

SUBJECT: People with Care Experience

DIRECTORATE: Social Care & Health

MEETING: People Scrutiny

DATE: 17th July 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider proposed measures that the Council may implement to help care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old) overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For People Scrutiny Committee to consider the proposed measures and to provide feedback and comment prior to the report being presented at Full Council on 19th September 2024.
- 2.2 The proposals are:
 - a. That 'care experienced people' is added to the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment, so that any impact of policy decisions on people with care experience is identified and taken into account when those decisions are made;
 - b. In relation to recruitment, currently the Council guarantees an interview to individuals who have been in the care of the Monmouthshire County Council provided they meet the selection criteria set out in the job

description. It is proposed that this be expanded to individuals who have been in the care of other Local Authorities;

- c. When setting and reviewing the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives, it is proposed that the Council include consideration of how it might overcome the disadvantages and discrimination experienced by care experienced people.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Care experienced people are one of the most vulnerable groups of people across our society, often facing lifetime stigma and discrimination. Whilst the experience of coming into care and being looked after as a child will be unique to every individual, the fact that it leaves a lasting legacy and influences life-trajectory, is indisputable. For many people, particularly when they have had a restorative experience of being in care, childhood adversity is easier to overcome. However, for many others, outcomes remain much poorer than the general population. For example:

- a. 25% of the homeless population are estimated to be care experienced;
- b. Care experienced people are three times less likely to access higher education;
- c. care experienced people have one of the highest pay gaps at over 25%; and
- d. care experienced people are 70% more likely to die prematurely.

3.2 Care experienced people report being stigmatised and discriminated against. When giving evidence in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in England, Care experienced people spoke of being refused employment and

- accommodation, and of assumptions being made about their potential educational ability or even about their parenting ability when they had children of their own.
- 3.3 The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care in England headed by Josh McCallister published in May 2022 contained a number of recommendations including the recommendation that Government should extend the protected characteristics of the Equality Act to include care experience. Although this review was of Children’s Social Care in England, the Radical Reform Summit Declaration saw similar expressions of support with regard to recognising the particular needs of care experienced young people within a Welsh Government context.
- 3.4 Increasingly local authorities across the UK are recognising the unique discrimination and disadvantage that people with care experience face and the actions that can be taken by councils to help overcome these. Some councils have expressed this as treating care experience ‘*as if it were a protected characteristic*’.
- 3.5 In line with this, it is proposed that Monmouthshire County Council takes some specific actions to ensure that the Council is recognising and helping to address the challenges faced by care experienced people. These proposals are set out in paragraph 2.2 of this report and are designed to help care experienced people to overcome the discrimination and disadvantages they face.
- 3.6 There are already a number of measures in place within the Council and wider across Wales that support care experienced people. These include:
- a. Through its Corporate Parenting responsibilities, the Council considers the impact of its decisions on Monmouthshire’s Children Looked After which equally extends to the care leaver population (up to the age of 25);

- b. Under the Social Services and Well-being Act, Monmouthshire care leavers are entitled to statutory support up until the age of 25 including advice, assistance, support and access to personal advisers;
 - c. Monmouthshire care leavers have priority access to housing;
 - d. Care leavers across Wales have a 100% council tax exemption (up to the age of 25);
 - e. Through its Corporate Parenting Strategy and Corporate Parenting Panel, the Council seeks out the views and perspectives of care experienced people; encourages other bodies and partner organisations to recognise and address disadvantages arising from having care experience; and celebrates and promotes the contributions and achievements of care-experienced individuals.
- 3.7 Whilst all these measures would remain, the current proposals would take a step further in formally recognising and addressing the real and life-long disadvantages and discrimination faced by people with care experience.
- 3.8 The Council currently produces an Integrated Impact Assessment for all policy decisions taken by Council, Cabinet or individual Cabinet members. This ensures decision makers consider the impact of decisions on people with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the National Well-being Goals and ways of working established by the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Welsh Language Standards applying to the authority. It also requires an assessment against some key areas of work such as safeguarding and corporate parenting. Completing the Integrated Impact Assessment ensures that report authors take these factors into account when developing proposals and making recommendations. In addition to the impact on decision making, adding care experience to the Integrated Impact Assessment sends an important signal to those who have been in care as well as officers, councillors and wider communities.

