

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL)	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
21 JULY 2021	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Lynne Ayres; Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Shalina Chandoo, QA Lead	Tel. 01733 452540

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL PARTICIPATION REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: <i>Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Children's Services</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Notes the content of the report.</i> 2. <i>Raise any queries they have with the lead officers.</i> 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to each formal and informal Corporate Parenting Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update from the Children in Care Council and participation services.

- 2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference:

2.4.4.1 To act as advocates for looked after children and care leavers.

2.4.4.6 To monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care.

(a) Raise the profile of the needs of looked after children and care leavers through a range of actions including through the organising of celebratory events for the recognition of achievement.

(b) Ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our looked after children and care leavers.

(c) Promote the development of participation and ensure that the view of children and young people are regularly heard through the Corporate Parenting Committee to improve educational, health and social outcomes to raise aspiration and attainments.

(d) Hold meetings with children and young people in care, frontline staff and foster carers to inform the committee of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for looked after children.

2.3 This report links to the Children in Care Pledge under:

1. Respect - We will respect you as individuals, with differing wants, needs and beliefs and tailor the service you get to fit you.

5. Listen – We will support you to have a voice in your care plan and make sure you are listened to. We will ensure you know how to make a complaint or compliment about your care. You will have access to advocacy support to do this if wanted.

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The Participation Team has continued to adapt its offer throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with changing government restrictions and feedback from children and young people. Working with the Participation Team from Cambridgeshire City Council has increased resilience, allowed us to share learning and has provided more opportunities for children and young people.

4.2 Since the start of the pandemic the team has sent out newsletters with information and activities as well as updates on Participation events and opportunities to children in three age categories; 11 years and under, 12 to 17 years and 18 years plus.

4.3 Throughout the pandemic, the Participation Team has offered virtual events where restrictions have not allowed face to face activities. These have been refined in line with feedback from children and young people and as a result, numbers attending these sessions have increased significantly. Our offer will continue to incorporate virtual events after restrictions ease for children who are placed at a distance and those who prefer to engage with us virtually.

4.4 The Participation Team, in conjunction with the Cambridgeshire Participation Team, has published a summer programme for Children in Care across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This includes face to face activities including a visit to a farm, ice-skating and laser tag as well as two virtual sessions designed by our Out of Area Group. In addition, there will be a team building and outdoor adventure day for Children in Care, which will include canoeing and kayaking, problem solving games, bushcraft skills and team building challenges.

4.5 The Participation Team has launched the annual Virtual Art Exhibition which is open to all children and young people with Children's Social Care involvement across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Themes for this year's exhibition were chosen by the CiCC alongside their CCC Counterparts and are Wellbeing & Mindfulness, Animals & Nature and Sports & Activities. The deadline for submissions is 15 August and the exhibition will premiere on YouTube on 31 August.

4.6 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) continued to meet regularly throughout the pandemic, largely on a virtual basis. Face to face meetings resumed in May and the venue and opportunity to meet in person again have been well-received by members of the CiCC.

4.7 The CiCC continues to be consulted by Children's Social Care and other agencies to improve services for Children in Care. Recent consultations have included reviewing leaflets for children and young people from the Family Group Conference Service, looking at the Staying Put policy with the Leaving Care Team and giving feedback to the Virtual School on their logo.

4.8 The CiCC have been sharing their expertise and experience with their counterparts from Cambridgeshire. They met to present their coming into care packs to Cambridgeshire's children and young people and the Cambridgeshire CiCC plan to refine the information provided in the

Peterborough packs so they can be launched in Cambridgeshire. The CiCC have also shared their goodbye cards idea with Cambridgeshire CiCC who plan to implement the cards for their social workers to use in the coming months.

- 4.9 Members of the CiCC met with Ofsted inspectors and were able to present some of their recent work as well as give their feedback and views on services. The CiCC members were able to show inspectors their coming into care packs and goodbye cards and the inspectors said they were impressed by these.
- 4.10 The Participation Team has been working with the Awards Planning Committee, made up of children and young people, to plan the annual awards event for Peterborough's Children in Care. The Awards Planning Committee have decided on a family fun day in August, with games, art activities and a raffle, where each Child in Care receives a certificate of achievement. Social workers, IROs, teachers and carers have been asked to send in their nominations via an online form. The CiCC plan to present information about their work at the event.
- 4.11 The Participation Team launched a Young Recruiters initiative earlier this year, to encourage more recruiting managers to involve young people in their recruitment panels, so that they can contribute their views and expertise and ensure the selection of the best candidates. This has been extremely successful and young people have been involved in the recruitment of Student Social Workers, Social Work Team Managers, Independent Chairs and Family Group Conference Coordinators.
- 4.12 Training was arranged for all young people who have expressed an interest in becoming a Young Recruiter to equip them with the information and support they needed to carry out this role. Three training sessions have been held to date with further training dates planned. Young people have told us they enjoy being part of recruitment, that it shows them their experience and views matter and helps them improve their own interview skills for the future.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 This report was completed in consultation with members of the Children in Care Council.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 Improved engagement with Children in Care and Care Leavers.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 N/A

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 There are no changes required.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 *There are no financial implications.*

Legal Implications

- 9.2 *There are no legal implications, as the report is for information only.*

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 Participation is an essential service for Children in Care and Care Leavers and this report demonstrates the level of participation in various events and activities.

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.4 There is an overall neutral impact identified in this report

9.5 Other Implications

This relates to all children in care and care leavers.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 N/A