

Charter for Liverpool Care Leavers

A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This charter sets out promises Care Leavers want Liverpool City Council to make. Promises and Principles help in decision making and do not replace laws; they give guidance to show how laws are designed to be interpreted.

The key principles in this Charter will remain constant through any changes in Legislation, Regulation and Guidance. Care leavers

urge Liverpool City Council to use these principles when they make decisions about young peoples lives. The Charter for Care Leavers is designed to raise expectation, aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need and what Government and Liverpool City Council should do to be good Corporate Parents.

Positive examples are given as a demonstration of Liverpool City Council's intent to make changes to the benefit of care leavers.

We promise

To respect and honour your identity

We will support you to discover and to be who you are and honour your unique identity. We will help you develop your own personal beliefs and values and accept your culture and heritage. We will celebrate your identity as an individual, as a member of identity groups and as a valued member of your community. We will value and support important relationships, and help you manage changing relationships or come to terms with loss, trauma or other significant life events. We will support you to express your identity positively to others.

Positive example identified in young people's discussion

Liverpool Leaving Care Service will no longer use the term Christmas Money, and in future it will be called Festival Allowance which can be provided at different times of the year to meet the differing needs of young people.

To believe in you

We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations, we will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of these yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you

Positive example identified in young people's discussion

Liverpool Leaving Care Service will make it possible for young people to access support for pursuing their talents recognising that all our young have abilities and aptitudes which are not always academic in nature, where this involves financial help the Leaving Care Service will explore all possible funding sources which will include from Liverpool City Council resources and from charitable trusts such as the David Lewis Organisation

To listen to you

We will take time to listen to you, respect and strive to understand your point of view. We will place your needs, thoughts and feelings at the heart of all decisions about you, negotiate with you, and show how we have taken these into account. If we don't agree with you we will fully explain why.

Positive example identified in young people's discussion

We will provide easy access to complaint and appeals processes and Liverpool Leaving Care Service will ensure care leavers have knowledge in how to complain which will be recorded in all pathway plans and information about how to complain will be clearly displayed in Reception areas and duty areas

To inform you.

We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and the service you can expect from us at different stages in the journey. We will keep information up to date and accurate. We will ensure you know where to get current information once you are no longer in regular touch with leaving care services. We will make it clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings you might have about information and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

Positive example identified in young people's discussion

Liverpool City Council will develop a young person's protocol for access to records which will make the process easier and more supportive. Young people and Liverpool Leaving Care Service will develop a signposting to services guide for young people aged 21 or over if they contact us looking for help and support.

To support you

We will provide any support set out in current Regulation and Guidance and will not unreasonably withhold advice when you are no longer legally entitled to this service. As well as information, advice, practical and financial help we will provide emotional support. We will make sure you do not have to fight for support you are entitled to and we will fight for you if other agencies let you down. We will not punish you if you change your mind about what you want to do. We will continue to care about you even when we are no longer caring for you. We will make it our responsibility to understand your needs. If we can't meet those needs we will try and help you find a service that can.

Positive example identified in young people's discussion

The Leaving Care Service and young people will draw up an entitlements guide by July 2014

To find you a home

We will work alongside you to prepare your move into independent living when you are ready. We will help you think about the choices available and to find realistic accommodation that is right for you. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when you move to independent living. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to support you until you are settled in your independent life; we will not criticise you

Positive example identified in young people's discussion

Liverpool Leaving Care Service will work with Liverpool's Housing Options service to develop a guarantor bond scheme that will better support young people choosing to live in the private landlord sector

To be a lifelong Champion

We will do our best to break down barriers encountered dealing with other agencies. We will work together with the services you need, including housing, benefits, colleges and universities, employment providers and health services, even if sometimes you choose the wrong path and receive a custodial sentence, we will still to help you establish yourself as an independent individual. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will help you to be the driver of your life and not the passenger. We will trust and respect you. We will not forget about you. We will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.

Positive example identified in young people's discussion

Liverpool Leaving Care Service will be flexible by providing setting up home allowances beyond the age of twenty one when young people move to independent accommodation after that age.

Signed by

Ged Fitzgerald

Jake Kellie

Cllr Jane Corbett

Colette O'Brien

Chief Executive

Chair of Children
in Care Council

Cabinet Member

Director of Children's
Services