

Children in Care Council - Update February 2018

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Since 2015/16 it has been agreed that the Children in Care Council (CICC) would give a report to each Corporate Parenting Committee meeting, to help them work together. This is a chance for the Children in Care Council to share what they have talked about, been working on and the changes from their work. It is also a chance to share any challenges the Children in Care Council may have had, which the Corporate Parenting Committee may be able to help with or need to know about.
- 1.2 The report from the CICC describes the issues the CICC have talked about in meetings in the last three months, guests, participation opportunities, numbers of young people attending and the changes made.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To consider what is written in the report and make appropriate recommendations.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee needs to know the Children in Care Council is being run well, that young people are able to participate and have their voice heard and see changes made in the services they use and about any difficulties and progress made. The report also gives a voice for the Children in Care Council at the Corporate Parenting Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Since the last report, there have been 4 meetings of the Children In Care Council (October, 2 in November and January) and a Pledge event.

- 4.2 On 4th October, 9 members attended the Children in Care Council meeting. Peter Macauley (Fostering Manager – Recruitment and Assessment Team) came to the meeting and asked the members what they would like people to know when thinking about becoming a foster carer, and what makes a good foster carer. Peter took these ideas to his team to include in their work with new foster carers. Members also looked at how moves to new placements happen and what is important to them as children and young people at that time. The ideas and views were made into an information sheet for professionals, which was shown at the October meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee. This was sent with the CICC minutes to be sent on to managers of teams that work with children in care; for social workers, foster carers, supervising social workers and managers to think about the messages and how these can be used. It is not clear if workers in all teams have seen this yet. Members asked if young people could be involved in making a video for foster carers to give these key messages; and asked if carers could make video profiles for children and young people to see before they move. The Fostering team thought about these ideas. They decided video profiles might make it difficult to keep children safe in terms of keeping confidentiality of placements; they will continue to think about the possibility of a video to show to foster carers in their induction training. Members feedback on the Virtual School leaflet and these comments were passed to the Virtual School team and those changes were made.
- 4.3 On 1st November, 11 members attended the Children in Care Council meeting. Councillor Sara Bolton (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Safeguarding) and Andy Smith (Strategic Director of People Services) attended. Councillor Bolton thanked Amelia for going to the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting and talking about the Children In Care Council. Councillor Bolton and Andy Smith both encouraged more members to attend the Committee meetings in the future and asked them to think about what time and days would make it easier for young people to come to the meeting. They said the topics and an early draft of the reports could be sent to the Participation Officer to talk with the CICC members about before the meeting. Councillor Bolton gave members the date of the Pledge event, Tuesday 28th November, 6-7pm. Members were asked their views on what they would like from the event. Councillor Bolton explained pledge point 7 has been updated, after the July Pledge event, to include work experience and apprenticeships, and this has been printed as posters and pocket sized cards. Cards were given to members to take home. A group of members met with the Participation Officer before the meeting to write a new welcome/information pack to be given when children and young people first come into care. Members looked at the draft welcome pack in groups to give comments and ideas. The pack was changed using these comments and ideas. The design officer has made some designs that will be presented to the members for their views.
- 4.4 On 29th November, 13 members attended the meeting at the Council House and Christmas meal at Cosmos. The Participation Officer gave feedback from Peter Macauley in Fostering after his visit to the CICC (see information in 4.4). Fostering are making sure all their foster carers have a printed profile sheet that can be given to children and young people before they move. New foster carers going to the Fostering Panel for approval are

asked to have a family book (with photos and information about themselves). The Participation Officer shared feedback from Gareth Dakin, Deputy Head of Children In Care. Gareth said social workers are reminded about sending out social worker profiles by their managers. An audit done by an external person (where they look at what is happening for a small group of children and young people in care) found that this part of the pledge was being met. There were 3 members who reported they hadn't had a profile and these names were given to Gareth as he wanted to look into the individual cases.

Two members wanted to be involved with speaking to Newly Qualified Social Workers as part of their training programme and this will be happen in March 2018.

Members who were interested in going to the Corporate Parenting Committee meetings said they would prefer meetings to be in school holidays, in the daytime. Unfortunately there were no other members who wanted, or were able to, help with the interviews for the Participation Apprentice that week. The members were given the suggested interview questions and asked for further suggestions or changes. One member suggested "What would you do if a young person shared something worrying e.g. about mental health" and suggested the right answer would be to tell someone about it. This question was used in the interviews.

