

**Title of the Report: Young People Engagement.**

**Executive Summary:**

The Council4Kids, the “children in care council”, is the forum where Walsall’s looked after children, young people and care leavers are able to shape and influence the parenting and support that they receive. Since the last Corporate Parenting Board on 7 January 2020 the CICC has met twice.

***Reason for bringing to the Corporate Parenting Board:***

To inform the Corporate Parenting Board about enrichment activities provided for Looked After Children and care leavers between since January 2020

***Recommendations:***

- 1. The Board notes the activity and events of the Children in Care Council***

**Background papers:**

None

**Corporate Parenting Pledges**

Our Pledge to Looked After Children

- *The Council’s Pledge to Looked After Children is currently being updated: children and young people are being consulted by means of a survey on proposed changes – this will be the subject a separate report to the Corporate Parenting Board in Early 2020. The current pledge:*
- Your Education
  - We will do everything we can to make sure you have the very best education and training possible.
  - You will be supported in taking up opportunities for further education and apprenticeships.
- Your Health
  - We will do everything we can to make sure that your health is regularly checked and your health needs are addressed.
  - We will support you to maintain and improve your health and wellbeing.
- A Good and Safe Place to Live
  - We will do all that we can to make sure you have a home where you feel safe, happy and healthy and where you feel well cared for and supported. We will make sure your carers have access to the support they need to make this happen for you.

- Things to do
  - We will make sure you have the opportunity to take part in sporting activities, youth clubs and other social activities without facing obstacles.
  - Your passport application will be treated as a priority especially where you live in a long term placement.
- Your Voice.....Your Influence
  - We will make sure you have chances to share your views, wishes and feelings. We promise to listen to you and tell you how your views and feelings are taken into account in making plans.
  - We will make sure you know what your rights are on a regular basis and information will be shared with you in a child friendly manner.
  - Contact with people who are important to you will be actively promoted and arrangements will clearly take into account your wishes and feelings.
  - We will support the Respect group to make sure that looked after children in Walsall have their voices heard. Members of the corporate parenting board will meet with children and young people at least four times a year.

#### 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 children in care council is supported by the Children's Champion.

#### **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 and the Corporate Parenting Board.

**Reducing inequalities:**


The children in care council seeks 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: Young People's Engagement and Children in Care Council

## 1.0 Introduction

Walsall's Council4kids is a forum where care experienced Children and Young People have a chance to meet, build friendships and networks and "Have a SAY" about the things that really matter in their lives. Children and young people are able to have influence and shape the services and policies which impact on the parenting and support that they receive at every level.

**1.1** Walsall Children in Care Council continue to meet every three weeks and new members are joining. We have an action plan which was presented at the last Board meeting.

**1.2 WhatsApp:** We listened to what young people are saying regarding communicating with them more effectively with the use of modern technology and are now piloting WhatsApp with key individuals which will be reviewed in six months. Young people have already started to communicate via WhatsApp and it is too early to evaluate the impact as this commenced in January 2020.

## 1.3 Key updates since January 2020

- We are preparing for the Pledge Workshop on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to ensure that we can reach many young people. Zoe Morgan met with the CICC on 14 January 2020 so that they could inform the planning and focus of the workshop. A targeted group of professionals will be involved to support the workshop which will be led by young people.
- A young person participated in the Department of Works and Pensions "Join the Workforce" in Manchester hosted by the Care Leavers Covenant. The event showcased the work of the Covenant with businesses and interviewed young people around their journey into the work force.

The young person talked about the Aspire to University programme and their journey into the work force. The young person said they really enjoyed the experience. A big thank you to LC's Social Worker who accompanied him and was very proud of his achievement. This experience gave LC the opportunity to network and build connections whilst boasting his self-esteem and confidence. ( See Appendix 1)

- The Participation Champions group have now been established and will be critical in increasing the awareness of the CICC with children, young people and their carers. The champions are passionate, enthusiastic and are very committed individuals who will work in partnership with the Children's Champion to promote the involvement and participation of children in care and care experienced young people.

The Participation Champions group is chaired by the Group Manager and will:

- Meet monthly
  - Support the Children in Care Council
  - Promote the events and activities within their services to ensure the opportunities and events are made to available to our young people.
- The Participation Apprentice post is under review to ensure that the recruitment to the post is affective.

## 1.5 **Our Meetings:**

1. Children in Care Council were consulted by the Office of National Statistics in conjunction with The Children's Society about their wellbeing and happiness. The Office of National Statistics will publish a report which will reflect exactly what children tell them about what is important for their well-being under general themes, such as autonomy, well-being, and relationships. The report will seek to inform future Government policy, charities and support workers, to parents and children themselves. This is also part of a wider project to update and review the national well-being measures for children's well-being.

