

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Sara McCartan, Head of Adolescent Service
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jim Hobson Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools
Date of Meeting:	13 September 2021

CARE LEAVER COVENANT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek support from the Executive for the Council and its wholly-owned companies to join the Care Leaver Covenant.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 That the Council joins the Care Leaver Covenant to further enhance its current offer to Our Children and Young People.

2.2 That the Executive recommends that all the Council's wholly-owned companies should actively consider signing up to the Care Leavers Covenant. It therefore requests the Company Secretary to liaise with each company's Managing Director and Board Chairman with a view to submitting a report to the next board meeting to join the Care Leaver covenant.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation:

3.1 Joining the Care Leaver Covenant would enhance Blackpool's current Offer (Appendix 2a) to our 251 care leavers which already includes support for our young people with care experience such as the Passport to our Leisure service, 'Jobs in the Family Firm' and Council Tax discounts. The recommendation to wholly-owned companies will ensure that they also consider enhancing their offer to care leavers.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 To not join Care Leaver Covenant which would not improve Blackpool's current offer to care leavers.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

6.0 Background information

6.1 Information about the Covenant can be viewed on the website – www.my covenant.org.uk

6.2 The Care Leaver Covenant is a government initiative borne out of Keep on Caring¹, the care leaver strategy. It seeks to create practical, specific offers, by organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors, to support care leavers aged 16-25 in living independently. It was developed through a process of listening to the voices of care-experienced individuals in various forums.

6.3 Spectra First² is contracted to manage the Covenant by linking care leavers to the offers which include: discounts, financial support, exemptions, personal development, workshops, training, work experience, apprenticeships and internships. This is achieved through supporting organisations in signing the Covenant, and raising the awareness of local authorities and voluntary sector organisations working with care leavers. The existing contract for the Care Leaver.

6.4 The 'mission' of the Covenant is to promote five key outcomes, in order that our care experienced young people:

- are better prepared to live independently;
- have improved access to employment, education and training;
- experience stability in their lives and feel safe and secure;
- have improved access to health support;
- achieve financial stability.

There is also an overarching ambition at the heart of the Covenant: namely, for society – civic, civil and business – to be the lifelong 'universal family' to those who have not enjoyed the love and support that comes from having devoted birth parents to fall back on.

¹ Keep on caring: supporting young people from care to independence, Government policy paper, published 7 July 2016 – www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-on-caringsupporting-young-people-from-care-to-independence

² Spectra First Limited is a private limited company, based in Wolverhampton, that was chosen by the Department for Education (by competitive tender) as the delivery partner for the Care Leaver Covenant.

The Department for Education has set out five underpinning objectives which set out a vision for the Care Leaver Covenant:

- Care leavers aged 16-25 across England have access to a wide range of support and opportunities through the Covenant, wherever they live, to help them achieve the five outcomes.
- Local authorities and care leavers know and understand about the Covenant and what support care leavers can get from signatories.
- Personal Advisers, Independent Fostering Agencies, charities, and others working with care leavers and those about to become care leavers have the information they need about Covenant offers to help care leavers take advantage of the support offered.
- A wide range of businesses and charities across England sign up to make offers of support to care leavers that help them achieve the five outcomes.
- The Care Leaver Covenant is a recognised and valued brand, and the accepted framework, for designing and delivering exceptional interventions that enable care leavers to make a successful transition into independent living.

6.3 The Covenant is not just a Department for Education initiative. In an example of cross-departmental collaboration, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are also involved. These departments have all signed the Care Leaver Covenant and reviewed their current policy and practices with a view to making them more 'care-leaver friendly', and impacting positively on one, or more, of the five key outcomes.

6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 2a: Blackpool's current offer to care leavers.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 There is no financial cost to joining the Care Leaver Covenant.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 Local authorities have a legal obligation to support care leavers. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, they are required to publish a 'local offer' setting out what services are available in their area to support care leavers. Under the Government's principles for corporate parenting all departments in local authorities are asked to recognise their role as corporate parents, and to look at the support and services they provide for care leavers. Joining the Care Leaver Covenant will enhance the Council's current Offer.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Joining the Care Leaver Covenant will enhance opportunities for our young people with Care Experience including our young people who live outside of Blackpool.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Feedback for our care experience young people and their Forms JustUz and JustUz Extra are regularly consulted on regarding our Offer and feedback is shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1