

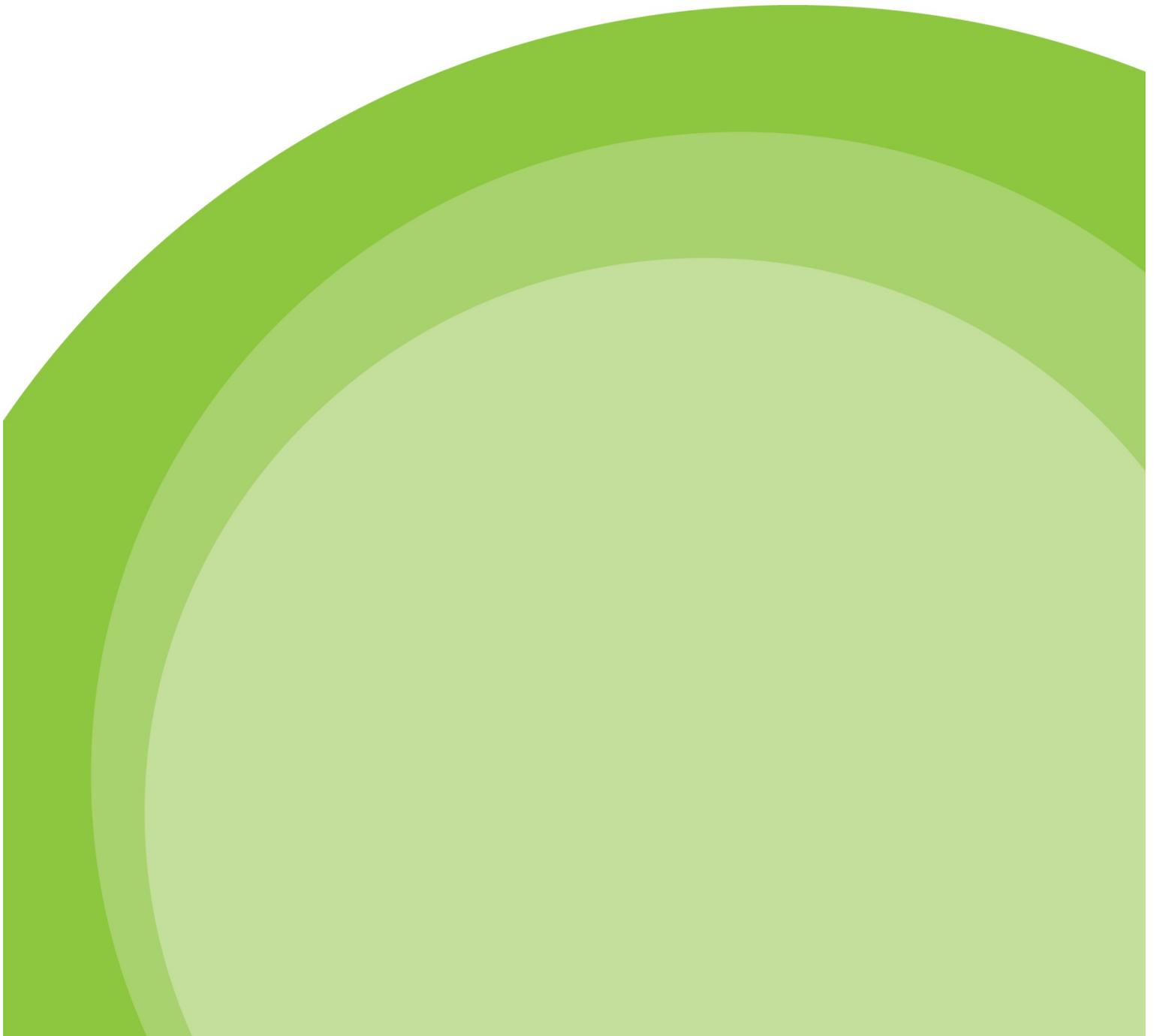
Appendix A

Central Bedfordshire Council
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Children in Care Council and Participation 2016 - 2017

Annual Report



Aims and Objectives

The aim of the following report is to summarise and evaluate the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Participation Officer during 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017.

