

Council: Tuesday, 26 January 2016

Joint Motion in the names of Cllr Reuben Thompstone and Cllr Anne Hutton:

Barnet's Corporate Parenting Pledge

Council recognises that councillors are, individually and collectively, Corporate Parents to all children and young people in care in the London Borough of Barnet. Council notes our special responsibility for those in our care and takes most seriously our role in championing their needs and protecting them from harm.

Council believes the safeguarding of young people to be among the primary functions of the council and a key part of our duties as councillors. Council, therefore, reaffirms our commitment to improving the lives of children in care and care leavers in the borough, by working across the council, with partners and with the young people themselves.

To demonstrate this renewed commitment, Council notes, welcomes, and subscribes to, the following Corporate Parenting Pledge, which sets out what we offer as Corporate Parents and what we expect from our young people in return.

Council notes that the themes around which the Pledge is based were the result of an extensive engagement process involving those in our care and what they told us was important to their prospects and wellbeing.

As Corporate Parents we want to support you to achieve the best in your childhood, adolescence and adulthood. As with all parents we know we won't always get things right, but we pledge to do our best.

A Good Education

- We, your Corporate Parents, pledge that;
 - Our virtual school will support you and your school to ensure you can achieve the best results.
 - We will make sure that you have access to good quality early years education between the ages of two and four.
 - We will make sure that you have stability in your education and that you only attend a school that is right for your needs.

- We will make sure that you will go to a school rated OFSTED 'good' or 'outstanding' and if not ensure that the virtual school supports you more
 - We will ensure that you have access to independent Information, Advice and Guidance in order to help you plan your future career. We will put in place volunteering and work experience opportunities for you.
 - We will make sure that you have access to Apprenticeships offered by us, or our partner organisations.
 - We will support you post 16 into further education, University or employment.
 - We will provide a laptop where it is an essential part of your learning.
- I, the child or young person, pledge that;
 - I will do my very best to take advantage of the education, training or employment that is provided.
 - I will speak to my social worker, personal assistant, teacher, the Virtual School, carer or other workers if I feel that I am struggling.

Feeling a Sense of Belonging

- We, your Corporate Parents, pledge that;
 - We will try our best to ensure that you will be as near to your family and friends as possible where that is in your best interests.
 - We will ensure that you are placed in safe and welcoming accommodation.
 - We will ensure that your voice and wishes will be at the forefront of any decisions taken on where you live
 - We will make sure you are able to 'Stay Put' with your existing foster carers, if you wish, up to the age of 21.
 - We will make sure that when you transition to Leaving Care a housing nomination form is undertaken to help you move in to independent living if you wish.
 - We will ensure that you have a passport, NI number and all other forms of identification at the times you are legally allowed to have them.
- I, the child or young person pledge that;
 - I will look after and respect the accommodation, carers and support workers that are there for me.

Keeping Healthy

- We, your Corporate Parents, pledge that;
 - We will ensure that if you are under 5 years old you will receive a health assessment every 6 months.
 - We will ensure that if you are aged 5-18 years old you will receive a health assessment once a year if you consent to have one.
 - We will ensure that you have regular eye and dental examinations.
 - We will help you access leisure, recreational and cultural opportunities through reduced rate gym membership, free swimming and school holiday/weekend activities and trips.
 - We will see that you have a named nurse who can provide support on physical and emotional health issues. If you need more specialist support, such as that through Child Adolescent Mental Health Services, then we will ensure that you are referred for the right interventions at the right time.

- I, the child or young person, pledge that;
 - I will make sure that I will communicate with an adult about how I am feeling through the way I feel most comfortable. If necessary I will attend appointments related to my health and emotional wellbeing so that I can get the best possible support.
 - I will seek to explore my own interests and seek to take full advantage of opportunities to engage with positive activities.

Staying Safe

- We, your Corporate Parents, pledge that;
 - We will ensure that you see your social worker a minimum of once within the first week of your placement and then a minimum of every 6 weeks thereafter.
 - We will only change your social worker if it is absolutely necessary and we will inform you as soon as possible if this happens and outline the reasons.
 - We will allocate you an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who you will review your Care Plan with and you will be given the opportunity to

meet with your IRO separately prior to your reviews to talk about how you feel.

- We will put in place a variety of different ways in which you can communicate with us your thoughts, feelings and views. If this isn't with your social worker or personal adviser, this could be through an advocate, digital media or online surveys.
 - We will ensure that we will educate you and raise awareness of current and emerging issues that place children and young people at risk of harm in the community. We will do this through identifying the right interventions at the right time. If we feel that you are not staying safe, we will speak to you and together we will support you and make decisions.
- I, the child or young person, pledge that;
 - I will communicate with an adult in the way I am most comfortable if I feel that I am not in a safe situation. I will put my trust in and communicate with those who are responsible for looking after and protecting me.

Championing Your Needs

- We, your Corporate Parents, pledge that;
 - We will acknowledge your differences through your individual care plans and reflect your nationality, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and disabilities and strive to ensure that you are able to remain in contact with your cultural background.
 - We will celebrate your achievements every year through events, newsletters and social media.
 - We will help develop your Life Story through photo albums and creativity to help you develop good memories for the future.
 - Will provide opportunities for you to have your voice heard through our children in care council and lots of other youth voice forums such as Barnet Youth Board or Youth Parliament.
 - We will include and consider the needs of children in care and care leavers within all of our future commissioning, policies and strategic development.
- I, the child or young person, pledge that;
 - I will express myself, my diversity and my beliefs in a positive fashion that promotes inclusiveness, and consideration to others.