



Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE, Assistant Director - Children's Services

Report to:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	10 March 2022
Subject:	Council tax relief to children leaving care – local and national context

Summary:

Looked After Children (Children in Care) and Care Leavers are amongst some of the most vulnerable people in our community. By the nature of their life experiences, prior to coming into care, they have often experienced considerable abuse, neglect, and harm. This group of young people have therefore nearly always experienced significant childhood trauma and outcomes are poorer based on their experience prior to coming into care.

The young people in the Care of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) are legally our responsibility and together with all our partners we have a parenting responsibility to them. This brief paper outlines the achievement to secure Council tax exemption and some of the more recent collaboration with district councils.

Actions Required:

Members are requested to review the paper, the achievements to date, and consider how best to enhance and discharge their Corporate Parenting duty with partners.

1. Background

The role that the County Council has to play in looking after children is one of the most important things we do. The term 'corporate parent' is broadly understood as being Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children. However, this also includes those working directly in children's services, elected members, and wider statutory partners in District Councils, the Police and Health. Corporate parenting is an important part of the role of all members, and it is vital that all parts of a local authority, beyond those directly responsible for children's care and pathway planning, recognise they have a key role too.

In Scotland they chose to introduce a care leaver compact. This means that across every local authority in Scotland there is a standard approach to what is on offer to children in

care and care leavers. In England the government devolved decisions to every Local Authority (LA) area to negotiation and develop local agreements. This has resulted in a multitude of offers across the whole of England with each area negotiating the offer; this has limited the scope and does not cross the borders to other LA areas.

- 1) After a 9-month process of discussion and negotiation, in 2019 every District Council agreed to award Council Tax exemption to all care leavers from Lincolnshire. This is now extended to the age of 24 for every District.
- 2) Every District Council now affords young people priority on housing list and agreed that no care leaver will be considered intentionally homeless without a multi agency meeting first.
- 3) Every young person in Lincolnshire can access any of the 7 housing registers for accommodation. The 7 Districts waived the local connection requirement for Lincolnshire care leavers.
- 4) More recently North Kesteven, South Kesteven, West Lindsey and East Lindsey have all agreed to offer care leavers free access to leisure facilities and fitness and wellbeing services. This is managed on an individual basis through the leaving care service

The District Council and County Council offer to our care leavers continues to grow. It is important to note that these offers are not replicated for our young people in other authorities as England does not have a national care leaver compact.

2. Conclusion

The offer to our looked after children and care leavers continues to grow. Members are requested to review the progress above and consider what other offers from Districts might further support excellent outcomes for our Children in Care and those Leaving Care.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andrew Morris, Corporate Parenting Manager, who can be contacted on 01522 553916 or andrew.morris@lincolnshire.gov.uk.