**WBCIR:18557**

**I am writing to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 relating to support for care leavers for whom your local authority has corporate parenting responsibilities.

1. Are care leavers given any “reasonable preference” for social housing under your local authority’s social housing allocations policy?**

Care leavers identified by the Council and approved by the Young Persons Housing Panel as having a housing need, are placed in band 2 on the housing list, designated for those with urgent housing needs. This is reflected in the Council’s Allocations Policy, which is attached for your reference. **2. How many priority bands or categories does your local authority housing allocation policy have?**

The Housing Allocations Policy includes five bands. A description of each band is provided in the table below:



 **3. Under your local authority’s social housing allocations policy, which priority banding would care leavers be given if they had no additional need or vulnerability?**

No distinction is made – all of the Council’s care leavers are prioritised equally, regardless of vulnerabilities or needs, unless a specific need qualifies them for additional priority. See the allocations policy for more details. **4. Are there any circumstances or criteria in which care leavers from other local authorities can be assessed as having a local area connection under your local authority’s housing allocations policy, and if so, what are these circumstances or criteria?**

Care Leavers below the age of 25 years who are, or were, owed a duty under section 23C of the Children Act 1989 by the Council and have been looked after in accommodation outside of Wokingham Borough. This will include care leavers who are still receiving after care support from Children’s Service until they are 25, and some care leavers who are in full-time education who wish to move back to Wokingham Borough on completion of their education.

 **5. What are the criteria or circumstances in which care leavers aged 21-25 can be assessed as in priority need for a homelessness duty?**

When making homelessness decisions, the Council follows the Homelessness Code of Guidance in determining which care leavers aged 21-25 can be assessed as in priority need. Chapter 22 specifies this guidance in more detail. Please refer to the link: [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-22-care-leavers](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fhomelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities%2Fchapter-22-care-leavers&data=05%7C02%7Cinformationrequests%40wokingham.gov.uk%7Ccb9ca9ebcb574a5702d208dcbfb16b51%7C996ee15c0b3e4a6f8e65120a9a51821a%7C0%7C0%7C638596016468610446%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2FzZhur8F4OmGt1Eah2NDIVtUouo80rHUGhXkalVXbzo%3D&reserved=0)

 **6. Are there circumstances or criteria in which care leavers can be assessed as intentionally homeless, and if so, what are these circumstances / criteria?**

When making homelessness decisions, the Council follows the Homelessness Code of Guidance. Specifically, it aligns with section 22.17, ensuring intentional homelessness decisions for care leavers are rare.

 **7. Does your local authority have a joint housing protocol for care leavers across children’s services and housing services?**

Yes. Please refer to the link: [https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/18446/311e-care-leaver-housing-joint-protocol-january-2022.pdf](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fproceduresonline.com%2Ftrixcms2%2Fmedia%2F18446%2F311e-care-leaver-housing-joint-protocol-january-2022.pdf&data=05%7C02%7Cinformationrequests%40wokingham.gov.uk%7Ccb9ca9ebcb574a5702d208dcbfb16b51%7C996ee15c0b3e4a6f8e65120a9a51821a%7C0%7C0%7C638596016468616639%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6JPxNyhpCBadcsRIhLpuj%2B3TuDjrg2URNTzdpVov2W0%3D&reserved=0)  **8. Does your local authority currently provide a housing guarantor scheme for care leavers, and if so, what are the eligibility criteria for this scheme?**

The Council offers financial assistance to assist those in housing need access suitable accommodation. This includes a Rent in Advance scheme and a Rent Guarantee scheme. Care leavers are eligible for both schemes.

 **9. Does your local authority currently provide a tenancy deposit scheme for care leavers, and if so, what are the eligibility criteria for this scheme?**

The Council offers financial assistance to assist those in housing need access suitable accommodation. This includes a Rent in Advance scheme and a Rent Guarantee scheme. Care leavers are eligible for both schemes.