
Award of Funding in relation to the St David's Day Fund for young people who have experienced care 2017 - 2019

Reasons for the Report

1. Following a successful application, up to £134,710 has been awarded to The City of Cardiff Council for each of the years 2017-18 and 2018-19.
2. The Purpose of the Funding is to support young people who are or have been in local authority care to access opportunities that will lead them towards independent and successful lives.
3. Letters from the Welsh Government and Guidance on use of the grant are attached in **Appendix A, B and C**.
4. Guidance on the administration of the fund states, that through their corporate parenting boards or leaving care teams, local authorities should promote the fund to their 16-25 population, encourage funding requests and work within the set of guiding principles set out in the following section.
5. The fund is to be used flexibly and local authorities are encouraged to work in a co-productive way with the children and young people in their care concerning the fund's arrangements.

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6. Young people are often disadvantaged because they do not receive the same support to which their peers living with birth parents have access. That support includes guidance about education choices, funds to maintain social contact with peers and advice on living independently covering issues such as how to budget, pay bills and buy household goods.

7. This fund is to be available to young people to address that gap.
8. The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has clearly stated that the fund is not to support the implementation of national strategies but is to go directly to care experienced young people in sums of money which can be used as a catalyst to advance independence, development and progression.
9. Neither is the fund been established to duplicate other sources of financial assistance in the form of bursaries, financial support for further or higher education or through the provision of services. Where there are already sources of financial support, they should continue to be accessed. This new funding should be in addition.
10. Local authorities should administer the fund flexibly and creatively to meet the needs of their young people in the same way that birth parents support their children, including the 'bank of mum and dad' role. Local authorities are encouraged to make care leavers and those approaching care leaver status aware of the fund through Pathway Plan discussions and review meetings.
11. Young people aged between 16-24 as set out in Section 5, Part 6 Code of Practice for Looked After and Accommodated Children plus those aged 21-24 who are not defined as being in education or training but require financial support to aid their transition towards independent living are eligible to receive the fund.
12. The Local Authority should work within the following set of principles:
 - Recognise and embrace the unique relationship between the child/young person and the local authority as their corporate parent. This relationship is not replicated anywhere else in the many relationships that exist between citizens and their local authority.

- Be responsible corporate parents by promoting their organisation as a family business, offering all care leavers opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships.
- Support and nurture young people's aspirations and help them to work towards achieving their goals so they can flourish and achieve

13. Where care leavers request support to enable them to undertake an activity that will improve their wellbeing, maintain their independence or contribute to their development, local authorities should consider such requests on a case by case basis.

14. The Welsh Government has not prescribed in detail how local authorities should administer the funds. This is deliberate as they wish to give local authorities flexibility and discretion so that they can distribute the money to young people in a way that maximises opportunities and improves outcomes.

15. The team allocated responsibility for the grant will be expected to set out how the fund will be administered and may decide priorities for its use depending on particular local needs of their care leaver populations. Local authorities are strongly encouraged to engage with young people and care leavers to agree priorities in a co-productive manner. Details such as whether the amount which can be requested is capped at an upper limit and the number of draws an individual can make on the fund in any given period are to be determined locally to allow organisations to respond flexibly and according to demand

16. It is proposed that the fund is used primarily but not exclusively for care leavers over the age of 18. The Managers of the Looked After Children's Service – 14+ Team, and Personal Advisor Team have worked with the Operational Manager to agree on the use of the fund. We have also consulted with young people who are in agreement with our plans,

17. Each Team Manager will have a proportion (£15K each, a total of £45K) of the fund allocated to enable them to approve expenditure that will be paid directly to young people, on a case-by-case basis. Managers will need to exercise

professional judgement when making decisions and will need to take account of any previous payments to the young person and the efficacy of the request.

18. Such payments might be made to cover, for example, driving lessons, furniture, clothing for interviews/starting work, and foreign travel for work experience. We will be able to consider financial support to young people over 18 where we have not previously been required to or been in a position to.
19. We have also decided to award the Bright Sparks Club (young people's consultation and support group) a budget of £10K in order that they can plan events for the group and other young people. It will also give them the experience of planning and managing a budget, for which they have to account.
20. We are going to set aside sufficient funds to ensure that each young person over 18 can receive a payment of £40 for their birthday and for Christmas or Eid (approx. £30K). This is an increase from the £10 they currently receive at Christmas or Eid only.
21. We plan to award at least £35K to establish the Traineeship Scheme for looked after children and care leavers on a permanent basis and to offset the cost to the service. Last year we spent just over £26K on the scheme from the base budget and want to be able to maintain payments to young people and develop the scheme
22. In order to uphold the spirit of the grant in acting as the 'bank of mum and dad', we will make one off payments of £500 to each young person starting University. Historically, young people leaving care to attend University received a Bursary from the Education department, but this is no longer available.
23. We have also set aside a sum of £10k to be used on a digitalisation project to develop a website/social media group/ App or similar for young people to access information. This was a direct request from young people.
24. A separate budget code has been created by the Service Area Accountant to assist with monitoring spend.
25. Any change to the purposes for which the fund is used will require written consent from the Welsh Government.

26. The grant will be moved into the RSG from April 2019.

27. The Service area is pleased to receive this additional funding and is committed to upholding the spirit of the grant. Our legislative responsibilities to financially support young people cease at the age of 18, but this is a time when they need more support so the majority of this grant will go straight 'into the hands of young people'. The remainder we will use to provide sustainability for services that directly support all young people.

Financial Implications

28. The grant sum of £134,710 represents an additional funding resource for the Council. It is important however that any costs associated with the proposals for its use are contained within the overall grant limit and represent eligible expenditure under the terms and conditions of the grant. Note should also be made of the monitoring and reporting requirements relating to the grant award'.

Legal Implications

29. The guidance set out in the letter and its schedules to Tony Young from Alistair Davey at Welsh Government dated 16th June 2017 must be adhered to along with the Guidance contained in the letter to Tony Young from Deborah Marshall at Welsh Government dated 16th June 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- Accept and support the plans proposed by the management team, which have been created in line with the spirit of the award of the Grant.

TONY YOUNG

Director of Social Services

10 October 2017