

Derbyshire County Council

Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People

18 July 2019

Review of the Derbyshire Care Leavers Offer

Scoping Report

1. Purpose of the Report

To inform the Committee about the proposed scope of a review of “Derbyshire’s Care Leavers Offer” and to seek approval to commence the review.

2. Information and Analysis

Background information

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty on local authorities to publish their local offer for care leavers. Derbyshire’s Local Offer was published in November 2018. It sets out the “legal entitlements” for care leavers and also other services that the Authority provides to assist care leavers in preparing for adulthood and independent living. For example services relating to accommodation and financial management are described in the offer.

The Act also placed corporate parenting responsibilities on district and borough councils and in doing so has encouraged partners to work together, with the shared aim of providing better support for care leavers. Consequently the County Council and housing districts have held discussions to explore council tax exemptions for care leavers (up to the age of 25) and a number of districts now offer this support. Further development of the offer through partnership working and ongoing discussions at the Corporate Parenting Board is planned.

Review objectives

The aim of the review is to identify opportunities to improve the Derbyshire Care Leavers Offer so that it is equitable and consistent across the county. The review will focus on three components of the offer: Accommodation, council tax exemptions and financial sustainability when a young person first leaves care to live independently.

The review will focus on the following key lines of enquiry:

- What processes do housing authorities have in place to meet the accommodation needs of care leavers, and how do these processes differ across the county?
- What challenges do “Leaving Care Workers” face when seeking accommodation for the young people they are supporting?
- How has each district or borough council arrived at its decision whether or not to exempt care leaves from council tax?
- What support is available to ensure that in the first few months of living independently the care leaver is in a financially sustainable position?

Potential Information Sources

The review will seek evidence from the following:

- Executive Director for Childrens Services
- Cabinet Member for Young People
- Appropriate officers and councillors from district and borough councils
- Community partners
- Officers from the Leaving Care Service

Timeframe and working arrangements

The review will be completed by December 2019.

It is proposed that one or more working groups will be appointed by this Committee to undertake the review and submit progress reports, and a final report to the full Committee at the conclusion of the review.

3. Officer’s Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- (1) Agree the scope of the review of Derbyshire’s Care Leavers Offer
- (2) Appoint Members of the Committee to the review working group(s)

Cllr Gary Musson
Chairman of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People