

18 June 2015		ITEM: 9
Corporate Parenting Committee		
Children In Care Pledge Update Report		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non - key	
Report of: Paul Coke – Service Manager, Through Care Services and Natalie Carter, Open Door		
Accountable Head of Service: Andrew Carter, Children’s Social Care (CATO)		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children’s Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides information about Thurrock’s Pledge, with an update as to the current monitoring, reviewing and performance.

It also provides an outline of the current proposals and recommendation in respect to the Pledge.

1. Recommendations

That members:

- 1.1 Support the amended proposals to the Pledge.**
- 1.2 Support the development of the Pledge leaflet in a suitable style that can be given to all looked after children and young people and that it be available for those that become looked after in the future.**
- 1.3 Agree that the Pledge is monitored and reviewed by the Children in Care Council (CiCC) on a yearly basis.**
- 1.4 Support the publicising of the Pledge through the Council’s Website and the Looked After Children’s website.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Pledge is a requirement directed by the Government in their documents, ‘Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care’, October 2006 and ‘Time for Change’ published in June 2007.**

- 2.2 These documents require local authorities to adopt a pledge that should be developed by the Children in Care Council, which in turn should then be adopted by the local authority as a key communication tool that develops partnership working with the children and young people, plus a tool for challenge.
- 2.3 The current Pledge was designed by the Thurrock Children in Care Council and established on the 30 October 2010 by a group of CiCC members in consultation with other young people in care and care leavers.
- 2.4 The current 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 Chief Executive, the Director and Head of Services and other officers.
- 2.5 These promises cover a number of aspects of a child/young person's life which will enable them to reach their full potential.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 The Promises are categorised into the 5 outcomes that were previously used within the Care Matters Agenda and Ofsted Reports:
- Health
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoying and Achieving
 - Making a positive contribution
 - Economic well-being
- 2.8 A report was presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee in September 2012, entitled 'Pledge Performance and Indicators and Descriptors'.
- 2.9 This gave an overview of the Pledge and the Thurrock's performance in line with the Ofsted Inspection dated 27 July 2012.
- 2.10 As part of the CiCC Work Plan for 2013/14 a further review of the Pledge was undertaken and reported to the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- 2.11 As part of its end of 2014/15 and beginning of 2015/16 work plan, the CiCC has proposed a number of amendments to the current Pledge. These amendments are attached to this report in Appendix 1 and can be summarised as:

- social workers will visit at least 12 times a year and give you the opportunity to meet with them independently during this visit (Amendment 1)
- giving you access to life story work in conjunction with Thurrock's life story policy including a book / memory box containing important information about your childhood. This information will include: where you were born, the area you grew up in, schools you attended, photos, family tree, calendar of events and other memories you may wish to add (Amendment 2)
- social workers should give young people their contact details such as email, mobile number and/or office number (Amendment 3)
- Respect your privacy when possible (Amendment 4)
- We will seek your views about contact arrangements and support you in attending family contacts (Amendment 5)
- supporting you in opening a bank account / savings account (Amendment 6)
- providing you with identification such as passport, birth certificate or alternative identification available to you (Amendment 7)
- supporting you to have access to your files (Amendment 8)

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Pledge is an integral part of how the local authority and the children and young people of Thurrock work together in improving services and outcomes for young people, plus a mechanism for challenge where appropriate.
- 3.2 The Pledge needs to be monitored, reviewed and updated to reflect the current climate. This has now been completed and will need the agreement and co-operation of the local authority in ensuring its implementation
- 3.3 Should the Corporate Parenting Committee accept the proposals it will be expected that the new Pledge will again be monitored and reviewed accordingly.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Pledge is a key tool which the children and young people can use to challenge and judge the services provided by the local authority
- 4.2 It is a duty and responsibility for the local authority to ensure it has an up to date Pledge that all children and young people who are looked after are aware of and have access to.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 None

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The Council's responsibilities for looked after children and care leavers are unique and sit at the heart of all priorities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

The local authority will need to take into consideration the costs of printing the new leaflet and ensuring that this is disseminated to all looked after children, including those children and young people that become looked after in the future.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Principal Solicitor Children's Safeguarding

As part of the local authority's statutory requirements, a Pledge needs to be available to all looked after children and young people. The Pledge needs to be readily available and accessible to all.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Karen Wheeler**
Head of Strategy and Communications

The Pledge is an important part of how the Council and the children and young people of Thurrock work together to improve services and outcomes for young people. As the Pledge is a document for all our looked after children and young people, it will be made widely available including on relevant websites. In addition, it can be made available in different languages and for those that are visually impaired upon request.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- **Corporate Parenting Committee – Pledge Performance and Indicators and Descriptors – 6/9/2012**
- **Corporate Parenting Committee – Participation and the Voice of Children and Young People + appendices – 5/9/2013**

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Amendments to the Pledge
- Appendix 2 – Current Pledge

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