

Personal Allowances for Looked After Children Consultation Report

October 04

Young People's Engagement Team

**South Tyneside Children and Young
People's Alliance
(Children's Trust)**

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Background:

Young people living in residential homes have, for some time, raised concerns about the difference between allowances available to their peers in similar placements in other regional local authorities and also those placed in foster placements. While at the same time young people living in foster care placements comment on how they receive less allowance than their peers of the same age within other foster care placements within the borough and their friends outside of the looked after system.

The Young People's Engagement Team was asked to complete a research project around the issue of Young People's pocket money and other allowances.

Specifically the purpose of the work was to:

1. Gain an understanding of current levels and rates of pocket money for all Looked After Children (those in children's homes, foster care both in house and those with independent providers, and out of borough placements).
2. Seek the views of all Looked After Children about current levels of pocket money, frequency of payment and method of payment.
3. Conduct direct consultation with a cross section of Looked After Children to explore the above.
4. Explore the perception that children in foster care receive more pocket money than those in children's homes.
5. Bench mark our payments against other Local Authorities both regionally and nationally.
6. Undertake an analysis of the above.
7. Present recommendations /proposals about changes / increases in pocket money.
8. Undertake a costings exercise around the above proposals.

Summary of Findings:

An analysis of clothing, pocket money, birthday, Christmas, holiday and other allowances highlighted the inequalities that exist in South Tyneside. This report recommends that allowances for young people in residential care be uplifted in line with those of young people in foster care, and to make the appropriate financial adjustments within the residential care budget. It also recommends setting appropriate *optional* pocket money levels for foster carers to adhere to. While still allowing foster carers the freedom to set their own pocket money levels this would give them a guideline for setting pocket money levels in accordance with other carers and residential settings in the borough.

Method:

Firstly, we set about trying to get a picture of pocket money levels across the region but this was far from easy! Some authorities were reluctant to provide this information and it was difficult to persuade people that we were merely trying to get a comparison between authorities. In the end we were able to obtain this data from Northumberland, Middlesborough and North Tyneside.

The fostering network, a leading charity for everyone involved in fostering, also publish minimum weekly allowance figures for fostered children in the U.K. We incorporated these figures in order to compare them to the allowances that our young people in foster care receive.

After we had obtained this data we compiled a similar list of payments and allowances that the young people in South Tyneside receive. This list consisted of allowances paid directly to foster carers and allowances given to young people living in residential care. As you will see from the results it is difficult to make comparisons because of the way that the money is divided i.e. foster carers are given a lump sum and while they are advised as to how the money should be spent they are able to negotiate the split themselves.

The young people in residential care do not have their allowances calculated in the same way - the payments that they receive are more rigidly set.

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

While we could find an overall weekly allowance figure for young people in foster care there seemed to be no such comparable figure for those in residential care i.e. the total amount that young people would receive when food, clothing, pocket money etc is all added up. Whilst this unit figure would be difficult to calculate it would provide a useful comparison with young people in foster care; **even though their method of care may differ, the level of care should have some equivalence.**

Once the figures from the different agencies and settings were accumulated we organised a number of focus groups with young people and carers.

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

Comparative Figures:

North Tyneside Council Allowances

Pocket Money Guidance for those in residential Care:

Over 14 - £6.50 per week

Under14 - £4.50 per week

Carers receive £70 per week; the foster carers can use own discretion as to how much actual pocket money the young people receive.

The young people in residential care can also earn up to £2.50 more for going to school/college. But this is added into savings.

