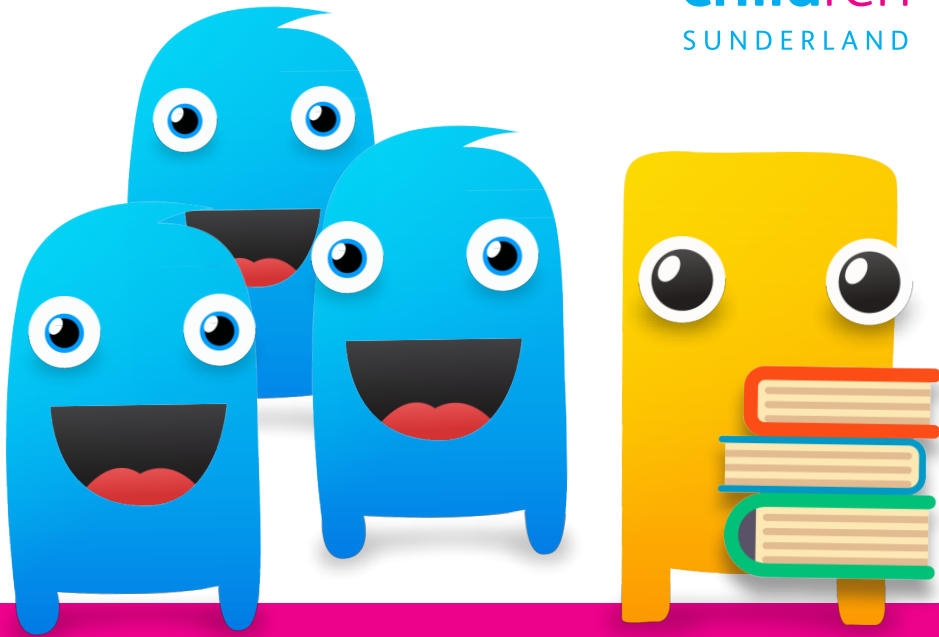


together for
children
SUNDERLAND



OUR COMMITMENTS

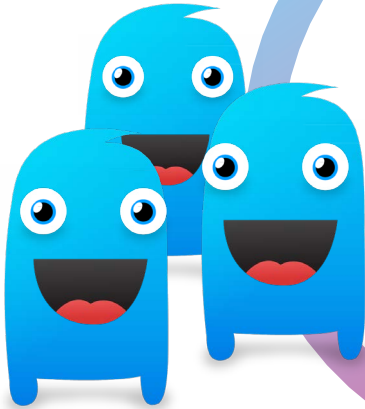
The 'Commitments' in this leaflet have been made by Together for Children to the children and young people who are looked after and leaving care in Sunderland.

The six commitments you'll find inside were decided on in consultation with the young people in Together for Children's Change Council (Sunderland's Children in Care Council).

These commitments, or pledges, are part of Sunderland's wider commitment to giving looked after children and care leavers the best opportunities they can have in life.

Thanks to all of the young people who gave their time and opinions to the project.

1



**WHEN YOU COME
iNTO CARE WE WILL
MAKE SURE YOU
FEEL LIKE YOU
HAVE A SENSE OF
BELONGiNG**

- We will aim to provide you with a home that can best meet your needs and interests.
- We will try and find a placement that is near your family and friends if appropriate.
- We will help you keep in contact with your family and friends, and when this is not possible, give you a reason why.
- When we make decisions we will take account of your age background and beliefs, including your ethnic and cultural needs and any needs you may have because of a disability, especially communication needs.
- Your social worker will stay in touch regularly to check you are OK.
- We won't talk about you to other people or professionals unless we need to keep you or others safe.

OUR COMMITMENTS

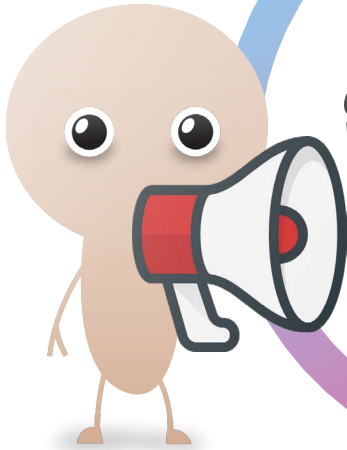
2



**IF YOU NEED TO
COME INTO CARE WE
WILL MAKE SURE THAT
YOU ARE SAFE AND
PROPERLY CARED FOR**

- You will have the right to privacy unless it would be unsafe.
- You will get information about your placement and the area it is in, you will have a proper introduction to your carers unless it is an emergency placement.
- We will ensure you have regular health assessments.
- We will encourage and support you to participate in wider opportunities to build your confidence so that you are able to make safe decisions for yourself.
- We will try and find a warm, welcoming, friendly, safe and stable place where you can stay for as long as you need to and where you can have your favourite toys and possessions.
- If you are moved out of an area we will explain in a way that is easy for you to understand the reasons why. We will try our best to help you live a normal life and have contact with the people that are important to you.

