

CABINET

16 July 2019

Title: Care Leavers' Local Offer	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Accountable Director: Chris Bush, Commissioning Director, Children's Care and Support	
Accountable Strategic Leadership Director: Elaine Allegretti, Director of People and Resilience	
Summary <p>Children in care and those with care experience are some of the most vulnerable members of society and national evidence indicates that far too often their life chances are significantly poorer than for their peers who are raised within a birth family. As corporate parents, the Council has a moral and legal obligation to prepare care leavers for their transition to adult life and independent living.</p> <p>The Council is required to consult on and publish its Enhanced Local Offer for care leavers, outlining the support and services available to care leavers, including information about statutory entitlements as well as discretionary support to be provided.</p> <p>London Borough of Barking & Dagenham (LBBd) Local Offer was updated in October 2018. However, it is recognised that the aspirations for care leavers could and should be higher. Corporate Parenting is a council-wide responsibility and the local offer should include contributions from across council services, for care leavers to develop the knowledge and skills to live independently and have access to the practical and emotional support they need.</p> <p>This paper reviews the current Local Offer, following benchmarking against other local authorities, and outlines additional proposals for inclusion in the offer – some of which are already being offered and some of which will take further time to implement.</p>	
Recommendations	
The Cabinet is recommended to:	
(i) Agree the updated version of the Care Leavers' Local Offer at Appendix 1 of the report;	
(ii) Agree to recommend to Assembly that it endorses LBBd Care Leavers resident in the Borough to be exempted from Council Tax up to the age of 25, effective from April 2020;	

- (iii) Agree that officers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration, develop a 'saving for independence' scheme for LBBB Care leavers aged 21 to 25 based on a sum equivalent to 50% of the Council Tax exemption; and
- (iv) Agree to delegate authority to the Director of People and Resilience, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration, to develop and approve a bespoke Local Offer for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as outlined in section 7.3 of the report.

Reason

To assist in achieving the council priority of “empowering people” by enabling greater independence by supporting the most vulnerable and ensuring that no one in our community is left behind.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Children in care and those with care experience are some of the most vulnerable members of our society and national evidence indicates that far too often their life chances are significantly poorer than for their peers who are raised within a birth family. Like any parent, our responsibility is not just to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children during their childhood but also extends to preparing them for a happy, healthy and successful life as an adult – and this means providing support beyond the age of 18 when they legally become an adult.
- 1.2 Through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, local authorities are required to publish their Local Offer for care leavers, outlining the services and support available within the local authority area, including information about both statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support that a local authority chooses to provide.
- 1.3 Support offered should cover preparing for adulthood and independent living, health and wellbeing, relationships, education, training and employment, accommodation and participation in society.
- 1.4 LBBB has recognised the need to improve its approach to working with care leavers. While good outcomes are being achieved, our aspirations for care leavers could and should be higher. We should embrace the notion of being “pushy parents”. The principle of “would this be good enough for my child” should underpin our local offer.

2. Principles of Corporate Parenting

- 2.1 Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires local authorities to have regard to seven corporate parenting principles when discharging their function in relation to looked-after children and care leavers:
 - To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people

- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - To take into account the view, wishes and feeling of those children and young people
 - To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
 - To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
 - For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, and education or work.
 - To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- 2.2. These principles will be embedded in the Council's approach to working with children in care and care leavers and are the foundations of the proposed additions to the current local offer.

3. Improvement activity within Children's Social Care

- 3.1. There is an ongoing programme of improvement activity taking place within Children's Social Care, of which the update to the Local Offer for Care Leavers is one part.
- 3.2. The Council's transformation programme is designed from first principles to support individuals, families and communities to grow their own capabilities, to learn to work, to live healthily and connect to one another. We have focused on empowering people and enabling greater independence, whilst continuing to support those who need it. The updates to the Local Offer for Care Leavers aim to foster independence, best preparing them for adult life, whilst continuing to safeguard and support.
- 3.3. During the past 8 months, a series of external tests has been applied to the Children's Social Care system, which has provided a clear picture of the fundamental changes required. This culminated in the Ofsted ILACS inspection in February 2019.
- 3.4. Ofsted praised the strong relationships between staff and care leavers, which meant that most care leavers were in touch with the service. Care leavers reported that they benefitted from the support and training provided by personal advisors and spoke warmly about the children's rights officer.
- 3.5. The recently refreshed Pledge, which care leavers participated in, was also mentioned – though it must be noted that this pledge is not reflected in the current Local Offer.
- 3.6. However, feedback from Ofsted also noted that health provision for care leavers is a significant concern. Health histories for young people are not available, health passports are not provided, and care leavers are not provided with specific targeted support to address mental health or emotional concerns.
- 3.7. Based on self-evaluation, corroborated by the OFSTED feedback, a new Target Operating Model (TOM) has been designed. The previous TOM is no longer fit for

