

ISSUE 02 SPRING 2018

THE MAGAZINE FOR RESIDENTS



THE VOICE

The Council Tax Edition



**Working for
a brighter future
- together**

The VoiCE Editorial

The VoiCE is brought to you and produced by the Communications Team at Cheshire East Council. An electronic version can be found on our website and the publication can be made available in alternative formats on request.

If you would like to get in touch, please email us on: thevoice@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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If you have a compliment, comment or complaint, then please call the Cheshire East council information line on 0300 123 5500, visit: cheshireeast.gov.uk or you can find us on:

-  @cheshireeast
-  /cheshireeastcouncil
-  /cheshireeast
-  /cheshireeast

WORKING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE – TOGETHER

This year, council tax will raise around one third of the money needed to fund the hundreds of local services we provide across Cheshire East to our 376,700 residents and 20,200 businesses.

Rising demand for both adult and children's social care services, inflationary costs and a phased reduction in government grants means we'll need to find an additional £70m over the next three years.

To face up to the pressures ahead and meet our target of becoming financially self-sufficient by 2020 – while ensuring that residents carry on receiving first-class services – we must continue to innovate and streamline our way of operating. It also means we have had to increase council tax by 5.99%. A bill for a Band D property will rise from £1,324.92 to £1,404.28, an increase of £1.53 per week.

Importantly, 3% of the tax rise – £5.7m – will boost services which help vulnerable people and the elderly, known as the adult social care precept. However, in total we've committed to spend an additional £10.9m this year on adult social care.

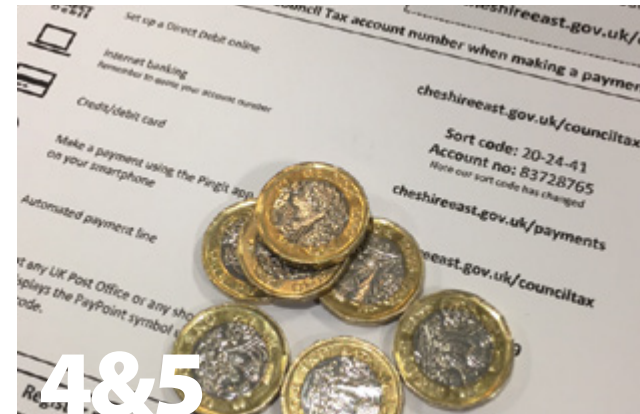
Read on through this magazine to find out how we're working for you to provide value for money and respond to the challenges.



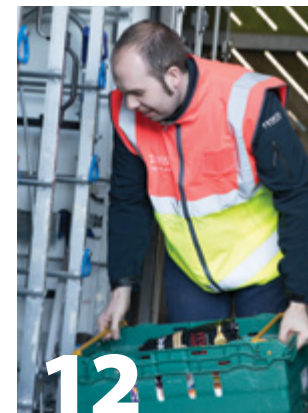
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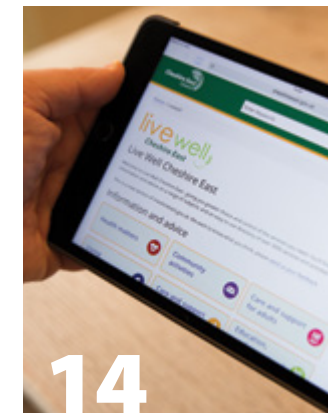
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COUNCIL TAX EXPLAINED...

Each year we send out a council tax bill to every domestic property in the borough.

Council tax is your way of helping us to pay for and provide many local services to all of the residents who live in Cheshire East. It is not a payment for services actually received or used by the individual resident or household.

Each dwelling is put into one of the eight bands (A-H), based on what it would have sold for on the open market on 1 April 1991 in England. The Valuation Office Agency and not the council decides on the band your property falls within.

We set the council tax for each band and the amounts for 2018/2019 are above. The band given to your property is on the front of your bill.

You can contact the Valuation Office Agency on **03000 501501** or by going to: www.vo.a.gov.uk

Your bill will be reduced if you qualify for any of the discounts or exemptions, such as single person discount or empty property exemption.

Council tax for 2018/19...

