

## **Fosterline Wales Factsheet**

### **Guidance for St David's Day Fund for young people who have care experience**

#### **Purpose**

The St David's Day fund was set up by the Welsh Government in 2017 and was specifically for children who have experienced care. The fund is to support young people who are, or have been, in local authority care to access opportunities that will lead them towards independent and successful lives. Foster carers can guide and help the children and young people in their care to find out exactly what the fund could help them with. Click here for the relevant [guidance](#)

Local authorities are corporate parents for children and young people in their care. We have heard from young people that they are often disadvantaged because they do not receive the same support to which their peers living with birth parents have access. That support includes guidance about education choices, funds to maintain social contact with peers and advice on living independently, covering issues such as how to budget, pay bills and buy household goods.

The St David's Day fund is to be available to young people by local authorities who should administer it flexibly and creatively to meet the needs of their young people, in the same way that birth parents support their children; including the 'bank of mum and dad' role. Local authorities are encouraged to make care leavers, and those approaching care leaver status, aware of the fund through pathway plan discussions and review meetings.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has clearly stated that the fund is not to support the implementation of national strategies but is to go directly to care experienced young people in sums of money, which can be used as a catalyst to advance independence, development and progression.

Through their corporate parenting boards (or equivalent) or leaving care teams, local authorities should promote knowledge of the fund to their 16-25 population, encourage funding requests and work within the following set of guiding principles.

- Recognise and embrace the unique relationship between the child/young person and the local authority as their corporate parent. This relationship is not replicated anywhere else in the many relationships that exist between citizens and their local authority.
- Be responsible corporate parents by promoting their organisation as a family business, offering all care leavers opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships.

- Support and nurture young people's aspirations and help them to work towards achieving their goals, so they can flourish and achieve.

There will be other sources of help for young people, whether through financial assistance, for example, bursaries or other financial support for further and higher education, or through the provision of services. This fund has not been established to duplicate these. Where there are already sources of financial support, these should continue to be accessed. It is the intention that St David's Day funding should be in addition to existing funding streams and schemes, to ensure young people and care leavers can access or maintain opportunities.

Where care leavers request support to enable them to undertake an activity that will improve their wellbeing, maintain their independence or contribute to their development, local authorities should consider such requests on a case by case basis.

We are aware the Welsh Government has not prescribed in detail how local authorities should administer their funds. This is deliberate, as they wish to give local authorities flexibility and discretion so that they can distribute the money to young people in a way that maximises their opportunities and improves outcomes.

Owing to the fund being able to be used flexibly, local authorities are encouraged to work in a co-productive way with the children and young people in their care concerning the fund's arrangements. Below are suggestions put forward by young people who are, or have been, in local authority care. This is not an exhaustive list but is designed to provide some ideas to stimulate thinking.

## **Education**

- One-off payments for course equipment.
- Help with travel arrangements and expenses.

## **Employment**

- Guidance on accessing work experience, training and apprenticeship schemes.
- Help to look and prepare for work, including interview coaching and interview clothes.
- Support with travel expenses and arrangements to get to and from work.
- Help to start own business.
- Driving lessons.

## **Health and wellbeing**

- Help for young people to access health services, including GPs, dentists and opticians
- Financial help, so that young people can maintain social contact with their peers and be at less risk of isolation and loneliness.
- Financial support to enable care leavers to take part in hobbies, sport, leisure and extra-curricular activities.
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles: learning, for example, how to buy nutritious ingredients on a budget, cook healthy food and be physically active.
- Peer networks to share experience and provide support.

## **Housing**

- Financial support for setting up home, including bonds/deposits and advice on how to budget and pay bills.
- Equipment and/or furniture for accommodation.

## **Access to ongoing advice and support**

- Money for passports, birth certificates or other forms of ID.
- Financial skills e.g. budgeting.

## **How Welsh Government will administer the £1m fund** **[St David's Day Fund](#)**

Welsh Government will provide each local authority with a grant apportioned according to Local Government Finance's Children in Social Services formula (this is a well-used formula, which takes into account a number of factors, including child population and deprivation, and has been agreed by local authorities). The scheme will be subject to the Welsh Government's Grants for Excellence requirements and procedures.

Local administration of the grant will be through each local authority Head of Children's service. The team allocated responsibility for the grant will be expected to set out how the fund will be administered and may decide priorities for its use, depending on particular local needs of their care leaver population. Local authorities are strongly encouraged to engage with young people and care leavers to agree priorities in a co-productive manner. Details such as whether the amount which can be requested is capped at an upper limit and the number of draws an individual can make on the fund in any given period are to be determined locally, to allow each local authority to respond flexibly and according to their young people's demand.

Six monthly reports from each local authority will be collated and submitted to the Welsh Government for consideration by the Ministerial Advisory Group. Grant offer letters will set out the reporting arrangements in more detail. Reports will demonstrate the effectiveness of the grant in supporting care experienced leavers to

maintain independence and realise their ambitions. Learning from the reports will be used to influence how the fund works in future years.

### **From 2019 onwards**

It is recognised that it is good practice to move small grants to local authorities into the Revenue Support Grant and it is Welsh Government's intention to do so with this grant from April 2019. A system of checks will be put in place to ensure the grant continues to be used for its original purpose and to maintain clear lines of accountability.

### **Eligibility**

- Young people aged between 16-24, as set out in Section 5, Part 6 Code of Practice for Looked After and Accommodated Children, **plus** those aged 21-24 who are not defined as being in education or training but require financial support to aid their transition towards independent living.
- The fund is accessible to those eligible, as set out above, from 1 April 2017.
- Young people to access the fund through their home local authority (this may be different to the local authority area in which they live). If a young person is leaving Wales for work, education purposes or similar, these young people should also access the fund through their home local authority.

### **How The Fostering Network can help**

The Fostering Network offers advice, information and support. Our expertise and knowledge are always up to date and available through our vital member helplines, publications, training and consultancy.

#### **Advice**

##### **Fosterline Wales**

Call us on 0800 316 7664 from 9.30am - 12.30pm Monday to Friday. If you call outside this time, please leave a message and someone will call you back as soon as possible.

You can email us at:

[fosterlinewales@fostering.net](mailto:fosterlinewales@fostering.net)

#### **Support and resources**

Our website is an essential source of information, while our online community brings together foster carers for peer support and advice. You can login to share your experience and get advice from other foster carers. Our online community is a safe and secure area to discuss foster care matters.

[thefosteringnetwork.org.uk](http://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk)

### **Training and consultancy**

Wherever you are in your fostering career, as a foster carer, social worker or manager, The Fostering Network has a range of training designed to meet your development needs.

For more information, contact our Learning and Development Manager, Sarah Mobedji at <http://sarah.mobedji@fostering.net>.

### **About The Fostering Network**

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered children to make foster care the very best it can be.

### **Contact us**

To find out more about our work in Wales, please contact:

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