

Corporate Parenting Panel

Monday 14 February 2021

CiCC & Participation Update

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Panel note the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), Care Leavers Forum (CLF) and the Participation Team.
- 1.2 That the Panel acknowledge the work that continues to take place with young people during the public health crisis.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This is a standing item on the Corporate Parenting Panel agenda which updates members on the work of the CiCC and CLF.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no significant financial implications to consider at this stage.

4. Environmental Implications

- 4.1 There are no significant environmental implications to consider at this stage.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 This update covers the period from 20th September 2021 to 17th January 2022.
- 5.2 **Warwickshire MHCLG Youth Homelessness Visit - 5th October**

Five young people met with the Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 5th October.

The young people's comments were as follows as presented by HAST in their feedback,

“Young Advisers Comments:

- The high rent in supported housing is a disincentive to working, and if in employment arrears can build up preventing move on – **it was suggested having a reduced rent towards the end of the stay in supported housing to enable a young person to work, save and achieve positive move on.** If a young person is out at work they are using less of the facilities/utilities and support on offer but paying the same.

- The different Allocation Polices in the DB's is confusing – **young people would like these to be clear and consistent.**
- Inspections of supported housing highlighted issues with:
 - Lack of staff training to provide the right advice to young people/gap in young people's knowledge of what is available to them.
 - Loneliness, increased by visitor restrictions.
 - Use of drugs in the premises and feeling unsafe in accommodation.
 - Being unable to work makes it feel both physically and mentally trapping.
- **A rent guarantor scheme available up to the age of 21 for care leavers was suggested.**
- Young Advisers were keen to have their voice heard by Ministers, **please share with them information on the Youth Homelessness Parliament where young people get the opportunity to present directly to the Minister for Housing. To find out more contact tamzin.reynolds-rosser@stbasils.org.uk**

"Can I once again thank all participants on the call on 5th October 2021, it was great to see people again and hear from those for who this was their first time joining. In particular, I want to thank the five Young Advisers; Alisha, Umar, Ian, Liss and Demi, for their thoughtful, honest and very helpful contributions and great to hear how well everyone is doing and I am grateful to Shinderpaul for organising for us." Jill Boak from HAST

5.3 National Advisor for Care Leavers Visit - 19th October 2021

Mark Riddell, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, from DfE, visited Warwickshire at Portland House in Nuneaton on 19th October 2021.

Mark Riddell was keen to learn about the progress that Warwickshire had made on the Care Leavers Offer and offered the following feedback post his visit.

"The recommendations are as follows:

1. Housing came across as a particular challenge and the need for more options for care leavers across the county.
2. A set of offers from each partner agency so that PA's and care leavers are clear about what is on offer.
3. To consider expanding your multi-agency approach with key partners so that care leavers can access support in a 'one stop' approach.
4. To review your Council Tax offer in line with the letter sent from MHCLG that asks all LA's to consider an offer up to 25yrs and that the exemption follows care leavers across LA (Local Authority) boundaries.
5. It would be good to see a leisure offer with a Plus 1 to care leavers up to 25yrs.

And finally, how well you have captured the voice of care leavers by engaging them in the co-production of their local offer is testament to your commitment to have an even better offer to care leavers.

Overall, what I heard and saw is a very strong offer to care leavers and I look forward to seeing you again in the new year."

5.4 **Ofsted Inspection of Local Area Children's Service 15th Nov – 26th Nov 2021**

As part of the Inspection meeting were with the Children in Care Council/Care Leavers Form on Weds 25th November and then with care experienced apprentices on Thurs 26th November.

The feedback from Inspectors was as follows,

- the inspectors wanted to pass on their thanks to all the young people they spoke to
- the inspectors said they were a vibrant bunch, and they said they could see how the young people are helping to make a real difference in Warwickshire
- the inspectors relayed back all the area of concerns the young people raised
- the inspectors have seen lots of CIC councils and Care leavers forums and mentioned that our group was really strong.

Participation was also identified as a strength by Inspectors.

A photo album covering 3 years of activities was put together to share with Ofsted Inspectors to help illustrate the scope and range of work undertaken with care experienced young people.

5.5 **Additional Corporate Parenting Panel Meeting - 18th October**

Four young people prepared and delivered a presentation to Districts and Boroughs on "What is Corporate Parenting?"

The purpose of the presentation was to "show how children and young people are able to influence the council's services and how improvements can be made to provide a better future for children in care."

5.6 **Local Offer for Care Leavers - Information Videos**

Two young people created 10+ separate videos on the topics listed below.

- Support from PA's
- Accommodation & Housing
- Education, Employment & Training x3
- Health & Wellbeing
- Relationships & Socialising
- Participation

The videos promote the Care Leavers Offer booklet titled, "What are you entitled to? A guide for Care Leavers."

The videos were sent out weekly, over October, November, December and January to Personal Advisors and separately to care leavers via the leaving care Facebook page.

5.7 CiCC meetings and topics

October – the meeting consisted of updates on projects being run in the Participation Team and up-coming events. The meeting discussed accessing files, how this looks to young people and what their thoughts are on what the process should look like.

November – the meeting took place face to face as a bowling activity in Coventry. During the games young people had the opportunity to give their opinions on some words that are used within the WCC to contribute towards the work we are doing on 'Watch Your Words – Dictionary of Care'.

December - we had another face-to-face CiCC meeting to celebrate Christmas. This included some games, foods, gifts, and prizes!

January - for the first meeting of the new year, January 11th 2022, along with a catch up, we discussed what young people would like to focus on and take to the Service Leadership Team during 2022.

5.8 Myton Park Allotment Update

3 further planting beds have been created by young people. This makes a total of 6 beds. 3 have been functional over the 2021 summer period with young people being keen to be involved. 3 further beds are now ready to be installed for 2022.

Seating benches have been bought and have been painted and decorated by young people. This work was led by a care experienced apprentice.

There is also now a proposal to set up vegetable beds in the grounds of WCC's first residential home in Stratford.

This current project at Myton Offices (Warwick) has given young people experience on how to set up an allotment. These young people have shown a willingness to volunteer in setting up allotment beds at the Residential Home.

The beds at Myton have been cleared and dug over in preparation for the winter and the new growing season from March 2022.

5.9 Sunday Football with UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children) Young People.

This is to report that football has been taken place every Sunday from 25th September to 12th December 2021 with Warwickshire's UASC young people.

The activity has been taking place at Sydney Stringer School in Coventry from 12-1.30pm.

The activity attracts young people from Birmingham, Coventry, and different parts of Warwickshire. Attendance has varied from 25-35 young people.

5.10 Halloween, Care Leavers Week & Christmas Events

Five young people took part in an activity at the Escape Rooms on 29th October to celebrate Halloween.

As part of Care Leavers Celebration Week (25th October – 31st October) the Care Leaving Service and Asylum Team organised trips for young people to Alton Towers, Drayton Manor Park and Weston Super Mare.

Christmas presents and meals were provided by two local charities and 38 were delivered to young people in and around the County on 21st December 2021.

A Christmas meal was prepared for young people who would have otherwise been alone at Christmas on 27th December at Myton Park Offices in Warwick.

5.11 National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum Awards & Full Council Recognition

Liss Phillips was nominated for 2 awards by the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum in October 2021 and won both. The awards were for Best Public Speaker 2021 & Champion of Champions 2021.

It is worth noting that these are the awards that Umar Teerab won in 2020.

Liss Phillips was invited to Full Council meeting on the 14th December to have her awards recognised by the Chair and Elected Members.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

An update report to be presented to the next Corporate Parenting Panel.

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): n/a

Other members: n/a