

The **Public Sector Equality Duty** (Section 149 of the Equality Act) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities.

The Equality Duty supports good decision making – it encourages public bodies to be more efficient and effective by understanding how different people will be affected by their activities, so that their policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people’s needs. The Council’s Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) includes an assessment of the community safety impact assessment to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will enable the Council to better understand the potential impact of proposals and consider mitigating action.

<p>Name or Brief Description of Proposal</p>	<p>Providing a rent guarantor scheme to care leavers.</p> <p>The rent guarantor offer will be against unpaid rent for the first 12 months of a young person’s tenancy. Offering to be a corporate rent guarantor for young people to move into their own tenancy is what any parent would do for their child if it meant they could move on to independence with security and stability for the first part of their tenancy.</p> <p>Our aim with the offer to be a guarantor is that we can open the private rental market to our young people, strengthening their case and giving them more options of accommodation. There would also be scope to review those young people in both supported and semi-independent accommodation, with a view to moving them into better quality independent rental properties. This may reduce costs for the Council whilst ensuring young people are supported in accessing private accommodation.</p>
<p>Brief Service Profile (including number of customers)</p>	
<p>The main target group will be young people, aged 18-24 years, leaving care who are ready for independence and prepared for their own tenancy. This includes young people in a foyer or supported accommodation. Young people must remain 25 years old during their tenancy to be eligible for the scheme.</p> <p>We currently have 281 Care Leavers aged 18-24 years old. Some of these young people will have alternative plans, such as requiring supported accommodation, attending university and education plans, or are bidding on social housing already. Some young people may not have plans to reside with a friend or family member. Some young people may not</p>	

require the Council to support them as a rent guarantor due to having other streams of funding or being fully independent.

However, this scheme will benefit young care leavers who require a corporate rent guarantor to access private rented accommodation.

Summary of Impact and Issues

There is a financial risk for the Council to pay the unpaid rent income if a care leaver under the scheme defaults on their tenancy. The likelihood is that any guarantee called in may not be recovered. Therefore, there will be budgetary implications for the Council on an ongoing annual basis. A 12-month period for a pilot would give an indication of the financial implications for future years. If the financial risks are too high, there is the option not to progress the pilot into Southampton City Council policy.

Potential Positive Impacts

The following list is the potential benefits that would be realised pending the successful delivery of the Rent Guarantor Scheme Policy pilot.

- Care Leavers will have better and more secure access to private rented accommodation.
- Care Leavers will have the same options and opportunities as young people that have not been in care.
- The local offer would have a better variety of support available to care leavers.
- It provides an opportunity for care leavers to become independent and learn to manage tenants and pay bills.
- Care leavers are supported by the council if issues arise around the accommodation.
- The Council will be able to support eligible care leavers as part of this scheme which could potentially result in cost avoidance to provide other sources of accommodation.
- The scheme aligns with key deliverables set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, and the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Responsible Service Manager

Ellie Steel and Nikky Brown

Date

27/11/2023

Approved by Senior Manager	Anisha Reed and Steph Murray
Date	27/11/2023

Potential Impact

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
Age	Not ready for independence at aged 18, likely to mean that their budgeting skills impact on their ability to sustain a tenancy.	Pathways Through Care have developed an Independent Life skills Workshop, an 8-week program to help develop independence skills and ensure young people are tenancy ready earlier.
Disability	Young People with a disability may face barriers to accessing employment or training which will impact on their ability to afford their accommodation.	<p>Personal Advisors ensure all young people have access to appropriate benefits that could provide them with a suitable income to manage their living expenses, to work with partner agencies to ensure more suitable accommodation is provided where needed.</p> <p>Young people who are unable to work due to a disability may be eligible for the scheme. They will need to demonstrate that their income/benefits can pay for rent costs and cost of living.</p>
Gender Reassignment	N/A	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnership	This could support a young person's application as it would allow 2 financial streams in respect of living costs.	Personal Advisors to ensure appropriate advice is given when holding a joint tenancy.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Young People may face barriers to accessing employment or training. This may impact their ability to afford	Personal Advisors ensure all young people have access to appropriate benefits that

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
	their accommodation and may increase their living costs caring for a baby/child.	could provide them with a suitable income to manage their living expenses.
Race	N/A	N/A
Religion or Belief	N/A	N/A
Sex	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	N/A	N/A
Community Safety	Young people's vulnerabilities may make it difficult to live in certain areas, this can be due to proximity to family members, contextual safeguarding or criminal offences.	The Rent Guarantor Scheme would allow the young person to access accommodation in other areas to mitigate the risks.
Poverty	Accommodation can be unaffordable in the Southampton City area, with cost of living rising, young people may struggle to manage their living costs	<p>Personal Advisors will help to ensure all young people have access to appropriate benefits that could provide them with a suitable income to manage their living expenses.</p> <p>Personal Advisors will support young people to secure employment or training to increase their income.</p> <p>The Rent Guarantor Scheme would allow the Council to access accommodation in other areas that may be deemed more affordable.</p>
Health & Wellbeing	Young People's health needs may make it more difficult to access employment or training which will impact their ability to afford their accommodation.	Personal Advisors will help to ensure all young people have access to appropriate benefits that could provide them with a suitable income to manage their living expenses, to work with partner agencies to ensure more suitable accommodation is provided where needed.

Impact Assessment	Details of Impact	Possible Solutions & Mitigating Actions
		The Rent Guarantor Scheme would support young people financially and remove the stress and worry in securing a home.
Care Experienced	This policy will support care-experienced young people in the private rented sector, expanding their housing options. The pilot policy limits the number of care experienced young people able to benefit from this scheme to 12.	The pilot will determine the positive impacts of this policy, and any issues which may need to be addressed. The Cabinet will review this policy in one year to determine whether to accept more care leavers into the scheme.
Other Significant Impacts	An Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker may still be awaiting their Home Office Decision and have no recourse to public funds to claim benefits or seek employment.	This cohort would not be eligible for a rent guarantor scheme until they receive Leave to Remain.

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