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| CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE (FORMAL) | AGENDA ITEM No. 5 |
| 23 NOVEMBER 2022 | PUBLIC REPORT |

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| Report of: | Nicola Curley, Interim Director of Children's Services | |
| 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 | |
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| FROM: <i>Ricky Cooper, 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.

This report supports the council's Prevention, Independence & Resilience corporate priority.

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

Respecting You: We will do everything we can to make you feel cared about, valued and respected as an individual.

Making Decisions Together: We will involve you in decision making so your views are listened to, and will explain when we make a decision you may not like or agree with.

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 updated young people on the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), Care Leaver Forum (CLF) and other participation groups including the Young Inspectors, have advertised the 'Every Word Matters' project launch and the Virtual Art Exhibition, and have promoted other relevant opportunities including training opportunities with the Virtual School, the Children's Commissioner's Big Summer Survey, courses for Care Leavers and an Explore University event with ARU Peterborough.

4.2 Children and Young People started working on the 'Every Word Matters' project, looking at the language used around children with social care experience, sharing views and feelings on certain words and suggesting alternatives. In addition to supporting each participation group to provide their feedback on the project, the Participation Team organised focus groups for three different age groups in the October half term to gather views from young people. The focus groups included an engaging lyric writing workshop led by a local award-winning Music Practitioner and Rap Lyricist.

4.3 The annual Virtual Art Exhibition was launched in October 2022 and comprised of artwork submitted by children and young people in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. Many of the art pieces were produced in workshops supported by the Participation Team and were gifted to local family contact centres so they can be enjoyed by children and families who use those spaces.

4.4 The CiCC continue to meet in person on a monthly basis to work on their own projects as well as look at consultation requests, meet professionals and give feedback on services. Recent consultations with children and young people in care have included a co-production request in relation to the Virtual School website revamp and looking at an ePEP App to seek views from children and young people about their educational progress and support needs.

4.5 The CiCC invited the Peterborough Youth MP to a recent meeting to look at what wellbeing meant to them. The Youth MP will feed their discussion into UK Youth Parliament research on health and wellbeing which will directly inform their national priorities and will return to share their research findings with the CiCC.

- 4.6 The CiCC has been working on its Mental Health Project for the last year and is focusing on creating a video aimed at teenagers to destigmatise mental health issues and signpost to available support, that can be shared widely. The group has created a script, drawn illustrations, taken example photos and videos and formulated ideas on what the final video will look like. They have recorded some of the audio and have met with professionals to confirm what they envisage the final video will look like.
- 4.7 The Children in Care Council (CiCC) enjoyed the opportunity to meet Corporate Parents at the face-to-face informal Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee in September. The group gave lots of positive feedback following the meeting, saying they understood a lot more than they had at previous meetings, felt they were at the centre of the meeting and enjoyed co-chairing the meeting rather than just listening. The young people brought cards to hold up if they had questions or found the meeting was getting too formal for them and found these useful if some of them did not feel confident enough to speak up.
- 4.8 The Children in Charge Youth Club continues to meet fortnightly during term time. The Youth Club attendees recently worked on creating new greeting card designs, using the 2022 Virtual Art Exhibition entries, which will be printed and shared with professionals for their use. They also started discussing words for the 'Every Word Matters' project, talking about the stigma attached to certain words and using scrapbooks to note down their thoughts and feelings. The group requested a visit from a police officer so they could learn more about the profession, and this was arranged by the Participation Team.
- 4.9 The Young Recruiters continue to be actively involved in recruitment and helped conduct Open University social work course interviews and interviews for a new Family Group Conference Coordinator. The Young Recruiters also helped choose a new Participation Officer to fill an existing vacancy, who will be starting the role in late November.
- 4.10 The Young Inspectors completed re-inspections of some of the Supervised Contact Centres in the October half term, to ascertain whether their recommendations had been implemented by the service. Further re-inspections are planned in the coming months, after which a new report will be drafted and shared by the group. The Young Inspectors were also involved in creating a mural for one of the centres alongside local artists during the October half term. The group has demonstrated its commitment to the project and was recognised by being nominated for, and winning, the Coram Voice 'A National Voice' Participation award on 25 October 2022.
- 4.11 The Young Trainers continue to deliver training to prospective foster carers and have received excellent feedback from attendees. The Fostering Service reported that some prospective carers widened the age range of children they would like to work with to include teenagers, following the training and discussion with young people. The Young Trainers are in the process of developing their training offer further by designing a session to deliver as part of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) for Newly Qualified Social Workers.
- 4.12 The Care Leaver Forum (CLF) is a space for Care Leavers to discuss their own care experiences and look at how to improve the support and preparation for young people leaving care, working with the Leaving Care Service to share their thoughts and expertise. The group is trying to recruit new members to the forum and has asked the Leaving Care Service for support with this. Recent consultation requests include a request from the Designated Nurse for Children in Care for feedback on Health organisations and a request from the Leaving Care Service to discuss different accommodation options for young people when they become eighteen years old, if they cannot stay in the same place.

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 Children in Care Council meetings are held face to face on a monthly basis. As the venue for Children in Care Council meetings is centrally located, young people have been able to use public transport to travel to meetings.

The report contains no proposals, and therefore there are no decisions which will have an impact on carbon emissions.

9.5 Other Implications

Participation is an essential service for Children in Care and Care Leavers, offering activities and opportunities to provide feedback on Children's Services.

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