

## Participation Report

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 29 March 2023

From: Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: An update on the activity of the Participation Service in relation to Children in Care.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.
- b) Raise any queries with the lead officers.

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Participation Team continues to promote the voice of children and young people in care by offering a variety of opportunities for engagement and feedback, and ensuring action is taken as a result of that feedback.
- 1.2 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) enjoyed the opportunity to meet Corporate Parents at the face-to-face informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee in January.
- 1.3 Work on the 'Every Word Matters' project continues, and audio for the video was recorded by children and young people in the February half term.
- 1.4 The Young Trainers delivered their first training session for student social workers on the Council's Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) in February.
- 1.5 Young people engaged with the Participation service across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire attended the first of two Youth Leadership training events in February, with the second scheduled for March.
- 1.6 The Participation Easter activities programme and annual awards date have been finalised and shared. The summer activities programme is in the process of being finalised.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The Participation Team continues to promote opportunities for children and young people through regular newsletters, as well as creating event-specific publications to encourage engagement. Recent newsletters have updated young people on the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), Care Leaver Forum (CLF) and other participation groups including the Young Inspectors, the latest on the 'Every Word Matters' project, and have promoted other relevant opportunities including opportunities with the National Children in Care Council, the charity Article 39 and the Prince's Trust.
- 2.2 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) enjoyed the opportunity to meet Corporate Parents again at the face-to-face informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee in January. The CiCC attendees shared their views on health services for Children in Care and the new Virtual School project on 'usualising' care.
- 2.3 The CiCC continues to meet in person on a monthly basis to work on projects and consultation requests, meet professionals and give feedback on services. Recent consultations have included a session on influencing the impact of services on young people with a councillor from South Cambridgeshire District Council. The CiCC has also scheduled in a visit from the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Children and Young people Committee in their March meeting.
- 2.4 The Care Leaver Forum (CLF) has been discussing their own care experiences and focusing on improving the support and preparation for young people leaving care. The Service Manager for the Leaving Care Service asked to consult Care Leavers about their experiences of finding suitable housing, to assist with writing a new Joint Housing Protocol for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and a focus group was arranged with

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Leavers to facilitate this. Feedback has been shared with the service, and the draft protocol will come back to the group for review.

- 2.5 Members of the CiCC, CLF and the Young Trainers group attended a recording studio in the February half term to record audio discussion for the 'Every Word Matters' project. The recordings are being edited for a video summarising their views, and the young people are meeting with professionals to decide on the style of the final animation. The young people are also considering releasing the remaining audio from the session as a podcast and have expressed interest in being involved in future podcasts on important topics, which would enhance the training materials they have already created for carers, social workers and other professionals.
- 2.6 The Young Recruiters continue to support services recruit into roles working directly with children. This has recently included interviews for vacancies within the Leaving Care and Participation services. The group will be also working once again with the Principal Social Worker to interview Newly Qualified Social Workers for the next ASYE places. The Young Recruiters have recently accepted an invitation to work with Anglia Ruskin University to assess candidates for the Social Work Degree Program. This service has benefitted from the involvement of young people and adults across children in care and care leavers.
- 2.7 The Young Inspectors completed and shared their re-inspection report of Supervised Contact Centres across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. They have now started a new project to inspect Cherry Lodge, a residential setting for children with complex needs. This started with a meeting for the young people to plan the inspection, including learning more about Cherry Lodge and thinking about what they would look at and who they wanted to speak to from Cherry Lodge. The inspection took place in the February half term and the Young Inspectors are currently in the process of collating their views and writing the final report.
- 2.8 The Young Trainers delivered another face-to-face training session for prospective foster carers in January, with the next training taking place in March. They have also delivered their first training session for student social workers on the Council's Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). This took place in February half term and gave the group the experience of how to adapt the training sessions to benefit different audiences, to have the most positive impact.
- 2.9 Young people engaged with the Participation service across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire attended the first of two Youth Leadership training events in February, with the second scheduled for March. This training has been facilitated by the British Youth Council and was open to children and young people from the CiCC, CLF, Young Inspectors, Young Trainers and Young Recruiters as part of their ongoing training and development. Attendees gave positive feedback on the session which focused on confidence building and problem-solving strategies and also said they enjoyed the opportunity to make new friends from across the county. The session was followed by lunch for participants and a bowling activity.
- 2.10 The Participation Team has continued to plan joint activities with Cambridgeshire County Council for Easter and Summer 2023, consulting both Children in Care Councils on the activities planned. The Easter programme of events has been shared with staff and carers and includes a visit to an escape room, laser tag and a trampoline park, alongside a virtual

craft session. The Summer programme of activities is being finalised, and the Children in Care Awards date and venue have been confirmed and invitations sent to all Children in Care, carers, staff and Corporate Parents.

### 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

#### 3.1 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.3 Places and Communities

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### 3.4 Children and Young People

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in section 2.

#### 3.5 Transport

There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 4. Significant Implications

n/a

### 5. Source documents guidance

#### 5.1 None.