

Full Council – 22nd July 2021

Agenda Item 6 – motion submitted by Councillor O’Driscoll under Standing Order 7

"Care leavers have suffered difficult childhoods marred by trauma and instability. A study by the Learning and Work Institute states care leavers are more likely to go to prison than university and have poor life chances.

The same study says 84% of care leavers leave school without five good GCSEs and they are four times more likely to commit suicide than the rest of the population.

A report by the Children's Society in 2016 found care leavers have difficulty managing their finances as they lack the financial education from parents through no fault of their own to avoid debt.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places responsibility for looking after children in care and care leavers on local authorities and also states that local authorities should act in the interests of children in care and care leavers. As the authority responsible for matters relating to council tax collection, this Council recognises that the transition for leaving care is challenging and that care leavers deserve our care and compassion. To help mitigate financial difficulties care leavers in the District may have, the Council should consider making them exempt from paying Council Tax until their 25th birthday. It notes that a report on this matter is due to be submitted to the Strategy & Resources Committee later in the year, with a view to the exemption being effective from the 1st April 2022. This would be in line with neighbouring Councils in Surrey."