

Meeting: CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD	Date: 14 March 2013	Agenda Item No: 8
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TITLE OF PAPER: Charter for Care Leavers

SUMMARY OF PAPER:

The Minister, Edward Timpson, has asked authorities to sign up to the Charter for Care Leavers

Care Leavers are young people who have left the care of the authority and by virtue of the time spent in care are entitled to services under S24 of the Children Act 1989.

The Children's Trust Board is asked to consider the Charter and the recommendation to sign up to it and to embed its principles in day to day practice.

Details

The Charter has been produced by care leavers and published by the DfE with a strong endorsement from the Minister asking everyone to support him in making it a reality.

The Charter sets out promises care leavers want central and local government to make them to aid the decision making in respect of them. It is designed to challenge authorities to raise the expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and act as good corporate parents.

The Charter reflects the aspirations and expectations of care leavers in their own words, requesting that we:

- respect who they are, and remember that they are individuals
- listen to them and place their views at the heart of decisions made about them. If we don't agree with them to explain why.
- provide them with practical help and support
- value their strengths and help them learn from their mistakes
- not forget them when they are no longer anybody's statutory responsibility

The Charter asks us to make 7 broad promises to Care Leavers:

- To respect and honour your identity
- To believe in you
- To listen to you
- To inform you
- To support you
- To find you a home
- To be a lifelong champion

The Charter reflects the principles of good practice and is in accordance with the vision and objectives of Onwards and Upwards, the recently formed Social Work Practice, providing services to Care Leavers.

Social Work Practice pilots are a Department for Education programme which enable a new way of providing social work services to children and young people. The aim of the Social Work Practice is to improve experiences and outcomes for children in care and care leavers. Social Work Practices seek to enable social workers to work more closely with children and young people and to have more control over the direction and priorities of their organisation.

In order to increase the ownership and value of the Charter, Onwards and Upwards propose working with young people to produce a local response based on its principles.

ACTION REQUIRED BY BOARD:

It is recommended that the Children' Trust Board agree that the authority signs up to the principles of the Charter.

That Onwards and Upwards build on the Charter in conjunction with the Role Model Army (Children in Care Council) and young people using the service to produce an addendum to the Charter, based on locally identified need and priorities.

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