...will increase by:
5.99% (£11.4m)

Adult social care element
3% (£5.7m)

...council services cost you around:
£3.20 per day

Bands

The amount of council tax each household pays is based on the value of the property. The council tax charges are as follows:

Band A £1,104.14	Band E £2,024.24
Band B £1,288.16	Band F £2,392.30
Band C £1,472.18	Band G £2,760.34
Band D £1,656.20	Band H £3,312.40

We provide a wide range of services for the people of Cheshire East

These include:

- Bin collections, street cleansing and recycling
- Planning and building control
- Leisure and library facilities
- Maintenance of roads and bridges
- Parking services
- Maintenance of our countryside sites, parks and gardens
- Social care for the elderly, children and other vulnerable residents
- Cemeteries, crematoria and mortuary services
- Elections, registration of births, marriages and deaths
- Housing benefits and council tax administration
- Consumer protection

What we don't provide includes GP and hospital services, the maintenance of motorways and police, fire and water supply services.

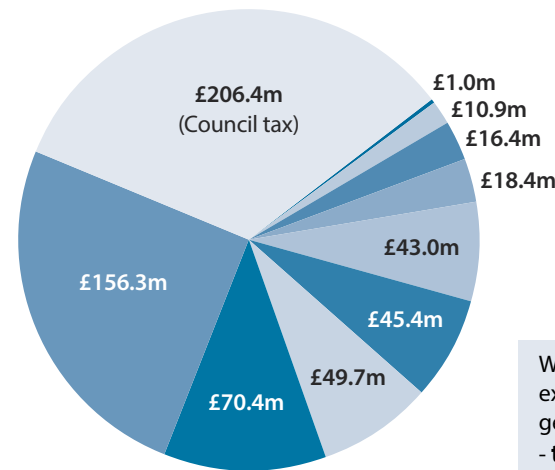
How your council tax is calculated

(example based on a Band D property)

We collect your council tax on behalf of Cheshire East Borough Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, Cheshire Fire Authority and the parish and town councils in Cheshire East.



Where our money comes from



	£m
Council tax	206.4
Schools funding	156.3
Housing benefits	70.4
Fees and charges	49.7
Reimbursements/recharges	45.4
Business rates	43.0
Unringfenced grants	18.4
Public health grant	16.4
Other ringfenced grants	10.9
Collection fund surplus	1.0
Total	£617.9m

We're one year closer to 2020 when it's expected we'll have no reliance at all on general funding from central government - **that's a reduction of £40m in total.**

How much does it cost to deliver some of our key services every day?

Adult social care £386,989	Parks and open spaces £4,345	Road maintenance, car parking and street lighting £49,540
Children's social care £103,586	Libraries £10,249	Public health £45,729
Waste and street cleansing £86,088	Culture, leisure and tourism £23,337	Planning and development £27,195
Education £442,652	Transport £36,668	

KEEPING CARE AT THE FOREFRONT

Caring for and protecting our most vulnerable residents, both young and old, remains a top priority. But there is no shortage of tough decisions to be made in our pursuit of providing quality, value-driven services.

It is a source of celebration that the population in Cheshire East continues to thrive, to live well and for longer. However, we are also seeing additional and unprecedented support requirements for our caring services at both ends of the age spectrum.

Reductions in government grants, rising costs and increased demand for statutory care services mean social care budgets are under huge pressure right across the country. The financial challenges in looking after vulnerable children and a growing older population have been building for a number of years, with more individuals and families needing support than ever before.



We are doing our very best to think differently, to be more innovative and increasingly work together with our partners to provide the very best outcomes possible for local people. This is against a backdrop of central government funding to councils being reduced by half over the next two years and local authorities face a funding gap that it is estimated will exceed £5bn by 2020.

In order to prioritise and safeguard services for vulnerable people, other services – especially those which are non-statutory – must come under closer scrutiny and deliver cost savings, wherever possible.

Moving forwards we will do everything we can to maintain capacity for frontline services and target our limited resources more effectively on those services that make a real impact to those most in need in our diverse community.

“But despite the challenges, our aim continues to be to deliver the right support, in the right place, at the right time.”



MAKING CHESHIRE EAST A GREAT PLACE

We've already achieved many great things together and we'll continue to work hard for you so that our future can be brighter – even though we're facing huge financial pressures.

We are an ambitious council and have much to celebrate, not least that our services have received 13 awards for their performance so far this last year. We've also won an award for tourism, been placed as the top performing area in the North West for economic wellbeing and achieved a strong record of securing public and private sector investment. But that's not all. Employment is at a record high, new businesses want to set up here and our schools continue to perform well.

To support our young residents to get a good start in life, the Emotionally Healthy Schools programme was launched to improve confidence when responding to the emotional needs and mental health of children and young people. We also launched a campaign to encourage young people to speak out about neglect.

We're developing a new special school in Crewe to expand provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). While £1.2m of funding has been identified to improve attainment in maths and writing for disadvantaged pupils and those moving from primary to secondary education.

To make a wider range of activities and support services more locally available, we've opened seven Connected Community centres and will have a further 23 open by the end of the year.

We strive to create an economy where there are more jobs and wages are higher, giving our residents a better standard of living.



Over the past four years, we've invested more than £35m to improve our roads and pavements and keep Cheshire East moving.

Major schemes which are under way or in the pipeline include the Poynton relief road, Crewe Green Roundabout improvement scheme, Congleton link road, Sydney Road bridge scheme and Middlewich eastern bypass.

In addition, work on a £48.3m scheme to revitalise Crewe town centre, including the redevelopment of the Royal Arcade site and refurbishment of Market Hall, will begin this year.

It's all part of our investment in modernising our town centres to ensure they are better places to shop, visit and work.

DIGITAL WASTE PERMITS SAVE TIME AND MONEY



Pyms Lane, Crewe

We've introduced a new digital service which allows you to apply online for a digital waste permit – saving time and council resources.

We have a permit scheme so that residents who drive a van, pickup, commercial type 4x4 or use a trailer may use their vehicle to dispose of their household waste at our household waste recycling centres.

Previously, waste permit applications were paper based and would once have been a drain on staff resources. But once you've applied online, you can now have a permit sent to you immediately by email with a barcode.



The permit can then be presented on smartphones to household waste and recycling centre staff for them to scan. It's that simple.

Each digital permit is valid for six months and can be used for up to six visits.



The scheme helps us to prevent the illegal disposal of commercial waste. Each digital permit is valid for six months and can be used for up to six visits. The old permits, which were only issued by post and took three days to arrive, are being phased out.

We manage more than 10,000 waste permit applications per year, which previously meant 60,000 individual waste permits were printed and posted each year.

KEEPING YOU ON THE MOVE

Our highway network is worth £5bn and we're working hard to keep your roads safe and moving.

We aim to make the best use of our highway budget by planning work using the right treatment, in the right location, at the right time. It means that we focus investment in longer-term repair programmes where we can, preventing more expensive short-term repairs.

When our roads suffer from heavy rain and freezing conditions during winter, potholes can form. It's a challenge that all councils face but we know this will happen and we are prepared.

In summer months, you will see more large-scale programmed work taking place as the weather conditions are better - making repairs more effective.

And during winter, you will see more of our pothole repair teams and patching teams working on the network to keep it safe, fixing those urgent risks.

Road defects that do not need immediate attention may be included in one of our longer-term repair programmes.

This year we will be investing a further £7m in to the highway network, with a particular focus on road resurfacing and surface dressing.

If you need to let us know about a highways issue, you can report it online at: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways or call **0300 123 5020**.

You can also get the latest updates on our road network by following [@CECHighways](https://twitter.com/CECHighways) on Twitter.



Potholes explained

Highways are constructed in layers and when cracks form in the asphalt surface – caused by traffic and the heating and cooling of the surface – moisture can get under it. The moisture weakens the layers underneath and causes potholes to form.

In winter, more potholes form because of the repeated freezing and thawing of the moisture, leaving a void which breaks down as more and more traffic goes over it.



12 STOPS FOR THE BEST START IN LIFE



“The Parenting Journey has been so helpful to me, especially as a first-time parent.”

Farrah



Last year, 3,765 babies were born in Cheshire East. Our 'Parenting Journey' programme is just one way in which we're working with families to help ensure every one of them gets the best possible start in life.

The programme supports families from pregnancy through to the child starting school and brings health and early-help services together with a 12-stop Parenting Journey.

Each stop is specifically designed to meet the child's developmental milestones and includes interactive play activities and sessions with health visitors and family service workers.

Mum Farrah said: "The Parenting Journey has been so helpful to me, especially as a first-time parent. There's lots of support available with sessions on all aspects of my child's development and the staff are really knowledgeable and always have the answers to any questions I have."

