
Meeting: Executive
Date: 9 March 2010
Subject: Pledge to Children in Care
Report of: Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis, - Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Summary: The purpose of this item is for Executive to receive and adopt Central Bedfordshire Council's Pledge to Children in Care

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning
Contact Officer: Jacqui Barry, Care Matters Project Manager
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision No
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Pledge to Children in Care is consistent with the Council's priority to educate, protect and provide opportunities for children and young people.

Financial:

There will be a minimal cost of issuing the written Pledge to all children in care. This will come from the Children's Participation Officer's budget. Delivery of the Pledge commitments will be met from within existing resources.

Legal:

The Children Act 2004 and 2009 sets out the duty. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to fulfil its responsibilities to all children in care. Under the *Care Matters* agenda, all Councils are expected to adopt a Pledge to children in care.

Risk Management:

Risks to children and their families may arise from failure to implement the Pledge and may incur risk to the Council's reputation. All such risks will be mitigated by implementation and monitoring of the Pledge. Monitoring will take place by the Children in Care Council, Corporate Parenting Panel and the Stay Safe Delivery Group of the Children's Trust. Non-compliance will be responded to by these groups.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Officers of the Local Authority will be expected to fulfil their duties under the Pledge in all aspects of their work with children in care.

Equalities/Human Rights:

Implementation of the Pledge will have a significant and positive impact on children in care.

Community Safety:

Not applicable

Sustainability:

None

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

- This report has not been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Executive receive and adopt Central Bedfordshire Council's Pledge to children in care.

Reason for Recommendation(s): To ensure that the Council complies with the expectations on them under the Care Matters agenda.

Executive Summary

The Central Bedfordshire Council's Pledge to Children in Care is a simple statement about the support services children and young people in care can expect to receive. The Pledge has been developed in accordance with the expectations of Care Matters agenda and is consistent with the Council's priority to educate, protect and provide opportunities for children and young people.

Background

1. The Pledge to Children in Care is an important aspect of the implementation of Care Matters. It is a simple statement about the support and services children in care can expect to receive. Care Matters sets out a clear expectation that every council should make a pledge to children in care and should consult with children effectively and frequently. This paper sets out the draft pledge which has been produced following consultation with our children and young people.

2. The Pledge to children in care is one of the means by which Central Bedfordshire Council will seek to improve the experience of and subsequently outcomes for children in our care.

Implementation

3. Delivery and monitoring of the Pledge will help to ensure that children in care are aware of the Council's statutory responsibilities to them, raise their awareness of key opportunities available for them and support them to engage in positive activities. It will also improve consultation with children in care.
4. Following a decision of the Executive it is intended that the Pledge will be issued to all children in care and officers of the Local Authority within the Children, Families and Learning Directorate. Officers will be expected to carry out their duties to all children in care, ensuring that they deliver all aspects of the Pledge throughout their work.
5. Delivery of the Pledge, once adopted, will be monitored by the Children in Care Council, Corporate Parenting Panel and the Stay Safe Delivery Group of the Children's Trust. Specific mechanisms to support effective monitoring will be required, for example, through questionnaires and consultation about the experiences of children in care, audit of children's case files and staff supervision.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire's Pledge to children in care

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

None

Location of papers: (Insert location where papers are held)