

Report of Director of Children and Families

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 26 September 2018



Subject: Scrutiny inquiry - is Leeds a child friendly city? Children and young people are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence

<p>Outcome: Children and young people are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence</p>	<p>Focus areas: 1. Voice and influence 2. Youth offending</p>
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Voice and influence

Story behind the baseline and turning the curve story

- Children, young people and their parents and/or carers have a right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives. Having a voice and influence means young people are listened to, are valued, and can influence decisions and actions. At the heart of the ambition for Leeds to be the best city for children and young people to grow up in is a commitment to working restoratively with young people to make sure their voices are heard, and that they are at the heart of decisions that affect them.
- When Leeds first set out its vision, we listened to the ideas of thousands of young people of all different ages. They told us what they thought would make Leeds a better city for them to play, live and grow up in. From this consultation, the [12 wishes](#) were formed, which underpin the entire Child Friendly Leeds approach.
- In 2011, a citywide strategic participation group met regularly and included decision makers from across the city (third sector, health, youth offending, council directorates). This group continued to meet until 2014 - the final action for the group was for members to help plan and deliver a voice influence and change conference in January 2015. This included 12 workshops, and significantly increased number of professionals and volunteers signing up to be on the voice, influence and change network.
- The Voice Influence and Change (VIC) Team was established in April 2012. This provided a co-ordinating function championing and enabling children and young people and their families to have a voice and influence over services and policies, and to shape priorities, provide training for staff, and run citywide youth voice programmes. Before this, participation work was contracted to the West Yorkshire Youth Association.
- Since 2012, "have your say" web pages have been developed on the Breeze Website. Every child in Leeds now receives a Breeze Card (which also doubles as a library card). There are pages for each of the citywide youth voice programmes and reports, films and e-bulletins are added on a regular basis.

- Young people are routinely involved in recruitment of children’s home staff and personal advisors, and their priorities are included in interview questions for all social worker recruitment. All senior leadership posts include a young person’s panel, or a young person on the interview panel, as part of the selection process.
- The eleventh priority in the 2018-23 CYPP is on affordable, safe, and reliable connected transport for young people. Young people have worked with WYCA to come up with a brand and help launch a new “MyDay” ticket type for under 18s in the region. This ticket type, launched in July 2018 enables young people to make journeys throughout West Yorkshire for a flat fare of £2.90 and, crucially, is accepted on all local bus operators.

Summary of the journey

<p>Narrative/key milestones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Friendly Leeds was established in 2012. It manages the activities taking place across Leeds to improve participation and engagement, and places the voice and influence of children and young people at the heart of the vision, driving the agenda • The Leeds Children’s Mayor started as a ‘mayor for the day’ programme aimed at secondary school pupils, but is now an established annual programme aimed at primary school pupils. • The Takeover Challenge is an annual initiative run by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner. In Leeds we developed the day into a takeover month and have produced guides to enable organisations and schools to participate • Ofsted carried out a joint local area SEND inspection in December 2016. The letter states, “children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are proud to be citizens of Leeds. They have a real voice in shaping their education, health and care plans. Many make strong progress towards achieving their personal development goals. Children and young people also have a voice in developing new services to meet their different needs” • Young people co-produced the Future in Mind Strategy, following a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) consultation that had young people’s social, emotional, and mental health concerns as the top issue. MindMate have ‘youth proofed’ the website, and schools have MindMate lessons and champions
<p>Performance measures 2011 to 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice and influence is difficult to measure, so the CYPP measure has not been consistent since 2011. Volume statistics (voting numbers, attendance at Breeze, survey completion) are the easiest to collect but do not necessarily show impact, or change. Much of the ‘impact’ activity is captured through voice and influence report cards
<p>Additional supporting evidence 2011 to 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils completing the My Health My School survey: 5,843 (2013/14), 10,914 (2016/17) • In 2011, 500 Leeds young people voted in the UK Youth Parliament Make Your Mark Ballot. In 2017, more than 17,000 Leeds young people voted • Leeds Children’s Mayor - 51 schools entered last year, with more than 6,000 votes being cast. The successful candidate is now supported to achieve their manifesto aims

