

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

To: Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Meeting Date: 17 July 2019

From: Claire Betteridge - Service Development Manager
Hullal Miah – Mind of My Own (MOMO) Apprentice
Amanda Prior – Participation Worker
Helen Hooson – Business Support

Electoral division(s): All

Purpose: Update on the participation of young people within Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee

Recommendation: To comment or 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.
- The Mind of My Own Apprentice continues to promote the use of the APP offering individual and group training.
- The Participation Team hosted a Voices Matter meeting on the 30 May 2019 at Xtreme360 Trampoline Park in St Neots, this event was well attended.
- A group for younger children was held in Whittlesey in May 2019 in conjunction with a Company Artzforkids decorating pottery.
- We recently attended the Mind of My Own conference and as a local authority we were recognised by Mind of My Own developers as being the most improved organisation according to size in using the APP, we were recognised as individual workers in promoting the use of the APP and we were finalist in the most memorable Mind of My Own story.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Committee requested an update on the work of the Participation Service at each meeting.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 Update on Involvement of Young People

Consultation

The participation team has continued 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. One young person expressed an interest and she intended to observe the meeting on the 22 May 2019 but then was not able to make it.

One of the two co-opted young people has agreed to come and speak to young people about the role if he is available during one of our events over the summer, as a way of promoting the role.

Voices Matter

The children in care council meeting (Voices Matter) took place in May 2019 at Xtreme360 Trampoline Park in St Neots. As part of the preparation and promotion for the event the participation team made contact with 75 foster carers and 28 children signed up to come along; however, three didn't make it as the taxi which was booked to support their attendance didn't arrive.

Of the 25 young people who attended we had 12 Girls and 13 Boys, aged between 5 and 14 years of age. We also had 4 young people who were placed out of county come along to the event.

The session started with introductions and sharing the plan for the session. The film clip of the top tips for social workers was shown to the group which generated a discussion later on in the meeting about what the group thought about the film and the top ten tips and whether they had any more advice or tips that they would give to their social workers.

An hour on the trampolines followed, where everyone seemed to have fun being able to freestyle their way around all areas of the park, as well as try out the other activities available which included dodgeball, slam dunk, the jousting beam, the foam pit and aero ball.

The group returned to the meeting room and tucked into a buffet tea where we carried on the discussions in smaller groups, whilst they ate, about tips they had for their own social workers and particular comments about their relationship with their social workers.

This is what the children and young people shared in this session:

“I love being in care”
“Thank you for giving me a second chance”
“I like it when my social worker visits as she plays with me” (Ciara)
“My social worker works really hard”
“My social worker is a good parent”
“I’d give my social 100%”
“I’d score my social worker 10/10”
“Want to keep same social worker, don’t like change”
“Social Workers disappear”
“Not on time”
“Don’t see her enough”
“Plays games”
“I liked the top ten tips for social workers”
“The best thing about my social worker is they let me in their car”
“I need to get answers to my questions. I need to talk to manager as not good enough”
“Need help to understand why I am in care”
“Other top ten tips from the group: 1. Be friendly; 2. Need to be understanding – don’t give us labels; 3. Don’t be repetitive.

Most popular top ten tips were:

- Say Goodbye
- Take me out
- Don’t nag
- Don’t be late
- Don’t wear your badge.

Once again the event was positively received by all and everyone seemed to have a good time. The feedback received has been shared with the corporate parenting service.

Just Us Group

A pottery session was hosted in Whittlesey in May 2019 in conjunction with a company Artzforkids. There were 7 young people signed up to attend, between the ages of 7 and 12. Unfortunately only 4 attended the session. One of these was not able to make it as he had tired himself the day before attending the trampoline session and two others were unable to attend due to family illness.

The aim of this group activity was to get to know young people who reside in the North of the county. The children who came along either decorated a plate or the word home, which after glazing they would be able to keep.

During this group, a general conversation was discussed around the young people's foster families, schools and social workers. All the young people knew each other so their school experiences were similar.

For these events to take place, the Participation team contacted 21 foster families and emailed details of this 'just us' event to in-house foster carers and teams.

Care Leavers Forum

Unfortunately attendance at the care leaver's forum continues to be low and meetings have not taken place as scheduled. We are looking to relaunch this forum and plan to have a series of drop-in meetings at different venues across the county. We are in the process of promoting the group to young people via their workers with a view to confirm dates and venues once we know who is interested in coming along and getting involved.

