



**18 July 2023**

**Agenda Item 11**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR COMMISSIONING AND  
RESOURCES**

**PROVISION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE  
COUNCIL 2022/23**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an overview of the work of the Children and Young People's Participation team in relation to the work of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), situated within the Youth Service. The team is responsible for:
  - the CiCC structure, which ensures that young people who are looked after are represented at all levels in the Nottinghamshire system of Youth Participation
  - encouraging and enabling young people who are looked after, adopted or living in residential care, to engage in positive activities provided by the Children and Young People's Participation team and to independently access mainstream provision
  - engaging with at least 250 unique children and young people in care, with a total of at least 1,200 attendances in various youth work sessions and activity throughout the year
  - working in partnership with a range of stakeholders including Children's Social Care, the Virtual School, the Strength-Based Practice team, and Adoption East Midlands.

**Information**

2. The Children and Young People's Participation team is responsible for the planning and delivery of a range of positive activities outside of the school day for looked after and adopted young people. This is to enable young people to come together to participate and have fun in events throughout the year as well as to have a voice about their life in care through the work of the CiCC. The structure includes several sub-groups, which provide a mechanism for a range of groups of looked after young people to be involved in Nottinghamshire's system of Youth Participation. Representatives from each sub-group then meet as the formal CiCC Board (also known as No Labels). The opportunities on offer for young people to engage in are designed to promote and support them to build their confidence and self-esteem as well as to develop new experiences.

3. Young people who are looked after are signposted to universal services across the County, as well as being encouraged to participate in group work activities. This enables young people to develop positive relationships with other young people and youth workers to help broaden their horizons and help to raise their aspirations. Young people who are looked after have participated in a wide range of activities throughout 2022/23, which are detailed in **paragraph 9**.
4. Activities are designed to help support a holistic assessment of children and young people's needs and to help, for instance, to close the gap in educational attainment through joining in activities outside of the school environment. The positive activities young people participate in provide a platform for them to share their views about life in care, which helps to promote placement stability as young people are actively involved, have trusted youth workers to talk to, have a safe space to meet and have fun and engaging things to do. A number of these young people will go on to be members of the sub-groups of the CiCC and attend No Labels meetings. This is where sub-group representatives come together with a range of senior officers and elected Members to design and shape services available to them.
5. The CiCC provides the Council and key stakeholders with an opportunity to listen to what children and young people are saying, consequently these views are taken forward and acted upon. There is also an expectation that the membership of the CiCC will be encouraged to have an active role in the Young People's Board.
6. The CiCC has direct links to Nottinghamshire's Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2022-25 and sets out the ambition of the Council and wider partnership as corporate parents. The CiCC took an active role in designing the strategy and partnership pledge through co-production, consultation with children and young people, creating featured artwork within the strategy and in writing the foreword.
7. Nottinghamshire has an established Young People's Voice Expression of Interest (Eofl), which is a mechanism that enables services both internal and external to the Council to engage with young people and hear their views about the provision they receive, or are affected by, and provides an opportunity for young people to offer insight into how changes can be made to better meet their needs.
8. Each Eofl submitted is reviewed by the Young People's Board (made up of 8 Members of the Youth Parliament, the Chair of the Children in Care Council and a representative from the D2N2 Voice of Adoption), allowing the Board to take ownership of the agenda, establish the information required and the time needed to enable their active involvement, they then determine the next steps of engagement. From April 2022, the CiCC has received 11 Eofls, allowing young people to actively shape services and positively influence change.
9. The CiCC sub-groups and No Labels met 30 times from April 2022 to March 2023. To date young people have been actively involved in several events and/or participated in sharing their views and making decisions on a variety of strategic and business agenda items such as:
  - The Chair of No Labels has been an ambassador for looked after children and young people in Nottinghamshire, speaking at the designated teachers conference about their experiences to help shape future practice. This took place on 18 April 2022 at

Eastwood Hall. It raised awareness of the CiCC and resulted in new members. Positive feedback was received from the event organisers and attendees.

- Involvement in creating the 'keeping you safe whilst in our care' film. The Independent Reviewing Officer submitted an expression of interest form to develop a film project with the premise of care experienced young people explaining to children and young people new to care who the professionals keeping them safe are and what support they offer.
- The Chair attends Nottinghamshire Young People's Board to represent looked after young people. This ensures that the voices and views of looked after children and young people are heard.
- Young people created artwork to promote health, wellbeing and friendships. This was displayed at the NottAlone event on 10 February 2023 at Nottingham Racecourse along with being promoted on the Virtual School website. The art was created as a vehicle of self-expression and enabled the group to talk openly about relationships. Featuring the art pieces at events and on the website promoted the work of the CiCC and highlighted the importance of positive relationships to other children and young people.
- Members of the CiCC delivered training to first year social work students after an expression of interest was submitted by the University of Nottingham. Feedback was very positive with one social work student saying *"Today I learned the importance of language, choice of words matters a lot to children and young people."*
- The Leaving Care team, in consultation with young people, looked at how health services are supporting the needs of young people and made recommendations for further development. Members gave audio recordings of their experiences in accessing healthcare with their GP.
- The CiCC also worked alongside the Fostering Recruitment team in developing questions that would help panel members to decide on the suitability of potential foster carers, making the young person's voice and perspective part of the recruitment and selection process.
- Young people have taken part in the training of foster carers who were attending the pre-approval foster care training to help them (as adults) see things from the perspective of children and young people who have been fostered.
- The CiCC collaborated with the Virtual School on planning and delivering the Achievement Day on 25 June 2022 at the Albert Hall, Nottingham. Members of the CiCC were ambassadors on the day, welcoming and signing in guests, introducing the event and supporting other young people accessing the stage.
- Young people have been involved in shaping the new Partnership pledge, ensuring that the promises made in the pledge are relevant to the lives of children and young people and that the artwork used is engaging.

- Young people have had the opportunity to identify two themes from the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy. This is a rolling piece of work, with two themes selected each year. The themes identified this year are preparation for adulthood and health and wellbeing. Subgroup activities and planned discussion will be focused on these topics.
- Representation at the monthly Mind of My Own regional consultation meeting, providing feedback on the app's development, working with the Mind of My Own team and its software developers to ensure the app is child friendly and continually progresses in meeting the needs of young people.

### **Other Options Considered**

10. To not bring this report to the Panel: this option is discounted because this report provides information that forms an important part of the Panel's remit in assisting the Council in fulfilling its legal corporate parenting duties and acting as an effective corporate parent.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

11. The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider any further actions arising from the information contained within the report.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That the Corporate Parenting Panel considers whether there is any feedback that it wishes to give and any actions that it recommends in relation to the information contained in the report.

**Laurence Jones**  
**Service Director, Commissioning and Resources**

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### **Constitutional Comments (CEH 22/06/23)**

13. The report falls within the remit of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

### **Financial Comments (VC 22/06/23)**

14. There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

15. Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Nottinghamshire's Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2022-25

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All.

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