

## Rotherham Looked After Children's Council & Lil' LAC CLUB September - 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 and have been meeting virtually on Zoom. We have also engaged in partnership working with Charlotte Elliot CEO of Affinity 2020 and provided daily Zoom Activities for LAC across the borough. 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 Shaping Rotherham through voice & influence work has had to be put on hold as our young people have succumbed to 'Zoom Gloom', where individuals are fed up of meeting on line and only want to meet up in person. However, our LAC have entered into the Coram Voice Writing Competition, joined in Affinity Zoom Sessions, Engage in Work-Wise Summer Academy, engaged as participants and volunteers in LAC Affinity Activities face to face, and received Bags of Care. 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 and wider LAC & leaving care community 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 during the past 3 months, that we would like to share with you:


### Coram Voice Writing Competition

LAC Council and LIL LAC Club members engaged in the annual Coram Voices Writing Competition. This year our young people put forward an interesting mix of poetry, song lyrics and stories to express themselves in the 'Experiences of Covid 19' category. Each of our entrants were given an invite to the online Awards ceremony which took place on 15<sup>th</sup> July. This year's competition saw its highest response to date, with over 300 entries and 1000 people watching. We watched with great excitement and anticipation as the winners of each age bracket for each category were read out by our host the award-winning Scottish actor and former Doctor Who star Peter Capaldi.



Unfortunately, this wasn't our year but the experiences of having a go and daring to believe in themselves is a huge accomplishment that will push us

through to engage again next year. Well done everyone who took part 😊



coram Voice getting young voices heard

You are invited to the  
**Voices**  
Online Awards 2020

The creative writing competition for children in care and care leavers

Hosted by Peter Capaldi  
Wednesday 15th July  
5pm

Join us for the live premiere of Voices 2020 on Youtube  
Coram Voice

Sponsored by  
CADENCE INNOVA  
club Peloton

Nick and Katie Searl Rosemary and Bernard Mayes

# LAC Group Participation

## Zoom Activities

Over the past 4 months we have 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 these opportunities were then opened up to other Rotherham Looked After Children running over the first 4 weeks of the summer holiday period and extended to 2 hours per day to meet the increasing demand. The sessions were a creative & fun mix of Get down & Dance, Funky Fitness, Act Like a Star, Word Play, Spanish, Poetry Express and Adventures with Music specifically tailored to the diverse group of children, for example a Slovakian speaking tutor was brought in to support our children's language and communication needs and increased dedication to support our children's mental health and wellbeing issues over these 4 weeks. These sessions have gone a long way to alleviate boredom, frustration and isolation of our children. To keep them connected with the outside world, build friendships, maintain existing relationships and increase their social capital. Importantly too, these sessions have given our Foster Carers the much needed break to have a couple of hours to themselves.

## ZOOM MUSIC



## Work- Wise Summer Academy 2020

This summer Rotherham LAC and Leaving care were generously offered 10 FREE places on the Work-Wise Virtual Summer Academy. This was a magnificent opportunity to support the development of our young people so they have the knowledge, skills, aptitude and opportunities for employment. The Academy ran over a 4 day period and included, Broadening Horizons which was an introduction to industry and the world of work including focus on first impressions and communication Skills. Day 2 was an Experience of Industry, which introduced different aspects of how a business operate and a chance to 'Walk in my Shoes' with apprentices, Day 3 involved creative and leadership skills and challenges and day 4, looked at 'What Employers Want', where students were given a chance to understand what employers are looking for, practice interview and preparation skills, this session finished with an online graduation ceremony. For those young people who embraced this opportunity and graduated, they all received a Graduation Certificate. This will be a boost to their confidence alongside a record for their CV's. Well Done 😊



