

Committee: Safeguarding Sub-Committee	Dated: 16/04/2024
Subject: City of London Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, 2023–24 Participation Annual Report	Public Appendix 2 non-public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1–4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Laura Demetriades, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Department of Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service within the People’s Directorate oversees the participation offer to children in care and care leavers. It is a statutory expectation that all local authorities must provide the opportunity for children in care and care leavers to share their experiences through a Children in Care Council. However, to support young people to do this, the participation offer goes beyond formal meetings and consultation events, providing opportunities for children and young people to: develop friendships with each other; foster relationships with senior leaders; and try new activities and cultural experiences which foster a sense of collective belonging and identity. It also serves as a conduit to share information with young people in an informal environment, signpost to services and professionals who can help, and act as bridge to support the engagement and interaction with new services and workers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. To deliver services that meet the needs of our children in care and care leavers, it is fundamental that we receive their honest and individual feedback about what is done well and what can be improved. While there are the usual mechanisms for

doing this, such as surveys and forms, it is nationally recognised that this isn't always the most helpful way for young people to share their views. Therefore, the Children in Care Council offers a space that is centred around the young person, and which is supported by workers not directly involved in operational social work practice and decision making. This enables young people to come together to share their experiences and views in a safe, supportive and facilitated way.

2. We need to ensure that we are being proactive, sensitively persistent, and creative in the ways we communicate our offer and the activities that are available. We also need to demonstrate the impact that young people can have on service development and the support they receive.

Current Position

3. During the last year we have offered six Children in Care Council meetings. This equates to one every academic half term, which is in line with our aims. The average attendance at each meeting has been six young people. Ideally we would like to increase this to eight to 10 young people. However, it is positive to be establishing a core membership.
4. The Children in Care Council has had the opportunity to share their views with the Lead Member, Town Clerk, Executive Director for the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS), Head of the Virtual School, Head of Children's Social Care, and the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. This ensures that the lived experience of children in care and care leavers is heard and understood at all levels of the Corporation, and that they receive feedback about what action was taken following their feedback.
5. Based on feedback from the Children in Care Council we have developed a 'one stop shop' website full of information that supports young people to understand their rights, feel safe in the community, access education and employment opportunities, manage their physical and emotional health, understand accommodation processes and available support, and raise awareness of London-wide social opportunities as well as those with the Children in Care Council. [Children in Care Council \(CiCC\) - City of London Family Information Service](#)
6. We have increased take-up at social events throughout the year, supporting young people to access a range of extracurricular activities that build confidence and support personal learning and development. Young people have been keen to make suggestions for future events and engage in WhatsApp polls to give feedback.
7. We have developed a more consistent and comprehensive communication strategy, ensuring that we have up-to-date contact details for all young people. We have also created a group email to share opportunities, promote the private WhatsApp group to receive information, and call young people directly to promote engagement and attendance. This enables us to ensure that all young people are

receiving information and can make an informed choice about whether they would like to attend events.

Options

8. The participation work continues to provide a pre-planned calendar of Children in Care Council meetings and events throughout the year. The Council also links with partners that are also working in this space, such as the Virtual School, Prospects and Partnership for Young London, to offer a wide range of opportunities that meet the variety of needs for our children and young people.

Proposals

9. The above arrangements continue through the Participation Officer who reports to the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance within the People's Directorate.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. There are no strategic implications directly related to this report.

- Strategic implications – N/A
- Financial implications – N/A
- Resource implications – N/A
- Legal implications – N/A
- Risk implications – N/A
- Equalities implications – N/A
- Climate implications – N/A
- Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

11. The participation offer is continually developing to respond to the needs and interests for our children in care and care leavers. Those who access the offer provide positive feedback about their experiences and the opportunities provided, and so we will continue work to increase take-up. There are areas of co-production that we would like to expand on with the Children in Care Council, which would help us move from consultation to more meaningful collaboration. With the establishment of a core group of attendees, this can be progressed over the next 12 months.

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