

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

29 June 2021

Agenda Item 5 – Welcome Back Fund

Question from Cllr Campbell Ritchie – Malmesbury Town Council

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for MCI, Economic Development, Heritage, Arts, Tourism and Health & Wellbeing

Question 1 – (21-101)

As of the 23rd June 2021 Malmesbury Town Council has not received any information from Wiltshire Council about how it intends to operate the £450,000 'Welcome Back Fund' for High Streets granted to Wiltshire Council by government in late March 2021. This funding is intended to help boost high streets post lockdown and prepare for the safe return of shoppers and tourists. We understand that other receiving authorities are well down the route of implementing spending as allowed by the fund and Malmesbury Town Council has schemes we support it would like implemented. We are, however, very concerned that time is running out to have these in place ahead of the main school holiday period and the opportunity to support our High Street and our local retail and hospitality businesses will be lost. Can you please advise how and when the 'Welcome Back Fund' will operate in Wiltshire and specifically when the benefits offered by the fund can be applied in Malmesbury?

Response

The Welcome Back Fund has a set of complex delivery and compliance criteria under the umbrella of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Welcome Back Fund guidance has had a number of iterations since it was first announced, the latest of which was published on 14 June ([here](#)). Wiltshire Council must ensure that Welcome Back Fund spending is compliant with the ERDF Guidance.

To date, Malmesbury has had a scheme funded in which Wiltshire Council is bearing the risk on non-compliance in relation to Welcome Back Fund. Wiltshire council will be taking a centrally commissioned approach in future as these contracts need to be consistent to ensure compliant spend. The size of these contracts therefore requires further time to deliver effectively and compliantly.

A holistic approach to town centre support over the next few years is also in development and will be rolled out later this year.

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Agenda Item 5 – Care Leavers

Question from Cllr Carole King

**To Councillor Laura Mayes, Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills**

Question 1 – (21-102)

Has WC signed up to the Care Leavers Covenant (a national programme that supports care leavers age 16-25 to live independently, funded by DoE and delivered by Spectra)? I note we have a Children in Care Council and Virtual School, but am not sure we have a “whole council approach” that all departments have signed up to for care leavers age 16-25.

Response

Following the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 our duties and responsibilities to care leavers were extended to support to Care Leavers to age 25, including provision of Personal Advisers, assessment of the needs of former relevant children and preparation of a Pathway Plan.

Underpinning principles within the Act are:

- Introduced corporate parenting principles to which local authorities must have regard. The Act says that when a child or young person comes into the care of the local authority or is under 25 and was looked after by the authority for at least 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, the authority becomes their corporate parent.
- As corporate parents, it’s every councillor’s responsibility to make sure that the council is meeting these duties towards children in care and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) is the primary vehicle for Councillors to meet with key officers and to make sure that the council is meeting its duties towards children looked after and care experienced young people and scrutinise the performance, quality and efficacy of Wiltshire Council’s services and those of partner agencies.
- Local authorities in England must publish a Local Offer for care leavers (often referred to as the Care Leaver Covenant), providing information about services which the local authority offers that may assist care leavers in, or in preparing for, adulthood and independent living. This includes services

relating to health and well-being; relationships; education and training; employment; accommodation; participation in society.

Wiltshire Council's Leavers Covenant is known as the **Care Leaver Promise**. This is a whole Council approach with Champions embedded with Council Depts to help oversee delivery.

Summary details of the offer are included below for reference. The offer is under constant review and is regularly updated.

Wiltshire Council Care Leaver Promise

We're here to support you on the next steps and this is what we offer to you:

Personal Adviser

- Your PA is there to help you to prepare to live independently and to offer advice and support after you leave care up to the age of 25.

Finance

- A leaving care grant of £2,000 to support you as you leave care
- Experts from within the Council will meet with you to ensure you get all the benefits you can and can also include personal budgeting/money management support when needed
- Your PA can provide a range of practical support including helping you to move into and furnish your new home

Accommodation

- As a Wiltshire care leaver, you are exempt from paying Council Tax until you are 25
- You will get priority status under the Homes for Wiltshire Scheme to allow you to apply for council and housing association accommodation
- If you are a care leaver currently living out of Wiltshire, you can apply under "local connection" for housing in Wiltshire
- Supported housing pilot – There are three two-bedroom flats available (in Salisbury area) for you as care leavers to rent and live together with support from PA's
- We offer to act as a rent guarantor to you if you have enough income to cover rent and living expenses but need a guarantor
- Access to an Accommodations Officer who can support you to access independent housing

Work/Independence

- Access to the Building Bridges programme which can support you into education or work
- Match you up with a "Grandmentor" which is a volunteer who can support you to work towards agreed personal goals
- A guaranteed interview scheme for you as care leaver for all Council apprenticeships where you meet the eligibility criteria
- Work experience placements in Council departments
- Careers information and advice
- Access to the further education Bursary Fund to support you in your further education
- Help with transport costs when travelling to training, school/college, apprenticeships or job interviews
- Support you to buy tools, equipment, essential clothing and books for your studies/employment

- Support if you choose to go to University
- A contribution towards your driving lessons up to a maximum of 5 lessons

Health and Leisure

- Free access to Council owned sports centres in Wiltshire
 - Contribution towards Wi-Fi costs
 - Giving you a 'Health Passport' when you turn 18 or leave care which is a summary of relevant health conditions, check-ups and immunisations
 - Signposting you to emotional and mental health services if required
 - Also support with
 - Information on healthy living,
 - Getting help to pay for prescriptions
 - Helping you to register with a GP
 - Information on counselling services
 - Help with transport costs when attending health appointments
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