

Notice of Motion – Council 2 February 2017 (Council and Mayoral Decision)

Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption

The Council notes that:-

1. Last year a number of young people (aged 16 or over) left the care of Torbay Local Authority and began the difficult transition out of care and into adulthood.
2. A 2016 report by the Children's Society found that when care leavers move into independent accommodation they begin to manage their own budget fully for the first time. The report showed that care leavers can find this extremely challenging, and, with no family to support them and insufficient financial education, are falling into debt and financial difficulty.
3. Research from the Centre of Social Justice found that over half (57%) of young people leaving care have difficulty managing their money and avoiding debt when leaving care.
4. The Local Authority has a duty of care to care leavers.

The Council believes that:-

1. To ensure that the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt as they begin to manage their own finances, they should be exempt from paying Council Tax until they are aged 25.
2. Care leavers are a particularly vulnerable group for Council Tax debt.

This Council resolves:

- i) To request officers to explore exempting all care leavers from Council tax up to the age of 25 as part of the development of the 2018/19 Council Tax Support Scheme; and
- ii) the Mayor write to the Minister of State for Children and Families, Edward Timpson M.P, urging him to introduce a national exemption for care leavers from Council Tax up to the age of 25.

Proposed by Councillor Ian Doggett

Seconded by Councillor Cindy Stocks

