

Committee:	Date:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	19 February 2015
Subject: Children in Care Council Update Report	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report will inform Members of the progress that has been made in setting up the Children in Care Council (CiCC) with Children Looked After and Care Leavers who are supported by the City of London. The first CiCC took place on the 4th November 2015; at this meeting the children and young people confirmed the City of London's Pledge, which has now been included into the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The logo for the CiCC and Terms of Reference were also agreed at this meeting, the logo can be seen on the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan which is attached to this report.</p> <p>The Chair and Deputy Chair of the CiCC will be elected from the young people attending, CityGateway are supporting these elections and until such time as they have taken place the Children and Families Team have been supporting in facilitating these roles. It has been agreed that the CiCC will meet in the half term, reporting directly into the Children's Executive Board (CEB), with representation on the board. A work plan has been agreed by the young people and this has been incorporated into the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan, which is also attached to this report.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <p>Note the report.</p>	

Main Report

Background

In 2007, the Government produced a White Paper, Care Matters: Time for Change which placed expectations on providers and care staff to develop the mechanisms for participation across all children's services.

"It is important that children have a chance to shape and influence the parenting they receive at every level – from expressing their wishes and feelings about the individual care they receive in their placements through to helping to shape the overall strategy for children in their area through a Children in Care Council"
(DfES Time for Change 1.21 pg 20).

Due to the low numbers of children in care it was initially envisaged that it would not be viable or sustainable to have a CiCC, especially as the City's children and young people are placed all over London. Consideration was given to setting up a virtual CiCC, with young people connecting through social media forums. However, after some consideration and following consultation with the young people it was agreed that the young people would meet at the Guildhall in the City of London. To support the progression of the CiCC the City enlisted the support of a participation consultant to set up and imbed the CiCC.

Current Position

1. On the 4th November 2014, the first CiCC took place, there were some difficulties in setting up this meeting due to the young people's availability, as it conflicted with some of their school and college commitments. This difficulty was reflected in the low numbers of young people who attended whereby there were only four young people who were able to come. Even though there was limited attendance the young people were able to progress and agree the following;
 - The City of London's Pledge, which has now been incorporated into the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
 - The Logo for the CiCC, which can be viewed on the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan attached to this report.
 - The Terms of Reference.
 - Agree a work plan for the CiCC which has been incorporated into the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan.
2. The CiCC agreed that it would be more suitable to have the meetings in the half term, as more young people would be available to attend. The second CiCC meeting took place on the 22nd December 2014, at this meeting there were eight young people who attended of varying ages, ranging from 13 to 20. At this meeting the following was agreed;
 - The election of a Chair and Deputy Chair, the young people thought it would be a good idea to have a job description for the roles and it was envisaged that the elections would take place at the next CiCC meeting.
 - For the young people to prepare a welcome pack and contact card for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
 - Prepare a young person friendly version of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
 - Develop training and volunteering opportunities for young people to be involved in such as;
 - Mentoring other young people.
 - Interviewing skills e.g. for participation in interview panels.
 - Informal inspection of commissioned services for children.

- Chairing meeting skills.
 - Report writing, producing a short update report on CiCC activity.
- Develop feedback forms in relation to service development and delivery.
3. Following the last CiCC all the young people went to a pizza making activity, supported by the Participation Consultant, CityGateway and two members of staff from the Children and Families Team. This activity helped the young people to get to know each other as a group, with the older young people supporting some of the younger ones in the group. Overall the young people confirmed that they had an enjoyable and productive evening during which, they were able to bond with each other.
 4. The young people are also being offered time credits for their participation in the CiCC, which can be used to access activities. The CiCC has been allocated a small budget to pay for any cost incurred around administration, printing and activities for the group. The young people have expressed an interest in going on another residential activity. The last residential was arranged by CityGateway to facilitate an opportunity for the young people to participate in the setting up of the CiCC, and was well attended by the young people.
 5. A celebration event is being arranged for the young people for either the end of March or early April 2015. The young people have indicated that they would like to showcase their culture by bringing food and wearing clothes that represent where they come from. Initially this event was scheduled to take place in December 2014 but it was considered that it would be more conducive to delay the event until the CiCC was established. This would give time for those young people who were on the CiCC to feel part of the group and be more confident of their role.

Conclusion

6. Initially there was some deliberation as to whether the City of London would have enough representation on a CiCC and consideration was given as to whether there should be a virtual CiCC using social media. The consensus of opinion was that it would be beneficial for the young people to meet and be part of the City of London. A residential event was arranged, inviting Children Looked After and Care Leavers, the purpose of this residential was to scope the interest of the young people in being involved. The feedback from the residential was positive and there was every indication that many of the young people would be interested in being involved in the CiCC.
7. The first CiCC took place on the 4th November 2014 and there were some difficulties around the young people attending due to school and college commitments. It was agreed at this meeting that the CiCC should be convened in the half term and when the second CiCC took place on the 22nd December 2014 considerably more young people attended. Although there is a wide age range the CiCC does present as working well, with commitment and ideas coming from the young people as to the future development of the CiCC.

8. The next step in developing the CiCC will be to elect a Chair Person and Deputy from the group of young people attending. The young people will also be supported in receiving training so that they can participate in shaping services through being involved in recruitment and monitoring of commissioned services. It is envisaged that in the future the CiCC will be more self-determining about its development.

Appendices

Corporate Parenting Action Plan

Background Papers

Care Matters: Time for Change www.tsoshop.co.uk

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