The Hon Kate Washington MP

Minister for Families and Communities

Minister for Disability Inclusion

Ref: SGM23/1234

Firstname Lastname

123 High Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

By email: firstname.lastname@email.com

Dear [First name],

Becoming an adult and gaining your independence is exciting but can also be challenging at times. It is important that you know there is support and assistance available from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) or the agency that was working with you.

You should have access to your Leaving Care Plan and that can help identify the financial support available to you, including assisting with accommodation, buying books or tools for your education, driving lessons and health and counselling expenses.

Even after you leave care, you can request assistance including reviewing and amending your plan or developing a plan if you don’t have one already. That can include financial assistance based on your needs.

There are also fortnightly allowances which offer additional aftercare support. This is available to you until you turn 21.

There are two ways this can happen:

* a ‘staying on’ carer allowance – which goes to your carer if you continue to live with them until you leave their home or turn 21.
* an independent living allowance – you can receive regular financial assistance until you reach 21 years of age to help you pay for rent and essential items.

Scan this QR code to apply or visit: <https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/children-and-young-people.html>

There are a number of ways to ask for help and I strongly encourage you to do so. You can:

* contact your caseworker xxxxx at the [xxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxxx], his/her number is [(02) xxxx xxxx or xxxx xxx xxx remove the spaces in the mobile phone number if the number carries over to the next line]
* call the Care Leavers Line on 1800 994 686 or email careleaversline@facs.nsw.gov.au
* visit the NSW Government Youth Hub at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/living-in-nsw/young-people/leaving-care>
* contact one of our Specialist Aftercare Services listed at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/young-people/leaving-care/aftercare-support#toc-specialist-aftercare-services>.

You can also get help with study, training and apprenticeships. This includes access to free courses through the NSW Government Smart and Skilled Fee-Free program at [www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au](http://www.smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au). There are also university scholarships available to study at Charles Sturt University or Western Sydney – visit

* <https://study.csu.edu.au/get-support/scholarships/find-scholarship/foundation/1st-year/nsw-department-of-community-and-justice-scholarship>
* <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/opportunities/scholarships/all_uws_scholarships/DEPFAMPAT>

Lifeline provides crisis support and a safe space to discuss your needs, worries and concerns. If you need to, call 13 11 14.

I wish you all the success that life can bring. Take care and best wishes for this next stage of your journey.

Sincerely,

**Kate Washington MP**

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