The children and young people engaged really well and enjoyed the session. This gave them the opportunity to talk about their own wellbeing which they do not always discuss in an open forum such as this in terms of what really makes them happy or what was important to them. (See Appendix 2)

2. The young people attended the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2020 and were happy that they were listened to. The Board has responded positively to the suggestions young people made to make meetings more interesting and young people friendly. The Board was jointly chaired by a young person and he really enjoyed the experience and has not stopped talking about it since. This has boosted his confidence. We look forward to other young people having the same experience.

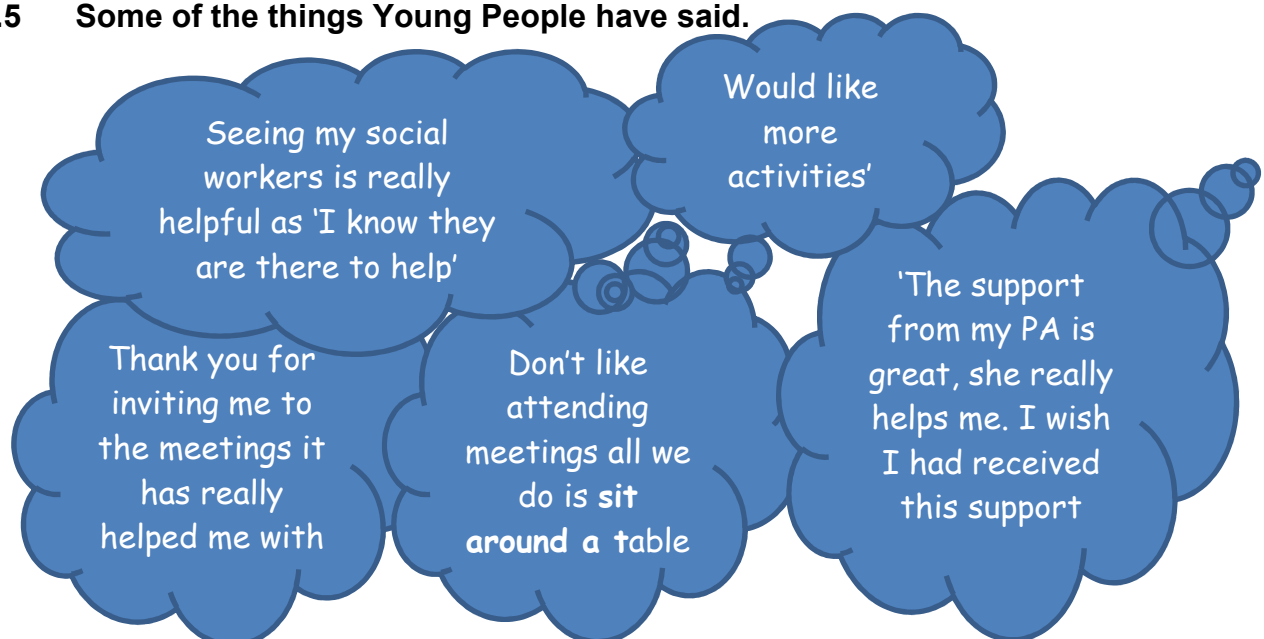
The next Corporate Parenting Board will be held at the TLC Hub, the young people's space which they requested.

3. Young people had the pleasure of meeting the new Group Manager for Provider Services, Mark Burrows, and the Young People entertained Mark with their humour in a very relaxed atmosphere, giving him advice about his new role asking questions around fostering and what could be done better. Young people will have the opportunity to be part of the Foster Carers selection process through Skills to Fostering.
4. Young people enjoyed an evening out as a Thank You for their hard work on the Advisory Panel for the New Adolescence Service Turning Point. This was a new experience for many, spending time

with their friends and the new manager and staff of the service who they helped appoint.

5. As part of young people's development they are planning a trip to Sheffield University to participate in training in evaluating services and this will enable the young people to learn new skills and be equipped to inspect services effectively. Young people are looking forward to this new learning experience as they will visit a new town and university.
6. We continue to partnership worked with the Rees Foundation. Following on from the success of the drop in café we now have a themed event for focused on how they can be supported when they want to access their records. ( See Appendix 3) A young person with lived experience of this process will be present to talk about their own experience and offer support to young people.
7. Young People have been nominated under the category of Inspiring Youth for the Walsall Community Recognition Awards and this is in recognition of the Children in Care Council young people who have been very committed in helping shape services and influencing decision making, they give their time and welcome new members unconditionally. They will have the opportunity to attend the recognition ceremony awards night on 19 March 2020 at Walsall Town Hall.
8. **Recruitment:** Always a firm favourite of our young people. Young People will be part of the panel for the Strategic Lead for Youth Justice and Head of Inclusions, again young people say this opportunity enables them to learn new skills and has helped with their development whilst boasting their confidence.
9. Young people are planning a fund raising event, they would like the event to represent the people of Walsall and further information will be shared when a date will be confirmed.

