

North Somerset Council

Report to the Council

Date of Meeting: 23 February 2021

Subject of Report: Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

Town or Parish: N/A

Officer/Member Presenting: Executive Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

Key Decision: No

Reason:

Not an Executive Decision.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

1. Summary of the report

1.1 The report provides members with an update in relation to the generous financial donations they made, in their role as corporate parents, to our care leavers.

2. Policy

2.1 Whilst the concept of members viewing themselves as the parents of all children who are looked after came from the Quality Protects initiative launched in 1998 by Frank Dobson, the then Secretary of State for Health, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for 'our' children. This means that they should:

- act in their best interests, and promote their physical and mental health and wellbeing;
- encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings, and take them into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them;
- make sure they have access to services;
- make sure that they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work;
- prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

3. Details

3.1 Over the Christmas period of 2019/20 Members gave a total of £770 to spend on our care leavers who were over the age of 21 at that time. This is because we already give our care leavers who are between 18 and 21 a voucher to spend at Christmas. Although there were initial plans which included a day trip, these had to be put on hold because of the subsequent lockdown periods. As a consequence the money was used for Christmas

gifts last year with £650 was spent on £10 Love2shop vouchers with some of the remainder being spent on boxes of biscuits or sweets for each young person. The balance was retained to buy toiletries for those who face financial hardship at different points in the year.

3.2 Prior to Christmas 2020 members responded to the call from the Lead Member for Children's Services and as at the middle of January the total donation stood at £880. Given the current restrictions and the feedback we are receiving from young people, we are considering the following options but a number of these are dependent on the Covid-19 situation:

- Meal voucher for a local restaurant or organising a group trip to a restaurant
- Just Eat vouchers for a take away treat
- Additional money for vouchers/food shopping over the Christmas period
- A Christmas hamper
- Funding a special trip out or activity.

For information, as at January 2021 we have 227 young people who are eligible for services and/or support – 136 are between the ages of 18 and 21 with 95 aged 22 to 25 (of whom 60 remain in touch with us).

3.3 As a result of members' donations in early Summer last year, to support our care leavers in the pandemic, £400 was raised. We used most of that funding to provide 'Goody bags' containing a range of items to help those most in need who were struggling. The remainder of the funds is going to be used at Easter to provide small gifts from you all.

4. Consultation

None, this is for information.

5. Financial Implications

None.

Costs

None.

Funding

None.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

None.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

None.

8. Risk Management

None.

9. Equality Implications

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No.

10. Corporate Implications

None.

11. Options Considered

None.

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Appendices:

None.

Background papers:

None.