

7 March 2016

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

PROVISION, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL AND PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER 2015/16

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an overview of the work of the Young People Looked After (YPLA) Youth Work team, situated within the Youth Service. The YPLA team is responsible for:
 - the Children in Care Council (CiCC) and ensuring that young people 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 YPLA team and to independently access mainstream provision
 - engaging with at least 250 unique individuals (children and young people looked after) in more than 1,200 sessions of activity with youth work staff
 - working in partnership with Children's Social Care and the Group Manager for the Access to Resources section.

Information and Advice

2. The YPLA 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 CiCC structure includes a number of sub-groups, which provide a mechanism for a range of groups of looked after young people to be involved in the Nottinghamshire 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 are designed to promote and support them to build their confidence and self-esteem as well as to develop new experiences.
3. Young people looked after are signposted to universal services across the County, as well as encouraged to participate in group work activities. This assists young people to develop positive relationships with other young people and youth workers to help broaden their horizons, learning new skills and experiences. Young people looked after have participated in a wide range of activities throughout 2015/16, with more events planned for the remaining financial year.

4. Activities are designed to help support a holistic assessment of children and young people's needs and to help 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 young people to share their views about life in care, which helps to promote placement stability as young people are actively engaged. A number of these young people will go on to be members of the sub-groups of the CiCC and attend No Labels meetings 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 listens to what children and young people are saying and 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 Board. The strategic development of the CiCC has direct links to the Looked After Children Strategy and is set within a vision for Children, Families and Cultural Services.
6. The work of the CiCC has direct links to the PLEDGE which is a set of promises (set within the Looked After Children Strategy) that Nottinghamshire County Council has made to young people looked after and has strategic commitment from senior management and the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.
7. The CiCC sub-groups and No Labels have all met six times since April 2015 with further meetings planned in March 2016. To date young people have been actively involved in a number of events or participated in sharing their views and making decisions on a variety of strategic and business agenda items such as:
 - consultation with young people on the LAC strategy review, and influencing the key priorities and action plan
 - consultation with young people on a Health Leaflet for information and guidance for all LAC
 - care leavers consulted on costing up items required for basic independent living in relation to the Home Establishment Grant completed in May 2015
 - working with the Coordinator of the Virtual School on planning and delivering the Achievement Event in July 2015
 - Care Leavers sub-group has led on the due diligence project which included marking tenders replies and undertaking unannounced inspections of private residential providers, as a part of the block purchase of residential placements
 - young people participating in the training of foster carers attending foundation training
 - in November 2015 young people were involved in a radio interview, as well as BBC's the One Show in early January 2016. This positive promotion of young people's involvement in influencing the design and delivery of services, concentrated on young people in foster care, their involvement in the CiCC and in inspecting residential care
 - LAC consulted on their experience of accessing NHS services and the problems they may encounter. This is an on-going project; young people's experiences and recommendations will be captured on film. The film will be used to share young people's views and recommendations with professionals in order to improve the services available to them

- the CiCC has been approached by Waterways to develop a project led by young people to increase the participation, interest and involvement of young people in waterways across Nottinghamshire
 - LAC are being consulted on their Pathway plans to ensure they are understood by young people, and clear regarding actions, time scales and who is responsible in delivering actions (on-going project).
8. Expression of Interest forms (EOI) were introduced in April 2015, following a review of the process in how young people are invited to participate in shaping the services available to them. The CiCC has received 22 EOI forms since April, allowing young people to:
- take ownership of the agenda and their involvement in the design and delivery of services
 - identify how requests link to the PLEDGE
 - establishing the information required and the time needed to enable young people to actively participate
 - organise and keep track of individual projects they are involved in.

Other Options Considered:

9. As this is a report for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working 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 overview of the work of the Young People Looked After team be noted.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

12. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (CDS 02/02/16)

13. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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