### 1.5 Some of the things Young People have said.



## 1.6 Celebrations and achievements of some of our young people:

- ✓ A big well done to all our young people'
  - ✓ Well done to The Children in Care Council who have been nominated for Aspiring Youths'
  - ✓ Well done LM who as achieved 100% attendance and 72% for good behaviour.
  - ✓ Big well done to all our young people who remain in education.
  - ✓ Well done SL the youngest and newest member of the Children in Care Council, who has given some well thought out feedback with confidence.
  - ✓ Well done SP and MA who delivered the Total Respect Training.
  - ✓ A big well done to LC who was invited to Manchester by the Care Leaver Covenant to participate in a Q and A style interview.
- ( See Appendix)

## 1.7 Total Respect Training:

Total Respect continues to be delivered monthly to professionals including Social Workers and Foster Parents by young people facilitated by members of the pool of Total Respect Trainers. The next date: 25<sup>th</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

## 1.8 Dates for forthcoming events and children in care council meetings

Have your Say Pledge Work Shop	17 February
Trip to the BBC	19 <sup>th</sup> February
Children in Care Council - Visitors	10 <sup>th</sup> March
Children in Care Council - Visitors	31 <sup>st</sup> March
Children in Care Council	21 <sup>st</sup> April
Children in Care Council	12 <sup>th</sup> May
Children in Care Council	2 <sup>nd</sup> June
Children in Care Council	23 <sup>rd</sup> June
Children in Care Council	14 <sup>th</sup> July
Children in Care Council	8 <sup>th</sup> September
Children in Care Council	25 <sup>th</sup> September
Children in Care Council	13 <sup>th</sup> October
Children in Care Council	3 <sup>rd</sup> November
Children in Care Council	24 <sup>th</sup> November
Children in Care Council	15 <sup>th</sup> December

\*\* Some dates may be subject to changes

## 1.9 TLC Drop in

The drop in continues to offer support for Care Leavers offering a safe space to socialise with other young people to reduce loneliness and isolation whilst having access to their PA's.

**Appendix 1**

**LC being interviewed at the Joint DWP The Work Force Event in Manchester hosted by The Care Leavers Covenant.**





Appendix 2

One of the Young people's top three things asked by The Office of National Statistics what makes them happy.

Research on children and young people  
Rank of most important things

What do you think are the most important things for children to have a happy life?

Please write the three things that are most important below.

- The most important will be under number 1,
- the next most important under number 2,
- and the next most important under number 3

1	The most important thing for a good life is: confidence
2	The next most important thing for a good life is: To live without judgemental people, positive relationships and to live without fear
3	The next most important thing for a good life is: <del>To be envied, not excluded</del> To go to the Malden and make memories

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**Appendix 2 continued**

**Young people being discussing what makes them happy.**



## Appendix 3

Flyers promoting the Access to records by the Ree's Foundation.



Are you a care leaver? Do you want support in accessing your records?

Come along and join us!

