



Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Corporate Parenting Panel update –

On behalf of the Children in Care Councils and Young Adult Council

### October Activities

The VSK Apprentices had another busy half term with lots of activities and meetings going on:

- 24<sup>th</sup> October: **KSPA Theatre Arts** – 25 Children in Care attended. They all took part in Dance, Drama, Singing and Makeup Workshops throughout the day. They all took part and really enjoyed themselves. All young people then performed their dances and songs to their carers in the theatre at the end of the day.
- 28<sup>th</sup> October: **London African Drumming** - 16 Children in care attended. They participated in African drumming, traditional African dancing and arts and craft. They then performed their dances and drumming at the end of the day to their carers.  
We also spoke about the Children in Care Councils at the activity days and several young people have said they are interested in finding out more and joining up.

### Super Council – for 7 to 11s

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016:** 12 Children in Care attended this meeting in Maidstone. We had a Halloween themed meeting and made spooky cupcakes. Existing members told the new members why they liked coming. They said it was a place they felt safe and could come and make new friends who were also in care. They said it was a place they could talk about what it's like being in care and what they thought about their carers and Social Workers. We think this group will make great members of the OCYPC in the future.

We asked what members would like to be included on the website for children in care of their age. They came up with some really good ideas to refresh the Kent Cares Town website. Responses were as follows:

- A website that is made just for their age group with things they are interested in
- Have a virtual job area. An example of a fireman was used where by you are set tasks to complete that a real life fireman would undertake. This was suggested as being a great way to get young people thinking about possible career paths from an early age
- An age appropriate TV channel with useful information on it
- Giving information but in a quick way that is easy to read and understand
- The suggestion was made to have a mascot which can be associated with the website. The Kent Council horse but made into a cartoon figure was suggested
- Having corporate parents displayed on website with cartoon bodies and real life heads to make them more personable to young people
- Having a website that is split into 3 age relative sub-pages. To look like the lay out of the CBBC/CBeebies website. Clear and easy to use.



## OCYPC

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016:** 14 Children in Care attended this meeting.

WE asked for existing members help in getting other young people to sign up and join the OCYPC. We did an activity where they told us their reasons for joining, some of the things they said were:

- “Come and make friends”
- “Get your voice heard”
- “Tell people your views”
- “Say what is good and what is bad”
- “To meet new people”
- “To change things that happen in care”
- “Fix key issues in the care system”
- “Share experiences”
- “To have fun”
- “To see your relatives” (Eg. Sisters who do not live together)
- “Get you out of the house”
- “Try new activities”
- “Talk to eachother”
- “You get to meet Jo, Sophie and Reece”
- “To see friends you haven’t seen for a while”
- “My views can change lives of others, which I give at the OCPYC”

We asked their views on the Kent Cares Town Website and how we could refresh it and make it more current. Members were also asked how they access the internet, and the majority of members said they use an iPad or other tablet to access. This was closely followed by accessing using a mobile phone. Not many members said they use a desktop/laptop to go on the internet. They said KCT was hard to view on their tablets and laptops.

Their views were that they wanted something that was:

- Easy to use and navigate and be more personally written
- Age suitable- having three different tabs for three different age groups
- To have a clear menu and navigation page
- Have an app to use with a mobile phone- but also said this may not be good because of phone memory

We asked what content members would like to see on the website:

- Quotes wall from real people about being in care. (Wall with post its notes with quotes on)
- Real life stories
- Make secondary age category to have interactive games to encourage engagement
- Information on transitions in school
- Give more info on the Children in Care Councils
- Help and advice section from young people who have been in care for a while to help other young people who have just come into care



We are looking at ways we can update and improve the current Kent Cares website, we would like to refresh and do some sort of relaunch to make sure young people in care and care leavers know about it.

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016: East/South Kent Super Council & OCYPC meetings:** Unfortunately we had to cancel this meeting due to the numbers of attendees being low. We are still unable to break down barriers with Carers in the East Kent area; we feel this isn't good enough. We would like to refer back the County Wide Meeting in August where we asked:

**Q. What do you think is the purpose and role of Children in Care Council?**

A. *To get your voice heard, making changes for the better*

**Q. What are the things that Corporate Parents need to do to help the Children in Care Councils achieve its purpose?**

A. *To be accessible to all children in care at all times*

A. *To work with foster carers to help new into care children feel supported and able to come to children in care meetings- help young people adjust to the care system and placements*

We would like to ask for your support in helping us really drive this forward and to work alongside us in working with carers to show the importance of the Children in Care Councils and the positive outcomes Children in Care achieve whilst attending. The VSK Participation are making it one of their priorities in 2017 to increase membership of the Councils in East and South Kent.

## YAC

During the summer the VSK Participation team held a 16+ activity day at Go Ape- this day was specifically for non YAC members and was a great chance for us to promote YAC to the young people who attended. From this day eight YP attended, and six of those have now become YAC members. This shows how important it is to have direct contact with young people in order to fully promote and explain the purpose of YAC, as well as being able to express how much fun we have at YAC.

This year, YAC has covered life skills such as; first aid, cooking on a budget, cv/employment skills and healthy eating. YAC has also been part of discussions and feedback, getting members voices heard and making a difference. YAC met with the head of the 18+ service, who wanted to know how they can make their services better for care leavers and what can prepare young people before they turn 18. YAC have also given input into the design of the pathway plan and gave their feedback on the current Kent Cares Town website.

At the November YAC we discussed what we would like the aims of YAC to be in 2017. YAC members told us in 2017 they would like to go on more activities, especially ones involving team work as a group so they can grow and gain confidence. Other things discussed included:

- Free train passes for YAC members who have attended more than 3 YAC meetings- to get to and from YAC easily



- Ensure all YP have a free bus pass
- 17+ young people to get a free provisional driver's licence
- Having more information about university options, specifically for children in care, which involves entitlements and support

YAC also said in 2017 they would like to fundraise for another charity, as was done in September for The Who Cares Trust. The importance of 16+ support workers and 18+ personal advisors telling their young people about YAC was vitally important- as many members have found out about YAC through different means.

The recruit crew is doing really well, with training being given which now provides young people that attend a LASER qualification in Interview Training for Service Users. YAC members have attended this training, and now have another qualification to add to their CV's.

### **Regional Children in Care Councils**

Jo & Gemma also attended a meeting with the Office of the Children's Commissioner last week to discuss developing a regional network of support for Children in Care Councils in the South East of England. Initial plans are being made to put on an event next year that brings together various South East children in care councils with Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members. The Children's Commissioner will also attend the event.

We think this will be a good idea and will help us build relationships with Kent CiC who live in other local authorities. We will update you further about this at the next meeting.