Middlesborough City Council Allowances

Pocket Money rates for Young People in residential care:

Age	Allowance	Age	Allowance
5-7 yrs	£1.50	12 yrs	£4.00
8 yrs	£2.00	13 yrs	£4.50
9 yrs	£2.50	14 yrs	£5.00
10 yrs	£3.00	15 yrs	£5.50
11 yrs	£3.50	16 plus	£6.00

Clothing:

5-10 yrs	£6.00 per week
11-15 yrs	£8.00 per week
16 plus	£12.00 per week

Hairdressing:

5-10 yrs	£2.00 per week
11-15 yrs	£2.50 per week
16 plus	£2.50 per week

Personal Toiletries:

Female	£1.20 per week
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Toiletries:

5-10 yrs	£1.00 per week
11-15 yrs	£2.00 per week
16 plus	£2.50 per week

Birthday food/present:

Under 10 yrs	£55.00
11yrs & over	£80.00

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

Northumberland:

Pocket money and Clothing allowance for young people in Residential Care:

AGE BAND	P M DIRECT TO Y P	ADDITIONAL AVAILABLE TO UNIT FOR Y P	Birthday. ALLOW	XMAS ALLOW	CLOTHING ALLOW PER MONTH DIRECT TO Y P	ADDITIONAL CLOTHING AVAILABLE TO UNIT PER MONTH
9	4.00	4.25	50.00	77.00	28.90	28.90
10	4.30	4.60	50.00	77.00	28.90	28.90
11	5.00	4.80	77.00	77.00	36.00	36.00
12	5.50	5.20	77.00	77.00	36.00	36.00
13	6.00	4.60	77.00	77.00	36.00	36.00
14	6.60	6.20	77.00	77.00	36.00	36.00
15	8.00	5.80	77.00	77.00	36.00	36.00
16	8.50	13.65	77.00	77.00	46.70	46.70
17	10.00	20.50	77.00	77.00	46.70	46.70

The Fostering Network

The Fostering Network publishes annual figures for the minimum weekly allowances for fostered children. These figures are based on the minimum costs of bringing up any child while providing adequate care and sufficient life chances.

From April 2004

(2003 rates in brackets)

Outside London

Age 0-4: £108.49 (£105.74)

Age 5-10: £123.58 (£120.45)

Age 11-15: £153.84 (£149.94)

Age 16+: £191.37 (£189.48)

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

Fostering Allowances in South Tyneside (since April 04)

Age Band	Food 32%	Household Costs 20%	Clothing 15%	Travel 6%	Personal Care Equipment & Social & Leisure Activities 27%	Total 100%	Daily Rate
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
0-4	28.544	17.84	13.38	5.352	24.084	89.2	12.74286
5-10	31.7824	19.864	14.898	5.9592	26.8164	99.32	14.18857
11-15	38.2272	23.892	17.919	7.1676	32.2542	119.5	17.06571
16+	46.5376	29.086	21.8145	8.7258	39.2661	145.4	20.77571

Birthdays:

1 x extra weeks allowance

Christmas:

2 x extra weeks allowance

Summer Holidays:

2 x extra weeks allowance

Back to School (September):

1 x extra weeks allowance

Residential Rates

The budget for the borough's Children's Homes is as follows (per year):

Category	Henderson	Lanark	Whiteleas
Clothing	£1670	£1670	£3272
School clothes	£520	£520	Nil
Pocket money	£1400	£1400	£2090
Leisure	£1050	£1050	£4180
Holidays	£630	£640	Nil
Bus Fares	£840	£840	£1150
Personal requisites	£680	£680	£1050

*Please note that it is difficult in some categories to calculate what an "individual" young person may receive per week due to the transient nature of the residential population. So the figures below should be used as a guide to estimate how much each young person might receive.

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

This means that individual young people living in the homes can receive the following amounts:

Whiteleas

Travel:

Young People Not at work
= £6.50 bus pass

Work or school bonus:

£5 extra per week
+ £10 from ILSS

Toiletries:

£1.25 per week

Pocket money:

Aged 16 years - £5.65 a week
Aged 17+ years -£6.95 a week

Clothes:

All ages £15 month
£20 month if at college or work
£25 month if in stage 2 and at college or work

Birthday: £50 each

Christmas: £100 each

Leisure:

Up to £8 per week per young person

Lanark Drive

Travel:

Under 16 - £1 max per trip, 2 family trips, 2 leisure trips per week

Over 16 - £2 Max per trip, 2 family trips, 2 leisure trips per week

Pocket money:

