

Hertfordshire

"Staying Put" Policy - Information for Foster Carers



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“Staying Put” is the name of the arrangement whereby a young person aged 18 years and older, remains living with their (former) foster carer. The aim of “staying Put” is to help a young person move into independence and adulthood at a pace more suited to their individual needs.

In Hertfordshire there are 2 levels of “Staying Put” – “Staying Put Supported” and “Staying Put Lodgings”. The level of the arrangement is dependent on the stage of development of the young person.

Planning for a “Staying Put” arrangement should start with a discussion with you prior to the young person’s 16th birthday. If you, your supervising social worker, the child’s social worker and their independent reviewing officer all agree that the young person would benefit from a “Staying Put” arrangement and if you are able to keep the young person living with you after they turn 18 then formal planning will start. From this point onwards the young person will be involved in all planning.

“Staying Put” Supported

Young people are able to remain with their foster carer/s under a “Staying Put” Supported arrangement for the following reasons:

1. To complete the course of education or training that they are engaged with on their 18th birthday (up to 2 years).
2. If they have a specific vulnerability (up to 1 year).
3. While they are seeking independent accommodation (up to 3 months).
4. If they have a disability and meet an adult-services criteria, until they transfer to an adult placement. All other situations come within

the “Staying Put” Lodgings arrangements (see below).

Financial Arrangements

Once a young person reaches the age of 18, there is an expectation that they contribute to their living costs from earnings or by claiming a benefit. You will no longer be expected to give them pocket money, clothing allowance and mobile phone/personal element - a total of £49.51 (2018-19). Your maintenance allowance will therefore be reduced by £49.51 to £159.49. If you receive a Skills Fee, this will remain unchanged.

It is also expected that the young person will pay rent of £98.00 per week, again from their earnings or by claiming Housing Benefit. If you are claiming a benefit the young person paying rent will mean that you lose either £26.00 or £39.00 per week depending on the benefits you are claiming. This amount will be made up by the service so that no carer is worse off due to a young person making a contribution to the arrangement.

Expecting a young person to contribute to their living costs helps to prepare them for independence and also covers some of the costs of enabling a young person to “Stay Put”. Rent and/or Housing Benefit are paid directly to Hertfordshire’s Children’s Service.

You will be helped with all benefit issues.

“Staying Put” Lodgings

When a “Staying Put” Supported arrangement ends and all parties are in agreement the arrangement can continue as “Staying Put” Lodgings, potentially until the young person reaches 21 years or until they complete the course of education or training

that they are engaged with on their 21st birthday. “Staying Put” Lodgings arrangements also apply to all young people who do not fit within the definition of “Staying Put” Supported and therefore may apply to some young people from the age of 18.

Financial Arrangements

“Staying Put” Lodgings Carers will receive the same level of maintenance allowance as “Staying Put” Supported Carers – see above. They will no longer receive the Skills Fee, instead they will receive £20.00 per week support fee. This reflects the reduced level of ‘care’ that the young person needs.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following frequently asked questions might help you think about a future “Staying Put” arrangement

1. How will the details of the arrangement be worked out? You and the young person (with appropriate support) will draw up a ‘Living Together Agreement’ which will outline day to day arrangements as well as the overall expectations of “Staying Put”. The young person will also have a pathway plan. A key feature of both plans will be how the young person will develop and improve their independent living skills.
2. Will the young person require a DBS check when they turn 18? If you intend to continue fostering, the young person will require a DBS check because they have become an adult in the foster care household. If the DBS check reveals a ‘trace’ then a risk assessment will be carried out.
3. What is the impact of a “Staying Put” payment on my tax liability? There is no impact since the government has made the foster care and “Staying Put” tax arrangements the same. When you complete your self-assessment tax form you will need to declare the income as “Staying Put” rather than fostering income.

4. Will the “Staying Put” arrangement have an impact on my 25% council tax discount? If the young person is in full time education there will be no change to your council tax charge. If your council tax does increase as a result of the young person “Staying Put” then Hertfordshire Children’s Service and/or the young person will make up the difference.

5. I foster a young person with a disability; can I transfer to an adult placement scheme? If the young person meets the adult services eligibility criteria you can transfer to the Guideposts Shared Lives Scheme. You will need to undergo an assessment similar to a fostering assessment during which, funding arrangements will be explained.

6. Do I need to inform my landlord/mortgage provider and insurance company that my foster child has become a “Staying Put” adult? Yes, you should always inform these people if there are any changes in your household. A failure to inform them may break the terms of your tenancy/mortgage or insurance policy.

7. Can I continue to foster if a young person “Stays Put”? Yes. When a young person stays in placement and becomes an adult, this change in circumstances will be considered at the annual review. This will include any relevant information that came back on the DBS check. If you have space you will still be able to foster the number of children you have been approved for subject to any risk assessment that needs to be carried out.

Your supervising social worker or the child’s social worker will be able to talk to you about “Staying Put” and answer any further questions that you have.