The report is written with members of the CiCC and CiCC Ambassadors.

CiCC Members and Ambassadors were asked what has the CiCC achieved over the last year?

The Pledge – We are very proud of this piece of work, as we have helped in develop this from start to finish. There have been 18 young people involved in consultations along with Councillors and Senior Managers and we think it is a really good Pledge for our children and young people.

Aspirations Wish List – Our Corporate Parents are supporting our career aspirations and have supported us with arranging work placements, shadowing days and creating an Aspirations Wish List.

The Awards – The awards evening took place on Friday 21st October, the event was a great success and all the young people enjoyed seeing their photos in a frame.

The Frontline Programme – CiCC Ambassadors designed the training for the direct work session for the Frontline participants, 12 young people attended the day to deliver the training.

Representing Looked After Children at Meetings – Ambassadors have attended the LAC health improvement meeting, LSCB Voice of the Child and helped to facilitate a young peoples conference, CiCC Members and Ambassadors have attended the Corporate Parenting Panel, Corporate Parenting Operations Group, Commissioning Team meeting and Housing Solutions Meeting.

Working with the Commissioning Service – Young people have worked with the QA Manager to develop a young persons QA role.

Children's Commissioner Participation Group – members of our CiCC have attended the groups with the Children's Commissioner.

Eastern Region CiCC Group – CiCC members and Ambassadors attended an Eastern Region CiCC Meeting. The Children's Commissioner also attended the event.

Meetings with Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Director – CiCC Members and Ambassadors presented the wording of the Pledge and gave an update on what the CiCC has been working on and promoted the Aspirations work.

Summer Fun and Consultation Activities – This year’s activities were supported by the Virtual School, 52 children attended one of the 12 activity days organised.

Peer Mentors – CiCC have continued to mentor younger looked after children (LAC), have completed informal consultations and represented the voice of looked after children.

Training Days for Assisted and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) – CiCC members have worked with the practice educator to develop a training programme.

Consultation Events – Consultations on The Pledge, Life Story Work, Emotional Well Being, Personal Education Plans, Advocacy and Independent Visitors.

Supporting a CBC Internship for Social Work Student – Working with the Central Bedfordshire Academy of Social Work and Early Help Team to provide an Internship for a student from the University of Bedfordshire.

The Children in Care Council and Ambassadors

The new Children in Care Council is for children from the ages of 8 – 16, members attend activity based participation events and will attend specific consultation events or meetings as and when required. There are around 17 children who are the core members and now that the group has had time to form, the next stage of their development will be the introduction of more formal meetings which will take place on a regular basis during school holidays.

The Children in Care Council is being supported by the CiCC Ambassadors who are all over the age of 16, currently there are 13 young people in this role. The Ambassadors attend activities and events and also represent the voice of looked after children at meetings and events where our CiCC Members are not able to attend.

The Ambassadors have been active in supporting the Participation Work Plan and leading on specific projects. There are currently 6 Ambassadors working on the Young people’s QA role with the Commissioning Service, one of the Ambassadors has lead on the Pledge work and another one has been leading on the Life Story Project.

There have been 32 children over the last year that have been part of the CiCC or acted as Ambassadors. All of the young people have different experiences of the care system from their journeys into and leaving care, the types of care provisions for example some have experienced foster care whilst other young people have lived in residential homes or placed with family members.

Age	Male	Female	
8 - 16 yrs	8	11	
Over 16	6	4	
Over 21	0	3	
Total	14	18	32

Aspirations Wish List

One of the CiCC Priorities was to raise aspirations of our looked after children and care leavers which has been discussed at Corporate Parenting Panel. This has been very well supported by members of the panel who have provided young people with opportunities to find out more about chosen careers or experience new activities. For example Cllr Hegley introduced a young person who wanted to be a vet and invited the young people to a foal parade. Cllr Chatterley arranged a day at Luton Town watching a training session and to meet the players. Four young people will also be attending a match as the match mascots.

