

## Child, Youth and Family Voice (C&YV) update

### Families and Children's Services

#### Children in Care Council (CiCC)

1. The C&Y Voice team aims to support and develop the CiCC by building trust, meaningful relationships, and confidence among participants whilst actively engaging them in improving services and enhancing their overall well-being.
2. Engagement by children in care in the activities we offered was high. A subgroup of the CiCC has been formed called the CiCC Committee for those who are feeling more able at that time to share their views and participate in initiatives to improve services. The CiCC Committee has plans to create a regular podcast that aims to amplify the voices and experiences of children in care, providing a platform to share their perspectives, challenges, and suggestions with a broader audience, including the Corporate Parenting Panel and at training events. The CiCC Committee will aim to raise awareness, enhance understanding, and encourage meaningful discussions about the experiences of children in care within the wider community.
3. We have a core group on the committee who signed up to make a change and a difference for themselves and other CiC. The Committee will devise fun activities to do with the wider group to still get their views, and Committee members will also get first choice of these fun activities. In addition, the team will continue to organise activities and residential experiences for the wider cohort of young people and encourage members of the CiCC Committee to facilitate voice exercises with the extended group. This approach provides the best opportunity to connect with children and young people and help them develop interest and confidence in taking part and being heard – with the Committee ready for when they feel able to take this forward.

#### Mind of My Own

4. The Mind of My Own app offers a secure and supportive platform for young individuals to explore their thoughts, emotions, and personal experiences. Its innovative features and user-friendly interface make it an exceptional tool for promoting mental health, self-awareness, and overall resilience among young people. By actively involving them in their well-being, the app empowers individuals and establishes a valuable connection between them and their social workers, fostering open communication and collaboration.
  
5. The number of statements received by workers from young people in this quarter have been:

<b>Number of One Statements sent (by Practitioners and young people)</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Number of Express Statements sent (by Practitioners and young people)</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Total statements sent to Wiltshire Children's Services (One and Express)</b>	<b>269</b>

### Bright Spots

6. The team will procure the Brights Spots Survey to aid us in getting the views of our wider cohort of children in care. The Bright Spots Programme, a partnership between Coram Voice and the University of Oxford, aims to systematically listen to children in care and care leavers, enabling them to express their needs, desires, and experiences. By implementing the Your Life, Your Care and Your Life Beyond Care surveys, we can measure the subjective well-being of these individuals and identify areas where improvements can be made.
  
7. In the implementation of the Bright Spots Programme, the surveys will be primarily administered through Designated Teachers in schools that have children in care (CIC). This approach will leverage the perceived impartiality of schools in collecting responses. The following details the method of implementation:

**Survey Distribution:** The surveys will be sent to Designated Teachers in all schools that have CIC. These Designated Teachers will be responsible for distributing the surveys to the CIC within their respective schools.

**School Notification:** Schools will be instructed to notify us when all CIC have either completed or refused to participate in the survey. This feedback will enable us to monitor the response rate and take appropriate actions to maximise participation.

Survey Duration: The survey will be conducted over a period of six weeks. This timeframe will provide sufficient time for the Designated Teachers to distribute the surveys, for the CIC to complete them, and for any necessary follow-up communication.

## Voice Ambassadors

8. The Child, Youth, and Family Voice Team acknowledges the importance of involving individuals who have received support from Families and Children's Services in co-production to achieve meaningful and positive change. In previous years we have utilised our Voice Consultants, however we have created a new role that will be a fantastic opportunity for anyone who applies.
9. **The Role:** Sessional Voice Ambassadors will either be employed by Wiltshire Council or volunteer their time depending on their preference. They will utilise their personal experiences to provide feedback on areas for improvement, deliver training, assist in staff, and foster carer recruitment, and offer support under CYV Team supervision.
10. **Inclusion of children and young people from a diverse range of backgrounds:** The roles are open to anyone supported by the directorate, including care-experienced adults, parents, and young people from the Children and Young People's Disabilities Team (CYPDT). The roles will be promoted on the Wiltshire Council Jobs portal and we will send an email to the directorate promoting the opportunities. Moreover, current members of our groups will be invited to apply.
11. **Corporate parenting responsibilities:** Wiltshire Council has corporate parenting responsibilities towards care experienced young people, aiming to support their success. The Voice Ambassador role will provide care leavers with valuable first-hand experience working for the Local Authority, helping them develop confidence, skills, and knowledge. The inclusion of Sessional Voice Ambassadors from diverse backgrounds contributes to shaping service delivery in alignment with the needs of service users, whilst also providing care leavers with opportunities for personal growth and development.

## Care Experienced Parent and Baby Group

12. The CYV Team worked with a care experienced adult to support her in setting up a care experienced parent and baby group, there was mixed success and learning opportunities and a subsequent revamp of the group based on feedback.