<p>Universal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citywide Youth Voice Model developed • Youth voice summits are now embedded - high school, primary, youth group and community youth voice summits • Influential campaigns by members of the youth parliament - transport is now a CYP priority; votes at 16 received full Council support and a letter from the Council to government; a tackling discrimination campaign has led to funding to run events and training for staff and young people • The Leeds Youth Council has 470 'virtual' members, with 40 on a working group that is consulted on major citywide priorities • The Hospital Youth Forum, and YouthWatch, are examples of youth forums that inform and influence policy and practice • Future in Mind Strategy and MindMate co-produced with young people • Child Friendly Leeds City Centre - voice and influence project
<p>Vulnerable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New voice and influence groups established, with an inclusive approach. FGC-Bright Sparks, Student Leeds Safeguarding Childrens Board, Children In Need Super Powers Group (child protection and children looked after), #Realtalk - young offenders, GATE (Gypsy and Traveller Education) peer group Lionesses, Wetherby Young Offender Institute youth council, Getaway Girls voice and influence • Youth voice groups participated in summits on tackling discrimination, votes at 16 and campaigning • The Out to 18 and Transtastic youth groups run by Leeds Youth offer team, have run events at as part of LGBTQ history month, helped produce transgender guidance for schools groups and produced young person's guide to Pride • Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) - positive feedback from the Ofsted inspection, young people involved in events, consultations, commissioning panels, recruitment staff, and takeovers: a Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) democracy day is planned
<p>Children looked after</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leavers' council established, ran two events on rights and entitlements for young people, set up Clu'd Up Facebook and delivered training for foster carers. Care leavers work in partnership with officers on working groups to advise and shape service improvement. Issues raised by a care leavers survey has directly influenced practice eg personal advisors receiving mobile phones to improve communication and a professional mentoring scheme being set up. Care leavers are currently helping develop the Local Offer and in response to their feedback they are also shaping plans on how the service can ensure there is not a cliff edge (support ends) at 25 • Have a Voice Council worked with senior leaders to develop "the promises" and mechanism to be able to "Tell Steve" if promises were not being met - over 80 per cent of children and young people received promise information from their current social worker 2018

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people's recommendations about contact/family time and placement moves led to changes policy, procedures, and practice • New groups: CARE group, Clear approach - Youth Offending Service - presentations to staff to reduce criminalisation of young people in care • Regional and national work with the Department for Education (DfE) and the Children's Commissioner
Next stage of our journey	
Future aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are able to influence topics for scrutiny inquiries • Continue to develop successful campaigns - lead to change and work in partnership with decision makers • Increase decision making/ influence of young people taking part in community youth voice summits • Have a post focused on working in schools and deliver training directly to pupils/school councillors and support VIC leads in schools to increase pupil voice • Involve children and young people in the child friendly Leeds fund (young people are already involved at local level in helping decide what type activities community committees spend money on) • Try new approaches engaging young people - social media advertising, and voting technology
Challenges/barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of pupils in high school who feel they have a say remains lower in high schools than primary - limited capacity to influence this in schools • Measurable outcomes for voice and influence - voting is key measure and report cards provide qualitative evidence
Supporting evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice and Influence one minute guide • Leeds Youth Council • UK Youth Parliament - Leeds members • Leeds Children's Mayor • Voice and influence report cards previously presented to Scrutiny as part of the six-monthly performance update reports. The latest report universal report card is here. The network version of the voice of the child in Social Care report card is attached in appendix one. 	

Youth offending

Story behind the baseline and turning the curve story

- 2007 was a high point in youth offending; the 'offences brought to justice' target on police forces required the Police to account for all offending, and large numbers of young people were brought into the justice system as a result. Young people within the justice system tend to do less well than their non-offending peers and this can result in further offending and poorer outcomes. By 2011, the Youth Offending Service (YOS) had a core prevention remit and a national target to reduce the number of first time entrants to the criminal justice system.
- The numbers of young people within the youth justice system has reduced considerably since 2011. These reductions are the result of changes in Police practice, and the targeting of preventative provision within the YOS. The YOS has been very successful in reducing first-time entrants to the criminal justice system; introducing with West Yorkshire Police a revised out-of-court disposal framework, the 'Youth Panel', to support joint decision making between the Police and YOS to promote positive outcomes. The Youth Panel has reduced first-time entrants even further in the past few years and has allowed us to prioritise children looked after for diversion.
- The strategic aims of Leeds YOS Partnership are preventing offending and reducing re-offending by young people. This is achieved through the delivery of integrated services that ensure young people are safeguarded, the public and victims of crime are protected, and those who enter the criminal justice system are supported with robust risk management arrangements. Young people are supported to reintegrate into their local communities, to reduce their offending and wherever possible with support from their families.
- The Child Friendly City agenda provides a permanent reminder that we are dealing with children and young people and allows us to operate on a 'child first, offender second' basis. It provides the strategic context for agency discussions and allows us to develop partnerships and protocols to meet the needs of this group. Importantly it allows for individualised plans and arrangements to be developed to support the needs of young people and their families.
- The YOS has experienced a significant reduction in both staffing and budget between 2010/11 and 2018/19. The current budget, of £4.4 million, is 42 per cent lower than the 2010/11 budget of £7.7 million. There has been, on average, a 6.7 per cent reduction in the YOS budget each year since 2010/11. Staffing has been similarly affected, with 88 full time equivalent (FTE) posts in YOS in 2018/19, compared to 153 FTE posts in 2010/11.

Summary of the journey

Narrative/key milestones

- The numbers of young people within the youth justice system has reduced considerably since 2011. The 10-17 population in Leeds reduced considerably over the same period, from 71,933 in 2011 to 64,255 in 2016 and at the same time, the percentage of young people that are within the justice system has reduced from 3.1 per cent to 0.8 per cent
- Numbers of children looked after in the criminal justice system are low in Leeds. The YOS is very successful in diverting many children looked after away from the justice system; however, the numbers of children looked after in custody are high in comparison with the general population, which is a concern

Performance measures 2011 to 2018	Proportion of young offenders who reoffend: 2.1% (2011), 1.1% (2015), 0.5% (2018) Young offenders that reoffend: 44.6% (October 15 to September 16) (41.9% - England and Wales)
Additional supporting evidence 2011 to 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people in the justice system are identified as being vulnerable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 per cent have significant speech, language or communication difficulties • Around a quarter have a learning disability • One third of young people in custody have a mental health disorder • Many have a history of abuse or bereavement • Around a half of young people in custody have been in local authority care • One in eight young people in custody have experienced the death of a parent or sibling • Over half of children and young people who offend have themselves been victims of crime
Next stage of our journey	
Future aspirations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the service as a trauma-informed organisation. Many of the young people the YOS works with have experienced one or more traumatic experiences, such as bereavement, witnessing domestic violence, experiencing abuse or neglect • Publish a revised set of values for the organisation. The YOS has decided that we want to lose the label offender and change the name of the service to the Leeds Youth Justice Service • Achieve the SEND quality mark • Participate in the West Yorkshire social media research pilot. Leeds YOS will be part of the West Yorkshire YOTS 'exploring social media use as a trigger and catalyst for youth violence and designing interventions to prevent it' research pilot with Huddersfield University. • Continue to deliver a priority service for children who are looked after. We will continue to prioritise children looked after to try to divert as many as possible out of the justice system and achieve the best outcomes for those within it. There will be a focus on residential homes within the city over the year and we will look to extend the reach and impact of the specialist looked after YOS officer around transitions
Challenges/barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sustained reduction in the YOS budget - the 2018/19 budget is 42 per cent less than the 2010/11 budget. Staff numbers have reduced by approximately the same percentage across that period • Impact of coming demographic growth/change: the Leeds under-18 population is projected to grow by 10.3 per cent by 2026, with the 11-17 population projected to grow by 25.4 per cent across the same period

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The rate of re-offending in Leeds. Young people who reoffended committed an average of 4.78 re-offences each
Supporting evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth offending report cards previously presented to Scrutiny as part of the six-monthly performance update reports	

Appendix one: Childrens Social Work Services Voice and Influence of Children and Young People Report October 2017 to March 2018



Outcome:

Children and young people (CYP) are active citizens who feel they have voice and influence over decisions that affect their lives and the Childrens Social Work services they access.

