

### Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils' Corporate Parenting Responsibility Update

1. The seven Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils have a strong track record and acknowledge that care experienced people can face significant barriers that can impact them, and they therefore undertake a range of service measures which aim to support care leavers to prosper. This document sets out the range of measures which have been taken across Nottinghamshire to mitigate the impact of these barriers for those individuals with care experience.
2. The Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils discharge their Corporate Parenting responsibility through various mechanisms. Councils have resolved to treat care experienced people as if they have a protected characteristic; Equality Impact Assessments (EIAS) are undertaken, including this guidance. All District and Borough Councils are signatories to the Nottinghamshire County Council Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2022-2025. The key principles within this strategy are as follows:
  - Adopting the stance of being a Corporate Parent to children and young people with care experience.
  - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made regarding priority to care leavers within the housing system.
  - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made regarding free access to leisure for children and young people with care experience.
  - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made to children and young people with care experience, as far as discounts on Council Tax is concerned.
  - Highlighting the commitments that we've already made regarding priority for interviews and work experience for children, young people and adults with care experience.
  - Agreeing to integrate people with care experience as a category within our EIA process on all new policy developments.
  - Making the commitment to ensure we include people with care experience in general engagement exercises and discussions on new policy, so they have opportunities to shape and influence what we do.
3. The Nottinghamshire Districts and Boroughs are committed to the principles and share some examples detailed below:

#### Partnerships/Having a Voice

4. As with all parents, we can call on our partners within our own partnerships, for example Broxtowe Partnership offer additional help and assistance in supporting our Looked After Children and care leavers where applicable.
5. Youth Council/Citizen Panels exist across the county. In Gedling, following a consultation exercise in 2020/2021, a responsive action plan was delivered to improve the lived experience of young people in the Borough, focusing particularly on those who experience barriers to accessing services. This example encompasses the

scrutiny of mental health and wellbeing services for young people who are more at risk.

6. Also, as part of the annual programme of events, Gedling Borough Council also includes stalls and information relating to parenting advice, fostering and support for families, including the Nottinghamshire County Council Families Service; the Healthy Families Team; Nottinghamshire County Council Reducing Parental Conflict Team and the commercial fostering service, Nexus Fostering – each of which promote the support services available for parents.
7. Bassetlaw District Council provides support for the Bassetlaw Youth Council. Recently, the Bassetlaw Children and Young People Mental Health Alliance has launched a “Mental Health Toolkit” which is specifically designed by and for young people.

### **Council Tax Support**

8. The Care Leavers Policy for Council Tax across Nottinghamshire has been in place since 2018 and supports care leavers with up to 100% reduction in their Council Tax charge until they are the age of 25.
9. As an example, Rushcliffe Borough Council have awarded Council Tax discounts to 46 people totalling £100,244. There are also others that have benefitted from the scheme.

### **Housing Support**

10. From a rehousing perspective, care leavers with an identified housing need are placed into a high housing need band to enable them to be rehoused quickly.
11. Care leavers are placed in Band 2 (an urgent rehousing band) for a period of eight weeks. During this time, care leavers are encouraged to bid for suitable properties. If the care leaver is not rehoused during this time, their application is moved to the highest priority band, Band 1, to enable their rehousing to be expedited.
12. In accordance with the Nottinghamshire County Wide Care Leavers Protocol, care leavers do not need to have a local connection to the district or borough in which they wish to be rehoused. This means that if a care leaver wishes to live elsewhere (from where they currently reside), they will be accepted onto the relevant housing register.
13. Each council has a point of contact through either a Champion of the protocol or through Tenancy Support Officers, who offer additional support. A referral can be made to this team if a care leaver requires help with their new tenancy.
14. Most councils have a Temporary Accommodation Facilities Improvement Programme, which focuses on reducing the effect of homelessness on children. Mansfield District Council offer a Child Home Safety Scheme, which is offered to families with young children to reduce accidents in the home through practical measures. In line with this, Mansfield District Council staff have also received Domestic Abuse Awareness

training and the Council has recently been awarded Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation.

### **Complex Case Panel/Safeguarding**

15. The joint Nottinghamshire District and Boroughs “Childrens and Adults Safeguarding Policy” was updated in January 2023 and safeguarding processes and procedures have been revised.
16. Where referrals for care leavers are made to the Complex Case Panel, the referrals are prioritised.

### **Employment/Skills**

17. All councils encourage job applications from care leavers. When a care leaver applies for a job, they can indicate this on the application form. A guaranteed interview will be offered if they:
  - Meet the definition of a care leaver; and
  - Meet the essential criteria of the person specification for an advertised role.
18. As part of its Apprenticeship programme, Newark and Sherwood recruited a young person leaving care who subsequently secured permanent employment and went on to win one of the annual Employee Awards.

### **Leisure**

19. As part of a county-wide scheme, all council owned leisure centres offer free gym, swim and classes to care leavers. The offer is described below:
  1. **Looked After Children** aged 0 to 15 years are eligible, with a letter from a social worker required.
  2. **After Care Pathway** aged 16 to 24 years are eligible, with a letter from a social worker or from Nottinghamshire County Council required.
  3. **Carer of a Child** must accompany their ‘Looked After Child’ to be eligible to attend an activity free of charge.
20. Recently, the new Leisure Management Contract in Ashfield was reviewed to ensure that those from a Care Experience are embedded into the new contract. In 2021/2022, 359 users from a care experience and 85 users in care used the leisure facilities free of charge.

### **Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)**

21. People with care experience are treated as if they have protected characteristics through all District and Borough Councils EIAs for the purposes of policy and service decision making.
22. Finally, as previously highlighted, a Care Leavers Motion has been taken through various council committees and as such, councils have pledged to treat ‘care

experience' as if it was a protected characteristic, which will help to protect care leavers from discrimination, despite national legislation not yet being in place. These measures endeavour to further represent and assist people with care experience across the Districts and Boroughs.

**ACTION:**

**Councillors have expressed a desire to undertake training to understand more about the responsibilities of being a Corporate Parent. If Nottinghamshire County Council would like to consider co-ordinating this training across Nottinghamshire, it would be very helpful.**

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