WSCB conference 2017

Young people helped to plan the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children’s Board conference. Then 9 young people took part on Tues 4th July at the Bedworth Civic centre. The theme of the conference was to “hear the voice of the child”. 3 of the 9 young people presented to an audience of over 200 professionals on their experiences of being in care. All 9 young people sat in on smaller workshops to talk in a bit more detail about what it is really like to be in care.

One participant wrote, “I will remember your presentations today for the rest of my working life. I will attempt to fight more in order for you to be heard by others”.

The Virtual School Awards

looked very different this year. For one, it was on Sunday 10th Sept, 10-3pm and not an evening. The awards bit happened in about 30-40 mins and the rest of the day was a proper celebration. There were lots of activities on the day to make it fun and enjoyable! A spray paint artist came from London, a rodeo bull tested people’s balance, henna and balloon artist creations, basketball and boxing challenges..... were a few of the activities on offer. Thanks to the Virtual School for listening to our ideas. It was an enjoyable day.

One foster carer wrote, “Dear all, just wanted to say “Thank You!” to all involved from Virtual School and the Children in Care Council for the Fun Day/Awards event held on 10th September. We all had a lovely time, with something there for everyone, children and carers alike. Our boys (aged 6 and 7) took part in almost every opportunity available to them and particularly enjoyed the basketball game and the circus skills, while M and I took the opportunity to have a henna tattoo. We had to practically prise the boys away at the end of the day! The boys are particularly proud of their trophies and are looking forward to taking it to school on Friday to show in assembly to the whole school. Thank you for organising such a fun relaxing and enjoyable event. Kind regards”.

OFSTED came to see us in July 2017 and this is what they said, “The CiCC is a vibrant and active group. A well-designed system of elections to the CiCC helps to ensure that children looked after and care leavers of various ages are involved, currently from age 12 to 21. CiCC members feel a real sense of responsibility to, and representation of, all children looked after and care leavers. The CiCC has instigated and been involved in some positive pieces of work, including designing new age-banded booklets for annual foster carer reviews and working with IROs on a pilot project for children looked after and care leavers to chair their own review and pathway plan meetings. The corporate parenting panel’s engagement with the CiCC is progressively strengthening and has the capacity for further development”.

December 2017
Edition 9
**Young Inspectors**

We have now done 3 inspections of SAHA supported accommodation, 2 in Leamington and 1 in Nuneaton. There are other buildings to visit in Nuneaton, Rugby and North Warwickshire. We inspect the outside of the buildings, speak to young people who live there, check the bedrooms, safety & security, bathrooms, kitchens, communal areas and the surrounding area...... We are meeting with Housing Commissioning this month to talk about what we found out. If you are living in supported accommodation and have anything you wish to say, tell us and we will pass on your comments.

**The Warwickshire Pledge & Care Leavers Charter**

*Our promise to Children & Young People Looked After*

The **Pledge** is a promise to children and young people looked after by Warwickshire County Council. The Pledge has been recently updated following a survey carried with children and young people. You can see the full set of promises on this link........


The **Care Leavers Charter** are guidelines created by the Dept. for Education for local councils like Warwickshire to follow. You can see these guidelines here......


The **CiCC** sent 3 young people to a Full Council meeting on Thurs 21st Sept, at Shire Hall........ “Councillor Morgan thanked the young people from the Children in Care Council for their presentations and for the contributions to the revised documents (Pledge & Charter) and reminded members that both the Council and individual councillors are ‘corporate parents’ and have responsibilities in relation to looked after children and young people. Councillor Morgan drew attention to two key test questions: If this were my child or young person, would it be good enough for them? If I were that child or young person, would it have been good enough for me?”

**CiCC Regional Event**

This event took place on Thurs 1st May, at the Welcome Centre, Coventry. 5 young people attended from Warwickshire. Over 14 local authorities were represented. The Children’s Commissioner came along and young people debated the role of the IRO, living independently and CiCC good practice.

**Learning from others experiences workshop**

On Friday 24th Nov, 8 young people attended a workshop event at Coventry University Techno Centre supporting the BA (Hons) and MA Social Work Team to provide 1st year BA students and MA students an insight into the lives of care experienced young people. The idea is to improve the students personal social work practice. The Children in Care Council supported the learning of the students through 3 workshops planned on the day.

