



Cllr Hannah Dalton, Leader &  
Ms Kathryn Beldon, Chief Executive

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

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Dear Cllr. Hannah Dalton and Kathryn Beldon,

**Regarding - Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers**

I last wrote to senior leaders in April 2021 regarding council tax exemption for Surrey care leavers living in Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

As senior officers and members we have a special responsibility to be the very best corporate parents to children and young people in our care. Our children and young people live in a range of different settings in each of the eleven District & Borough Councils. *Section (1) of the Children and Social Work Act 2017* sets out seven corporate parenting responsibilities to children in and leaving our care.

In January 2021 The **Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government** wrote to all local authorities in England. This letter highlighted that '40% of care leavers are not in education, employment or training, and many are at risk of financial vulnerability and often have problems with debt and arrears. This letter appealed for all local authorities to implement best practice and provide all care leavers with council tax exemption.

We know that offering council tax exemption will help to alleviate financial problems and reduce stress that many Surrey care leavers tell us they experience when transitioning from care into that uncertain world of 'independent living'. Care leavers experience living independently at a much younger age than their peers who have not had the disadvantage of being in care; and who often have a strong family network to support them well into adulthood.

**I am writing to request that Epsom and Ewell Borough Council support the Surrey Offer for Care Leavers by committing to a 100% council tax exemption for care leavers aged between 18 to 24 years.** Surrey County Council agreed to do this from April 2020 and currently nine Surrey District & Borough Councils are committed to this Offer.

**What does this mean for Epsom and Ewell?**

As of 01/07/2021 there are **ELEVEN** care leavers living in '(01) independent and (10) semi-independent' accommodation in Epsom and Ewell.

Below is an estimated breakdown of costs for council tax exemptions:

Estimated costs for E&BC precept	2021/22	2022/23
Independent living	c.£343 (based on current and estimated x1 more during the year <i>(could be more or less)</i> )	c.£675 (based on projected increase <i>(could be more or less)</i> )
Semi-independent living	c.£486 (based on current and estimated x2 more during the year <i>(could be more or less)</i> )	c.£650 (based on projected increase <i>(could be more or less)</i> )
Total	c.£829	c.£1,325

I would be grateful if you could take this important request to council and bring forward a motion supporting all Surrey county care leavers to be provided with an equal Offer; irrespective of the District & Borough Council in which they live.

Further information on the financial implications for the District & Borough Council of Epsom and Ewell is attached.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Yours sincerely,



**Rachael Wardell**  
Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning  
Surrey County Council

## Care Leaver Council Tax Relief Estimations – Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Numbers of young people currently in independent or semi-independent living  
 11 young people as at 01/07/2021 (x1 in independent and x10 in semi-independent)

Estimated costs for Epsom and Ewell

Assumptions – this is how SCC estimated its costs in decision making:

- Based on average **Band B** for 2021/22 – £1,588.93 (as per on Epsom and Ewell BC website)
- For 2021/22 in Waverley precept was as follows: SCC – c.76%, PCC – c.14%, **E&EBC (including town and parish) – 11%**
- For independent living a single person 25% discount has been applied and for semi-independent this is based on 4 sharing
- The number of care leavers increases in line with estimated trajectory
- The numbers of care leavers placed out of county reduces by 20% a year with more young people being placed in county.
- There may become additional care leavers living in Epsom and Ewell in the year, as well as recording issues meaning a small potential increase than current figures

Breakdown of costs

- £161.98 (E&EBC precept)
- 75% of £161.98 = c.£121.50 (independent living)
- £161.98/4 = c.£40.50 (semi-independent living)

Estimated costs for E&EBC precept	2021/22	2022/23
<b>Independent living</b>	c.£343 (based on current and estimated x1 more during the year (could be more or less))	c.£675 (based on projected increase (could be more or less))
<b>Semi-independent living</b>	c.£486 (based on current and estimated x2 more during the year (could be more or less))	c.£650 (based on projected increase (could be more or less))
<b>Total</b>	<b>c.£829</b>	<b>c.£1325</b>

**N.B** – the majority of those in Semi-independent living in Epsom and Ewell are not in education, employment or training.

Comparison to other Surrey District and Boroughs

In Guildford for 2020/21, they had 14 claims. They had a slightly higher Council Tax, closer split between independent living and semi-independent living and costs to Guildford Borough Council was just under £3,000.

