

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Gateshead's Local Offer for Care Leavers

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

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Cabinet approval for Gateshead's Local Offer for Care Leavers.

### **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 in accordance with the requirements of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
3. Under the, the Government introduced the requirement for local authorities to publish a 'Local Offer to Care Leavers', 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. The draft Local Offer was published in April 2018 and includes:
  - 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
5. In order to get the best possible offer for our care leavers, the Council has worked with external partners to encourage partners to sign up to the Local Offer and make pledges for our young people. This work will continue with our partners and local businesses. As the offer changes this will be updated on the website and communicated to our care leavers.

### **Proposal**

6. To present the final Local Offer to Care Leavers.

### **Recommendations**

7. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Local Offer to Care Leavers as set out in appendix 2.

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 Offer to Care Leavers', 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 provide support to care leavers 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 was 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 Local Offer for Care Leavers. Work with partners and local businesses will continue which will result in the Local Offer being revised and updated on a regular basis.
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 Local Offer is being managed within the existing revenue budget. The cost of implementing the scheme to allow all care leavers up to the age of 25 100% council tax exemption for 2019/20 is £120,000.
  - 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 and 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