10 years - £3.15 a week
11 years - £3.65 a week
12 years - £4.10 a week
13 years - £4.40 a week
14 years - £4.75 a week
15 years - £ 5.05 a week
16 years - £ 5.45 a week

Clothes:

£5 per week

Work or school bonus:

50p per day - max
£2.50

Leisure/Holidays:

Up to £5 per week per young person

Toiletries:

£2 per week

Telephone:

20p per day for friends (office phone available for family, SW, solicitors etc)

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

Birthday: £50 each

Christmas: £100 each

Henderson Rd -

Travel:

Bus fares -

50p per single journey (max £1)

£1 per day for school

£1 per day after school

Pocket money -

12 years - £4.10 a week

13 years - £4.40 a week

14 years - £4.75 a week

15 years - £5.05 a week

16 years - £5.45 a week

Telephone money:

50p per day - office phone

available for (family, SW etc)

Clothes:

£5 per week

Birthday:

£50 each

Christmas:

£100 each

Work or school bonus:

50p per day (mon-fri) -£2.50 max

Toiletries:

£5 per month

Leisure/Holidays:

Up to £5 per week per young person

Consultation with young people and carers:

The Young People's Engagement team met up with various groups of looked after young people and individual carers. The purpose was to obtain some views about the current system and also to provide us with an accurate understanding of the level of personal allowances that young people in foster care receive. It was also necessary to find out how the young people received their money and what kind of things they spent it on.

Some popular perceptions surrounding pocket money levels were that young people in residential care had to provide more things for themselves (i.e. out of their allowances) while young people in foster care had these things provided for them e.g. deodorants, perfumes, clothes, etc. Part of the consultation sought to explore this issue and so we asked the young people and carers to think about what the young people bought for themselves and what carers provided.

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

We organised a small competition for young people to tell us what they could buy with their weekly pocket money - this was supposed to get them thinking about the issue and also provide us with an idea of what the young people could theoretically buy with their allowances.

Overall, views were obtained from the homework club at "The PLACE", Fostering Reference Group, and individual young people in foster care placements.

We also spoke to a number of foster carers about the rates of pocket money that they set for the young people that live with them and also asked them about how they decided upon these levels. This was in the form of a questionnaire and also face-to-face interviews.

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

Results from Consultation with Young People in Foster Care:

Name	Age	Amount (£)	How	What spent on?	Things bought for you (not pocket money)
Callum	7	0.3 per day	£2 in total depending on behaviour	toys	toys
Rhobyn	8	0.40 per day	Behaviour chart per day, 2.8 paid weekly	Chocolate	phone cards (mobile)
Paige	8	0.60 per day	Behaviour chart per day, 4.2 paid weekly	sweets	Clothes (going out)
Blaid	8	2	cash, weekly	sweets	School stuff - dinner money, pens
Melissa	8	3	£1.50 wed, £1.50 on sat	sweets,	dolls
Lauren	8	2.5	cash on sat	book	sweets/ice cream
Steven	9	4	£2 on mon, £2 on fri	sweets, toys	football stickers
Ben	9	3.5	cash on sat	dinosaurs	don't know
Toni	10	2.5	cash, weekly	nothing, saves	deoderant
Ryan	10	4.55	£1 sat, £1 Sun, £2.55 wed	Sweets	Bus Fares - school
Stacey	11	5	cash ,weekly	different things	sweets/ice cream
Jason	11	1	for jobs done (0 pocket money)	ice cream	holidays-spending money
Lee	11	5	cash weekly	football stickers	don't know
Barry	11	4.5	cash weekly	music	sweets/ice cream
Daniel	11	4.5	£2.50 on wed, £2.50 sat	magazines and sweets	don't know
Kailly	12	5	cash weekly	different things	Cinema
Christopher	12	5	cash weekly	cds	soaps
Chelsea	12	5	cash, weekly	comic and sweets	Clothes
Laura	12	5	cash, weekly	sweets	Clothes
Trevor	12	5	£2.50 wed, £2.50 sat	different things	sweets/ice cream
Adam	13	5	cash ,weekly	sweets, deoderant,	McDonalds
Andrew	13	6	Cash fri	cinema	don't know
Tony	15	5	cash - extra if jobs done	music and other stuff	Extra treats, "going out money"

