

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 20 November 2019

From: Claire Betteridge - Service Development Manager

Electoral division(s): All

Purpose: To provide an update on participation events and initiatives.

Recommendation: The Sub-Committee is recommended to:

Comment and provide feedback on the range of consultation events and activities the Participation Service provide for children in care and care leavers.

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Summary:

- There is a plan for participation activities throughout 2019/20.
- We had four Just Us Groups planned for October half term 2019.
- The regional participation teams met as planned at the end of September 2019 for the media project.
- We are hosting meetings for young people aged between 16-18 and care leavers 18 plus to meet and get involved with the participation programme
- The Mind of My Own Apprentice continues to promote the use of the APP offering individual and group training.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee requested an update on the work of the Participation Service at each of its meetings.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 Update on Involvement of Young People

Consultation

- 2.1.1 The participation team has continued to make efforts to identify other young people who might be interested in being substitutes for the co-opted members of the corporate parenting sub-committee, so we can ensure we have young people in attendance at each meeting.
- 2.1.2 We are mindful that the links between the corporate parenting sub-committee and the Voices Matter (children in care council) need to be strengthened. Over the coming months we are going to be focusing on this by encouraging and supporting the young people who attend the Sub-Committee as co-opted members to attend the Voices Matter meetings to feedback to other young people about the issues that are discussed at the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee. They will also be supported to share any issues or feedback they might want to highlight on behalf of other young people with elected Members.

Voices Matter

- 2.1.3 We haven't hosted a Voices Matter meeting since the event in August at Grafham Water. The next meeting is planned for the 17 February 2020. However, we have had contact with some members of Voices Matter during the October half term and in 20/21 we plan to move to a schedule of meetings at least six times per year.

Just Us Groups

2.1.4 Wisbech Session – September 2019

On the 2 September 2019 a Just Us Group took place at the Wisbech Adventure playground for children and young people aged between 5 and 14 years of age. We had 5 young people came along on the day and engaged with working with us.

A summary of the session is outlined below:-

Ideas for the Awesome Awards
Food Meatballs Chocolate Fountain Sweets Chilli Peppers Doughnuts
Award Categories – What are you proud of? PE New home New school Singing Reading Helping around the home Listening Maths Writing Minecraft/ Lego City Doing things for yourself Being Tall! Baking



2.1.5 We also asked them for ideas about what they would like to do at future groups, they suggested the following:

Ideas for Future Groups
Swimming Shows Singing Beach Video Games Cinema Bowling Park Skating 'Play Today' nr. March/ Wisbech – soft play/ bowling Murrow Village Hall

We will be using the feedback and ideas to shape participation activities going forward. The ideas we obtained about the Awards Ceremony will be used to plan the event.

2.1.6 October 2019 half term sessions

We had 4 Just Us Sessions planned for the October half term, the sessions were offered at two different venues (March and Waterbeach). The two sessions planned for March and one in Waterbeach were cancelled due to no one signing up.

The one session in Waterbeach that took place as planned had four young people signing up but one had to cancel on the day. All of the young people who booked to come along had been to a number of participation events previously.

The team sent out the newsletter and information about the Just Us Groups that were planned for the October half term to 116 foster carers as well as colleagues three weeks prior to the event to promote. The Participation Team spoke to or left messages with 86 foster carers within 10 days of the groups taking place.

The three young people who attended were consulted about their awareness of The Promise to our children in care and care leavers and none of them had heard of it. The participation team will be promoting The Promise with operational teams as part of the team visits we are currently undertaking. We also plan to include a copy of The Promise in the correspondence we are sending to all new children in care along with our newsletter. We will ensure that we have discussions in the groups we are running over the coming months with young people to ensure that they know about The Promise and how they being supported with this in mind.

This is the feedback we received about The Promise and how they were being supported in keeping with it.