purpose. The entrenched needs of our community, such as neglect, and domestic abuse are increasing – in terms of volume at least – and emerging factors, such as risk of exploitation, pose a serious threat to our most vulnerable children and young people, placing the existing system under strain, at times approaching breaking-point. The new TOM has been designed to meet these challenges, in a needs-led design.

- 3.8. The Corporate Parenting and Permanence Service will include leaving care coaches embedded into each social care team, working with young people to help prepare them to leave care and gain independence based on maturity/readiness, not age. It also means reduced transfer of children between social workers and personal advisors (PAs) at a crucial time.
- 3.9. Our Corporate Parenting function will be strengthened, and the new Local Offer will be underpinned by the new Corporate Parenting principles, reflecting contribution for every part of the Council. For Care Leavers, this means harnessing cross-Council support and opportunities, e.g. work with Community Solutions and corporate services to ensure that no one is left behind – securing appropriate accommodation, education, training and employment opportunities.

4. The Current Local Offer

- 4.1. LBBD published an updated Local Offer to Care Leavers in October 2018, in order to meet the new legal duty to extend Personal Advisor support up to 25 for all care leavers. The current local offer is outline in the table in Appendix One.
- 4.2. The current offer meets the statutory minimum requirements, but as set out above, through internal review and external inspection, the Council has recognised that we could do more to improve our offer to care leavers.
- 4.3. It has also been acknowledged and corroborated by Ofsted feedback, that there are elements of the current local offer that are not being delivered as we would expect, for example the health provision. The new TOM states that the LAC nurse and health administrator will join the new Corporate Parenting and Permanence service, to help improve the poor health assessments and outcomes.
- 4.4. Along with meeting the new duty to offer Personal Advisor support up to 25, the Council needs to consider how we use the new Corporate Parenting Principles to develop a local offer that reflects the contribution of all parts of the local authority, not just Children’s Services, how we can take account of feedback from care leavers to improve the local offer, and how we can ensure that care leavers develop the knowledge and skills to live independently, and have access to the practical and emotional support they need.
- 4.5. LBBD’s Local Offer is available on the website as a downloadable PDF <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/leaving-care> and there is also an app called Learn2Live which is free to download and summarises the key points from the document.
- 4.6. However, feedback from care leavers has shown that they find the app “too wordy” and that it looks too much like the LBBD website, with “depressing” text and pictures that lack diversity and do not reflect Barking and Dagenham. They wanted something that was more dynamic and interactive, with less text and divided into

age specific, topic specific information. One suggestion was to use video to promote the local offer.

5. **Additional support that we already offer that is not in the Local Offer document**

- 5.1. **Leaving Care awards** are held annually to celebrating achievements and ambitions of our care leavers. October 2018 saw the 5th annual award ceremony, with 85 care leavers attending as well as Members and the senior leadership team. Awards covered achievements in formal qualifications, apprenticeships, volunteering, participation in groups and giving back to the community.
- 5.2. The **NEET Panel for Care Leavers** meets every 2-4 weeks and involves professionals across the Council who are involved in supporting young people into education, employment and training. It looks at individual cases and agrees actions that can be taken to support that person into EET.
- 5.3. The current Local Offer states that the Council is committed to giving **priority for apprenticeship to care leavers** but does not specify what this means. Following conversations with the Leaving Care Team and the apprenticeship co-ordinator, this means that all care leavers who are interested in apprenticeships are referred to the job shop and receive one-to-one support in applying and interview skills. If they meet the minimum criteria, care leavers are guaranteed an interview. Care leavers are also paid an additional £50 per week, increasing to £70 per week if they progress into the second year. Details about the extra support offered to care leavers when applying for apprenticeships should be added to the offer.
- 5.4. The new **Promise Pledge** was signed by councillors in May 2018 is not reflected in the current local offer. This should be updated.
- 5.5. There are a number of ways in which care leavers are involved in **influencing practice and service development**, including leading on training for professionals via “Total Respect”, involvement in interviews for recruitment of staff in Leaving Care Service, and quality assuring 16+ and 18+ support provisions as part of a large-scale procurement exercise. There is also a “take-over” of the Corporate Parenting Board, where the Skittlz group sets the agenda and run the meeting.
- 5.6. **Annual information and networking meetings for care leavers who are interested in university or apprenticeships** are organised by the Virtual School. An apprenticeship meeting was held on 24th April 2019 at the BLC. These events provide the opportunity for care leavers to find out about options for university and apprenticeships, build new connections and get support in application. It also aims to encourage businesses to get involved through mentoring, apprenticeships, work experience etc.
- 5.7. **The Homes and Money Hub** was created in 2018, bringing together a partnership team to work together to enable residents to improve their financial independence. Support available includes personal budgeting, tenancy readiness and sustainment support, conflict resolution. The Homes and Money Hub is willing to work with care leavers on a 1:1 basis to develop specific support package, or to provide group sessions that they can tailor to meet the needs of care leavers. Any service can refer a young person to the Homes and Money Hub, and young people can self-

