

Appendix 3

This suggested pledge has been drawn up by experts, ie those who have first-hand knowledge of growing up in care.

Our aim is for all children and young people in Cheshire West & Chester / Cheshire East to receive the best parenting possible.

THE PLEDGE

You will be as passionate and committed to looking after us as you would your home grown children – and want no less for us. Being in care will not be a reason for missing out.

The pledge should link into all decision-making structures that relate to children through Cheshire West & Chester / Cheshire East.

Your Pledge should be based on children's rights under United Nations Convention on the Child (UNCRC), to which Britain is a signatory, as well as all rights awarded under relevant legislation, regulations and guidance

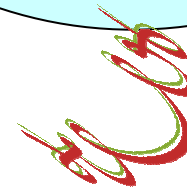
YOU WILL ACTIVELY INVOLVE US IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT OUR LIVES AND GIVE US OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED

- You will:
 - ask us what we want to say
 - listen to what we say
 - act on what we say
 - tell us what you have done and when you have done it
- You will give us clear information about the bigger picture too - like policies that affect us - but let us know in language we can understand, not just big documents
- You will give us a range of approaches, both formal and informal, that let us participate on our terms
- You will give us structured opportunities to be involved in recruitment of staff (at all levels) and foster carers, as well as ongoing appraisals.



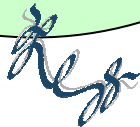
YOU WILL KEEP US SAFE

- You will ensure we are placed where it is safe for us and where we are well looked after
- You will not move us when we are happy and settled unless there is an issue around our welfare - and you will explain that clearly to us
- You will check that we will be given good quality parenting, by monitoring and offering ongoing training opportunities to carers/residential staff
- You will listen to us when we have concerns



**YOU WILL HELP AND SUPPORT US TO SORT
OUT ANY PROBLEMS OR WORRIES WE
HAVE**

- We will always be able to speak with our carers, social worker, family member, independent reviewing officer or teacher and know how to get hold of everyone. This means having access to a phone
- If we have no credit on our mobiles, you will make sure there are other ways to say if we are unhappy about something or have a complaint
- You will know us well enough to recognise when we are unhappy and help us to do something about it
- You will make certain we can contact independent advocates easily and that we have the number of a children's complaints officer
- As lead Councillor member, or as senior staff member responsible for children's services, you will make sure all your systems are easily understandable for children and young people



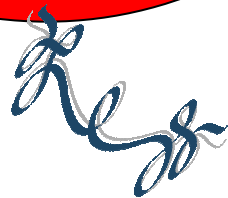
**YOU WILL RESPECT US AS INDIVIDUALS,
WITH DIFFERING WANTS AND NEEDS - AND
TAILOR THE SERVICE WE GET, TO FIT US**

- You will respect our rights in relation to disability, sexuality and race. You will support our right to follow both our culture and religion if that is our wish. You will understand that we are at different ages and our needs and wishes may change
- You will make sure everyone is encouraged to participate at a level they are comfortable with and that everyone is actively listened to whatever age or ability, so that this becomes part of the everyday life in Cheshire West & Chester/ Cheshire East
- You will recognise the difference between living in residential care or a foster family and how those differences affect young people
- You will give us extra support when we need it
- You will respect our right to privacy, with information stored on a 'need to know' basis



**YOU WILL HELP US STAY IN TOUCH WITH
PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO US**

- You will help us stay in touch with our birth families (where appropriate, and if in our plan); previous foster families; friends and other people who are important to us where this is possible and if this is what we want to happen
- If this can't happen, you will be upfront with us and explain the reasons why
- You will help us keep items of our personal history safe, like photos of friends, family and school
- At 18, you will give us access to information that has been kept about us, where that is possible



**YOU WILL MAKE SURE WE HAVE NAMED
WORKERS, WHO WILL STAY WITH US
WHILST WE GROW UP**

- You will provide us with qualified named social workers and only change them if there is a problem
- You will expect all workers employed by Cheshire West & Chester/Cheshire East to tell us when they will visit and you will employ workers who are reliable, punctual and safe people to be around children.
- You will let us know ways to contact our worker/s and if we leave a message for them, someone will get back to us within 2 working days
- You will use text messaging, emails etc as our preferred way of contact, unless we tell you differently



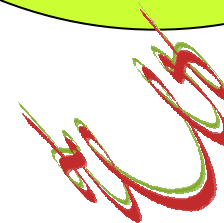
YOU WILL HELP US KEEP HEALTHY AND WELL

- You will help us get age appropriate and clear information about our health
- You will make sure all our hospital/GP and dental appointments are kept or we are supported to attend
- You will let us know where and how to get confidential help and advice
- You will contribute to issues around road safety and environment concerns that affect our health, as a good parent would
- You will give us guidance about healthy living, diet and exercise
- You will make sure there are safe places for us to play, that we can get to easily



YOU WILL SUPPORT US TO HAVE DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES, SO WE HAVE THE CHANCE TO DEVELOP OUR TALENTS, HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

- You will support us to do the things we enjoy
- You will reward and celebrate our achievements in our lives and education with us
- You will be committed to our success in all aspects of our life



YOU WILL HELP US ACHIEVE WHAT WE
ARE CAPABLE OF, AT SCHOOL AND AT
COLLEGE, AND GIVE US EXTRA SUPPORT
IF WE NEED IT

- You will actively encourage our social development
- The plan to support us at school will be recorded on our personal education plan and we will get a copy
- You will give us more choice in the school we attend.
- You will listen to our views about our school



YOU WILL HELP US MOVE ON TO ADULT LIFE

- You will support us to have a range of high quality work experience places
- The Council will act as a 'family' firm and give us priority in apprenticeships
- You will give us practical help, like driving lessons
- You will save for us when we are younger so we have something to help us when we start out
- You will help us learn about how to manage our money and how to get credit, etc
- You will help us fill out forms with other agencies such as housing and help us with all the negotiations
- You will support us if we make mistakes and help us get back on track

