

Joint CHICC (Young people and Senior Managers)

Tuesday 30 October 2018, Welwyn Garden City Library, 3.00pm – 4.30pm

Minutes

- 1. Attendees**
- 2. Update from CHICC**
- 3. Discussions led by young people on specific topics**
- 4. Juniors: My Social Worker**
- 5. Next meeting**

1. Attendees

Apologies: Marion Ingram (Operations Director, Safeguarding and Specialist Services);
Jonathan Jack (YC Youth Engagement and Participation Manager)

The following people were present at the meeting:

Young people: Caitlin; Jade; Kelly; Alicia; Paige; Shannon; Hayley; Laiyla

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

Teresa Heritage (Lead Member for Children's Services)

Graham McAndrew (Member, Resources)

Jenny Coles (Director of Children's Services)

Matt Ansell (Operations Director Children and Families)

Lindsay Edwards (Interim AD Services for Young People)

Joanna Jacobs (Participation Worker)

Nancy Burge (Participation Officer)

Mark Hinton (Participation Worker)

Aidan Moffat (16plus Manager, Virtual School)

2. Update from CHICC

Nancy Burge gave a brief update, focussing on how CHICC was reaching out:

National Care Leaver's Week

This started on Wednesday 24 October and was due to end tomorrow (31 October). CHICC did two main things to mark the week:

Project Positive

CHICC Care Leaver's Group spoke about how they were affected by negative stereotypes, especially when applying for jobs. Working with Jo Mayes (Services for Vulnerable Young People), Project Positive was launched and a campaign page was set up on HCC website. Corporate parents and local partner organisations/employers were asked to make a pledge to care leavers. The project emphasised how having experience of care gave young people skills such as resilience and empathy. The project was picked up by BBC East - Luke from CHICC and Teresa Heritage were interviewed and it was broadcast on 26 October.

Care Leaver's Survey

Members of CHICC and Senior Managers rang care leavers to do the annual survey. The aim was to find out how young people feel about the service they get from their worker and support with moving towards adulthood. 47 young people completed the survey. A full report will be produced. Headlines so far were that 68% described the relationship with their worker as good and 80% said that the amount of contact with their worker was right.

CHICC Group for Unaccompanied Young People

Following football and picnic CHICC event in the summer, monthly meetings are now held at Oaklands college. The group is planning an event for unaccompanied young people across the County in February half term 2019. The event will be at the snow slopes in Hemel Hempstead and will include some kind of interactive mental health session.

CHICC LDD Group

Jo Jacobs and Mark Hinton said a group were meeting fairly regularly and was going well. They had fed into consultation on Top Ten Tips for carers and were now looking at a piece of work with young commissioners on short breaks .

The Random Club

This is for young people who have social workers working with their families. Twelve young people have been involved so far. Seven came to an art workshop on Monday and made mosaic selfies for the conference suite. The aim is to make the suite more young person friendly.

Out of County Day

Mark Hinton organised the first HCC Out of County Day in the summer, to promote awareness and try to make sure all our young people feel included and thought about, wherever they are. It was a good day with lots of tweets. Packs were made and taken by workers. Packs included a post card with personal message, travel mug, heart shaped stress ball. A competition was also held. Young people described where they lived. Prizes were given. Jo Jacobs gave out some of the packs when

she visited young people out of county. She said the young people really liked the packs. The rest of the packs have been given to CLA teams and Leaving Care P.As to distribute.

Paige felt we should get the stories of young people placed out of county so we can learn about their experiences. Mark said he was making a film with 3 young people out of county who want to be involved. He said that all 3 were positive about living out of county. Caitlin asked how many young people lived out of county and asked why. In the region of 150 young people live out of county. CHICC now have a regular slot in the newsletter for out of county young people. They can go to local CHICC events if they want to meet other young people in care. They can have a relationship with us too if they want to give their views.

3. Discussions led by young people on specific topics

Before the meeting, CHICC Deputies and Care Leaver's Group members came up with specific topics they wanted to discuss. These were circulated to Senior Managers. We ran out of time so could only discuss the topics below. We agreed that we should talk about 'how can carers and workers learn from CHICC young people' at the December Joint CHICC. Marion Ingram was also going to give an update on 2 pieces of information arising from full council speeches. Nancy will liaise with Marion to get this information to the young people.

Topic: Semi Independent Accommodation

Young person's view:

Caitlin introduced the topic. She said that we don't talk enough about young people in semi-independent accommodation. CHICC always focus on foster care and residential. Young people in semi-independent can feel like they don't have a category – are they care leavers? It can feel like being in limbo. Caitlin suggested the following actions:

- Managers to do spot checks on semi-independent placements, speaking to the young people who live there
- Each semi-independent placement should be matched up with a visiting NYAS worker, like in residential homes.

Response:

Paige explained that monitoring visits are done as part of the commissioning arrangements. They are spot inspections. Nancy said that a piece of work was started so that young people could visit young people in semi-independent and ask them how things were in the placement. (this piece of work will be resumed once the Participation Team is back to full capacity).

Aidan addressed the notion of being in limbo, and said that pathway plans were really important and young people should be involved in their pathway plans which should include goals.

Re NYAS, everyone thought it was a really good idea to promote NYAS more with semi independent placements. It was agreed that NYAS numbers should be promoted in semi-independent and to remind NYAS of the importance of linking in with semi-independent placements. As there are many placements, it is not possible to match up each one with a NYAS visitor.

Lindsay asked what preparation for independence is like. It was established that the practice flats are still in use and are a good thing. One young person said you are not prepared with 'how to be alone'. More needs to be done to help with how young people might feel scared and also to link them into local support. A young person asked what progress was made with the shared accommodation for care leavers idea. Lindsay agreed to find out and let Nancy know.

Questions came up about the rules regarding having to go into a hostel before getting your own flat. There were also questions regarding local connection and whether that is still an issue.

Generally, it was felt that more clarity is needed about how housing works for care leavers across the county. Lindsay agreed to look into this and report back to Nancy.

Actions:

- 1. Nancy to liaise with NYAS contract monitoring Officer re actively promoting NYAS in semi-independent placements**
- 2. Lindsay to get an update on housing issues including:**
 - progress with idea of shared accommodation for care leavers**
 - whether local connection is still an issue across the 10 Districts**
 - whether all young people have to go into a hostel before accessing own flat**

Topic: Driving Lessons

Young person's view:

Kelly and Caitlin asked why nothing had happened as this was raised by CHICC months ago. They said the issues were that it shouldn't be linked to being in education or employment and also that 5 lessons were not enough.

Response:

Aidan explained that £7k was spent on driving lessons a year. Approx 90 young people benefit from the driving lessons. Aidan felt it was important to keep it linked to education/training as it was an excellent incentive for young people. Aidan said he was happy to look at doubling the lessons to 10, subject to Felicity Evans' approval. The young people thought this was really good!

Actions

- 1. Aidan to look into doubling driving lessons to 10, subject to Felicity Evans' approval, and let Nancy know**

This part of the meeting came to an end. We were joined by two of the Junior CHICC members for the final part.

4. Juniors: My Social Worker

In small groups, the juniors spoke about their social workers with senior managers. The juniors had written something to prepare for this, which was very useful.

5. Next meeting

The next Joint CHICC is Tuesday 4 December, 6.00pm – 8.00pm, Hertford Theatre, Hertford.