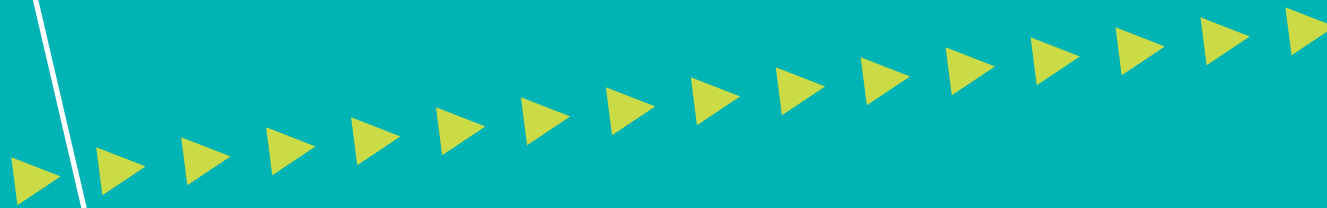


KENT PLEDGE



our promises to you



Our pledge to Kent's children and young people in care



We understand that being in care and leaving care isn't always easy and that it can bring extra challenges and pressures for you. If we are going to get it right for you we need to make a real difference to help you do your best and have success in your life.

Our pledge includes a number of things we will do that will help make sure that your time in care is a positive experience.

These are based around six themes:

- a sense of belonging
- an adult who is always there for you while you are in care
- a good education
- good memories for the future
- getting ready for being an adult
- championing your needs and interests.

We are making a pledge to you because you are in the care of Kent County Council.

We will check our pledge to you often so that, when we can, we will improve on the commitments that we make and listen to your views.

Please ask your Social Worker or Personal Adviser for your pack of Kent Pledge Cards which give you a shorter version of the Kent Pledge commitments.



Sarah Hammond
Corporate Director - Children, Young People and Education

A sense of belonging

We will:

- find a placement for you that is as near as we can to your family and friends
- help you keep in contact with family and friends and, when this is not possible, give you a clear reason why
- make sure we take into account your views and, if appropriate your parents' views of the type of carers that you would want when choosing your placement and short break/respite care
- when we make decisions, 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
- arrange for you to get your National Insurance number for your 16th birthday or as soon as possible after being entitled to have one
- get you a passport by your 16th birthday if you are legally allowed to have one – sooner if you need one to go on holidays with your carers and take part in school activities.

An adult who is always there for you while you are in care

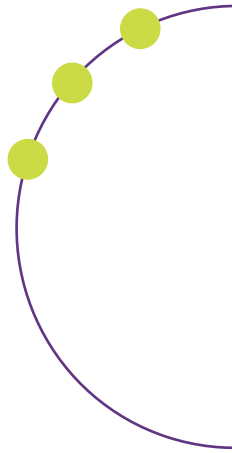
We will:

- make sure that you have a named Social Worker or Case Worker and an independent reviewing officer and know how you can contact them
- make sure that you have at least one person in your life who you can expect to be around throughout your time in care
- make sure that you have a named nurse that you can contact if you have any questions about your health.

A good education

We will:

- make sure that you have a place at a school that will help you to do your best
- make sure that two to four year old children in care can go to early years education
- work with your school and the 'designated' teacher to help you do your best (all schools should choose a teacher who is in charge of all of the school's services for those children in care who go to the school)
- help you to make the best possible choices in education, employment or training beyond 16 and support you in your work or studies including help going on to university if you choose to do this
- help you catch up with schoolwork if you fall behind
- expect your carers to take an active interest in your education and make good links with your school, including going to parent's evenings and other school events
- provide a laptop or electronic device if you have been in care for six months or more and are in year 3 and above or if you are aged over 16, still in care and where a laptop computer or electronic device is an essential requirement of your course and, if appropriate, access to the internet
- celebrate your achievements and success
- help you to make the best possible choices in education, employment or training beyond 16 and support you in your work or studies including help going on to university if you choose to do this.





Good memories for the future

We will:

- provide opportunities for you to take part in hobbies and interests (including sports, art and music)
- help you build a photo album of important people in your life and places you have been to while in care.

Getting ready for being an adult

We will:

- make sure that we ask you about important decisions we make in your life
- make sure that your move to adult services, if you need them, is as smooth as possible
- care leavers entering higher education will receive a yearly grant plus other support. The amount paid for the duration of the three year degree course is inclusive of the government bursary, plus other support. On request we will also provide a laptop computer to university students.

There is a Care Leavers Local Offer which outlines support offered to Kent Care Leavers, please ask your Social Worker or Personal Adviser for a copy.

Championing your needs and interests

We will:

- make sure that you are able to tell us your wishes, feelings and interests, taking into account any disabilities you have
- listen to your wishes and feelings before making decisions that affect you and support you if you need help to do this
- work with you and your family to make sure that plans for your care are up to date and meet your educational, health and care needs
- make sure that you know how to complain and how to get in touch with Young Lives Foundation (Kent's Children's Rights Service), who can give you support to help you make a complaint
- give you access to a solicitor (at our cost) if you want legal advice about your care order, or any other legal order affecting you, such as contact with certain people in your life.



Contact Details:

To contact Specialist Children's Services, to find the number for your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) or your Social Worker or to ask for help, you can:

- **email:** social.services@kent.gov.uk
- **Call:** 03000 41 11 11
- **Text relay:** 18001 03000 41 11 11

The Children's Services Complaints team is for children, young people and those closely connected with them. If you would like to make a complaint or ask for advice about a problem, you can:

- **write to Kent County Council, Children's Social Complaints, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, TN24 8XU**
- **call:** 03000 41 11 11
- **email:** cocomplaints@kent.gov.uk
- **text:** 0786000 8025, **start your message with the word complaint.**

We can help you put your complaint in writing or give you advice.

You can always speak to your Social Worker or Personal Adviser or you can ask for an advocate (this is a person who is independent of Kent County Council who can speak on your behalf and help make sure your voice is heard). You can find out what advocacy is through the Young Lives Foundation leaflet. You can contact the Young Lives Foundation by:

- **call:** 0808 164 0096
- **email:** advocacy@ylf.org.uk
- **website:** <http://ylf.org.uk/how-we-help/advocacy-childrens-rights/>
- **facebook.com/ylf.org.uk | twitter.com/ylfcharity**

Speak Up. Be Heard.

The Super Council, Our Children and Young People's Council (OCYPC) and Young Adult Council (YAC) are groups of young people in care or who have recently left care who meet regularly around the county. The meetings give you the chance to meet others and have your say on how improvements could be made to help you and others.

To find out more speak to your Social Worker or Personal Adviser, or:

telephone: 03000 422558
email: VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk

**KENT
PLEDGE**