The initiative has been promoted by Cllr Hegley and members of the Corporate Parenting Panel and a Aspirations Wish List has been generated from the young people and their career aspirations.

Senior Managers have also support our young people acting as mentors to support aspirations, helping to arrange work placements and support with assignments. 'I am grateful for the support from Helen, Sue and Gerard during my college course, it helped having strong connections with corporate parents. I found my classmates had family to help and support them which isn't an option for me so it meant a great deal, going above and beyond to help me.' **CiCC Ambassador.**

Consultation Events

The Pledge – one of the Ambassadors has lead on this project as part of her college work placement. A workshop was organised for young people, members and senior managers. The groups were asked to think about what Central Bedfordshire should pledge to looked after children and care leavers. This included support from social workers and independent review officers, support with health and education and future aspirations. **See Appendix 1** for the feedback from the workshop.

Posters were created using the information from the feedback and presented to the Chief Executive and Director of Children's Service. **See Appendix 2.**

During the meeting the CiCC Members discussed their aspirations and gave some examples of where they would like support to explore these aspirations.

The information from the events and meetings was then used to write The Pledge. **See Appendix 3.**

The Pledge was taken to Corporate Parenting Panel and shared with Members and Senior Managers and signed off. The Pledge will now be designed by members of the CiCC along with the Ambassadors. There has been some delay with the design of The Pledge; however the CiCC Ambassadors are continuing to work on the design of the pledge and a younger version.

Life Story Project

From the event, Taking it to the Next Level Corporate Parenting event which took place in November 2015 the Ambassadors requested that Life Story Work be one of their priorities. One of the ambassadors agreed to lead on this piece of work and

wrote a research proposal which was agreed by the Assistant Director of Children Services Operations. There have been some delays with this project due to issues which have arose. The issues have been fed back to senior managers and the young person has met with the Director of Children's Services to share her experience. From this the local authority updated their policy and procedures relating to access to files.

'Even though the project has not gone to plan, using my experience to highlight some of the issues in the process and giving the feedback will improve the access to files procedures for other care leavers. This has also made me more determined to be the voice of our looked after children to ensure our young people get good quality life story through their journey of care so that young people don't need to access files to gain this information'. **CiCC Ambassador**

One of our CiCC members stated 'Life Story Work is so important as it allows me to get to know things and gives a meaning to my past'

Emotional Well Being

Members of the CiCC met with the Practice Manager for the Corporate Parenting Service, and contributed to a presentation which was written for Corporate Parenting Panel on Emotional Health and Well Being.

Personal Education Plans

The Virtual School attended one of the activity days and asked CiCC members to complete a survey on their Personal Education Plans. The feedback from the survey has informed the changes which have been made. This includes a request that there is a question on the document with regards to the Pupil Premium and how this is spent.

LAC Review Consultation Documents

Before a young person attends their Looked After Children's Review meeting they are sent a consultation document to complete which is shared with the Independent Review Officer and social worker. The information included in these booklets could be used for service development; part of the intern's role was to collate the information. For example there is a high number of young people who did not know what an advocate was. This information can then be passed onto the teams, including the commissioning team to ensure that information is shared with young people on a regular basis.

Members of the CiCC and Ambassadors think that this should be a priority going forward, working with the Independent Review Officers to look at the process of gaining this feedback for the individual but also for service development and how services can use this information.

CiCC Involvement

CiCC members and Ambassadors continue to raise their profile, have their voices heard and influence service development. They are often invited to be part of meetings or events. Currently CiCC Ambassadors attend the Corporate Parenting

Panel and contribute to discussions. During the school holidays CiCC Members also attended the meeting to give their views on the Pledge.