refer. Details of the support available and how to access it to be included in the local offer. Gil Wilson (Homes and Money Hub) is also a member of the NEET panel, providing this support to young people who are referred to the panel.

6. Lower cost initiatives that could be included in an updated Local Offer to be further considered by the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration

- 6.1. A number of local authorities ring fence a small number of apprenticeship roles for their care leavers, e.g. Warwickshire have 5 apprenticeships ringfenced for care leavers, Wandsworth ring fence 2 participation apprenticeships with Children's Social Care. We employ 50-70 apprentices each year, which is due to increase and currently no care leavers are employed at the Council in an apprenticeship role, despite them being guaranteed an interview if they meet minimum criteria. Through discussions with managers in Children's Services and the apprenticeship co-ordinator, it was noted that many care leavers are not job ready, and so may require a **"traineeship" or paid work placement** opportunities to help prepare them for employment in the future. The placements would offer care leavers the chance to gain appropriate skills and experience. As an example, the Confident Futures Programme in Wigan, offers six-week placements for 16-25 year olds who are not in education or training, with priority given to care leavers.
<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/LINC2/News/2017/December/UntitledYoung-people-celebrate-their-confident-futures.aspx> Opportunities for traineeships or work placements should be made available within the Council and in local businesses and partner organisations, and once complete, participants would have the opportunity to progress onto an apprenticeship.
- 6.2. **Partners in the Borough (e.g. Barking and Dagenham Delivery Partnership) to offer guaranteed apprentice interviews for care leavers.** The Council offers a guaranteed interview for care leavers who met the minimum criteria in the job description for apprenticeships. We should engage with key partners in the borough to encourage them to offer the same – starting with the members of the Barking and Dagenham Delivery Partnership. Hackney is very successful at establishing apprenticeship places – with 29 care leavers starting apprenticeships between 2013-16. Apprenticeships are with a range of local and international firms, as a result of effective negotiations. (Source: Ofsted Report July 2016)
- 6.3. **Leisure passes for friends** – it has been agreed in principle that care leavers should be offered an extra pass for leisure centres in order that they can bring a friend with them.
- 6.4. **Free membership to the Youth Zone for care leavers** – the Youth Zone opened in May, the first of its kind in London, aiming to engage and inspire young people to try positive new activities and raise aspirations – giving them somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to. The Youth Zone is open to young people up to age 19, or 25 if they have disabilities or learning difficulties). Annual membership costs £5 plus 50p per visit. Wolverhampton Council offer their care leavers free annual membership to the Youth Zone. There are currently 130 care leavers aged 19 and under, giving them free annual membership would therefore cost £650.

- 6.5. **An approval mark** to be designed to show that policies, procedures and documents have been signed off by Skittlz, and given their “stamp of approval” showing that it meets their needs and is accessible in the language used. A mechanism to be established to ensure that Skittlz are engaged and consulted with on all policy changes.
- 6.6. **Community Solutions are reviewing housing pathways** for five vulnerable groups – including 16 to 25-year-old care leavers. There are three core outputs from this review; mapping current housing pathways and agreeing ways to improve, proactive use of data, including looking at current supply, demand and cost and projections to inform future supply planning, and making recommendations for operational processes and protocols to ensure that the desired changes are realised, e.g. the creation of multi-professional panels. The outputs of this review should feed into the updated local offer.
- 6.7. **Text message service.** The most efficient way to communicate information to a large number of people is to be able to send a text message. Text messages are shown to have better response rates than letters or emails, particularly amongst young people. The Leaving Care team would like to have a system which allows them to quickly inform all care leavers of news and events. A similar system exists within My Place to contact tenants and leaseholders. The Customer Experience and Digital Team are looking into procuring a corporate solution using GovNotify, and a meeting has been arranged to discuss incorporating the needs of the Leaving Care team into this procurement exercise.

