

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURE AND PROSPERITY  
CABINET MEMBERS**

**CARE LEAVERS COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek the cabinet members approval regarding the proposals in relation to helping Care Leavers to live independently and manage their finances through support to pay their Council Tax.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire Council is committed to supporting young people as they progress from care into adulthood and ensuring that our young people are helped to become independent and resilient adults.
- 2.2 North Lincolnshire Council takes its responsibilities towards Care Leavers very seriously and has a comprehensive local offer to all care leavers that is fully supported by Corporate Parents across the council and partners. This is in line with statutory responsibilities to ensure that Care Leavers live in suitable accommodation and have support to help them manage their finances. This is reinforced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 that requires Councils to offer support to Care Leavers up to 25.
- 2.3 The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) advocates that the support for Care Leavers includes full Council Tax exemption up to the age of 25.
- 2.4 Care Leavers are helped to budget responsibly and have comprehensive plans that are regularly reviewed to ensure they have the help they need to manage all aspects of their lives including their finances.
- 2.5 Nationally young adults are staying at home longer and therefore have more support within their own families to become financially independent. Care Leavers are also increasingly continuing to live with their carers or in

supported accommodation. Those over the age of 22, however, who live in their own accommodation are currently required to pay Council Tax.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There are 2 options proposed in relation to the support provided to Care Leavers with their Council Tax:

- 3.1 Option 1 - Continue with the existing arrangements whereby young people are required to pay council tax from the age of 22.
- 3.2 Option 2 - Build on the existing arrangements to increase the Council Tax support to Care Leavers up to the age of 25 utilising the mechanisms within the Council Tax Support Hardship Scheme. For those who are earning a living wage or above and those who live with a non-care leaver, the level of support would be reduced based on the household circumstances. This can be implemented immediately as it is within the existing scheme.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

The implications in relation to the options are:

- 4.1 Option 1 - No additional financial implications to the current arrangements. This will mean that there will be no reduction in the financial pressures for young people in continuing to manage in their own tenancy and managing their finances effectively.
- 4.2 Option 2 - This would mean an additional cost of approximately £10,000 p.a. from the Council Tax Support Hardship Fund. This will support young people to sustain their own tenancies without the additional financial pressure of Council Tax up to the age of 25. It will also enable planning and budget management to take place with the young person with the expectation that they begin to develop their responsibility for managing their finances whilst services are still in place to support them as care leavers up to the age of 25.
- 4.3 The revised policy enables the Council to continue to build on and develop the comprehensive support that is provided locally to care leavers through collective responsibilities as Corporate Parents.

### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 There are no staffing or resources implications, the financial implications are as detailed above.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 The proposed change to the current arrangements promotes equality of opportunity for those young people leaving care and is supported by the Council's Corporate Parenting Pledge.

**7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 N/A

**8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED**

8.1 Young people are regularly consulted as part of their individual planning and through the children in care council and other consultation forums. Feedback from young people is that they worry about their finances as they leave care and value the support of the Council and partners.

**9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That Option 2 is adopted and the offer of financial support currently in place is extended from the age of 23 to 25.

DIRECTOR: CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: N/A**