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Director of Integrated Commissioning
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Participation

ITEM 5

Children in Care Council Update

Purpose

1.1 Children in Care Council Report Summary:

There have been four meetings of the Children in Care Council (CICC) since the last report, October, November, December and January.

- I. At October's meeting the CICC developed questions for the foster carer recruitment panel. The Looked After Children's Nurse also attended the meeting and the CICC gave their feedback on the annual report for Children in Care and an NHS website for CIC.
- II. November's meeting was attended by the Children in Care Commissioning Manager who talked to the group about foster carers (recruitment and assessment). The group talked about what made a good foster carer and why it was important. They also gave their view on what makes a good foster home. Councillor Ashburner attended the meeting.
- III. A Christmas Party was held in December where the CICC members had a tour of the fire station where the meetings are held, the group also had a Christmas party. There was a Christmas event on 12 December where CICC members went for a meal at an Indian restaurant in Derby.
- IV. January's meeting focussed on services that help children affected by Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). In January two new CICC volunteers from Fostering and Adoption Services joined the group, as two previous volunteers have now left. The volunteers will support young people during CICC meetings and will be discussing the Foster Care Charter.

1.2 Throughout the months of November and December Children in Care in Derby were invited to take part in a Takeover Challenge. This is a National initiative where Children in Care are encouraged to undertake work experience in decision making roles. 6 young people took part in Takeover Day, with 1 young person attending Whitehall to shadow the Secretary of State.

1.3 This report highlights the work the Children in Care Council (CICC) have been doing and how they have had an impact on services. It also explains the challenges they

face which the Corporate Parenting Committee may be able to help with.

- 1.4 It provides information on numbers attending and the issues that have been talked about in last three months.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider the content of the report and the feedback from the CICC.

Reason

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee needs 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 the young people is heard at Corporate Parenting.

Supporting information

- 4.1 Since the last report, there have been four meetings of the CICC (October, November December and January).
- 4.2 On 3 October, 5 CICC members attended the meeting. Two Fostering and Adoption Recruitment Officers came to talk to the group. The officers asked the CICC to help them to form questions for the Foster Carer recruitment panel. The Group were asked the following:

- i. What is a good foster carer?

The group explained that a good foster carer is: kind, funny, honest, and motivational. They said that they should listen to young people, have a warm heart, give pocket money, involve young people in activities, help to tidy the young person's bedroom and be brave.

- ii. What questions should foster carers be asked when they are applying to care for children?

The CICC members said that they would need to know their bedtime, how long they need to do their homework, if the carer smokes, if there are other children in the home, if there are parks nearby, if mobile phones are allowed, if the foster carer is untidy, how big their bedroom would be and if they have any brothers and sisters.

This feedback has been provided to the Fostering and Adoption Team who will reflect the views of the children and young people in the foster carer recruitment process.

- 4.3 At October's meeting the Looked After Children's nurse also asked the group about their experiences of annual health checks for children in care. The CICC members gave the following feedback:

- i. The CICC wanted the nurse to already have their health information.
- ii. The CICC explained they would like to keep talking about their health.
- iii. The CICC members said that they would like to see their nurse twice a year and see the same nurse.
- iv. The young people said that they don't like it when nurses ask them too many questions.
- v. The group also said that they would prefer to answer questions alone with the nurse so that they didn't feel awkward in front of their foster carer.

This information has been feedback to the Looked After Children's nurse.

- 4.4 On 7 November the CICC meeting was attended by 6 members. A Senior Commissioning Project Officer and a Commissioning Manager from the Children and Young People's Commissioning Team came to the meeting. They asked the group the following questions:

- i. Why is it important to be a Good Foster Carer?

The CICC members stated that it is important so that young people have someone to talk to. The CICC members explained that it is important to be helped with homework and problems at school. They also felt that it was important to have somebody to give young people advice and help with any problems they might have. The group also said that it was important for young people to be taken to where they needed to go.

- ii. What makes a good home?

The CICC members explained that a home should have: a garden, a private bedroom for young people, Wi-Fi, shower and a bath, a fire escape plan, windows, working smoke alarm and no trailing wires.

