

The logo for TúsLA, featuring the word 'TúsLA' in a stylized font. 'Tús' is in green and 'LA' is in blue. The logo is positioned in the top left corner of the page.

**TúsLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

A large, stylized graphic of a ship's wheel, rendered in shades of green and blue, centered on the page. The wheel has eight spokes and a circular hub. The text 'FINANCIAL SUPPORT in Aftercare' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the wheel's hub.

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT in Aftercare

THIS IS A SUPPORTING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR AFTERCARE, WHICH SHOULD BE READ  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 'NATIONAL AFTERCARE POLICY FOR ALTERNATIVE CARE'

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## 1.0 Introduction

Section 45 of the Child Care Act defines what assistance care leavers should receive when they leave care and for how long that assistance should be provided. Section 45 of the Child Care Amendment Act 2015 further defines aftercare support, eligibility and provides a framework for providing the service subject to resources available.

The provision of financial support and outlining what that consists of is a key consideration in helping young people to plan for their future and providing a framework around finance allows young adults to make informed decisions.

Budgeting and acquiring skills to become financially independent can be challenging and skills are learned over time. It is important that in care young people have some experience of money matters e.g. that they are supported to open a bank account at 16 years, that they have pocket money to manage, that they are encouraged to source a part time job, have experience of household costs and a saving plan while they are in care is incorporated for their future. Aftercare financial support is one aspect of Tusla's Aftercare Service.

At 18 years young adults will be eligible to apply for financial support in their own right as other state departments have shared responsibility to provide support in adulthood, i.e. if progressing in further education Department of Education/SUSI, Department of Social Protection, i.e. Job Seekers. The amount of financial support an adult will receive at 18 years and which Department(s) provides the support is unique to each adult's circumstances.

Tusla in taking a role as good parents recommend that:

- All young people should be assisted to open a bank account at 16 years
- Young people in care should be given opportunities to experience and develop budgeting skills as they will take on earlier responsibility than those of their peer group who live at home
- All young people in care should receive weekly pocket money
- A savings plan should be incorporated in care as part of a young person's care plan
- Young people in care should be encouraged to secure part time employment to fund social outlets and develop life experiences and skills

## 1.1 Purpose of the aftercare allowance

The allowance is made in respect of the young adult and the purpose of the allowance is to cover the day to day costs associated in supporting the young adult as they progress in education or accredited training.

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## 2.0 Eligibility for financial support from Tusla

To qualify for an Aftercare Allowance at 18 years of age an eligible adult must:

- Have turned 18 in the care of the Child and Family Agency having spent 12 months in the care of the Agency between the age of 17-18 years
  - Be attending an accredited education course, third level course or training programme as outlined in the young adult's Aftercare Plan.
  - Agree to engage with Aftercare Service requirements and provide progress updates from course to which he/she is attending
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## 3.0 Aftercare financial support guidelines

Aftercare financial support provided by Tusla is based on their Assessment of Need. The Aftercare Allowance incorporates an Aftercare Allowance for the purposes of education and the Aftercare Grant which is a once off payment. The Aftercare Allowance may be outlined in the Aftercare Plan which will be completed six months in advance of a young person turning 18 years. However it too may have to be postponed or reviewed until exam results are received if the young adult is progressing into further education.

### **3.1 Financial support**

The assessment of need is a tool which is used to outline and determine the needs of the young adult and this includes their financial support that they will require to support them in education/training. It too has to be completed to apply for the Aftercare Grant.

The young adult must be included in all discussions and decisions in relation to their financial needs.

The assessment of need must make explicit statements in relation to the financial needs of the young adult. The aftercare worker, the young adult, the foster carer (where applicable) must identify and agree what financial supports the young adult needs. This agreement must be made in writing.

### **3.2 Aftercare allowance**

The Aftercare Allowance is a payment made with respect to an eligible adult who turns 18 in care to support them as they progress in education/training. In cases where the adult care leaver moves to live independently at 18 years the Aftercare Allowance can be paid directly to the young adult. The Aftercare Allowance is paid to the carer or supported lodgings provider if the young adult is in placement. The Aftercare Allowance payment from Tusla is €300 per week.

Every effort will be made to encourage adult care leavers to engage in education/training and to sustain same. They may decide the course they have chosen is not for them or run into difficulty along the way. We must understand and support in a way that enables young people to reach their potential, be sensitive and allow them to take responsibility for decisions they make and learn from them.

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### 3.3 Aftercare grant

An aftercare grant is a once off payment paid to the eligible adult when they leave placement and it is a grant to assist with rent/ deposit and startup costs associated with initial moving home expenses.

#### ELIGIBILITY

A young adult who turned 18 years in the care of the Child and Family Agency having spent a period of 12 month in care of the Agency between the ages of 17-18 years

The cost of setting up home can be initially considerable i.e. bedding, towels, utensils, initial groceries etc for the first time expenses. It is recommended that as this is a planned for event carers/residential providers can together make a list of requirements and start buying in advance of moving. Moving to independent living can be an exciting first taste of freedom for many but it can be an emotional time and a costly expense too and therefore preparing together may alleviate some of the stress to make it a positive experience.

#### HOW MUCH CAN I EXPECT TO RECEIVE?

Month's rent and deposit to a ceiling as set by the Department of Social Protection.

Setting up home allowance of €300.

### 3.4 SUSI

It is imperative that the young person/young adult applies for the SUSI grant where eligible and they will be assisted in this regard to register and submit documentation required by SUSI by their Aftercare Worker. The aftercare worker will also submit supporting documentation in order that the application is processed without delay.

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## 3.5 Education access route

The HEAR scheme is a college and university scheme which offers places on reduced points and extra college support. Young people/young adult in aftercare can apply and supporting documentation will be provided by Tusla. Young people must apply online to CAO.

The DARE scheme similarly offers places on reduced points and provides extra college support for young people with a disability who are applying for college/university.

HEAR and DARE application advice clinics take place nationwide and notices as to where they will take place are available on line at [www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie)

Where young people are in receipt of a grant, training allowance/other, this will be noted in their assessment of need.

## 3.6 Course fees

Tusla will cover course fees for PLC Courses. Government contribution fees are covered by the medical card therefore the adult care leaver must provide medical card details to the college directly in order to be exempted from these fees.

If the adult care leaver is remaining in placement beyond 18 years, course equipment shall be covered from the aftercare allowance paid with respect to the adult care leaver

## 3.7 Overseas courses

In cases where adults are looking at studying options overseas and no similar course is available in Ireland, courses can be looked at however the Aftercare Allowance will not exceed that which would ordinarily be offered if studying in Ireland. The course must be accredited.

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## APPEALS

The Assessment of Needs determines the aftercare allowance is inclusive to allow for discussion and agreement. In the event that the adult care leaver does not agree and agreement cannot be reached they can in the first instance discuss with their allocated aftercare worker. If after doing so they are still not in agreement they can ask to meet with the local area aftercare manager to discuss further. If the adult care leaver is still dissatisfied they can put this in writing to principal social worker for resolution.

## REVIEW

The adult care leaver is expected to provide their Aftercare Worker with progress updates each term (Please see Appendix 3). This Form must be completed and returned to the Aftercare Worker at the end of each term or as deemed necessary in order that ongoing payments can be processed.

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## 4.0 Asylum seeking young people leaving care

Non Irish national young people who come into care because they are unaccompanied or come into care due to child protection concerns will be eligible to receive an aftercare service if they meet the eligibility criteria for aftercare services.

In some cases the asylum process may not be processed at 18 years and in these cases young adults who are seeking asylum will have to adhere to processes in place by the Department of Justice including ongoing financial support.

They will be eligible to receive an aftercare grant to assist them with startup costs as outlined.

In cases where leave to remain is granted young adults will be eligible to receive financial support incorporating an aftercare allowance to support them as they progress in education.

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## **5.0 Young people/adults who return home**

Young people who return home prior to 18 years as part of their preparation for leaving care and aftercare plan are not eligible to receive an aftercare financial support from Tusla as they are reunified to their family. They will be supported to make all relevant applications for assistance prior to or on returning home and can too avail of drop in service for guidance/support.

If a young adult returns home post 18 years they may receive financial support from Tusla if they are progressing in education/training course. They will too be entitled to apply for the SUSI grant to support them in education.

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## **6.0 Young people who are adopted**

Young people who are adopted who have a care history with Tusla are eligible to apply for an aftercare service however they are not eligible to apply for financial support at 18 years from Tusla if they are progressing in education/training. They can apply for the SUSI grant. The young adult can make contact with aftercare staff through the drop in service or indeed contact the social work office and arrange an appointment to meet with aftercare staff to make an application for support.

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## **7.0 Adult in aftercare placement with NGO provider/private aftercare service**

Young adults who continue to live in an aftercare service at 18 years or move to an aftercare placement at 18 years or after and are an eligible adult attending college/training placement are eligible to receive financial support. The financial support that the young adult receives will be no less or greater than a young adult will receive if living independently or if remaining in placement.

These young people will be provided with a living allowance by the service provider in accordance with these guidelines and the young adult will be supported to make an application to SUSI.

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## 8.0 Vulnerable young adults-special considerations

Young people who are placed in the care of Tusla as children are one of the most vulnerable groups in Ireland. For many young people being in care improves their life and opportunities in adulthood. For some young people that vulnerability and need for additional support may be heightened as they transition into adulthood. For example young people with disabilities, addiction issues, young parents, young people with mental health issues, young people with no status.

While early referral to the aftercare steering committee for vulnerable young people in care is a platform to advocate and referral pathway to adult services it is too an opportunity to ensure that appropriate specialist services are on hand to develop aftercare plans appropriate to need.

While this policy provides the basis for aftercare financial support it too recognises vulnerable adults will need tailored support as part of their aftercare plan and this may too include tailored financial support. In this regard approval for additional financial support must in the first instance be made by the aftercare worker to the aftercare manager for consideration by the principal social worker and approval by the area manager. A review date will be set by the area manager.

### USEFUL WEBSITES

[www.susi.ie](http://www.susi.ie)

[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

[www.citizeninformation.ie](http://www.citizeninformation.ie)

[www.disability-federation.ie](http://www.disability-federation.ie)