Have you heard about The Promise to children and young people in care and care leavers	All three young people said that they hadn't heard of it
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Now that you have looked at and discussed The Promise – what do you understand about it?	You have to adhere to it to help young people Basically the rules that keep us safe and the rules that social workers have to follow. How people can support young people and what they can do to help.
Do you feel happy and safe in the home you live in?	Yes I am happy Yes Yes I am very happy and safe where I live
Do you think you are healthy? Do you think you are getting the right support?	Yes and I know where to go if I need to access help Yes I am a very healthy person and I would know where to go if I wasn't. Yes I am happy about the support that I am getting I am receiving help from Brookfields soon. But I feel very much supported by everyone
Are you seeing the people who are important to you enough?	Yes Yes I am seeing some enough and others not enough
Are you kept informed about your care plan?	Yes Maybe Sometimes
Do you feel listened to?	Yes
Are you receiving feedback about the participation events you have been to?	Yes Yes I was given enough feedback
How would you like to get feedback and communication from the participation team?	Instagram Letters via foster carers Letters sent to me in my name I wouldn't mind Instagram or snapchat

The session also had guests from the National Children's Bureau who are undertaking a national consultation with children and young people about their understanding of Children's Rights.

2.1.7 **Impact**

- The foster carers who supported children and young people to attend the Just Us sessions were positive about the opportunities being made available to the children in their care.
- The Just Us Group provided valuable feedback about the Awards Evening and what activities they would be interested in coming along to in the future.
- The young people we are attracting to come along to the Just Us Meetings are relatively small in number. The young people who came along to the Waterbeach session have engaged in a number of participation events previously.

- The feedback about The Promise is based on three young people's comments, but is indicating that we need to do some more work on promoting with children and young people and practitioners
- We supported three young people to engage in a national consultation being undertaken by the National Children's Bureau on Children's Rights.
- The participation team now plan to promote The Promise with operational teams as part of the team visits we are currently undertaking. We also plan to include a copy of The Promise in the correspondence we are sending to all new children in care along with our newsletter, to inform them about the participation team and how they can get involved. We will also ensure that we have discussions in the groups we are running over the coming months with young people to ensure that they know about The Promise and how they being supported with this in mind.

2.1.8 **Care Leavers Forum**

Up until February 2019 the service ran a small but regular group of care leavers who met on a monthly basis in Cambridge city, which ended at that time due to the team's capacity to facilitate the meeting along with young people's availability.

Through discussion with older young people and some foster carers we have identified that they would like a forum, but we need to offer meetings across the county to assist in their participation and attendance. As a result we have consulted colleagues in the leaving care team about how we can reinstate a forum. The proposal is to offer meetings on a regular basis across the county to offer the young people the opportunity to meet up for the social aspect, but also to have guest speakers on subjects that are important and of interest to young people. These meetings will be used to consult with young people about their experiences and give young people the opportunity to engage in wider participation and co-production activities. However we plan to shape the meeting alongside the young people themselves to establish what they would like from the forum.

We have prepared promotional material and the group will be launched on 6 November 2019 to coincide with Care Leavers Week. We will also be launching a group for young people aged between 16-18 years.

We have a further date to offer these two forums in the Wisbech area on the 8 November 2019.

3.1 **Events from other organisations we have supported**

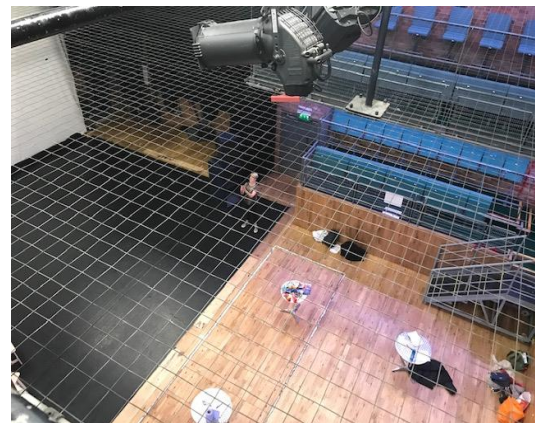
3.1.1 **Regional Participation**

The regional participation teams are collaborating on another media based project and held its first meeting on the 28 September 2019 at The Junction in Cambridge. We supported five young people to come along from Cambridgeshire and as part of the session the whole group were given a tour back stage.

The plan is to make a film with children and young people across the region to share their experiences about their journey into and leaving care. There were four groups who considered the following aspects: coming into care, meetings that are held when in care, my first placement feeling stable/safe and leaving care.

The regional workers will be meeting in mid November 2019 to collate the feedback gathered on the day and plan next steps.

The aim is to show the finished product at the Cambridge film festival in June 2020 with the young people attending the after film party.



After the visit to the Junction and exploring ideas for the project the group of young people went out for lunch at 'Nines all you can eat Buffet'.