- 3.9 The authority offers guaranteed job interviews to several groups of people providing they meet the criteria for a job. This is about taking positive action and giving people the opportunity to demonstrate their talents and knowledge at the interview stage. This presently applies to disabled people, veterans and those who care been in the care of Monmouthshire County Council. The proposal to expand this to all people with care experience is a small but significant change which is aligned with the aspirations of our recently approved People Strategy to be inclusive and attract the widest possible range of talent to work for the organisation.
- 3.10 The proposed changes we have identified are intended to go some way in tackling the disadvantages that many care experienced people can face by:
- a. Improving the life changes and opportunities of people who have care experience;
 - b. Raising awareness about the inequality and prejudice faced by care experienced people;
 - c. Promoting the wellbeing of care experienced people within Monmouthshire (and wider) through listening and responding to their views and opinions.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION

- 4.1 By taking steps to overcome prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage faced by people with care experience, this proposal is intended to make Monmouthshire a fairer and more equitable county. Implementing the proposals will provide a framework for Monmouthshire County Council to promote the social, psychological and economic wellbeing of care experienced people.
- 4.2 Local councils play a crucial role in ensuring that all members of their community are treated fairly and equitably. By putting in place additional measures to support the life chances of people with care experience, Monmouthshire County Council will be taking an important step towards creating a more inclusive and supportive

environment for everyone. In addition, these measures will help to break down the barriers that care experienced people often face when it comes to accessing education, employment and housing. Raising the profile will also help to ensure Council officers and elected members are aware of the unique challenges and strengths of care experienced people and encourage them to incorporate this awareness into their policies and practices.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Description	Costs	Benefits	Disbenefits/risks	Recommended
Do nothing	Cost neutral	No additional work needed to implement policy	Missing significant opportunities for MCC to improve how it fulfils its role as a Corporate Parent and improving outcomes for care experienced people.	No
Take steps as proposed to help address discrimination and disadvantage faced by care experienced people.	Cost neutral	<p>Improved recognition of the challenges faced by care experienced people.</p> <p>Improved identification of ways to challenge these and therefore improve outcomes for care experienced people.</p> <p>Demonstrate that we are responding to the wishes and feelings of care experienced young people within Monmouthshire.</p>	<p>Consideration would need to be given to adjusting the current impact assessment.</p> <p>This would have an operational impact and require a minor change in practice. This could be achieved through a practice note and awareness raising so that report writers understand the potential discrimination faced by people with care experience.</p> <p>Consideration would need to be given to included care experience within the next Strategic</p>	Yes

			Equality Plan and Annual Monitoring Report.	
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6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 There are a number of performance measures in place for Monmouthshire Care Leavers who have recently left care:
- a. Number of care experienced young people re-connecting with support (up to age 25;)
 - b. Numbers of care experienced young people who are outside of education or employment;
 - c. Numbers of care experienced young people experiencing episodes of homelessness.

7. REASONS

- 7.1 Monmouthshire County Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out a range of priorities and commitments to children Looked After to promote their overall health and wellbeing. A core intention of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is to enable Children Looked After to achieve their potential as independent and fulfilled members of society according to their own personal outcomes and ambitions. The strategy recognises that children in care have already been disadvantaged by the experiences that brought them into the care system and states that care experience should not add to this but provide children with the stability and security they need to flourish. The aspirations of the Corporate Parenting Strategy extends to those young people who have recently left our care and are on their pathway to independence as young adults.
- 7.2 Any good parent would continue to have a continued interest in their child throughout their adulthood and seek to promote and safeguard their lifelong

wellbeing. Recognising this extended duty in a proportionate way will help to validate the experiences of those with care experience including their childhood 'relationship' with local government, and publicly demonstrates a Council that takes seriously its responsibility as a Corporate Parent.

- 7.3 In taking forward this proposal Monmouthshire County Council will be joining an increasing number of councils across the UK who recognise the value that such steps will bring. Whilst it is a relative cost neutral, it has the potential to bring significant value in terms of promoting inclusion, addressing stigma and discrimination faced by care experienced people and helping build a more connected, compassionate and cohesive community for all with improved long-term outcomes for care experienced people.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct resource implications of adopting this however, there may be implications at an operational level which would require a review of Local Authority policies/procedures across directorates and the inclusion of care experience in strategic planning as part of the fairness and equality impact assessments.