Other meetings which our Ambassadors or members attend include meetings with the Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and the Assistant Director. The young people themselves report that they have good relationships with their Corporate Parents.

Corporate Induction

CiCC Ambassadors are part of the Corporate Induction Programme for new members of Children's staff. Young people prepare and deliver a presentation about the CiCC and the work they are involved in.

The Children's Commissioner and Eastern Region CiCC

Members of the CiCC were invited to attend an event with the Children's Commissioner and worked on a project which has produced a draft document called Asks from Children with care experience. It is hoped that this document will be used for all children in care.

Our CiCC has also attended the Regional CiCC event where our young people took part in discussions alongside the Children's Commissioner. The young people returned from the event proud to be part of Central Bedfordshire's CiCC. They felt proud of what they have achieved and came back with ideas of how to promote and improve the group further.

LSCB Voice of the Child Sub Group

One of the Ambassadors attends the LSCB Voice of the Child Sub Group and is a member of this group, along with the Participation Officer. Two Ambassadors helped to facilitate the young people's conference, gaining views from children who attended and supported the discussions.

Quality Assurance Young Peoples Role

Six Ambassadors have worked to co-produce a Quality Assurance Young People's Role. This is an exciting development for the young people to be able to support the Quality Assurance Manager in attending accommodation providers. The young people have started to coproduce their own inspection framework to go along side the QA Managers inspection framework. The young people gave a good insight about living in semi independent accommodation.

ASYE Recruitment and Training

The Learning and Development Team work with the CiCC Ambassadors and Members ensuring that young people are involved in the ASYE Training and recruitment. This year the team supported an Internship to work alongside the CiCC and Participation Officer during the summer break. The final year social work student undertook the 300 hour placement focusing on the Consultation Feedback, Summer Activities Programme and supporting the CiCC Ambassadors.

'My summer as an intern taught me so much, the work that is being carried out by Marie and the CiCC is crucial to ensure that the council continues to improve it's services for looked after children. The ambassadors were amazing young people,

who had great ambition and dedication to improving the lives of other young people who were looked after. They could share their experiences with the younger people, and give them advice that perhaps other people such as their social workers or foster carers, do not have the experience of to help. They were also in college and had other commitments in their lives, which made it even more inspiring that they gave up their time to help other young people. The ambassadors gave me lots of tips and advice on how to be a good social worker; I got continuous feedback and learnt how to build meaningful relationships with young people. They were honest and blunt but mostly kind and compassionate with great personalities.' **Amy Boorer, Intern.**

Frontline

The CiCC Members and Ambassadors continue to work with the Frontline Training Programme,

'In 2016, a group of children and young people from the CiCC came along to the Frontline Summer Institute to deliver teaching for the third year running. This year, they delivered work shops to groups of 35 student social workers as well as sharing some personal stories to the whole cohort of 150 students. Their input into our teaching is always invaluable and well received by the students and I continue to be impressed by the professionalism of the young people. What always stands out for me is seeing the young people grow and develop in confidence each year and how they deliver messages from children in care with passion and insight. Students' feedback has included comments on how humbling the stories are, how inspiring the workshop content is and how meeting young people who have had social work involvement fills them with hope and admiration as they begin their own journey into social work as a career. The academic team at the University of Bedfordshire are so grateful that the CiCC continue to support our work and that we can always rely on them to deliver such amazing messages through their teaching.' **Jo Williams, Senior Lecturer in Social Work**

The young people who have attended the training enjoy the opportunity and this year attending the University of Warwickshire was an experience for the young people to see the university. This year one of our younger members attended, who is 12 years old and stood delivering the session with confidence, giving great ideas to the participants and then spoke in front of the whole cohort. Our CiCC has been invited back again this year to deliver the training to 300 participants and we hope to take more of the younger group.

Annual Awards Evening

The Annual Awards evening took place on Friday 24th October 2016 in the Council Chambers at Priory House, there were over 120 young people who attended the event to receive their award which was presented by Councillor Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care & Housing.

