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| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE | AGENDA ITEM No. 7 |
| 24 NOVEMBER 2021 | PUBLIC REPORT |

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| Report of: | Lou Williams, Director of Children's Services | |
| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Cllr Lynne Ayres; Cabinet Member for Children's Services Education, Skills and the University | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Shalina Chandoo, QA Lead | Tel. 01733 452540 |

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL PARTICIPATION REPORT

| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
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| 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**

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| 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 continues to promote opportunities for children and young people through regular newsletters, as well as creating event-specific publications to encourage engagement. Recent newsletters have encouraged young people to get involved in the new Young Inspectors group.
- 4.2 The Participation Team worked with Cambridgeshire County Council colleagues to organise two activities in the October half term for Children in Care. The first event was a day at Burwell House TV Studio, where young people were able to learn some of the skills required to create their own videos. The theme chosen by the Children in Care Councils for the activity was an ideal Foster Carer, and young people took the opportunity to share experiences of where a Foster Carer supported them, encouraged them to try something new, and the activities they enjoyed with their Foster Carers. These reflections will be used to create training materials for Foster Carers, alongside similar resources being created by the CiCC for Social Workers, IROs and Designated Teachers.
- 4.3 A virtual activity for Children in Care who live at a distance or who prefer online activities was also arranged in the October half term. This was a Halloween themed online ‘Spooktacular’ party involving an escape room activity, with goody bags sent to participants in advance with craft items and treats. Attendees also spoke about what made an ideal Foster Carer, ensuring that all children and young people were able to contribute their feedback, whether they attended a face to face or virtual session.
- 4.4 Following the success of last year’s Virtual Art Exhibition, the Participation Team invited young people from across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to send in artwork for this year’s exhibition. The exhibition premiered on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/9fR0kBHUVyU>) on Friday 29 October, showcasing the latest masterpieces from our creative and talented young people.
- 4.5 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) continue to meet in person and members have reported that they are happy to be able to meet face to face. Recruitment to the CiCC is ongoing and we now have nine members.
- 4.6 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 working with the Virtual School to launch a logo competition to replace their existing logo.
- 4.7 Members of the CiCC attended a regional youth voice conference hosted by the British Youth Council, alongside the Peterborough Youth Council. During the day, they participated in a

mental health workshop, which is a current UK Youth Parliament priority, and attended a panel discussion with politicians including MPs and London Assembly Members.

- 4.8 The CiCC were invited to the Undercroft, a pop-up venue based in Hampton, to take part in a workshop which included an outline of the play 'The IT'. The play's narrative has an underlying theme of mental health issues for the main character, and filmed extracts of the original work were shared and themes from the play were used to generate discussion and share perspectives. This visit will contribute towards the CiCC's ongoing mental health project, and the CiCC plan to invite Councillor Robinson to an upcoming meeting to discuss mental health services for children.
- 4.9 The CiCC has been looking at the Corporate Parenting Committee Champion roles and have asked that each champion completes the CiCC's councillor profile to help them get to know them better.
- 4.10 Members of the CiCC met with reviewers as part of the government's independent review of Children's Social Care in October. CiCC members discussed their experiences of care, how it's perceived at school and their relationships with carers and professionals who work with them, sharing what's going well and also making suggestions for improvement. CiCC members were also able to share some of their projects including the reasons behind their launch of the coming into care pack and their current mental health project.
- 4.11 The Children in Charge Youth Club continue to meet during term time. The current venue for the Youth Club has a large outdoor space, and children and young people made the most of it by playing games and sports in the space, as well as using the indoor space for art and craft activities. Activities have included making rangoli art using stencils, painting trinket boxes and team games. The group discussed what activities they would like to include in future sessions and attendees have commented that they find the Youth Club fun and a great way to make new friends.
- 4.12 The Young Recruiters Group continue to be actively involved in recruitment and have recently taken part in interview panels for the appointment of a Specialist PA in the Leaving Care Team.
- 4.13 The Young Inspectors met face to face as a group in October to start their project on inspecting Supervised Contact Centres across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. The group used a video tour of the first location to complete their review, while other inspections will be in person. The Young Inspectors came up with creative ideas on how the centre could be improved, to ensure young people get the most out of their family time at the centres. Once all visits have been completed, the Young Inspectors will write their report, detailing their recommendations on how to ensure the supervised contact centres are meeting the needs of the children and young people that use them.
- 4.14 In October young people delivered training to prospective Foster Carers as part of the Fostering Team's training course for prospective carers. The young people were supported by the Participation Team to facilitate an activity looking at Foster Carer skills and attributes and went through scenarios with the group on how to help young people settle into new placements. The young people's input ensured the training was meaningful and relevant, and they received glowing feedback from attendees and the Training Lead.

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 are no recommendations contained within this report, so there are no implications to carbon emissions. Progress has been made recently as the new venue for Children in Care Council meetings is centrally located, more young people have been able to use public transport to travel to meetings. However the Children in Care Council meetings and activities which were previously held remotely during COVID-19 lockdown restrictions have been held face to face since May 2021, and so travel emissions are likely to have risen.

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