

Young People Engagement

Executive Summary:

The Children in Care Council is a forum where young people looked after by Walsall are able to shape and influence the parenting they receive at every level. The Council aims to give children and young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives and input to the setting of local authority strategies which affect those in or who have recently left care.

Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:

To update the Board on the activities and events of the Children in Care Council.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Board notes the progress of the Children in Care Council.***

Background papers:

None

Corporate Parenting Pledges

Our Pledge to Care Leavers

- We will improve the transition into adulthood so that all young people leaving care are better prepared and supported to live independently.
- We will improve access to education, employment and training and help you with your career plans.
- We will help you to experience stability in your lives, and feel safe and secure, including help to find and keep a stable place to live.
- We will provide improved access to health support, and go to medical appointments with you if you are worried to go alone.
- We will help you learn about budgeting and what bills to pay to help achievement of financial stability.
- We will respect you as individuals, not judge you on the past, and we will believe in your future.
- We will listen to you, hear what you say and spend some time with you away from the office

Resource and legal considerations:

The appointment of a dedicated officer was agreed in 2018 and the Children's Champion was appointed in May 2018.

The response to drive improvements plays a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

Citizen impact:

The services and the improvements play a key role in the quality of life and outcomes for the children, young people and families of Walsall. The Council and its partners as Corporate Parents make critical contributions to improve outcomes.

Environmental impact:

None

Performance management:

The Children's Champion is works with children looked after and care experienced young people to ensure that that the Council4Kids is rich and engaging forum. Regular reports are provided to the Director of Children's Services, Corporate Parenting Board as well as the Corporate Parenting Steering Group which is chaired in the Assistant Director.

Reducing inequalities:

The report sets out the response to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and families

Consultation:

The Children in Care Council is one of the key forums through which services for children in care and care leavers seek to consult on service delivery and where Children and Young People are able to shape and influence the parenting they receive at every level

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Report: Children in Care Council

- 1.0** The Children in Care Council is a forum where young people looked after by Walsall are able to shape and influence the parenting they receive at every level. The Council aims to give children and young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives and input to the setting of local authority strategies which affect those in or who have recently left care.
- 1.1** Walsall has an active Children in Care Council with approximately 12 active young people who participate within group settings, consultation or virtually. We have a diverse range of members whose ages range between 11 and 18 years, and we are continuing to recruit new members. We have active apprentices who work within Walsall Council and are also part of the Children In Care Council.
- 1.2** Young people have the opportunity to undertake work experience within the Participation Team and actively engaging in consultations
- 2.0** The Children in Care Council now meets every three weeks to discuss issues that matter to them and to update the Council of work undertaken within different services.
- 2.1** Refreshments are provided at each meeting and members are given vouchers as an incentive when they attend regular and to say thank for their time.
- 2.4** We are continuing to promote the Children In Care Council to ensure all children with care experience and care leavers are aware there is a platform for them to influence decisions that affect them and the services they access.
- 3.0** The Children's Champion and a young person will speak to children and young people who are interested in becoming members prior to attendance. The purpose of the Children In Care Council will be explained to ensure they have an understanding of the Council.

3.1 Constitution and Term of Reference

The Constitution and Terms have Reference has been completed and approved by the Children In Care Council and shared at the Corporate Parenting Board on February 18th 2019.

3.2 Diary of events

The diary is updated every three months with planned events until the year end and these are set out below. Invitations are sent out through appropriate channels of communications and to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Date	Activity or Event
2 nd April 2019	CICC - Charsvisionarys - Workshop
15 th April 2019	Corporate Parenting Board
24 th Apr 2019	Train the Trainer Total Respect
14 th May 2019	Children In Care Council Meeting
15 th May 2019	Stop & Search Workshop Children Know your Rights
4 th June 2019	Children In Care Council Meeting
2 nd July 2019	Children In Care Council Meeting
30 th July 2019	Summer Event
5 th Aug 2019	Madame Toussards
19 th Aug 2019	Black Country Museum
3 rd Sept 2019	Children In Care Council Meeting
24 th Sept	Children In Care Council Meeting
1 st Oct 2019	Children In Care Council – Theatre Evening Wizard of Oz
25 th Sep 2019	Children in Care - Carpool Karaoke

3.3 Activity that Young People have been involved:

Total Respect	<p>Young People and professionals from the Council and Children's Society undertook the Train the Trainer that have widened the pool of trainers for the programme. Total Respect.</p> <p>Training has been delivered on 17th April, 8th May 5th June and (See Appendix 2) further dates are planned for July and September 2019.</p>
Walsall Children's Safeguarding Board - participation in consultation panel	Young people are continuing to work the Walsall Children's Safeguarding Board to become the fourth partner and have established a Youth Shadow Board with a range of young people.
Carpool Karaoke	Fun event to build relationships between the Children and Young People and their social workers, personal advisors, team managers, head of the virtual school. The