Best ideas – what worked during October 2017 to March 2018?

Rainbow House

Staff are in the process of creating a council led by young people to vote on issues relating to Rainbow House, helping our manager Chris to make decisions that relate to young people. Agenda items will include menus and activities. 4 candidates are standing for election, and children, young people and families are being kept updated via the newsletter. The newsletter also includes a regular feature where young people interview staff.

Have a Voice Council (12- 18 year olds)



Between October and March there have been 10 meetings of the Have a Voice Council with 6 different young people regularly attending. The group has now started meeting twice a month instead of once a month. At the monthly meetings the young people participated in:

- Reviewing the Financial Support for Care Leavers Policy and recommending ways in which this policy could be communicated to young people before they leave care. Suggestions included
 - A) one to one talks with Social Workers and or Foster/Residential Carer's about specific parts of the policy that may apply when planning for independence;
 - B) to have a written and on line information leaflet which gave general information e.g. "You are entitled to support with University costs" (but not specific amounts as these change dependent on circumstances). The leaflet/web page should also say where young people can get more information;
 - C) the Offer of a meeting with a Specialist Benefits and Finance Consultant who can explain the policy in detail and give advice.
- Taken part in two films, one for the Independent Visitors Service and another alongside young people from Barnsley about what makes a good Social Worker.
- Met with Jancis Andrews, the Head of the Virtual School to review the Leeds PEP documents, as the beginning of their focus on education in 2018.
- Met with Lucy Crowley the Manager of the Placements team and reviewed the draft Placements Moves flowchart, a document they asked to be produced for young people, so they can be better informed about what happens in a placement move process, who does what and how long it takes.
- Chosen the Theme for this year's STARS Awards.
- Been presented with the new IV National Standards and given their feedback on how Leeds plans to implement the standards.

Care Leavers Council (16-25 year olds)

Between Oct and March there have been 13 meetings of the Care Leavers Council (CLC) with 10 different young people regularly attending. The Care Leavers Council has participated in:



- Consultation on the Missing / Return Interview process.
- Consultation on the new Corporate Parenting Guidance and the seven principles produced by the DfE.
- Met with Michael Clarke (Service Delivery Manager for the 13+ Teams) to hear an update on the development of the new Pathway Plan forms and the Social Finance Team's work on the digital tool.
- Representatives from CLC participated in the New Belongings MALAP review

meeting and shared their concerns about governance, approach and progress in addressing priorities in the New Belongings action plan.

- Met with Steve Walker (Director of Childrens Services) following his request to meet the group to learn about their priority issues and discuss ways in which the service for Care Leavers could be improved.
- Delivered Skills to Foster, Young People's Perspective training to a new cohort of pre-panel Foster Carer's, receiving excellent feedback on the impact of their session on the participants.
- Consulted on their experience of last year's Care Leavers Celebration event, to inform planning for the next event in October. A member of the group will attend future planning meetings.
- Delivered a presentation on Corporate Parenting in Leeds, together with Michael Clarke, at a Leaving Care National Benchmarking Forum event.



Joint work:

Regional Children in Care Council (CiCC) Meeting in Leeds (January)

Members of the HAV council and CLC worked with CYP from other CiCCs from across Yorkshire and the Humber to deliver the Regional CiCC and Children's Commissioner Conference, where they delivered two workshops to decision makers, on communication with Social Workers and on issues around Transport for young people. Plans are being made for a follow up event in May.

Ofsted visit

Representatives of both HaV and CLC met with the Ofsted inspector in January, and answered questions on how their views have been listened to and used to inform service development.

Takeover of the Corporate Parenting Board

Young people from both groups worked together to take over the Corporate Parents Board in January 2018, challenging Elected Members and Officers to devise new ways of ensuring we celebrate the achievements and resilience of Children Looked After and Care Leavers, as well as to develop closer working relationships with the young people's groups over the next year.