**Results from the Pocket Money Competition with young People in Foster Care:
"What can you buy with your pocket money?"**

Christopher (£5)

Mr bean Magazine
Beano Magazine
Dandy Magazine
1 single cd
12 Mars bars (40p each)
50 Tazo bars (10p each)
one cinema ticket (£3.50)

Chelsea (£5)

500 penny jellies
3 mars bars
Save up two weeks for barbie (£8)
Save up 3 weeks for cd album
2 singles (1.99)
Save up for 2 weeks for book (6.99)

Andrew (£6)

One cinema ticket
2 cd singles
300 turns on the 2p machine
5 games of pool plus deposit
2 games of bowling
12 cans of coke
1 second hand computer game
1 playstation game after 6 weeks

Ryan (£4.55)

3 ice lollies
4 ice creams
Mr Bean magazine
Beano magazine
1 ticket to see Harry potter
One packet of gel pens
2 packets of coloured pencils
One fine liner pen
4 bottles of coke
2 spider man rulers
1 dvd after three weeks
10 mix ups
Two bags of apples
Cd's like 0-2one
1 packet of felt pens
1 set of blank tapes

Blaid (£2)

20 refreshers (10p each)
2 super bouncers (£1 each)
4 cans of pop
4 mix ups
6 bottles of panda pop
1 comic
1 box of crayons
2 packs of super sours

Tony (£5)

12 Kit Kat Chunky bars (40p each)
25 Hubba Bubba packets (20p each)
one childs cinema ticket (£3.50)
One adults ticket after two weeks (£5.20)
12 cans of coke
5 bags of chips
1 10" pizza
5 Cheeseburgers at McDonalds

Stacey (£5)

One sparkle magazine
2 cd singles
4 Boosts
1 glamour girl makeup box
2 nail varnish
24 packets of space dust (sweets) (20p each)

Results From Consultation with Foster Carers:

Age of child	Rate of pocket money (£ per week)	Age of child	Rate of pocket money (£ per week)
8	2-3.99	12	4-5
9	0-1.99	15	Over 5
10	4-5	16	Over 5
11	2-3.99	16	Over 5
12	4-5	17	Over 5
12	4-5	16	Over 5

How did you decide on these amounts?

Spoke to other carers that we know
Spoke to other parents that I know
Gave own children this rate
Start at £1 for 10yr old, goes up £1 each year
Asked young person how much they thought they should get and negotiated with them
Just thought they seemed right
Were what was left after other expenses had been deducted
Negotiated with young person at placement meeting
Pocket money reduced because of what it was being spent on

Do the Young People have to buy any of the following?

Item	Number of young people
Personal hygiene (some extra things)	1
Personal hygiene (all)	0
Bus fares (not to school)	0
Phone cards (mobiles)	2
Clothes (special items)	0
Family trips (spending money)	0
School stuff e.g. Pens, pencils etc	0

Conclusion:

From the figures provided by the Residential service and those given from Foster Carers, there appears to be a substantial difference in personal allowances and clothing allowances for young people in residential care as compared with young people in foster care. There are also wide differences within foster placements as carers are able to set pocket money levels themselves.

The personal allowance incorporated in the foster care allowance has been increased annually in line with the recommendations of the National Foster Care Association, residential care allowances have not seen the same levels of increase and don't seem to have been increased inline with inflation.

Young people have indicated that they are unhappy with the situation and feel disadvantaged to be in residential care as opposed to foster care. Even those young people in foster care placements feel hard done by as they see other young people of the same age with different pocket money levels.

When looking at the results of the carers questionnaire it is clear that they use the allowances that they receive to provide all of the hygiene products for their young people and the young people also have a choice about which products they are provided with. Seemingly in our children's homes the young people can use the "standard" items that are provided by staff but if they want their own choice they must accompany the staff while on shopping trips or buy them with the money provided for toiletries.

Also according to the carers involved in the consultation they are able to provide some of their young people with up to £10 per month for mobile phone cards there is no mention of this in the residential homes budget.