- 4.5 On 10th January, 7 members attended the Children in Care Council meeting. Kelly Thompson, Named Nurse came to the meeting to ask the members about the design and content of biographies for the nurses which will be sent to young people before their health assessment, and a feedback form which has been devised. Members gave their views and ideas, and Kelly said she would take these and make changes to the forms. Changes will be shown to the members. Zine Maingene and Rosanna Aten-Shearwood, Senior Training Officers came to the meeting to ask members about Assessments and Care Plans. Most of the young people at the meeting had not seen their assessments or care plans. Members gave their views on how they would like to be included when social workers are writing these documents and what they would like to see included. Zine and Rosanna said they will include this information in their training with social workers around assessments and care plans.
- 4.6 The Participation Officer encourages new members to join the Children In Care Council by going to team meetings, promotional and recruitment activities, training, committee meetings, and talking to social workers, team managers and Deputy Heads of Service. There are many new members who joined in 2017. Many new members have come from Independent Reviewing Officers talking to young people about it at their review meetings. There is a leaflet to tell young people and their carers about the Children In Care Council, designed with the members. This is now being given to young people, social workers and carers. A copy of this leaflet was sent to all young people (aged 10-18), with the Focus On Us newsletter in October 2017.
- 4.7 Each Residential Home has a member of staff who is the champion for the Children In Care Council. As champion, it is this person's role to help and encourage young people to go to the CICC meetings. The Participation Officer meets with the champions to help them encourage the young people to come to the meetings. This is an area we still need to work on, to make sure the Children In Care Council represents our range of young people and their experiences and views. The

Participation Officer and Deputy Head of Service also meet with the Head of Service for children's residential homes to talk about how to improve attendance.

- 4.8 There are now 4 Champions who support the Children In Care Council regularly. There is one new volunteer starting in 2018, with another volunteer hopefully joining later in 2018. The volunteers will carry on supporting the group in 2018 and giving excellent encouragement and support to the young people, as without their help the group could not run.
- 4.9 On 28th November a Pledge event took place at the Council House and 6 members attended. Officers gave young people an update on their pledges and how these will carry on being delivered over the next year.
- 4.10 Takeover Challenge is a national event organised by The Office of The Children's Commissioner for England. This year the Takeover Challenge ran from Monday 20th to Friday 24th November 2017. This was a chance for young people to develop skills by working with others, problem solving, communicating with a range of people and making decisions. The day aims to give young people a chance to better understand how important decisions are made about issues that affect their community. It is also an opportunity to gain an insight into the world of work.
A number of departments throughout the Council offered opportunities to young people for a day or half day. Four young people took part in: a Stay and Play session at a Children's Centre, in the IT team at Connect Derby, in the IT department and in Public Health Commissioning.
In 2018 it would be excellent to see some opportunities in higher management positions. As Corporate Parents we want to encourage our children and young people to aim high.
- 4.11 The Participation Apprentice, Sandeep Chaggar, started on Monday 15th January. Sandeep will support the Participation Officer in the office and at the meetings. Sandeep is visiting many teams and shadowing different workers to get an understanding of the different experiences of children in care.
- 4.12 It has been agreed that a Mifi be bought so that the Participation Officer's laptop can connect to the internet during meetings. This will mean young people living further away can join in by an online conferencing website. This has been ordered and we are waiting for IT to confirm it has been delivered.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s)	
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Other(s)	
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Claire Hurst Participation Officer 01332 640269 Claire.Hurst@derby.gov.uk None None

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1 None arising from this report.

Legal

2.1 None arising from this report.

Personnel

3.1 None arising from this report.

IT

4.1 None arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

5.1 None arising from this report.

Health and Safety

6.1 None arising from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 None arising from this report.

Property and Asset Management

8.1 None arising from this report.

Risk Management

9.1 None arising from this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The content of this report links to the priority 'Protecting vulnerable children, young people, adults and older people'. We work to safeguard our children in care who can be vulnerable and sometimes need higher levels of support. This will involve helping early on if things are starting to feel difficult or unsafe (early intervention) and working to keep things safe and well (prevention) wherever possible.