

Report sponsor: Gurmail Nizzer, Director,
Integrated Commissioning (CYP)
Report author: Patrick Aherne, Participation
Officer

Children in Care Council Update

Purpose

1.1 Children in Care Council Summary

There have been two virtual meetings of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) since the last report, July and September:

- I. The Participation Officer encouraged several discussions in the July meeting, including what subjects they would like to talk about in future meetings, what plans they had over the summer holidays and around increasing the age range at the CiCC to 24 years.
 - II. The meeting in August was not held due to school holidays.
 - III. September's meeting was used to discuss the consultation being sent out to young people in care about services they have received during lockdown. We also discussed how meetings will proceed in future.
- 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 ways to encourage new members to become involved in the CiCC.

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 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.

- 3.2 It has been historically difficult to engage with young people placed out of area as technology has not been able to adequately accommodate them. However, with meetings now being held virtually, this has opened opportunity to engage with those out of area. IRO's and Social workers have regular contact with young people and are best placed to initially promote CiCC and allow the Participation Officer opportunity to then follow up and engage the young people and increase participation of young people.

Supporting information

- 4.1 In July's meeting the CiCC members discussed the increase of age from 18 to 24 years as part of encouraging care leavers to become involved in an established group. The members were very positive in this move. They suggested that as the care leavers would be older, they could attend later (7-8:30pm) for any subjects which would be more age appropriate. They also suggested that as a member reaches 17 years of age they could start to move over to the older group.
- 4.2 The CiCC members discussed the plans they had for the summer. Members said they had no holidays planned but hoped to have days out instead. One member was waiting on their GCSE results.
- 4.3 In September's meeting the CiCC members were introduced to the new Commissioning Support Assistant who would be helping to facilitate the meetings alongside the Participation Officer
- 4.4 The Participation Officer told the CiCC about a questionnaire involving young people in care of Derby City Council. The purpose of this consultation was to see how well Derby City Council had engaged with the young people during lockdown. It asked questions on how well IRO's and Social workers engaged with young people, whether reviews were undertaken during lockdown and if so, how did they work, and whether any mental health issues arose and did they receive help if requested.
- 4.5 The members were very positive about the consultation and were happy with the questions asked. It was suggested that a prize draw may be offered to those that take part.
- 4.6 A member asked about the annual education awards for young people that have achieved good results in their GCSE's or have achieved positive results in education. This will be followed up with the Head of Virtual school.
- 4.7 The Participation Officer also spoke about the possibility that meetings may be held in person. These would have to be COVID secure. The CiCC members were keen to resume meetings in person. This is something which would be resumed when the situation allowed.

- 4.8 The Participation Officer has tried different ways to engage new members which are noted below. It would be helpful to have feedback from Corporate Parenting Committee of further ideas.
- Mail shot to all carers and young people living within easy travelling distance of meeting place (pre lockdown).
 - Promoting the CiCC with new foster carers who are in training.
 - Holding sessions within schools.
 - Following up referrals from IRO's with phone call to carers and to the young person to explain what the Children in Care Council is all about.
 - Attending team meetings with other professionals to encourage referrals to CiCC.
 - Mail shot to external foster agencies and meeting them to explain the role of CiCC.
 - Liaising with other participation officers in other local authorities to find young people placed within Derby from other local authorities that are eligible to attend CiCC.

- 4.9 The Participation Officer is also going to investigate the use of small electronic surveys to send to CiC and Care Leavers who are unable to participate in the organised groups, allowing thoughts/feelings and feedback from a wider group of young people.

4.10 **Care Leavers Update**

There have been no meetings with Care Leavers due to Covid19 restrictions. The Participation Officer is looking into the practicalities of holding a virtual meeting, however this would depend on participants having access to compatible IT to allow them to join.

- 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. At the last Corporate Parenting Committee, it was agreed that we look to extend age range to 24 and this is being taken forward by the Participation Officer and the Service Manager.

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)		
Report sponsor		
Other(s)	Lorraine Smith, Commissioning Manager	8/10/2020
	Lisa Melrose, Head of Integrated Commissioning, Children & Young People	8/10/2020

Background papers:	n/a
List of appendices:	n/a