

## **Notice of Motion to Council Re: Care Experienced Children being given Protected Characteristic Status**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council notes:

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. Outcomes remain much poorer than the general population. For example:

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

An Independent Review of Children's Social Care' in England headed by Josh McCallister' published in May 2022 contained recommendations that included:

“Government should make care experience a protected characteristic” and “New legislation should be passed which broadens corporate parenting responsibilities across a wider set of public bodies and organisations.”

Care experienced young people face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice in their day to day lives. Research indicates that the public's perceptions of care experience focus on the idea that children are damaged which could lead to discrimination and assumptions.

Young people in care describe having been subjected to stigmatisation and discrimination which can sometimes be explicit, and often comes with assumptions about their experiences. This can also be implicit and evidenced in the way care experience is discussed in schools, workplaces, and the media.

Some of the most direct examples care experienced young people experience in terms of discrimination are when they are refused employment, accommodation, or when they are judged on potential educational ability, or negative views about their parenting ability when they have children and families of their own.

Making care experience a protected characteristic would provide greater autonomy to the Local Authority to put in place policies and programmes which will promote improved outcomes for care experienced people.

Blaenau Gwent is currently offers a good level of support for our care leavers until the age of 25. This support is required within legislation. Making people with care experience a protected characteristic will provide greater consideration and protection from discrimination for those over the age of 25.

This Council resolves to:

- 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, the Council guarantees an interview to individuals who have been in care provided they meet the selection criteria set out in the job description.
- 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.

**Signed by:**

Councillor H. Trollope

Councillor S. Thomas

Councillor T. Smith

Councillor Jen Morgan, J.P.

Councillor G. Humphreys