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**Presentation to Head Teachers conference Tues 7th Nov – Stoneleigh Abbey**

One Head Teacher wrote...... “I just wanted you to pass on my regards to the 3 young adults that spoke at the HT meeting. I was greatly impressed by their bravery and courage in standing up to speak to the HTs in the room. Sharing the details of their lives in foster care was very insightful and heartfelt. I thought it was the right thing to share the good and bad times/events in their lives and I was moved by their honesty and openness. Their message was very clear, that professionals need to listen and I took that on board. I wish them all the best for their future and thank them for sharing their experiences”.

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**Image of a child speaking to a group of adults.**
**My work experience - Tehetana T**

"Spending 3 days shadowing a consultant, specialist doctors, nurses and administrative staff at Warwick hospital in the children’s department, allowed me to further my insight into the medical field. I had the opportunity to sit in a meeting where various doctors were doing a handover to one another, which allowed me to see the importance of complete confidentiality and clear communication between staff regarding each patient. This highlighted the importance of teamwork where their prime concern is the well-being of the patients.

This experience has also exposed me to a multitude of patients that are sent here, either from A&E or their GP which is an environment I find particularly enticing; it allowed me to appreciate the skills involved in diagnosing patients and dealing with various kinds of distressed patients. Also I got the chance to shadow a junior doctor and some medical students which were doing their placement where I learnt how important it is to have good organisation skills, recognising and working within your own limits of competence.

The humility, the dedication and the sacrifice of the doctors I have witnessed has highly inspired me to emulate their work to make a difference to the quality of people’s lives”.

**Communicating Effectively with Young People Training for Social Workers – Melissa P**

“My experience with being able to work alongside the trainers has been amazing. I really wanted to be able to help make some improvements. I didn’t think that I would be able to being a previous young person in foster care. With help from and with thanks to CICC I am able to be apart of all of this.

For me to be able to help is definitely one of the things that I wanted to achieve, not just on a personal note but also to help others. I wanted to give a little back and feel this is exactly what I want to do. I would say to whomever wanted to take part, just get a little involved and make it better for many”.

**House Project – George W**

“I (and 2 others) attended a day full of information about the House Project on 28th Sept. The House Project is basically a housing company that is run by and for young people leaving care.

During the day we heard all about the project as well as hearing from those who are currently living in housing arranged by the Stoke House project.

A series of exercises were also carried out, we were split into teams and told to craft the ideal house, including the support we would like. Overall it was a really interesting day”.

**Transformation Consultation**

A member of the Transformation team met with 8 young people to understand what might have prevented them from becoming looked after or improved their care experience. One example from the Transformation team is as follows.

“A CICC member told me they were made to sit in reception all day whilst a placement was sought. They could overhear conversations about placing them which wasn’t great to hear. Also, they were bored waiting around all day and it wasn’t a very good experience, thus leaving them in a bad mood when a placement was found. Not exactly getting that placement off on the right foot from our good practice perspective”.

We….. “will be changing practice so that young people are not left in reception, able to overhear those kinds of conversations. They will be taken somewhere with appropriately entertaining things to do for as long as it takes for the placement to be found”.
CiCC Election 2017
Letters have gone out to over 650 young people who can stand as a candidate to become a member of the CiCC (forms on the right). The closing date for young people to send in their nomination is Friday 22nd December 2017.

After all the nominations are in there will be an opportunity for children and young people to vote for the young people they feel will best represent them. The voting will take place in January 2018.

You can learn more about what the CiCC do by visiting https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/cicc

BR4C (Bright Residential for Children) is a new residential (children’s home) project Warwickshire has been working on over the past 12 months. Its aim is to support children who need or require a children’s home type setting locally, in Warwickshire. On the evening of 7th November representatives from 2 housing associations came to talk to us about how they can support children and young people if they were the chosen to provide homes for them. After the presentations we had this feedback from Commissioning……

“Please can you pass on our thanks to the young people for their engagement and participation in last nights presentations. Their questions were absolutely spot on. I have had feedback from our procurement colleagues who have advised that last night was possibly one of the best participation sessions they have been part of with some fantastic questions from the young people.”

…and finally

Elected Member Induction
On Mon 19th June at Shire Hall
3 young people attended an Induction seminar for newly elected Councillors. The young people spoke about the role and work of the CiCC.

Hopefully this will help Councillors think about children and young people as part of their work with the Council

Please get in touch with us via
https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/cicc

Pease bring this Newsletter to the attention of children and young people in your care

MERRY CHRISTMAS
.....and a happy New Year!