

Participation Report

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 16 November 2022

From: Participation Team, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: To provide 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.

Officer contact:

Name: Shalina Chandoo
Post: Quality Assurance Lead - Participation and Independent Visiting
Email: shalina.chandoo@peterborough.gov.uk
Tel: 01733 452540

Member contacts:

Names: Cllr Anna Bradnam/ Cllr Lucy Nethsingha
Post: Chair and Vice Chair, Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee
Email: anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Lucy.Nethsingha@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 706398 (office)

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 October half term engagement activities for Children in Care (CiC) focused on the 'Every Word Matters' project, looking at language that is used in relation to children in care or with social care experience.
- 1.3 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) enjoyed the opportunity to meet Corporate Parents at the face-to-face informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee in September. The group gave lots of positive feedback following the meeting.
- 1.4 The Young Inspectors completed some re-inspections of Supervised Contact Centres in the October half term and also worked on a mural for one of the centres alongside local artists. The group won the Coram Voice 'A National Voice' Participation award on 25 October 2022 for their work on inspecting Supervised Contact Centres.
- 1.5 The Young Trainers continue to deliver training to prospective foster carers and are in the process of designing training to deliver as part of the assessed and supported year in employment for newly qualified social workers in the new year.
- 1.6 The Care Leaver Forum (CLF) successfully completed its performance project and designed and facilitated a workshop at the Virtual School Conference.

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, have advertised the 'Every Word Matters' project launch and the Virtual Art Exhibition, and have promoted other relevant opportunities including training opportunities with the Virtual School, the Children's Commissioner's Big Summer Survey, courses for Care Leavers and an Explore University event with ARU Peterborough.
- 2.2 Children and Young People started working on the 'Every Word Matters' project, looking at the language used around children with social care experience, sharing views and feelings on certain words and suggesting alternatives. In addition to supporting each participation group to provide their feedback on the project, the Participation Team organised focus groups for three different age groups in the October half term to gather views from young people. The focus groups included an engaging lyric writing workshop led by a local award-winning Music Practitioner and Rap Lyricist.
- 2.3 The annual Virtual Art Exhibition was launched in October and comprised of artwork submitted by children and young people in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. Many of the art pieces were produced in workshops supported by the Participation Team and were gifted

to local family contact centres so they can be enjoyed by children and families who use those spaces.

- 2.4 The CiCC continue to meet in person on a monthly basis to work on their projects and consultation requests, meet professionals and give feedback on services. Recent consultations have included giving feedback on consultation booklets used for reviews to the Independent Reviewing Service Manager and discussing ideas for the development of a short pre-initial meeting video for young people with the Family Group Conference Service Manager.
- 2.5 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) enjoyed the opportunity to meet Corporate Parents at the face-to-face informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee in September. The group gave lots of positive feedback following the meeting, saying they understood a lot more than they had at previous meetings and appreciated the child-friendly style of reports presented. The CiCC would like to get to know members of the Sub-committee better and would like any members who have not yet returned a councillor profile to do so.
- 2.6 The CiCC have completed their work on the Coming into Care Packs and created a [video](#) to explain why they created the packs and what each contains. Packs have been made available to social work teams who work with children at the point they come into care. Feedback from young people who receive the packs has been requested and
- 2.7 The Young Recruiters continue to be actively involved in recruitment and helped conduct Open University social work course interviews and interviews for a new Family Group Conference Coordinator.
- 2.8 The Young Inspectors completed re-inspections of some of the Supervised Contact Centres in the October half term, to ascertain whether their recommendations had been implemented by the service. Further re-inspections are planned in the coming months, after which a new report will be drafted and shared by the group. The Young Inspectors were also involved in creating a mural for one of the centres alongside local artists during the October half term. The group has demonstrated its commitment to the project and was recognised by being nominated for, and winning, the Coram Voice 'A National Voice' Participation award on 25 October 2022.
- 2.9 The Young Trainers continue to deliver training to prospective foster carers and have received excellent feedback from attendees. The Fostering Service reported that some prospective carers widened the age range of children they would like to work with to include teenagers, following the training and discussion with young people. The Young Trainers are in the process of developing their training offer further by designing a session to deliver as part of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) for Newly Qualified Social Workers.
- 2.10 The CLF successfully delivered their music, spoken word and performance skills and confidence-building project aimed at Children in Care and Care Leavers aged 15-21, using grant money awarded by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. The final event for this project was held at Cambridge Junction. Feedback from participants and Care Leavers organising the event demonstrated that the project had been an empowering experience for them during which they had developed skills and confidence.

- 2.11 The Care Leaver Forum (CLF) worked with the Virtual School to create a workshop for their multi-agency conference. This aimed to increase awareness of the issues faced by Children in Care in education settings, and to educate providers around how to effectively support young people. The Care Leavers used their own experiences, as well as the experiences of other young people to create the content for this presentation. Following this, Care Leavers have been working with the Independent Reviewing Service Manager on pathway planning training workshops for social care staff.
- 2.12 Recent consultation requests for the CLF include a request from the Designated Nurse for Children in Care for feedback on Health organisations and a request from the Leaving Care Service to discuss different accommodation options for young people when they become eighteen years old, if they cannot stay in the same place.

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.