

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
25 NOVEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn Executive Director People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Lynne Ayres Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University	
Contact Officer(s):	Myra O’Farrell	Tel. 01733 864 391

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE FOR OUR CARE LEAVERS IN RELATION TO IMPACT OF COVID

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: <i>Nicola Curley, Assistant Director</i>	Deadline date:
<p>It is recommended that members of the Corporate Parenting Committee note the attached report and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise any queries with the lead officer and; 2. Make any recommendations as they find appropriate 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee. The need for this report was identified as part of the Committee's work schedule for 2020/2021 and is in line with the work programme.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information requested by the Committee in relation to the university experience for our Care Leavers in relation to the impact of Covid and what services have been put in place to mitigate these impacts.

2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.6 To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.

2.5 This report links to **Support** – We will support you in all aspects of your education so you are able to achieve your full potential in the Care Leavers Charter.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 THE NUMBER OF CARE LEAVERS CURRENTLY AT UNIVERSITY

4.1.1 There are currently 23 Care Leavers at universities throughout the country, in various years of their degree and studying a variety of subjects e.g., veterinary science, Law, international tourism, health and social care.

4.2 THE PETERBOROUGH CORE OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

4.2.1 The Core Offer for Care Leavers includes the following support for Care Leavers at university.

- Help with making a University and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) application
- Costs of travel to two university open days and three university interviews
- Higher education bursary of £2,250 a year plus and additional £2,000 split over the duration of the course
- Summer accommodation costs equivalent to local housing allowance
- £300 for educational purposes for which there is no other funding
- Funding of first year's accommodation at university

4.3 THE IMPACT OF COVID ON CARE LEAVER ATTENDING UNIVERSITY

4.3.1 It is evident that Covid and lockdown is having a significant impact on University students across the county, with significant disruption to their studies and the usual student experiences.

4.3.2 The Corporate Parenting Service recognised that Care Leavers are particularly vulnerable as unlike the vast majority of university students who can return to parents, they do not have alternative accommodation available during term time. For those in Staying Put arrangements this was only funded during University holidays. (Staying Put is an arrangement where young people remain with their foster carers following their 18th birthday.)

4.3.3 Care Leavers are also more at risk due to loneliness and lack of support to meet their everyday needs.

4.4 MEASURES TAKEN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF COVID

4.4.1 Personal Advisors (PA) have kept in regular contact with Care Leavers who are at University during the Coronavirus pandemic and have been able to respond efficiently and effectively to their resulting needs.

4.4.2 We have provided funding or in kind support for all our students who have found themselves in difficulty due to the challenges of the pandemic.

4.4.3 Additional weeks in their Staying Put arrangements have been funded if they found themselves isolated at university. This continues during this current lockdown. The majority of University care leavers returned to their former foster carers.

4.4.4 For one young person who was unable to find holiday employment over the summer due to Covid a living allowance was paid during the holiday.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 *None*

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 The Core Offer for Care Leavers who wish to study at university will continue for their first degree.

6.2 The current changes to Staying Put arrangements to address the impact of Covid will remain in place and be kept under review.

6.3 Personal Advisors have kept in close contact with their Care Leavers who are at University and report that the young people have coped well during this pandemic.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 To mitigate the impact of Covid on Care Leavers who are attending University during this time.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Not to provide the service would mean not fulfilling statutory requirements in terms of the Core Offer and not fulfilling Corporate Parenting requirement with regard funding Staying Put accommodation during the disruption caused by Covid.

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial Implications

There are financial implications from additional funding required for the extended Staying Put arrangements; these have been met through central government's dedicated COVID fund to local authorities.

9.2 Legal Implications

N/A

9.3 Equalities Implications

The Leaving Care service is ensuring that Care Leavers are not disadvantaged during the Coronavirus pandemic.

9.4 Carbon Impact Assessment

Carbon Implications in respect to this report have been considered and there is a neutral impact.

9.5 Implications for Care Leavers

The support provided enables Care Leavers to continue to attend University and has mitigated the impact of Covid by allowing Care Leavers to return to Staying Put Arrangements to prevent them feeling lonely or isolated or even having to use temporary accommodation during lock down periods.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 Peterborough Covid-19 children and young people's survey:
How are we doing? Quality Assurance

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

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