The Parenting Journey is part of our commitment to provide families with the support they need as soon as they need it.

The group 'stops sessions' are held in children's centres and others are held in parents' own homes on a one-to-one basis. They are a fun way for parents to learn more about their baby or child, while having access to health and childcare professionals and being able to meet other mums and dads.

Neil, one of the dads, said: "I've discovered lots of information I didn't know before and it's reassured me that I'm on the right track."

To find out more:

- Contact your local children's centre
- Speak to your health visitor
- Visit www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/parentingjourney
- Contact the family information service on **0300 123 5033** or
- Search for 'Cheshire East Parenting Journey' on Facebook



Our Family Information Service offers free impartial advice, support and guidance on all aspects of family life.

If you are a parent or carer the team can provide a wide range of information on topics including parenting support, finding childcare, early-years education, youth services and clubs and activities in your local area.

They can also provide information on childcare funding entitlement and services available in the Cheshire East Local Offer, which is for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

For more information:

Visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/fis

Email: fis.east@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Call: **0300 123 5033**

Follow [@FISCheshireEast](https://twitter.com/FISCheshireEast) on Twitter

Like 'Family Information Service (Cheshire East Council)' on Facebook

DELIVERING INDEPENDENCE



“
This job has made a huge difference to me.”
Matthew

We will always prioritise services for vulnerable people, despite the financial challenges we face. That includes supporting people with disabilities into paid work – helping them to gain independence and in turn reducing the need for them to access more traditional care services.

Last year, our supported employment team began working with more than 60 new clients and supported 43 of them into paid employment. Matthew, who's from the Knutsford area and has autism, received help after struggling to find suitable employment since finishing his last job.

With support from work placement officer Lou Smith, he secured a job with Tesco and advanced to become a delivery driver – something the motor enthusiast had set his sights on. He was recently named one of the supermarket chain's national 'customer delivery service superstars'.

“This job has made a huge difference to me and I love coming to work,” said Matthew. “I've got to know a lot more people and my confidence has really built up.”

From identifying employment skills and support needs, to helping him to complete his initial job application and accompanying him to the interview itself, Lou was there for Matthew each step of the way.

She said: “Matthew's face beams with pride when he talks about what he's done at work. I'm so proud of how he's stayed totally committed to achieving his goals.”

Chris Taylor, Matthew's manager, added: “Matthew has done so well and we've pushed him out of his comfort zone. He's an asset to our department.”

To find out if you, or someone you know, could benefit from the range of services and support available in Cheshire East, call the supported employment team on **01260 375468** or email: supportedemployment@cheshireeast.gov.uk

OPENING THE DOOR ON UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Domestic abuse can happen to anyone – no matter who you are, your gender, background, what you do or where you live. It can cause serious harm to victims and their families, especially children who witness it.

In Cheshire East, we work hard to help ensure that no-one has to live in fear, providing money for services that enable survivors and those close to them to be safe and recover. We also work with those who harm, to try and help them change their behaviour.

Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub (CEDAH) is a 24/7 single point of access to domestic abuse services, giving information and advice and directing people to one-to-one support, recovery groups for adults and children and emergency accommodation.

The support is provided by our high-risk team, Barnardo's and Cheshire Without Abuse, working in partnership with other services, including police and health.

Saskia Ritchie, chief executive of Cheshire Without Abuse, said: “If you, or someone you know, is experiencing a relationship – either with a partner or family member – where the other person's behaviour is controlling, manipulative, abusive or violent, this is an unhealthy relationship and is defined as domestic abuse.”

Tackling domestic abuse remains one of our top priorities and everyone can play a vital role in opening the door on unhealthy relationships. We want to equip our communities with the skills and knowledge they need so they can spot signs of abuse earlier and feel able to start a conversation about it.

