

Rotherham Looked After Children's Council & Lil' LAC CLUB June Update- Corporate Parenting Panel

The LAC Council and Lil' LAC Club have creatively adapted the way we were engaging with each other during the Coronavirus pandemic. We have seen a shift from face to face weekly group meetings to holding virtual meetings on Zoom and more recently MS Teams.

Young people have faced many challenges, emotionally, educationally and socially as they have navigated through the corona-coaster of changes to their lives. In response, we have engaged in numerous activities, specifically tailored to meet their needs to keep our children connected, maintain social capital, to support their mental well-being and resilience.

By supporting individuals, talking through changes, feelings, worries, sending out information, providing Tablets to those who could not access the virtual technology and help them keep connected with the outside world, providing Bags of Care full of arts, crafts, reading materials and bath bombs, to help raise their spirits, to give our most vulnerable something else to focus on and give them the tools to stay safe. We have seen a shift from group working to engaging with our young people individually via text, phone, emails, facetime and meeting with individuals face to face and even emailing each other.

New Beginnings

The LAC Council group met face to face outside for the first time on Weds 21st April. This was an absolute joy for everyone, we had a 'chips & chat' session walking through Clifton Park sitting on the benches and having a chippy tea! The numerous experiences and opportunities offered to children & young people at the LAC Council, Lil' LAC Club and the wider LAC population through Voice & Influence Campaigns, participation activities & community events are specifically designed to empower, increase social capital, raise self-awareness and self-esteem, to foster resilience and support better outcomes for our vulnerable children & young people. Here are some of the things that we have been doing to achieve these outcomes that we would like to share with you:-

LAC Council Voices Shaping Services & rebuilding the future

Young Persons Interview Panel

Members of the LAC Council were excited to engage in interviewing candidates for the *Head of Service – Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Post* in June. Alongside another young person from Early Help the panel created their own questions to ascertain whether the candidates were young people friendly, had a commitment to ensuring the Voice & Influence of all Rotherham Children & Young People and also how were they going to address the findings from the Independent Review on Council run Children's Social Care. The interviews were conducted with the candidates virtually and the young people found the experience of having a Voice in saying what LAC think of potential candidates is important, valuing and empowering for them.

The Big Ask

The LAC Council were invited by the Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza to engage in '**the Big Ask**', the largest ever survey of children in England, designed to find out what their concerns and aspirations about the future are. Our looked after young people completed the online survey during the LAC Council group sessions. The results from this survey will help to identify the barriers preventing children from reaching their potential, put forward solutions and set ambitious goals for the country to achieve.

Neglect Strategy

The LAC Council engaged in the new and improved consultation by answering questions and lending their Voices to inform the Rotherham Neglect Strategy. This group session was intense and at times emotional as the Neglect topic generated much discussion amongst our young people that went beyond the consultation questions themselves and allowed members to express personal feelings and perceptions in the safety and security of the LAC Council nurturing and compassionate environment. These young people are not only united through their care status but also their bravery and drive to improve knowledge within Social Care for others, those as yet anonymous children and young people who have yet to be emancipated from neglect.

CYPS Partnership Board

In March LAC Council members delivered their update report in a presentation at the CYPS Partnership Board for the first time online. Their aims were to introduce themselves to the board, outline the LAC Council aims and priorities for this year and highlight their successful campaigns. The group are regularly invited to this meeting but unfortunately cannot physically attend, however, a positive outcome of the blended new way of interacting due to COVID has meant the young people can have their voices heard and participate through online Teams/Zoom meetings and no longer rely on attending meetings face to face.

Voice & Influence Strategy

LAC Council members are actively engaging alongside other youth groups, and adult facilitators in Rotherham CYPS's, the Voluntary & community sector in the co-production of the Rotherham Voice & Influence Strategy. This is an ongoing piece of voice & Influence work that is to be shaped by our diverse tapestry of children & young people to ensure this work is truly co-produced in partnership. Well done everyone 😊

LAC Virtual Offer



every mind matters

Virtual Youth Sessions

LAC Participation has also joined up with Rotherham United Community Sports Trust to increase the LAC Virtual Offer for our younger LAC. We reached out for support from RUCST to help us deliver fun filled activities online on Monday evenings during our last lockdown as we recognised that our LAC were experiencing ZOOM fatigue and needed a shift of pace and creativity to keep them interested, keep engaging with us and having fun. Carla & Nicole came up with an exciting programme each week and we saw the children playing catch phrase, musical bingo, family fortunes, Virtual escape rooms. The children could be sorted into teams inside their own virtual rooms and discuss their answers and play strategy out of ear shot of the rival teams. Lots of fun was had 😊



LAC Participation

LAC Water Sports Activity Day

In June, LAC Participation joined Affinity CIC & Wickersley Partnership Trust to deliver a Water Sports Experience at Ulley Country Park for 24 of Rotherham's Looked After Children & Young People. The day was led by the trust's trained paddle sport instructors who offered a kayaking experience with canoeing, raft building and supervised jumping off the jetty. We were treated to a glorious sunny fun filled day the young people had a fabulous time playing about on the water, building confidence, laughing and squealing with delight at these exciting experiences.



Some of our Foster Carers have taken the time to send us positive feedback and asking for more opportunities to engage in LAC activity days during the summer holidays.

Hi Lisa,
Exxx loved today, thank you all so much.

All the best
TRACEY

Morning, thank you for the day at ulley, Hxxxx really enjoyed it.....Brilliant day thanks again.
Steve

Hi Lisa, Txxx had a great time at Ulley the other week. He really enjoyed himself, so thank you very much for inviting him.
Emily x

'I wanted to email to say thank you so much the activity day at Ulley. The welcome at the gate was great.....The activities provided were well managed, so i was reliably informed by S. Once again thank you so much for the day, an out and out success at our house and we are excited for the next one' Thanks Again Denise

LAC Treasurer & Vice Treasurer



**LACC
Treasurer**

It is the custom of the LAC Council to vote in a Treasurer and Vice Treasurer from their peers to support the management of the LAC Council & Lil LAC Club budget. This would under normal circumstances have taken place in April for the candidates to take on the role throughout the financial year April until March. This year our elections were held in June, each of the 3 candidates presented themselves and their speeches to the LACC saying what they could bring to the role and why LAC members should give them their votes. This year was an exceptionally strong and close contest. Thank you to



**LACC Vice
Treasurer**

everyone who took part. The LAC Council would like to announce **Zuzana** as the LAC Council Treasurer and **Alicia** as the LAC Council Vice Treasurer.

Future Planning to Improve LAC Voice & Influence

Over the coming months the LAC Council will be looking closely at the Priorities for the coming year, the Aims of the LAC Council, our LACC Constitution and the role of the group in having LAC Voices heard and those voices influencing positive changes in Services for LAC, our communities. We will be reviewing the current Corporate Parenting Promises to young people and how these will be realised and measured through the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Thank You All! 🙏

Children and Young people from the LAC Council, Lil LAC Club and those who have engaged in LAC participation online sessions & events would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all of our friends, volunteers and supporters over the last 6 months. These include:-

Chris Dawson – Educational Psychologist

Peter Douglas – Head of Virtual School

Charlotte Elliot – CEO Affinity 2020

Carla Whitehead – Rotherham United Community Sports Trust

Nicole Cant – Rotherham United Community Sports Trust

Joel Mettam – Rotherham United Community Sports Trust

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