

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

11 October 2022

Decision No: (CAB 22/23 34247)

DECISION-MAKER:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE (PARAGRAH 1.2 OF THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION)
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Cabinet Member for Children and Learning
SUBJECT:	Staying Close - DFE Grant Funding
AUTHOR:	Julian Watkins

THE DECISION

- (i) To approve the Staying Close Connected Project and agree to accept the grant of £717k over 3 years provided by DFE.
- (ii) To approve the request to fund the rental costs of properties Circa £3500/month (this is not funded by the grant but is required to make the project viable).

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Due to their difficult life experiences many care leavers leave care with increased vulnerabilities in relation to employment, mental health, housing and relationships. Those leaving residential care are particularly vulnerable because on leaving they lose important relationships and often they are not yet ready for independence.
2. For the Connected project cohort, on leaving high-cost residential care or supported accommodation at age 18, young people will initially move to 'Intensive support' accommodation, moving on to 'extended support' accommodation when they are ready. Designated Personal Advisors (PAs) will build strong relationships with young people during their 17th year. They will have exceptionally low caseloads and will be based within the young people's accommodation, providing strong relationships and intensive support, including overnight. This is how good parents support their young people when they reach the age of 18.
3. A multi-agency team around the young people will provide timely, flexible, specialist support on issues such as health, mental health, employment, education and training, or substance misuse.
4. Young people who are engaged in the Connected project will also be able to access the general Care Leavers Offer from Southampton City Council, including positive leisure activities, support around ETE activity, relationships etc. The refreshed Care Leavers Offer remains in draft and will shortly be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

5. Due to the use of the Connected PAs who will be employed to work directly with these young people, caseloads for the main PA cohort who currently work with all care leavers will reduce. This will enable increased support to the young people who are not in the Connected cohort.
6. Due to their difficult life experiences many care leavers leave care with increased vulnerabilities in relation to employment, mental health, housing and relationships. Those leaving residential care are particularly vulnerable because on leaving they lose important relationships and often they are not yet ready for independence.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To reject the grant funding and not undertake this project.

The current staffing within the Pathways Through Care service does not allow for the level of intensive support that this project promotes, therefore without this investment most young people will not receive intensive support.

Young people will continue to require costly supported and emergency accommodation post 18, but without intensive, targeted support to reduce their support needs over time. The anticipated savings will not be achieved.

To reject the grant funding and still undertake the housing aspect of the project. This is likely to be cost effective taking into account the current high private sector housing costs. However, we cannot provide intensive support within current resources, and the DfE pathfinder projects have determined that this aspect of the project is critical. The DfE project will promote learning from other participating LAs. This is important for the sustainability of the project post-grant funding.

Embarking on the project without DfE funds and infrastructure would reduce the positive impact on young people and cost benefits.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

Following the postponement of the formal decision-making meetings, the Chief Executive assessed the appropriateness of using the Emergency Powers delegated to the Chief Executive. Following this, approval was given on the 22nd September 2022 to accept the DFE funding.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 11 October 2022

Decision Maker:
Chief Executive

Proper Officer:
Judy Cordell

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on 18 October 2022

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*