2.2 Other Events

- The Realise Team from Cambridge University hosted an event during the course of the May half term (28 May 2019). The session consisted of a science session which involved extracting DNA from a strawberry, an engineering workshop building a small racing car, lunch and ice-cream and a visit to Kings College. Only 1 young person from Cambridgeshire attended this session, despite 4 being signed up. This is disappointing as these events facilitated by Realise provide a good insight into university life and are fun activities to participate in for our young people. The Participation Team continue to disseminate information to colleagues, but we are reliant on them to promote events with the young people they are working with and encourage their foster carers to support attendance.

More information on the events that the Realise Team host can be found via the link below.

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events/care>

- We have been supporting the learning and development team with the assessments and interviews of candidates who have applied for sponsorship to undertake their social work training. This has consisted of four days of being part of a panel and contributing to the assessment process. Unfortunately Hullal has been the only young person involved in this process despite others agreeing to be involved who weren't available on the day.

- The Participation Team attended an event hosted by the Virtual School on 1 July, to promote the work of the team with colleagues from education who work with children in care and care leavers.

Activities Planned

- A schedule of events and participation activities are planned for 2019 and children residing out of County are invited to attend in the same way as all other children.
- The annual summer “picnic in the park” is booked for the beginning of the summer holidays. We are in the process of finalising the activities for the day.
- We continue to meet with social care teams and the foster carers support meetings to update them regarding participation activities and promote the APP Mind of My Own.
- Further discussions have taken place to explore facilitating with colleagues from the library service a commissioned project called ‘The Library Presents’ which is funded by Arts Council England which deliver arts events in libraries across Cambridgeshire. The information can be seen at the following link - www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/arts.

A representative from the ‘Library Presents’ team joined us at the last Voices Matter meeting in May to explore with the children the concept behind the project and to gather ideas as to the theme of the project and to establish what medium they would be interested in using.

A brief has now been developed based on the discussions with children, young people and their foster carers, in order for an artist to be commissioned to support this project based on the following: “We are seeking an artist/organisation to deliver a high quality, fun and accessible digital arts experience to children in care, their foster families and friends. We would like a digital outcome(s) which can be hosted on the County Council’s YouTube platform following the sessions and shared widely. We have consulted children and young people about what kind of project they want, they have said that they want a project that will use game imagery, styles or formats on the theme of ‘dreams’ like exploring future worlds/utopias and the kinds of people/jobs/actions needed to make them a reality. Games mentioned as inspiration included Minecraft and Fortnite”.

The plan is for there to be two groups engaging with this project, each attending for two days, commencing on the 27 August 2019 and will be held at a venue in the St Ives area.

The Arts Award is also planned over the summer in conjunction with the Fitzwilliam Museum, this activity is open to young people aged 11 plus and will be taking place for four days in August. Young people who attend the programme will achieve a bronze award.

- We are looking to host the next Voices Matter meeting at the end of August at Grafham Water after a positive visit to the venue. We are in the process of finalising the arrangements with colleagues in the Fostering service.
- In August and September we are planning to host a couple of Just Us sessions, one at a Country Park, aimed at 5 to 12 year olds, where various woodland activities will be on offer and the second to be held at the Adventure Playground in Wisbech, aimed at children and young people aged between 8 and 14 who like climbing and exploring.

Regional Participation

The regional participation teams are planning to collaborate on another project and has a meeting planned for the end of September 2019 at The Junction in Cambridge. The plan is to make a film with children and young people across the region to share their experiences about their journey into care.

2.3 Participation Service

Staffing

The Participation Team currently has a part time manager, two participation workers, a business support assistant and an apprentice leading on Mind of My Own. One of the participation workers has recently resigned from their post.

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.

We attended a recent conference in Birmingham along with other local authorities hosted by the Mind of My Own developers and we were recognised as being the most improved organisation in using the APP, we were also recognised as individual workers in promoting the use of the APP and we were finalist in the most memorable Mind of My Own story.

The information in Appendix 1 summarises Mind of My Own activity for April, May and June 2019.

3.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Resource Implications

n/a

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

n/a

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

n/a

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

n/a

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

n/a

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

n/a

3.7 Public Health Implications

n/a

Source Documents	Location
None	