

Meeting of the City Council

20 September 2023

Report title	Motions on Notice	
Referring body/person	Councillor Chris Burden Councillor Wendy Dalton Councillor Simon Bennett Councillor Ellis Turrell	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Cabinet Member with lead responsibility	N/A	
Accountable director	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
Originating service	Governance	
Accountable employee	David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
	Tel	01902 550320
	Email	David.pattison@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Recommendation for decision:

The Council is recommended to:

Consider the motions received in accordance with the Council's procedure rules for a maximum of 50 minutes.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 For Council to consider the motions received:

a. Care Leavers Protected Characteristic Motion

Councillor Chris Burden, will move the following motion:

“Every Councillor, employee of this Council and our partner agencies is a Corporate Parent to the children in our care and our care experienced young people.

We are all responsible for providing the best possible care, safeguarding and educational outcomes for the children and young people who are and have been in the care of the City of Wolverhampton Council.

Our young people in care and our care experienced young people have the right to expect everything from a good corporate parent that would be expected from a responsible and good parent. This includes how families continue their support, care, and ambition for their children long after they leave home and gain independence.

The City of Wolverhampton Council in partnership with the Care Leavers Independent Collective Forum and our partner agencies are proud that together we have been able to achieve, :-

- Wolverhampton Care Leavers being exempt from all Council Tax charges up to the age of 25.*
- Wolverhampton Care Leavers up to the age of 25 having free access to leisure facilities at WV Active sites.*
- Care Leavers bidding for Wolverhampton Homes properties are entitled to Band 1 Housing allocation.*
- Care Leavers living in a Wolverhampton Homes property will never be made intentionally homeless.*
- Care Leavers up to 25 years have access to free prescriptions.*
- Wolverhampton Care Leavers have access to a variety of apprenticeships within the City of Wolverhampton Council and are able to apply for positions as the two-week internal application stage.*
- Care Leavers have dedicated advice and support from an Education, Employment and Training Advisor to help them make their next steps into work or education.*

However, as fantastic as these achievements are, we know as a good corporate parent that we can always do more. We are determined that every decision made by this Council and every policy set here considers the impact on our care experienced young people.

This motion proposes including “care experienced”, regardless of age, as a protected characteristic in all our Equality Impact Assessments. This will give these people formal recognition and make sure that all decisions that are made and policies that are set consider their specific needs and the impact on them.

The Government commissioned independent review into children’s social care highlighted the recommendation that care experience should be made a protected characteristic as part of the Equalities Act 2010. As yet, the Government have not progressed this recommendation.

Therefore, we propose to take steps here in Wolverhampton to be the best corporate parents we can be and to recognise care experience, regardless of a person’s age, be defined as a protected characteristic till such a time as it may be introduced by legislation.

The City of Wolverhampton Council, by recognising care experience as a protected characteristic would resolve:

- a. That when making any decisions in relation to its policies or formulating its Council plan that it recognises that care experienced people of all ages are an oppressed group who face discrimination.*
- b. That it recognises that the Council has a duty to put the needs of oppressed people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration.*
- c. 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 in so far as available data allows for meaningful monitoring.*
- d. To formally adopt and call upon all other bodies to treat care experience as a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.*
- e. To formally call upon all other bodies and partnership agencies working with the City of Wolverhampton Council to adopt the principal that care experience be a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.*
- f. For the Council to continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people, regardless of age, when developing new policies based on their views.*
- g. As a Local Authority, this would commit us to acknowledging and addressing the challenges faced by those with care experience across everything we do, from breaking down barriers to work, including transport and digital poverty to ensuring fair access to housing, education, and employment within the City.*

However, we recognise that as a Council, we can only implement so much alone. Thus, we call upon our civic and regional partners to follow the Council’s lead in developing their own initiatives to support our care leavers.

We believe as a Council that the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) should recognise the request of Care Leavers to provide transport to our Care Experienced Young People in the region.

Furthermore, this Council believes that the Minister for Children and Families should follow the example of the Council and seek to promote the status of Care Leavers as a protected minority characteristic.”

b. Leisure Membership Concessions

Councillor Wendy Dalton, will move the following motion:

“I would like to move a motion calling on the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing to extend the concession for leisure membership rates to all Ex-Emergency service personnel, Veterans and NHS workers living in Wolverhampton to demonstrate our continued gratitude and support for their years of public service and dedication to our City.”

c. JCB Pothole Pro Vehicle Purchase

Councillor Simon Bennett will move the following motion:

“Over the last 10 years, the state of Wolverhampton’s roads has remained largely unmaintained, allowing new cracks and potholes to form regularly resulting in insurance claims against the Council, damage to vehicles, and reduced safety for road users.

This Council therefore agrees to take urgent action, and procure a JCB Pothole Pro vehicle, using funds from the Highway Management Reserve - that is there specifically to fund projects to improve roads and pavements in the City.”

d. Business Relationships

Councillor Ellis Turrell will move the following motion:

“The relationship between the Council and businesses in the city centre is crucial to the future success of the whole city. However, this relationship has reached a new low, with allegations in the press of bullying and harassment. Sadly, the new Leader of the Council, in his previous position as Cabinet Member for City Economy, made the relationship far worse rather than better.

This Council therefore commits to immediately improving this relationship, using every lever at its disposal to prevent any further harm and disruption, and pledges its full support for any business that operates in the city. The success of our economy and our residents depends on this vital relationship being restored.”