

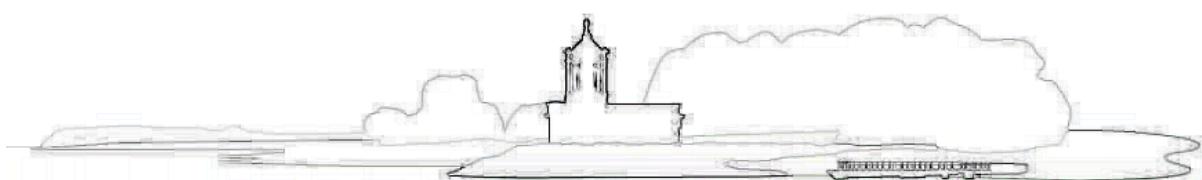


Rutland County Council

CARE LEAVERS – COUNCIL TAX RELIEF

Version & Policy Number	Draft V 1.0
Guardian	Andrea Grinney, Revenues & Benefits Manager 01572 758227
Date Produced	23 rd May 2019

Approved by Cabinet	
---------------------	--



Summary of document

This document appends the Local Council Tax Support scheme. Care leavers relief provides full or part reduction in Council Tax for care leavers under the age of 25 in order to support their transition out of care.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Government's care leavers strategy, 'Keep on Caring' which was published in July 2016, encourages local authorities to introduce measures to exempt care leavers from paying Council Tax.
- 1.2 Care leavers are faced with a new set of potentially overwhelming financial responsibilities, often without the support of family that other young people can rely on. Alleviating the financial pressure of paying council tax supports one of the key outcomes for care leavers of achieving financial stability.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The Council is able to determine its own discretionary discount for specific circumstances under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).
- 2.2 This addendum will form part of the Local Council Tax Support Discretionary Fund (DF) scheme originally approved by the Council on 7th January 2013 (Report 2/2013).
- 2.3 This addendum will adopt the processes and procedures detailed in the above schemes- for example; backdating, appeals, fraud etc.

3.0 CARE LEAVERS RELIEF

- 3.1 Care leavers who are liable to pay Council Tax will have their Council Tax reduced to nil if the eligibility criteria are met; until they reach their 25th birthday. This will also apply if the care leaver is jointly liable with another person or there are other residents in the property e.g. they live with their partner.
- 3.2 In cases where the care leaver is a resident of a household, but they are not liable to pay the Council Tax; the taxpayer will receive a 50% reduction until the care leaver reaches their 25th birthday. e.g. lodging with a friend. (This may have the effect of reducing the council tax to nil if other statutory discounts, exemptions, reductions or LCTS are awarded).
- 3.3 In cases where the care leaver is living in a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) no relief will be given as the landlord is responsible for paying the Council Tax.
- 3.4 The relief will end on the day before the care leavers 25th birthday.

4.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 4.1 The term 'care leaver' is defined in the Childrens Act 1989 (as amended) and applicants will need to meet this definition in order to be eligible to apply for relief under this policy. In simple terms a care leaver is an adult who has spent time in foster or residential care, or in other arrangements outside their immediate or extended family before the age of 18. Their time in care could have lasts for a few months or from birth until their 18th birthday.
- 4.2 Statutory discounts, exemption and reductions will be awarded first, if the eligibility criteria are met e.g. single person discount.

5.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 5.1 The care leaver, or their representative i.e. their Personal Advisor, must complete an application form and providing supporting evidence if required.
- 5.2 Officers will seek written confirmation from their Personal Advisor within Childrens Services of the relevant Council, to verify that the care leaver meets the criteria detailed at 4.1.
- 5.3 Awards will be made directly to the Council Tax account only.
- 5.4 The care leaver, their representative or the relevant taxpayer will be notified of the award and advised of their duty to notify us of any change in their circumstances within 21 days.
- 5.5 If the care leaver is eligible to claim Housing Benefit; an application will need to be made. If there is a shortfall i.e. the Housing Benefit payment doesn't cover the rent; the care leaver can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment.

A large print version of this document is available on request



Rutland County Council

Rutland County Council
Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP

01572 722 577
enquiries@rutland.gov.uk
www.rutland.gov.uk