The rate of pocket money varies considerably between foster carers - some young people aged 8 get more personal allowance than those aged 11 or 12. There is no consistency between placements and so it is understandable that some young people feel frustrated about this subject. However the difference in rates between foster care and residential care is also clearly visible. While the rates at the younger levels do not vary quite so much (although the residential rates are still lower) the difference for the older young people is much more appreciable. The maximum amount for a 15 year old in residential care is £5.05 per week, while most

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carers that I spoke to said that their 15 and 16 year olds would receive at least £10 per week with extras when necessary. There was one 15 year old, in foster care, who received £5 per week, but he did say that this was really just for him to buy things with e.g. music c.d.'s etc, his carer gave him extra "going out" money when he went out with his friends or other leisure activities.

This was a comment repeated by most of the carers that we spoke to - **they had a set amount for pocket money per week, but there were always occasions when they gave extra funds for going out or particular items that the young person wanted/needed.** The frequency of these extra payments varied from once or twice per month to it being a regular weekly arrangement.

The difference between the clothing allowances of young people in foster care and young people in residential care is also extensive. Fifteen percent of the young person's total weekly allowance, in foster care, is supposed to be for clothing. This figure is a notional amount calculated by the fostering service through discussion with local agencies, other local authorities, and organisations such as the Fostering Network. Because of the 15% figure the rate of clothing allowances per week for young people in foster care varies between £13.38 for a 0-5 year old up to £21.81 for a 16 year old. Whereas the maximum sum a young person in a children's home will receive is £5 per week. **This means the monthly rate for a 16 year old in residential care (£20) is less than the weekly rate for a 16 year old in foster care (£21.81).**

This raises an important question - if the fostering service believes that these percentages are what carers should be spending on items like clothes, **why are the young people in residential care receiving substantially less?**

Young people in the children's homes can sometimes get extra clothes over and above their weekly/monthly allowances but this means that their "budget" is in deficit and the young person is effectively "in debt". This does not seem to give out a positive message about effective money management.

Even if a young person in a children's home gets "a bit extra - because they have been good" this will not compare with the rate provided by the fostering service.

The fostering allowance also includes extra spending on birthdays, Christmas, and holidays, which in total equals an extra six times the normal weekly allowance.

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Spending on Birthdays and Christmas for young people in residential settings does not reach anywhere near this amount. For example the carer of a 16 year old would receive an extra weeks allowance for his/her birthday - this equates to £145.40, while a 16 year old in residential care would only receive £50 - practically a third of the amount.

In fact a 16 year old in a Children's Home would receive the standard £50 for his/her birthday **this is about half the amount that a five year old in Foster Care would receive.**

The differential at Christmas is even more marked - a 16 year old in residential care would receive £100, while the carer of a 16 year old in foster care would receive £290.8, **nearly 3 times as much.**

There are also 3 extra payments to carers over the summer - two to cover summer activities or holidays and one to prepare the young person for going back to school. No such extra payments are given to young people in residential care (although there is a school uniform budget).

Depending on their age the young people living in children's homes will be missing out on up to an extra £436.2 (the top rate for a 16 year old) over the summer.

The children's homes do have separate budgets for leisure activities and holidays, however these are intended for use throughout the year and not just for summer holidays and they cannot be considered as "extra payments".

Recommendations:

It is clear from these figures and the comments that we have collected from young people and carers that the present system is not equitable. There are three areas that need immediate attention, these are:

- The disparity of pocket money levels between young people living in residential care with those of young people living in foster care.
- The inequality of clothing allowances between these two groups.
- The unfairness of Christmas and Birthday payments for young people in residential care and the lack of any summer payments.

The inconsistency of pocket money payments within the fostering system should also be investigated.

