Council Tax Care Leavers Local Discount Policy (allowed under S13A Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended))

1 Background

1.1 Billing Authorities have the power to allow a local Council Tax reduction under S13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), for individual cases or a class of cases.

1.2 Care leavers often have to start living independently much earlier than their peers taking on more financial responsibilities, when they might be on a low income and without the same family support network.

1.3 As a corporate parent, Norfolk County Council and, in addition, Broadland District Council has a responsibility to support care leavers whilst they are developing the skills and confidence to live independent lives and learn vital life skills.

1.4 By granting a full reduction in Council Tax for care leavers living as single adults or living with other care leavers up to and including age 21, the Council will be providing financial assistance for a group of people who need help at a very important time in their lives.

2 Operation of the discount

2.1 This discount is available to care leavers who are liable to Council Tax as the only adult in the dwelling or who live with other qualifying care leavers.

2.2 A full discount will be allowed to qualifying care leavers reducing the Council Tax charge to nil.

2.3 The discount will be awarded only after entitlement to other discounts have been applied (except Council Tax Reduction).

2.4 The qualifying period will last until the care leaver(s) reach the age of 22.

2.5 A care leaver is defined as a person aged 25 or under, who has been looked after by a local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14; and who was looked after by the local authority at school-leaving age or after that date.

2.6 The Act defines the categories of children entitled to leaving care support as:

- Eligible children are those young people aged 16-17 who are still in care and have been ‘looked after’ for a total of 13 weeks from the age of 14 and including their 16th birthday;

- Relevant children are those young people aged 16 and 17 who have already left care, and who were ‘looked after’ for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and have been ‘looked after’ at some time while they were 16 or 17;
• Former relevant children are those young people aged 18, 19 or 20 who have been eligible and/or relevant.

2.7 A written application will be required, except for cases where the authority has been able to establish all the conditions of entitlement to the discount from existing evidence held by the authority or provided to it.

2.8 Applications may be made by email to council.tax@broadland.gov.uk or by post to:

Council Tax
Broadland District Council
Thorpe Lodge
1 Yarmouth Road
Thorpe St Andrew
NR7 0DU

2.9 Once an award has been made an adjustment notice or bill will be sent confirming the discount.

2.10 The care leaver must advise the Council of any change in circumstances which may give rise to a change in entitlement such as a new adult moving in or the care leaver vacating the dwelling.

3 Review of decision and appeal process

3.1 S16 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that a person may appeal against any decision by a Billing Authority that he or she is liable to pay Council Tax or a calculation as to the amount to pay.

3.2 Any care leaver aggrieved by a decision of the Billing Authority not to award a care leavers discount may in the first instance request a review of the decision.

3.3 A review should be instigated by writing to the Head of Finance and Revenue Services at the address shown in 2.8 above.

3.4 A request for a review should detail the reasons in full.

3.5 If a review is requested, the decision on entitlement will be independently reviewed by a different officer from the one involved in the initial determination.

3.6 A final decision following a review will be sent in writing to the care leaver.

3.7 Following a request for a review, if the care leaver is still aggrieved an appeal may be made to the Valuation Tribunal within 2 months of Broadland’s response at 3.6. Or, if Broadland has not responded, within 4 months of the date of the request for a review the care leaver may appeal to the Valuation Tribunal.
3.8 The Valuation Tribunal’s contact details are:

Valuation Tribunal
Hepworth House
2 Trafford Court
Doncaster
Yorks
DN1 1PN

Email : vtdoncaster@vts.gsi.gov.uk
Tel : 0300 123 2035