

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

10 DECEMBER 2018

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

'A HELPING HAND' SCHEME

SUMMARY

This report provides details of the 'A Helping Hand' Scheme – an opportunity for all members and officers of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to play a role in corporate parenting.



RECOMMENDATIONS

That Corporate Parenting Board note these proposals, and that other organisations consider how they can be involved in extending the scheme to their own organisations.

DETAIL

1. 'A Helping hand' is the term given to a new scheme aimed at ensuring that all elected members and employees of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have the opportunity to be part of our corporate parenting approach. To be official launched in the New Year, the scheme involves the opportunity for everyone to give time or money to support children in care.
2. There are four main elements to the scheme:
 - a. The development of a specific focus on children in our care on the intranet, similar to the weekly KYIT information., This will act as a 'virtual fridge door' and will include a rolling programme of information and feedback about children in our care and their progress;
 - b. The opportunity to give time through a variety of means
 - c. An opportunity to give finance through payroll giving
 - d. An opportunity to contribute to additional projects such as the 'Gift of a book' scheme at Christmas.

Virtual fridge door

3. This concept was developed through an internal innovation challenge, and essentially represents the opportunity to showcase work with children and young people in our care, and to act as a base for information and updates on projects, activities and the scheme in general.

The chance to give time

4. The focus of this element is to enable employees and elected members the opportunity to support children and young people in our care by giving time. Initially this will be focused on the Talent Network and will seek expressions of interest for individuals to volunteer to offer time for children in our care and care leavers. These offers will be matched with young people's own 'asks'.
5. There are five options to give time. The options are flexible and not mutually exclusive. The intention is to provide enough opportunity for everyone to be able to consider contributing, from small amounts of time, to a more long term relationship.
6. The options are:
 - a. **Short term or ad hoc support** - The opportunity to donate time for specific activities such as enabling young people to attend activities or the opportunity to engage a young person in a specific project, or to take a young person to an event. This role is designed to replicate the role of an extended family members – a social auntie model
 - b. **Timebank** - this is an opportunity for individuals to donate a certain number of hours over the course of a 12 month period, on the basis that this might be called on for a number of ideas or projects, but at the point of volunteering, these are not identified or fixed.
 - c. **Virtual school** - Two opportunities are available: a 'governor' of the Virtual School, supporting the development of the school; or as a member of a new 'parent – teacher' association (PTA for the school which would be around volunteering to take part in initiatives and projects, and possibly fund raising for the VS)
 - d. **Independent visiting** - we are seeking volunteers to provide an independent visiting service. An independent visitor is a volunteer who befriends and visits a young person living in the care of the local authority such as in a residential unit or foster care. The key ask is to give a few hours once a month for a minimum of two years and be their friend, provide consistency and create a positive friendship. This can involve anything fun from football in the park, seeing the latest film, ice skating or new things that the young person wants to try. The role will play an important part in the young person's social, emotional and educational development, offering support and advice
 - e. **Mentoring** - for those who want to make a long-lasting difference – the opportunity to develop a long term mentoring link to a young person, with a more regular, ongoing and consistent relationship which seeks to develop confidence and skills with a focus on achieving specific goals, which might include support for those leaving care where they are to live independently.

The chance to give financially

7. We have established a fund which is managed by Tees Valley Community Foundation. This provides an overall mechanism to raise finances to support children and young people in care. We are working with a group of care leavers to develop their capacity to manage this fund – providing them with the skills and experience to be in effect ‘trustees’ of the fund. The longer term objective is to seek to establish this as a social enterprise, owned and managed by the young people.
8. The fund has been kick started by the Council with a funding contribution of £10K. It has also been adopted by the mayor as one of the chosen charities for her term of office.
9. A payroll giving scheme will be established in the New Year to enable Council staff to voluntarily donate.

Contributions to projects

10. There will continue to be additional opportunities for members and officers to contribute through taking part in a range of additional projects or activities such as the chance to buy a book for a young person in care, which will again run out of Drake’s Book Shop this year

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The management of the scheme will be undertaken through existing resources. Additional funding has been identified to kick start the Fund.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The proposals in this report contribute to the Council’s approach to fulfilling its corporate parenting duties.

RISK ASSESSMENT

13. Risks will be managed in line with existing risk management arrangements.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

14. This scheme has a positive impact on children and young people in care.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

15. This initiative responds to the Council plan priority of protecting the most vulnerable.

CONSULTATION, INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

16. The Cabinet member for Children and Young People has been consulted. Corporate Parenting Board are aware of the principles of the scheme.

Name of Contact Officer:	Martin Gray
Post Title:	Director of Children’s Services
Telephone No:	01642 527043
Email address:	martin.gray@stockton.gov.uk