

6 September 2012		ITEM 9
Corporate Parenting Committee		
PLEDGE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND DESCRIPTIONS		
Report of: Paul Coke, Service Manager, Through Care Services		
Wards and communities affected: None	Key Decision: Not Applicable	
Accountable Head of Service: Barbara Foster, Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Jo Olsson, Corporate Director, People Services		
This report is Exempt		
Purpose of Report: To provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with information and an update as to the progress of the Pledge Indicators		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the Pledge and the promises that have been made by the Corporate Parent

It provides evidence as to how we have currently achieved these promises as reported mainly from the Ofsted Report dated July 2012, but it also highlights the areas for improvement.

This report should be read alongside the Annual IRO Report and the Annual Report from the CiCC, both of which the Committee have not yet had sight of.

This report and its contents are written from an officer prospective.

- 1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**
 - 1.1 The CiCC to provide an Annual Report as to their activities, which will also include their analysis of the Pledge and the Performance Indicators.**
 - 1.2 This report to be read in conjunction with any further reports that involve Thurrock's Ofsted Report dated 27th July 2012 and the Department's Action Plan**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 At the Corporate Parenting Committee held on the 10 July 2012 the Committee agreed to add to the agenda for September 2012 a report on the Pledge and its performance indicators and descriptions
- 2.2 The Pledge is a requirement directed by the Government in their document Care Matters: Time For Change published in June 2007
- 2.3 The Local Authority should adopt a pledge, which should be developed by the Children In Care Council, which in turn would then be adopted by the Local Authority as a key communication tool that develops partnership working with the young people
- 2.4 The Pledge was designed by the Thurrock Children In Care Council and established on 30th October 2010 by a group of CiCC members, in consultation with other young people in care and care leavers.
- 2.5 The Pledge consists of promises made to young people in the care of Thurrock Council. It is an agreement between the children/young people and Thurrock Council who as corporate parents are represented by Councillors, the Director, Head of Services and other officers.
- 2.6 These promises cover a number of aspects of a young person's life, which will enable them to reach their full potential.
- 2.7 The Pledge applies to all children and young people who are looked after and have left care by Thurrock Council regardless of where they are placed.
- 2.8 The Promises are categorised into the 5 outcomes which are used within the Ofsted Report at the time of writing this report
 1. Health
 2. Stay Safe
 3. Enjoying and Achieving
 4. Making a positive contribution
 5. Economic well-being
- 2.9 Part of the role of the CiCC is to promote the Pledge to all looked after children and young people, and to monitor and review the Pledge on an annual basis

3. PROMISES/PERFORMANCE:

3.1 Health

'Helping you to keep fit and healthy and giving you the resources and information on how best to equip yourself to continue to develop'

'Ensuring that you are given support to have regular health and dental checks'

‘Having social workers support you in all aspects of your development and giving you every opportunity to flourish’

The Ofsted Inspection dated 27 July 2012 rates the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in respect to Health as Adequate (Grade 3)

The Department recognises the need to develop our systems and partnership working with our health professionals.

Within the report Ofsted have made a number of recommendations for areas of improvement, which addresses the need for health plans to *‘set out clear, overall health and well-being objectives, timescales and accountabilities for delivery’*

Ofsted have also recommended *‘that the CiCC be fully engaged in developing effective health promotion and support to care leavers and is facilitated to hold health and social care to account for undertakings set out within the Pledge’*

The Department has developed an Action Plan and will be using the role of the Looked After Children Health Steering Group as a vehicle to ensure these recommendations are acted upon

3.2 Stay Safe

Making staff available to speak to you when you need to contact them to discuss your problems, anxieties and achievements

Involving you in decisions and plans that are made that will affect your current and future life

Not changing your social worker unless absolutely necessary

Giving you advice and support to stay safe both within your home and community

Calling you back within 24 hours

The Ofsted rating for staying safe is Good (grade 2)

For the inspection a survey was undertaken (Care4Me) by all looked after children and care leavers, where the majority of the respondents reported that they felt safe and well supported by the Aftercare Team, and that they felt confident in approaching their workers.

