

SEFTON PLEDGE TO CHILDREN IN CARE

In accordance with Care Matters : Time to Deliver (2008) a consultation exercise was undertaken with all of Sefton's looked after children, age 10yrs + in relation to the development of the 'Sefton Pledge To Children in Care'.

In October 2008, 164 questionnaires were sent out. The questionnaire followed the ten points, suggested, in Care Matters : Time to Deliver (2008). 26 written questionnaires were completed and returned. In addition further work took place with the Kids In Care Council (Grafitti Wall) and the Care Leavers Forum (Discussion Group)

Overall, a total of 32 children and young people contributed to this document. A full report on the consultation is available from Karen.Gray@sefton.gov.uk .

The 'Pledge' was ratified at the inaugural meeting of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board on the 6th of October, 2009 and is included within the Sefton Corporate Parenting Strategy.

It is important that the 'Pledge' is a living document that can be used to quality assure the care given to our looked after children and young people in Sefton.

In the words of one child involved in the consultation "Don't make promises if you can't keep them."

Karen Gray
Children & Young People's Participation Officer

Updated: January, 2010.

Sefton Corporate Parenting Strategy

SEFTON PLEDGE TO CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

The following pledge has been put together by looked after children, Care Leavers, staff, management and leadership. A special 'Thank You' to the members M.A.D (Making A Difference – In Care & Care Leavers Council) who put a huge effort into the development of the pledge.

1) We promise you will have a named social worker who you know how to contact and who will keep in touch with you

This means:

- You will have your social worker's address, phone number and email so you can contact them when you need to.
- When you leave a message for your social worker we will make sure someone returns your call as soon as they can. We will try to do this within 24hrs
- Your social worker will keep in touch with you regularly to check you are ok –this will be every 4 weeks for the first six months and then at least every 6 weeks.
- Your social worker will only be changed when it is completely unavoidable.

2) We promise we will involve you in all the decisions that affect your life.

This means we will:

- **ask** you what you want
- **listen** to what you say
- **act** on what you have told us

We can't promise to do everything you ask, but when we can't, we will always explain why.

3) We promise that you will have a care plan that is up-to-date and meets your needs

- This plan will include all the support you need, including any support to meet your religious, racial or cultural needs.
- It will be written down and you will be given a copy of this.
- It will be regularly reviewed - at least every 6 months.
- The meetings to review the plan will be run by an independent person called an Independent Reviewing Officer .
- You will know the name of your Independent Reviewing Officer and how to contact them.
- You will be given copies of the notes from your review meetings.
- We will make sure that your care plan contains all the positive things about you.

4) We promise we will do our best to find a home that suits you

- This will be a home where you are cared for, feel safe and are supported
- We will take our time to find you a home that supports your needs.

5) We promise we will help you stay in touch with your family and any other people who are important to you.

- If you are not allowed to see someone, your social worker will make sure you understand the reasons why.
- We will listen to your opinions when we are arranging contact with family and friends.

- We will try to place you somewhere that is not too far away from family and friends if it is safe to do so.
- 6) We promise to help you to do the best you possibly can at school.**
- We will give your school all the information they need to look after you properly.
 - If you do not make as much progress as you can we will give you extra help to catch up, both at and outside school.
 - We will make sure that you are involved in drawing up your personal education plan to support you at school and you will get a copy of this.
 - We will make sure you get a place at the best possible school for you.
 - If you have to move placement wherever possible we will try to keep you at the same school.
 - We will support you if you have problems at school.
- 7) We promise to encourage you to develop your talents, interests and hobbies and to support you to do things you enjoy.**
- We will make sure that you have a leisure pass
 - We will celebrate your successes and achievements.
 - We will support you to take part in hobbies and interests.
- 8) We promise to take an interest in your health and encourage you to be healthy.**
- We will make sure you get regular health and dental checkups.
 - You will be given the name, address, phone number and email for the nurse for children and young people in care who can give you confidential advice and help you to be as healthy as you can.
 - We will support you with any appointments you have or treatment you need.
 - We will give you information to help you keep yourself safe and healthy.
- 9) We promise to work with you to give you all the help and support you need to make a success of moving on from care to adult life.**
- You won't be expected to move on from care before you are 18
 - Whatever you decide to do when you leave school (whether you want to find a job, go to college or university or do something else) we will give you help and support to achieve this.
 - We will make sure that you have support to find suitable accommodation.
 - We will not move you on from care until you have found suitable accommodation.
 - We will stay in touch with you until you are 21 (or 24 if you are still in education).
 - We will make sure you are involved in developing your pathway plan and you will be given a copy.
 - Your pathway plan will be regularly reviewed – at least every 6 months.
 - We will make sure you get information about leaving care well before it happens.
 - We will link you up with the Leaving Care Team who will offer you ongoing support when you do, eventually, leave care.
- 10) We promise we will work hard to sort out any problems or worries you have.**
- We will make sure you know how to get an independent advocate. That's someone who will listen to you and work with you to get things stopped, started or changed.
 - We will make sure you have all the information you need to make a complaint, including the name and contact details of the Children's Complaints Officer
 - We promise to take all complaints seriously and deal with them fairly and as quickly as possible.
 - We can't always promise to do what you ask, but we will explain the reasons why.
 - We will make sure that your social worker has the time to see you regularly.