

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Children, Young People & Families Partnership
2.	Date:	30th August 2013
3.	Title:	Looked After Children’s Council (LACC) Update
4.	Programme Area:	IYSS - Youth Service

Summary:

The Looked After Children’s Council (LACC) are currently meeting for Voice & Influence training and development sessions every fortnight at the MyPlace Building Rotherham. However, more commonly the LACC are meeting weekly holding additional meetings on weekends and evenings to prepare presentations, and complete high profile project work. This month the LAC Council have welcomed an additional member of the staff team Janet Stanley to support the delivery of the group alongside Susan McBride and Lisa Du-Valle. Up to 20 young people may attend LACC sessions at any one time.

Over the past three months the LACC have been meeting weekly and engaged in a rich variety of Voice & Influence Sessions, these have included ‘Chill & Chat’ days held over the Summer Holidays, Life Story Work, Arts & Crafts, team building exercises, worked on self awareness and self-esteem, represented looked after and leaving care young people at the Rotherham Youth Cabinet, were supported in positively engaging with Ofsted inspectors, engaged in the interviewing process, lead on young people’s peer consultations around re-commissioning of leaving care, and engaged in South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Youth Planning day.

Dream Big DVD Launch – The LAC Council supported Aaron Wildman in meeting and greeting his guests at the launch of his ‘Dream Big’ DVD at Myplace on 24th July. The LACC enjoyed the opportunity to share the evening with Aaron and talk about their aspirations from a LAC perspective with guests such as Rotherham’s Lord Mayor, Cllrs Paul Lakin and Roger Stone and SY Police Supt Jason Harwin, and of course their very dear friend Joyce Thacker. A wonderful evening was had by all.

Articulation Residential – At the beginning of the Summer Holidays members of the LAC Council went on a 3 day residential staying at Manchester University Campus in Crewe. The theme of the residential was **‘Campaign! don’t Complain’**, and young people actively engaged in a variety of activities across the 3 days including, Lyric & rap, African Drumming, Visual Arts, Street Dance, Singing and Drama Sessions. The residential culminated in everyone taking part in putting on a show in the Axis Theatre, expressing through the medium of drama, music and dance issues they would like to raise and campaign about. This residential was a fantastic opportunity for young people to meet other looked after and leaving care young people from across Britain and share experiences. In addition, staying

in the University campus rooms helped to raise awareness and potential aspirations for some Rotherham looked after young people who were surprised at how informal and welcoming the University surroundings were.

Summer Holidays – Chill & Chat Days – The LAC Council chose to hold three ‘Chill & Chat’ days over the Summer Holidays, where they engaged in social and team building activities including console games, singing, arts & crafts activities, nail art, banner & bunting making and future planning for the LAC Council.

Councillor Pickering Visits the LACC – The LACC invited Cllr Dave Pickering and his wife to the LAC Council on 26th June to present Cllr Pickering with a framed copy of the poem ‘Goodbye Mr Mayor’ which they had penned for his leaving ceremony. Cllr Pickering said he was moved by the poem which meant a lot to him.

Leaving Care Re-commissioning – The LAC Council formed a sub-group of leaving care young people who received basic peer consultation training and were supported in the design, development, delivery and analysis of feedback from Rotherham young people. This group held workshops and 1to1 peer consultations with leaving care young people by visiting residential accommodation across the borough, semi-independent accommodation and Connexions Employment open day at RCAT. Feedback from this consultation has gone to inform the commissioning of future leaving care services.

Consultation Projects. In addition to the leaving care re-commissioning, The LAC Council has been called upon to give their voices to a number of consultations over the past 3 months this has included the Health and Well Being consultation around the young person’s pledge card and the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner Survey which was followed by a regional Youth Planning Day to feed ideas around perceptions of safety to our Commissioner Shaun Wright, alongside young people from Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster at the Lifewise Centre in Hellaby.

Interviewing C&YPS Staff – Members of the LAC Council engaged in the interview process by taking part in the interview panel alongside RMBC staff for the new Service Manager, Family Placement & Residential Services. Although this was a little nerve racking, the young people held their own asking important and somewhat challenging questions on behalf of looked after children. Their feedback and marking for the candidate mirrored that of RMBC panel members although looked after young people had the extra quality of observing that;-

‘He looks nice and cuddly.... I think that is important in a worker!’

Future Projects

International LACC Visit – The LACC received confirmation from Joyce that funding has been made available to embark on an International Visit. This news was met with great excitement squeals and a few tears. The LACC have

begun their project to research potential destinations, accommodation, places of interest and are also exploring avenues of additional fund raising to support the visit. This will be an ongoing project. Currently the group hope to be visiting Spain in the Easter holidays 2014.

Rotherham Show 2013 – Looked After and Leaving Care young people will be working alongside the Rotherham Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament at the Voice & Influence mobile bus at the up and coming Rotherham Show in September. The group have made banners and bunting to decorate their spot and draw in other young people over the weekend.

LACC Staffing – The LAC Council have recently welcomed an additional member of the staff team to support the delivery of the LACC, namely Janet Stanley from IYSS. Due to increased attendance at the group by young people with multiple and complex needs, we urgently required additional dedicated staffing to support the LAC Council and cover annual leave and sickness periods. Janet will join Susan McBride and Lisa Du-Valle.

Contact Name : Lisa Du-Valle
Voice & Influence Team
Looked After Children's Council
Integrated Youth Support Service
Tel:- 07748143388 or (01709) 760817
Email:- Lisa.duvalle@rotherham.gov.uk