Recruitment and Selection of Staff

Members of the Have a Voice Council and Care Leavers Council participated in several interview panels including: Head of Service Social Care, Restorative Early Support Team Partner panel

interview, Youth worker 'SAFE' project, Child Protection Team Manager, Social Care Personal Advisor's and Virtual School panel member.

Commissioning

Members of the 'Have a Voice' Council and Care Leavers Council were involved in a commissioning panel tender for the 'Appropriate Adult' Commissioning Panel and Independent Fostering agency & Supported Lodgings Commissioning Panel.

CARE group



The CARE group delivered a presentation to the Leeds Therapeutic Team about the disproportionate over-representation of CLA within the Criminal Justice System. The aim was to share experiences with professionals and develop strategies to improve outcomes for CLA. Group members have also developed this [film](#) which they are using as part of their presentation to different staff teams.

The CARE group were involved in a Voice and Influence event for Children Looked After (CLA) to celebrate Care Day 2018. The group requested that all professionals and YOS young people attended and celebrated Care

Day with them. They also discussed the barriers that CLA face and how they overcome them.

The CARE group also had a restorative discussion with foster carers. This discussion was to explore how foster carers deal with teenagers that are Looked After and the complexities this can bring. The group and foster carers discussed the different perspectives and came up with ideas about how to help teenagers settle into care and build resilience.

Clear Approach

In March the sixth group of young people to take part in the Clear Approach Programme in Leeds (facilitated by Leeds YOS and the Care Leavers Association) delivered their presentations and shared their experiences and views with carers, parents, professionals and decision makers.

In January the care leavers association in partnership with staff in Wetherby YOI started the first clear approach programme with young people in Wetherby YOI.

The 8 week programme is developed to help and enable young people to talk about their experiences in care and express themselves in whatever way that they want. At the end of the programme, the young people aim to put together a presentation that they present in front of either, parents, professionals or who they feel needs to hear their message.

Virtual School

- A care leaver sat on the interview panel with the Virtual School and helped identify two appointable candidates
- The Bramley cluster champion has worked with the Have a Voice team, met with children and young people to seek their views, attended the Total Respect training and ensured that Head teachers in the Bramley cluster understand the value of hearing from young people
- The Virtual School Head met with the HAV council to share and discuss ideas about how we can improve personal education plans and process
- HAV told the Virtual School Head that they wanted to be able to choose from a number of personal education plan "styles" and not have to stick to one design and so this is already part of the plan to make personal education plans more meaningful and engaging

Fostering Service

As part of "You Can Foster", our birth and foster children were invited to enter a regional story writing competition in November. We were very pleased that 5 entries came from Leeds! Winners will be announced in April.

Bright Sparxs (Family Group Conference children and young people service user group)

Five new young people have joined the group since December. The group is now 10-strong. The monthly sessions since then have been largely 'getting to know you' exercises, and provided opportunities for our more experienced members to let the 'newbies' know about their group and some of our achievements! Young people have discussed experiences and issues including their own strengths and personal qualities and bullying. We have also discussed young people's participation in voting for members of the Youth Parliament.

In March, three Bright Sparx staff facilitated two workshops at an international FGC Conference involving practitioners from Bulgaria, France, Germany and the UK on our experiences of setting up a young persons' group in our FGC service, which prompted discussions on how to involve the views and experiences of young people in influencing and shaping FGC services in the future.

Child Protection Team



A leaflet has been developed to try and improve engagement of children and young people in Regulation 44 visits. The leaflet is going to be trialed with young people in two of the Childrens homes.

The team are continuing to trial the 'children's meetings' with the support of the LSCB – these are running in parallel with the CP meetings - very positive feedback about how this improves children and young people's participation in the child protection process.

Super Power Group



The Leeds 'superpower' group was initiated through the good practice gleaned from North Lincolnshire children's social care. They had established their 'Cool Kidz Club' The Leeds model helps support children aged 7-11 who have experience of the child protection system. A pilot group was established with social work teams in the South. The group currently meet during school holiday terms. Participants discuss and share views about their experiences to help improve services for other children and young people who are subject to child protection plans.

