

SUBJECT:	PROTOCOL FOR TRANSITION FROM CHILDREN'S SERVICES TO ADULT RELATED SUPPORT AND (SEMI) INDEPENDENT LIVING
DIRECTORATE:	DIRECTORATE OF HOUSING AND REGENERATION
REPORT AUTHOR:	ALISON TIMMINS, HOUSING SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Executive on the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities and to request signing and adoption of the Protocol for Transition from Children's Services to Adult Housing Related Support and (Semi) Independent Living.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Local authorities are subject to new legislation, namely the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which place a new 'Corporate Parenting' duty on the authority.
- 2.2 The Council has been working in partnership to develop a protocol which sets out how the partners will work together to deliver the requirements of the legislation, and to make the transition from care leaver or looked after child, into independent living, as seamless as possible.

3. Background

- 3.1 Local authorities must have regard to the seven corporate parenting principles identified in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers (former relevant children).

The principles are applicable to all local authorities in England whether they are, or were, the local authority looking after a particular child/young person. They apply to the whole local authority and not just to children's services functions. They apply only to local authority functions that are exercised in relation to looked after children and care leavers.

The principles state that in order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles are as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings

- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work, and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

4. Development and Adoption of the Protocol

- 4.1 The Protocol has been jointly developed and agreed between Lincolnshire Children's Services, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing, District Councils and DWP. For the City Council, the Housing Solutions and Support Manager has led on the development of the document.
- 4.2 The purpose of the document is to define the arrangements that need to be in place within the Local Authority (primarily between Children's Services, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing, and District Councils but also including other stakeholders such as Department for Work and Pensions) in relation to when a young person soon to turn, or already, 18 years of age, or 21 years if a care leaver, is receiving support within the Children's Services Commissioned Youth Housing contract. It relates also to the Single Gateway Protocol developed by Children's Services and District Councils covering 16-17 year olds presenting as, or deemed to be at risk of, being homeless.
- 4.3 In addition to the requirement set out in Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which requires the City Council to have regard to the principles set out in paragraph 3.1 (above) when exercising its functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers, there is also a statutory requirement in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to offer a local connection to any Lincolnshire care leaver when making a homelessness application.
- 4.4 Whilst it is encouraged, the council is at liberty to choose to offer a local connection to any Lincolnshire care leaver when they make an application to join the Housing Register.
- 4.5 The County Council has 'corporate parenting' responsibilities for around 180-200 children and young people at any one time. We have received assurances from County Council Officers that the City Council is likely to receive only a handful of applications from care leavers on an annual basis. The City Council has also advised the County Council that we will use our best endeavours to provide suitable housing for these young people but that, given the high demand for single persons housing with the city, we will need to utilise the private sector where appropriate. Given the assurance from the County Council officers, it is proposed that the City Council offers a local connection to any Lincolnshire care leaver wishing to join the Housing Register.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's deliver quality housing

Adoption of the protocol helps to ensure that looked after children and care leavers are appropriately and suitably housed.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

No significant financial implications.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

Legislative requirement in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

6.3 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights (including the outcome of the EA attached, if required)

Positive effect on young people.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 There may be a risk involved with granting local connection to all Lincolnshire care leavers in relation to the Housing Register. The City is a popular area in which to live and if significant numbers of care leavers express a desire to reside in the city, despite having no local connection to the area, this could result in a shortage of suitable accommodation meaning further delays for all applicants. County Council officers have offered assurance that the City Council will receive only a handful of such applications on an annual basis. This will be monitored by the Housing Solutions Team.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That Executive gives approval for signing and adoption of the Protocol for Transition from Children's Services to Adult Housing Related Support and (Semi) Independent Living.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? One

List of Background Papers:

None

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