

TITLE OF REPORT: Local Care Leaver Offer

REPORT OF: Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval to go out and consult on the draft Local Care Leaver Offer.

Background

2. Every local authority has a statutory duty under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 to offer care leavers support, advice and guidance. The Council publishes its current offer on its website, which outlines the services and support offered to care leavers.
3. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Government introduced the requirement for local authorities to publish a 'Local Care Leaver Offer', which outlines the services for care leavers available within the local authority area. This offer is a combination of statutory entitlements as well as how the Council and its partners can support care leavers over and above their statutory duty.
4. In order to get the best possible offer, the Council is hosting a stakeholder event, involving external partners and local businesses to encourage partners to sign up to the local offer and make pledges for our young people. The draft Local Offer will be published in April 2018 and it is hoped we will be able to subsequently refine this to have:
 - Council tax exemption for care leavers up to the age of 25
 - Peer mentoring
 - Housing pathway with a range of options for young people
 - Improved employment, education and training offer from both within the council and from partners

Proposal

5. To present the draft Local Care Leaver Offer, prior to consultation and engagement via the proposed stakeholder event in May 2018. Following this consultation the final Local Care Leaver Offer will be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) endorses the draft Local Care Leaver Offer as set out in appendix 2, for the purpose of consultation and engagement with stakeholders; and
- (ii) agrees to receive a further report recommending a final Local Offer following the proposed consultation activity.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To ensure the Council meets statutory requirements.
- (ii) To ensure that Care Leavers are supported by both the Council and partners in their transition to independence.

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Government introduced the requirement for local authorities to publish a 'Local Care Leaver Offer', which outlines the services for care leavers available within the local authority area. This offer is a combination of statutory entitlements as well as how Gateshead and its partners can give over and above their statutory duty.

Background

2. Every local authority has a statutory duty under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 to offer care leavers support, advice and guidance. The Council publishes its current offer on its website, which outlines the services and support we offer our care leavers. The draft Local Offer will be published in April 2018.

Consultation

3. Consultation has taken place with Health, Education, Learning and Skills and care leavers. Feedback from this consultation has been listened to and incorporated into this draft local care leavers offer. We are developing a stakeholder event for local businesses and partners in May 2018 to further develop the content of the care leavers offer. This will result in a revised local offer including services in addition to those the Council is responsible for delivering.
4. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People have been consulted.

Alternative Options

5. There is no alternative option; the Council is required by law to publish information about services which are offered to care leavers, to be known as a local offer for care leavers.

Implications of Recommended Option

6. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that the proposal to allow all care leavers up to the age of 25 100% council tax exemption will cost the Council up to £182,100 per year.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications.
 - c) **Property Implications** - There are no property implications
7. **Risk Management Implication** - There are no risk management implications
8. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - The Council has a duty as Corporate Parent to treat all looked after children, including care leavers equally and to commit to give looked after children and care leavers the best opportunities they can have in life.

9. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime implications
10. **Health Implications** – This initiative will help support young care leaver adults feel stable and secure in their own homes which adds to their emotional wellbeing.
11. **Sustainability Implications** - The cost of the proposal has been factored into the budget as supports the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities.
12. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no human rights implications
13. **Area and Ward Implications** - There are no particular ward issues related to the proposal