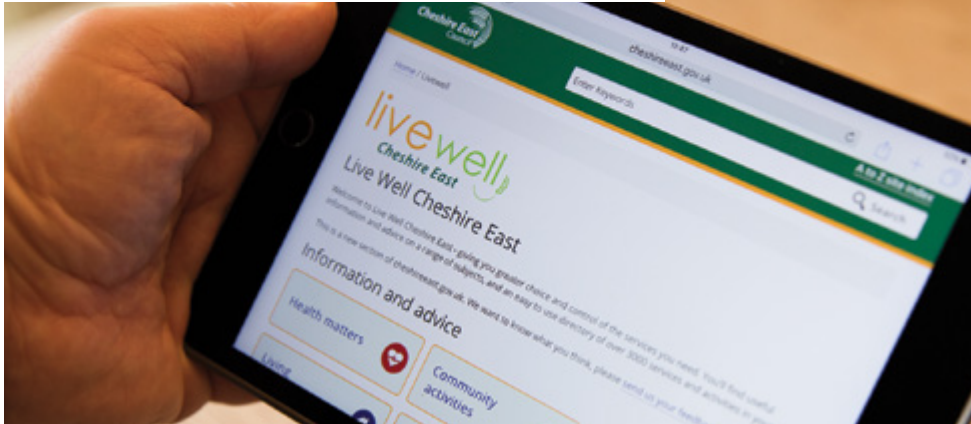
Saskia said: “We know that people are more likely to tell a friend or family member if they are worried about their relationship and we want to make sure that everyone has access to the right information and advice if this happens to them. One of our clients was given a helpline card by her mother-in-law and this helped her reach out for help for the first time.”

If you are affected by domestic abuse or concerned for someone else, call CEDAH on **0300 123 5101** at any time or visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/domesticabuse
In an emergency, always call 999.



Cheshire Without Abuse chief executive, Saskia Ritchie

CARE AND SUPPORT FOR YOUR FAMILY



Do you need to find care or support for you or your family? Our online resource 'Live Well Cheshire East' can help.



The site contains an easy-to-use directory of more than 2,500 services and activities in your area, plus useful information and advice on a range of subjects.

So whether you need advice about care and support for adults, children's services, health matters or money management, or want to find a new group or club to join, you can find the information on Live Well Cheshire East.

The resource gives you greater choice and control in finding the care and support you need by having all the information and advice available in one place. It means there's no need to search through multiple websites and you can find what you need at a time that suits you.

What's more, by entering your postcode into the directory and filtering the results, you can find out what's available near you that meets your specific needs or interests.

We're committed to supporting our residents to live well and stay independent for as long as possible and you can use the directory to find out

more about services such as homecare, home repairs and adaptations or meal delivery services.

Under the Local Offer section you can find information about the support and services available for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

You can also use Live Well Cheshire East to look for carer services or childcare, find information about education and employment, children's centres, volunteering, keeping active and benefits and to search for support groups.

Have a look yourself and see how you can Live Well at: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell

Live Well Cheshire East comes recommended by Socitm, a society for IT and digital leaders.

Following a survey of 152 councils' online information about social care, Live Well Cheshire East was praised by Socitm for providing 'one of the best integrated directories' its testers had seen.

SHARED LIVES – NOT APART BUT A PART

Our Shared Lives scheme is just one way in which we're supporting people to live well for longer.

It's available to vulnerable adults over the age of 18 and sees people matched with a carer, who helps them to develop or maintain independent living skills, friendships and connections within their community.

They can choose to live in the carer's family home permanently, stay with them for overnight short breaks or just visit for a few hours per week. They can also enjoy trips out or receive support at home.

The early-intervention scheme helps to prevent people having to leave their homes permanently or needing more complex care.

Elaine, from the Congleton area, has been receiving support from Shared Lives carer Ruth, having spent years barely stepping outside her home.

Elaine said: "I really like going out with Ruth as before I felt quite lonely. I look forward to seeing her and having our weekly sessions and she's become more like a friend to me. We have a great time and do lots together, like go for coffee, visit the garden centre and bake – it's made my life a lot better."

Ruth said: "Being in the care profession is so rewarding. All the individuals I see have different interests and we do different things together, but there has to be a connection between the two of you – and that's why the matching process is so important. Elaine and I have a great time together and I get to enjoy the pleasure of her company."

For more information about Shared Lives and the eligibility criteria, or if you are interested in becoming a Shared Lives carer, visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/sharedlives or call the team on **01260 375456**.



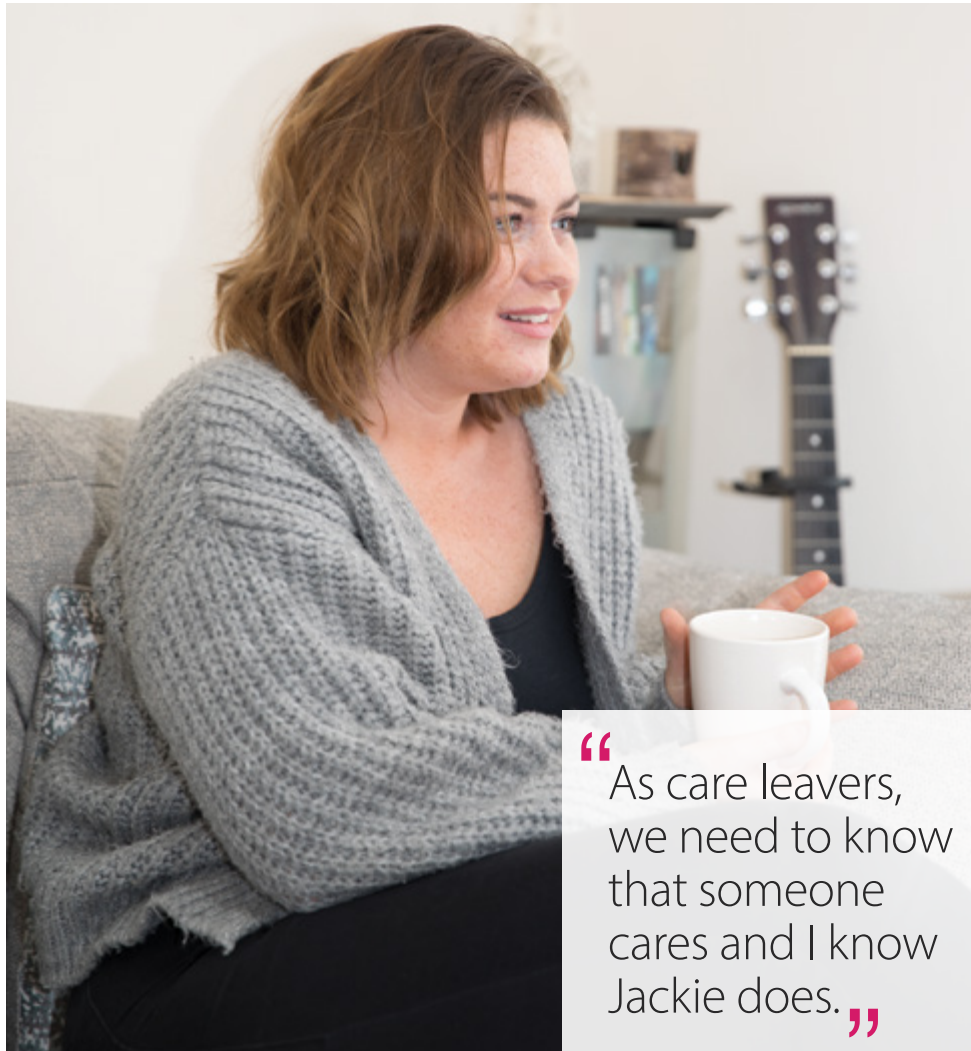
Elaine, left, with Shared Lives carer Ruth

A CARE LEAVER'S JOURNEY

Did you know that your council tax helps support vulnerable young people into having a second start in life?

We're committed to supporting young care leavers as they enter into adulthood and providing them with the assistance and guidance any parent would.

Care leavers are young people aged 16+ who have spent time in care, such as foster care or residential care. Many have experienced neglect and abuse throughout their childhood.



“As care leavers, we need to know that someone cares and I know Jackie does.”



Personal advisor Jackie, left, with care leaver Alanis

Your contributions help them to receive invaluable practical and emotional assistance, with support focused around their health, education, accommodation, independence and financial stability.

As part of the support available, all care leavers are allocated a personal advisor (PA). Their main role is to promote independence and offer advice, guidance and support wherever necessary.

Alanis, 20, receives support from PA Jackie, who she describes as her 'go to for everything'.

"We first met two years ago when I was moving into my flat and I had no furniture," said Alanis. "Jackie came to my rescue and she's my main support – most young people my age have parents around but I don't."

"As care leavers, we need to know that someone cares and I know Jackie does. She encourages me to do better and we have a lot of respect for one another."

In April 2016, we became the first council nationally to offer a council tax exemption policy for care leavers, up to the age of 25. Our decision was in response to recognising the challenges young people face when managing their finances.

Alanis said: "Jackie helped me with my council tax, as I didn't have a clue how to do my bills. She sat me down and explained everything – and in a way that I would understand."

"She supports me in lots of ways and helps me with the little things, like planning and gives me practical skills I can take with me."

She added: "My life is much better than this time last year. With encouragement from Jackie, I know I can do better and now I'm working full time in a job that I really enjoy."

Jackie said: "As well as help with things like organising benefits and housing, practical support is also offered, especially when a young person moves to independence and takes on their own tenancy."

"They may need help in setting up utilities, decorating and furnishing their home – it's not unusual for a PA to be armed with their own tool box for putting up curtain poles and plumbing in washing machines!"

For more information about the care and support available for children and young people in Cheshire East, visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell and click on the 'care and support for children' tab.



FIELD TO FORK

Cheshire East is blessed with a wide range of award-winning tourism destinations and in 2016 we welcomed a record 16 million visitors – generating £895m in income for the local economy.

We have a long-standing aspiration to help create a visitor economy worth £1bn by 2020. Helping us to do that are attractions such as Tatton Park, in Knutsford.

The park is one of our eight Green Flag award-winning sites and is launching an exciting project called 'Field to Fork'.

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, we are delivering this ground-breaking project which brings to life Tatton Park's farm's fascinating heritage – its buildings and machinery, the people who lived and worked there, the farming practices and animals reared over the centuries.

You'll be able to view spaces never before seen by the public, such as the impressive three-storey mill and enjoy guided tours, live demonstrations and interactive models.

There'll also be the opportunity to take part in traditional agricultural skills such as horse ploughing and bee keeping.

To find out more, visit:
www.tattonpark.org.uk



#CEwhatson

Some key dates for your diary...

Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival

15-17 June

www.middlewich.org.uk/middlewich-fab-festival

Macclesfield Barnaby Festival

15-24 June

www.barnabyfestival.org.uk

Royal Cheshire County Show, Tabley, Knutsford

19-20 June

www.royalcheshireshow.org

RHS Flower Show Tatton Park

18-22 July

www.rhs.org.uk/tatton

Bluedot Festival, Jodrell Bank, Cheshire

19-22 July

www.discoverthebluedot.com

Nantwich Show & International Cheese Awards

25 July

www.nantwichshow.co.uk

Just So Festival, Rode Hall, Cheshire

17-19 August

www.justsofestival.org.uk

Nantwich Food and Drink Festival

31 August – 2 September

www.nantwichfoodfestival.co.uk

PRIDE Picnic in the Park, Tatton Park

16 September

www.tattonpark.org.uk/events



First World War commemoration events:

Picnic concert at Tatton Park

26 August

When the Light Goes Out

Crewe town centre

10 November

When the Light Goes Out

Tatton Park

11 November

www.cheshireeastreflects.com

For more events, activities and things to do, visit: www.visitcheshire.com

Conor wants to be a mechanic...

But first, he needs a loving foster family in Cheshire East.

Become a foster carer with Cheshire East Council and we'll support you every step of the way. Do something incredible.

Go to youcanfoster.org/cheshire-east



24-HOUR ACCESS TO YOUR COUNCIL



www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

You can access a range of services 24-hours a day, as well as make a payment, view planning applications, contact specific services and report issues such as fly-tipping and potholes to us.

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell

You'll find an easy-to-use directory of over 2,500 services and activities in your area, plus useful information and advice on a range of subjects - giving you greater choice and control in finding care and support for you and your family.

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/counciltax

Find out more about council tax and manage your council tax online.
You can also contact our council tax team by filling in the online enquiry form.

Visit one of our customer service centres

Visit www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/contact to check for locations and opening times.

Find us on:

 /cheshireeastcouncil

 /cheshireeast

 @cheshireeast

 /cheshireeast

Contact us by phone or post if you're not able to access our website or are unsure which service to contact.

Call the Cheshire East information line on 0300 123 5500

Or write to:

Cheshire East Council,
c/o Municipal Buildings,
Earle Street,
Crewe,
CW1 2BJ

For emergencies out of hours,

call our emergency control centre on 0300 123 5025.
For social care emergencies out of hours, call 0300 123 5022.