

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting 14 March 2024

Liberal Democrat Motion on Care Experienced People

To be proposed by Councillor Paul May

Council notes that:

1. Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives.
2. Despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account.
3. Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system.
4. As corporate parents, we have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority.
5. All corporate parents should commit to hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to considering their needs in any aspect of Council work.
6. This issue has been discussed at the Corporate Parenting meeting of 17 January 2024, at which all Councillors present supported the idea of treating care experience as a protected characteristic, and with care experienced people locally.
7. Councillors should be champions of the children in our care and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society.
8. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as Councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics.
9. 75 other Local Authorities (cross party) have already adopted the motion to protect Care Experience.
10. The Independent Review of Childrens Social Care (2022) recognised that Care Experience should be considered a Protected Characteristic. The national advisor for Care Leavers, Mark Riddle (DfE) supported this recommendation in May 2023.

- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

Council therefore:

11. Recognises that care experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination.
12. Recognises that Councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making and include them in decisions which affect them.
13. Requests that future decisions, services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic.
14. Requests that in the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment.
15. Resolves that this Council will treat care experience as if it were a protected characteristic and that this shall be in addition to any other protected characteristic which may be relevant to an individual.
16. Formally calls upon other bodies to treat care experience as a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
17. Calls for Council departments to continue proactively seeking out and listening to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies.

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