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Children in Care Council Update

Purpose

1.1 Children in Care Council Summary

There have been three meetings (including virtual) of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) since the last report, February, March and June:

- I. The Head of Virtual School attended the meeting in February to discuss the Annual Report for the virtual school and explain how the report had been collated. The Corporate Parenting Lead also attended and showed the new Independent Review sheets for 0-11 year olds and asked for views on these. The Participation Officer gave the CiCC members an update on progress of recruiting new members.
 - II. At March's meeting the CiCC looked at the Booklet given to young people entering residential care. This was to view any possible changes to this booklet. The Participation Officer also asked the CiCC about future topics for the CiCC to discuss.
 - III. April's meeting was cancelled due to Covid19.
 - IV. May's meeting was cancelled due to Covid19 however the Participation Officer made phone contact with the CiCC members.
 - V. June's Meeting was held virtually with CiCC members. This gave the CiCC members a chance to discuss what they had been doing during the lockdown and discuss their feelings. This meeting was held at one of the residential homes and included a resident from the home.
- 1.2 The report highlights the work the Children in Care Council (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 CiCC.

- 2.2 To consider the implications of increasing the age range of the Children in Care Council from 18 years to 24 years of age, to incorporate Care Leavers.

Reason

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee need to know that the CiCC is being run well. It provides information and evidence that the voices of the children and young people in care is 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
- 3.2 Increasing the age range of the CiCC would provide a way to engage with Care Leavers and support young people involved in the CiCC.

Supporting information

- 4.1 At the February meeting Corporate Parenting Lead asked the young people for their thoughts on the Independent Review Sheets for 0-18 years. The CiCC agreed they looked better than previous ones and were very colourful. They all felt that they were much better for younger children and they could draw in them. The CiCC members asked about the review sheets for older children. The Corporate Parenting Lead stated that these had changed as well although CiCC members stated that the old style was still being used, The Corporate Parenting Lead assured that all future reviews would be with new style of Review sheets.
- 4.2 The Head of Virtual School came and presented the Annual Report for Virtual School. He explained how the results had been calculated and how they had improved. The Head of Virtual School also gave an update on a new one to one tuition via WhatsApp - one member of the CiCC stated they were receiving this and was finding it very helpful. The Head of Virtual School promoted the revision camps that were happening in Easter Break however these have since been cancelled due to Covid-19.
- 4.3 The Participation Officer told the CiCC about a mail out to increase numbers of those attending CiCC meetings and to get a representation from Residential Homes. All thought it was a good idea and suggested that before contacting the young people, carers should be informed first so that they had the information to hand for the young people.

- 4.4 In March's meeting the CiCC looked at the booklet given to young people who come into residential care. The CiCC members all agreed it there was too much information in the booklet for a child coming into care. One young person stated they had received it when they came into care but still hadn't read it. The following comments were received as to changes needed:
- Less scary pictures / real pictures;
 - In contact page, much less information, only need the following information - Childline, NHS (111), Advocacy service, Participation Officer for CiCC and Head of Residential;
 - A space to put in Social Workers contact as well as IRO;
 - Name of manager of the home and name of keyworker (could be filled in by young person);
 - On front cover, a picture of the home with staff;
 - Information about what to expect in the first couple of weeks and information regarding school/education.
- 4.5 The Participation Officer gave an update on a possible visit from the Office of the Children's Commissioner who wanted to hold a CiCC meeting to explain to what Children's Commissioner had been doing and to deliver a report around mental health. This was planned to happen in the Easter Holidays but was cancelled due to COVID.
- 4.6 Due to Covid19 and lockdown, no meetings were held during April and May. The Participation Officer volunteered to be redeployed into a residential children's home as a Residential Children's Care Worker.
- 4.7 In May the Participation Officer rang each of the CiCC members to see how they were coping in lockdown. They all said that whilst it was boring, they were OK and had managed to keep themselves occupied. We discussed the possibility of using virtual aids to ensure we could maintain the CiCC going forward. All members agreed and were happy to have a virtual meeting via Zoom.
- 4.8 In June a virtual zoom CiCC was held. During this meeting the young people discussed how lockdown had impacted them and what they had been doing during lockdown. One member said that due to lockdown they had missed out on a leaver's day from school and a school prom. The young person in residential was also saying that they found it very difficult as there was very little to do.

4.9 **Care Leavers Update**

The first meeting with care leavers was held on January 22nd, this was held at a café in Derby. They agreed the Care Leavers Forum would be called Care Leavers Group and would have a private Facebook group and in the long term become self-sufficient with input from Council staff.

- 4.10 There has been little contact with care leavers due to the Covid19. Other Local Authorities have been contacted for ideas about how best to maintain engagement, all advised they have also found it difficult to engage care leavers. One Authority encourages care leavers to attend CiCC (with a large youth club available) and holds a separate meeting for them whilst the CiCC is held for 11-18-year olds. Others use special one-off events to engage.
- 4.11 The advantages of increasing the age range of the Children in Care Council to incorporate Care Leavers would be to enable Care Leavers to access an established group which meets regularly; encourage current CiCC members to remain with the group which gives them continuity in having their voice heard and give the Council one place to go for all consultations that are specifically targeted for Care Leavers and children and young people in care.
- 4.12 A proposed meeting at YMCA to meet care leavers there was postponed due to Covid19 and lockdown.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 As outlined in this report.

Other options

- 6.1 Nothing to note for this period.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 None noted.

Legal implications

- 8.1 None noted.

Other significant implications

- 9.1 None noted.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal		
Finance		
Service Director(s)	Gurmail Nizzer, Director, Integrated Commissioning (CYP)	09/07/20
Report sponsor	Patrick Aherne, Participation Officer	09/07/20
Other(s)	Lorraine Smith, Commissioning Manager	09/07/20
	Lisa Melrose, Head of Integrated Commissioning, Children & Young People	09/07/20
Background papers: n/a		
List of appendices: n/a		