Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA) Policy

Surrey Care Leavers Service

For Personal Advisors and Young People

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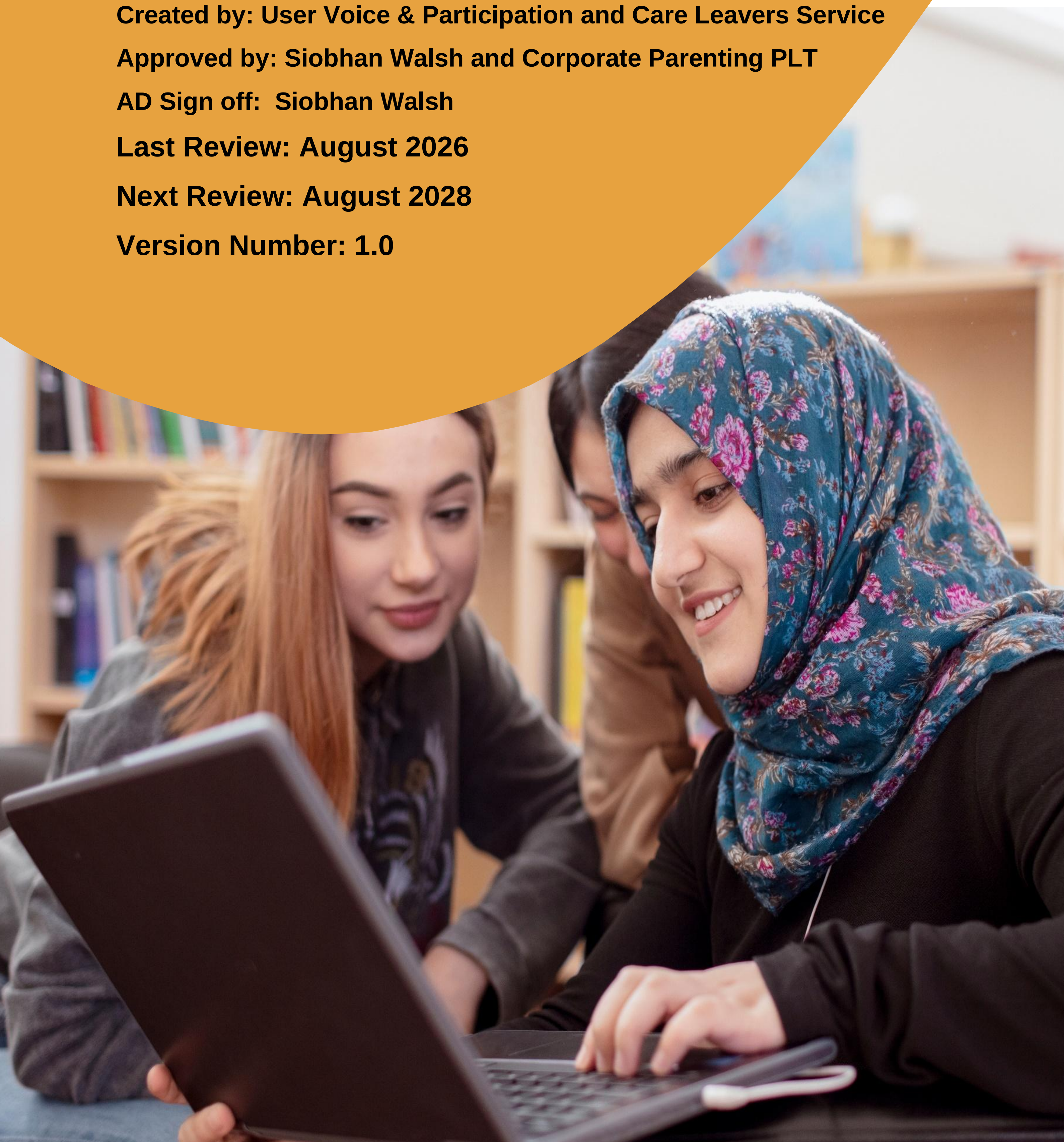

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of this Policy

The Setting Up Home Allowance (SUHA) supports care-experienced young people as they move into independent living.

This policy explains:

- What the allowance is for
- Who is eligible
- How Personal Advisors (PAs) and young people should plan and manage the allowance
- What SUHA can and cannot be used for
- Additional financial and practical support

This policy sits alongside the **SUHA Young Person's Guidance**, which explains the allowance in a more accessible and user-friendly format.

2. Eligibility

Young people are eligible for SUHA if they:

- Are aged **18 or over**, and
- Are former relevant care leavers supported by Surrey County Council under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and
- Are moving into **their own independent accommodation** for the first time (if young people are moving into university or temporary accommodation any items purchased should be able to be taken with the young person into subsequent accommodation).

Young people cannot access SUHA before age 18, but planning can begin from age 16.

To understand who meets the criteria of a former relevant care leaver, please see the Care Leavers Local Offer.