A suitable venue has been secured at zero cost; travel arrangements have been established for pick up and drop off; lunch is provided and finances secured for resources. The children have engaged in a couple of consultations from University researchers about their experiences of child protection conferences. They also had a really enjoyable and productive session in designing a 'logo' and group name that best represents their group identity. They also learned about all the people involved in the child protection process.

We are hoping to continue with this programme, looking to develop self-reflection recordings and assessments of the children's development in confidence and being more involved in giving their voice and influence in their review meetings.

See "Spotlight on Good Practice" at the end of the report.

CHAD (child health and disability social work service)

The CHAD service have developed a Best practice Forum where Voice and Influence of CYP are central to the discussions and plans. There is also a CHAD voice and Influence working group

which includes staff from each CHAD team and representatives from Childrens Rights, Rainbow House and Acorn Lodge.

- Following feedback from children and young people (CYP) at Acorn Lodge and learning from good practice at Rainbow House - CHAD staff all now have PECS on their lanyards to assist in communicating with CYP.
- To increase CYP's awareness of CHAD staff, young people at Acorn Lodge and Rainbow House have been consulted on their preferred board maker symbol to represent the role of "CHAD Social Worker" which will be attached to the lanyard. Funding has been secured for identifiable lanyards and young people will be involved in deciding on the colour / pattern.
- Following feedback from young people about the accessible version of the promise needing to be reviewed and include less text- a draft revised promise has been developed and young people at Acorn and Rainbow's feedback is being sought.
- Case file audits undertaken by Team Managers/SDMS and Advanced Practitioners are looking specifically at how the child's voice is captured in assessments, meetings and plans.
- Advocates are now more active with children where there are Child Protection or other meetings, increasing their participation.
- Workers are utilising tools particularly for children who are looked after e.g. board maker, PECs, Social Work staff team trees.
- There has been an increase in children's participation at meetings.
- SW's doing increased observations/spending time with children who are not vocal to get a better understanding of their life and views.

What difference is this making in practice.. examples shared by CHAD teams

"Due to direct work with his Social Worker, he has been much more involved with all his care packages, feeling empowered and rightly involved."

"He came on his own for the interactive audit and was able to give his view of the service he was receiving."

"She has been very vocal about what she wants in school and out of school, she attends her CIN meetings and school have changed things to meet her requests. She has also told RADAR (through the form) what she wants from life. She has a life limiting condition and has been clear about what she does want to do."

"He was talking about what he wanted, school were planning a residential trip and expressed some difficulty/concerns due to his wheelchair use. He felt able to say what he wanted and was enabled to go on the trip."

"He (aged 9) won a well child award for inspirational child at the end of 2017, he met Prince Harry, Prince William and Kate Middleton as well as his current hero Stormzy. He has a very rare skin condition called Harlequin's Itchyosis. Last year her really struggled with low mood, due to feeling left out in school and just generally being different. He was nominated by Caroline James, continuing care, for this award as part of our support to try and boost his mood. he is also one of the first children in Leeds to have a personal budget that is combined with health and social care that has been up and running for the past 2 years. Channel 4 and BBC are currently recording documentaries about him and he has been on ITV news as well!"

What next? Plans for April 2018 to September 2018

Acorn Lodge Childrens Home

Young people will be involved in recruitment and selection of the new manager.

Easedale Close Childrens Home

As part of developing induction pack for new staff, there are plans to include a section that incorporates the views of young people in residential care.

Young People's Meetings in Childrens Homes

VIC team have been invited to meet with children's home managers to learn about different approaches to running young people's meetings and recording how staff were listening to the views, wishes and feelings of young people.

Bright Sparxs

The VIC team have been invited to meet the group and explore which other voice and influence initiatives in the city the young people can get involved in, as well as help young people explore some of their experiences of Family Group Conferences, which can inform the practice of the FGC service in the future.

