

Croydon Council

For General Release

REPORT TO:	Corporate Parenting Panel 3 July 2013
AGENDA ITEM:	9
SUBJECT:	Revised Corporate Parenting Pledge to Looked after Children
LEAD OFFICER:	Paul Greenhalgh
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Tim Pollard, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:	
FINANCIAL IMPACT: None	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to approve this revision of Croydon's Corporate Parenting Pledge to Looked after Children

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Earlier this year the Corporate Parenting Panel requested that the Children in Care Council undertake a revision of the Corporate Parenting Pledge which was last updated in January 2012. This revision has been the focus of considerable work and discussion by the Children in Care Council and on their behalf I am presenting it in this report for the Panel's approval. The Children in Care Council are of the view that the Pledge should not include visual images or 'fancy' graphics because "it is much too important for that" and should present as a contract.

The Children in Care Council have also prepared a questionnaire that they suggest the Independent Reviewing Officer should use in every review to ensure that in the view of the child the Council is keeping its corporate parenting pledge to them. This proposal is under discussion with the Safeguarding and LAC Quality Assurance Service.

The revised Pledge was presented to all social workers and managers in the Looked after Service during the conference held on 10 May 2013 and social workers and their managers were asked to give their personal commitment and promise to ensuring that the Pledge is delivered to the children they are working with. An awards and recognition event for looked after children is being planned jointly by the LAC Service and the Virtual School for October 2013, and it is intended to present the Pledge to elected members, foster carers, parents and friends and family of looked after children at that event.

The Pledge will be sent to all looked after children and to their foster carers with an accompanying letter from the Children in Care Council explaining what the Pledge means as the contract between Croydon as the Corporate Parent and the child in its care, and how the child can hold the Corporate Parent accountable for delivering its promises to them, through the carer, social worker, review meeting, IRO, and the complaint process.

The Corporate Parenting Panel additionally requested a response from Children's Social Care Management to the suggestions made by the Children in Care Council to Panel at the meeting of the Panel on 20 March 2013. Unfortunately discussion with the Children in Care Council about these suggestions has not been progressed because recent meetings of the CiCC were cancelled because of exams, but Martin Hudson and Dionne Sang will be progressing at their meeting with the CiCC on 18 June and will report back on to Panel.

3. Revision by the Children in Care Council of the Corporate Parenting Pledge

CROYDON'S PLEDGE TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

We will work together as one council to provide good quality care for the children and young people in our care.

We will have the highest aspirations for them, and are committed to working together with all partners to ensure looked after children in Croydon achieve their fullest potential and lead happy and satisfying lives.

In partnership with the Children in Care Council, the Looked After Children Strategic Partnership and the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel we will regularly monitor the progress of the promises of the Corporate Pledge.

OUR PLEDGE

We will provide you with services to meet your physical and emotional health needs

We will complete an effective assessment of your needs and a care plan with timescales for action and review.

We will return you to your family if appropriate in a way that is safe for you and promotes your well-being.

We will respect you as an individual with your own identity and personal needs.

We will ensure you have a social worker to support you with clear arrangements for you to contact them.

We will provide you with high quality early years education

We will ensure you have a good education

We will help you to achieve in your education.

We will make sure you have a good school attendance record.

We will help you access to positive leisure activities.

We will provide you with a placement that can best meet your needs.

We will ensure contact with your family if appropriate and enable you to maintain links with your wider family, social network, and community.

We will provide services that respect your cultural and ethnic needs and supports your heritage.

We will involve you in decisions which affect you and have your wishes and feelings taken into account.

We will provide you with support in moving on from care and prepare you for independent living.

We provide you with support if you go on to further and higher education.

We will support and help you in seeking education, employment and training.

We will help you see the records we hold about you

CROYDON PLEDGE TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Pledge to Looked After Children has been reviewed by the Children in Care Council who have suggested that the Pledge is monitored by IROs at Reviews using this questionnaire and that an annual report is made to the Corporate Parenting Panel on the Council's adherence to the pledge

	Yes	No	NA
Have services been provided to meet physical and emotional health needs?			
Has an effective assessment of needs and a care plan been completed with timescales for action and review?			
Has a safe return to family members (if appropriate) been considered?			
Has individual identity and personal needs been respected and considered?			
Has high quality early years education been considered?			
Are all arrangements in place to provide a good education?			
Has help been provided to maximise achievement in education?			
Has help been provided to make sure there is good school attendance?			
Has help been provided to access positive leisure activities?			
Has a placement been provided that can best meet needs?			
Are contact arrangements in place which maintain links with family, social network and community?			
Have services been provided that respects and supports cultural, ethnic and heritage needs?			
Has there been involvement in decisions which affect the child/young person and have wishes and feelings been taken into account?			
Has support been provided for preparation for independent living?			
Has support been provided to progress to further and higher education?			
Has support been provided in finding education, employment and training?			
Has information been given on access to records?			

4. **CONSULTATION;** The revision of the Pledge was undertaken in consultation with the Children in Care Council.

5. **FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

1 **Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations**

	Current year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast		
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Budget available				
Expenditure				
Income				
Effect of decision from report				
Expenditure				
Income				
Remaining budget				
Capital Budget available				
Expenditure				
Effect of decision from report				
Expenditure				
Remaining budget				

2 **The effect of the decision: None**

3 **Risks; None**

4 **Options; None**

5 **Future savings/efficiencies: None**

6. **COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

- 6.1 (Approved by: *A N. Other*, Lawyer on behalf of the Council Solicitor & Director of Democratic & Legal Services)

7. **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT: None**

8. **EQUALITIES IMPACT:** None as the Pledge applies only to looked after children in the care of Croydon.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: None

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT: None

CONTACT OFFICER: Paul Chadwick, Head of Service for Looked After Children

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None