Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers

Our aspirations for you and how we meet our commitments to you.



Hampshire County Council

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About this pledge

You are important to us and here in Hampshire, we have high aspirations for the way we work with you, the children and young people in our care, and our care leavers. We want to help you meet and exceed your ambitions. We want to listen to your needs and respond appropriately. To that end, we have created this pledge to clearly outline how we can work together to help you achieve your life goals.

We recognise that an individual's journey, through care and beyond, is not always easy and there may be many challenges along the way. I, along with Stuart Ashley (Director of Children's Services), our Corporate Parenting Board and all our staff, have the same aim – to help you face and overcome these challenges, understand your experiences, and find success.

We will review this pledge regularly to make sure it is fit for purpose, and we will make continuous improvements by seeking, listening, and responding to your views. Please ask your social worker or personal advisor if you have any questions or would like to provide feedback to us.

We will continue to work hard to understand your experiences, build on your strengths, and meet your needs to keep you safe and help you thrive. This is why we have made this pledge to you all.



Steph How
Deputy Director,
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Children's Services

Hampshire County Council's Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers

Our aspirations for you and how we meet our commitments to you.

This is our pledge to Hampshire's children and young people in care and care leavers. This sets out how your allocated key worker will work with you and what you can expect from them.

We understand that your experiences of being in care and your transition to adulthood can sometimes be difficult and challenging for you. We want you to be happy, healthy and successful in your life. We are committed to doing our best to help you continue to develop and grow, and achieve your own life goals, so that you can become the person you want to be.

Your safety and wellbeing are key to us. Sometimes we may have to make decisions or take actions that may not seem to align with the themes of our pledge to you. This will be to make sure that you are safe and well. We will help you to understand this, and we will always have your voice at the heart of what we do.

How will we do this? Our work with you will be guided by these eight themes.

1. We are **here for you** and can be contacted when you need us.
2. **Your voice** is at the centre of our work with you.
3. **Your plans** are strengthening your voice and focused on your goals.
4. To support **your health and emotional wellbeing**.
5. To make sure **where you live** is safe, you feel you belong, and you can access the facilities you need.
6. Help you with **your education, training and employment** to find something you enjoy.
7. Help you to develop **supportive and meaningful relationships**, including identifying an important person in your life and maintaining that relationship.
8. **Prepare you for your future**, ensuring you have the skills you need as you transition to adulthood and independence.



Here for you

- We are contactable in different ways - you can text, call, or WhatsApp your worker or team supporting you. You should always try to call your worker first on their mobile, unless you know they are not available. We can't always get back to you straight away, but your worker will get back to you within three working days. You can also contact the duty number/email for your allocated worker's team if you need to, or out of hours.
- We will make time for you to talk to us one to one, where you are most comfortable to do so.
- We will explain things to you the best we can and help you to understand the decisions taken around you.

Your voice

- We will put your voice at the heart of all we do with you. We will advocate for you and make sure that those you are working with clearly understand your opinions and feelings.
- We will make information available to you, in a way you best understand it, so you know your entitlements, rights, and responsibilities.
- We will help you to understand your story, so that you understand your family history and why you are or have been in care.
- We will make you aware of how to make complaints, give compliments and let us know when a service could be improved.
- We will create opportunities for you to speak with other children and young people in care or care leavers at participation and engagement events.
- We will help you to access Hampshire's advocacy service if you want to. Advocates are independent professionals who can work with you, to help you understand your options, know your rights and have your voice heard.

Getting involved

- If you want to be more involved and help change the services you and others receive from us you can ask to join the Children in Care Council or the Care Experienced Adults Council. Ask your social worker or personal advisor for more information and how to get involved.

Your plans

- We will put your voice at the heart of your My Life My Future / Pathway Plan.
- We will work with you to keep these up-to-date and relevant, so they reflect your wishes and goals.
- We will work with you to make your plans strengths based, meaning we will help you to build on what you're already doing well to help you to meet your goals.

Your health and wellbeing

- We will help you to access health services such as doctors, dentists and opticians. As well as supporting you to access mental and physical wellbeing services.
- We will help you to identify and access positive activities, interests, and hobbies. This may be by funding transport or membership costs.
- We will offer you a 'health history' document to help you understand your health history.
- We will work to support the transition between under 18 and over 18 health services you are engaged with, such as from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to adult mental health teams.

Your education, training and employment

- We will make sure you have a place at a school and we will work with the school to help you do your best.
- We will help you to access academic and non-academic opportunities – such as apprenticeships and work.
- We will help you to get the right support if you have any additional learning or support needs.
- We will help you to make informed choices about your education, employment or training beyond 16 and support you in your work or studies.
- We will help you to access college or university, including financial support where applicable.
- We will celebrate your achievements and successes with you.

Where you live

- We will find you somewhere appropriate to live while you are under 18.
- We will be open and honest about when changes are happening or where we can see that they are likely to happen.
- We will help you move smoothly if you need to change where you live.
- We will help you to understand your accommodation options beyond the age of 18 and offer you supported accommodation at the appropriate level if you need this.
- We will help make sure that where you live beyond the age of 18 is safe and meets your needs.
- We will help you to understand that where you live can affect the services, education or support networks available to you and we will help you to live as close as possible to the important people in your life.

Supportive and meaningful relationships

- We will make sure that you have a named social worker, personal advisor and independent reviewing officer and know how you can contact them.
- We will help you to maintain contact with important people to you, such as family and friends where possible and appropriate.
- We will support you to engage with any religious or spiritual networks you have.
- We will give you advice and guidance about identifying and maintaining healthy relationships in your life.
- We will give you advice and support about the possibility of returning to live with family beyond the age of 18, if this is possible.

Prepare you for your future

- We will help you to prepare for your future using your My Life My Future / Pathway Plan.
- We will support you to make choices about your beyond the age of 18 accommodation, by helping you to understanding the options you have and the skills you need, in part by using the Independent Living Skills Assessment.
- We will offer you specific housing advice and guidance.
- We will help you to build the skills needed to maintain your accommodation.
- We will help you to have a safe transition into adulthood.
- We will help you to know how you can access care leaver support until you are 25 if you need.

We want to do all of this to help you be the very best you can be, and to achieve what you want in life.



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