

Wiltshire
Children in Care Council
Annual Report
April 2017 – March 2018

1. Introduction

Wiltshire's Children in Care Council (CiCC) is coordinated by the Joint Commissioning Team within Wiltshire Council. The work of 'voice and influence' staff within the Joint Commissioning Team supports the Council's ambition that no policy, or service, related to children and young people is developed without first seeking their views. Wiltshire Council believes that participation and involvement becomes 'the business of every service and organisation that works with children and young people.'

This report provides a summary of CiCC activities over the last twelve months, highlights key messages and outlines priorities for future development.

2. What is CiCC?

CiCC is a forum for young people who live in care, and care leavers. Members put themselves forward to have their voices heard, to improve the lives of children and young people living in care and leaving care. Membership fluctuates as young people move onto new opportunities and given the time that they have available. CiCC is open to all young people aged 10 and above, and aims to be as inclusive as possible. Current membership:

Girls	Boys
1 x 17 years	1 x 15 years
2 x 15 years	1 x 11 years
1 x 14 years	1 care leaver
1 x 13 years	
2 x 12 years	
2 x 11 years	
1 x 10 years	
Total female: 10	Total male: 3
Of whom	
1 asylum seeker, 2 out of county, 2 SEND	

3. Messages from CiCC members

Since April 2017, CiCC has been consulted on a range of issues and has made the following input - *You said*. In response, councillors and officers have taken actions – *We did*.

	You said	We did
1	We have views on foster carers, including what makes a good carer and what they can help us to achieve. We have recorded those here .	Recording taken to LAC/YP & CL Improvement Group for information and to inform team development. Also, used in foster carer training and other recruitment activity, for example it will be used on the Fostering Website, and to inform Facebook campaign.
2	We like the revised approach to Missing Return	Coordinator for missing children attended

	<p>Interviews (MRI) and ask that foster carers are encouraged to express relief when children do return home. Anger only makes the situation worse and can lead to us disappearing again. Please remember that we have gone missing for a reason – perhaps connected to the placement.</p>	<p>second CiCC meeting to update on service developments and feedback to young people.</p> <p>Corporate parents agreed a revised approach based on feedback from young people, which suggested that guidance should only be followed when in the best interests of the individual young person.</p>
3	<p>These are our key messages for potential foster carers (as part of the foster carer recruitment drive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't do it for the money • Use your parenting skills to help other children • You can't give up on children • Treat us like you would treat your own children, if you have them • We need to feel cared for • You need to build a relationship with us • Give us space to grow but be there for us • You should have some experience of children • Don't wrap us in bubble wrap • Have boundaries • Remember that we are young people, just like other young people 	<p>Placement Services staff took comments away for inclusion in foster carer recruitment information sessions and to inform other recruitment and training materials.</p>
4	<p>We believe that children coming into care should not be overwhelmed with information. We need information that is proportionate and up to date. We like the File of Facts (that is now out date) and think it could be updated or replaced with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a simple leaflet when first coming into care • a video • information on a website • a fuller document when we have been in care for a time 	<p>IRO and IV Scheme Manager visited CiCC to discuss resources and took away young people's ideas. They created a postcard for children and young people coming into care, which is now complete and being circulated to safeguarding teams for use. File of Facts has been revised and will be reprinted in-house as a booklet, rather than a folder. Poster with artwork of corporate parenting panel has been created and will sit on website, and is on display at Aspire House. Design team yet to work on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CiCC member handbook • CiCC recruitment leaflet • complaints leaflet <p>The Children's Champions Working Group is also working on guides to assessment for primary and secondary age children.</p>
5	<p>We attended fun information days in September to hear about joining the Children in Care Council. We like the idea of CiCC and want to meet with other young people like us.</p>	<p>CiCC continues to develop and grow. The issue of resourcing CiCC effectively has been discussed with the Children's Champions Working Group, which proposed that Children's Champions (who are key workers and social workers) get involved with CiCC for specific pieces of</p>

		work. This has been discussed with CiCC to establish whether this would compromise the independence of the group. Whilst there were no objections, the involvement of social workers does not solve the resourcing issue as their priority needs to be cases.
6	We are happy that our comments about the Leaving Care Survey were taken into consideration and that the survey is now available online and in paper form	This is now in place and reports are available. Currently, completion rates are low and the Children in Care Teams have been reminded of the importance of completing them.
7	<p>The Promise needs updating and this is the updated version we propose:</p> <p>We (Wiltshire Council) promise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A choice of home where you can stay until you are ready to move on from care • To keep you together with brothers and sisters whenever we can, and to help you stay in close contact with your family if that's what is right for you • To listen to your views, act on them when we can and be honest when we cannot • That your social worker will work hard for you to solve problems • To tell you what your rights are and what you are entitled to • That you will be involved in decisions taken during your looked after child review • To involve you in decisions about school and to help you get to school so that your education can continue • To arrange transport for you that is reliable, gets you to school, important meetings, and on time • To invite you to group activities with other children living in care, and those leaving care, to help you feel more confident • That we will deal with bullying quickly and efficiently • To support you when you need help with school, leaving school and preparing for 	Discussion with Corporate Parenting Panel in November 2017 resulted in adoption. Signed copy is available on website and is on display at Aspire House.

	employment and training	
8	We do not want to be asked repeatedly about services, for example, annual foster carer review. We'd rather that these things are covered in our reviews with our IROs.	Service manager, foster carer social work teams, took away feedback, as well as FACT project lead for consideration in transformation of children's services. New approach to include greater systematic and 'joined up' service user feedback.