7. Higher cost initiatives with a longer implementation time frame to be considered

- 7.1. **Council Tax Exemption** – The Children’s Society report “Wolf at the Door” published in March 2015 recommended that Councils make care leavers eligible for council tax exemption, to ensure that the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers getting into debt as they begin to manage their own finances.

Care Leavers are amongst the most vulnerable groups in the community, particularly for council tax debt. Evidence from the Children’s Society shows how challenging care leavers can find managing their own budgets for the first time when moving into independent accommodation and how scary they found falling behind on their council tax.

As their corporate parent, we should help care leavers to take their first steps towards living independently, just as any parent would with their children. By making care leavers exempt from council tax, we are giving these young people a few valuable years to learn how to manage their finances and have a better change of avoiding problem debt in the future – thus making the transition from being in care to becoming independent much smoother.

Most other London Boroughs have already taken the decision to exempt care leavers from paying council tax.

In October 2018, the Mayor of London published his actions for care leavers, including the agreement to waive the GLA precept where a borough has put in

place discretionary scheme for care leavers to be exempt from council tax. This means that the cost to the Council of exempting care leavers would be less the GLA precept. The Mayor of London also pledged to undertake a survey of London boroughs to gather information on discretionary schemes and encourage boroughs who do not currently have a care leavers exemption scheme to set one up, showing that there is further backing for exemption schemes.

Options for exemptions that were considered:

- Council tax exemption for all care leavers up to 25
- A stepped discount - council tax exemption for all care leavers up to 21 (100%), then liable to pay 50% council tax until 25.
- A sliding scale for council tax exemption – with 18 years old being fully exempt and the amount of council tax they pay increasing each year until they are 25 and are paying full council tax.

7.1.2 Initial discussions with Elevate about a sliding scale highlighted some issues, mainly that date of birth is not recorded as it is not required for council tax purposes, and there is no field for this on the council tax system. This discount would need to be manually applied outside the system. Elevate also do not recommend creating eight levels of discount (one for each year) as this would not only increase administration, and likelihood of error but they also say this would be confusing to the young people.

Elevate confirmed that a two tier discount scheme would be more manageable although they add that as their system does not record date of birth and that they would not know when a young person moved into accommodation liable for Council Tax (e.g. moving out of a staying put arrangement), this would need to be monitored by the Leaving Care team, who should notify Elevate of the discount to be applied, and monitor any changes of circumstance. Elevate’s recommendation however would be a single exemption system.

An accurate estimate of the costs of a council tax exemption for all care leavers up to either 21 or 25, requires the addresses of each care leaver to check council tax bands. If a care leaver is a full-time student, they would already be exempt from paying Council Tax. Other variants include whether the care leaver lives alone in which case they will have a 25% single person discount, and what type of accommodation they live in, such as residential care or supported lodgings, as not all are liable for paying council tax. Where a care leaver lives with non-care leavers, the exemption would be applied in a similar fashion to where a student lives with a non-student, e.g. their name would not appear on the bill, and the non-care leavers would be liable to pay the council tax, and would receive a 25% single person discount if they were the only other person in the property.

Estimated costs of exemption/discounts:

Care Leavers aged 18 – 21	Care Leavers aged 21 – 25-year	TOTAL	TOTAL minus GLA precept
100% exemption	100% exemption	£196,921.71	£156,359.12
100% exemption	50% discount	£127,247.04	£101,035.98*
100% exemption	No exemption/discount	£57,572.37	£45,713.42

*50% Council Tax discount matched by 50% GLA precept discount.

These figures are based on the current list of care leavers living within the borough and their current addresses as provided by the Leaving Care Team and Elevate, and based on the assumption that all care leavers are solely liable for the cost, do not claim the single person discount and that 100% of those entitled make a claim. After adjustments for single person discount and other discounts available to them via the Council Tax Support Scheme, this estimate is likely to reduce. However, the estimate might also increase if the overall number of care leavers eligible for exemption increases, or if circumstances change, e.g. moving to a larger property.

