

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	25 September 2015
Subject: Children in Care Council	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information

Summary

This report will outline the activity and progress of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), since it was set up in November 2014. There will be a summary on the event in March 2015, when the young people met with Members for lunch. There will also be information on a sailing activity that was arranged through the CiCC and took place in August 2015.

Members will be informed of the future development of the CiCC in reviewing the pledge, and how the promises that were made are being met. There will be information on the training and support being offered to the young people and their carers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to: Note the report

Main Report

Background

Children in Care Council

1. The CiCC has been in place for nearly a year, the first CiCC meeting was held in November 2014 and there will be six meetings a year that will correlate with the school holidays, to date there have been five meetings. Since it has started the CiCC has agreed on the pledge and the terms of reference for the group and earlier this year a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson were elected by the group. Attendance at the meetings has at times been variable, with a minimum of two attending and a maximum of nine. However this is to be expected given this is a new initiative, meetings taking place in the Guildhall and also due to their school and college commitments.
2. It was agreed that when the group is established an event would be arranged for the young people to meet with Members, and this took place in March 2015. The young people were consulted about what they wanted to do on the day and they suggested that they would like to ask Members questions about themselves. The event initially involved lunch with Members and then after lunch the young people

asked Members various questions, with the Members moving from table to table within a set time period. Overall the day went very well and the young people reported to have enjoyed the day.

Key Priorities Achieved for 2015/2016

3. The CiCC has set out its key priorities and below are some of the achievements for 2015/2016;
 - Develop a welcome pack and contact card for children and young people who are looked after or care leavers in the City of London – This has been now been completed.
 - Develop a young person friendly version of the corporate parenting strategy – This has now been completed.
 - Develop and provide training, volunteering opportunities for looked after children and care leavers – Young people will be having training on interview skills and mentoring and volunteering opportunities, this was presented to the CiCC by Fusion in February 2015.
 - Workshops for CiCC on the prevent agenda, radicalization, substance misuse and child sexual exploitation. This took place in July 2015.

Summer Events

4. In July and August 2015 a number of workshops were held for the young people, the topics covered were;
 - Radicalisation – raising awareness, keeping safe and reporting any concerns.
 - Child Sexual Exploitation – this focused on young people keeping themselves safe.
 - Workshop on drugs and alcohol – raising awareness of the affects.
5. These workshops took place after a CiCC meeting, the first two workshops were attended by two young people and the second two workshops were attended by nine. Those young people who attended gave positive feedback on the events and professionals providing the workshop found the young people to be interested and engaged in the topics.
6. In August 2015, eight young people who were looked after and care leavers aged between 13 and 24 were sponsored to go on a sailing adventure through the Tall Ships Youth Trust based in Portsmouth. They were accompanied by two members of staff from the Children and Families team. The Tall Ships Youth Trust runs these adventures for young people from varying backgrounds. Young people spend a week on board a sailing ship, with experienced crew members, learning basic sailing skills, cooking, team building and confidence building.
7. During the week the young people were separated into two groups and were involved in sailing the vessel, with support from experienced crew members, part

of their duties involved cooking for everyone on board, this for some of the young people had been the first time they had cooked.

8. A video diary was recorded by the young people during the week, as well as blog of their experience. They were also taught basic sailing skills and some of the young people went fishing and engaged in various other activities throughout the week. This created a healthy competition between the two groups with a noticeable change towards the end of the week in young people's confidence levels.
9. At the end of the week the young people were given a certificate, and two young people were commended for their leadership skills by the crew. The feedback from the staff who attended was very positive, they had seen many of the young people develop during the week, as they learned new skills and gained confidence. For most of the young people this had been the first time they had been on a sailing boat and travelled outside of London since they arrived in the country.
10. Staff encouraged young people, not currently engaged with CiCC, to participate, highlighting the benefits, which include them contributing the service changes/improvements. The feedback from the young people has also been positive, many enjoyed the experience of working as a group and it also gave them the opportunity to develop their relationships with frontline staff of the Children and Families team.

Future Development

11. As stated above, there are plans in September 2015 to have a training event for the foster carers who care for City of London children and young people. This training will be a one day event and will focus on Prevent, Radicalisation and Child Sexual Exploitation. The purpose of providing this training is to ensure that carers know and understand the potential risks that the children/young people could be exposed to or indeed vulnerable to due to their backgrounds. Overall, there appears to have been a good take up of this training, there is also going to be training for young people around interviewing skills, to enable young people to have the skills and confidence to attend job/college/university interviews.
12. There are plans to have young people involved in the procurement and monitoring of services for children and young people. This will be explored further as to what the level of interest is in taking this opportunity, and whether this would be feasible given the young person's commitments to school/college/university. At the CiCC on the 18th August the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson put forward the idea of setting up a Facebook group for the CiCC, this idea is now being progressed.

Conclusion

13. The CiCC is now becoming an established group and it is hoped that those individuals who attended the Tall Ships event, who are not already involved in the CiCC may now attend meetings and events organised. The eight young people

who attended have now had an opportunity to bond as a group and the forum of the CiCC would afford them the opportunity to meet as a group in the future and remain in contact. It is hoped that the sailing activity will have encouraged the young people to participate in the work of the CiCC and contribute to on-going service development. The development of a Facebook group will also facilitate communication and enable those young people who find it difficult to attend the meetings an opportunity to express their views. Members have also been made aware of the progress of the CiCC through the briefing sessions that have been taking place.

Appendices

None

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