The Young People's Engagement Team recommends that:

- **The current budgets for leisure, travel and toiletries should be replaced by a new Personal Allowance for young people aged under 16 years.**
- **The Personal Allowance would include a new pocket money rate that has been calculated in line with those of young people in other authorities and with the most common rates within the Fostering service. See Table 1.**
- **Clothing Allowances for young people in residential care be standardised with those for young people in Foster Care. See Table 2**
- **Christmas and birthday payments are brought into line with the Fostering service and a new Activities Fund for use by the three children's homes is introduced. See Table 3,4 and 5.**
- **A new *Fostering Service pocket money guide* is introduced for foster carers to use when discussing pocket money levels with young people. This guide would be optional and so while it would allow foster carers the freedom to set their own pocket money levels it would also give them a guideline for setting minimum pocket money levels in accordance with other carers and residential settings in the borough.**

We propose that the new allowances will not be wholly paid direct to the young person.

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The proposal is that clothing allowances are increased in line with the rates paid for young people in **foster care**. Of which 50% would be paid to the young person with the other part being retained within the residential unit for expenditure on clothing when the young person needs this. This figure can accrue over a number of months if necessary. This would help the young person have some independent control over buying clothes but allows for a safety net because negotiation with staff may be necessary. This allows young people to buy the clothes that they need but also save up to buy those expensive luxury items that other young people sometimes receive e.g. trainers or coats etc.

The young person's personal allowance will also be divided, between the centre and the young person. 32% will be paid direct to the young person with the remaining 68% being used by the unit for daily expenditure, including fares, outings and other leisure activities. The exact nature of the expenditures can be negotiated between staff and young people.

Birthday and Christmas allowances would be divided between the young person (70%) for buying presents and the unit (30%) for ensuring appropriate celebrations. A similar approach is taken by foster carers, and thus arrangements will vary from home to home and if necessary young person to young person. Some children may only receive presents from the unit as they may not be in contact with any other family members and so this should be extra special. The new rates would allow each staff member to buy presents and could even be used to allow the young person to buy presents for other people.

The proposals allow for an increase of direct payments to the young person, thus responding to their sense of grievance and for responsible use of the money by the unit to benefit the young person. It also ensures that young people do not have an unrealistic expectation of personal allowances when they are living independently or when they return to live within their family.

Further work with the Independent Living Support Service will be necessary as the proposals outlined in this report are for young people aged under 16 years. The ILSS and Residential Service managers are currently looking at ways to overhaul the current methods of providing this age group with an income and finding new ways of encouraging young people to get involved with employment or education.

Personal Allowances For Looked After Children

Table 1: Personal Allowance Increases *per week*

Age	PM now	Proposed Total PA	Available to YP (32%)	Available to Unit (68%)	Current nos.	Current cost/age group	Proposed cost/age group
15	5.05	24.6	8	16.6	2	10.1	49.2
14	4.75	20.35	6.6	13.75	3	14.25	61.05
13	4.4	18.5	6	12.5	1	4.4	18.5
12	4.1	16.95	5.5	11.45	0	0	0
11	3.65	15.41	5	10.41	0	0	0
10	3.15	13.2	4.3	8.9	0	0	0
9	0	12.3	4	8.3	0	0	0

Pocket Money Totals

PM Cost at Present/week	PM Cost at present/year	Proposed PA cost/week	Proposed PA cost/year
28.75	1495	128.75	6695

This Means:

Proposed extra cost/year
5200

Key:

- = Current Pocket Money Levels
- = Proposed Personal Allowance Levels
- = Proposed Extra Cost to Service

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Table 2: Clothing Allowance Increases *per Month*:

Age	Clothing now	Proposed Total/month	Available to YP(50%)	Available to Unit(50%)	Current nos.in units	Current cost/age group	Proposed cost/age group
five - ten	20	59	29.5	29.5	0	0	0
eleven - fifteen	20	71.6	35.8	35.8	6	120	429.6

Clothing Allowance Totals:

Cost at Present/month	Cost at present/year	Proposed cost/month	Proposed cost/year
120	1440	429.6	5155.2

This means:

Proposed extra cost/year
3715.2

Key:

- = Current Clothing Allowance
- = Proposed Clothing Allowance
- = Proposed Extra Cost to Service