4. Activities during the last 12 months

As well as meeting and considering policy matters, CiCC has engaged in many activities, which have included:

- Discussions and engagement with corporate parents at Shared Guardian meetings and social events
- Induction training for new staff within Children's Services
- Recruitment panels for senior appointments
- Training social work students at Wiltshire College
- Helped to run fun days at Braeside in Devizes and Five Rivers in Salisbury, resulting in new members
- Engagement in anti-bullying 'big conversation' during anti-bullying week
- Two CiCC members standing for election to UK Youth Parliament.

5. Priorities for future development

CiCC has identified priorities that it wishes to work on in 2018, in order of priority:

Action

- 1 Raise awareness of mental health and emotional wellbeing
- 2 Raise awareness about bullying
- 3 Continue to make newsletters
- 4 Training new staff – children's services induction, Wiltshire college and any other opportunities
- 5 Be professional when we have meetings and develop skills to be effective representatives
- 6 Meet other CiCCs from other counties (it will be more fun if there are some activities)
- 7 Taking part in consultations
- 8 Influence decision makers by sharing experiences and that of others

CiCC were keen on the idea of receiving training to become more skilled representatives; content is being developed in partnership with the Head of Virtual School.

Recruitment remains a key priority to ensure secure and meaningful representation. During the early part of 2017, local community area meetings were trialled but were not successful at increasing representation or accessibility. In 2017/18, a different model will be reviewed by CiCC members, whereby they have opportunities to meet at a different time of the week, and to have more time for fun, consultation, and personal development activities. Proposals are currently being drafted in consultation with young people from the CiCC, Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY), Youth Safeguarding Board (YSB) and partner

organisations. These **may** include a pilot to:

- Enhance separate CiCC, WAY, and YSB voice by creating a single Wiltshire Youth Forum
- 6 Saturday meetings of the Wiltshire Youth Forum, plus 3 distinct annual meetings for CiCC
- Venue – possibly Aspire House, Braeside or another central venue more conducive to youth work than County Hall
- Kick-start new programme with a launch event, following on from the 2017 Youth Summit, which identifies a work plan/activities for the year
- Youth leadership offered by trained Care Ambassadors and Care Leaving Ambassadors, plus Members Youth Parliament (x3)
- Co-facilitated and resourced by Wiltshire Council and partners
- Youth attendees: children living in care, care leavers, members UK Youth Parliament (MYPs), school council representatives from Wiltshire secondary and independent schools, colleges, Local Youth Network members, Youthwatch, CAMHS participation user group, voluntary and community sector representatives.
- Partner organisations: Wiltshire Council Children's Services, Wiltshire Council Communities Team, Wiltshire Council Public Health, Healthwatch Wiltshire (delivered by Evolving Communities), Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board, Virgin Care (delivering child health services), Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (delivering child and adolescent mental health services), Wiltshire Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum, Wiltshire Parent Carer Council, Wiltshire Community First.
- **Sample agenda:**

Time	What	Facilitator
11am	Welcome and icebreaker	Youth leaders
11.20am	Activity sharing part 1 What's the hot topic where you are? What have you done? What's made a difference? Feedback from task groups	MYPs
	Activity sharing part 2 You Said, We Did	Partner agencies
11.50	Issue-based activity/discussion e.g. mental health, community safety, school nursing	Relevant agency
12.20pm	Break	
12.50pm	Interest group break-out Children in care Care leavers MYPs Young carers LGBT community Policing/community safety Education, skills and training	Corporate parents/commissioners/police youth engagement officers/virtual school/community engagement managers/social work managers/public health/directors

	Mental health For activity/discussion and action on key areas of interest/need	
1.50pm	Skills development e.g. representation, listening, campaigning, project management Completion of Personal development tracker (Youth Wheel)	LA participation lead
2.45pm	Wrapping up and task group arrangements	LA participation lead
3.00pm	Close	

Proposals for change are considered necessary as:

- The current format for CiCC is not ensuring a good enough experience for members
- This leads to difficulties in recruiting and retaining members
- Meetings at County Hall are not conducive to the safe and effective management of the group
- Staff delivering CiCC do not have adequate skills to manage the group

6. Meeting dates

At March 2018, the following schedule for the year is proposed, although this is subject to change given proposed developments.

March	Tue 13 Mar. County Hall, Trowbridge. Shared Guardian Session (with Corporate Parents) 5pm-6.30pm
April	Tue 24 Apr. Five Rivers, Salisbury. 5pm-6.30pm
June	Wed 6 Jun. County Hall, Trowbridge 5pm-6.30pm
July	Wed 4 Jul. Strategic Youth Voice event 4.30-7pm
September	Sat 8 Sep. Devizes Leisure Centre 1.30-4pm
September	Tue 18 Sep. County Hall, Trowbridge. Shared Guardian Session (with Corporate Parents) 5pm-6.30pm
November	Wed 14 Nov. County Hall, Trowbridge Joint meeting with Wiltshire Assembly of Youth and Youth Safeguarding Board Anti-bullying week 5pm-6.30pm
December	Wed 12 Dec CiCC Christmas Get Together Details to be confirmed

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