

# **The Oxfordshire Pledge to its Children in Care & Care Leavers**

## **By the Children in Care Council & Corporate Parenting Panel**

This pledge highlights what Oxfordshire County Council and the Children in Care Council will do for its children who are looked after, and those leaving care.

The Pledge is to ensure continuous improvement of the care system for all and to keep children and young people protected, safe, happy, settled and moving forward in their lives. This Pledge is reviewed annually and runs alongside the Leaving Care Charter and Foster Care Charter. Issues in the Pledge are discussed at children in care council meetings and at the Corporate Parenting Panel.

### **What is a Corporate Parent?**

If a child or young person is looked after, or a care-leaver, Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for them, they are known as “**Corporate Parent**”. Corporate Parents are expected to do the very best they can in the child or young person best interests. Children in Care Council can challenge Corporate Parents if they don't do their best for them. Corporate Parents can be teachers, housing officers, foster-carers, doctors, health visitors, Social Workers - all the people who play a part in looking after children and young people in care and leaving care.

### **Who are the Children in Care Council?**

All members of the Children in Care Council have been in care or are leaving care and they help make their Corporate Parents do the very best they can for them. They have elected Chairs and members are dedicated to ensuring this Pledge is acted upon.

**“My foster carers were really good and I am staying in contact with them, they are part of my family now”**

**“Just because I am doing well in life does not mean I am always okay”**



## **KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE AND HEALTHY**

- **We will offer training to our foster carers and residential workers on community and internet risks**
- **We will launch a social media campaign on for all looked after children on community and internet safety.**
- **We will encourage all looked after children to share with their foster carers where they are going and who with. We want our children and young people to feel confident to speak out when there is a problem and to know who to speak to.**
- **We want all looked after children to have the contacts for VIVA.**
- **Give advice to children and young people to stay safe and have healthy relationships**
- **To help children and young people to understand that their health and wellbeing is important.**
- **The CICC will work with the Phoenix team to support all looked after children to know who their school health nurse is and for the school health nurse to encourage the child/young person to understand their health issues. They will work together to gain confidence in accessing health services.**

## **GOOD COMMUNICATION**

- **The CICC chairs will meet with the LAC/LC Chairs to raise issues around improving communication e.g. punctuality, calling young person back, cover arrangements when worker on leave. These issues will be fed back to all workers in supervision. Good clear communication may also reduce anxieties of those leaving care.**
- **The CICC will reissue the information card which provides details of how to request advocacy and how to make a compliment/complaint**
- **The CICC will ensure that no looked after child or care leaver is ever ignored or forgotten about. Needs a specific action. Think about the children who are quieter, out of county, remands etc.**
- **Young people know their entitlements and are supported to use them responsibly.**

**“No one falls through any gaps”**

## **EDUCATION, TRAINING, WORK or APPRENTICESHIPS**

- **CICC will work with the Virtual School to ensure that all looked after children know who their designated teacher is and encourage them to have met up to discuss any difficulties in school.**
- **CICC will work with the Virtual School to rate schools on their performance with Information, Advice and Guidance and their culture around inclusion. Good schools should be awarded the care mark and underperforming schools should be challenged through Corporate Parenting Panel.**

**CiCC will work with the Virtual School to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people in care and leaving care and aspire all children and young people to reach their full potential.**

- **All professionals working with care leavers are clear about the range of opportunities available to young people and know how to get the specialist knowledge needed to guide and aspire them to achieve their full potential**

### **HOME & Preparation for Independence**

- **All children will receive age-appropriate information about their foster carers, their family and daily routines prior to placement except in emergency.**
- **All care leavers are accommodated in housing suitable for their needs that provides a stable base from which they can access EET**
- **CICC will work with the corporate parenting service to develop a training programme to ensure that foster carers, residential and social workers support young people with life skills and preparation for independence.**
- **CICC will review transport arrangements for looked after children and care leavers to ensure they are given the appropriate levels of support from foster carers and key workers.**

**“Whose there to help me?”**

**Issues in this Pledge will be dealt with, before more issues are put forward. This Pledge will be reviewed annually by Children in Care Council and Corporate Parenting Panel – April, 2017**