3



**WE WILL MAKE
SURE YOUR VOICE
IS HEARD AND
LISTENED TO**

- We will listen to what you have to say and take your views seriously.
- We will support you if you want to make a comment or complaint.
- We will involve you in plans and decisions made about you.
- If you need someone to talk to, this includes at evenings and weekends, we will make sure you know who to call.
- We will take your feelings into account in decisions that affect you.
- If you want to make a complaint we will provide you with access to an advocate to help you get your views across.
- We will only promise you things that we know we can do.
- We promise to listen to the voices of all looked after children and care leavers, ensuring they are not only listened to but where appropriate, acted upon.
- We will take your wishes and feelings into account in all our work and will explain why decisions have been made.
- We will make sure the voice of looked after and leaving care young people is heard through talking and consulting with Change Council, Sunderland's Children in Care Council.

OUR COMMITMENTS

4



**WE WILL MAKE
SURE YOU GET A GOOD
SCHOOL EDUCATION
AND SUPPORT YOU
TO GO INTO HIGHER
EDUCATION IF YOU
WOULD LIKE TO**

- We will continue to develop the virtual school and use our power to support you in the best way, to suit your individual educational needs, dreams and aspirations.
- We will continue to promote the importance of your involvement in your own care plan which includes your personal education plan (PEP) because we understand that your views matter.
- We will help you to celebrate your achievements and recognise when you have made a personal achievement yourself.
- We will expect your carers to take an active interest in your education and support you to do your homework and attend parents' evenings.
- We will support you to get the most from your education and encourage you to reach all your goals and achieve your potential.
- We will provide a named teacher in your school or education setting who understands the issues that you may face.
- We will help you if you want to do an apprenticeship, go to college or university.
- We'll help you get ready for the world of work, find a job or training placement and give you the chance to get work experience.
- We will provide a laptop where it is an essential part of your learning.
- We will make sure that you don't miss any school because of things that are happening in your life and if you fall behind then we will help you get back on track.

5



**WE WILL MAKE
SURE YOU HAVE
OPPORTUNITIES
TO KEEP FIT
AND HEALTHY**

- We will make sure someone is available to listen to your feedback about health services that are available to you and we will act to improve areas that need to be developed.
- We will support you during any difficulties you might face by constantly trying to understand more about how we can improve “being there for you”.
- We will provide you with the right services to meet your medical, physical and emotional health needs.
- We will make sure you have regular health assessments.
- We will help you to access all the services you need to keep you healthy and safe.
- We will make sure you have opportunities to do fun things like access to leisure activities.
- We will support you if you wish to use mental health services and professional counselling.
- We will provide advice and guidance on how to look after yourself including, smoking, drinking and drug use.
- We will support you if you want/need to access sexual health services.

OUR COMMITMENTS

6



**WE WILL MAKE
SURE YOU DON'T NEED
TO LEAVE CARE UNTIL
YOU FEEL READY AND
HAVE THE RIGHT
SUPPORT INTO
INDEPENDENCE**

- We will ensure that your carers and people supporting you provide support to improve your independence skills including practical, social and emotional skills so you are able to care for yourself and become more independent individuals.
- We will support you to access your entitlements as a care leaver.
- We will make sure we talk to you regularly about your pathway plan.
- We will support and guide you in making a positive start to your adult life by supporting you in your choices for employment, education and training and by ensuring that you have a safe and stable place of your own.
- If you can't live on your own we'll make sure that choices are there for you after you are 18.
- We will make sure that the home we provide for you when you are going to leave care is safe and properly supported.
- We will make sure that your move to adult services, if you need them, is as smooth as possible.
- We have huge ambitions for you. We will make sure that we work alongside you to support you to achieve the best start into adulthood as you deserve.
- We will make sure you have enough money and help you learn how to manage it.



For further information about Change Council or our Commitments please contact the Participation and Feedback team at Together for Children on **0191 561 7430**.

To find out more about Together for Children visit www.togetherforchildren.org.uk

Note: The Government White Paper 'Care Matters: Time for Change' requires every local authority or company operating on its behalf to create a 'pledge' to all of its looked after children and young people. This booklet details Together for Children and Sunderland's pledge. On the advice of the young people who took part in the consultation project, we've called them our 'Commitments'.

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