

Financial Requests & Payment Processes

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INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the process for making requests for financial support for Children Looked-After and Care Leavers and explains the different methods of payment that are available.

FINANCIAL REQUESTS

Children Looked After

Request for financial support for Children Looked-After (CLA) should be made using the Finance Service Request Form (FSRF) in LCS via the Forms Menu in the child/young person's record. Only one payment method can be selected per form (refer to Payments Methods below). This will ensure that financial transactions are recorded in the child/young person's record.

Diversion from CLA

For children on the edge of care, authorised proposals should be supported by an FSRF being raised to generate the payment. This will ensure that financial transactions are recorded in the child's record. If it is not possible to raise an FSRF, then a CSF4475 for should be used. Either payment method will serve to clarify the amount(s) payable; when and how it/they should be paid.

Section 17

For section 17 support, the form CSF4475 or an invoice should be used, authorised and coded by the budget holder/manager and for processing payments. Budget codes should be entered by the budget holder/manager.

PAYMENT METHODS

Invoice

Invoices ensure a robust audit trail when payment is required by suppliers of goods or services. All invoices must be addressed - Hertfordshire County Council, Children's Services.

BACS (Bankers' Automated Clearing Service)

BACS is the preferred method of making payment to individuals from an auditing and efficiency perspective. This requires a Vendor Number in order to set them up in the SAP Payments System. To do this, a Bank Account Details form should be completed. This requires an original signature. Payment typically takes 2-3 working days to reach the account.

Purchase (Credit) Cards

Certain officers hold purchase cards. These can be used to pay for phone or on-line orders (e.g. setting-up home items, emergency accommodation etc.). This enables instant payment for goods/services.

PrePaid Cards

PrePaid Cards are used where a child/young person is unable to set up their own bank account or as an alternative to cash. It is a debit card that can be loaded with an agreed amount (maximum

Financial Requests & Payment Processes

£500.00 balance). There is no overdraft facility with this account and there are restrictions on what can be bought (e.g. gambling and fuel are not admissible). The account is unique and is allocated to an individual. The account has a Chip & Pin facility, can be used as a debit card as with any other bank account and the individual can view transactions/balances etc. on line. HCC are also able to view the transactions. Because it is allocated to an individual, it can take up to 10 days to generate a new card and up to a further 3-4 days for the funds to reach the account. Once a card has been issued, top-ups can be made in 2-3 working days.

Store Vouchers

There are a range of vouchers/gift cards that can be requested from Brokerage to be used to support children/young people: supermarket cards (e.g. Tesco, Asda), Argos cards, Love2Shop cards. These are an alternative to cash.

Travel Warrants

Travel warrants can be raised for specific train journeys and can have 'PlusBus' added for onward bus journeys where it is accepted. They cannot be used for first class travel. Travel warrants are relinquished at train stations and HCC will be charged through their account. In order to gain economies, journeys should be planned in advance for cheaper fares.

Third Party Disbursements

A Third Party arrangement is where an accommodation provider is willing to assist in managing a young person's money. The provider will be issued with an 'Authority for a 3rd Party to Invoice' form by Brokerage, which will give details of what should be paid and the period it covers. This is their only authority: case workers must not attempt to give authorisation for these types of payments.

Cash

Cash disbursements are only agreed in exceptional circumstances and where no other method is appropriate.

Purchase Orders

In some instances, it is more appropriate for a purchase order to be raised prior to goods/services being delivered. This requires a vendor number to be set up and particular details being available. This is a more automated process whereby the supplier/provider will submit invoices direct to Serco.