

Voice and Participation Service

Children's Select Committee Update - January 24

Children in Care and Care Experienced Adults

Christmas Activity

1. 18 Children in Care Council members attended a Laser Tag Christmas activity, including 3 new members. The session was also attended by Cllr Laura Mayes and Director Jen Salter, giving them a unique opportunity to speak with young people about their experiences in Wiltshire. Cllr Mayes stated "It was fun to meet the young people and have some good chats – they are always so engaging." The young people also enjoyed the day giving them more opportunities to socialise among peers that share care experience.

Care Experienced Parent Group

2. Current membership of the group is 5 parents (mothers) and 6 children. The Group will be moving after February to the Trowbridge Hub at County Hall. The parents would like to explore sharing their views on a podcast and also being involved in discussions around how care experienced parents face discrimination linking in with the ongoing conversations about care experience being a protected characteristic. The group will help develop a plan on how these outcomes will become a reality.

Sessional Voice Ambassadors

3. The Voice and Participation Service have recruited 10 Sessional Voice Ambassadors. These roles are for people with lived experience of receiving services from social care to share their views and help coproduce initiatives. We have 8 care experienced individuals, 1 parent and 1 person who utilises SEND services.
4. The Voice Ambassadors have been involved in the following activities since coming into post.
 - a. Interviewing prospective foster carers
 - b. Speaking on the CiCC Cast Podcast
 - c. Interviewing for Senior Leadership Roles
 - d. Interviewing Volunteers that will become Independent Visitors.
 - e. Placement Supervisor Training (how to include young people in learning)
 - f. Ambassador co-delivered a workshop at Community Care Live on 10th October 2023
 - g. Peer inspection of the Youth Justice Service
 - h. Creating a 'what to expect' document for parents entering Child Protection

Mind of My Own App

- The team continues to lead on the Mind of My Own app, which allows children and young people to communicate directly to their workers by sending in statements and have their views heard, enabling them to participate in their own care planning.

In the last period 25 young person accounts have been created and 8 new practitioner accounts

Number of One Statements sent (by Practitioners and young people)	100
Number of Express Statements sent (by Practitioners and young people)	32
Total statements sent to Wiltshire Children's Services (One and Express)	132

One app Usage			
STATEMENT TYPE	SENT BY YOUNG PEOPLE	SENT BY PRACTITIONERS	TOTAL
Totals	52	48	100
Conference	0	4	4
Foster Care Review	3	0	3
My Life	12	22	34
My Wellbeing	6	4	10
Pathway	0	1	1
Post Meeting	0	1	1
Preparation	10	3	13
Problem	2	1	3
Share Good News	8	1	9
This Is Me	4	7	11

One app Usage			
STATEMENT TYPE	SENT BY YOUNG PEOPLE	SENT BY PRACTITIONERS	TOTAL
Totals	52	48	100
Worker Visit	7	4	11

Bright Spots Survey

6. Collaborating with Coram Voice and the University of Oxford, our involvement in the Bright Spots program signifies our ongoing dedication to enhancing well-being for children in care. We have launched 2 surveys, "Your Life, Your Care" and "Your Life After Care," these have now concluded, and we have had the following number of take up from the cohort.

Bright Spots Your Life, Your Care survey

Age Group	Total number of YP	No. of recorded responses	Response rate (%)
4-7	36	16	44%
8-11	40	28	70%
11- 17	301	93	31%
Totals	377	137	36%

Bright Spots Your Life Beyond Care survey

	Total	No. of recorded responses	Number of declined responses	Response rate (%)
Age Group				
18 – 24	316	102	1	32%

7. We are expecting to receive a full and comprehensive report from Coram Voice within 2 months that will tell the local authority how children in care and care leavers feel about their lives. We have achieved enough results for the

survey to be considered representative. This is a fantastic opportunity for us to fully understand how children and young people feel in general about being supported in the county.

New Workstreams

SEND Voice Lead Worker

8. The Team has recruited a new SEND Voice and Participation Lead Worker. The worker is due to start in early January. In this dynamic role, the primary focus is to actively engage with children and young people with SEND, gaining profound insights into their needs, concerns, and aspirations. This engagement extends to organising inspiring activities and initiatives that motivate participants to share their invaluable perspectives, ensuring their voices remain central to service planning and delivery. Through supporting research into lived experiences, conducting evaluations, and facilitating opportunities for scrutiny, the worker ensures that service user feedback becomes a driving force in enhancing and innovating services.
9. In the realm of decision-making, the worker plays a pivotal role in empowering children and young people with SEND to advocate for positive change, implementing a solution-focused approach and contributing to the development of a tailored voice strategy. Guiding professionals, collaborating with stakeholders, and measuring the success of voice initiatives contribute to continuous improvement, with regular reflections informing senior levels within Wiltshire Council and its partners.
10. The worker's active participation in meetings, forums, and partnerships, coupled with providing training for professionals, developing accessible consultation materials, and supporting recruitment processes, collectively amplify the positive influence of this role. The coordinated efforts of various roles within the service ensure an effective contribution to overarching goals and a lasting positive impact on the well-being of children and young people with SEND.

Families and Children's Volunteering

11. An integration of the Independent Visitor Scheme and Community involvement Scheme is taking place to create a Families and Children's Volunteering. The volunteering opportunities that are being offered include;
 - a. Independent Visitors
 - b. Community Mentors
 - c. Primary School Mentors
 - d. Referral Order Panel Members
 - e. Appropriate Adults
 - f. Parent Mentors

Joe Sutton Voice and Participation Manager