

## **COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS FOR CARE LEAVERS**

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- a) For the purpose of this document, a Care Leaver is defined as a young person aged 18-21 who was formerly a child in the care of Gloucestershire County Council and then became a 'former relevant care leaver' as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The Care Leaver must be resident and liable for council tax on a property within the Cotswold District Council area.
- b) A Care Leaver must be aged 18-21 years old to qualify for a reduction under the care leavers discount scheme. A Care Leaver will cease to qualify for the discount from the date of their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday.
- c) A Care Leaver must be the liable person for Council Tax, either solely or jointly and severally with other(s), at the dwelling in respect of which the application is made. The Council Tax account must be in their name.
- d) Where the Care Leaver lives in a Housing of Multiple Occupation or other property where they are not the council tax payer, no discount will be awarded.
- e) The Care Leaver discount will apply to occupied properties only.
- f) Confirmation that a claimant is a Gloucestershire County Council 'former relevant care leaver' must be received from Gloucestershire County Council's 11-25 Permanency Service.

### **Care Leaver Discount**

The Care Leaver Discount is effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

Care Leavers that meet the eligibility criteria listed above will be eligible to apply for a discretionary discount as follows:

- Where a property is solely occupied by Care Leaver(s), 100% will be awarded;
- Where a Care Leaver is in occupation and jointly liable with others, 50% discount will be awarded.

The Care Leaver discretionary discount will be awarded after statutory discounts, exemptions, disability discount and local council tax support.

### **Application Process and Administration**

Gloucestershire County Council's Permanency Service will provide information to confirm the name, address and date of birth of Care Leavers living in the Cotswold District area who will qualify for the discount.

A Care Leaver discount may also be awarded where the following information is provided and the Care Leaver status has been verified with Gloucestershire County Council's Permanency Service.

An application should provide the following information:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Current address
- Details of any other adults in the property and relationship to them
- Details of any circumstances that would be relevant to entitlement to legislative discounts, disregards or exemptions
- Contact details
- Name of Leaving Care Worker if known

Awards will be made directly by a discount in council tax liability and notification of the discount being awarded will be by way of the council tax 'amended' bill.

The Customer Service, Revenues and Housing Support Services will undertake periodic reviews appropriate to the individual of each case.

The Care Leaver, or his/her appointee or a recognised third party acting on his/her behalf, must advise Cotswold District Council of any changes in circumstances which may affect entitlement to the discount within 21 days of the change occurring.

Any overpaid Care Leaver discount will be reclaimed through the relevant council tax account and collected and recovered under the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992.

#### **Review of Decision / Backdating**

Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, there is no right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers. However, the Council will accept a written request for a reconsideration of the initial decision. The request must be supported by further information or evidence and be made within one calendar month of the decision. The reconsideration will be undertaken by the relevant Cabinet Member

The Council will accept applications backdated to the beginning of the financial year, or to the date the care leaver became responsible for council tax so long as the date is not more than 12 months prior to the date of application. The Care Leaver discount cannot be awarded prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 or for any period prior to that date.

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