9. Consultees

- 9.1 To a large extent, this proposal has been generated by the expressed wishes, feelings and opinions of people in Monmouthshire with care experience through the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 9.2 The panel hosts regular engagement events to listen directly to young people with care experience with the purpose of developing a collaborative approach to improving services.
- 9.3 At recent events care experienced young people have voiced strong support for the proposal as put forward within recent national reports, that care experience should be recognised as a protected characteristic. Discussions within the

Corporate Parenting panel have reflected this and have sought to identify ways which the council could take supportive action whilst recognising the legal constraints under the Equalities Act. Young people are consequently very much in support of the proposals and see it as a step forward in supporting and promoting positive outcomes for care experienced people.

9.4 Other consultees include:

- Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- Cllr Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding & Health
- Children's Services Leadership Team
- SLT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. AUTHOR: Charlotte Drury

CONTACT DETAILS

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<p>Name of the Officer Charlotte Drury</p> <p>Phone no: 07811 234244</p> <p>E-mail: chalottedrury@monmouthsire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To consider how the Council can help to overcome disadvantage and discrimination experienced by people who have spent time in care.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>All directorates</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>11/03/2024</p>

1. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	<p><i>Consider the impact on our community in relation to this e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p> <p>Whilst care experience can impact on any age, this is particularly important for young people who may be leaving care as well as for older, care experienced people who have experienced long term consequences from being care experienced. Adopting this seeks to actively address the needs of this vulnerable population.</p>	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	N/A None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Gender reassignment	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Marriage or civil partnership	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Pregnancy or maternity	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Race	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Religion or Belief	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Sex	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Sexual Orientation	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>Socio-economic outcomes for many care experienced people are often poorer than for the general population. 25% of the homeless population are estimated to be care experienced, care experienced people are three times less likely to access higher education and this gap is widening, care experienced people have one of the highest pay gaps at over a 25% and care experienced people are 70% more likely to die prematurely. Adopting this policy seeks to address this in promoting their outcomes and reducing the likelihood of them experiencing socio-economic</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	<i>Under the Welsh Language measure of 2011, we need to be considering Welsh Language in signage, documentation, posters, language skills etc. and also the requirement to promote the language</i> None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	<u>None identified at this point</u>	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	<u>None identified at this point</u>	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Adopting this policy will promote the economic interests of a marginalised group potentially reducing their negative experiences and promoting their long term outcomes.	None identified at this point
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and land, river and coastal ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Care experience people have poorer health outcomes than the general population, this proposal goes some way to recognising that and in taking steps to promote the interests of this marginalised group potentially reducing their negative experiences and promoting their long term outcomes.	None identified at this point
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Adopting this proposal will assist in reducing the prejudice and stigma that care experienced people can face and promote a more cohesive Wales for all.	None identified at this point
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation		
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	By taking steps to overcome the disadvantages and discrimination faced by people with care experience, the proposal attempts to make Monmouthshire a fairer and more equitable place to live.	None identified at this point

5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	Adopting this policy recognises the long term impact of care experiences on this population seeking to support their wellbeing and promote their outcomes in the long term as well as the short term.	None identified at this point
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	Adopting this as a council policy promotes a collegiate approach across the council and opportunities to raise the profile of this issue with partners.	None identified at this point

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The voices of Care Experienced people were sought as part of the review that this policy is based on. Adopting this policy will promote the interests of this marginalised group including enabling their voices to be heard and needs considered in all decisions, service development and policy implementation across the council as part of impact assessments.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>This policy is designed to mitigate the negative impact including stigma, prejudice and discrimination of being care experienced and in this way it seeks to be preventive.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>Adopting this as a council policy promotes a collegiate approach across the council and opportunities to raise the profile of this issue with partners.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	This policy is designed to mitigate the negative impact including stigma, prejudice and discrimination of being care experienced and in this way it seeks to safeguard care experienced children and young people as well as vulnerable adults.	<i>None identified at this point</i>	None identified at this point
Corporate Parenting	This policy speaks directly to the councils corporate parenting responsibility.	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

<p>1. The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care’ in England</p>  <p>Care Experience</p> <p>2. Protected Characteris</p>

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

.This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template

- Implementing this proposal has the potential to challenge discrimination, inequality and prejudice faced by care experienced people.
- Implementing this proposal will provide a framework for Monmouthshire County Council to promote the wellbeing of care experienced people and therefore improve their outcomes

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Monitor the implementation of the policy.	Annually as part of the review of MCC Corporate Parenting Strategy	C Drury

10. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	People Scrutiny		