

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel 21 November 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Looked After Children Complaints Statistics</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Philip Segurola Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alisa Flemming Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT:</b> Not applicable as this report is for information only	

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The appendix report will outline detail from the 17/18 Annual Complaints Report specifically relating to Looked After Children.

## **3. DETAIL OF YOUR REPORT**

The report shows the volume of LAC complaints in relation to the rest of the service, with a breakdown by team. It also shows the themes and learnings identified, and the volume of stage 2 and stage 3 complaints received.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

## **5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

**7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

**8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

**9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

**10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

Not applicable as this report is for information only

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** *Clare Davies, Complaints Manager ext 47378*

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

1. Looked After Children Complaints Data 17/18

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:** *None*

## Looked After Children Complaints Data 17/18

1. The Looked After Children (LAC) service received a total of 36 stage 1 complaints in 2017/18, which was 41% of the total stage 1 complaints for the Children's Service.
2. **Stage one** complaints broken down by LAC Service Team:

Team	Volume
LAC - Leaving care - Statutory Childrens	7
Looked after children (previously Permanence Service 1) - Statutory Childrens	8
LAC - Adoption & SGO - Statutory Childrens	6
Looked after children and adoption (previously Permanece 2) - Statutory Childrens	9
Looked after children and adoption (previously Permanence Service 2)	3
LAC - Adoption & SGO (Special Guardianship Order)	1
LAC - Leaving care	2

### 3. **Top trends for complaints and Lessons Learned:**

Looked after children service received 41% of all statutory children complaints. This biggest cause of complaints is the lack of or quality of communication with customers or delays in providing services or failure to comply with procedures.

A larger than acceptable proportion of the complaints have been about concerns about the quality or timeliness of communication with customers. It is noted that a large number of these relate to decisions on the part of the local authority which are difficult for the service user to accept. Communicating these difficult decisions more clearly would assist. We have seen an increase in complaints about Adoption Support which is in part about managing service user's expectations. Providing adequate business support to the Adoption and Special Guardianship services remains a challenge which has impacted on the teams' ability to process basic requests in a timely manner.

The tone of responses could improve and the managers in the service have a planned meeting to discuss this detail in order to support them to improve the quality of responses.

The number of complaints from foster carers is relatively low given the size of the service and given the foster carers told Inspectors in the last SIF inspection that they felt unsupported. That said, the service has taken action to engage foster carers more routinely.

Complaint responses are not well organised which impacts upon the service's ability to keep track and respond in a timely way. The Executive Support Officer to the Head of Service has created processes to assist in this as far as it is possible to do so.

#### 4. Lessons from Complaints

In this reporting year Children's Services were graded as inadequate overall in the Ofsted SIF Inspection of June 2018. This context and the disruption that resulted from it may give some background to the poorer performance, year on year, against timely response indicators at Stage 1. Of the 88 complaints received 34 were upheld at Stage 1 and 22 partially upheld. This acceptance of fault in all or part of the complaint at that stage demonstrates a willingness to reflect on and accept our responsibility for the cause of complaint.

That 41% of statutory children's complaints originate in the LAC population is both a marker for further exploration around the reasons for complaint, but also a strength in that it demonstrates that children and young people or their representatives are aware of the process and are proactive in using it.

Poor progression and communication when informing service users of the outcome of assessments or decisions made, is a major generator of complaints. Significant staff turnover across several services may have impacted on the smooth progressing of a number of core activities when working with children and their families. As a result families are potentially left without update or information for longer than is acceptable. Consistent efforts have been made over recent months to stabilise teams and bring casework back up to expected standards.

As complaints escalated to Stage 2 also deal with similar areas there is a need to work with respondents to ensure that the complaint response at Stage 1 answers the complaint in full, apologises where appropriate and ensures that the cause of the original complaint is actioned swiftly. There is a need to work with staff about the tone and content of first responses to make complainants more receptive to the complaint being settled at that early stage.

Neither of the complaints which progressed to Stage 3 were upheld but this may indicate a need for greater efforts to try and understand and resolve remaining issues for complainants given the real demands that a Stage 3 complaint can make on time and resource. With this goes an acceptance that for some complainants nothing short of a total recognition of the rightness of their position will be accepted.

Given the large volumes of children and families being worked with, the number of complaints is low in comparison. The complaints largely focus on the provision of practical services and support and for some families this will be a source of discontent around decisions made, but these are also areas where real efforts to improve can produce dividends quickly.

