

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Cabinet

DECISION NO:

23/00035

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
- *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Care Leavers Covenant

Decision:

Cabinet, agree to:

- (a) KCC becomes a signatory to the Care Leavers Covenant
- (b) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services and impacted Portfolio holders, to take other relevant actions as necessary to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

Background

The Care Leavers Covenant was established in 2016, run by Spectra on behalf of the Department for Education. It is a national inclusion programme which supports care experienced young people to live independently.

The Care Leavers Covenant is accessible to both private and public companies and agencies e.g., charities, businesses, and Local Authorities, to sign up and commit to providing opportunities to care experienced young adults.

For the Council, adoption of the Care Leaver Covenant is a commitment to the principles of accepting a whole council approach to Corporate Parenting on behalf of all departments across the Local Authority. In practice this may mean being part of a process that reviews such things as the Local Offer and helps the Children in Care and Care Leavers service improve its offer to Care Leavers and provides the political ambition and authority to do so.

For Elected Members, the signing of the Care Leaver Covenant is a confirmation of their political commitment to be the best corporate parents they can be for our Children in Care and Care Leavers. It will secure individual responsibility and accountability to be part of a process that looks at how they can individually contribute to the collective response and act as champions for care leavers when making decisions about the direction of the Local Authority.

For Officers, it means promoting the Care Leaver Covenant across all KCC departments and identifying how they can provide meaningful opportunities and improved life chances for children in care and care leavers for whom the Local Authority is the Corporate Parent. This could include work experience, mentoring or apprenticeships across all departments.

For KCC services, it means identifying Care Leaver Champions within each service, who can coordinate opportunities and pledges of support, to liaise with the 18+ Care Leavers Service as a central point, to be able to match young adults to those opportunities available. All KCC services would need to actively promote their role as a Corporate Parent and ensure priority is given to care leavers for any opportunities within their departments.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for the delivery of the services that will implement the covenant, it will not require any additional staff resource. One of the aims of the covenant is to improve the financial security for care leavers, by maximising their opportunities to secure employment.

As per the overview, subsequent service development arising from the activity under the Covenant would be subject to separate decision-making with full consideration of any relevant financial implications.

Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications, the Care Leavers Covenant will give a framework to KCC by which to formalise the opportunities it offers to our young adults who are care experienced. It is not a statutory legal requirement or obligation for the organisation to be a signatory to the covenant. If agreed, this would become part of the Care Leavers Local Offer, which is a published document as part of our Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.

As per the overview, subsequent service development arising from the activity under the Covenant would be subject to separate decision-making with full consideration of any relevant legal implications.

Equalities implications

The proposed Care Leavers Covenant will have positive impact across all protected characteristics as it will provide a firm declaration and commitment from KCC to adoption of “whole council approach” to promote inclusive approach for care experienced young adults for their economic growth and independence, community cohesion and overall wellbeing.

It is anticipated that this proposal will not have any adverse negative impact on the protected characteristics of our children in care and care leavers that KCC have responsibility for and aim to promote overall fairness.

Other Alternatives Considered and risks if decision isn't taken.

8. Data Protection implications

The DPO confirmed that this decision did not require a DPIA

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The Children's and Young People Cabinet Committee considered the decision on 16 May 2023

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

KCC has one of the largest care leaver populations in the country with over 2,000 young adults aged 18-25 years who are care experienced. The Covenant gives a clear framework developed collaboratively with young people to prioritise which support is best for them. By signing this Covenant, KCC will provide a clear declaration of its commitment to our care leavers and increase the access to opportunities across the full spectrum of KCC departments.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None

29 June 23

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date