

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Care Leavers Covenant

Responsible Officer

Nimesh Patel - CY SCS

Type of Activity**Service Change**

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility**Directorate**

Children Young People and Education

Responsible Service

18+ Care Leaving Service/Corporate Parenting of Integrated Children's Services

Responsible Head of Service

Nimesh Patel - CY SCS

Responsible Director

Caroline Smith - CY SCS

Aims and Objectives

This is a proposal for Kent County Council to become signatory of the Care Leavers Covenant. As part of this process, the 18+ Care Leavers Service have sought the views of the Young Adult Council and Corporate Parenting Panel, who are in support of this.

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.

Should Kent County Council become a signatory, they would take a 'whole council approach' in supporting the needs and progress of the young adults they are a Corporate Parent for. This means the whole of KCC will accept responsibility for its support provided to our young adults who are Care Leavers. As of 20th March 2023, we have 2051 young adult care leavers aged 18-25 years. "Under the Government's principles for corporate parenting all departments in local authorities are asked to recognise their role as a corporate parent and to look at the support and service they provide for care leavers". An example of this, is asking that all departments appoint a Care Leaver champion, who can represent their departments and make

decisions around potential pledges and opportunities for our care experienced young adults.

The 'mission' of the Care Leavers Covenant is to set out five outcomes which it asks those signing up to make commitments and pledges to, so young adults who are care experienced:

- Are better prepared to live Independently
- Have improved access to Education, Employment and Training
- Experience stability in their lives and feel secure
- Have improved access to health support
- Achieve financial stability

At the Young Adult Council (YAC) meeting on Thursday 7th April 2022, there was a general agreement that Kent County Council should sign up to the Care Leavers' Covenant.

The group liked the idea that by signing up, the council would be making a 'whole' council promise and further emphasising that everyone who works for KCC has a Corporate Parenting responsibility. They also thought that it was a good way to hold the Local Authority to account and ensure that promises to care leavers are clear and transparent.

The young people were shown the briefing document and information available on the Care Leavers Covenant website. In addition to looking at the opportunities available to care leavers on the website, they also discussed what it would mean for Kent County Council to support the Covenant with the '5 Part Strategy'.

YAC expressed that KCC is already taking some great steps to support care leavers but a signed commitment for a 'whole council approach' would allow 18+ Care Leavers Service to challenge other departments within KCC and go to Local Businesses to secure support from them too. All agreed that there should be more apprenticeships, work experience opportunities and job roles for care leavers across KCC and not restricted to children's services. They thought it was important that services were actively seeking to recruit care leavers and thinking about how best to support them to be successful. They also thought there should be more career progression opportunities for care leavers after their apprenticeship or first role within KCC.

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.

KCC becoming a signatory will provide the 18+ Care Leavers Service with an opportunity to talk to partners and local businesses to ask them to offer similar commitments and opportunities to KCC's care leavers which would help improve the lives of our young adults. It is more difficult to get further signatories and commitments, all the time KCC are not signed up to the Covenant.

It is recommended that KCC becomes a signatory to the Care Leaver Covenant because it will confirm its commitment to the young people for whom it is a Corporate Parent. This has been endorsed and AGREED by the Corporate Parenting Panel on 27th July 2022.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes
It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
Yes
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Yes
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
<p>Consultation has taken place with the following services, meetings, and personnel:</p> <p>Care experienced service users of Young Adults Council (YAC), Service Managers, 18+ Care Leavers Service, Senior Managers in CYPE, DivMT meeting, CMT meeting, Members in Corporate Parenting Panel External organisation such as Spectra</p>
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff Staff/Volunteers
Residents/Communities/Citizens Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
<p>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.</p> <p>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. In practical terms this may mean championing care leavers causes with other organisations using their political influence, such as with the District Borough Councils or Health Authorities.</p> <p>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</p>

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. For example, giving priority to care leavers for apprenticeships and providing additional support to them with interviews for job opportunities. KCC already have in place, priority interviews for our care leavers, where they are appropriately qualified or experienced for the job vacancy. Signing up to the Covenant, would mean all services going the extra mile as a Corporate Parent to secure opportunities for our young adults to support them to reach their full potential. The coordination of the offers as part of the Care Leavers Covenant will be managed and overseen by the Heads of Service and leadership team within the 18+ Care Leavers Service. The service has two specialist Education, Training and Employment (ETE) workers, so there will be no additional staff resource required for the coordination and implementation of this work.

A recommendation for the whole council approach would be for Elected Members, Senior Leaders, and Officers, to form a cross department working group to address the recommendations in the Care Leavers Covenant guide and expand our existing Care leavers Local Offer to include all KCC 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.

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.

Analysis:

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.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable