

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November**

**Corporate Parenting Panel Update-**

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

**Participation Team update:**

Our Apprentice Chloe has completed her apprenticeship with us after 2 years and has now moved on. Chloe completed a level 3 Operational Delivery Apprenticeship and wants to continue to work with children and young people. She is now hoping to do a degree in Child Psychology.

Tom Byrne and Chelsea Goodwin are now members of the Corporate Parenting Panel (along with Sophia and Reece,) which will give them a chance to come along more regularly.

We are currently looking for a new apprentice to join our team.

**Super Council & OCYPC Updates:**

The main focus of the October Children in Care Councils meetings was to understand the levels of participation in IRO meetings and whether there are any barriers for young people attending or chairing them. This is something our colleagues in the IRO Service have asked us to work on with them.

So on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2018 we held two Children in Care Council meetings – the Super Council and OCYPC in Maidstone. We wanted to understand how much the young people take part in their review meetings and how much they knew about them. We put together some activities to ask these questions. We were pleased to see the numbers of Council members who did participate actively in their Review Meetings. We will be reporting our full findings and young people's suggestions back to the IRO Service at their upcoming IRO Practice meeting.



## **OCYPC Extra:**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> October we met with our OCYPC Extra in Thanet. We asked them, how can IROs increase engagement during review meetings. Young people had a really good discussion about this, and again we have some great points and ideas to take back to the IRO Service.

## **Young Adult Council – October 18 Meeting:**

YAC members discussed the barriers to generally speaking up during any type of meeting.

- Lack of relationship with - it is much easier to speak up when you trust your IRO and it is important that young people know they are on the young person's side
- Young people must be given ample opportunity to speak during the meeting, they may be nervous at the start of the meeting.
- Sometimes, young people can feel that they are being spoken 'out', not 'with'
- The large number of people at the meetings can be intimidating and make it harder to speak, especially if the young people do not know everyone present.
- Sometimes, young people do not want to speak out if what they want to say is about someone present at the meeting
- The location of the meeting can affect how much a young person will
- Review meetings can be very long and 'boring'.
- Lack of confidence to speak up especially if younger; nervous about saying the wrong thing, young people suggested others might panic in the meetings and clam up even though they have lots to say.

## **18+ Care Leavers Survey:**

YAC have invited all care leavers to take part in the Care Leavers Service's survey to help us find out how they feel about their experience of leaving care and look at where improvements can be made.

YAC were involved in writing the questions for the survey and we think that the idea of sending the survey about to young people by text message is a great idea. Young people can also access the survey via the Kent Cares Town



website. There is also a staff bulletin on KNet and in staff newsletters so we are hoping for a good response.

### **YAC Life Hacks Booklet:**

We have brought along the Young Adult Council's Life Hacks booklet to show you. After attending a Centrepoint Research Launch and reading their subsequent report and recommendations highlighting the challenges young people face when they leave care, YAC has had many discussions and suggestions to support and prepare young people for this change. One of the more light hearted ideas was to create this booklet, which is full of simple recipes, handy hints. We hope it provides a useful read for care leavers and for those young people who are approaching 18.

### **October Activity Days:**

In the half term we held two Arts and Crafts Activity Days on either side of the county for Children in Care. The days had different art stations where they could take two pieces of their art home and entered their final piece for our annual art competition. This year the theme of the art competition is 'Your hobbies and Interests' and we have some great entries; which Sarah will be judging with the apprentices shortly.

### **EK Boy's Group 'Get on Board':**

The first session for the boy's group will be taking place on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 where boys ages 13-17 can come along and do a specific workshop over a 6-week programme which will focus on emotional, health and wellbeing. They will get the opportunity over the course to design & make their own Skate Boards to take home with them.

### **Corporate Parenting Work:**

Our work continues to help promote the idea to all KCC staff that they all have a responsibility to our children in care and young care leavers. We have run some focus groups to help us find out what young people understand by the term Corporate Parenting and what their expectations are. We are currently working with the Comms Team to produce some leaflets and guidance for young people, these will be ready soon and will be available for all children.



We have also just met with the senior management team for Countryside, Leisure and Sport to discuss what their directorate could do to support our children and young people. They were very positive, and we have quite a few ideas to follow up. We will update with our progress with this at the next meeting.

### **APPG:**

On Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October, Rob Barton, Jo Carpenter and Sarah Newman attended the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (APPG) at Portcullis House in London. The meeting was well attended and there were lots of young people who are currently in care or have past personal experience of the care system. The session was titled 'From Care to Careers: Care Leavers' Roundtable on Employment'. The speakers in the roundtable discussion, who are all care experienced, were:

- Christel Dee, presenter, writer and digital creative for the Doctor Who series
- Luke Elkins, film & TV production assistant and actor
- Ashley John-Baptiste, BBC Journalist
- Jenny Molloy, author, adviser and trainer

The members of the panel discussed their experiences of the care system and how this impacted their future careers, and what helped them become successful in their chosen fields. Some of the key conclusions of the panel were:

- the importance of people who believe in the young person who has been in care and have high aspirations for them
- the need for exposure to inspiring environments outside of the young person's own environment or locality
- how the young person can use their experience of the care system as a positive, so that it demonstrates their resilience, perseverance etc
- the need to help young people develop contacts in their chosen field of employment
- how joining the local Children in Care Councils can help young people develop confidence and say what they think which can help them when they are looking for a job



- the importance of the young person being persistent in following their career dreams
- how difficulties with housing can impede care leavers as they begin in employment

All the members of the panel were extremely inspiring. As a Doctor Who fan, Rob was particularly interested in what Christel Dee had to say. Since the meeting, we have made further contact with Cristal and are now looking forward to working with her in the future to write an article for the 16+ Newsletter about her experiences and career.

### **New Kent Cares Town Website:**

Our newly refreshed and updated Kent Cares Town Website has now been launched. This was possible after many consultations with Young People telling us how they wanted their new website to look. We also have a Kent Cares Town App that young people can download from the App Store.

They were involved in the design with their drawings and information they said they wanted. The website consists of three different portals which contains relevant information for their age group and different stages in care. At the VSK Awards ceremonies which took place in September & October we showed the Young People what the website looks like and it was positively received.

Please have a look at the website yourselves - Kent Cares Town. We are now looking at ways to make the website as engaging as possible to young people, so have decided that vlogs and blogs are the way to go rather than young people having to trawl through pages of text. The website can be read in different languages and it is enabled so you can Listen to it rather than reading it. It also works on all mobile devices.

### **VSK Post16 Awards Ceremony:**

On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October, Virtual School Kent held their fifth annual Post 16 Awards Ceremony to recognise and celebrate the many and varied achievements of our young people. As in previous years, lots of nominations were received and 88 awards were presented to young people, many of whom attended the Awards Ceremony.



It was a fantastic evening with over 50 young people attending, supported by their friends, carers, social workers and personal advisers. The event had a red, black and gold theme with red carpet, balloons, selfie photo booth, mini sports activities and a delicious buffet. Everyone who attended, including Roger Gough, Matt Dunkley, Sarah Hammond and Caroline Smith, were blown away by the young people's achievements. The event also included an entertaining quiz about the Young Adult Council led by the VSK Participation Team (some tables were very competitive!) and a talk about the National Citizen Service by Ben Powell.

Awards presented at the ceremony included:

- Young people achieving excellent GCSE results
- Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards for our Post 16 students
- Young Adult Council members received recognition for their commitment to the Council
- National Citizen Service Award