During 2017/18 Stage 1 complaints for children's services can be grouped largely into four areas as can be seen below:

<b>Learnings</b>	<b>Total</b>
Poor Communication - lack of response to emails or request for information	45
Delays completing claims/assessments/referrals	23
Failure/Delay completing agreed actions	18

## 5. Stage 2

In 2016/17 Children's service received 12 stage 2 complaints. This compares to 8 in 2017/18. The table below shows the stage two volumes received by Service Area:

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Children in need service (CIN)	2
Assessments	2
LAC-leaving care	2
Child protection & proceedings	1
Early help	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8</b>

### 5.2 Top trends for complaints at Stage 2

<b>Learnings</b>
Delays completing claims/referrals/assessments
Poor communication
Failure/Delay completing agreed actions

## 6. Stage three volumes

In 2016/17 Children's services received 4 stage 3 complaints. In 2017/18 2 stage 3 complaints were received. The table below shows the stage three volumes received by Service Area:

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>Upheld/Not</b>
Children-Disabilities	1	Not upheld
Looked after Children (LAC)	1	Not upheld
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

**7. Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman**

0 complaints were received in relation to the LAC service.

**CiCC action plan** (reviewed Sep 2018)

**Director: David Butler and Philip Segurola**

**Head of service: Shelley Davies**

**Lead officer: Emily Collinsbears**

**What are we trying to achieve?**

- Continue to recruit to the Children in Care Council for children and young people who are looked after by Croydon Council
- Give children and young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives
- Give children and young people the chance to shape and influence the corporate parenting that they receive
- Help to shape the strategies for looked after children and young people in Croydon
- Consider the differing needs of children and young people and care leavers

**Who do we need to work with?**

- Other youth voice and young people's participation groups
- Social Care – management and teams
- Corporate Parenting Panel
- Virtual School team
- Independent Visitors team
- Croydon Safeguarding Children Board
- Improvement group

**What will we do?**

- Run fortnightly CiCC's for children and young people
- Co-design the sessions and annual planning with children and young people
- Create a Welcome to Care pack designed by children and young people
- Deliver bespoke school holiday provision for CiCC and looked after children and young people
- Facilitate sessions on topics requested by children and young people
- Invite appropriate officers, managers, senior leaders and Cllrs to meet CiCC based on topics and issues children and young people are working on/interested in/affect their status as looked after children and young people
- Support children and young people with additional life skills and experiences

**What does success look like?**

- Children and young people feel connected to decisions that are made about their care
- Children and young people are able to communicate their involvement in co-production of services in the borough

- Children and young people being able to communicate with managers, SLT and Corporate Parenting Panel is a supported, planned and knowledgeable way
- Children and young people are happy and feel secure in sessions and with youth engagement team
- Children and young people feel a sense of community with their peers and have strong relationships built through shared experiences

### **Milestone(s)**

- Additional recruitment of children and young people for the CiCC
- Update Corporate Parenting Panel on changes and developments (Nov 2018)
- Continue regular meetings with good attendance
- Co-design plan with children and young people for CiCC long term (Jan 2019)
- School holiday provision more embedded in offer for children and young people attending CiCC
- Children and young people led branding completed (Jan 2019)
- Children and young people led Welcome to Care pack created (March 2019)
- Managers and SLT are communicating regularly with CiCC, as requested by children and young people

### **Monitoring**

- CiCC will work in partnership with the Corporate Parenting Panel bi-annually (or more frequently as needed); with members of the panel attending the CiCC, CiCC attending CPP and through interactive reports and communications
- Annual reviews by children and young people, Corporate Parenting Panel, Director of Education and Youth Engagement and Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care, relevant Heads of Service and delivery staff
- Sessional recordings updated by delivery staff on Upshot system and impact reports completed termly





# CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

## Spring/Summer 2018

### IMPACT REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

### What is Children in Care Council?

The Children in Care Council is a forum where young people looked after by Croydon are able to shape and influence the parenting that they receive at every level. It aims to give young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives and input to the setting of Local Authority strategies which affect those in or who have recently left care.

The forum is structured in a workshop format and aims to be led by young people looked after with the support of the youth engagement team. Sessions take place on a fortnightly basis during term time at Bernard Weatherill House and welcomes all young people looked after by Croydon and care leavers. The forum has a primary function of amplifying the voice of its members by identifying themes and issues relevant to being in or having left care. The views, ideas and feedback being shared with the Early Help and Social Care Directorate, Education and Youth Engagement Directorate, Youth Cabinet and Corporate Parenting Panel.

### Aims and Objectives

- From October 2017 to re-invigorate the CiCC for children and young people who are looked after by Croydon Council
- Give children and young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives
- Give children and young people the chance to shape and influence the corporate parenting that they receive
- Help to shape the strategies for looked after children and young people in Croydon

### Benefits for Young People

- Improve the collective experience of looked after young people borough-wide
- Establish a community of looked after young people in Croydon
- Through team work gain leadership skills which are helpful for young people aspiring to higher education and employment
- Support other looked after young people new to being looked after
- Represent approximately 900 other looked after young people

### Key Statistics

- 15 members recruited between January and June 2018
- 3 members have Special Education Needs (SEN)
- 1 is a care leaver
- 1 is supported by Children Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- 8 come from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds (BAME)

# RECRUITMENT

Since launching in October 2017, the Youth Engagement team have proactively established new working relationships and continuous communication with core Early Help and Social Care teams, education providers, partner organisations and foster carers to support the publicising, recruitment and retention of members. The aim of creating a new group; these young people would then participate in sessions, consultations and fun activities.

Of the 15 members aged 11-21 that were recruited between January and July 2018:

- 4 were referred following visits to foster carer forums
- 3 existing Youth Engagement team project participants
- 3 referred from permanence teams
- 2 referred from a partner organisation
- 1 joined after seeing publicity at school
- 1 referred from the Virtual School
- 1 referred by a friend already a CiCC member



The total numbers recruited reflect well across Croydon's pan-London neighbours; Harrow, Greenwich and Bromley each having comparable numbers of participants. However, Croydon's population is much greater than these (and other boroughs) meaning that whilst a direct comparison is difficult to identify, higher participant numbers continue to be aimed for and ideally to split the CiCC into two age range groups that recognise the importance of socialising with age appropriate peers.

# SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND PROJECTS

The core objective for the Children in Care Council since relaunching in October 2017 has been for its members to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives, this is achieved by exploring topics and issues that are relevant to the lifecycle of a young people looked after by Croydon. In the period from February to July 2018 members participated in over 20 hours of learning, discussion and workshops covering topics such as the borough's relationship and commitment to young people, service improvement, life skills and placement solutions.

## 1. Reviewing the Corporate Parenting Panel's Pledge

In spring the CiCC embarked upon a review of the Corporate Parenting Panel Pledge. The Pledge exists as a set of twelve statements which outline the guiding principles for how the local authority should approach their responsibility to 'parent' looked after young people and care leavers and what they should therefore expect.

Over a period of four-sessions CiCC members carried out group activities to discuss, interpret and shape the pledge so it becomes more accessible, understandable, relatable and closer to what looked after young people's needs and wants are. Using facilitated activities, young people carried out a review of the existing commitments by exploring each statement and its meaning. They then discussed, as a group, how they felt about a commitment and whether it should be kept 'as is' or replaced with 'their' language.

Across all twelve commitments the CiCC members who engaged with this activity proposed that five of the commitments either did not reflect their expectations of the local authority in these areas or the language used was not accessible to the majority of young people and were amended. Of the seven remaining commitments, young people agreed that they were relevant and clear.



Fig 1. Summary of feedback from CiCC members (Corporate Parenting Panel Pledge) spring 2018

Pledge commitment	Proposed change	Young peoples' comments
"We will help you to access positive leisure activities"	"We will help you to access positive activities"	"The revised version is better for young people because its short and better to understand as young people don't like reading long sentences"
"We will support and help you in seeking education, employment and training when you are beyond school age"	"We will make sure your education continues into later life"	"It is important that support is put in place for a young person after they leave care so that they are not left alone"  "Although 18 it is the legal age where your allowed to be out of education, funding should still be provided to encourage students to take on further education, which is important"  "This simplified version means that everyone can understand"
"We will provide you with a place to live that is right for you"	"We will provide you with a place to live that is safe & happy for you"	"This version to providing young people with somewhere safe and happy"  "Safe and happy reinforces a child's needs"  "I strongly agree because I feel happy when I am with my family"  "It highlights that being safe and happy are important "
"We will provide you with services to meet your physical and emotional health needs and celebrate your identity"	"We will provide you with services to meet all your needs and celebrate who you are"	"This is the best and most important change"
"We will provide you with support in moving on from care and prepare you for independent living"	"We will support you in moving on from care and prepare you for living independently"	"Very reassuring"  "[the] wording has changed but it means the same thing"

**Next Steps:** The review of the pledge is an ongoing piece of consultation the CiCC members are engaged with and two further streams of activity exist in relation to this topic.

First: the final proposed changes are expected to be presented, by CiCC members, to the Corporate Parenting Panel in the autumn

Secondly: an internal communications and publicity campaign to ensure that the feedback provided by young people is followed up on, circulated where relevant and monitored by the panel and relevant local authority service areas.