Have a Voice Council

- Group members will participate in the Foster Carer Awards judging panel with Elected members and Senior Leaders in April.
- Will decide on the focus of their education project and be working in partnership with the Virtual School and Designated Teachers to improve educational outcomes and support for looked after children and young people.
- A meeting is planned in June to explore how the film about what makes a good social worker(and other films featuring Leeds young people) can be used in recruitment, induction and training of CSWS staff.

Care Leavers Council

- Group members will attend YPBMF NORTH thematic event on Financial support for Care Leavers in May
- Will deliver Foster Carer training in June
- Making links with the CARE group – exploring options for joint project.
- Be involved in development and communication of Care Leavers Offer to be published by Sept.

Representatives from Have a Voice and Care leavers Council

- Will meet with Joel Hana (Head of Service Looked After CYP) in May
- Will attend Leeds Youth Voice Community Group summit to learn about how to develop campaigns and meet other youth groups.
- Will attend CiCC Regional follow up event 30th May
- Will participate in the Stars Awards Judging Panel in June.

Childrens Rights Total Respect Training

Elected members will be invited to a shortened version of this training in June as part of their induction training which will be delivered by care experienced young people (from Leeds) and supported by Barnardo's Childrens Rights Team. The training will also include a short workshop to further elected members understanding of corporate parenting and the role of the corporate parenting board.

Virtual School

- Have a post-graduate student working with young people, carers, social workers and schools to develop some proposals for what the local authority (social workers, IROs, schools, carers, complex needs services and the Virtual School) need to do to improve personal education plans and the process and make recommendations to the Corporate Parenting Board
- Ask young people to help design a postcard so that we can 'celebrate' when young people have done well

CHAD (Child Health and Disability team) Service

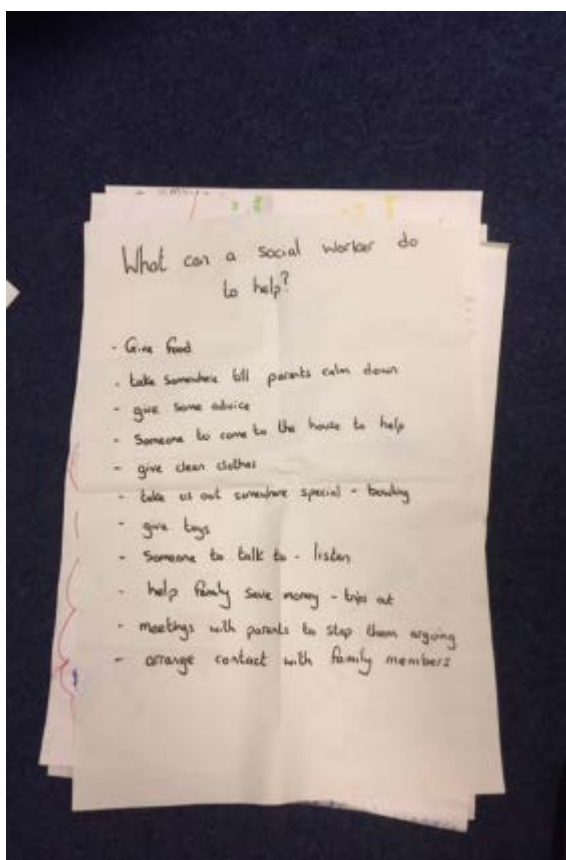
- We have a new Advanced Practitioner who is taking over the work of chairing the working groups and working in partnership with Acorn Lodge and Rainbow House.

- We are looking to try and provide training for CHAD staff to increase their confidence and skills in using a range of approaches and tools to communicate with CYP- as all children are different and have different needs.
- Case file audits undertaken by team managers are looking at how the child's voice is captured in assessments, meetings and plans – we need now to look at capturing that information, learning from it and hopefully then increasing the voice of the child in all aspects of the work.
- Organise further training around communication issues with STARS for CHAD.

Kinship Care Event

Young People are speaking at this event telling their stories and lived experiences as they wish for professionals to have a greater understanding.

Spotlight on Good Practice The Super Powers Group (SPG)



A group was established in August 2016 for children aged between 7 and 11 who are either subject of a Children in Need plan or a Child Protection plan. The group meet in the holidays and around 11 children attend.

