

## Rotherham Looked After Children's Council December 2022 Update Corporate Parenting Panel

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 over the past four months to achieve these outcomes:-

### LAC Council Voices Shaping Services & rebuilding the future

#### Amplify Event Manchester

The LAC Council promote the voice of Rotherham Looked After and Leaving Care Young people at local, regional and national Voice Events and consultations. In October the group were invited to Manchester to participate in Amplify, a national Voices Networking Event. This gave our young people the opportunity to meet other passionate Looked After Children from across the country and engage in 4 workshops that focussed on issues they had raised that featured in the Independent Review of Social Care report.



The interactive workshops talked about

- 1) Supported Accommodation with regards to what young people feel OFSTED should inspect based in their knowledge and experience of supported accommodation.
- 2) A workshop to seek to understand young people's perspectives on modern family life.
- 3) Looking at Loving relationships within the care system (DfE) asks what does children's social care need to do to achieve this?
- 4) Looking at our Rotherham LAC COUNCIL Mental health campaign and how young people may achieve good mental health.

Rotherham young people actively engaged in the debates and spoke on the mike to the national LAC Councils. The LAC Council also engaged in a video to promote Rotherham LAC Council and the benefits of engaging in a voice group and spoke about what they have been most proud of doing this year which was the VIP Summer Fest. We would also like to say a big thank you to two of our LAC Council members Bella & Ace who co-hosted the event alongside other Coram Voice Ambassadors. Well done girls!





## Consultation with Helen LAC Sufficiency Strategy

In September Helen Sweaton, Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance & Quality was invited to the LAC Council to engage in a consultation of the Looked After Children and Care Leavers strategy that considers Sufficiency.

LAC Council members had the opportunity to directly influence the development of a strategy which will set out the Council's priorities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers and homes for looked after children and care leavers. The group agreed to support the development of a child/young person friendly document and agreed to lead the decision making for the final version and editing of the original document to create the child. They enjoyed spending time with Helen who made the young people feel good about themselves plus treated them to a bag of sweets each.

## Advocacy & Independent Visitors Consultation

The LAC Council engaged in the Independent Care Review with CORAM Voice alongside thousands of care experienced young people nationally. A number of recommendations were made in this report which the LAC Council will consider over the following months. For the Advocacy & Independent Visitors Consultation we invited Annette Marshal from Rights2Rights to come along and explain how the service supports young people in Rotherham currently. The group looked at definitions of Advocacy and Independent Visitors, then at the recommendations from the care review.

When the group were asked 'what decisions do you want to have a say in?' the vast majority focussed on **family time**, here are some quotes from our young people:

*'they (IRO's) don't involve you in what you want, they choose what's best for you and try to convince you that's what you want'*

*'you should be able to choose when and how long for family time'*

*'I want to be with my family more, cos I see them every month only for 2 hours and that's not enough, I want to spend more time with them'*

*'as I'm leaving care I don't get included in family times anymore, I've repeatedly asked to be invited so I can see my siblings as they live in different placements, but the social worker says she*



*doesn't have to consider me anymore now. It's a constant fight to see my family together, it shouldn't be so hard'*

*'you should have a say in where you go for family time and which ones you see'*

Also, Placement decisions were questioned as young people felt they didn't really have a genuine choice or Voice where they lived, as they were put where there was a place rather than the area they wanted, or with a family type they preferred.

*'you should have a choice where you live not just get put with what the council has'*

## LAC Council Participation Sessions

### LACC's Halloween Celebration with Sharon our Chief Executive



In October Sharon Kemp attended the Looked After Children's Council, Día de los Muertos inspired Halloween event. Organised by the LAC Council and the children and young people who benefit from their services, the session allowed young people to come together to celebrate different cultures.

The theme of the event was **Día de los Muertos** (translation Day of the Dead) celebrates life and death where mourning is exchanged for celebration and honouring those we've lost. As part of the festivities sugar skulls represent a departed soul and reflect the folk-art style of big happy smiles, bright colours and sparkly tin and glittery adornments.

At the start of the event the young people in held a discussion about the importance of celebrating different cultures. Whilst it is also Black History

Month, the LAC Council celebrated the life and achievement of famous individuals including Marcus Rashford MBE who is well known outside of his professional football career for being a campaigner against racism, homelessness, and child hunger in United Kingdom.

*'I'd like to say a big thank you to **Lisa Duvalle**, the LAC, and the young people involved. Lisa, as always, brought her special magic to the event and it was lovely to see all the colourful mask designs'* Sharon Kemp CEX

## Community Engagement Days

### Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service

It is important for our young people to be involved with and gain positive experiences of living in Rotherham and engaging with their own communities to enhance their connectivity, belonging and support self-esteem. The LAC Council is invited annually to engage in the Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service by our Mayor, this year by our Mayor Cllr Tajamal Khan to represent Looked After

and Leaving Care young people at this important event. Two LACC members, Rosie & Baron were voted by their peers to represent the group and felt proud (albeit a little nervous too) to lay the Poppy Wreath on behalf of our care experienced young people at the cenotaph.



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

Annette Marshal – Rights2Rights

Cllr Tajamal Khan – Mayor of Rotherham

Helen Sweaton - Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance & Quality

LAC Voice, Influence & Participation Volunteers

Sharon Kemp – CEX

Thank You All! 😊

Merry Xmas and Happy New Year from all of our LAC Council Members



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