Table 3: Birthdays increase

Age	Current Birthday	Proposed Birthday	Available to YP	Available to unit	Current nos.in units	Current cost/age group	Proposed cost/age group
five to ten	50	99.32	69.52	29.8	0	0	0
eleven - fifteen	50	120.5	84.35	36.15	6	300	723

Birthday totals:

bday at present/year	Proposed b.day/year
300	723

This means:

Proposed extra b.day/year
423

Key:

- = Current Birthday Allowance
- = Proposed Birthday Allowance
- = Proposed Extra Cost to Service

Table 4: Christmas Increase

Age	Current Ch.mas	Proposed Ch.mas	Available to YP	Available to unit	Current nos.in units	Current cost/age group	Proposed cost/age group
five to ten	100	198.64	139.04	59.6	0	0	0
eleven - fifteen	100	241	168.7	72.3	6	600	1446

Christmas Totals:

ch.mas at present/year	Proposed ch.mas/year	Proposed extra ch.mas/year
600	1446	846

Totals for Christmas and birthdays:

Total cost at pres	Total proposed	Total extra cost/year
£900	£2169	£1269

Key:

- = Current Levels
- = Proposed Levels
- = Proposed Extra Cost to Service

Table 5: Activities Budget

The young people in Foster care placements receive 3 extra payments over the summer holiday, therefore we propose that we use the middle fostering allowance rate of £119.5 for calculating the new summer activities budget.

£119.5 x 3 = £357 per young person.

£357 x 22 places currently filled = **£7854 in total.**

The budget will be split between the homes according to the number of places they have:

Lanark drive: 6

Henderson road: 6

Whiteleas Way: 10

Lanark	Henderson	Whiteleas
£2142	£2142	£3570

The budget will be used for organising group activities, trips away, special events, or for individual activities if necessary. It will be particularly used for summer activities.

Table 6: Overall Cost to Service

Total Current Cost	Total New Cost	Total extra Cost
£3835	£18 038.2	£14 203

Key:

- = **Current Levels**
- = **Savings from Old Budgets**
- = **Proposed Levels**
- = **Proposed Extra Cost to Service**

These new costs are significant but there are a number of points that are important:

- The proposals are intended to bring the payments received by young people in Residential Care *in line with those of the Fostering Service* and not as anything extra or additional to what the young people need.
- The payments that the Fostering Service provide are still below the recommended allowances as suggested by the Fostering Network.
- Young people in Residential Care often have more complex needs than their counterparts in the Fostering Service, we should not be compounding this by promoting inequality and providing them with fewer opportunities.
- Statistics show (Crime and Disorder audit 2001) that crime and antisocial behaviour levels increase over the summer holiday period, therefore providing more opportunities for our young people at this time is vital.
- Arguing that "young people who spend their money unwisely and so should have less given to them" not only aggravates the young people concerned it also does nothing for building their skills or helping them to learn how to use their money wisely.

A Way forward?

It is recommended that the new proposals be implemented as soon as possible so as not to lose any of the enthusiasm and interest that the completion of this project has invoked in the young people concerned.

We suggest that these findings are presented to Looked After young people as soon as the Scrutiny Committee and CSMT have been presented with the report and agreed any of the findings.

We propose that the young people and Social Care and Health work together to decide the best way to implement the plans.

There are a number of options that can be taken forward:

- 1) The extra funds are made available this financial year to meet the Total New Costs outlined in the report, and this is reported to the young people as soon as possible.
- 2) An agreement in principle is made by Social Care and Health to meet the new costs but the changes are made over the next 3 years. A proposal could be sent out to young people for consultation allowing them to set the priorities for implementing the new allowance levels. E.g. Pocket Money in year one, Clothing in year two, Christmas and Birthdays in year three. **It is important that the department is seen to agree to all the changes and a "contract" is agreed that the changes will be made by the end of the three years.** Otherwise it will be impossible for the young people to decide what happens first.
- 3) The proposals in the report are not agreed and new levels of allowance are drawn up in partnership with the young people. Focus groups consisting of young people, Members, and senior managers could be set up to negotiate these new levels. It will of course be necessary to fully explain to the young people why the proposals in this report cannot be implemented.