The main objectives of the group are:

- to give children and young people a voice in shaping the services they receive from CSWS.
- to understand what it is like for children and young people to have a social worker.
- to gain an understanding of their understanding.

Staff running the group have developed an evaluation for senior leadership team. Here are some highlights of the report:

The main observed benefit for the children has been their growth in personal confidence, establishing friendships with each other and strengthening relationships and trust with the staff working with them. This has been manifested by them sharing personal experiences; playing a more active role in the group work; incorporating the working agreements by actively listening to each other, working with different members of the group and

engaging with external consultants.

What lessons have we learnt?

- Children enjoy having a social worker.
- They get to spend time with their social workers alone and have a view that social workers are there to help them and their families.
- They understand that their families have difficulties, particularly with regard to domestic violence, home conditions and drug/alcohol misuse.
- They see their social worker as someone safe who they can speak with.

Areas for Improvement

- Children don't appear to understand what a Child In Need plan is.
- Children don't appear to understand what a Child Protection plan is.
- Children don't appear to understand what services work with them and their families.

- Children don't appear to understand their plans and do not see their plans.

Unexpected outcome- Children's Meetings

The SPG has evolved over time and has enabled practitioners to think creatively about how we work with children and gain their views. Stemming from the delivery of the SPG, social work assistants involved in the group have developed Children's Meetings. Running the group has given the workers involved confidence in facilitating group work for children/ sibling groups which appears to be a simple but effective way of gaining the views of children and young people.

Children's Meetings can take place in any circumstance; when a CAFA is on-going, CIN/ CP plan or with Children Looked After. The meetings are simple and specific to the circumstances of the family and can take place either at home or in a neutral venue, e.g. school. The children involved can invite anyone to the meeting they would like and are provided with drinks and snacks. The general format of the meeting includes the practitioner facilitating the meeting with flip chart paper and covers the following;

- 1) Ground Rules
- 2) What services are involved with you?
- 3) Who do you think comes to meetings?
- 4) What do you think people are worried about?
- 5) What do you think needs to change?

This information is then shared with parents and the core group of professionals. The children often like to take the lead in facilitating their own meetings.

SPGGU's

It became apparent early on in the group that there needed to be a high level of commitment from the Super Power Group Grown Up's (SPGGU's) in order for the planning, running and evaluation of the group to be effective. Without this high level of commitment, the SPG was likely to drift and the impetus would be lost. Due to the commitment of Lyndsey, Louise, Lisa, Lindsey, Diane, Helen, Toni and Harnek, the group has gone from strength to strength and each person has developed their own practice and that of their team in terms of what they have learnt throughout the life of the group to date.

Challenges

- The level of commitment from each worker in ensuring the group continues to run successfully is high and they have undertaken this work in addition to their other roles and responsibilities.
- It has been a challenge to source the appropriate funding for the group as each session has incurred costs, particularly with regard to purchasing food/ treats for the children.
- Transport continues to be an on-going challenge as there is a need for social workers to ensure these arrangements are in place to enable the children to attend the group consistently.
- There needs to be sufficient time to evaluate each group session and obtain feedback from social workers and parents regarding the benefits of the group for the children who attend.

Learning from the SPG

Feedback received from the children themselves has been extremely positive. They have attended the group consistently which is testament to how much they have enjoyed it. Feedback from social workers has evidenced that the children are growing in confidence and gaining a better understanding of their plans. The children have said to their social workers that they enjoy attending the group and the relationships they have cultivated with each other, and with the SPGGU's have been extremely positive.

Next Steps

It has been agreed that the SPG will be a 12 month programme for identified children. The group will continue to run in each of the school holidays and will follow the same format as previously. We have developed a programme of work having run the initial programme; this can be adapted as necessary to meet the needs of the children. Plans are being developed to roll out the successful programme that was piloted and is continuing to run in the south to the west and east areas of the city.

For more information contact the new lead for the south SPG alison.greenwood@leeds.gov.uk

Appendix two: Leeds Youth Voice Model