The event was supported by members of the Corporate Parenting Panel along with the University of Bedfordshire. There were over 260 young people nominated by social workers, foster carers, school and residential staff, with 120 young people receiving their award on the night. The theme of the event was Oscars. The event was well attended by Members, Senior Managers, social workers and foster carers.

The Young Person of the Year stated "I felt very proud and happy to receive the award. I felt like a princess in my dress and I was so happy that my dad was there too with me. I felt as though I would burst with happiness".

Young people from Maythorn, a residential unit for disabled children and young people, also attended the event, Manager Tom Smith gave feedback -

'In terms of our young people as a whole, it was a rare and positive opportunity for our service to take our recognition of their achievements one step further. The setup worked really well for us with lots of things to do, plenty of space if needed and a really positive atmosphere, where everybody got genuine recognition for overcoming their individual challenges and achieving something special. The fact that our young people were as much a part of this as everyone else was testament to the inclusive nature of the event and made for an evening they all really enjoyed. This evening has been talked about in reviews, school meetings and other forums, and I feel it has led to an increase in recognition that what our young people achieve really is something to be proud of.'

Activity Based Participation

The Virtual School financially supported the summer activities programme, which enabled more days of activities to be organised and an increase in the number of young people attending. There were 52 young people between the ages of 5 and 15 who attended at least one of the 11 activity days. The activities included ice skating, pony days funded by the British Horse Society, cinema trip and a day at Rushmere Country Park funded by the Leisure Service. CiCC Ambassadors have also attended the events to act as peer mentors but to gain experience of working with younger children to support their own personal career development.

The activity days have also been well attended by social workers from the Corporate Parenting Team, which has been very positive for both young people and workers in developing relationships. We have also had some of the Independent Review Officers attending the activities and again this has supported the development of positive working relationships.

One social worker stated 'the activities and events are so important for the young people, one of my young people doesn't always communicate her feelings, but after spending time with the Ambassadors and other workers, they were able to pass on some information which enabled me to meet with the young person and talk about the things that mattered. The young person also felt able to say how she felt as she had been encouraged by the ambassadors'

Young people who are supported by the Children with Disabilities Team and the Family Support Teams have also attended some of the activities, for example trips to The Grove Theatre to watch a Disney production and the pantomime.

Central Bedfordshire Leisure Service has also offered free swimming passes to our looked after children and care leavers and their families.

University Of Bedfordshire

The University of Bedfordshire organised a residential for young people over the age of 18, to attend and explore options for future education, The feedback was positive and the young people who attended enjoyed the experience. The University continues to support our young people providing funding for the awards evening and additional support to individuals and groups of young people.

Challenges

The number of young people attending CiCC events continues to fluctuate, there continues to be a core group of young people who have developed a very strong working relationship with the participation officer.

Changes in the service can cause challenges for the young people and their involvement / commitment to the CiCC.

Times of meetings often means that only certain young people can attend, the role of the CiCC Ambassador is to represent the voice of other looked after children and care leavers however a number of young people are not able to gain experience in attending professional meetings as a CiCC member or Ambassador.

Future Priorities

	Timescales	Who is involved	Outcomes
CiCC Development	September 2017	CiCC Members and Ambassadors Marie Short Corporate Parenting Service	To have established groups for the CiCC and for CiCC Ambassadors / Care Leaver who meet on a regular basis and set their own priorities. To include regular CiCC Member recruitment activities / events.
The Pledge and Monitoring the Pledge	September 2017	CiCC members and Ambassadors Marie Short Corporate Parenting Service	To have a CBC Pledge to looked after children endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Panel. A quality assurance tool will be developed for young people to complete to monitor the Pledge. This will become part of the LAC review process.
Life Story Work For All	September 2017	CiCC Ambassador with support from identified social workers	To undertake the research project for Life Story Work to establish what is offered to young people and what could be improved. Our aspiration will be that all

			young people receive good quality life story work.
Aspirations Wish List	September 2017	Cllr Hegley and Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel Marie Short Corporate Parenting Service	To offer looked after children and care leavers the opportunity to explore different career opportunities using links through members and officers.
Entitlements for Looked After Children and Care Leavers	September 2017	Corporate Parenting Service Marie Short	To ensure that children and young people are aware of their entitlements during their time in care and when leaving care.

