

## **Joint CHICC (Young people and Senior Managers)**

**Wednesday 30 May 2018, County Hall, 10.30am – 12.00 noon**

### **Minutes**

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- 1. Attendees**
- 2. What makes a good carer?**
- 3. Open session**
- 4. Deputies session**

## **1. Attendees**

**Apologies:** Jenny Coles (Director of Children's Services); Sue Lowndes (Head of Adoption and Fostering)

**The following people were present at the meeting:**

**Young people:**

Juniors: Ethan; Rehan; Sabrina; Hayley, Laila; Dylan

Deputies: Emily; Alicia

**Staff and Members:** The following Hertfordshire County Council Staff and members were present:

Marion Ingram (Operations Director, Specialist Services)

Teresa Heritage (Lead Member for Children's Services)

Sarah Baker (Head of CLA Service)

Lindsay Edwards (Interim AD Services for Young People)

Joanna Jacobs (Participation Worker)

Ellie Foster (Participation Support Assistant)

Nancy Burge (Participation Officer)

Mark Hinton (Participation Worker)

Ellie welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was the first time ever that Juniors had attended a Joint CHICC with Senior Managers. It was really good to see everyone. The Managers introduced themselves and said what their role was. Everyone said something that they were looking forward to about summer. Answers included: having long days with lots of light; going on holiday; spending time in the garden; it would only be 6 months until Christmas (Mark) .

## 2. What makes a good carer?

We split into 2 groups to look at what makes a good carer. Ellie explained that the children had made pictures of carers at Paradise Wildlife Park (at the Junior CHICC event in April). Ellie asked the groups to look at the pictures and words and to come up with the most important things about carers. We could then make Top Ten Tips for carers booklets (like the ones we already have for workers).

Hayley, Laila and Sabrina gave feedback for the first group:

Positive: Keeping us fit; They help us with our homework; Never judge children by the way they look; They keep us healthy by taking us to the Doctors when we are ill; They give us food; Don't drink alcohol around children because they are not safe when you drink; Being positive with your manners; Heartful and loving; Keep your children safe instead of hurting them; Aggression is illegal to adults for children;

Dylan; Rehan and Ethan gave feedback for the second group:

1. Honest
2. Protective
3. Give us healthy stuff
4. Don't judge young people by the way they look
5. Always care for your young person, whatever the problems
6. Always go to meetings. Should know what is happening (so can help explain to the young person)
7. Celebrates the day I moved in
8. Be 'strict' to keep us safe

One young person also came with a list he had prepared beforehand:

- Food – healthy treats variety
- Don't force you to eat things you don't like
- Bedroom – express yourself
- Surprises. Nice activities
- Clubs
- Celebrations – anniversary
- Help with family celebrations
- Helps with homework
- Watch me play piano and football
- Pets – lets us look after school pet
- Holidays – let us come
- Respite – chose them carefully
- Sleepovers – friends come round
- Activities – meet other foster children
- Pocket money – earn extra for jobs
- Buy new clothes. Let you chose
- They give you TLC. If you're upset, hear your side of the story
- Help you deal with emotions

## **Actions**

**Nancy to add these thoughts and ideas to the development of Top Tin Tips for carers. (A new CHICC group for young people with disabilities will be doing the same piece of work this week).**

## **3. Open Session**

We then had an open session for young people to raise anything they wanted to. One young person wanted to raise an issue about social workers. He said that workers only listen to the things they want to. They seem to write down everything you say but ignore the difficult bits, giving just a positive picture. He wanted to know what happens to the information. Sarah Baker said it goes in your file and it is looked at by your social worker and your social worker's manager.

The young people said it was important to do lots of activities. Everyone gave examples of things they do, including: cricket; football; lots of sports; choir.

Marion Ingram asked each young person to say one thing that could be better/needed to change about being in care.

One young person said his carers are really good but social workers should communicate more.

One young person said they would like to see their social worker more. This young person said she had had a few workers. One day they were there and one day they weren't. She wanted to be able to speak to the social worker at that moment when needed. She had had a contact card with the worker's number on it but it got lost.

Sarah Baker said that the Top Ten Tips for workers which CHICC produced were given to all workers and are regularly discussed. The Tips include things like staying in touch with young people and saying good bye properly if you are leaving.

## **Actions**

**Nancy to summarise the comments made about communication and doing activities and forward to teams.**

## **4. Deputies Session**

The Deputies and Senior Managers reflected on the meeting with Juniors as this had been the first one. Everyone agreed it was very important for Managers to meet this age group of

young people. It was suggested that next time, feedback is taken by Managers and the Deputies working one to one with the Juniors. Being in a larger group can be very distracting. One of the Deputies suggested making the meeting less formal. Eg can suggest to the children that they 'wear your favourite trainers'. We could also sit on the floor. We could also use a less formal venue (Care Leaver's café, Sunnyside Hemel? Or the Member's lounge at County Hall?) . Peer mentor training would help the Deputies to support Juniors to have their voices heard. Peer Mentor training is being arranged by Jonathan Jack's team.

Thinking about issues raised regarding Social Workers, we discussed how the 'system' means a change of social worker (Assessment team first, then Family Safeguarding and then if come into care, CLA team) and how often, changing social worker can't be avoided. Workers Top Ten Tips do include that workers should always say good bye when leaving and introduce the new worker. We discussed ways to make sure the Tips are happening. Sarah advised that all workers have copies of the Tips and they are always around. One idea was to add a question about the tips into the annual survey of children and young people (Bright Spots). Another idea is to put it into PMDs for workers. Sarah also suggested something on the Tips be added to the regular audits done by Managers.

#### **Action**

- **Sarah Baker to request that Top Ten Tips are raised in workers supervision – asking workers whether they have a copy and are regularly referring to them, with a view to incorporating into PMD in 2019**
- **Jonathan Jack to include question about Top Ten Tips in next annual survey of young people**