

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

12 JANUARY 2023

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIC INCOME PILOT SCHEME

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting with an update on the implementation of the Welsh Government's (WG's) Basic Income Pilot (BIP) Scheme for eligible care experienced young people.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Basic Income Pilot Scheme was announced by Welsh Government in February 2022. It is a pilot scheme which offers eligible care leavers in Wales who turn 18 between 1st July 2022 and 31st June 2023 a monthly income of £1600 before tax, with the aim to support them to make a successful transition into adulthood. The pilot is intended to last for three years.

This report will provide an update on the progress of the above scheme.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 In March 2022 the cohort of care experienced young people who would be eligible to participate in the scheme were identified. There are 25 eligible young people in Bridgend. Throughout March, April and May 2022 a series of engagement sessions

took place between WG and Welsh local authorities to discuss the scheme, plans for implementation and to develop practice guidance.

- 4.2 Discussions took place between young people eligible to participate, their social workers and/or personal advisors at the onset of the scheme being announced to enable them to give consideration as to whether they wished to participate and could be supported to make the decision. This is a key feature of their pathway planning when considering finances as they transition into adulthood.
- 4.3 Welsh Government have expanded their single advice fund agreement with Citizens Advice Cymru to include specialist advice to young people specifically relating to the BIP and support with the 'better off calculation' to determine whether the young person is better off opting in or not. Lead workers were identified in each local authority's Citizen's Advice Cymru branch. A personal advisor for the 16+ Team was identified as a lead for the scheme within the local authority to support the team manager with day to day operations. The local authority has worked alongside Citizen's Advice Cymru to support young people on whether or not to opt into the scheme and ensure that they are provided with advice and are fully informed in doing so.
- 4.4 Following the provision of information and advice, if the young person chooses to participate, they complete the enrolment forms with support from their allocated social worker/personal advisor. Two members of the business support team have access to an online portal whereby they upload the forms which are then accessed by the independent payment provider who processes the documents in readiness for the payments to be made. As with all applications for any benefits, there is usually a 4-6 week wait for the initial payment. We provide financial assistance to the young person in the interim period, usually the equivalent to the Universal Credit payment for consistency purposes but we would make discretionary payments or support via other means such as supermarket vouchers or meter top ups.
- 4.5 Feedback from the 16+ team on the implementation has been very positive overall. All young people eligible to participate in Bridgend have already or intend to enroll in the scheme. The 16+ Team has clear processes in place to ensure that young people are provided with timely advice to enable them to make decisions with appropriate support along with seamless enrolment processes. Young people are receiving payment in a timely manner and there have been no reported issues or concerns relating to the scheme or its implementation.
- 4.6 Welsh Government are now working with local authorities to develop processes for evaluation of the outcomes of the Basic Income Pilot Scheme. Young people are being encouraged to complete online surveys at the start of the scheme, and at the 12 and 24 month point. Cardiff University have been commissioned by Welsh Government to evaluate the impact of the pilot and have begun to engage with the service in respect of this evaluation.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There will be no immediate impact upon any policies or procedure rules. Processes impacted by this report will be subject to review.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the Basic Income Pilot scheme for eligible care experienced young people. All young people who are eligible for leaving care services from Welsh Local Authorities between 1st July 2022 and 30th June 2023 will be eligible to participate in the scheme if they wish to do so.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report; therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 Long term – the Basic Income Pilot Scheme is intended to provide care experienced young people with a level of financial security and stability with the overall aim to develop skills of financial independence and a motivation to support oneself therefore reducing reliance on welfare benefits.
- 7.2 Prevention – the aim of the scheme is for young people to develop their independence skills, reduce the risk of poverty and decreased likelihood of reliance on welfare benefits.
- 7.3 Integration – with an increased level of independent living skills and motivation to support oneself, it is envisaged that young people would integrate within their local communities through local employment and accessing education and training opportunities. Young people will be able to actively contribute to their communities.
- 7.4 Collaboration – the success of the rollout of the Basic Income Pilot scheme has required the local authority working with the Welsh Government and Citizens Advice Cymru to ensure that effective systems and process have been in place to for effective implementation.
- 7.5 Involvement – from the onset of the announcement of the scheme, and identification of the eligible young people, planning commenced to ensure young people were fully involved in the process. They were made fully aware of the scheme and supported by their social worker and/or personal advisors in conjunction with Citizens Advice Cymru to enable them to make the decision as to whether they wished to participate. Young people have been kept fully up to date with all development relating to the scheme through the implementation process.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The scheme is fully funded by the Welsh Government.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the contents of this report and are therefore fully informed of the progress relating to the implementation of the Basic Income Pilot Scheme.

Claire Marchant
Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
January 2023

Contact officer: Sheree Dixon
Group Manager Case Management and Transition.

Telephone: (01656) 815111

Email: sheree.dixon@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal address: Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB