

THE PLEDGE

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE AGED UP TO 18YRS

Happy
Safe
Resilient
AMBITIOUS
INDEPENDENT
Happy
Healthy
Independent
Ambitious
Resilient
Safe
Healthy
Resilient
HAPPY
Ambitious



These are
your rights!

DEVELOPED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHICC



This is our pledge (or promise) to you. It is for young people aged up to 18 years old looked after by Hertfordshire County Council and is based on the things young people in care say are most important to them. By all of us working together (you, your worker and all who care for you), we can ensure the things in the pledge happen. You have an important part to play, and as you grow older your responsibilities will grow too.

Before you come into care we will ask family and friends if they can offer you a safe home. But if this is not possible we will make sure you are cared for. We want the same for you as we want for our own children – the best. We want you to be safe, healthy, ambitious, resilient, independent and happy.

The pledge fits in with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to which the UK is a signatory. If you feel the things in the pledge don't happen, you can use this booklet to challenge why and seek solutions. Turn to the back to find out how.

Be Safe

1. When you first come into care we will help you understand why you are coming into care and make sure you have everything you need

- We will explain why you are coming into care and be honest and clear with you about the plans for you, including about whether or not you are likely to be returning home
- We will give you a profile of your carer, which gives you an idea of the family/placement you are going to, the setup of the household, hobbies and interests
- We will make sure you have all your belongings within seven days in proper holdalls and/or suitcases
- We will make sure you have all the contact details of your brothers and sisters and key family members within seven days (as long as this is safe)



2. We will make sure you have a social worker. Your social worker will do their best to spend time with you and get to know you

- We will visit you regularly and spend quality time with you
- We will take you out and do things you like doing, where possible
- We will spend time getting to know the small things in order to help with the big things. We want you to feel that you matter and you belong
- We will reassure you and support you without judgement
- We will share our profiles with you so you know something about us
- We will give you a contact card with our number on it and also details of who to contact if we are away
- We will try to make sure you know any worker who covers for your social worker if they are away



3. We will protect you and keep you safe and settled

- Whatever decisions are being made about you or your life, we will work with you to keep you safe and settled. If you have to move placement we will involve you in the decision as much as possible and give you a profile of the placement you will be moving to
- You should not have to put up with bullying at school, at your home or anywhere else. Please tell a trusted adult if you are being bullied, or if there is anything worrying you, so that we can do something about it together. A trusted adult might be your carer, teacher, social worker, family member or anyone else you trust



4. We will listen to what you think when adults are making decisions about you

We will talk to you when making decisions about you and listen to what you think, what you want and how you feel. How much this can change things will depend on things like how old you are, your individual experience and situation and your safety.



We will listen to you about:

- Your care plan
- The best place for you to live
- School or college
- Keeping in contact with your family

We will try to make your review easy for you to take part in. We will make sure you understand all decisions made about you.

5. We will only share information about you if we are sure it is best for you

Be Healthy

6. We will help you to be as healthy and well (mentally and physically) as you can be

- We will help you to have your health assessed and support you with any health needs
- We will listen to any health concerns you have and help you get the support you need
- We will give you guidance about healthy living and lifestyle choices
- We will help you to get appropriate support for your emotional and mental health when you need it



Be Ambitious

7. We will support you with education and school, to help you achieve the best you can

We have the highest aspirations for all children and young people in care.

- When you first come into care and during your time in care, we will set up planning meetings on education and will ensure you are part of the ongoing plans
- We will make sure you get all the help and support you need to learn, achieve and succeed

Be Resilient

8. We will help you develop self-confidence and feel able to deal with life's challenges

- We will support and encourage you to express your views
- We will positively encourage you and celebrate your successes
- We will empower and support you to develop tools to deal with and overcome challenges



9. We will help you know who you are and about important events and people in your life



- We will help you to keep a record of important events, achievements and people in your life and to have a memory box

- We will help you to do the things that are important to you in terms of your culture and/or religion

- If you need your birth certificate or passport we can work with you and your parents to get them*

**If you are a young person who came from another country without an adult, you may not be able to have all of these documents. If you are in this situation we will help you to understand why*



Be Independent

10. We will make sure you are supported over time to develop the skills you need as you grow into adulthood and towards being as independent as you can be

- Your carer/worker will provide opportunities for you to develop skills as you need them
- You will be offered the chance to attend a range of Independent Living Skills courses run by YC Hertfordshire

11. We will tell you about things you are entitled to like pocket money and saving

- When you come into care we will provide you with a pack of useful information which will include all the things you are entitled to such as pocket money, savings, clothing allowance, setting up home allowance etc. This information will be available to you throughout your time in care



Be Happy

12. We will help you to keep in touch with family and friends, as long as this is safe

- If possible, we will keep you with your brothers and sisters when you come into care

- It should be fine to go to sleepovers and have friends over too. Your carer and social worker should be able to agree this (as long as it is safe)

13. We will help you to take part in things you want to do

- We will help you take part in school trips, sports, hobbies and fun activities wherever we can
- We'll make sure you have an annual holiday wherever possible



14. We will listen to what you think about how to make being in care better for lots of children and tell you how you can get involved with CHICC (Children in Care Council)



CHICC is run by and for young people in care. It is to make sure you can have your say about being in care and help make services better for others. CHICC runs lots of events and activities throughout the year. There are also opportunities to get involved as a volunteer and help run CHICC. To find out more contact the Participation Team on 07812323854

What can you do if you think this pledge is not working?

We will do our best to make sure the things in the pledge happen for you.

If you feel that one or more parts of this pledge are not happening for you, or you feel that any of your rights have not been met you can:

- **Speak to your carer or social worker.** They know you well and are usually the best people to help put things right. Your social worker should give you their number on a contact card
- **Talk to your independent reviewing officer (IRO) during the review meeting or at any time.** Your IRO should give you their number on a contact card
- **Contact NYAS, an advocacy service** (contact details on the back). They can help sort out problems with you. They are not part of Hertfordshire County Council, they are an independent agency who can help you be heard
- **You can also complain to Children's Services about your care if you want to.** We can help you do this if you would like us to: Complaints Team 01992 588542

cs.complaints@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Once you turn 18 your entitlements to support are outlined in our Pledge for Care Leavers aged 18-25. Your worker should give you a copy of this. More information can also be found in the Care Leaver's Offer, by visiting www.hertfordshire.gov.uk and searching local offer for care leavers

Sources of Information and Support

NYAS

The National Youth Advocacy Service
0800 808 1001
www.nyas.net
help@nyas.net

Hertfordshire County Council

Participation Team
The Participation team run CHICC -
Children in Care Council
07812323854
CHICC@hertfordshire.gov.uk
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk (search CHICC)

Children's Commissioner

Promotes and protects the rights of children and stands up for their views and interests using unique statutory powers
020 7783 8330
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Help at Hand

Independent advice and representation for young people in care and care leavers
0800 528 0731
help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

CRAE

Children's Rights Alliance for England Protects the human rights of children by lobbying government and others who hold power
020 3774 2279
www.crae.org.ukinfo@crae.org.uk

Become

Become a charity for children in care and young care leavers
0800 623 2033
www.becomecharity.org.uk
advice@becomecharity.org.uk

The pledge is available in easier to read versions and can be made available in another language on request.
Please call the Participation Team on 0781232854

