

Cabinet

Review of Care Leaver Offer

14 May 2020

Recommendations

That Cabinet approves the revised care leaver offer to include:

1. a change in age for payment of council tax for all care leavers from the ages of 18-21 years to the ages 18-25 years old.
2. an increase to the age that a care leaver can claim a university bursary of £1000 up to the age of 25.
3. a winter fuel payment of £100 payable in November each year.
4. a counselling service to young people who wish to access their files should they wish to access this service (for any care leaver aged 18-25).
5. the purchase of a baby box for any eligible care leaver open to the Leaving Care Service who is a new parent including essential items such as nappies etc up to the cost of £50 for any care leaver aged 16-25.
6. the funding of a £200 flat rate payment to purchase essential items such as a cot, buggy, car seat for any eligible care leaver open to the service, aged 16-25, who is becoming a new parent.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Warwickshire's first local offer was presented at Corporate Parenting Panel on the 5th April 2018 and agreed at Cabinet on the 10th May 2018.
- 1.2 The Department for Education guidance (February 2018) states that local authorities can choose how regularly they review their local offer but expect local authorities to review and update it at least every 2-3 years following consultation with care leavers.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the progress of the Warwickshire Local Offer to care leavers during the period from 1 June 2018 – 31 January 2020 and seek approval regarding Warwickshire's reviewed Local Offer for care leavers for 2020 – 2021.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The table below summarises the financial impact of changes to the care leaver offer. The total value of the offer is estimated to be £137,777 This includes an additional spend from 2020-2021 with changes to our offer of £39,410. The full cost of the offer will be funded by the existing budget within the Children & Families Service.

Recommended changes to Local Offer	Existing Estimate Offer Cost	Recommended changes to local offer	Additional Annual Cost	Revised Total Offer Estimated Cost
<p>Elements of the existing offer not subject to change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Driving Lessons - Grand mentor Scheme - Gym Memberships - Independence Training 	£53,367	None	£0	£53,367
<p>Council Tax - The current agreed offer is to pay three years of Council Tax for all eligible care leavers between 18 – 21 years of age.</p>	£20,000	<p>If we were to extend this offer up to 25-year olds this would be a cost increase of £5000 based on the number of current 21-25 year old eligible care leavers open to the service.</p>	£5,000	£25,000
<p>To increase the age that an eligible care leaver can claim a university bursary of £1000 from 21 years up to the age of 25 years</p>	£25,000	<p>We are seeing a slight increase in young people attending university. At present we have 26 young people at university and we have paid 24 bursaries at £1000.00 each.</p> <p>At the moment there are four young people who started their course over the</p>	£8,000	£33,000

		age of 21. We envisage an additional cost of £8,000.00 in total per year.		
Provide a winter fuel payment of £100 payable in November of each year to eligible care leavers 18 – 25 who are living independently.	£0	Based on the number of eligible care leavers who are qualified to receive this funding the costing would be £17,900	£17,900	£17,900
To provide an optional counselling service to young people who wish to access their files for any eligible care leaver aged 18 – 25.	£0	We would be looking to recruit a worker on a zero-hour contract to undertake this work costing £5000.00 and would need to be continually reviewed.	£5,000	£5,000
Provide a baby box to any eligible care leaver open to the Leaving Care Service who is a new parent including essential items such as nappies etc up to the cost of £70 for any care leaver aged 16 – 25.	£0	We currently have 52 young people who are young parents. Thirteen of these parents had their baby in 2019 therefore it would have been a cost of £910.00	£910	£910
A flat rate payment of £200 to purchase a large item such as cot, buggy, car seat for any eligible care leaver open to the service who is becoming a new parent aged 16 – 25.	£0	The total cost based on data from last year will be of £2,600	£2,600	£2,600
Total	£98,367		£39,410	£137,777

3. Environmental Implications

None

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 On 31 December 2019, Warwickshire had 607 young people who are care leavers and aged 16-25 years old. This is an increase of 74 young people since February 2018.
- 4.2 The National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum Audit Tool was used to review Warwickshire's local offer alongside our own consultation with young people. This Audit Tool was created by the NLCBMF and combines local offers from across the country. It provides examples from multiple local authorities and includes best practice which could be promoted in our own local offer. It is not expected of any one local authority's local offer to include all examples provided in the audit tool but is a good benchmark for Warwickshire to consider.
- 4.3 Warwickshire's local offer is based on the services we already have in place and looks to build and strengthen these further ensuring better outcomes for care leavers.
- 4.4 Please see Appendix A for additional information on the positive impact of the previously agreed local offer.

5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Once agreement has been made, these changes can be made immediately, and the information shared with workers and young people.

Appendices

1. Support currently provided to Care Leavers under the Local Offer
2. National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum Audit Tool

Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: None