Based on the lists supplied, 70% of care leavers aged 18-21 live within the borough with the remaining 30% living in boroughs that already offer exemption to care leavers. 110 (55%) of the 199 care leavers aged 21 to 25 live within the borough. Of the remaining 89, 41 live in areas that exempt care leavers from council tax, 5 are in prison and the whereabouts are unknown for 19. We would look to enter reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring boroughs that already exempt care leavers. Many of the London boroughs that offer council tax exemption to care leavers already offer this exemption to care leavers from other boroughs, for example Haringey, Lewisham and Croydon. We do not know how many care leavers from other boroughs currently live in Barking and Dagenham; however, it is likely that these reciprocal arrangements will result in some level of cost. There are currently 24 care leavers (according to lists supplied) who live in areas that do not exempt care leavers, mostly in Kent and Essex.

7.1.3 We propose that all LBBDD care leavers up to 21 living in the borough are fully exempt from paying council tax, in line with best practice, in keeping with the Council's vision of leaving no one behind and embedding the principle of "would this be good enough for my child". For care leavers aged 21 to 25, who live in the borough, we propose that they would also be exempt from Council tax. However, in order to support their transition to independence, we propose that they pay an amount equivalent to 50% of the council tax they are liable for (taking into account any exemptions or support they would have received via the Council Tax Support Scheme), and that this money is paid to the Leaving Care team who will put this money into a savings pot or similar to be held until the care leaver reaches 25, at which point it will be released to them. The Leaving Care team already administer similar systems for the collection of rent and housing benefit. It should be noted that this is unlikely to be enforceable through the courts in the same way as Council Tax. The cost to the council in terms of loss of council tax collection would be the same as if all care leavers were fully exempt (£156,359.12).

The exemption from paying council tax is likely to result in a decrease in emergency payments made to care leavers in crisis and the numbers of care leavers finding themselves in council tax arrears, as well as further reducing the dependency on services that is experienced by some of our young people. Where care leavers are in council tax arrears, it is proposed that once an exemption is effective, as of April 2020, any remaining arrears would be cleared.

7.2. **Peer Mentor Scheme** to empower care leavers to support each other. Young care leavers (16-18) are paired with a peer mentor aged 18-25, who has experience of being in care. The mentors' role will be to establish a positive relationship with the young person, provide informal support, encourage links with other supports/agencies and opportunities, raise self-esteem and increase confidence. It would also create opportunities for the mentors to develop communication and

leadership skills, gain experience for CV, increase confidence whilst sharing their experience with a younger care leaver. A peer mentor scheme would require some training for mentors, system for pairing mentors/mentees, ongoing support for mentors, and monitoring of impact.

https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/peer_mentoring_programme.pdf

- 7.3. **Development of a bespoke offer for UASC.** Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are a big proportion of our young people who are NEET. They are a particularly vulnerable group within the care leavers cohort. We should appoint a Corporate Parenting UASC Champion to advocate for the particular needs of UASC, who will sit on the Corporate Parenting Board and advocate for them. We will look to making local arrangements with Coventry University London and Barking and Dagenham College to enable UASC young people to access education and training. Other options for specific support include Creative English classes offered through the Leaving Care team.
- 7.4. **Creation of webpage/forum (replacing the app).** As noted above (section 4.6) the feedback from care leavers about the current app is not positive. They would like to have something more interactive, more dynamic – and less like the Council website. It is proposed that care leavers are involved in the process of creating a new resource, to ensure that it meets their needs and wants – thus reflecting the Corporate Parenting principle that we listen to the views of young people and allow them opportunity to express themselves.

Jenny Slade (Lead Design for Customer Experience and Digital Transformation) has stated that she could assign a content designer to work with a group of young people at the Foyer to co-design a new webpage or forum – as determined by the young people. Estimated time: 3-4 months. Estimated cost: £5,000.

- 7.5. It is important to note that the local offer is a living document that can be added to at any time, so it is anticipated that as more support is developed, or partnerships established that the local offer will be added to.

8. Governance

- 8.1. The implementation of these actions and the evaluation of the impact will be monitored through Corporate Parenting Board, whose membership reflects the cross-organisation ambitions of the enhanced local offer, on the bi-annual basis. An annual report will also be presented at Corporate Performance Group, as the Chief Executive is leading the project.
- 8.2. The regular updates will include monitoring actions and use of the local offer, and the impact of the new local offer on care leavers' experiences and outcomes. It will also recognise that some of these activities have been long-standing but have previously failed to enact change. These reports will be produced by the Leaving Care Team and Children's Commissioning.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The proposals in this report have been considered and endorsed by People and Resilience Management Group at its meeting on 25th April 2019; Councillor Worby

at a portfolio holder meeting held on 4th June 2019 and Corporate Strategy Group at its meeting on 20th June 2019.