## Affinity Bags of Care for LAC



Our friends Affinity 2020 have also raised funds to provide 50 Bags of Care for our Rotherham LAC. These bags contain age appropriate items, books, colouring pens & pencils, arts & crafts materials, Body Shop Anti-Bacterial hand gel, shampoos, bath bombs, sweets etc. These are set aside for children who come to the Activity Programme and other vulnerable LAC children who would welcome the opportunity to play and read and keep themselves busy in other ways. Modelled by a small foster family bubble of boys. Thank you Affinity 😊



## Affinity LAC Activity Programme

During Lockdown Rotherham LAC Participation joined in partnership and worked closely with Charlie Elliot CEO of Affinity 2020 who has written bids and received funding to enhance the participation of LAC during Covid 19, and provide specific LAC offers such as the Zoom sessions and Bags of Care to engage our children & young people. Over the summer holidays we have worked closely with Affinity to organise and deliver a 6 weeks Activity Programme, the first 4 weeks delivering on Zoom and the final 2 weeks working face to face delivering group activities. Organising, planning, coordinating and delivering these two weeks within the safety of Government Guidelines for our young people in a worldwide Coronavirus epidemic has involved the support, hard work and sheer determination of a number of people to pull this together, both behind and in front of the scenes to keep our LAC safe. All of this work is to ensure our Rotherham children and young people can engage in group activities many for the first time in 5 months to get them up, active and prepared for starting school in September. Affinity hired Clifton Campus, provided the sports coaches, timetables and the risk assessments etc and we recruited the children, provided individual risk assessments, safeguarding & placing individuals into group bubbles, consents, PPE, and volunteers to support our children and coaches etc. We were pleasantly surprised to receive volunteers from across the borough to help with the Activity Programme including, members of the LAC Council, Rotherham Heroes, RMBC Staff, LAC Nurses a RMBC Councillor. In our first week we actively engaged 30 LAC in the Affinity programme and looking forward to seeing what week 2 brings.

Here are a few pictures to show our young people having fun within their team bubbles.



**WARMING UP**



**O£&@?**



**RESTING**



**Happy 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday Mattie, here proudly showing off his birthday buns baked by Lesley one of our Rotherham Hero Volunteers.**

The Activity Programme has also been very beneficial and gratefully appreciated by our Rotherham Foster Carer community who have been afforded the opportunity to hand over their children for the day to engage in burning off energy, having fun and making friends while they get their own jobs done:

*'The boys love the Activity Club and they both look forward to it every morning. It keeps them busy on their feet doing different activities. The club give the boys the opportunity to interact with other children and make new friends. A big Well Done to all the team especially xxxx she's a lovely lady with a good heart X'* Robina, Foster Carer

*'I've got so much done today without the boys.... washings done, house cleaned and even had some time in my garden.... Can you keep them? Ha Ha'* Usma, Foster Carer

## Thank You

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

**Alan Perry** – LAC Council Volunteer

**Charlotte Elliot** – CEO & Founder of Affinity 2020 CIC

**Laura, Pete, Manny, Barbara, Sophie, Kath** – Affinity Zoom Facilitators

**John Barber** – Chief Exec Work-Wise Foundation

**Pepe Diasio** – Rotherham Schools

## LAC Activity Programme Volunteers

**Lesley Wills** – Rotherham Hero

**Pete Douglas** – Virtual School Head

**Elizabeth Dimpleby** – Rotherham Hero

**Cllr Mick Elliot** – RMBC Councillor

**Sally-Ann Fisher** – Advocate Rights To Rights

**Daniel Stone** – Advocate Rights to Rights

**Leanne Corns** – Early Help Outreach & Engagement Worker

**Sophie Hopkins** – Fostering Support Worker

**Kim Wylam** – Social Worker

**Alison Sharp** – Family Group Conferencing Practitioner

**Jane Attwood** – Rotherham Hero

**Hannah Collins** – Staff Nurse for LAC & Care Leavers

**Sophie Brown** - Staff Nurse for LAC & Care Leavers

**Zuzana** – LAC Council Member

**Jordan** – LAC Council Member

Thank You All 😊

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