Further work will be carried out alongside the Conference and Review Team to look at the data collection from the consultation booklets and how this could be used for service development.

Continue to develop links with other teams who support looked after children, including the Children with Disabilities and Family Support teams.

Conclusion

Central Bedfordshire's CiCC and Ambassadors are an inspirational group of young people who continue to work to improve the services for looked after children and care leavers. The role of Participation Officer is supported by these young people and they continue to drive the work plan.

The CiCC have achieved a lot over the last year, the Ambassadors and CiCC members continue to be committed to their priorities and promote Central Bedfordshire Council in their work.

Relationships have developed between the CiCC and Ambassadors and corporate parents, including members of the Corporate Parenting Panel, this has further promoted the CiCC and has led to more involvement with services across the local authority.

The Awards are always a highlight for the CiCC and a time when they are able to celebrate their achievements with their Corporate Parents and other looked after children and care leavers.

The CiCC has continued to grow with the support of the social workers; this has ensured that the ambassadors are representing the voice of more of our children in care. Members of the CiCC and Ambassadors not only promote the work of the CiCC but also the social workers they work with and Central Bedfordshire Council for the support they receive.

We have been invited to be involved with this year's Frontline cohort and are proud to be one of the chosen CiCC groups to do this work. This year we will be training around 300 participants and offering more direct work with the students.

Being invited to attend external events like the Children's Commissioner's events and Frontline supports our personal development, gaining recognition from outside of the local authority reinforces our achievements and abilities, increasing our confidence and people skills and motivates us to continue our work.

'I have enjoyed all of the things that I have been involved with over the last year, especially my work placement, I attended meetings to improve services including the LAC Health Meeting. I also really enjoyed having the opportunity to design and deliver the training to ASYEs. The experience I have gained will help me with my career aspirations. I really valued the opportunity to work with the Participation Officer which gave me an insight into the role. I also had the opportunity to share my talent and performed at the Cheering Volunteering event which has helped to build my confidence.' **CiCC Ambassador.**

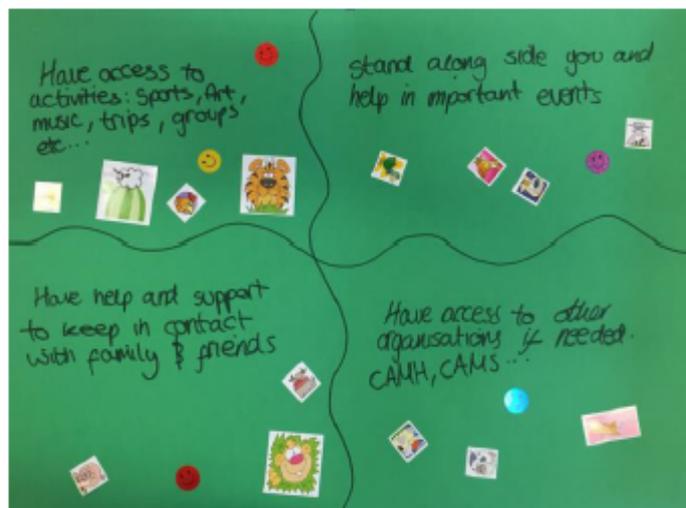
This year I have enjoyed working closely with the CiCC working on the Pledge and peer mentoring during the summer holidays. It has been a good experience to hear our young people express their views and opinions for the Pledge. Being able to lead on pieces of work as an Ambassador has boosted my confidence and enabled me to do things I would never have thought I could. I have had the opportunity to meet with different people and gain so much from working with people from the local authority and the people at Frontline.' **CiCC Ambassador**

