

Scrutiny Briefing Note

The Children and Lifelong Learning Panel have asked to monitor progress on the following issue. This briefing contains the latest position regarding the offer made to Care Leavers who attend University as of 20th August 2020.

Subject: North East Lincolnshire's offer to Care Leaver who attend University.

Basis of report

This briefing is prepared in response to a request by Cllr Freeston, who has indicated that he would wish to review the current offer to our care leavers who attend university.

Legislative Framework

The 2008 Act amended section 23C of the 1989 Act to introduce a requirement for local authorities to pay a Higher Education Bursary to former relevant children who pursue a higher education course in accordance with their pathway plan. The new duty is in addition to their duty to provide assistance for education and training under section 23C (4) of the 1989 Act. The Children Act 1989 (Higher Education Bursary) (England) Regulations 2009 11 deal with the payment arrangements which local authorities need to put in place to former relevant children who pursue such a course of higher education. The regulations set the amount of the one-off higher education bursary at £2,000. They prescribe the meaning of higher education for the purpose of determining eligibility for the bursary and set out the broad framework for arrangements in relation to the timing of payments and the circumstances in which payments may be withheld or recovered by a local authority.

Offer in North East Lincolnshire.

As corporate parents, like all parents, we are keen to have the highest aspirations for both children who are looked after and for our care leavers. The Borough recognises children who have experienced the degree of trauma which has resulted in them being unable to reside with their parents or family often struggle to have the emotional capacity to learn. This is often reflected in the poor educational outcomes for children who are looked after nationally.

When young people have sufficient resilience to overcome the significant obstacles to learning and can engage in higher education, we have developed an offer which complies with our statutory requirements and demonstrates our value for our children.

The offer includes the following: -

Personal Advisor: To support young people in engaging in the application process and making the transition to higher education. (Statutory requirement).

Pathway Plan: we continue to have a pathway plan for university students which clearly outlines the support which will be offered to them both financially and emotionally. It also provides guidance as to what additional supports the young person may require to be successful in their chosen course.



Financial support: We offer a £2000 bursary to students which can be broken down and given over the course of the degree or in one lump sum (statutory requirement), £35 per week living allowance (£1820). In addition, we also offer an accommodation allowance both for term time and non-term time (statutory requirement). The amount of payment for accommodation is not regulated for and will of course be dependent upon the cost of accommodation.

Comparisons with other authorities.

It is helpful to review the offer in North East Lincolnshire. All authorities offer their care leavers who attend university have a Pathway Plan and a Personal Advisor.

Authority	Bursary	Accommodation/living costs	University fees
Doncaster	£2000 per year	All costs for 52 weeks	
Lincolnshire	£2000 per year	Yes based on individual circumstances, accommodation paid during the University holidays	£3000
Hull	£2000 for course	Yes 52 weeks based on individual circumstances	
North Yorkshire	£2000	£1800 per year	
East Riding	£2000	£3016 paid over 52 weeks	

Number of Care Leaver attending university in North East Lincolnshire

At the time of writing, we have three students who have access higher education, these students are studying Mechanical Engineering, Business Studies and Criminology. One student has recently left university having completed her course and is now engaged in an apprenticeship for accountancy.

Following the “A” level results being announced in August 2021 we have a further young person who has secured a place at Sheffield University to study electrical engineering.

Given the adversity that each of these young people have faced which includes separation from family members and multiple moves we believe that the offer made to has served to maximising the prospect of each of them successfully completing their undergraduate course and being able to contribute to society. It is a point of note that the student who has decided to study in Grimsby there is every prospect that they will remain in the local area and thus contribute to the local community and potentially the economy.

Conclusion

As can be seen the offer which North East Lincolnshire make to their care leavers is not in excess of what neighbouring authorities offer. Indeed, the low numbers of our care leavers which take up university places may suggest that an improved offer may result in an increase in the



number of young people who feel able to engage in this process and it may well be that elected members would wish to consider whether it is appropriate in these circumstances to improve the offer.

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