When: Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March

Time: 10am-2pm

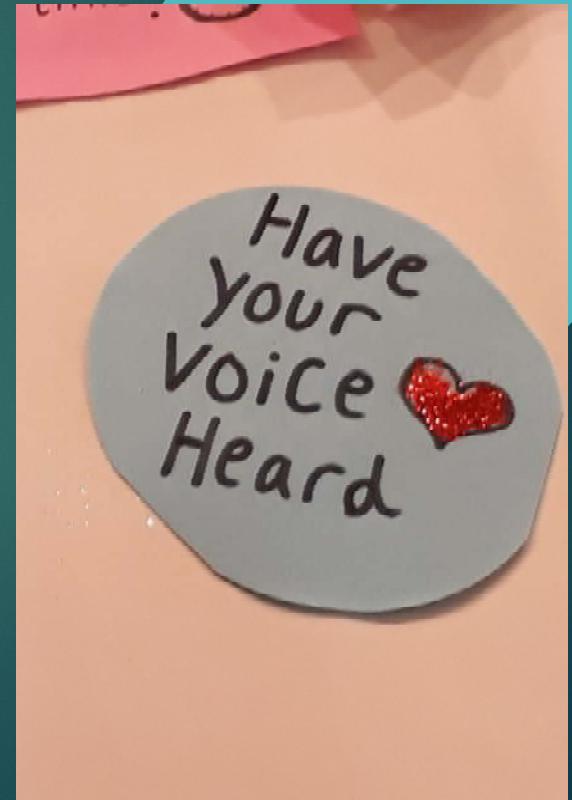
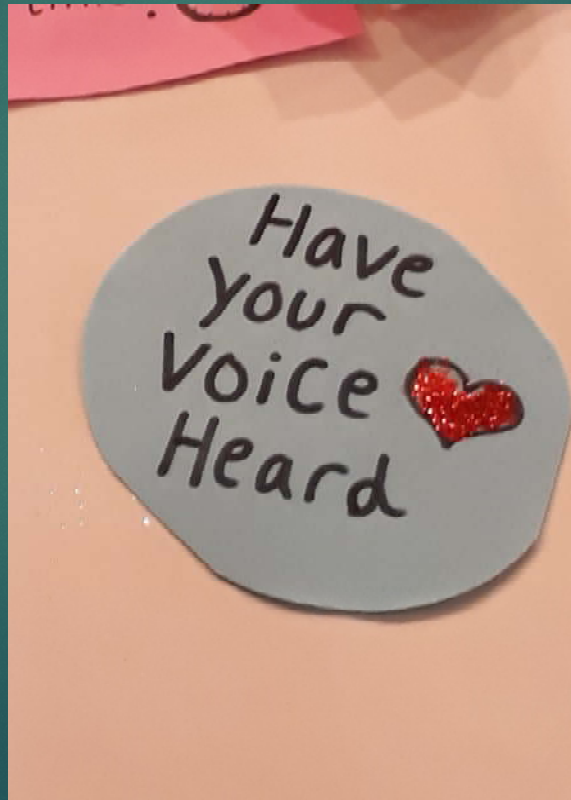
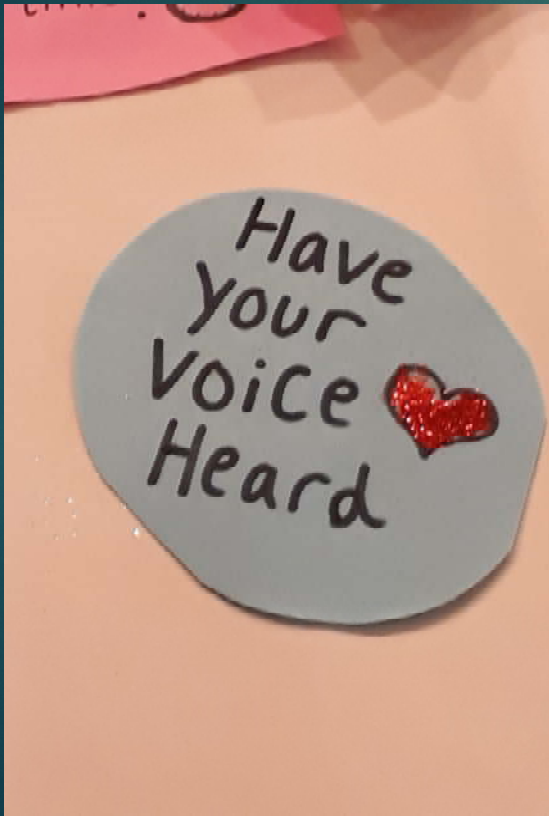
Where: TLC Hub, Brineton Street  
Walsall  
WS2 9EP



For more information/to register your interest, contact:

[michelle.cummings@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.cummings@walsall.gov.uk)

# CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL





# What we have done

- ▶ We meet every three weeks at the TLC Hub.
- ▶ We prefer to meet at TLC Hub so we can be more focused.
- ▶ We have met twice since the last Board meeting.
- ▶ The annual survey is now closed and we are looking at what it says
- ▶ We met with Mark and Zoe in January .
- ▶ One of us was interviewed by The Care Leavers Covenant in Manchester ( Lee's Story )
- ▶ We met with the Office of National Statistics to talk about our wellbeing





# Update

- ▶ Office for National Statistics came to our meeting to ask us about our well being and what things made us happy, the findings we be in a national report.





# Pledge Discussion



- We met with Zoe Morgan, Group manager for TLC and Corporate Parenting.
- We had a discussion about the Pledge and getting ready for our workshop 17<sup>th</sup> February.

# Another important visitor Mark Burrows.



- We met Mark Burrows who is the new Group Manager for Fostering, Residential Care and Placements Teams.
- We were able to ask questions about his new role.
- We also gave him advice to help him as he is new to Walsall.



# Calendar of Events

- ▶ Have your SAY Workshop on 17 February - We are looking forward to help renewing the pledge.
- ▶ 10 March - We are meeting with Sally and Colleen
- ▶ 27 March - We are meeting the Rees Foundation to look at how they can support us when we want to Access our Records
- ▶ We are planning a fundraiser event - We need to set the day and the theme is about the importance of Community and to represent our diverse community.







Walsall Children in  
Care Council 😊