#### Initial Vision:

- Aimed to create a group for care leavers and their children to socialise and establish connections.
- Initially it seemed most care leavers with children were in the south, leading to the selection of a venue in Bemerton Heath, Salisbury.
- Lack of attendance, transportation issues, and difficulties with commitment and communication hindered the success of the group.

#### Revamp and Learning Opportunities:

- Location changed to Studley Greens Children's Centre in Trowbridge.
- Revised vision of the group now includes voice work and collaboration with consultants.

#### Identified learning opportunities from the previous experience:

- Additional support from Personal Advisors (PA) regarding referrals, transportation, and staying for sessions if possible.
- Better dissemination of information about the group for advertising purposes.
- Clear expectations set for both group members and staff.
- Implementation of deadlines for booking taxis.
- Enhanced communication between group members and staff.

#### Family Voice

13. The remit of the Child and Youth Voice Team has recently expanded to include gathering the perspectives of families. To support this initiative, we have appointed a dedicated Family Voice Worker to oversee this important work. The primary objective of the Family Voice Worker is to enhance the engagement and participation of families who receive support from Wiltshire Council in the design and development of services. By involving families directly, we ensure that their voices are at the core of our quality assurance framework. This strengthens our commitment to providing services that truly meet the needs and preferences of the families we serve.

## Wiltshire Youth Council

### Wiltshire Youth Council Eco Week 2023

14. Introduction: Eco Week was a collaborative event organised by the Child and Youth Voice Team and the Wiltshire Youth Council. The objective of the event was to promote eco-friendly practices and raise awareness about positive changes regarding climate change. The event took place from 6th March to 10th March 2023.

#### Participating Schools and Activities:

- Seventeen schools actively participated in Eco Week, comprising 7 secondary schools and 10 primary schools.
- Each school had the freedom to decide how they would contribute to Eco Week and shared their initiatives on social media using the hashtag #wycecoweek.
- Activities included a wide range of eco-friendly practices such as implementing mileage trackers for walking and cycling, introducing gardening clubs, organizing Green Days, distributing reusable sanitary products, rewilding areas of the school, creating artwork from recycled materials, and engaging in litter picking and gardening projects.

#### Judging and Awards:

- A panel of councillors and officers with expertise in environmental matters served as the judging panel for the Eco Week activities.
- Winners and runners-up were selected based on the creativity, impact, and commitment demonstrated by the participating schools.

#### Secondary Category:

- Winner: Pewsey Vale School - Activities included implementing a mileage tracker, introducing a gardening club, and organizing a Green Day. Notably, the school accumulated an impressive total of 172.9 miles through walking and cycling.
- Runners-up: South Wilts Grammar School - Activities included distributing reusable sanitary products, rewilding areas of the school, and creating artwork from collected bottle caps.

#### Primary Category:

- Winner: Marlborough St Mary's CE Primary School - Activities included raising awareness about the 5 R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair, and Rethink), designing a pond area, and sharing energy-saving techniques with parents.
- Runners-up: Queen's Crescent School - Activities included litter picking, building hedgehog houses, and engaging in gardening projects.

- Runners-up: St Patrick's Catholic Primary School - Activities included planting vegetables, conducting litter picks, making compost, and creating informative posters.
15. Conclusion: Eco Week was a successful event with active participation from 17 schools, promoting eco-friendly practices and positive changes related to climate change. All participating schools in both the secondary and primary categories showcased commendable initiatives and demonstrated their commitment to environmental sustainability.

### Young Person Debating Competition

16. Young Person Debating Competition: The Wiltshire Youth Councillors have proposed the organisation of an interschool debating competition. The purpose of this competition is to provide a platform for young people to discuss and explore issues that impact them and their peers, considering different perspectives and innovative solutions.
17. In addition to fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills, the debating competition aims to achieve the following educational outcomes:
- a. Enhance Communication Skills: Through engaging in structured debates, participants will develop their ability to articulate their ideas clearly, present logical arguments, and effectively communicate their viewpoints.
  - b. Promote Research and Analysis: To prepare for the debates, students will conduct research on the assigned topics, enabling them to gather relevant information, critically analyse different sources, and strengthen their information literacy skills.
  - c. Encourage Critical Thinking: Debating encourages participants to think critically by challenging their own beliefs and considering alternative perspectives. This process enhances their ability to evaluate and analyse complex issues from multiple angles.
  - d. Foster Collaboration and Teamwork: The competition will involve teams of students working together to develop arguments, coordinate their speeches, and counter opposing points. This promotes teamwork, cooperation, and the ability to collaborate effectively.
  - e. Develop Confidence and Public Speaking Skills: Through presenting their arguments in front of an audience, participants will gain confidence in public speaking, overcome stage fright, and improve their overall presentation skills.
  - f. The Youth Councillors intend to host the debating competition in the Council Chamber during the last week of the summer term. They will provide guidelines, topic options, and resources to the participating schools, ensuring a fair and engaging competition that promotes valuable educational outcomes.