

This leaflet is issued by Essex County Council Schools, Children and Families Service.

You can contact us in the following ways:

By Post:

Schools, Children and Families Involvement Team
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Colchester CO1 1SS

By Telephone:

01206 762 923

By email:

itsmylife@essex.gov.uk

The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.

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Ways to have your say

The Government says all councils must make sure children and young people can meet with the people who make decisions about their care. Sometimes these meetings are called Children in Care Councils.

Have your say about the Essex Pledge and being looked after

- Tell us how the Essex Pledge is working for you when you have your review.
- Talk to people who help to care for you like your foster carer, social care worker or an independent advocate.
- Take part in an 'It's My Life' Children in Care Council event.
- Join a group that is part of the Children in Care Council.



To find out more about the Essex Pledge and how to get involved in the It's My Life Children in Care Council, you can talk to your social care worker, Independent Reviewing Officer or simply contact the Involvement Team whose details are on the back of this leaflet.

Useful Information

If you would like someone to help you have your say, contact The Essex Advocacy Service, run by Barnardos:

Telephone: 0800 652 4546 (free from a landline but charges will be made if you use a mobile phone)

Email: essexadvocacyservice@barnardos.org.uk

To make a comment, compliment or complaint about social care services, look at the 'Have Your Say' leaflet or contact the Customer Care Team:

Telephone: 0800 085 3248 (free from a landline but charges will be made if you use a mobile phone)

Email: haveyoursay@essex.gov.uk

Find out about children's rights when you are living away from home.

Visit: www.rights4me.org.uk



“The County Council is determined to ensure that Children Looked After and care leavers receive the very best chance possible to go on and lead fulfilled and successful adult lives. This pledge is a marker to remind everyone how important and special these children and young people are and of the significant responsibility we have”

Councillor Sarah Candy, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

The Essex Pledge



You are important and we want you to feel cared about. Our job is to look after you and we can do that better by listening to what you have to say.

The Essex Pledge is a set of promises written by children and young people being looked after by Essex County Council. The pledge will see that you are treated well, can have your say and keep in touch with your family and friends.

When it is time for your review we will ask you about how you think the pledge is working for you but you don’t have to wait if you’d like to talk to us sooner. Remember that your care worker is always there to help you

Our pledge to you

- To do everything we can to make you feel cared about, valued and respected as an individual.
- To make sure you have a social care worker who will spend time with you and get to know you.
- To make sure you have opportunities to achieve and succeed.
- To do our best to help you keep in touch with your family, brothers and sisters and friends when you come into care.
- To fully involve you in decision making so your views are listened to and to explain when we have to make a decision that you may not like or agree with.

Children and young people have helped to write the Essex Pledge and these are the important things they wanted written in the pledge. We will do our very best to make this pledge work for you when we make decisions and plans for you and your care.



We promise to do our very best to:

- listen to your views, wishes and feelings before decisions are made;
- make sure social care staff let you know when we have to share your personal information;
- help you with life story work;
- make sure you are not treated differently because you are in care;
- sort out consent for school trips, social activities and visits to friends so you don’t miss out;
- make sure your social care worker gets to know you;
- make sure you know how to get in touch with your social care worker;
- help you be the very best person you want to be;
- make sure you get help with your education and learning;
- help you to make choices so you can enjoy taking part



in the things you want to do;

- help you stay in one place when you feel safe and settled until you are ready to move on;
- help foster families to care for you and give you a safe and settled place to live;
- help you to follow your religion and customs;
- make sure you know about your family and background;
- help you keep in contact with your family, brothers and sisters and friends;
- help you to be involved in decisions about your life and care;
- explain things clearly so you understand what they mean;
- make sure you know what is written in any plans about you;
- tell you about your rights and what you can expect when you are being looked after.

The plasticine models were created by young people at the Big Involvement Event October 2010

