

Rotherham Looked After Children's Council JANUARY 2023 Update



The numerous experiences and opportunities offered to children & young people at the LAC Council and those to 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 three months to achieve these outcomes:-

LAC Council Voices Shaping Services & rebuilding the future

LAC COUNCIL VIP Free Leisure Pass Campaign

Members of the LAC Council have been tirelessly campaigning for a free Leisure Pass for looked after and leaving care young people for three years. The group feel passionately that having free access to exercise opportunities such as gym equipment, fitness classes and swimming benefits young people both physically and emotionally. Research by the LAC Council within our regional Children in Care Services local authorities found that 17 of them already had free leisure passes for their young people. In December 2022 members of corporate parenting panel joined the LAC Council at their Xmas Craft session and shared with them their update on the free Leisure activities they have secured for Looked After & Leaving Care Young People so far. These are:-

VIP Big Brother Project 2023 – Free Gym membership for 50 boys
aged 11 -15 years

VIP Sister Project 2023 – Free Gym membership for girls aged 9 -15

VIP Swimming 2023 – Free swimming for looked after and leaving
care young people across 4 leisure centres – aged 0- 25 years

The LAC Council was invited to engage in a consultation to explore their perceptions of support currently offered, further support needed and the issues and opportunities for young people making decisions about education. HEPP encourage young people to think about going to university, they provide information and put on events to help people decide if university could be right for them.



The team brought along a care experienced young person to talk about his experiences of university and answer any questions from the group. This was a fun session which gave LACC members the space to think about their future and possibilities available to them. Young people helped design an activity that other young people like themselves could enjoy.

Information gleaned from the Rotherham Looked After Children's Council, alongside other care experienced young people and young carers was used to inform the report titled Supporting Young Carers & Care Experienced Young People: HEPP ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT (copies available upon request) Well Done LAC Council

LAC Council Participation Sessions

The month of December is heavily peppered with seasonal activities for members of the LAC Council. These sessions are specifically planned by young people at the beginning of each year to ensure the group have opportunities to have positive experiences over this period which historically may have been a negative time of year for many. In addition, delayed gratification of spreading their budget out over the year and forward planning is an essential life skill for them to practice.

York Trip

A group of LAC Council members shared a coach with other looked after children and their carers partly funded by Rotherham Foster Carers Association (RFCA) visiting York. Our young people were 'wowed' by the York Cathedral gothic architecture, and newly erected statue of the queen, they loved the old worldliness of York with its historic cobbled streets and tiny buildings of the shambles. Plus, the Harry Potter Shop and magicians brews were very popular with the group. This trip had at times remote supervision in order for our young people to practice independence, where young people are trusted to go off to explore in small groups, keep in touch with the group leader and come back on time to the designated places.



This year the LAC Council and their siblings enjoyed a visit to the Rotherham Civic Theatre to see Beauty & The Beast!! This was a fun packed pantomime with the young people stepping out of their usual behaviours and engaged in shouting in the dark 'he's behind you' 'booooo' and laughing hysterically at the comedic flamboyant pantomime Dame and her every changing and outrageous outfits. LACC members relaxed with their siblings making positive memories together with their family and enjoying the Xmas experience together.



LAC Council Xmas Party



The LAC Councils final session of the year was to hold their Xmas party at Frankie & Benny's. This was an exciting evening for everyone the young people chose the set menu to keep costs down and exchanged presents and cards with each other.

Community Engagement

Xmas Crafts Session

Each year the LAC Council holds a Xmas craft session where they engage in festive team building activities and gain skills to create hand-made gift items for friends and family. Sharon Kemp has been kind enough to engage in this session annually and this year the group also invited members of the Corporate Parenting Panel to join in the fun and get to spend time with the LACC members outside of the Town Hall. This was a huge success with adults and young people mixing and engaging with each other in creating crystal art keyrings, Snowman Soup, Rudolf hot chocolate bags etc and Rudolf antler team building games followed by a mesmerising catwalk from Monica, Rebecca, Lynda & Bobby to show off each teams work. This was great fun.





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

Jane Galloway – CIDON Construction

Kelly Self – Specialist Evidence Evaluation & Research (SEER)

Kelly White – Head of Service First Response

Lynda Briggs - Named Nurse For Looked After Children and Care Leavers

Monica Green – Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care

Pete Douglas - Virtual School Headteacher Secondary and Post 16

Rebecca Wall – Head of Service Children in Care

Sharon Kemp – CEX

Stephen Simpson – CIDON Construction

Cllr Victoria Cusworth

Thank You All! 😊



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