

HERTFORDSHIRE YOUTH CHARTER
For Young People aged 13 to 19 Years
February 2005

This Charter aims to support and enable all young people in Hertfordshire to enjoy good health, live a healthy lifestyle, and stay safe from harm and neglect. We want young people to grow up able to look after themselves, enjoy their lives and also make a positive contribution and develop the right skills to lead a fulfilling and rewarding adult life.

This Charter is based on The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Human Rights Act 1998, views of young people in Hertfordshire and it also tells you what services, help and advice you can get. The UNCRC has 54 rights called articles. Where the issue in this Charter is the same as the UNCRC, it states the article number.

This Charter has been developed to raise awareness and inform both young people and adults about rights and responsibilities (article 42). We hope we can all work together to try to ensure that all these rights are being met (article 41) and to help young people understand what is expected of them.

All young people have these rights (article 1). They cannot be taken away, however, as a young person you have the responsibility to respect other people's rights, their values and the environment (articles 5, 13 & 29) and to know that all decisions taken about you should always be in your best interest (article 3).

If you feel your rights are not being met, you can speak to the agency, service or organisation that you are unhappy with or speak to someone at your nearest Connexions One-Stop-Shop.

For details of your nearest One-Stop-Shop, for more about rights, information and citizenship, (articles 4, 13 & 17)) or if you have a question, concern or complaint, visit the web-site www.hertsdirect.org/youth, call Connexions Direct on 080 800 13 2 19 or email youth.charter@hertscc.gov.uk.

Enjoying and Achieving

All young people aged 13 to 19 (up to 25 for those with learning difficulties or disabilities) have the right to fair and **unbiased advice, information and guidance** (article 17).

You have the right to a **free education** until you are 18 years old (article 28).

You have the right to access **sport, arts, leisure and cultural activities** (article 31)

If you are **at school**, you have the right to two hours a week of good quality **sports activity**.

Staying Safe

You have the right not to be bullied in any way, by anyone. If you are **being bullied**, you have the right to know what actions will be taken so that you are supported (articles 19 & 29).

You have the right to enjoy your life free from **racial or other forms of harassment** (article 30)

You have the right to **protection**, advice and support if you have suffered from, or witnessed, **harm or abuse** (articles 19, 34 & 39).

You have the right to receive sensitive help and support if you are the **victim of crime**.

You have the right to be treated with respect in any dealings with the **police** and to have a full explanation that you understand if you are **stopped or questioned**.

If you are **questioned at a police station**, you have the right to legal advice or representation and if you are under 17 you must have an adult present to support you. (articles 37 and 40).

You have the right to get help so that you can keep in **safe contact with your parents** and others in your family if it is not possible to live with them (article 9).

Making a Contribution

You have the right to your own thoughts, **to be listened to**, have your views taken seriously and to be involved in decisions which affect you (articles 12, 13 & 14).

You have the right to **vote** or stand in Youth Parliament elections up to the age of 18 and to vote in local, general and European elections at age 18 (article 12).

You have the right to be **treated fairly** regardless of your age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality, background or where you were born (articles 2 & 22).

You have the right to **practice** your chosen **religion** (articles 14 & 30).

All young people have the right to help and support to lead a full life and to be able to take part in the community. Additional support is available **if you have a disability or are/ were in care** (article 23 & 20).

If it is **not possible to live with your family**, you have the right to be looked after in a way that gives you stability and help towards your future (articles 18, 20 & 25).

If **you look after someone** in your family who has a disability or illness, you have the right to help and support for you and your family member.

Keeping Healthy

You have the right to a range of help that **promotes a healthy life-style**, such as, healthy eating, stopping smoking and leisure activities (articles 24 & 33)

You have the right to help with **looking after your health**, including accident and emergency, mental health, sexual health and contraception, drug and alcohol services, doctors, dental and eye care (articles 24 & 33).

The age of **consent to sex** for ALL young people is 16, whether you are heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual. You have the right to say '**No to sex**' and whatever your age, you shouldn't have sex **until you feel ready** (article 34).

You have the right to **free prescriptions** if you are under 16. This goes up to 18 if you are in full-time education and beyond this if you are in Higher Education (article 24).

You have the right to **speak to a health professional in confidence**. (Do check this out as it may not apply in exceptional circumstances where your or someone else's health, safety or welfare is at risk. You should be told first if this is the case) (article 3).

Economic Well-Being

You have the right to unbiased information, advice and guidance to help you make the right choice about **your options in education or training** and when you are **looking for a job**.

If you are over 16, you have the right to advice about **financial help to support your education**.

You have the right to be paid at least the **National Minimum Wage** from the age of 16.

You can undertake some **part-time work** below 16, but there are strict rules about this (article 32).

If you are a **young parent** you have the right to advice, information and help with **childcare** (articles 26 & 27).

You have the right to information about **public transport** (buses and trains), **cheaper fare schemes** and **rider training schemes**.

You can learn to **ride a moped** at 16 and to **drive a car** at 17.

You have the right to advice about **housing** and how to find a place to live. You may be entitled to extra help if you have special circumstances such as you were in care, are pregnant or you are 16 or 17 and have nowhere to sleep (article 27).

You have the right to advice about **benefits** if you are 16 or over. 16 and 17 year olds may be able to claim if living away from home, are pregnant, a parent, unable to work because of illness or disability, or, in some cases, if unemployed. Once you reach 18, you have the same rights to claim benefits as all other adults (article 26.)