

Friday 1st June 2018
Corporate Parenting Panel Update-
On behalf of the Children in Care Councils and Young Adult Council

The team has had a busy few months and has spent time working on the Lifelong Links Project that Chelsea has told you about.

We have also been recruiting for new apprentices and as well as Rob joining the team, we have had a work experience student working with us for 2 weeks who hopes to become an apprentice. The work experience has been great for her as it has really given her an idea about what our job is all about and also what it is like when you enter the work of work.

OCYPC/Super Council Update:

Our 3 Children in Care Councils continue to develop and grow. But we have struggled in the past year to engage with young people in Thanet, they are happy to come along to activity days and events but were more reluctant to sign up to join the councils. After a bit of investigating we found out that travel was one of the issues, so we decided to give the idea of a 'local' Children in Care Council a go again – this time with more success!

We first met up with a group of 17 young people aged from 7 to 16 on Thursday 12th April, and our newly East Kent Children in Care Council was formed!

This will initially be a joint meeting with our OCYPC & Super Council members, they decided to name themselves 'OCYPC Extra!'

As well as getting to know each other and having some nice food and going bowling after the meeting, they also did some great work looking at the summary for young people of the Independent Fostering Review by the Department of Education. A

We wanted to get young people's comments on the Review's recommendations in order to inform the Government response.

Below are their thoughts about the questions set out in the Summary for Young People.

What makes a good foster carer?

- Someone who listens to young people and shows that they care.
- Someone who treats young people as part of their family; they are no different to other children.
- Child friendly.
- Some of the young people thought that it is better for foster carers to be younger as they are more relevant to them although others had lived with older but still very active foster carers.
- Able to take young people to places they need or want to go easily.

How do we encourage these people to become foster carers?



- Make sure people know how rewarding it is when they see a foster child make progress in their care.
- Make sure people know that they are helping children who really need it.
- BUT they must know that it is hard work and that they need to be kind.

How do we match the right foster carer to the right child or young person?

- Time to visit potential foster carers; go to each other's houses and have sleep overs before a final decision is made.
- A formal trial before the final decision.
- Young people have time to talk to the foster carer and tell them what they like.
- More effort by social workers to find out what children/young people and foster carers are really like so they can match carers with children/young people who have similar interests. For example, if a young person likes to go to lots of different clubs or has lots of hobbies, don't place them with an older person or someone who won't travel and take them.
- Foster child and foster carer passports / profiles with likes and dislikes, skills etc.

What kind of information would you want to know about your new foster carer?

- Age.
- How active they are; what their hobbies are.
- Where they live, what their house and local area is like, what amenities are nearby.
- Their family and who the young person is likely to come into contact with regularly.
- Pets.
- Their past and their lives (the young people made the point that they have to share a huge amount of very personal information with their foster carers so they felt it was right that they also learn something about the people who will look after them).

What information would you want them to know about you?

- How the young person should be introduced; what they would like on the first day.
- Past experiences (This might help the foster carer be sensitive and avoid bringing up upsetting things from their past). The young person should know what has been shared with their foster carers.
- Likes and dislikes e.g. food, bedroom.
- Fears and worries that might affect where the young person lives / in the home e.g. fear of dogs.

Who are the most important people in your life? How do you keep in touch with them? Are there any people that you want to be in touch with, but are not?

- Mum and dad
- Friends particularly if they live further away
- Brothers and Sisters including step brothers and sisters
- Grandparents



- Neighbours
- Many of the young people said they saw everyone they wanted to during contact.

We met up again in this school holiday with our Children in Care Councils and will give you an update of these meetings at the next meeting.

Young Adult Council Update

YAC have been doing some great work with us looking at Stigmas around being in care and when you leave care. We have included their thoughts and insight into putting together this afternoon's Talent showcase event.

Mind of My Own Conference

On 16th May, some of the Participation Team including Reece, one of our Apprentices, travelled to Birmingham to attend the Mind of My Own Conference. As we have told you previously, MOMO is an app designed to allow young people to communicate more easily with the professionals they work with anytime, anywhere, 24/7. The Participation Team are currently training professionals in SCS to use MOMO and training sessions are being delivered around the county. The VSK apprentice's role is to encourage young people to sign up and use the App.

The Conference was a fantastic opportunity to talk to representatives from some of the sixty Local Authorities that have implemented MOMO and hear good news stories about the positive impact MOMO has had on the young people using it. We also had the opportunity to attend several workshops which looked at successful implementation of MOMO promoting MOMO to young people, both of which were useful.

We are excited to now try out some of the ideas shared at the Conference to further promote the use of MOMO by children in care and care leavers in Kent.

East Kent Girls Group Update

The East Kent Girls group has now finished, and we have now evaluated the success of the project. The project was six weekly sessions run by VSK's Participation Team in conjunction with Fostering, the LAC Nurses, a foster carer and The Health and Beauty Department at Canterbury College. The aim was to empower the participants and increase their self-esteem whilst also providing useable and practical information from various informative sessions. The programme provided a safe environment for the girls to share any worries or concerns.

The participants also received a hair and beauty treatment each week. The target audience were girls in care from the Thanet area between the ages of twelve to seventeen, identified and selected by Management Information who were deemed to possibly be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, loneliness, NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET.

Outcomes from the project were pretty positive. All the girls reported that their feelings of self-esteem increased over the time of the project. As part of the evaluation, the girls were asked what they had gained or learnt from the programme. Some of their responses were:



- Relaxation, to stay safe and manage my wellbeing.
- Better self-esteem.
- To drink alcohol safely.
- To know how to stay safe around men.
- To check alcohol labels.

It is our intention to run similar projects for girls at other colleges in other areas and explore the possibility of running a group for boys.

Participation days and events over May Holidays

Arethusa Adventure Centre

Recruitment & Selection

Revolution Skate Park

Don't forget to come along this afternoon to our VSK Talent Showcase!!

Lecture Theatre Sessions House

Friday 1st June 2018: 2:30pm-4pm