This feedback will be used by the Childrens Commissioning Team as part of Fostering recruitment and assessment.

Cllr Ashburner also attended the November meeting and answered some questions from the CICC. The CICC said that they valued Cllr Ashburner's visit as it helped them to understand how the council works and how decisions are made.

- 4.5 On 7 December 7 young people attended the CICC meeting. The members had requested a relaxed meeting before the Christmas break. The group had a tour of the fire station where the meetings are held and were able to sit in the fire engines and listened to a fire officer, who talked to them about the tools that are used in an emergency. Following this tour the group had a Christmas party.
- 4.6 A Christmas event was held on 12 December and 7 young people attended. The CICC members went to an Indian restaurant in Derby for a meal and received some gifts that had been donated from the Lush store.
- 4.7 On 9 January 6 young people attended the CICC meeting. A Commissioning Project Officer came to the meeting to talk to the group about the services in Derby that were available to help keep children safe. For example the Child Sexual Exploitation Service. The young people were asked the following questions:

i. How can we keep young people safe?

The CICC members said that young people should receive online safety training about how to keep safe. They also said that apps such as, find my iPhone may be useful to track the whereabouts of young people if they were worried about not being safe. The group suggested that mobile phones should be provided to young people and SMART tracking watches.

ii. How can we work with foster carers?

The group suggested that foster carers should receive training in exploitation and how to recognise signs that a young person may be experiencing abuse. The CICC members also said that it would be helpful for foster carers to have a social support group so that they could share ideas or worries with other adults.

iii. Who would you like to talk to about CSE?

The CICC said that if they did not feel safe they would talk to: their head of year, the school council, somebody they trusted, maybe go to The Keep service, ChildLine or a professional. The young people also said that they might tell somebody at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). CICC members said that education in schools should start in primary school in a simple way and be reinforced in year 7. The group stated that information videos and young people's stories were useful. The CICC members said that they could also find advice online.

This information will be fed into the review of Derby's current Child Sexual Exploitation Service.

- 4.8 Takeover Challenge happens on a yearly basis in November. The challenge puts children and young people into real-life decision-making positions in organisations. Children gain experience and valuable insight of a workplace, while organisations benefit from a fresh perspective on their work.

On 23 November one member of the CICC attended Whitehall and shadowed James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The young person enjoyed the experience and will be writing a column for the next Focus on Us newsletter.

- 4.9 Local opportunities for Children and Young People in Derby included: setting up and attending a full council meeting, shadowing a council member, experience with highways and gardening services, chairing a business planning meeting in Commissioning and planning the next CICC meeting, with the final opportunity being to shadow a Team manager within Adult's services. 6 young people took part and received certificates for their contributions, with one young person being offered the opportunity of further work experience.

- 4.10 The Participation Officer has developed relationships with schools to widen the access of the group to other children in care. The Participation Officer has agreed with 4 schools in Derby that the topics discussed at the CICC will also be covered within school with those young people in care who cannot attend CICC meetings. Feedback will be provided to the Participation Officer on a monthly basis, this will then be provided to attendees of the group. The Officer has 3 more school visits confirmed for February.
- 4.11 There is a piece of work being undertaken with The University of Derby to provide experience days to young people in care relating to university opportunities.
- 4.12 The CICC previously reviewed the content of an NHS webpage for children in care. The group made a number of recommendations to the Looked After Children's Nurse regarding the content and age appropriateness of the information. As a result the group members have agreed to work in partnership with the Looked After Children's nurse to redesign the webpage.
- 4.13 The Focus on Us newsletter will be issued at the end of February. Members of the CICC are currently writing articles for the publication. The CICC have requested that the newsletter becomes a magazine that can be delivered to children in care and this is being explored by the group and Participation Officer.

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)	Gurmail Nizzer, Director of Integrated Commissioning (CYP)	
Report sponsor		
Other(s)	Lisa Melrose, Head of Commissioning (CYP)	28/1/19
Background papers:	none	
List of appendices:	none	