

Corporate Parenting Panel

28 April 2023

Entry into Care Packs



Report of Jodie Henderson, Practice Lead, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council, and Sharon Davey, Strategic Manager Children in our Care, Children's Social Care, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

None.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present the Entry into Care packs, for consideration for funding and support from elected members of Corporate Parenting Panel.

Executive summary

- 2 The Children in Care Council have requested that the Corporate Parenting Panel consider funding Entry into Care packs, for those children and young people who enter into care in emergencies. They explained they would like to create care packages to be distributed to children and young people when they first come into care in unplanned ways. The packs would be age-appropriate and would include small tokens which would be relevant to the individual young person, to provide them with reassurance that they are supported and care about. The young people explained the packs would be particularly useful when emergency protection measures are required or when children come in to care in unplanned ways.
- 3 We are asking for funding of £7,600 to assist with the creation of the packs and ask that members consider this request from their neighbourhood budgets.

Recommendations

- 4 Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:
 - (a) Note the contents of the report
 - (b) Agree the proposed packs content
 - (c) Agree funding for the Entry to Care packs

Background

- 5 Discussions have taken place at previous Corporate Parenting Panel meetings in relation to the Children in Care Council requesting that the Corporate Parenting Panel consider funding Entry into Care packs, for those children and young people who enter into care in emergencies
- 6 Discussions took place with the Children in Care Council outside of the CPP meetings and it was identified that various packs will need to be purchased dependent on the ages of the young people and their circumstances they have come into care. These can be broken down as follows:
 - (a) Children under the age of 6
 - (b) Children aged 6 -12 years old
 - (c) Young people aged 12 years old and over
 - (d) Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people
 - (e) Young people in residential accommodation/children's homes
- 7 A working group of managers and practitioners has explored all options and have created a pack that provides essential items that will offer comfort to children and young people, as well as provide information about children services and the wider roles of professionals and partners.
- 8 The working group has gathered feedback from Children In our Care Council and children and young people within the Children In our Care service. Foster Carers have also been consulted through their Foster Care Support Network.
- 9 The feedback was positive, and they were able to give insight into children needs, at such a sensitive and traumatic time. The children in Care Council have suggested that the name of the pack is changed and potential name of 'Supply Pack' (this is taken from the popular online video game 'Fortnite')
- 10 The feedback has highlighted a reflection of how our children and young people feel when they come into our care and how we can make improvements to this
- 11 Suggestions for the pack have also included, blankets, soft toys, nightlights, books, journals, and pens.
- 12 Within these packs we will also include guides to the IRO service, guides to Children's homes and services, welcome to Durham booklet (UASC) and a who is who guide.

Costings

13 It is anticipated that we would require funding for 150 packs, to support young people who come into care on an emergency basis. We have projected that we would need:

- (a) 40 packs for UASC
- (b) 40 for children under the age of 6
- (c) 30 for children aged 6 – 12
- (d) 40 for young people in residential care

We have created a Demo pack that cost £44.58; however, we anticipate that we can work with procurement to buy these items in bulk, and therefore reduce the costings. There is an additional cost to the UASC young people as we would like to provide them with a Prayer Mat and Quran, £20 each (projected £800 additional cost).

14 Initial projected costings stand at £7,600 for the 150 packs.

15 The costings for the design and print of our guides for young people will be covered by the CIC Service budget.

16 These packs will be kept within our Fostering service, UASC team, Families First and EDT for out of hours access.

Future Developments and learning

17 We will gather feedback on the pilot of these packs following their introduction and feedback to corporate parenting panel on the benefits of the packs and the impact they have had on children.

18 Review our coming into care guide with the CICC

19 Continue to develop guidance for young people around fostering and residential homes, which can be shared with our children and young people within their care journey

Conclusion

20 It is clear that there is valid need to support our children and young people who come into care on an emergency basis. These packs that have been suggested by our children and young people, demonstrate that these items will hopefully give comfort at a time when children feel lost and are in crisis, and provide vital information to support their transition, knowledge and understanding.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

To progress with the entry to care packs additional finance of £7600 is required. If this is not available from members efforts would need to be made to identify this from within current budgets. Due to restrictions in budget this may mean the project could not take place.

Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the working group of young people to identify what should be included in the packs

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

Procurement

Procurement guidance will be adhered to in the sourcing and purchasing of the contents for the packs