The role of the IRO is very important and essential when making plans and involving young people. Of all the reviews held in the last year (ie April 2011 – March 2012) 96.8% involved the participation of the children/young people.

The role of Fostering and Adoption, along with placement stability was all areas of evidence which were positive.

Multi agency arrangements are in place to monitor children/young people who go missing.

3.3 Enjoying and Achieving

Celebrating your achievements and recognising your goals and helping to push you further while in care

Supporting you to attend and achieve in education

Providing you with good educational opportunities that best meet your abilities

Providing you with a translating dictionary in your language when you first come into care if your first language is not English

Giving you the same opportunities available to young people who are not looked after

The Ofsted rating for this outcome is Good (Grade 2)

This area addresses the area of education and the role of the virtual head teacher, which provides a very positive picture.

The development of the Personal Education Plans, their timeliness and improvement in compliance with the statutory guidelines has increased to 80%.

The use of funding for tuition packages via the pupil premium

The closing of the gap between looked after children and their peers is very effective

Good partnership working with Thurrock racial unity support task (TRUST) especially with unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Availability of provision within the community (ie Grangewater outdoor activities centre)

The report did suggest we look further at the range of activities young people are able to access in the community

3.4 Making a positive contribution

Giving priority when you ask to stay with friends and relatives away from your normal placement

Aiding you in having easy access to libraries, youth clubs and positive activities

Giving you access to an independent visitor/mentors

Supporting you in being heard throughout the local authority across all departments

In the Ofsted report the rating for this outcome is Good (Grade 2)

The role of the CiCC and Open Door are positively acknowledged in terms of user engagement and enabling children and young people to have their voices heard.

The Department has policies that provide social workers with guidance in respect to children and young people staying with friends and relatives for periods of times. It is expected that decisions are made on an individual basis and takes into account the age and understanding of the young person + the risk.

3.5 Economic well-being

Supporting you financially up until the time you start work or are entitled to claim benefits

Providing you with a grant to help you settle into your own accommodation when you leave care

Supporting you in higher education at university

Helping you with support to seek employment and training

Helping you with transport for attending education and LAC appointments

Supporting you to apply for all documentation and providing you with necessary information on your rights

The Ofsted rating for this outcome is Good (Grade 2)

The Department has a Setting up Home Allowance that is provided to all young people if they are entitled to it

The Department supports all young people financially, especially during the transition period from care to either work or claiming benefits

The After Care Team have a dedicated worker that is focussed on education and training, and working with other key partners to ensure all our care leavers have the same access to job opportunities.

The development of the diversity in apprenticeship scheme has enabled the team to provide a service specifically for care leavers.

It is recognised and acknowledged that further work needs to be undertaken with our young people in order to get them into work or training and maintain suitable accommodation.

This is evidenced in our performance figures for both our NEET population and those living in suitable accommodation.

The Department's work with Housing and the private sector has helped in securing appropriate accommodation for our young people

An area that has been identified as requiring improvement is that of ensuring our care plans and pathway plans are of good quality and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timeframes)

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 This report reflects commitment to young people in line with the stated policies and priorities of the council towards looked after young people.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
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mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk

In order to deliver the targets set out within the report, the need for any additional resources will be identified as part of the budget setting strategy. Once the full implications are known, resources can be identified within the service area, as best they can, in order to meet the objectives. Any additional financial pressures will be monitored as part of the financial management process, and reported accordingly.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
 Telephone and email: **01375 652054**
lindsey.marks@BDTLegal.org.uk

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
 Telephone and email: **01375652472**
sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

The corporate parenting committee will need to give report to the protected characteristics of children and young people that are looked after. These will need to be identified and addressed within the individuals care plans and pathway plans. Further consideration to equality issues will be required in any improvement plan.

6.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

There are no other significant implications of the report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This report confirms that we have made a sound start to ensuring that we fulfil the commitments made to young people within the Pledge. We recognise our obligation to regularly monitor progress against the Pledge to ensure performance is monitored.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- Thurrock's Pledge
- Ofsted Inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services, Thurrock published 27 July 2012

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Thurrock's Pledge

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