

County Council - 13 October 2023

Item 11(b) - Notice of Motion on Support for Care Leavers by Cllr Linehan – revised wording

The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care headed by Josh **MacAlister** published in May 2022 had a final report and recommendations that included:

“Government should make care experience a protected characteristic” and “New legislation should be passed which broadens corporate parenting responsibilities across a wider set of public bodies and organisations.”

The Care Leavers service in West Sussex supports our young people to grow and develop into young adults successfully as they move towards independence and operates under a clear legislative framework provided by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

As corporate parents to the children and young people in our care, and care leavers, we in West Sussex take those responsibilities extremely seriously, as any good parents should.

But as West Sussex county councillors, we should go further and support the aspirations of Care Leavers, making sure that no Care Leaver is discriminated against, and that they have every opportunity to live fulfilling and successful lives without barriers.

This Council therefore recognises:

- That care leavers and those children who have been cared for are a group who are likely to face discrimination.
- That councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration with them and all our local partnerships.
- That any future decision with respect to services and policies by the County Council assessed through Equality Impact Assessments should also consider the likely impact on people with care experience.
- To formally call upon all other bodies and partners, locally and pan-Sussex to treat care experience in the same way as they do a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
- For the Council to continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of Care Leavers when developing new policies based on their views.

This Council therefore calls upon the Leader and Cabinet to ensure the Council treats care experience as if it were a protected characteristic, to provide greater authority to employers, businesses, public services, and policy makers to put in place policies and programmes which promote better outcomes for care experienced young people. ***The Council also calls on the Leader and Cabinet to inform West Sussex MPs and the Department of Education of the action taken.***