



LEAVING CARE FINANCIAL

FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATE OF VICTORIA POSITION:

The FCAV strongly believes that young people should begin preparing for their transition to independence from an early age. Developing skills such as problem solving, dealing with people they do not know, as well as cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and driving are basic requirements for a successful adult life. Each agency has its own leaving care program which helps to ensure young people leaving care are prepared for the process. We recommend that you contact your agency for more information.

Another vital aspect to post 18 transitioning from care is where does a young person live? And how do they manage financially? Some young people will remain with their foster families but will no longer be subject to a protective court order; therefore their carers will no longer be eligible to receive care giver reimbursements. This fact sheet is designed to assist carers and young people with the financial aspects when a young person in home based care turns 18 years of age.

LEAVING CARE SERVICES - DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Eligibility for Services:

Leaving Care services are specifically for any young person under the age of 21 who was subject to a court order (Custody or Guardianship) on or after their 16th birthday. Support is available to those young people transitioning from care or who have left care and subsequently needs support. DHS has the following Leaving Care programmes:

- Leaving Care Mentoring,
- Post Care Support, Referral & Information Services, and
- Leaving Care Brokerage Funding (**LCBF**)

The **LCBF** is aimed at providing a flexible financial support for young people who have been in State care up to the age of 21 years. The use of brokerage is strictly focused on supports that directly benefit the young person's transition to or maintenance of independent living. This can include:

- Accommodation
- Education, Training and Employment
- Access to health and community services
- Life skills education and connection to community (applicable to young people up to 18 years of age)

Enquiries about Leaving Care Brokerage go via Home Based Care agencies to DHS Placement and Support Units.

The DHS Leaving Care Helpline is now available. Call **1300 532 846** (10am-8pm weekdays, 10am-6pm weekends and public holidays) or sent your Email to leavingcare@dhs.vic.gov.au

Or visit the website <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-and-families/child-and-youth-placement-and-support/leaving-care>



CARE GIVER PAYMENTS

Carers of Child Protection clients who turn 18 and are attending secondary school, are eligible for continued carer reimbursements until the end of the school year in which the young person turns 18, if the young person continues to reside in their care. Further, if these same young people continue their secondary education in the calendar year beyond which they turn 18, and remain with their carer, reimbursements will be extended for a further school year. Carers wanting to find out more information should speak with their foster care agency, or local Child Protection office.

REGIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There is also an expectation that DHS provide young people leaving care with the equivalent of \$1000 worth of assistance from their regional budget. However each DHS region provides these services in different ways so it is best to contact the relevant region via your home based care agency to determine what form this support may take in your region.

STATE CONCESSIONS

Young people leaving care who hold a Healthcare Card may also be entitled to a range of concessions. More information is available at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions/home

TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING ALLOWANCE (TILA)

TILA is a one-off payment from the Australian Government to help young people who are leaving out-of-home care, providing a contribution of up to \$1,500 towards the costs involved in moving to independent living. Young people, aged between 15 and 25 years who are leaving formal out-of-home care will be able to access a \$1,500 allowance for a range of support services as well as training and educational materials and other items like furniture and white goods. The \$1,500 payment will be available in up to six installments as agreed between the young person and their case worker, and will be paid by the Australian Government Department of Human Services (DHS).

More information is available at: <http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila>