicate family and/or welfare benefit support.

Care leavers are a 'priority group' in terms of college 'Access Funds' which are sometimes called Learner Support Funds. Many colleges also have bursaries and specific welfare grants which care leavers may be able to apply for. The students' support service should be able to provide information on both the practical and financial support that may be available.

Higher Education [Advanced Course's i.e. Degree level]

See Uni Flow Chart on page 7 & 8 for details on financial support offered to you if you are planning to go to university. If you are in Higher Education (this a Degree/HND level) it is expected that the student loan will meet the cost of your accommodation during term time. Brent Social Care has a duty where required to provide assistance with rental deposit (if in private accommodation) and the cost of vacation accommodation either in cash or kind. This is for a maximum of 16 weeks.

During Christmas & Easter vacation young people will not be entitled to financial assistance towards rent and living costs – these are covered by their student loan & Education Bursary. Requests for additional support will be subject to **Service Manager's** agreement and will need a full financial assessment of income and expenditure to include clearly where the shortfall is and if additional funding was not available that you will suffer severe financial hardship.

Category	Amount	Comments
Christmas & Easter Vacation Accommodation & Subsistence payments	Nil	Payments will usually be covered by student loan and bursary
Summer Vacation Accommodation payments	£current market rate in not in own tenancy	Financial assistance will be provided to cover payment towards rent – young people will be encouraged to seek employment during the summer vacation to enhance their employment prospects once they leave university – in exceptional circumstances subsistence maybe paid subject to the agreement of the Service Manager.
Graduation Ceremony	Up to £200	Costs towards hire of gown & photographs

Welfare Benefits

The majority of young people who undertake higher education courses are ineligible for welfare benefits such as Income Support and Housing Benefit. Certain limited groups of young people who undertake higher education courses such as lone parents and sick and disabled young people may remain/be eligible for welfare benefits while studying.

If you are a lone parent, you may be eligible for the Government's Childcare Grant and/or Parents' Learning Allowance. Disabled students may be eligible for the Disabled Students' Allowance. Additionally, lone parents and disabled students are eligible for the equivalent of the Student Maintenance Grant.

Lone Parents and Sick and Disabled Students who are in receipt of Welfare Benefits should check with the Department of Work and Pensions regarding the rules about student loans. Being in receipt of a student loan may cause disqualification for welfare benefits.

For UASC young people wishing to attend university details of their current immigration status and eligibility of student loan application will need to be confirmed prior to any agreement of funding from Brent Children & Young Peoples Service.

Additional Funding and Information

Care leavers are a 'priority group' in terms of university and college 'Access Funds' which are sometimes called Learner Support Funds. Many universities and colleges also have bursaries and specific welfare grants which care leavers may be able to apply for. The individual university or college should have information about these. The students' support service should be able to provide information on both the practical and financial support that may be available.

Other financial support, i.e. accommodation

Category	Amount	Comments
Renting Private Accommodation		If you want to rent a private property, its is likely that the landlord will require a deposit and rent in advance before they will agree to a tenancy. If are over 18, you will be supported to access a rent deposit scheme.
Key Documents/Travel document	up to £100	LB Brent will purchase a passport & 1 birth certificate or Travel document (UASC) for each young person [one time only] if it has been lost and if funding is not available from any other source i.e., DWP.
Emergency payments	£40	In exceptional circumstances provide emergency payment in form of £20 food voucher and £20 in cash. These payments will be dependent on an assessment of need and will not exceed a one-off payment of £40.00.
Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA)	£3000 or £3200 (single parents) this is a one of payment.	The setting up home allowance is available up to the age of 25. The setting up home allowance should always be used to purchase household items. At least £70 should be used to buy a health & safety pack [smoke detectors etc]. The allowance is payable when you have secured a council tenancy, in exceptional circumstances some goods may be purchased whilst you are in a semi-independent placement (up to £250), the costs of goods will then be deducted from the total sum of the SUHA.
Subsistence Allowance (custody or prison)	£5.00 per week	If you are in custody, the department will support you with subsistence allowance up to the age of 21. This will be no more than the prison basic rate. These payments can be made direct to the prison on your behalf or arranged between a family member or significant other with written consent from you. Payments cannot be backdated but can be paid monthly.
Discharge Allowance (up to the age of 21)	Up to £150	If you have been in custody for more than 6 months and you require essential items such as clothing, toiletries etc. You will be entitled to this payment only once and will be dependent on a financial assessment.
Council Tax Exception	Amount will vary and depends on local council tax charge.	If you are 18 and over and either in full-time employment, training or apprenticeship and living in your own property you will be responsible for paying council tax. As part of our 'Local Offer' we will pay the council tax amount after you have applied for the necessary reductions based on your circumstances as outlined above. (if you are a student or claiming UC you may not have to pay full amount as you be exempt – please check with your personal advisor, if you are working and on low income the same rule may apply).