- 9.2 A period of consultation with care leavers is planned for July and August, following presentation at Corporate Parenting Board.

10. Financial Implications

Implications completed by Katherine Heffernan, Group Manager – Service Finance.

- 10.1 This report seeks to enhance the current local offer to care leavers. Many proposals, such as the changing of the website and setting up a peer mentoring scheme, will be funded from within the Children's Social Care existing budget. Most of these items are relatively low cost for the Council.
- 10.2 The most expensive proposal is the recommendation to exempt care leavers from paying council tax up to the age of 25. This is estimated to cost around £0.15m per year for LBBB care leavers living in the borough and an unknown but fairly small amount more if care leavers from other authorities were exempted under reciprocal arrangements. If this recommendation were approved by Assembly, this exemption would feed through to the Council's budget through a reduction in the Council tax base. This would be taken into account in the MTFS for 2020/21 onwards
- 10.2 However, offsetting this council tax base reduction as a result of these recommendations, there is likely to be a decrease in bad debt and write offs and emergency payments made to care leavers in crisis, as well as further reducing the dependency on services that is experienced by some of our young people, although this has not yet been quantified.
- 10.3 The report also recommends that a Saving for Independence scheme should be set up for Care Leavers aged 21 to 25. There would be some work required to administer this. This work which would need to be managed by the Council's Learn to Live service within its existing resources.
- 10.4 The number and amount of exemptions provided to Care Leavers would be recorded by the Council Tax recovery team in Revenues and Benefits. It is recommended that the financial impact both to the young people and to the Council should be monitored and reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.

11. Legal Implications

Implications completed by Dr Paul Field, Senior Governance Solicitor

- 11.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 section 13A(1) gives the Council the discretionary power to reduce liability for Council Tax in relation to particular cases or by determining a class of cases where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied. Section 13A(1) states *'Where a person is liable to pay Council Tax in respect any chargeable dwelling and any day, the billing authority for the area in which the dwelling is situated may reduce the amount which he is liable to pay as respects the dwelling and the day to such extent as it thinks fit.'* Furthermore, Section 13A(3) enables the Council to establish a scheme in relation to particular cases or by determining a class of case in which liability is to be reduced to an

extent provided by the determination. The proposed scheme which exempts care leavers who are living in the borough is reasonable being evidence based as it supports the Council's corporate parenting role for care leavers.

- 11.2 There are a number of pieces of legislation and statutory guidance that set out the role of the local authority in respect of children in care and care leavers. There are statutory obligations and guidance for the role of the Local Authority as the Corporate Parent in the Children's Act 2017, and the Children and Young People Act 2008.

12. Other Implications

- 12.1 **Risk Management** – The budget for and impact of this policy will be monitored and reported to the Corporate Parenting Board which will help to mitigate risks to the council.
- 12.2 **Staffing Issues** – The Children's Commissioning Team and Leaving Care Team will work together to implement the proposals outlined above.
- 12.3 **Corporate Policy and Equality Impact** – The proposals outlined above link to the Council's priority of empowering people whilst protecting the most vulnerable, as research shows that care leavers are some of the most vulnerable in our society. It also links to the Council's vision of "no one left behind" by supporting these young people in their transition into independent living.

The proposals will also have the impact of reducing the inequalities between young people who have experience of being in care and those who do not, as national evidence indicates that far too often their life chances are significantly poorer than for their peers who are raised within a birth family. These proposals offer increased access to services and specific support, across health and wellbeing, relationships, education, training and employment, accommodation and participation in society in order to reduce the inequalities inexperienced.

- 12.4 **Safeguarding Adults and Children** – Children in care and those with care experience are some of the most vulnerable members of our society and national evidence indicates that far too often their life chances are significantly poorer than for their peers who are raised within a birth family. As corporate parents, we have a moral and legal obligation to prepare care leavers for their transition to adult life and independent living. This paper outlines the support and services available to care leavers within the borough to best prepare them for a happy, healthy and successful life as an adult. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, local authorities are required to publish their Local Offer for care leavers.
- 12.5 **Health Issues** – The Local Offer for Care Leavers includes specific health services for young people leaving care, such as LAC nurses and health passports, which have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

None.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Care Leavers' Local Offer