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Children in Care Council and Engagement of Care Leavers Update

Purpose

1.1 Children in Care Council (CICC) Summary

There has been one meeting of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) since the last report, held in September. There was no meeting in July at the request of the CiCC due to the summer holidays.

- I. The Children's Rights Service (CRS) attended the meeting in September to talk about the advocacy support it offers to young people in care. The CiCC were asked to review a service leaflet. Their feedback will be used to create a new leaflet.
- II. At the meeting the CiCC began to work on a dictionary of appropriate words for professionals to use when speaking to young people about their care. It is intended to bring this to the next Corporate Parenting meeting.
- III. The CiCC members discussed holding a celebration event for children in care that recognises individual achievements. The Participation Officer is taking this forward with the CiCC, Independent Reviewing Officers and Social Workers.
- IV. The CiCC are currently planning for Takeover Day which is scheduled for November and December and offers children in care the opportunity to work alongside people in decision making roles. Information has been circulated to young people about how they can take part.
- V. The Children's Rights Service is being reviewed and CiCC were asked what they thought should be provided by an advocacy service. Their views will feed into the new service specification for when the service is reprocured.

1.2 Engagement of Care Leavers Summary

- I. Derby Theatre has held a planning meeting with care leavers to identify the topic areas they want to discuss during an eight week engagement programme, running between November and December. Some sessions will be attended by the Participation Officer.
- II. Care leavers attended a summer event in the Peak District in August and have planned another visit over the Christmas period with a member of the leaving

care team.

- 1.3 This report highlights the work the CiCC have been doing, what is important to them and how they impact on services. It explains the challenges they face which Corporate Parenting Committee may be able to help with. This report also highlights engagement of care leavers across the local authority.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider the content of the report and feedback from CiCC and engagement with Care Leavers.

Reason

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee need to know that the CiCC is being run well. It provides information and evidence that the voices of the children and young people in care is being heard and having a direct influence on services. The report also ensures that the voice of young people is heard at the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Supporting information

4.1 Children in Care Council

The Children's Rights Service (CRS) came to talk to the CiCC about their services and how young people in care can access them. The CRS explained that young people can self-refer for the advocacy service, and do not need to be referred by keyworkers. The CRS also talked about the Independent Visitor Service and how referrals for this service came from social workers. The CRS asked the young people about the design of a new leaflet for the advocacy service.

Feedback about the current leaflet from the CiCC was:

- It looked too wordy.
- The images needed to be of younger people.
- They would like it in two colours to make it stand out.
- They felt that a smaller leaflet that could be picked up more easily with information on would be more appealing.

The new leaflet will be brought back to the group by CRS once finalised.

- 4.2 The CiCC have been working on a dictionary of terms that they would like professionals to use when working with children in care. The terms considered in the September meeting were:

- Advocate
- Birth Parents
- Care Leaver
- Care Plan
- Contact
- Corporate parent
- Foster parent
- LAC review
- Respite

Alternative terms were suggested; the dictionary will be finalised and brought to the next Corporate Parenting meeting.

- 4.3 The CiCC have expressed an interest in holding a celebration event for children in care. The event would focus on individual achievements. The Participation Officer will take this forward with the CiCC, Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers.
- 4.4 Takeover day will be taking place in November and December this year. Takeover day is an opportunity for young people in care to assume decision making roles to gain experience and influence positive change for children in care. Opportunities for Children in Care have been secured with the CEO of Derby City Council, Legal Services, Childrens Commissioning, NHS Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Democratic Services. Opportunities with the Derby Telegraph, Radio Derby and Derby Theatre are also being explored. Information for children in care has been provided to Independent Reviewing Officers and the Fostering and Adoption Team. We are awaiting confirmation from the Children's Commissioner of the option of visiting Westminster.
- 4.5 The Children's Rights Service is being reviewed and the CiCC were asked what they thought should be provided by an advocacy service, and what should be in place.

They suggested:

- A poster to promote the service.
- Accessible advocates - good promotion to children in care.
- Somebody to help them access the service (such as Social Workers and IRO's, rather than self-referral).
- Being able to talk to and meet advocates before starting support.
- An Independent Visitor to be a care leaver or younger person.
- Access to advocate profiles.

Their views will feed into the new service specification for when the service is reprocured.

4.6 Engagement of Care Leavers

Derby Theatre has held a planning meeting with care leavers to identify topic areas to be discussed during an eight week engagement programme, running between November and December. This will include two topic areas identified by the Leaving Care Improvement Board. Feedback will be provided to the Local Authority and used to shape services.

4.7 There will soon be an external evaluation of the Local Area Co-ordinator role, for Care Leavers, which will be presented to the Corporate Parenting meeting once completed.

4.8 Care Leavers attended a summer event in the Peak District in August, and have planned another visit over the Christmas Period with a member of the leaving care team.

4.9 The next CiCC meeting will focus on compiling the autumn 'Focus on Us' newsletter that will be distributed to all Children in Care in October.

Public/stakeholder engagement

5.1 This report summarises engagement with the Children In Care Council on topics that affect them.

5.2 This report provides an overview of the engagement being held with care leavers across the city.

Other options

6.1 None noted

Financial and value for money issues

7.1 None Noted

Legal implications

8.1 None noted

Other significant implications

9.1 None noted

This report has been approved by the following people:

| Role | Name | Date of sign-off |
|---------------------|--|------------------|
| Legal | | |
| Finance | | |
| Service Director(s) | | |
| Report sponsor | Gurmail Nizzer, Director of Integrated Commissioning (CYP) | 10/10/2019 |
| Other(s) | Lisa Melrose, Head of Commissioning (CYP) | 10/10/2019 |
| | Emma Humphrey, Commissioning Manager | 10/10/2019 |

Background papers:

List of appendices:
