

Rotherham Looked After Children's Council & Lil' LAC CLUB

Lockdown Report Edition for June **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Summary

The LAC Council and Lil' LAC Club have creatively adapted the way we are engaging with each other during the Coronavirus Lockdown. Instead of meeting as groups in venues we have been meeting up for daily Activities and LAC Council weekly meetings on Zoom! We have engaged in partnership working with Charlotte Elliot CEO of Affinity 2020 who have consulted with our young people and provided daily Zoom Activities for Rotherham LAC. We have enjoyed the support from Charlee Bewsher, Regional Children in Care Council, Youth Work Unit to provide Zoom Spaces to enable Rotherham LAC Council meetings to go ahead. LAC Council Voice & Influence work has continued with their LAC VOICE Residential Newsletter, Neglect Strategy Co-production, engaging with the interview process with Social Care Staff. However, Campaigns of LACC Caring Language Campaign, LAC Free Leisure Pass Campaign & Know Your Entitlement have had to take a back seat temporarily as we have worked through supporting our Looked After Children & Young People with what they need in these unprecedented times.

The numerous experiences and opportunities offered to young people at the LAC Council and Lil' LACC 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 that we have been doing to achieve these outcomes in Lockdown that we would like to share with you:

LAC Council Voices Shaping Services

Neglect Strategy Support

CYPS are updating their Neglect Strategy and have asked the LAC Council to support the co-production of the Neglect Survey that they intend to distribute across Rotherham Schools. Our young people have engaged in this very sensitive and emotive theme to advise CYPS on how this survey may be perceived by vulnerable young people, suggested the addition of a robust Purpose Statement to fully inform participants and seek their informed consent, options to opt in or out of survey, changes to questions to have greater clarity and to reflect the difference in knowing who to contact to report neglect and the intention to act upon that advice by young people. e.g. *'Knowing it and doing it are two different things'* (LAC Council member)

LAC Council members have been very generous and brave to share their thoughts about neglect and reporting it, revealing a very complex issue for these young people being wrapped up with their lived experiences within their biological families, being put in to and living in care.

Residential Homes - Interviews for Managers & Staff

For Rotherham Looked After Children & Young People to engage in the interview process for managers & workers means they have an active part in shaping the services workforce that serve them. At the end of March and straddling across the timespan pre and during lockdown rules where members of LAC Council could not leave their homes for non-essential travel, we made alternative arrangements for interviewing Residential Home candidates. Young people living in a Rotherham residential home were supported by myself to Interview candidates of Residential Home Manager Post via Skype. This was our first LAC journey into the unknown world of virtual interviewing and was quite the milestone for what was to come. The interview questions developed by LACC and the residential home children & young people were delivered by Lilah a brave young person who was absolutely amazing and conducted the interview like a professional. Well done Lilah😊

Later in May, 60 candidates were interviewed for a range of Residential Home Posts including Managers and Support Workers. Due to the complexities of including young people from across the borough on skype meetings when the vast majority of young people use zoom. Interviews were held without LAC present and LAC Council questions were asked to candidates on young people's behalf. William Shaw (CYPS Head of Development Programmes) fed back that these were really important and helpful questions that not only reinforced voices of our Looked After Children are an essential part of the interview process but also send out the message that LAC Voices are respected and listened to from day one for all new staff.

Residential Homes Newsletter

The LAC Council continued to support and reach out to Rotherham children and young people in Residential Homes by developing their own LAC Voice Newsletter. This newsletter introduced the LAC Council to encourage participation and shared what they have been up to including their LAC Campaigns, 3 day residential at Kingswood, Pride of Rotherham Awards, changes in LAC's entitlements that affect all Rotherham LAC and giving them the opportunity to share their voices around living in Residential Homes to provide feedback for RMBC to contribute LAC Voices to future Residential Home planning. (Please see appendix for LAC VOICE Newsletter)

LAC Tablets

Jordan with his Tablet



Due to the unusual circumstances of lockdown where many of our young people were staying at home with Foster Carers and no longer able to see their fellow students or friends from the LAC groups. It was important to give our children the opportunity to keep in touch with the outside world & continue with their relationships Virtually. However, it became evident that not all LAC had access to the technology to be able to virtually engage with friends or access young person friendly activities. We are very grateful to Affinity 2020 CIC who loaned 20 Tablets to looked after children to give them the opportunity to keep in touch & engage with Zoom activities every day if they wanted to. These tablets were delivered to young people on their doorsteps it was great to see them & catch up too.

LAC Council & Lil' LAC Club zoom Activities

During Lockdown we joined in partnership with the charity Affinity 2020, whereby, our Lil LAC Club members and LAC Council members have joined together in a broad range of daily Zoom Activities delivered until September by Affinity 2020. The activities are offered to all LAC in Rotherham for an hour long every day 10am to 11am. These sessions have gone a long way to alleviate boredom and isolation of our children unable to go to school or in some circumstances unable to leave the house due to health reasons. LAC are having fun, learning, playing games, and being able to keep in contact with each other and maintaining their relationships & social capital.

