

(FRONT SHEET TO BE ADDED – IT IS CURRENTLY BEING DESIGNED BY YOUNG PEOPLE & DESIGN TEAM)

OUR PROMISE FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

This our pledge for Shropshire, which was created by the Care Council Crew with input from young people in care, foster carers and councillors. This pledge asks that corporate parents acknowledge and embrace their duty of care. This will try to ensure that all children and young people in care and care leavers have equal access to services, support and life opportunities.

By signing this document you are making a pledge to Children and Young People in the care of Shropshire Council that you will aim to deliver these promises.

MY VOICE

“I need you to listen to my views and opinions”

- I want to be included in decisions which will affect my life.
- Be aware that some young people in care find it difficult to voice their feelings and thoughts. People that are working with me need to take time to get to know me as an individual and to discuss issues that matter to me in depth to understand my feelings.
- I need to have access to a complaints procedure if I am not happy with decisions that are made about me. I also need to be able to have an advocate to help me to voice my opinions.
- I would like you to tell me about any new legislation that is relevant to me in a format that I can understand – and in my first language.
- Councillors and senior managers need to pledge to work with the Care Council Crew to help obtain our views and make a difference for young people in care.

MY HOME

“You need to provide homes where children like me feel happy”.

- I need a safe and secure home that is appropriate to my individual needs.
- The people who are caring for me need to be supportive and I need to be able to talk to them.
- Try to get a good match so that I'm not moved from placement to placement.
- If I am happy in my placement I don't want to be moved just because I am old enough. If I'm living in a children's home, I want the chance to stay there beyond my 18th birthday.

MY FAMILY

“Help me to keep in touch with relatives”

- Where possible I would like contact with people of my choice – whether that is immediate family, friends or other relatives. This includes meeting face to face and contact over the phone, internet or through the post.
- We would like you to consider providing each young person of secondary school age with their own mobile phone.

EDUCATION, WORK and TRAINING

“A suitable education and to be able to have a say on my education”

APPENDIX 1

- Give me the opportunity of a good education.
- All young people of secondary school age should have access to the computer and the internet to help with homework and course work.
- If needed, I would like to have a bus pass or a rail card to help with the cost of travel to education, work and to access activities.
- We would like Shropshire Council to provide all young people in care the chance to do their compulsory school work experience with the council – in an appropriate placement – as if it was the 'family firm'.
- Shropshire Care Leavers should be offered appropriate apprenticeships to help support us into the world of work.

SOCIAL WORKERS & MY DETAILS

"I need support, and a good social worker."

- I need a social worker that I can rely on. Social workers should adhere to "the promise" and visit on an agreed basis.
- I want to be made aware of any important information about me – stuff that is relevant to my life.
- I would like to have the opportunity to change social worker if I am not happy with them.
- My personal details should be protected and confidential so that information is shared only with people who need to know.
- I would like the chance to see my file.

MY SOCIAL LIFE

"Offer me activities"

- I would like to be supplied with information on clubs and events in my local area.
- I would like the chance to have support to go to clubs and activities that I like - including money to pay for activities, transport, and the opportunity to have someone to take me there.
- Young people of compulsory school age should have access to free or discounted music lessons.
- Pocket money should be rounded to the nearest whole pound.
- We think that much better links should be developed between children and holiday carers so that if possible, children go to the same respite carer each year and not have to worry where they are going and having to go through introductions to yet more people.
- The Council should offer me discounted access to arts and heritage sites in Shropshire such as the theatre and museums.

BEING HEALTHY

"I want the chance to be in good health"

- When asked, give me advice on how to stay healthy.
- I want easier and more open access to Sexual Health services.
- Make sure that I have plenty of food to eat.

SUPPORT

"Safe People to turn to when I am upset or angry"

- I want the chance to access therapy and other professional services as appropriate.
- Young people and their carers must be able to access professional outside help if their needs are not met by agencies within Shropshire Council.

APPENDIX 1

- I want the chance to meet and consult with other young people who have experiences of being in care through a Mentoring or befriending scheme.

MOVING ON

“Help for the Future”

- I need support that is tailored to the individual and ongoing post 18. This support needs to be effective, whether I go back to my family or stay in care.
- Make sure that I am aware of the support that I can get if I stay in care.
- Give me the chance to prove my independence, and support me if it doesn't work out.
- Help me with my finances – tell me what I'm entitled to and give me better access to this information.
- When I reach 17 I would like the chance to learn to drive – we would like you to consider providing subsidised driving lessons for care leavers as well as a driving licence.

GENERALLY...

Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of children and young people in care. Respect young people, treat me fairly and as an equal to others. Honour the Corporate Parenting role and do your best to live up to the requests outlined in this pledge.

DECLARATION

This Pledge sets out the wishes and needs identified by children and young people in Shropshire. Officers across all Directorates will take account of these. This is because a corporate commitment from all Services is needed in order to do the best for the young people in our care.

Signed
Sheila Healy
Chief Executive

As a Shropshire Councillor, I am aware of the important responsibility I have as a corporate parent for the children in our care.

This Pledge is a set of needs that I will endeavour to progress. I think that it is important for all children and young people in care to have their own views and to be treated as well as any other young person. I acknowledge that it is my job to make sure that this happens.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT