

Report sponsor: Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Social Care
Report author: Laura Bradley, Participation Officer

Our Voice, Our Success – Children in Care Council Update

Purpose

1.1 Our Voice, Our Success (CiCC) Summary

This report provides a summary of participation activities over the last quarter, ensuring Corporate Parenting are sighted on activity and enabling direction to be set where required.

Key areas of work include:

- I. Our Voice, Our Success Meetings/Get together.
- II. Breaking the Stigma Project
- III. School Cluster Groups
- IV. Young Recruiters Update
- V. Whatsapp Broadcast Channel
- VI. Logo Review

- 1.2 The report highlights the work the Our Voice, Our Success (CiCC) have been doing, what is important to them and how they impact on services. It also explains the challenges they face which Corporate Parenting Committee may be able to help with.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider the content of the report and feedback from Our Voice, Our Success.

Reason

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee need to know that the Local Authority CiCC is being run well. It provides information and evidence that the voices of the children and young people in care are being heard and having a direct influence on services. The report also ensures that the voice of young people is heard at the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Supporting information

4.1 **Our Voice, Our Success (OVOS) Meetings**

There has been one scheduled meeting of the Our Voice, Our Success Group for Quarter 4, with the usual second meeting falling outside of the deadline period therefore will be reported on in the next report.

- **January Meeting** – This was due to be a get together at the Council House to work on the design aspects of The Pledge.

Unfortunately, this meeting was cancelled on the day due to lack of interest and the two young people who were to attend pulling out. The Participation Officer will utilise additional groups we have to support the design aspect of this document. This will be sent out as a competition to school groups we meet with to come up with a design.

The Participation Officer is working closely with the Commissioning Manager for Early Help and Supporting Families to map out how we move forward with consulting young people in care due to the lack of attendance at recent meetings.

4.2 **Breaking the Stigma Project**

The Participation Officer in collaboration with The Virtual School is running a project to 'break the stigma' around children in care in. This came to the forefront of priorities after a young person who attends our groups stated she felt there was a stigma throughout school aged peers in particular leading to those who are looked after by the LA to feel ashamed to be in care with some hiding this fact, along with feeling negative emotions and having negative experiences with peers because of this.

It was felt that this was due to a lack of knowledge and experience of others which could be supported with the right information and tools used to increase understanding.

The Participation Officer utilised the School Cluster Groups to consult around how this would be captured, with the Virtual School kindly offering to support with a collaboration film with Derby Theatre.

There are in total of 5 workshops with creatives through Derby Theatre and Children in Care to create an animation which will be rolled out through Derby City Secondary schools with the aim to educate young people and remove the stigma attached to children in care.

The animation will be showcased initially at the Virtual School Festival on June 11th along with a further showcase alongside the Strategic Director for People's Services at the National DCS Conference on July 11th.

4.3 School Cluster Groups

This model gives the opportunity for schools to come alongside other schools in the city. These are focussed sessions with a different topic each term for young people to have their say on and influence services which affect them. We endeavour to keep a school/education theme where possible.

The last School Participation meeting was held at Woodlands School on February 6th. All secondary age CiC were invited to attend with their school. There were 4 schools in attendance Woodlands, West Park, Murray Park and City of Derby Academy.

This session focussed on 'Breaking the Stigma' which features in 4.2 of this report, all those in attendance of this session were invited to continue working on this project attending the further workshops throughout March and April and be a part of the creation of the final animation.

The Participation Officer for CiC along with support from Specialist Education Officers for The Virtual School attended the session along with liaising with schools to promote the sessions and will continue to champion and support this model.

The next session will be in the spring/summer term.

4.4 Young Recruiters Update

The Participation Officer for CiC developed a group called 'Young Recruiters' in the summer of 2023 which is a group of young people who had the opportunity to obtain recruitment training with materials which have been obtained from HR within Derby City Council to then be a part of the recruitment of employees who would support our CiC.

As a reminder this followed on from an earlier report which referred to Young People having the opportunity to shape services that affect them at all levels and within all areas, not excluding the staff which the LA employ. It is powerful for our young people to have input in the recruitment of the staff which support them, and they have the opportunity where possible to be involved in this decision-making process. This allows our young people to feel heard, empowered and encourages them to participate in wider opportunities.

All services who employ staff that support our CiC have been encouraged to involve this group when carrying out interviews where possible. The Participation Officer continues to support facilitation of this and holds details of young people who have completed the training and would like to be on panels moving forward.

We have had minimal engagement in terms of Young Recruiters being invited to attend interview panels since this training took place. The Participation Officer is running a virtual training session in April 2024 to give opportunity for young people to access the training should they wish and will also attend the next City Managers in June to promote this scheme to managers across the LA.

4.5 **WhatsApp Broadcast Channel**

The Participation Officer with support from The Communications and Marketing Team have created a WhatsApp Broadcast channel which will allow the Participation Officer to send information, polls and surveys etc to young people straight to their phones. This is to ensure we are engaging with young people using platforms preferential to them. This platform is a safe way to pass on information with only the Participation Officer having the ability to post in the group and see who else is in the group, its is otherwise private with no chat facility.

The Participation Officer is working on a mailing list consent form for young people and carers alongside piloting the channel in house within the team to ensure the running of this is in line with our requirements.

4.6 **Logo Review**

Due to the recent name change of the LA's CiCC to 'Our Voice, Our Success' we are required to update the logo. The Participation Officer has created and sent out a poll to all Children in Care to ascertain if the current logo requires an update in terms of design or it is still current and requires only the name changing.

This poll runs to the end of March, the Participation Officer with then work alongside the Communications and Marketing Team to make any changes identified. Please see the current logo for reference below.



5.1 Care Leavers Update

The Participation Officer works alongside the Personal Adviser/Staying Close Lead within the Leaving Care Team to support participation with Care Leavers as necessary. The Participation Officer alongside support from a Personal Adviser within the Leaving Care Team has ensured there will be 2 care leavers attending the National DCS Conference in the Summer with the Strategic Director for People's Services to share their experiences. The Participation Officer will attend the conference for support along with the planning and preparation with young people prior to the event.

6.1 Public/stakeholder engagement

As outlined in this report

7.1 Other options

Nothing to note for this period.

8.1 Financial and value for money issues

None noted.

9.1 Legal implications

None noted.

10.11 Other significant implications

None noted.

report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care / Fiona Colton	15/03/2024
Report sponsor		
Other(s)	Lorraine Smith, Commissioning Manager	08/03/2024

Background papers:	n/a
List of appendices:	