

Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey – Decision Making Record

Exempting Leavers from Local Authority Care from bearing the cost of paying the Police Precept element of annual Council Tax – January 2020

Decision number: 001/2020

Author and Job Role: Ian Perkin PCC Treasurer & CFO

Protective Marking: Official

Executive Summary:

For 2020/21, and beyond the Police and Crime Commissioner has decided that Care Leavers will not have to pay the Surrey Police Precept element of Council Tax. This decision mirrors similar action being taken by Surrey County Council and the District and Borough Councils across Surrey, who have similarly decided not to charge Care Leavers in respect of the County Precept and the local District and Borough Council Tax.

The cost to the Police & Crime Commissioner from taking this action is estimated to be in the region of £25,000 per year.

Background Information:

Care Leavers can and do experience a range of challenges in their lives and, by the nature of having the legal status of a care leaver, it means they have spent time in the care system as a 'looked after child/young person'.

- Currently in Surrey there are around 980 looked after children and around 600 care leavers. These are children and young people that have often experienced long term abuse and neglect and on many occasions have had to live away from their birth parents, who themselves are likely to have poorer life outcomes.
- On average both nationally and in Surrey, only around 17.5% of looked after children get their attainment 8 score (GCSE results), compared with 55% of all pupils in Surrey. Looked after children's expected progress compared to all of Surrey's pupils is well below average.
- Looked after children are also more likely to be exploited and go missing; 25% of the children currently identified at risk of being exploited are looked after.
- In Surrey 73% of care leavers are in education, employment or training. This is good but compared to a Surrey population with very low unemployment and many who go onto further and higher education, this group is still at a disadvantage compared to their Surrey peers.
- National research tells us that adverse childhood experiences, of the likes these children and young people have faced, increase the chances of poorer mental and physical health both in childhood and adulthood. It is up to us as Corporate Parents to help change that path. The PCC is committed to preventing harm, with this being one of his six Police and Crime Plan Priorities. This recognises the vulnerability of children and adults as a result of their situation or circumstances and the importance of putting the right support in place to improve the chances of a better life for the individual.

It for this reason a recommendation is made to the PCC that supporting the cost of living through Council Tax Relief will help Care Leavers to manage their transition to adulthood and help make their own home affordable, providing much needed stability and a safe place.

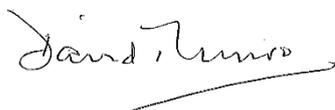
Recommendation

The Commissioner agrees that Local Authority Care Leavers should no longer bear the cost of the Surrey Police Precept element of Council Tax.

Police and Crime Commissioner Approval

I approve the recommendation(s):

Signature:



Date: 14th January 2020

All decisions must be added to the decision register.

Areas of consideration

Consultation

Consultation has taken place with appropriate lead officers about the financial and social consequences of taking this decision.

Financial implications

The financial cost of making this decision is slight, when balanced against the benefit that will be enjoyed by individual local authority care leavers.

Legal

The Police & Crime Commissioner has the statutory power to make this decision.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with taking this decision.

Equality and diversity

No equality and diversity issues.

Risks to human rights

None.