Impact

3.1.2 Although we are in the early stages of this work the ideas that the young people shared on the day about the messages they wanted to convey were insightful and powerful. Once complete it is anticipated that the film will be a valuable tool for training practitioners across the services.

4.1 Activities and Work Planned

- A schedule of events-based participation activities are planned for 2019 and into 2020. All children including those residing out of County are invited to attend.
- We are attending a corporate parenting management away day at the end of October 2019 to share feedback from the children and young people who have engaged in the different activities and events we have hosted.

- We are launching two forums for young people aged 16-18 years and those aged 18 plus in Cambridge city on the 6 November 2019 and in the Wisbech area on the 8 November 2019. The proposal is to offer meetings on a regular basis across the county to offer the young people the opportunity to meet up for the social aspect but also to have guest speakers on subjects that are important and of interest to young people. These meetings will be used to consult with young people about their experiences and give young people the opportunity to engage in wider participation and co-production activities. However we plan to shape the meeting alongside the young people themselves to establish what they would like from the forum.
- We are meeting with colleagues in the commissioning team to explore how we can support children and young people get involved in the commissioning and contract monitoring process.
- We are going to develop a protocol and toolkit for how we involve children and young people in work such as meetings with inspectors; staff recruitment; commissioning and contract management; and being involved in the delivery of training to staff and foster carers through the development of a young ambassadors program.
- The team are hosting a Make and Create Christmas Event on the 20 December 2019. Further information regarding the participation focus will be developed in preparation for the day.
- We are planning to take an invited group of young people to Wind in the Willows at the Junction in Cambridge in January 2020, as a way of showing our appreciation for the participation activities that they have been involved in and contributed to over the course of the year.
- We continue to meet with social care teams, foster carer support and other stakeholders to promote support and encouragement for children and young people getting involved in our participation activities and promote the use of the APP Mind of My Own.
- We are exploring means of working with key managers from across children's social care to support the communication strategy; to increase the number of children and young people engaging in and contributing to the participation strategy. We met for the first time on the 14 October 2019 to begin these discussions and have a further meeting planned on the 27 November 2019.
- The participation team now plan to promote The Promise with operational teams as part of the team visits we are currently undertaking. We also plan to include a copy of The Promise in the correspondence we are sending to all new children in care along with our newsletter, to inform them about the participation team and how they can get involved. We will also ensure that we have discussions in the groups we are running over the coming months with young people to ensure that they know about The Promise and how they being supported with this in mind.

5.1 Participation Service

Staffing

The Participation Team currently has a manager, two participation workers, a business support assistant and an apprentice leading on Mind of My Own. Our second participation worker took up post on the 10 October 2019.

6.1 Mind of My Own

The Mind of My Own Apprentice continues to target practitioners across the service who have registered for a Mind of My Own account but have not used it, offering training and support as a team or on a one to one basis to enhance practitioners understanding in how to use the application to capture the voice of the child.

The information in Appendix 1 summarises Mind of My Own activity for July, August and September 2019.

7.1 Conclusion

7.1.1 The participation team had a busy summer hosting and supporting various events. The events planned over half term didn't attract as many young people as we hoped. However, we continue to see a core group of young people come along to our meetings and events and we are beginning to build positive relationships with them as well as observe how they are enjoying meeting up with one another and forming friendships. We are beginning to see a growing group of children and young people are showing an interest in getting involved in shaping as well as participating in our participation events and making their voices heard.

As a team we are committed to promote and encourage our children in care and care leavers access and attend the various opportunities that are being made available to them which not only include the events and meetings we host, where their voices can be heard but also those enrichment opportunities that are being offered by other organisations which we can use for consultations and feedback.

We are mindful that the links between the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee and the Voices Matter (children in care council) need to be strengthened and over the coming months we are going to be focusing this by encouraging and supporting the young people who attend as co-opted members to attend the Voices Matter meetings to feedback to other young people about the issues that are discussed at the corporate parenting sub-committee but also share any issues or feedback they might want to highlight on behalf of other young people with elected members.

We are exploring means of working with key managers from across children's social care to support the communication strategy; to increase the number of children and young people engaging in and contributing to the participation strategy. We met for the first time on the 14 October 2019 to begin these discussions and have a further meeting planned on the 27 November 2019.

8.1 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

None identified

Source Documents	Location
None	