Other financial support, i.e. internet

Category	Amount	Comments
Internet		If you are claiming Universal Credit you can apply for free internet access from Talk Talk (internet provider). If you are not on Universal Credit and live in Brent, you can also apply through the 'Brent Digital Support Offer' where you could be eligible for free internet, please speak to your personal advisor who will advise you on the best option that meets your needs.
Gym Membership		Please speak to your advisor on how to join the Gym – you will only be eligible for this offer if you are in touch with your personal advisor and participating in your pathway plan reviews.

Other Help

- Rees: The Care Leavers Foundation <https://www.reesfoundation.org> Provides small grants for care leavers aged 18-25;
- The care leavers association <http://www.careleavers.com> A charity aimed at improving the lives of care leavers;
- Become <http://www.becomecharity.org.uk> Online advice and information for care leavers;
- Propel <http://propel.org.uk/UK> Information on what support is available for care leavers at university;
- Shelter <https://england.shelter.org.uk> Provides housing advice;
- National government benefits calculator <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators> Information on benefits;
- Citizens Advice Bureau <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> Information about money, benefits, your rights, employment, housing and the law.
- Care Leavers Covenant is a national inclusion programme that supports care leavers aged 16-25 to live independently [Care Leaver Covenant \(mycovenant.org.uk\)](https://www.mycovenant.org.uk) it also has several business offering discounts to care leavers i
- Young Brent Foundation works with young people in Brent: <https://youngbrentfoundation.org.uk/>

Uni for you?

The London Borough of Brent is committed to increasing the number of care leavers going to university. Going to university should give you the opportunity to study a subject that you enjoy, to learn about living independently, to have fun and increase your job prospects.

What can the London Borough of Brent provide*?

We want to help you get the most out of your time at university. In order to do that we are prepared to assist in the following:

- £2000 Higher Education Grant payable in instalments over the duration of the course*
- Financial support for rent during the summer accommodation. For Christmas & Easter half-term breaks rent is included in your maintenance loan however if you think you may need financial help speak to your Personal Advisor.
- Expenses for visits, open days & Interviews
- Financial assistance (subsistence) if you feel you are going to be in hardship (financial assessment will be undertaken & proof that you are actively looking for work)
- Financial contribution towards a laptop & specific software, if not already provided
- Financial assistance towards travel to university
- Advice and assistance in finding vacation accommodation if studying outside London.

What can you expect from the London Borough of Brent?

We will also offer assistance during your time at university in other ways. Most importantly you can expect:

- Support & encouragement from your allocated personal advisor or from the virtual school right up until the time that you graduate
- Help with filling out forms
- Assessment of your financial needs
- Review of your pathway plan every six months
- Travel to & from university during term time if needed

Making the most of your time

Going to university is a big step. It won't always be easy, but all the effort will be worthwhile in the end. University life can be tough, but you have come this far so with our support and your commitment it will be worth it in the end.

*** Subject to agreed eligibility**

Contact your social worker or personal advisor if you are starting or returning to University in 2024.

This flow chart applies to young people who are to commence a Higher Education Course in September 2024

Starting Course
in 2024/25

Brent Support

Expenses for visits, open days & interviews

A lap top & specific software
(apply for Access Fund)

Travel Grant to pay for travel fares to University

£2000 [non-repayable] Education Grant one off payment paid in instalments

Financial assistance [depending on assessment of need] will be made towards rent during Christmas, Easter & Summer vacation. Subsistence will only be paid during summer vacation following a financial - young person will be encouraged to find suitable employment

Advice in finding vacation accommodation if studying outside London

Lone Parents & Students who are eligible for welfare benefits will not receive the Accommodation & living expenses grant.

University Student Finance

University bursary up to £1,000 per year [varies between universities]

Up to £12,667 Maintenance Loan [London]

or
Up to £9,706 Maintenance Loan [outside of London]

Up to £9,250 Tuition Fee Loan [paid directly to University]. Universities that charge the maximum tuition fees per year must provide a **minimum bursary** of up to £400 per year, apply to University.

Apply to university for **Access Fund** to pay for laptop/living costs

Lone parents & Sick & Disabled who are eligible for welfare benefits will receive a special support grant similar to the maintenance grant.

This group of students should check with the Department of Work & Pensions as taking out a student loan may affect their benefit