



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Council Tax Team
SE Quarter - 2nd Floor
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Email: council.tax@communities.gsi.gov.uk

To English Local Authorities

Council Tax Information Letter: 21 December 2016

Dear Chief Finance Officer,

CARE LEAVERS: COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS & EXEMPTIONS

In July 2016, the Department for Education published [Keep on Caring](#), the refreshed cross-government care leaver strategy. It focused on embedding a culture of corporate parenting across all parts of the local authority, not just the care leaver team; and across the whole of society. The government is introducing corporate parenting principles through the Children and Social Work Bill that will apply to all local authorities, as well as a requirement on local authorities to consult on and publish a 'local offer' for care leavers.

The strategy also set out the government's ambitions for care leavers and how the government is going to work towards these over the next four years. The ambitions we have for all care leavers are that they:

- Are better prepared and supported to live independently
- Have improved access to education, training and employment
- Experience stability and feel safe and secure
- Have improved access to health support
- Achieve financial stability

The strategy highlighted best practice examples of how local authorities are already providing additional support to care leavers, including using existing freedoms to support vulnerable groups, such as care leavers, to meet their council tax payments.

This Information Letter reminds councils that under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and through local council tax support schemes there is flexibility to support vulnerable groups to help manage their council tax liabilities. This could include offering exemptions or discounts to care leavers and other vulnerable groups. Where local authorities choose to provide exemptions or discounts, we would expect this to be set out in their local offer, mentioned above.

Some local authorities have already taken the decision to support care leavers to meet their council tax payments through an exemption or discount, such as North Somerset, Cheshire East and Milton Keynes.

If billing authorities have any comments regarding this Information Letter, please let us know at the following email address:

council.tax@communities.gsi.gov.uk