In addition, the LAC Council have held weekly zoom sessions which were initially more nurturing in content to talk about feelings, thoughts and their concerns relating to Corona Virus and imparting the latest Govt information to our young people and exploring what this meant in a young person friendly way. We also talked about coping strategies, meditation, and ideas to keep busy. LAC members shared their stories with each other and helped normalise their strange feelings in their individual 'Corona Coaster rides' safely in the knowledge that they weren't alone.

The sessions are truly diverse covering Poetry, Fitness, Drama, Dance, Folk Music, Spanish

AFFINITY 2020 VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETINGS For Rotherham LAC
Week 8th June – 12th June

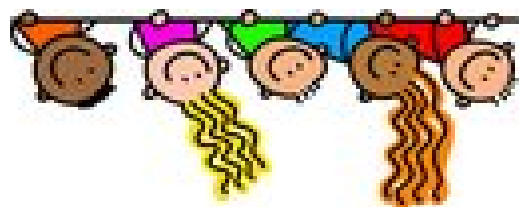
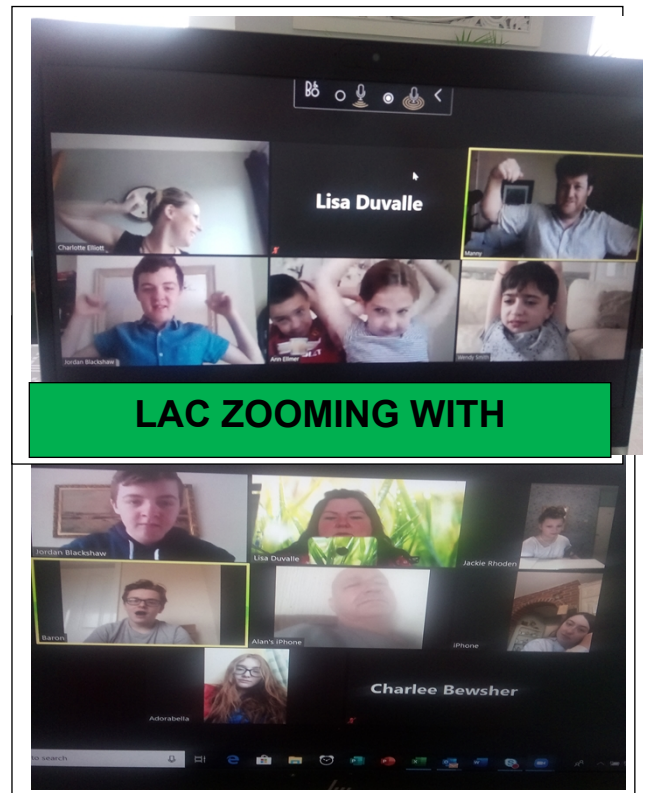
Date	Activity	Time	Ages	Facilitator
Monday	Fun Fitness @ Home	10am – 11am	6 to 12 years	Pete
Tuesday	Act Like a Star!	10am – 11am	9 to 18 years	CE or BC
Wednesday	Get Down & Dance @ Home	10am – 11am	8+	Pete
Thursday	Britains Got Talent	10am – 11am	7 to 15 years	CE or BC
Friday	Poetry Express	10am – 11am	10 – 18 years	CE or BC

* Please note that Lisa Du-Valle (LAC Participation Lead) will be present throughout these sessions with our children & young people. Zoom ID & Passwords will be sent via email and text by Lisa. Zoom sessions & Tablets have been provided for Rotherham LAC by the Charity Affinity 2020. Thank You!!

AFFINITY 2020 VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETINGS For Rotherham LAC
1st – 5th June 2020

Date	Activity	Time	Ages	Facilitator
Monday	Stretch n Chill	10am – 11am	7 + years	Pete
Tuesday	Spanish	10am – 11am	10 to 18 years	Pete
Wednesday	Word Play	10am – 11am	10 to 18 years	CE or BC
Thursday	Funky Fitness @ Home	10am – 11am	8+	CE or BC
Friday	Adventures with Music	10am – 11am	6 +years	CE or BC

* Please note that Lisa Du-Valle (LAC Participation Lead) will be present throughout these sessions with our children & young people. Zoom ID & Passwords will be sent via email and text by Lisa. Zoom sessions & Tablets have been provided for Rotherham LAC by the Charity Affinity 2020. Thank You!!



Thank You

Young people from the LAC Council and Lil LAC Club would like to thank all of our friends, Foster Carers & LAC Voice Volunteers who have supported our Voice work and virtual groups over these last 3 months. We really value your commitment to Ethical Participation and believing in us which has given us the freedom to continue to grow. We appreciate you!! These include:-

Alan Perry – LAC Council Volunteer
Charlee Bewsher – Development Director Youth Work Unit
Charlotte Elliot – CEO & Founder of Affinity 2020 CIC
Wendy Smith – Foster Carer
Ann Elmer – Foster Carer
Laura, Pete, Manny & Barbara – Affinity 2020 Facilitators
William Shaw - CYPS Head of Development Programmes

Thank You All 😊

Contact Name: Lisa Du-Valle
LAC Voice, Influence & Participation Lead
Children in Care
Tel: 01709 822130 or Mob: 07748143388
Email: lisa.duvalle@rotherham.gov.uk



@LACCRotherham



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