

Corporate Parenting Panel

15th January 2024

CiCC, CLF & Voice, Influence and Change Team 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 Voice, Influence and Change Team (Participation).
- 1.2 That the Panel acknowledge the work that continues to take place with young people.

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

This update covers the period from 5th September 2023 – 31st December 2023.

5.1 Children in Care Council Meeting Updates

12th September – Welcome back from the summer holidays. Going through the CiCC webpage and flyer and gathering thoughts and ideas.

10th October - Rachael Boswell, Rachel Thomas and Jackie Soulier in attendance to discuss young people's views about accommodation including foster homes, residential homes and supported accommodation. These views will be implemented into the Sufficiency Strategy.

- 14th November - Rebecca Clifford attended to gather some final thoughts around what makes a good foster carer, CiCC views to be included into the Hey Foster Carer booklet. Young people supported with creating videos and information for the CiCC webpage and flyer. Discussion around priorities for 2024 which were:
- Mental Health
 - Experiences/support in Education – going into schools to talk about children in care.
 - Life in care/life after care
 - Trips and Opportunities
 - Family Time
 - Not seeing social workers enough

5.2 **Care Leavers Forum Meeting Updates**

- 12th September – Cath Winton from Compass in attendance to talk to the group about the services that Compass provides. Cath also asked for views of young people about the name of a new service being developed. Young people were consulted about what they think would be helpful to have in a mental health box to support young people who are struggling with their mental health.
- 10th October - Rachael Boswell, Rachel Thomas and Jackie Soulier in attendance to discuss young people's views about accommodation including foster homes, residential homes and supported accommodation. These views will be included into the Sufficiency Strategy. Views and opinions sought around young peoples' experiences of being brothers and sisters in care.
- 14th November - Young people's views were sought on the rights and entitlements booklet in preparation for a re-design in the New Year. Young People also discussed access to records and what they know and understand about this.

5.3 **Care Experience Week – 25th October-1st November**

Throughout Care Experience Celebration Week, a number of events and activities were arranged for our care experienced young people to take part in. Throughout the week, good news stories and successes were shared across social media to celebrate young people on their achievements.

26th October – Winter Social took place at Myton Park where food was shared and games/activities were on offer to take part in.

27th October – Young Parent’s Party took place during the day for those young parents with care experience and their children. Lots of painting, pumpkin carving and children dressed up in their halloween outfits.



30th October – A meal was organised during the day at Myton specifically for young asylum seekers from Vietnam. In the evenings, a halloween movie night was organised at Hatter’s Space where young people could either watch a scary movie, or take part in



halloween crafts and activities.

31st October – Unaccompanied Young Asylum Seeking Children had the opportunity to have a meal in Coventry, socialise and meet new people.

1st November – Our British Care Leavers went to Nandos in Coventry to share in a meal together and socialise and meet new people.

5.4 **UASC Football Tournaments**

On 25th October Warwickshire was represented at a tournament in Milton Keynes in memory of a young person who sadly died. Teams from different counties were the Fire and Rescue service and Jaguar Landrover. Warwickshire players came in 2nd place, losing to the Fire Service in the final.

On 30th October the players were at another tournament in Walsall and this time came first and won the Care Leaver Week tournament!



5.5 **Apprentices Involved in Training**

The Voice, Influence and Change team have been working alongside the Practice and Learning Hub to ensure that young peoples' voices are embedded into training. This has included our apprentices with Care Experience helping to deliver the 'Improving the Journey Through Care' training and also being a part of the training for the Cohorts of newly qualified social workers focusing on communication with young people and language used.

5.6 **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Training**

A member of the Voice, Influence and Change team is continuing to deliver training to newly arrived young asylum-seeking children. This training has become a mandatory session for young people creating an opportunity to explore Relationships and Sex Education within UK. Sessions that took place recently are as follows:

26th September - Sudanese & Eritrean (8 Young people attended)

27th September - Kurdish & Pashtu (8 Young people attended)

18th December - Sudanese & Eritrean (2 Young people attended)

19th December - Kurdish & Pashtu (2 Young people attended)

5.7 **Youth Conference – 3rd November**

On 3rd November, the Voice, Influence and Change team along with colleagues from the wider Quality and Impact team planned and hosted with young people the "Voices of Tomorrow" Warwickshire Youth Conference which was attended by over 125 young people.

The conference was jointly funded with Warwickshire County Council by Warwick University through a partnership set up by Child Friendly Warwickshire. The Slate building at Warwick University was a fantastic venue

for the event with the use of breakout rooms in the adjacent building for workshops.

Eight workshops were available to young people on themes chosen by them. Twenty organisations provided stalls on local organisations and businesses. A range of fun activities were also on offer for part of the day including a graffiti wall, pick n mix station and arts and craft table.

Feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees describing it as well-organised and safe. One young person said: *"I loved it! I would really like to go again. I had a wonderful time."*

Another said, *"This conference gave us that chance by creating a space to talk with each other and to local organisations about our views on issues we care about and how we can make a difference and shape our communities."*

A report highlighting key elements of the conference can be accessed here [Voices of Tomorrow Warwickshire Youth Conference 2023](#)



5.8 Residential and Brothers and Sisters Feedback

Following on from the brothers and sisters residential in August 2023, a follow up activity was organised to gain the children's views and opinions. As part of the activity young people were asked about the residential and their experiences of being siblings in care and not living together. An event was hosted at the Jump In trampoline park with an area booked for food and feedback after the session.

Feedback was also sought from the Care Leavers Forum in October around experiences of being brothers and sisters in care. Below are some examples of the feedback recorded for each area:

Feedback from children and young people who attended the residential

“Liked it. I was able to spend time with my siblings.”

“Meeting and being with people in a similar situation to myself was good.”

“It was really good!”

Feedback when asked if children had 5 minutes with a manager, what would they want them to know:

- *“Stop separating us”*
- *“Stop taking them (brothers and sisters) away”*
- *“Let us write to each other more”*
- *“I am happy with how things are”*
- *“We want more contact”*
- *“They have phones, let them call each other”*
- *“We want more things to do with each other”*
- *“Explain why we don’t live together better”*
- *“Keep explaining reasons to me for my age at that time”*

Feedback from Care Leavers Forum

- More support connecting with brothers and sisters still in care even when they had left care.
- More family time with brothers and sister in care and/or with family members.

Please see the link below to the full report shared with the Senior Leadership Team in November:

[SLT Young People Voices Update - 16.11.2023.docx](#)

5.9 **DfE Befriending and Mentoring Programme Bid – Grandmentors**

At the end of August 2023, Warwickshire applied for some funding from the DfE as part of their Befriending and Mentoring Programme to support the work of our current Grandmentors programme with the charity Volunteering Matters. At the end of November, we found out we had been successful in securing £107,000 to support this work until the end of March 2025. This money will ensure that young people with care experience aged 14+ will have the opportunity to have a mentor to support them at a stage in their life where this could be a great support. Warwickshire is working closely with the Grandmentors coordinator to increase referrals to this valuable service.

5.10 **Care Leavers’ Christmas Party – 13th December**

On 13th December, around 100 care leavers attended their annual Christmas Party, which took place at the Collingwood Centre at Rugby school. The event included a mocktail station, pizza van, raffle with fantastic prizes and live music and entertainment. The evening was also well attended by staff from

Warwickshire County Council who were able to spend time with their young people and celebrate with them.



5.11 **Children in Care Christmas Bowling – 13th December**

On 13th December, 25 children in care chose to go bowling for their Christmas Party. The children were given the option of ice skating, trampolining and bowling and the majority wanted bowling. Staff from the Voice, Influence and Change team and the Children in Care team attended and played alongside the children. The evening included a meal and the chance to socialise and engage with each other.

5.12 **Pantomime Trips – 16th and 17th December**

On the 16th and 17th December, children in care with their foster families were given the opportunity to go and see the pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk, in Leamington Spa. A total of 110 tickets were purchased and distributed to families that wanted to attend, including some sibling groups attending together who are in different foster homes. This provided an excellent opportunity for foster carers to meet other families and enjoy an experience together in the lead up to Christmas.

5.13 **Norma's Hampers**

This Christmas, Norma (an ex-Warwickshire foster carer) produced around 250 hampers to send out to Care Leavers to support them over the Christmas period. Warwickshire staff members from the Corporate Parenting team and Quality and Impact team supported by collecting items to go into the hampers and providing money to buy essential food and hygiene items. Together with Morrisons, Evelyn's Gift and the Fire and Rescue team, all these items were delivered to Norma's house to be able to make up the hampers ready to be collected and delivered to young people by their Personal Advisors.



5.14 **Mental Health Boxes**

A member of the Voice, Influence and Change team has worked and partnered with different organisations to be able to provide 12 mental health boxes for care leavers. Although not a solution to their mental health issues, the boxes are aimed to provide support whilst they are seeking further help. The box includes:

- Weighted blanket
- Meditation kit
- You're not alone book
- Acupuncture rings
- Hygiene items
- Fidget toys & stress ball
- Hot chocolate & biscuits
- Cosy socks
- £30 Sports Direct voucher (limited availability)
- Free GYM session voucher

In addition to the box, there is an A-Z guide of mental health services that the young people are able to access for additional support.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps.

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

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

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The report was not circulated to the following members prior to publication: