Walsall Corporate Parenting Pledge 2017-2020

Our Pledge to Looked After Children

Your Education
1. We will do everything we can to make sure you have the very best education and training possible.
2. You will be supported in taking up opportunities for further education and apprenticeships.

Your Health
3. We will do everything we can to make sure that your health is regularly checked and your health needs are addressed.
4. We will support you to maintain and improve your health and wellbeing.

A Good and Safe Place to Live
5. We will do all that we can to make sure you have a home where you feel safe, happy and healthy and where you feel well cared for and supported. We will make sure your carers have access to the support they need to make this happen for you.

Things to do
6. We will make sure you have the opportunity to take part in sporting activities, youth clubs and other social activities without facing obstacles.
7. Your passport application will be treated as a priority especially where you live in a long term placement.

Your Voice.....Your Influence
8. We will make sure you have chances to share your views, wishes and feelings. We promise to listen to you and tell you how your views and feelings are taken into account in making plans.
9. We will make sure you know what your rights are on a regular basis and information will be shared with you in a child friendly manner.
10. Contact with people who are important to you will be actively promoted and arrangements will clearly take into account your wishes and feelings.
11. We will support the Respect group to make sure that looked after children in Walsall have their voices heard. Members of the corporate parenting board will meet with children and young people at least four times a year.

Our Pledge to Care Leavers

In keeping with the vision outlined in ‘Keep on Caring’ (July 2016) we will improve the transition into adulthood so that all young people leaving care are better prepared and supported to live independently.

12. We will improve access to education, employment and training and help you with your career plans
13. We will help you to experience stability in your lives, and feel safe and secure, including help to find and keep a stable place to live
14. We will provide improved access to health support, and go to medical appointments with you if you are worried to go alone
15. We will help you learn about budgeting and what bills to pay to help achievement of financial stability.
16. We will respect you as individuals, not judge you on the past, and we will believe in your future
17. We will listen to you, hear what you say and spend some time with you away from the office

Our Priorities

1. Strengthen the corporate parenting role including support and develop our Council 4Kids Respect, and New Belongings group.
2. Make sure all looked after children are listened to so their views can help plan what we do and make it better.
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people being looked after and care leavers.
4. Ensure looked after children and care leavers are safe in their home and in their community and are cared for close to Walsall. They have suitable accommodation whilst in our care, and in line with their best interests, move quickly to a permanent home.
5. Improve education and improve access to work, education and training.
Respect and Influence

Everyone involved with our children and young people will treat them with respect, listening to their views and explaining clearly why some things cannot happen if that is the case.

We know that: 59% of children and young people feel that they have a say about what their care plan is.

In 2017-2020 we will:

- routinely use the views of children and young people and work with children and young people to refresh our approach to participation and co-production.
- ensure easy access to information about rights, entitlements and advocacy services.

Good Health and Wellbeing

The health needs of children and young people are assessed and planned for. This includes supporting the development of identity and self-esteem and good emotional well being.

We know that: Children are likely to have poorer health outcomes when they start to become looked after.

In 2017 – 2020 we will:

- complete more SDQ’s to assess and provide for mental health needs.
- finalise and make available health passports for care leavers.

Education, Training and Employment

Children and young people receive a planned and supportive education from early years through to higher education and into work.

We know that: 79% of Walsall looked after children attend a good or outstanding school.

In 2017-2020 we will:

- ensure that the Pupil Premium is being used effectively to raise attainment and aspirations of looked after children.
- increase our participation with looked after young people post 16 to ensure they are in appropriate provision and that they are supported as they move towards adulthood.

Lifestyle and Leisure

Children, young people and care leavers are supported and encouraged to enjoy a wide range of leisure, cultural, sporting and social activities, including taking an annual holiday, which will enable them to fulfil their potential and make new friends.

We know that: 72% of looked after children have regular contact with family and 96% have a hobby.

In 2017-2020 we will:

- fully implement the contact policy and toolkit
- build resilience of children and young people through working with them, their parents/carers and other people in their lives to be able to identify and manage difficult situations to keep themselves safe.

Home

Children, young people and care leavers live in good, safe homes where they feel cared for, safe and supported and can stay for as long as they need to.

We know that: fewer looked after children move placement compared to nationally but more are placed outside Walsall.

In 2017-2020 we will:

- increase the range and quality of ‘local’ placement options and help all looked after children achieve a permanent home in a timely way.
- develop the skills of all carers so they can provide a home where children and young people feel safe, happy and ‘loved’ and do not have to move unless it is an agreed part of their plan.

Journeying to Adulthood

Children and young people are nurtured and supported as they journey towards adulthood and through inclusive, good quality planning and guidance will feel confident and ambitious about their future.

We know that: More care leavers are not in suitable accommodation or suitable education, employment or training compared to nationally.

In 2017-2020 we will:

- further improve the range and choice of safe and supportive accommodation options for our care leavers who wish to live independently.
- implement the delivery plan for the implementation of ‘Keep on Caring’.