

Additional DfE Funding to Pilot Pupil Premium Plus Model for Looked After Learners in Post-16 Provision

Date: 15th September 2021

Report of: The Virtual School Head

Report to: Deputy Director for Learning

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- Each local authority in England is required to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH) to promote the educational attainment of children in the care of their local authority. VSHs currently receive Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding of £2,345 per child in care, aged 4 to 15. It has been recognised for some time that this financial support and the bespoke provision and services it can facilitate need to continue for as long as the child is in care, commensurate with the statutory duties of the VSH. Specifically, this means young people aged 16, 17 and 18 across years 12 and 13: the final two years of their statutory requirement to be engaged in education and training. Young people turn 18 and achieve care leaver status during the course of year 13.
- In order to 'test' a funding model to extend the PP+ grant to this age range, the DfE made available a total sum of £3m and offered every VSH an opportunity to submit an 'expression of interest', setting out a delivery plan for how they would make use of the additional funds, based on the numbers of young people who might be accessing post 16 provision in years 12 and 13.
- The Leeds VSH submitted an expression of interest and was successful in being selected as one of the local authorities to participate in the pilot, along with around 30 other VSH. The total sum of funding being made available to Leeds is £126k: this is a one-off payment subject to section 31 grant conditions and must be spent in the delivery of the activities set out in the bid between 4th October 2021 and 31st March 2022.
- The additional funding makes it possible to strengthen the range of support that young people in care in years 12 and 13 of their statutory education can access.
- This work contributes to the corporate parenting strategy, the Promise we make to the young people in our care to have high aspirations for them and encourage them to reach their full potential and to support them throughout their education and to plan for the future
- The programme of planned work will support our young people to benefit from the education and employment opportunities that the city has to offer.

Recommendations

- a) That the Deputy Director for Learning agree to receive the section 31 grant of £126k on 5th October 2021 and to enable the Virtual School to deliver the work as set out in the bid.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 This proposal brings additional grant funding into the local authority, through the Virtual School, that enables the local authority to strengthen the support for young people in care and care leavers in their final two years of statutory education and training.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 2 Building on existing partnerships with Leeds City College, the Pathways service and the Employment and Skills Hub, the Virtual School will increase the capacity of the local authority to secure the best possible education, training and employment outcomes for young people in our care through a range of activities that will include, but are not limited to, ensuring young people get access to bespoke careers education, information and guidance, opportunities to access work experience and benefit from the Child Friendly Ambassador programme and ensuring post-16 providers increase their awareness and capacity to respond to the social, emotional and well-being needs of care experienced young people.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 3 Consultation has taken place with the Pathways service and the Employment and Skills hub.

What are the resource implications?

- 4 This pilot brings into the local authority £126k of new grant funding for expenditure on the key activities set out in the expression of interest.

What are the legal implications?

- 5 This funding will provide support to selected local authorities in England for expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them to extend support to looked-after children and care leavers in general Further Education (FE) colleges. Local authorities can spend this grant to support costs associated with meeting this duty. In doing so, they should take account of the statutory guidance *Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children* published on 26th February 2018.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 6 The risks will be the short time scales for delivery. These will be managed by the development of a steering group to oversee the delivery plan.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 7 Ensuring young people in care and care leavers secure the best possible outcomes in all aspects of their education, training and employment addresses the financial independence of care experienced young people and their well-being. Being able to access good employment and training opportunities, having the right support and benefiting from the wealth of opportunity in a vibrant and growing city like Leeds is what we should want for our children and young people as their corporate parents.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 8 This grant funding is a one-off pilot offered by the DfE, there were no other sources of funding to deliver this programme of work.

b) How will success be measured?

- 9 The DfE will be identifying a research partner who will develop an evaluation and impact schedule in partnership with other participating VSH and the Association of Colleges. This is likely to include a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators that will need to take into account the relatively short period of time for delivery. The results of the evaluation will support the case for the funding to be extended.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 10 The DfE have stipulated that delivery of the plan should commence from 4th October until 31st March 2022 with the section 31 grant to arrive with the local authority on 5th October.

Appendices

11 None

Background papers

12 None