

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Children, Young People &amp; Families Partnership</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> July 2014</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Looked After Children's Council (LACC) Update</b>
4.	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Integrated Youth Support Service.</b>

### **Summary:**

The Looked After Children's Council (LACC) are currently meeting for Voice & Influence training and development sessions weekly at the MyPlace Building Rotherham. In addition, the LACC hold regular meetings on weekends and evenings to prepare presentations, and complete high profile project work. This quarter up to 15 Looked After and Leaving Care young people have attended meetings at any one time.

Over the past three months the LACC have engaged in a rich variety of Voice & Influence Sessions working on team building skills, self awareness and self-esteem. Young people have engaged in international visit preparation including completing individual risk assessments and delivering an open evening for Foster Carers, have actively engaged in an 8 day residential to Portugal. In addition, LACC sent Easter Cards containing 'magic dust' to all 63 Rotherham Borough Councillors to raise their awareness of the LAC Council. Engaged with Rotherham Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament in a joint training day, have gratefully received 3 iPads and 2 laptops to work with at the LACC sessions, and delivered a recruitment event for looked after children to welcome them to the LAC Council at Myplace. Moreover, the LACC has welcomed visits from our Corporate Parents Joyce Thacker and Cllr Paul Lakin and delivered their Portugal presentation to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

### **Easter Celebrations**

One of the LAC Council's aims within their Terms of Reference is to improve the lives of Rotherham looked after and leaving care young people and to raise awareness of these groups. Therefore, in preparation for Easter members of the LACC wrote out and sent 63 Easter Cards containing 'magic dust' alongside LAC Council information to Rotherham Councillors to raise these Corporate Parents awareness of the LAC Council.

**Youth Voice Vehicle Training Day** – Young people from the Looked After Children's Council alongside the UK Youth Parliament and Youth Cabinet worked together as part of the three strands of youth democracy in Rotherham which make up the Youth Voice Vehicle. The training day involved planning youth democracy projects over the following year and engaging in fun team building exercises, the groups created Easter Bonnets and Youth Portraits. A fun day was had by everyone.

## International Residential to Portugal

The LAC Council members have been busy preparing for the international residential to Portugal, have engaged in individual, self and peer risk assessments for the trip, prepared a Portugal residential information booklet for carers and have delivered an open evening with presentation for all LAC Council foster carers to increase their awareness and allay any concerns around the trip. The group of 9 young people left Rotherham on Sunday morning April 20<sup>th</sup> travelling to Portugal and returned 8 days later on the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> April. Young people had a fantastic opportunity to work together and engage with the group, having experiences outside of their everyday lives, including having to navigate around maps to find places, communicate with non-English speaking people, use foreign currency and understand its worth, try different foods and drinks, have an understanding of local customs and history etc. A number of the young people had never flown before or travelled abroad and three of the leaving care young people worked tirelessly as volunteers throughout the residential to support the other young people and staff team.

**Corporate Parents Visit** - Joyce Thacker and Cllr Paul Lakin were invited to visit the LACC in June to enable the LACC members to say a big thank you for funding to go on the International Residential to Portugal and for supporting the group in acquiring 3 iPads and 2 Laptops. The LACC have been using the new technology to create PowerPoint presentations and translate English into Portuguese etc. The group also took the opportunity to deliver a photographic presentation around the Portugal Residential and talk about the trip thanking them for the great opportunity they had been given. Here is what some young people had to say on the presentation:-

**Just wanted to say thank you for this week. A lot of weight was lifted and stress was gone. Would never have happened without this holiday and I gained a lot of respect for the group and you wasn't expecting to have so much fun and can I just say BENCH!! Love Dale(19) & Reece(20)XX**

**I liked being a member of staff because I felt older and wiser.  
Zoe 21**

**I liked getting to spend more time with everyone and getting to know them better. We all worked well together  
Jocelyn 17**

**I enjoyed learning to wristbind!  
Mark 17**

***The pool was the best... I could swim any time I wanted  
Brendon 15***

**I liked getting to know people better by spending more time with them.  
Paislie 17**

**I've never flew before but I loved it.  
Natasha 18**

**I enjoyed the whole thing!  
Where are we going next year lol  
☺ x Abbie 17**

**LAC Council Open Evening Event** – Three of the older LACC members have now found full time employment and can dedicate less hours to volunteering with the LACC. The reduction in numbers has led to an opportunity to recruit new members. On the 18<sup>th</sup> June the LACC members invited Rotherham looked after children to their open evening. LACC young people had worked hard to put together this event, sorting out timing, icebreakers games, delivery and materials etc. Five looked after children attended the event whereby existing LACC members explained all about what the LAC Council does including a brief whistle-stop tour through their Terms of Reference, Peer Consultations, National Participation in CiCC (Children in Care Council), Community Engagements, Day Trips and Residentials. All wrapped up in a fun evening of games and activities. Feedback from these potential new members has been extremely positive and all have said they definitely want to join the LACC.

**Corporate Parenting Panel** – The LAC Council were invited to engage in the Corporate Parenting Panel which took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The LACC were treated to the more informal setting of the John Smith Room in the Town Hall to deliver their Portugal Presentation. Despite many apologies given from LACC members who could not support the presentation on the night, three young people bravely delivered the presentation to the panel members on behalf of the group to a receptive and responsive audience. A questions and answers session followed with a member of the panel suggesting the presentation should be delivered around other looked after children to show what the LACC does. However, one young person made the point that the LACC is not just about the residential but about all the other work the LACC does over the year and wouldn't want young people to join just because they thought there would be a residential. Paul Dempsey was asked whether there would be extra funding for a LACC residential for next year but he could not answer at this point. The LACC asked if he would get back to them. Cllr Paul Lakin asked if the LACC would ask other Looked After Children about their experiences of being in care and we told him we were already working on this and would feedback this information and any recommendations in the coming months. Cllr Lakin and other panel members praised the LACC for all their hard work and thanked them for their presentation.

**Annual LAC Council Peer Consultation Feedback** – Over the last couple of months young people have been engaging in peer consultation with looked after and leaving care young people asking them how they have experienced and perceived the service. This process is ongoing with LACC members due to visit local Residential Accommodation and Semi-Independent Units of Hollowgate and Nelson Street in Rotherham over the next couple of weeks. In addition, Social Care managers have been asked to support this process and given the LACC 'Have Your Say' form to distribute around young people they work with to encourage their voluntary engagement. This feedback will be collated and analysed by the LAC Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, and any recommendations written into a report and delivered to Joyce Thacker, Cllr Paul Lakin & Clair Pyper during a LACC meeting.

**Youth Voice Vehicle Overnight Residential–** The LAC Council alongside the UK Youth Parliament and Youth Cabinet are preparing to go on an overnight residential to Habershon House on 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> July. Some of the residential will be given over to having fun including team building activities such as sand sculpting, and engaging in the Tropical Beach Party Theme. However, the LACC will also be taking a session to collate and analyse the feedback from looked after and leaving care young people and start to form the basis of their recommendations to improve their service.

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