	<p>council invited range of staff who work with them to get to know them better and build positive relationships.(See appendix 2 for example of questions asked)</p> <p>Further events of this nature have been set at the request of children and young people. Young People Corporate Parents</p>
Coram Voices	<p>Young people have entered into the Coram Voices annual writing competition. A young person has been selected from 200 entrances as a finalist and attending an award ceremony in London and present her poem at the full Council Meeting in June 2019.</p> <p><i>Well done to Hannah who entered Coram Voices Writing competition and attending an awards ceremony in London and presenting at the Council Meeting</i></p>
Care Leavers Covenant	<p>Care Leavers Covenant Advisory Panel supported the “Ready When You Are” signatory event with the Children’s Minister, Nadhim Zahawi.</p> <p>Care leavers will be consulting on new resources developed for care experienced young people by Barclays Bank in supporting them to manage their finances.</p>
Children’s Society	<p>Walsall Care leavers have been invited to work with the Children’s Society’s National campaign around Crises Support.’ Strengthening the Net’ in July 2019 and are seeking young people’s input on what child friendly support looks like.</p>
Consultation for Walsall Right 4 Children Logo colours	<p>A part of the transformation programme young people from CICC has been consulted to consider how school exclusions can be reduced.</p>
Consultation in setting up the Adolescence Support Service with Project Manager	<p>Young people have been involved in the transformation programme and participated in the interview process for the new adolescence service.</p> <p>Young people will be part of an ongoing advisory panel over the next three months with new staff to look at the operational model. They are working with Beverley Barnett Jones and Children’s Champion</p>
Annual Survey The Pledge	<p>Annual Survey now completed.</p> <p>A plan of action to be put in place to role this out, the outcome will support the review of the pledges and Corporate Parenting Board priorities for 2020/2021. Survey will commence in July and will be open for 8 weeks.</p>

Diary of events Activities and trips	Diary planned in advance Young People are planning summer events and trips with the Respect , Children in Care Council and New Belongings drop-in.
Stop and Search	Young people hosted a Stop and Search Work shop around understanding your rights, which was delivered by a Youth Trainer (See appendix 3 for feedback)
Interview Panels	Young people have prepared questions and participated in interview panels for Adolescent Support Service, the Step Up Programme for Social Work at Birmingham University and upcoming recruitment for appointments over the summer.
In development	Children in Care Council are developing a football team to promote positive social interaction with Corporate Parents, neighbouring local authorities whilst trying to reduce isolation and loneliness.

3.4	<p><u>Drop-in support 18 to 25 year olds</u></p> <p>The Transition and Leaving Care Hub continue to offer a drop in support group.</p> <p>The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is available for extra support if young people are feeling anxious or stressed. Young people are accessing this on a regular basis.</p> <p>The Transition and Leaving Care Nurse has regular presence at the Hub to be available for children in care and care leavers.</p> <p>Care leavers Covenant have visited the Hub to recruit Care leavers to become more actively engaged in the Covenant.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Virtual School Activities</u></p> <p>Virtual school hosted a series of interactive events during the Easter holiday and this included Graffiti art, den building, cake decorating and “have a go arts day”</p> <p>There is a residential planned 12-14th July to Edgmond Hall Outdoor Centre for year 6 students who will be going into year 7. The aim is around friendship building with other students when they start secondary school, which will also give them the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have during this transitional period.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Issues raised by the young people</u></p> <p>Young people have not raised service wide issues however there has been some specific issues for individual young people, which have been taken up on their behalf with the relevant social worker and team manager.</p>

3.7	<p><u>Compliments and achievements from Children in Care and Care leavers</u></p> <p>The young people stated the Carpool Karaoke event that they came up with:</p> <p><i>‘was very enjoyable however would have like more Social Workers present as this was an opportunity to learn more about Social Workers and the service’.</i></p> <p>Young People said <i>‘it was a fun event and like having the professionals there answering the questions we put together’.</i></p>
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Appendix 1 : Questions from Carpool Karaoke

- What is your proudest moment being a Social Worker/ PA/ Support Worker/ Manager when working with CYP in care?

It makes me proud every day, seeing my young people smile! Even during the hardest times when I know, you are strong enough to get through these and we have good outcomes!

- How old were you when you became a Social Worker or started work for Social Services?

I went to University at age 18 and was 22 when I became a social worker 😊

- What or Who inspired you to become a social worker/ Support Worker/PA/Manager?

'My personal life experiences. I thought it would be beneficial for me to understand where young people are coming from and some of my own experiences would also help me to always put the children first'.

- What is the best part of your job when working with Children and young people?

'When they tell me I am a good social worker. When I do something, which makes them happy, i.e. listening to their wishes and feelings'.

- When is it ok for young people to swear?

'We are all human and sometimes young people get angry and social workers do understand this'.

- Do you always agree with the decisions of your manager? If you do not agree how you make sure, your voice is heard.

'During chats with my manager, if I think something is not the best for the young person I will speak to my manager about this'.

- How are you promoting the Children in Care Council?

'Ensuring children are aware of the council and speaking to foster carers/young people about it during visits to them'.

- Why do you always take us to MacDonald's?

'Because sometimes I know it gets boring sitting in the house talking right after school. It don't always have to be Macdonald's though, let me know where you would like to go😊'



Appendix 2 - Feedback from Total Respect:

What are you expecting to learn from the training today?

'hearing the Voice of young people in Walsall'

'How to engage well with children and families'

'Gain a deeper understanding of young people's experiences'

What is your overall rating of this programme?

82% of participants rated the programme as excellent

91% of participants rated the trainer knowledgeable of the subject.

91% of participants liked the style and delivery of the programme.

Participants were asked what part of the course they would change.

'The length of the course as I felt the course could be half day'

'Nothing the trainers were excellent'

'The course was fantastic thought provoking, wouldn't change anything'

'To many activities'

