

Wales Safer Communities Network response to: Welsh Government - Removal of eligible care leavers liability for payment of council tax

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Introduction to the Wales Safer Communities Network

The Wales Safer Communities Network was established in January 2021 following the recommendations of the Welsh Government's Working Together for Safer Communities Review. The Network aims to become the strategic voice for community safety in Wales, working collaboratively to champion and support community safety partnership working, and influence the shaping and development of national policy and local practice. This response is on behalf of the Network and not WLGA.

Questions:

Question 1: Do you agree with the policy intent to remove care leaves from joint and several liability for council tax? Please give your reasons.

Yes. There is real risk that a benefit young care leavers are entitled to will be over shadowed and leave these individuals in financial difficulty unfairly. It could negatively impact credit ratings in the future and lead to stress. There could be consequences, such as, behaviour changes which could impact on the care leavers feeling of being an accepted part of the community (community cohesion).

Question 2: We have proposed changes be made to the relevant legislation to remove care leavers from joint or several liability for council tax. Do you agree with this approach or can you suggest an alternative?

We agree. These would appear to be the simplest option and will mitigate the risk of them becoming liable for someone else's debt. It should also reduce the risk of it being used as a route for exploitation. It is especially important for care leavers given they are already at higher risk of exploitation as identified in the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner and Newport Council Understanding The Triggers document.

Question 3: We would like to know your views on the effects that these proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

No comment

Question 4: Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy approach could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

No comment

Question 5: We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related points which we have not addressed, please use this space to record them:

No additional comment