

Corporate Parenting :Taking It To The Next Level

Summary

1. The focus in this report is upon the participation work undertaken by looked after young people, care leavers and Corporate Parents at recent regional events to reflect upon the progress of York's services for looked after children and care leavers. This has been through attendance at events entitled Corporate parenting Taking It To The Next Level and A Passport to Parliament.

Background

2. Taking it to the Next Level is a two year Department for Education funded project, a partnership between the National Children's Bureau and A National Voice. Following a successful first year, further events will take across the country for Children in Care Councils members to attend with their Corporate Parents.
3. These events provide an exciting opportunity for Corporate Parents to work with young people directly and share ideas with other local authorities to strengthen the Children in Care Councils, explore how Corporate Parents and Children in Care Councils could work more effectively and raise the bar in terms of aspirations and actions to improve outcomes for children in care. The series of events will focus on three themes this year, a) improving placements b) health and wellbeing c) leaving care. Each event will have one main theme although there will be an opportunity to discuss challenges and achievements and to showcase what Children in Care Councils and corporate parents have been doing in other areas.

4. It was advised that participation should consist of: two Corporate Parents (Director of Children's Services / Cabinet Member /Senior Manager), one Children in Care Councils Worker, two Children in Care Councils representatives.
5. City of York prioritised participation at the following events:
 - 28 October, Manchester - Theme – Improving Placements
 - 8 November, Newcastle - Theme – Leaving Care
 - 6 December, Leeds - Theme – Health and Wellbeing
6. In addition The Who Cares Trust hosted a corporate parenting event entitled Passport to Parliament in York on 31 October 2014. This was attended by 15 local authorities from the north of England.

Consultation

7. The work of each of the officers reporting to the board is undertaken with consultation with service users eg looked after children and care leavers foster carers, adopters. Feedback from Show Me That I Matter and I Matter Too (representatives of all looked after children) York Area Foster Carers Association, is regularly sought and incorporated into the service development.

Options

8. There are no options for decision, as the information provided is intended to progress information sharing with the Board about the experience of looked after children.

Analysis

9. The National Children's Bureau and A National Voice brought together several local authorities for full day forums in which the views and experience of young people and care leavers could be discussed with the active participation of the corporate parents for the children and young people.
10. The Improving Placements event was attended by two young people, the fostering service manager and a children's council worker. It was an invaluable event in which the York delegation were able both to listen to the description of innovative practice from other local authorities , as well as describe the progress in

York with the major emphasis upon young people being placed with skilled, knowledgeable and caring foster carers.

11. York's delegation identified key areas for future action, which broadly related to the achievement of the guarantee to looked after children about good, kind foster carers, enabling young people to stay in touch with important people and supporting them into adulthood through Staying Put with foster carers after their 18th birthday.
12. The Leaving Care event was attended by two young people, two elected members from the Corporate Parenting Board, a pathway support worker and the head of service for care leavers. Participation in the event enabled York's delegation to reflect on the strengths of York's services and offers to care leavers, to listen to innovative developments across local authorities in the north and to identify key areas for further consideration and action.
13. The identified key areas, which were most pertinent to care leavers related to gas, electricity and winter fuel costs; out of hours support for care leavers and the availability of computers and Wi-Fi.
14. Who Cares Trust, a national charity, which supports looked after children and care leavers, was keen to promote young people's awareness of 2013 Entitlements Inquiry report by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, which found that many care-experienced young people do not know about their entitlements, and some children and young people aren't getting what they are entitled to.
15. The Passport to Parliament event hosted by the Who Cares Trust highlighted the wish for looked after young people and care leavers to be enabled to understand their rights and entitlements as young people at the varying stages of their experience of childhood through to early adulthood. York's participation included young people of varying ages, who are looked after or care leavers, four elected members from the Corporate Parenting Board, Mr Hugh Bayley, York Central MP and the Director of Children's Services. The promotion of young people's awareness of their rights and entitlements is core work of the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service, with a refreshed guidance being developed in various formats. The Pathway Team is also

developing a guide, which advises care leavers of their rights and entitlements about Staying Put and upon leaving care.

16. The Health and Well Being module of Taking It To The Next Level in Leeds is planned for Saturday 6 December 2014. There will be active participation in York from young people, Corporate Parents, and the Children's Rights Service.

Council Plan

17. The Corporate Parenting Board will be ensuring that the work of partners for looked after children contributes to the aims of:
 - The Children and Young People's Plan
 - building strong communities
 - protecting vulnerable people
18. Through the positive outcomes for looked after children, the aim is for them to be able to benefit from and contribute to:
 - get York moving
 - create jobs and grow the economy
 - protect the environment

Implications

19. There are no financial, human resources, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, information technology or property implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

20. Not applicable.

Recommendations

21. It is recommended that the Board notes the feedback and key actions from elected members, young people and officers in relation to the participation in the National Children's Bureau Taking It To The Next Level and The Passport to Parliament conferences.

Reason: To ensure that all those involved with children and young people are collaborating to ensure that Corporate Parenting is central to all planning and operational work of elected members, staff and partners in accordance with the Looked After Children's Strategy 2012-15.

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**Report
Approved**



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Specialist Implications Officer(s) - Not applicable

All



Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers

York's Guarantee to Looked After Children (available online only)