

Council 19 April 2023

Motion from the Liberal Democrat Group – Schools and Young People – Care Leavers as a protected Characteristic

Proposed by: Cllr Chessie Flack

Seconded by: Cllr Samantha MacArthur

Council understands that:

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics.

Council notes that:

2. Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;
3. Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;
4. Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;
5. As corporate parents, Councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority.

Council agrees that:

6. The work done to further strengthen the role of corporate parenting in Merton is helpful and that all corporate parents should consider acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to reflect their needs in any aspect of council work.
7. Councillors should be champions of our looked after children and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society wherever and whenever possible.

Council therefore requests Cabinet:

8. Considers care experience as a local protected characteristic in Merton;
9. To proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies based on their views and reflect these in Equality Impact Assessments;

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10. To continue to build on the existing ringfenced apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced people by committing to an agreed appropriate number of apprenticeships places each year delivered through the Council's levy funding.

**Councillor Chessie Flack
Bokhari**

Councillor Samantha McArthur Councillor Hina