

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

18 January 2016

Report on Refreshment of the Children in Care Council Representation on the Panel

Report of Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
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Purpose of this report

To detail the proposal of the development of the Children in Care Council.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

1. Approve the plan for the development of the Children in Care Council

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report is not scheduled to be considered by any Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The recommendation is for Corporate Parenting Panel to examine under its authority to consider matters relating to the Council's role as a corporate parent.

Issues

2. The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is currently made up of 8 young people between the ages of 16 – 23, five of these young people are still open to the leaving care service, and 5 young people are in full time employment, education or training. Four of these young people are able to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel. The others cannot do so because of their college or employment responsibilities.
3. The current CiCC members have continued to promote the voice of the child within Central Bedfordshire Council and also at National level attending meetings with the Children's Minister and Children's

Commissioner. One member of the CiCC attended the staff conference and a commissioning event to share her experience of being a looked after child and workers who provided positive support in her life. The CiCC Achievements will be detailed in the annual report which will be presented at the next Panel.

4. The Young Voices Group is made up of children in care between the ages of 8 – 15. These young people attend activity based participation and take part in informal consultation and formal consultation days. There are around 32 young people who attend activities or consultations. When organising these days there is a limit to the number of young people we have in a group due to their needs and the support required. None of these young people are able to attend the Panel due to being at school; however other meetings have been arranged between young people and Councillors.
5. Some members of this group have also been involved in meetings with Councillors and the Children's Minister and Children's Commissioner as well as the consultation on the Independent Review Officers.
6. Following on from discussions with young people, a proposal for developing the CiCC is to make the Young Voices Group the new CiCC. The role for the current CiCC members will be to be Ambassadors, to support the younger group and to represent them and be their voice at Corporate Parenting Panel.
7. The Ambassadors can develop their own group as Leaving Care Young People to focus on Leaving Care issues and invite other leaving care young people to attend.
8. The newly formed CiCC group will meet during the school holidays to focus on the experience of being in care. The CiCC work plan could be developed with the Corporate Parenting Panel and any specific consultations required by the Panel could be included.
9. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be invited to attend the meetings of the CiCC or specific consultation days could be arranged with the Panel during the school holidays. The Lead Member has already expressed interest in holding an informal meeting of young people from the CiCC and elected Members.
10. The new CiCC and the Ambassadors together will give a better representation of the views of looked after children and care leavers at the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Council Priorities

11. Promote health and well-being and protect the vulnerable; improve educational attainment.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

12. None

Financial and Risk Implications

13. None

Equalities Implications

14. The CiCC is open to all young people who are in care. Young people who have additional needs will be supported to participate.

Conclusion and next Steps

15. If agreed the new CiCC will be launched during the February half-term, the work plan of the CiCC will be developed and Members will be invited to attend. The Ambassadors will start their new role and will attend the Corporate Parenting Panel to represent the views of looked after children.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None