

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CABINET MEMBER
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

CARE LEAVERS FINANCIAL POLICY

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

To inform and seek the Cabinet Member's approval of the updated Care Leavers Financial Policy, which outlines the package of financial support available to our young people leaving care.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.2 The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations *Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers* sets out the requirement for Local Authorities to have a 'clear written and transparent financial policy' that 'sets out what entitlements young people have'.
- 2.3 In the 2021/22 financial year, the Financial Policy was updated, and an addition to the Policy was to include an additional support payment to be made to all young people open to the care leaving function of Children and Families, to provide some additional support to young people who were faced with pressures due to the increase in costs of gas and electricity. As we move into 2022/23, the Financial Policy has been reviewed and updated again. The updated Policy contains the additional support payment again for 2022/23, with a 6-month review date included in October 2023, to consider whether this payment continues to be required.
- 2.4 A further change to the Financial Policy includes an increased amount that young people will be entitled to receive from North Lincolnshire, as part of their 'setting up home grant'. In 2021/22, this amount was specified as £2000 per young person, to support them move into their first home. However, a key recommendation within 'The Independent Review of Children's Social Care; Final Report' is 'increasing the leaving care grant to £2,438 for care experienced people'. In line with this, the updated Financial Policy includes a setting up home grant of £2450 per young person.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 **Option 1**

Continue with the current policy, and make no revisions to the financial support available to our young people.

3.2 **Option 2**

Implement the revised financial policy, which provides greater levels of financial support to young people.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 **Option 1**

Option 1 would retain the current working practices in line with the current policy.

4.2 **Option 2**

Option 2 would continue to support our young people as a result of the current rise in energy costs. Furthermore, the revised financial policy includes an increase in support towards young people moving on into their own homes.

4.3 **Option 2 is the preferred option.**

5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

5.1 There are financial implications for North Lincolnshire Council within the updated Financial Policy.

5.2 The support payment is anticipated to increase expenditure to similar levels experienced within 2021/22, with these estimates being approximately £25k - £29K, depending on the total population number of young people through out the year. This cost can be met within the existing Children and Families budget designated for care leavers.

5.3 The increased 'setting up home grant' will also increase expenditure within the Children and Families budget designated for care leavers. We have utilised the data available from the last two financial years to estimate the amount of young people who may access this grant into 2022/23, and potentially beyond. Using this information, we have estimated that the increase in the grant will cost an extra £17.5k per year. It is anticipated that this cost can be met within the Children and Families budget designated for care leavers in 2022/23.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

6.1 In ensuring that the needs of our care leavers continue to be promoted, and their ambitions and outcomes are supported, it is envisaged that the revised policy will have a positive impact.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Not required.

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 The voice of our young people who have left care has been central to the development of the services provided and of the offer from the Care Leaving function of Children and Families.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That the Cabinet Member endorses the implementation of the revised Financial Policy, in order to provide greater tools and resources to support our young people in line with and exceeds national best practices.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report –

- Revised Financial Policy March 2023