



Terry Galloway

Care Leavers' Council Tax Reduction and
Introduction to the Care Leaver Offer

1. Introduction

This is adapted for the Chief Executives meeting of the District and Borough Councils in the County of Derbyshire by Terry Galloway a Care Leaver, a campaigner and Business owner in Nottinghamshire.

Your Councils have discretion to reduce the council tax of any persons you see fit. This discretion is allowed by section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

And your councils now have Corporate Parenting responsibilities by virtue of the Children and Social Care Act 2017 where you are required to produce what is known as a “Local Offer for Care Leavers” which is designed to help support care leavers manage their social and financial transition from local authority care to independent living.

I have been working to produce a single offer across the D2N2 region and have successfully created a Joint offer across all 7 District and Borough Councils in Nottinghamshire. This is now going through the political sign off in each council and is scheduled to be published in March 2019.

The Local Offer for Care Leavers has the following themes;

- (a) health and well-being;*
- (b) relationships;*
- (c) education and training;*
- (d) employment;*
- (e) accommodation;*
- (f) participation in society.*

I am offering to share our learning across all your departments, to give you my insight and to ask that you adopt my Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers proposal as the first step towards a joint Local Offer for Care Leavers in Derbyshire.

Where you adopt the Council Tax Exemption proposal we can work with your revenues managers so that there is consistency across the County by sharing reports, research and processes we have already developed.

In Nottinghamshire we created the first County Wide Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers in 2018.

The wider offer requires sub meetings in each theme. And our first meeting of all Derbyshire Housing departments is on 25 February 2019.

2. Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers and Local Care Leaver Offer

- 2.1 I ask that you aim to have the following Council Tax Exemption Reduction Scheme for Care Leavers in place in your individual councils by 1st April 2019.
- 2.2 That you preserve the stated definitions of Care Leavers in this document.
- 2.3 That you support the creation of a Joint Local Offer for Care Leavers across the 8 Districts and Boroughs of Derbyshire.
- 2.4 That you accept an agenda item each month to your Chief Executives meeting where you will be provided a progress brief on the development of the Local Care Leaver Offer in Derbyshire.

A. Who is eligible for council tax reduction?

For the purposes of this guidance, a care leaver is defined as a person aged between 16 and 25, who is currently resident in the Borough or District with a council tax liability and:

- i. has been in the care of a local authority (looked after) for a period, or cumulative periods equalling at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and which ended on or after their 16th birthday, or;
- ii. is aged between 16 and 21 and with respect to whom a guardianship order is in force (or was in force on their 18th birthday) and was looked after immediately before the making of that order, or;
- iii. at any time after their 16th birthday but before their 18th birthday, was, but no longer is, looked after, accommodated or fostered.

This definition incorporates the statutory definitions of “former relevant child” and “qualifying care leaver” as defined in the Children Act 1989.

B. How will council tax reduction be applied?

The council tax reduction will take effect from 1st April 2019. Care leavers who become responsible for council tax after this date will be granted a reduction from the date their council tax liability begins.

Care leavers who are liable for council tax on 1st April 2019 will be granted a reduction from 1st April 2019. The reduction will be awarded after all other relevant discounts, reductions and exemptions to the council tax liability have been awarded.

Where the reduction is awarded, it will remain in place until the care leaver reaches the age of 25 years (the care leaver's 25th birthday) or ceases to be liable for the council tax, whichever date occurs first. In these circumstances, the bill will be apportioned.

Where a reduction has been awarded, a council tax bill will be issued showing the detail of the reduction. If a request for reduction is refused, a letter will be issued detailing the reasons for the refusal.

C. How much council tax reduction will be applied?

Where a care leaver has a liability for council tax, the reduction in that liability will be up to 100%.

The amount of reduction awarded will be the relevant amount (after all other discounts, reductions and exemptions) required to reduce the care leaver's council tax liability amount to zero.

If, subsequent to an award, the care leaver's liability for council tax reduces during the period of the award, for example if the care leaver becomes entitled to a single person discount, the care leaver's reduction will be amended to ensure the award does not exceed the care leaver's council tax liability for the period.

Where there is a shared liability for council tax, the reduction will only be paid to cover the share for which the care leaver would be liable.

D. Right of appeal

Under section 16 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, a person applying for a reduction in council tax who is not happy with the decision of the Council may appeal the decision.

This appeal in the first instance should be made to the Council's Revenues and Welfare Support Service. If after this the person making the request for reduction is still not satisfied, they may then make an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal for England (VTE).

The VTE is an independent body which adjudicates between taxpayers and the Council. Appeals to the VTE must be made directly to the VTE.