Appendix 1

The Pledge Workshop 17th February 2017	
	The pledge workshop was developed by CiCC Ambassadors with support from the Participation Officer. 18 Young people and Councillors were split into working groups. The first activity was to build a spaghetti tower and there was a prize for the biggest tower.
	The Pledge Consultation, the groups were asked to think about what Central Bedfordshire should pledge to look after children and care leavers, young people were then asked to feedback.
	<p>Feedback from Groups -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receive opportunity to have a peer mentor ➤ Be more involved in care plans ➤ Have specific information on different aspects of care, i.e. care plans ➤ Have social workers number/Duty social workers number in case young people need to talk to them ➤ Having a back-up social worker ➤ Help with Education ➤ Having the opportunity to develop relationships outside of contact with important family members. ➤ Having something in common with social workers ➤ Bond with Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) to form relationships ➤ Feeling and being listened to ➤ Children in care council (CICC) to continue ➤ Reliable access to services ➤ Strong relationships with Corporate Parenting Panel ➤ Profile book/life book/memory book for each child-written by the child with social worker ➤ Ensuring health for young people ➤ Celebrate Achievements ➤ Social workers to communicate in sensitive ways ➤ Summer Activities ➤ Going out on activities and trips with social workers ➤ Contact centers to be supplied with things young people need and like ➤ Food and things that young people enjoy doing, sports, hobbies etc. ➤ The Pledge ➤ Seeing a social worker longer than 30 minutes ➤ Being able to talk privately with a social worker ➤ Information on stages of coming into care at what ages ➤ Show children and young people it is not just them that is going through this. ➤ Feeling comfortable around social worker, not just talking about being in care, days out etc...

Appendix 2

The Pledge Feedback 2016



Your Journey

As your corporate parents we will treat you with dignity, equality and respect. We will provide you with a home that you can feel safe, settled and happy. We will provide you with information about being in care, help you understand your journey and be alongside you. We will help you to build positive relationships with your allocated social worker and other professionals involved with your care, so you feel that your views and your journey matters. It is important that you are listened to and your wishes and feelings are included in your care plans. We will encourage you to participate in the Children in Care Council activities and events and provide peer mentor support so you can talk to other looked after children and care leavers.

Support along the way

We will ask you for feedback about the services you receive and use this to develop the service. We will support you with accessing life story work and encourage you to keep a life book / memory book so you can understand your journey and help support future goals. We will support you to stay in contact with family and friends and help you to develop meaningful relationships (if safe to do so). We will give you information about independent visitors and advocates and support you to access these services.

Your journey and support along the way

Your health is very important; we will support you in staying fit and healthy. We will ensure you are registered with a doctor and dentist and help you to access other health services if needed. You will be offered regular health check ups with the Looked after Children's Nurse. We will always make time for you and ensure you see your Social Worker and Independent Review Officer on a regular basis and will ensure you have their contact details. We will help you to develop relationships with professionals involved in your care. Being able to do activities with your worker is vital to build the relationships and being able to talk to your social worker privately will help build trust and rapport. Having strong relationships with your corporate parents is important so you can continue your journey with as little bumps as possible. We will support you in your education and support your future goals and aspirations and always celebrate your achievements. You will receive support from the Virtual School to reach your educational potential. We will encourage you to take part in school trips and after school clubs. We will support your hobbies and interests. We will always look for new opportunities for you to develop new hobbies, interests and skills. We will support your career aspirations and offer you opportunities to explore careers options.

Future Aspirations

We will continue to support you in your future goals and aspirations when you leave school. We will make sure you have all the right documents that you need such as a birth certificate, passport and national insurance number. The Leaving Care Team will support you up until you are 21 or 25 if in full time education. When you turn 18 you will have an allocated personal adviser who will support you through the transition to leaving care.