3. SUHA Amounts

The total SUHA available is:

- **Up to £3,000 -** for young people who turned 18 **on or after 1 April 2023**
- **Up to £2,000** - for young people who turned 18 **before 1 April 2023**

(Surrey follows national guidance reflecting additional government funding from April 2023).

The allowance is **one-off**, so careful planning and budgeting are essential, young people can access this amount as and when required.

Young people can receive this allowance even if they get benefits or other help with money, like universal credit.

4. Purpose of SUHA

The SUHA is designed to help young people purchase essential items that may be needed to set up a safe, comfortable and functional home. Young people should be actively involved in financial decision making and purchasing items.

4.1 Items SUHA can be used for

- Bed and mattress
- Sofa or seating
- Fridge freezer
- Washing machine
- Cooker or microwave
- Small electrical items (kettle, toaster, iron, etc.)
- Kitchen equipment (pots, pans, cutlery, utensils)
- Storage furniture
- Basic homeware (bedding, towels, curtains)
- TV or media equipment
- Items that promote safety, comfort and ability to live independently

4.2 Items SUHA cannot be used for

- Rent, deposits, rent arrears or bills
- Repairs or improvements that are the landlord's responsibility
- Items purchased **before** moving into independent accommodation
- Non-essential luxury or decorative items not required for setting up a home

5. Required Spending: House & Contents Insurance

All young people **must** spend **£100–£200** of their SUHA on **contents insurance**.

This protects young people on the financial impact on replacing belongings in a case of fire, flooding, theft or accidental damage.

PAs must ensure evidence of insurance is recorded and stored in the young person's file and Pathway Plan.

6. Planning and Approval Process

PAs must support young people to plan SUHA spending thoughtfully and in line with this policy.

6.1 Accessing funds

Young people's preferred purchases and method of accessing SUHA funds should be discussed with them.

Should there be a disagreement between young people's preferred method of accessing SUHA funds or using the funding, the PA should discuss this with the Team Manager who should ensure any decisions comply with the legal duty of the Council, the young person's rights and this policy. Once a decision has been made, this should be clearly communicated directly with the young person.

6.2 PA responsibilities

PAs should:

- Begin SUHA planning from age 16 within Pathway Plans
- Provide budgeting support and help prioritise essential items on a needs-basis
- Check what items are already provided within accommodation (including carpets

and flooring or other fixed items)

- Help young people research affordable options, including second-hand
- Support young people to access discounts, donations, or community resources
- Ensure receipts or screenshots are collected by young people to track expenditure
- Record SUHA spending within the Pathway Plan and on the young person's file
- Ensure young people understand that SUHA is a **one-time allowance**
- Ensure that young people are aware of their entitlements including those listed on the Care Leavers Local Offer and access to services provided Surrey County Council

6.3 Young person's responsibilities

Young people must:

- Work with their PA to agree purchases
- Track spending of SUHA by keeping receipts, invoices or screenshots for *all* items
- Make responsible financial choices, prioritising essential items
- Take out content's insurance as required

7. Additional Financial Support

Alongside SUHA, the Surrey Care Leavers Service will provide:

- Up to **£50** for **first bills**
- Support with **first TV licence**
- Up to **£120** towards **first 6 months of Wi-Fi**
- Suitcase (up to £50)
- Moving boxes

Requests must be assessed by PAs in line with the Care Leavers Local Offer and service budget.

It is recognised that one of the most expensive costs for young people moving into their own accommodation is new flooring which is sometimes required to enable the accommodation to be habitable. The service is looking at how existing flooring could be retained in accommodation where it is of a good enough standard and may simply require cleaning. The service is continuing to look at how additional funding can be accessed to support young people with a contribution towards flooring costs as there is not an ability to meet flooring costs for all care leavers.

8. Finding Affordable Furniture

PAs should support young people to explore low-cost, good-quality options through:

- Furnistore
- Kingston Community Furniture
- Woking Community Furniture Project
- Furniture Helpline
- Other charity-run reuse schemes

Young people should be encouraged to compare new and second-hand options.

9. Recording, Monitoring and Governance

- SUHA spending must be recorded on the Pathway Plan and in the financial system for monitoring and audit purposes
- Evidence of purchases must be stored on the young person's file
- Team Managers are responsible for oversight and compliance with this policy
- A Team Manager must approve any exceptions to the policy

10. Linking SUHA to Pathway Planning

The PA must incorporate SUHA planning into the young person's:

- Accommodation plan
- Budget plan
- Financial independence plan
- Move-on readiness assessments

Spending should reflect the young person's assessed needs and the goals in their Pathway Plan.

11. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed every **two years**, or sooner if:

- Government guidance changes
- Funding arrangements change
- Local Offer updates require

12. Supporting Documents

This policy is designed to be used alongside:

- **SUHA Young Person's Guidance**
- Surrey Local Offer for Care Leavers
- Care Leavers Financial Policy
- Pathway Plan Guidance
- Leaving Care and Transition Procedures