



Our ref: MF/ 4960
Your ref: 17 017 296

26 June 2019

FAO Michael King
Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
COVENTRY
CV4 0EH

Dear Mr King

COMPLAINT BY: MS X

Further to my letter of 3 May, I am writing to confirm to you that your report was considered by the Audit Committee on 18 June 2019. This Committee has the power, delegated by the City Council, to consider reports from you. It approved the actions officers have taken, or intend to take, to meet the recommendations you made. The committee meets every two months, so it will be a while before the minutes are available, but audit committee meetings are web-streamed, so the proceedings can be viewed on our website. I will send a copy of the minutes to you when they are available, which I think is likely to be in August.

Please see below the actions we have taken, or are still in the process of taking, in relation to your recommendations on pages 3 and 4 of your report:-

- a) I attach copies of our apology letters to Ms and Mr X.
- b) And c) As advised previously, the payments were made on receipt of your report and Ms X confirmed receipt of both cheques on 18 April.
- d) In May, Cabinet approved a new 0 to 25 policy for transport assistance to educational provision. This followed on directly from our consultation exercise which I referred to in my response to your draft report dated 18 February 2019. A copy of the new policy and its appendices is attached. The consultation process showed that parents, carers and young people were concerned about practice as well as policy - how it is communicated to them, the need to improve the clarity of the application process and how easy it is to navigate. We are committed to working with parents and carers to change the application forms and to introduce a new application process for post 19 transport. Our website pages relating to transport support are being changed to

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make them easier to understand and we plan to include case studies to help parents and carers to understand the different types of transport support that are available.

The decision making process for post 19 applications is also being changed so that in future, decisions will be made by an independent panel which will include health, safeguarding and education professionals. We want to be certain that the decision-making process is transparent and consistent. Applicants will be able to attend the stage 2 panel meetings to present their case. In addition, a new Quality Assurance framework is being introduced to ensure that decisions are communicated clearly and in a timely manner to applicants. Random sampling will take place to check that the new process is working well.

e) All transitional cases are being reviewed and I can report as follows:-

Our records show that there are 37 transitional cases. We have written to all of them and I attach a copy of our standard letter sent to all those involved other than two who have already made complaints to you. Their cases are being reviewed anyway.

So far, we have received 8 replies, 5 requesting a review and three saying that they did not want one. The five who have requested a review are being considered by an Assistant Director in accordance with the new policy approved in May. We will advise the applicants of the results as soon as we can.

We may have to chase the remaining 27, but we will give them longer to reply first as we appreciate that people are busy and need time to gather the information. I will give a further update about this in due course.

37 In reviewing our policy on the provision of an escort, we have learned from what happened in this case - clearly a new risk assessment undertaken promptly would have addressed the issue. In the future, when there is a new case, a new risk assessment will be undertaken to assess whether the requirements of the individual requesting transport have changed.

38 The Adult Social Care Service is satisfied that its policies and procedures for carers to be assessed are operating satisfactorily. But on review by Children's Services, their conclusion is that they need to improve their own communications with Adult Social Care about signposting parents/carers who may need a carer's assessment. Staff in Travel Assist have been informed that in such cases, they should ask parents/carers whether they already have a carer's assessment or would like one and, if so, signpost them to ACAP.

I hope that this is helpful to you. I will be in contact again with the minutes and a further report on transitional cases in due course.

Yours sincerely

Miranda Freeman

Miss M Freeman

Senior Liaison Management Officer

Legal and Governance Department

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