

Croydon Council

For General Release

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 9 July 2014
AGENDA ITEM NO:	8
SUBJECT:	The Pledge to Children and Young People in Croydon's Care
LEAD OFFICER:	Ian Lewis, Director of Social Care and Family Support
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: <p>This report serves to update the Corporate Parenting Committee about revisions to the Pledge to Children and Young People in Croydon's Care. The 2008 White Paper 'Care Matters: Time to Deliver for Children in Care' required that every Local Authority set out it's Pledge to children in it's Care and make provision for monitoring that Pledge.</p> <p>Croydon's Pledge was last brought to the attention of this committee in July 2013, having been revised by the Children in Care Council in May of that year.</p>	
FINANCIAL IMPACT <p>There is no direct financial impact.</p>	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve the reviewed Pledge as requested by the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and to consider actions necessary to ensure the Council is adhering to the Pledge.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the last discussion of this Pledge at Corporate Parenting Committee, the Committee requested that some comments be fed back to the Children in Care Council.

This revision took place formally in April and May 2014 in readiness for an annual review of this Pledge at the Committee today.

The meeting will want to consider how it will lead on ensuring that the Council meet the terms of the Pledge to children and young people in our care.

The young people of the Children in Care Council were aware of the need to consider what their responsibilities are in meeting the terms of the Pledge and how they might further discuss this with the wider children in care population.

3. DETAIL OF YOUR REPORT

The following is the Pledge as revised and simplified by the Children in Care Council in April and May 2014:

OUR PLEDGE

Croydon Council is committed to being a Corporate Parent to all of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Our promise, on behalf of Council members and Council staff is to look after you in the same way as any good parent. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel, with the support of the Children in Care Council and the Looked After Children Strategic Partnership, will monitor the promises we make in our Pledge.

- ♦ *We will provide you with services to meet your physical and emotional health needs and celebrate your identity.*
- ♦ *We will make sure we know your needs and review our plans to meet them regularly.*
- ♦ *We will respect you as an individual with your own identity and personal needs.*
- ♦ *We will ensure you have a social worker or personal advisor to support you with clear arrangements for you to contact them.*
- ♦ *We will ensure you have access to high quality good education at all stages of your childhood.*
- ♦ *We will support and help you in seeking education, employment and training when you are beyond school age.*
- ♦ *We will help you to access positive leisure activities.*
- ♦ *We will provide you with a place to live that is right for you.*
- ♦ *We will ensure contact with your family if appropriate and enable you to maintain links with your wider family, social network and community.*
- ♦ *We will return you to your family if appropriate in a way that is safe for you and promotes your well-being.*
- ♦ *We will involve you in decisions which affect you and we will take your wishes and feelings taken into account.*
- ♦ *We will provide you with support in moving on from care and prepare you for independent living.*
- ♦ *If you request it, we will help you see the records we hold about you.*

As noted, the Children in Care Council have met twice to review the Pledge in the last year. In April 2014, officers presented to them that we would like to review the Pledge and would ask them to do so in more detail at the next meeting of the CiCC in May 2014. In that meeting, the young people were of the view that the Pledge could be made more succinct and suggested more appropriate straightforward language. The new version of the Pledge reflects this. In addition, the Children in Care Council want

to consider their role in more general terms including how they might support the Council to review this Pledge. To this effect, two staff who lead youth participation in the Early Intervention and Support Service are making arrangements to meet with the young people in the Children in Care Council to consider a range of issues, including recruitment to and the wider role of the Children in Care Council. Those staff will ask the young people:

- 1) How they want to be involved in monitoring the Pledge
- 2) How they want to publicise the Pledge to our children and young people in care

Those meetings are intended to be part of a programme of work over summer 2014 and will start in early July now that young people have concluded their school and college examinations. Of particular consideration is how younger children and young people might be involved in monitoring the Pledge and being involved in the CiCC and how those might be made more age appropriate if needed. We note that many of the Children in Care Council are aged 15 years and over.

4. CONSULTATION

The Pledge was reviewed in consultation with the Children in Care Council and it is the intention of the officers that in future, it will be common practice to do so and in fact we hope to support the Children in Care Council to lead on the review as they wish.

CONTACT OFFICER: Dr Paul Chadwick, Head of Service, Looked After Children.
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: none