

## Rotherham Looked After Children's Council & LAC CLUB – Corporate Parenting Panel - Update Report October to December 2017

### Summary

This has been another exciting and productive period for the LAC Council who have successfully met the core 3 aims of their Voice & Influence Project. Young people have celebrated their achievements at the Pride of Rotherham Awards, engaged in local community Remembrance Sunday parade laying a poppy wreath on behalf of looked after children, have successfully participated in an OFSTED Inspection, delivered a passionate presentation to the Corporate Parenting Board and travelled to Leeds University to deliver another presentation to the Regional Children in Care Council Conference. In addition, young people are continuing to work together to design and deliver the 'Bin Liners are **NOT** Suitcases' Campaign and Fashion Show. We have also seen the launch of our newest LAC participation group the LAC CLUB which is growing in numbers. All of our young people have actively participated in a number of themed sessions at the LAC COUNCIL and LAC CLUB.

The numerous experiences and opportunities offered to young people at the LAC Council and LAC Club are specifically designed to increase social capital, self-awareness and self-esteem, to foster resilience and support better outcomes for our vulnerable young people. Here are some of the things we would like to share with you:-

### Pride of Rotherham Awards 2017

Rotherham held our second Pride of Rotherham Awards at the New York Stadium in October. It was a fun filled glittering evening celebrating 181 Looked after and Leaving Care young people's achievements. The LAC Council had been involved with the preparation and decision making for the awards and erected a graffiti feedback wall for young people at the event to say what they thought of the event and how to improve it for next year. All our LAC Council members individually received a Certificate and Trophy in recognition of their great achievements in



the categories of Sports, Arts & Drama, Education and Community Involvement with the LAC Council. A fabulous evening was had, where our Social Care Managers and Strategic Director set the scene performing a 'modern dance' piece in their tutus. Great fun all round. Young people fed back they loved their trophies, the disco, selfie-booth and mixing with other Looked After and Leaving Care young people.

## Community Participation

**Remembrance Sunday** - For the 7<sup>th</sup> year running and at the invite of the Mayor, young people from the LAC Council alongside their peers from the Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament have actively participated in the Remembrance Sunday Parade through Rotherham and engaged in the Service at the Rotherham Minster. This was a proud day as Kiran and Emma who lay down the LACC Poppy Wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of all Rotherham's



Looked After and Leaving Care young people. Also, another LACC member Steph proudly wore her foster father's medals from two conflicts. To say thank you to those who have sacrificed their lives, their physical and/or mental health to fight for our freedom



## LAC COUNCIL – Shaping Services in Rotherham and Beyond

**CiCC Regional Conference in Leeds** On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November the LAC Council travelled over to Leeds University to actively engage in the first Children in Care Councils Regional Conference alongside looked after children and young people from across the region. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet our neighbours and share good practice between different Voice & Influence groups within our looked after and leaving care community. The Rotherham LAC Council did Rotherham proud and despite trembling knees and shaky hands delivered their presentation with passion in the lecture theatre to hundreds of people. They shared their experiences of Destination Poland, the co-production of the LAC & Leaving Care Corporate Promises, the Pride of Rotherham Awards and their newest campaign 'Bin Liners are **NOT** Suitcases' and how Policy and Practice in Rotherham has been changed as a result of the LAC Council. The group also shared their intention to deliver a fashion show in February where all the models are wearing outfits created with bin liners, the campaign was met with rapturous applause. The Children's Commissioner for England Anne Longfield was so taken by the Rotherham presentation she photographed the group and their images of bin liners and Tweeted our Campaign nationally.



**OFSTED Inspection** – As part of the OFSTED Inspection in November the LAC Council was visited by Inspector Alison Smales. Alison talked to young people about why they came to the

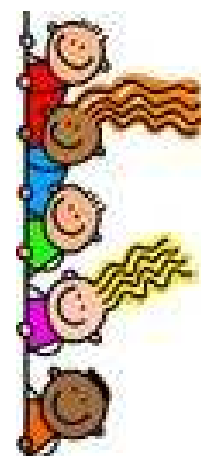


LAC Council and what participation and voice & influence projects they had been working on this year to which the young people answered enthusiastically about their achievements, their community involvement and ongoing projects. Alison also asked young people about the Service, their experiences and wanted their perceptions around Social Workers, Foster Carers and genuine

opportunities for having a voice. At times this meeting turned from fun and laughter to emotionally charged and serious as young people shared and discussed their experiences living in care. Alison told the group she was pleasantly surprised at the number of Rotherham LAC Council members and their commitment to meet each week. The OFSTED Inspector also told senior management that the LAC Council was a real burgeoning strength and said they were '*vibrant and committed*' and were clearly having an impact on the service provided to Looked After Children.



**Looked After Children's Club – (AKA 'LIL' LAC)** – In October, the LAC Participation Team opened our LAC CLUB for looked after children at primary school aged 6 to 11 years. The purpose of this group is for our children to have opportunities to participate in lively and fun group activities and games so children can meet and make friends in a safe welcoming environment. The LAC CLUB membership is growing each session as word gets around and we meet every two weeks at the Myplace building from 5pm until 7pm. To date we have 16 energetic children who run around, play games, engage in arts and craft activities, and fill the room with laughter and loud enthusiastic chatter. Verbal feedback from children and foster carers alike is extremely positive and the group is looking to meet weekly in the New Year. A Foster Carer recently emailed about the LAC CLUB:



***'the boys both had a super time and were buzzing about the things they came back with!!'***

We also have 4 fabulous Social Work Students who volunteer to support the LAC CLUB sessions and 3 committed LAC Council members who regularly volunteer too. Invites have been sent to all LAC aged 6 to 11 to come to the LAC CLUB Xmas Party on the 14<sup>th</sup> December and children are hoping they will meet more new friends.

**Participation Sessions** -The LAC COUNCIL and LAC CLUB have both engaged in a rich variety of themed activity sessions over the past few months which have included Halloween Night, Bonfire Night, Xmas Craft Celebrations and a visit to see Jack and the Beanstalk at the Civic Theatre Rotherham.





## Bin Liners are NOT Suitcases Campaign

Following the LAC Council's participation in the Corporate Parenting Panel in October where we highlighted the issues around the use of bin liners being used as suitcases for Looked After and Leaving Care young people. The members of the CPP gave their wholehearted support to the campaign and requested this practice cease immediately. Ian Walker (Head of Service) is writing this practice into Policy to be presented at the next CPP meeting. News of the Rotherham LAC Council's Campaign has moved from local, to regional and with the help of the Children's Commissioner for England is known nationally.

To celebrate the success of the campaign and raise awareness of the change in Policy and Practice. The LAC Council are organising a **'Bin Liners are NOT Suitcases'** fashion show for Friday February 16<sup>th</sup> at 1pm to be held at Rotherham College of Arts & Technology. Working very closely with RCAT Degree students the group will design outfits made entirely of bin liners which will be modelled on the day by LAC Council and LAC Club members and supportive adults LACC members have chosen to take part including Ian Walker, Ian Thomas, Anne-Marie Banks and Sharon Sandell.

### 'Bin Liners are NOT Suitcases' Campaign



**LAC Council Guests** - Young people from the LAC Council would like to thank all of our guests, friends and supporters who have visited the LAC Council or invited us to visit them over the past few months. These are:-

Ian Thomas – Strategic Director  
All Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel  
Alison Smailes – OFSTED Inspector

Thank You All 😊

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