

**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Children, Young People and Education**

3 September 2024

Report of the Director of Safeguarding

Local Offer for Care Leavers

Summary

1. This report sets out and seeks approval of the revised Local Offer for Care Leavers.
2. The Local Offer responds to the views of young people and feedback from the National Advisor for Care Leavers. The proposal is to enhance the offer through extending the bus pass from age of 21 to 25, an annual subscription to an app which supports emotional well-being, contribution to internet access and addressing the ‘cliff edge’ in relation to council tax.
3. Consultation with young people has identified the need for a more individualised approach to support. Given this there is a proposal to move away from paying accommodation costs at University in their entirety but assess this based on individual need and in conjunction with the University Offer. This in turn brings balance to the offer, particularly for those who are undertaking apprenticeships.
4. The overall vision is to strengthen the Local Offer and move away from a ‘one size fits all’ approach resulting in more flexibility for each care experienced young person.
5. This report focuses on the above key areas however, the full Local Offer can be viewed in Annex A.

Background

6. Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide, consult on, publish and review a Local Offer for care experienced young people (Children and Social Work Act 2017).
7. Our Local Offer outlines the support we provide as Corporate Parents to our care experienced young people and aims to improve social mobility, reduce inequality and promote good health outcomes and ambitions for the future. The offer sets out how we support young people, as parents would, in their transition to adulthood and beyond.

Consultation

8. Consultation has taken place with care experienced young people to enable a co-designed Local Offer which makes a real difference. Young people have requested a more individualised and flexible approach which allows them to have more of one part of the offer than another and is dependent on need. At present young people report that whilst a blanket offer is helpful it does not take into consideration individual need and can leave some young people at a disadvantage.
9. Mark Riddell, National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers, DfE visited York in December 2023 and reported he was impressed by the leadership and management approach and described this as *'ambitious and aspirational along with a sense to have a better offer for care leavers across the whole service area.'*
10. Active discussions have taken place with other Local Authorities.

Options

11. The options are either to remain the current Local Offer or endorse the new enhanced Offer.

Analysis

12. Young people can access a bus pass up until the age of 21 however, have requested this is extended to 25 to support access to employment and education in the City. Other transport options have been explored however, young people state an extension to the bus pass is the most favourable and this is in line with the City's climate agenda.

13. It is proposed we offer access to a mindfulness app for young people which focuses on sleep, meditation and relaxation. Young people have consistently identified emotional well-being as one of their top 3 priorities. This also links to the priorities of the administration. Young people have reported deterioration in their emotional well-being due to societal pressures such as the cost-of-living crisis. Whilst one to one support is in place responses from young people focus on easy access support apps. There is always a risk an app may not have the desired impact therefore it is imperative there is a review of usage and impact.
14. The new Local Offer proposes changes to the payment of Council Tax. The current Offer includes a Council Tax exemption for one year, benchmarking has shown many Authorities provide a sliding scale or exemption until 25.
15. The proposal is for Council Tax to be on a sliding scale over a 3-year period, 100% in the first year, 50% in the second year and 25% in the third year. The approach responds to young people's views about a 'cliff edge' through a tapering approach therefore encouraging autonomy in managing budgets.
16. Young people have voiced the importance of internet access and the imperative need for this in the modern world. Internet access enables social interaction, mobility, study opportunities and promotes learning. The proposal is to provide a monthly contribution to broadband costs for 12 months.
17. It is important to support young people who attend university as any parent would while also encouraging autonomy and promoting budget management. The plan is to move away from paying accommodation costs in their entirety to an annual contribution of 2.5k and a bursary of 2k. It is important to note that Universities do have offers to support care experienced young people which we need to promote. There is an option to remain with our current offer of full accommodation costs however, the proposed offer outlined is more in line with our regional neighbours.

Implications – Financial

18. Discussions are underway with First York regarding bus passes for young people however, over the next 12 months the bus passes will be funded through the Bus Service Improvement Plan grant.
19. Additional costs in relation to broadband and the well-being app are outlined below:

	Annual Costs
Broadband	£4,200 (A £25 per month contribution for 12 months based on 14 young people)
Well-being app	£2,400 (An annual subscription of £39.99 based on 60 young people)
Total	£6,600

20. Care experienced young people are exempt from Council Tax in the City for the first year. The proposal is to introduce a sliding scale reduction over a three-year period which will result in the below loss of £11,250 income to the Local Authority (based on 15 young people), however, will respond to the need of our care experienced young people.
21. There are no other known implications.

Risk Management

8. There are no known risks in relation to the proposals outlined.

Contact Details

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Education

Report ✓ **Date** 13 August 2024
Approved

Wards Affected: [List wards or tick box to indicate all] **All** ✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Enhanced Local Offer