



## Appendix 2

### Cambridgeshire's Children in Care Council Terms of Reference

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#### 1. Mission Statement

*The Young People:*

*‘Our aim is to use our experiences of being in care and leaving care to improve the services for other children. As the Children in Care Council we will work towards achieving the best possible standards for every child and young person looked after by Cambridgeshire to achieve their full potential.’*

*The Officers and Members:*

*“As Corporate Parents, are committed to empowering our children and young people to be agents of change and influence. The Children in Care Council (CiCC) will facilitate and encourage children and young people to share their perspectives and direct experiences to influence service development and practice and we will listen to their voices to ensure that we are maximising their effectiveness and relevance. We will evidence the impact the CiCC feedback has had on our thinking and be open and honest as to what changes can or cannot be made and why.”*

#### 2. Aims:

- To reflect and represent the views of children and young people in the care of Cambridgeshire as well as care leavers.

- To work with members, senior managers and key professionals to make positive changes and support good outcomes for all children in care and care leavers including those who are placed out of county.
- To explore and promote opportunities for young people to be involved training & recruitment of staff, carers and commissioned services for children in care and care leavers.

### **3. Statutory Framework**

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child gives children and young people the right to say what they think when adults make decisions which affect them.

Care Matters – Time for Change published 2007 set out the expectation that every council will set up a Children in Care Council (CICC). Through the CICC, children and young people should be able to put their experiences of the care system directly to those responsible for corporate parenting including the DCS and Lead Member, who should demonstrate how they will maintain contact with children and young people in care.

The CICC therefore plays a vital role in ensuring children and young people with care experience have a say in their care and the issues that matter to them. CICCs bring together passionate and dedicated young people with those who run care services to share their experiences and ideas on how to improve the provision care in their area.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 highlights seven principles in respect of the Corporate Parents role which are

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people in their care or leaving their care
- To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- To help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people
- For children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

These principles should shape the mind-set and culture of every part of the local authority in how it carries out all of its functions in relation to children in care and care leavers.

### **4 The Children in Care Council (CICC)**

#### **Membership**

'Care Experienced' children and young people /adults ages 12 years up to 25 years.

## **Professional Guests**

Professionals are welcome to attend the meeting but will need prior consent from young people.

## **Meeting Frequency and timing**

The CICC will meet a minimum of six times per year.

The meetings will take place at a time agreed with the young people, typically in school holidays, after school /college hours, and be hosted at various venues across the county.

## **CiCC informal meetings**

In addition, the CiCC will meet informally on a fortnightly basis with members of the participation service. This may be a mix of virtual and face to face meetings. Primarily the purpose of these meetings will be to facilitate ongoing project / participation / co-production work. Other young people who have shown an interest to be involved in a particular project may join the informal meetings.

## **Governance and work planning**

There will be an agreed agenda and work programme for all of the CiCC meetings – formal and informal - which will be developed by the CICC membership, led by the children with support from the participation officers.

Officers and Committee Members should furnish the CiCC with requests for support and where possible this will be set in advance to inform an annual programme of work. Such might include for example consultation over a specific service / practice issue; request for involvement in a new service development; involvement in recruitment processes; involvement in training activity; a young person inspection of a service; and so on.

## **5. Corporate Parenting Committee – Informal meetings with the CiCC**

There will be three meetings per year of the Committee with representatives from the respective CIC Council.

The purpose of these Committee meetings is a two way dialogue for the CiCC to raise questions to the Committee under the auspices of its role to bring challenge and scrutiny to its corporate parents. And for committee members to speak the CiCC about matters on which they would like the views, wishes and feelings from Children in Care and Care Leavers. This will also inform the work of the CiCC.

The informal committee will also provide feedback to the CiCC as to the impact of their representations and any actions taken in response to their feedback; challenge and scrutiny.

## **Meeting Frequency and timing**

The Committee Meeting with the CICC will meet three times per year.

## **Governance**

There will be an agreed agenda for the Informal Committee meetings that will be developed by the CICC membership, led by the children with support from the participation officers.

A record of the meeting and any actions agreed will be made and the record circulated to all members within one week of the meeting held.

## **Accountability and Impact**

The local authority officers and Committee members, as Corporate Parents, are committed to empowering our children and young people to be agents of change and influence. It is in all of our interests to make sure that we listen to the voices of those in receipt of our services to ensure that we are maximising their effectiveness and relevance. Children in care councils provide a model to facilitate and encourage children and young people to share their perspectives and direct experiences to influence service development and practice.

We need to evidence impact such feedback has had on our thinking and be open and honest as to what changes can or cannot be made and why, from the feedback that children and young people give us.

There will be an agreed programme of work and an action log to evidence work completed; its purpose; feedback loops and impact for children in care and care leavers.

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