

THE PLEDGE

FOR CARE LEAVERS AGED 18 TO 25



Safe



Healthy



Ambitious



Independent



Happy



Resilient



**These are
your rights!**

DEVELOPED WITH YOUNG
PEOPLE FROM CHICC



Be Safe

This is our pledge (or promise) to you. It is based on the things young people in care and care leavers say are most important to them. We want the same for you as we want for our own children – the best. We want you to be safe, healthy, ambitious, resilient, independent and happy.

By all of us working together (you, your worker and all who care for you), we can ensure the things in the pledge happen. You have an important part to play, and as you grow older your responsibilities will grow too. The statements in the pledge apply to everyone up to the age of 21. If you feel the things in the pledge don't happen, you can use this booklet to challenge why and seek solutions. Turn to the back to find out how.

From 21, if you wish, we will continue to support you, but the support you receive will be tailored to specific needs that you have and you will be expected to take more responsibility to action advice and guidance from your worker – it's all about empowering you to be as independent as you can be. Many, but not all, of the pledge statements will still apply to you, and you can still challenge us if you feel things are not happening for you, in the ways listed at the back.

The pledge fits in with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to which the UK is a signatory.



- We will support you to settle into your accommodation
- We will support you to try to resolve any issues relating to your accommodation or the area you live in
- We will proactively work with other agencies to support you to sustain your home
- We will try to ensure you have a consistent worker who will listen, can spend time with you and understand your needs and any worries
- If your worker is going to be away from work for a period of time, we will ensure you are aware of this and the arrangements for cover
- We will ensure that someone is always available to provide advice and support
- We will give you a contact card with your workers number and details on it, and also who to contact if we are away



Be Healthy

- We will support you to be physically and emotionally healthy
- At your last health assessment, we will ask what information you would like to hear about your health history. This will then be given to you when you are 18
- We will make sure you have the information you need to access support and advice for sexual health, emotional and mental health, substance issues and general health advice after you have left care
- We will support you to access counselling services if you require and will be there to listen to you when you need support
- We will ensure a mentor is available to you should you need one and do all we can to ensure you are not left to feel lonely. A mentor is a trained volunteer who can build a relationship with you over a set period of time and help you with your goals. If you would like a mentor please ask your worker
- We will encourage you with your emotional wellbeing by supporting you as you grow through your adulthood

- We will respect and honour your unique identity and value your personal beliefs, culture and heritage in order to get to know you and support you



Be Ambitious

We will support you with education, training and employment options to help you achieve the best you can

- We will believe in you
- We will value your strengths, talents and ambitions and support you to reach your goals
- We will believe in your potential and have a vision for your future even if you sometimes lose sight of this yourself
- We will help you to overcome challenges and ensure we celebrate your successes
- We will support you to achieve your career aspirations
- We will seek and promote apprenticeships and work opportunities



Be Resilient

We will help you feel self-confident and able to deal with life's challenges

- We will help you build on your strengths
- We will support you to strengthen relationships with those around you
- We will support you with coping mechanisms for when things are not going so well
- We will help you claim any benefits you are entitled to such as Universal Credit, disability benefits etc



Be Independent

We will help you move into adulthood

- We will involve you in making decisions about transition to adulthood
- We will provide clear information on the support available to you from the age of 18 to 25 years
- We will ensure you are involved in your pathway planning and any opportunities to develop your independent living skills
- We will help you find out about activities in your area to enable you to make your own choices



Be Happy

- We will encourage you to take part in the things that you enjoy and support you to pursue your interests
- We will be available to you when you're having a bad day for a chat or get together
- We will listen to what you think about how to make being in care better for lots of young people and tell you how you can get involved with CHICC (Children in Care Council)



CHICC is run by and for young people in care. It is to make sure you can have your say and help make services better for others. CHICC runs lots of events and activities throughout the year. There are also opportunities to get involved as a volunteer and help run CHICC. To find out more contact the Participation Team on 0781 2323854

What can you do if you think this pledge is not working?

We will do our best to make sure the things in the pledge happen for you.

If you feel that one or more parts of this pledge are not happening for you, or you feel that any of your rights have not been met you can:

- Speak to your personal advisor. They know you well and are usually the best people to help put things right. Your personal advisor should give you their number on a contact card. If you don't want to speak to your personal advisor you could speak to their manager (their number should also be on the contact card)
- Contact NYAS, an advocacy service (contact details on the back). They can help sort out problems with you. They are not part of Hertfordshire County Council, they are an independent agency who can help you be heard
- You can also complain to Children's Services about your care if you want to. We can help you do this if you would like us to: Complaints Team 01992 588542 cs.complaints@hertfordshire.gov.uk



Sources of Information and Support

Care Leaver's Offer

Information about help and support available to care leavers in Hertfordshire. Visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk and search Care Leaver Offer, or for more information about services for young people in care and care leavers from YC Hertfordshire visit www.ychertfordshire.org

NYAS

The National Youth
Advocacy Service
0800 808 1001
www.nyas.net
help@nyas.net

POHWER

Advocacy Service for people who
experience disability, vulnerability,
distress and social exclusion
0300 4562370
www.pohwer.net
pohwer@pohwer.net

Hertfordshire County Council Participation Team

The Participation team run CHICC - Children in Care Council
07812323854
CHICC@hertfordshire.gov.uk
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk (search CHICC)



Children's Commissioner

Promotes and protects the rights of children and stands up for their views
and interests, using unique statutory powers
020 7783 8330
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



Help at Hand

Independent advice and representation for young people in care and care leavers
0800 528 0731
help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Sources of Information and Support

CRAE

Children's Rights Alliance for England
Protects the human rights of children by lobbying government and others
who hold power
020 3774 2279
www.crae.org.ukinfo@crae.org.uk

Become

Become are a charity for children in care and young care leavers
0800 623 2033
www.becomecharity.org.uk
advice@becomecharity.org.uk



The pledge is available in easier to read versions and can be made available in another language on request. Please call the Participation Team on 0781232854



**Designed by Mohan Ballard -
Children's Services, Learning and Development**