## 2. Local Offer

The CiCC provided input to a consultation on the local authority statutory requirement in helping shape parts of the local offer. Via an interactive workshop, 10 members engaged in the topic of the care lifecycle and supported work to understand the key services, interventions and positive activities that could benefit young people. These views served to support and influence parts of the ongoing work to publish the local offer.

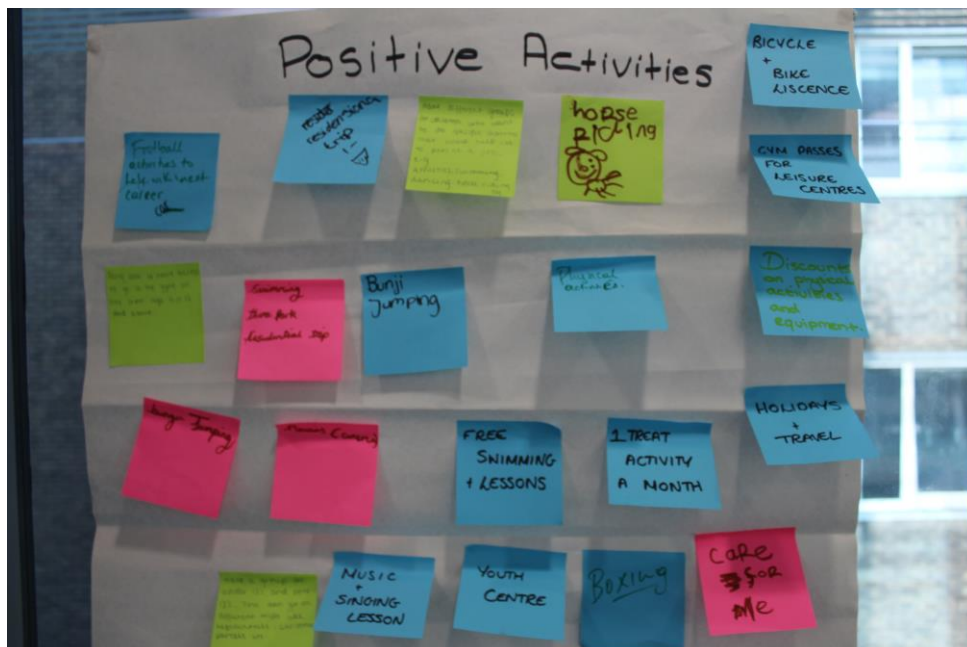
**Next Steps:** The CiCC now understands its role in supporting ongoing improvement work being carried out by the Early Help & Social Care division and regular consultation will support this.



## 3. Regional Engagement

In addition to local topics related to looked after young people; the CiCC members have also been involved with two regional activities which have given a wider reach to Croydon's looked after young people. In the spring and summer terms (including school holidays) two CiCC members, including one care leaver, represented Croydon's population at the London Children in Care Council meeting which is a Partnership for Young London initiative. The London Children in Care Council aims to strengthen the skills, campaigning ability of individual borough CiCC members in London as well as mobilising the voice of looked after young people in London. Via this engagement a programme of skills development (see incentives and rewards) has been created to mirror aspects of the London Children in Care Council skills development objectives.

The CiCC have also been working with the South London Commissioning Group, the project aimed to explore the viability of a new software solution which aids the process of placing young people with carers has received the support of two CiCC members. They will provide service user feedback to support the procurement process of this software.



# INCENTIVES AND REWARDS

Throughout the period, young people were offered incentives for regular attendance and positive engagement across the sessions. Such practice, commonplace by CiCC's in the London area that are newly formed or are seeking to become established has seen membership grow and maintain consistent attendance figures across the spring and summer terms.

Each experiences or trips were selected by group members who were consulted by Youth Engagement workers. The model for rewarding young people with these experiences was based upon regular attendance of at least 5 consecutive sessions – over the course of the programme this would amount to almost three months of consistent engagement.

Mirroring parts of the London Children in Care Council and following sector practices, members were offered a mini-programme of life-skills style sessions. These aimed to: help them in making better choices, benefitting from having a broader range of abilities and continue their social development by participating in a group setting.

## 1. Money Management

Identified as a need for young people approaching the transition to becoming a care leaver, the CiCC participated in an educational workshop Money Twist KS3 session in July aimed at supporting young people in learning about money, currency and financial independence.

Through an Interactive session young people built knowledge around basic finance and helping them engage with money on topics such as:

- History and functions of money, security features of notes, currency and exchange rates.
- Budgeting, youth employment, minimum wage, needs and wants, shopping deals, risk and saving.
- Interest, current and savings accounts, ethical banking, flow of money, consumer choice and future of money.



## 2. Sugar Workshop (pancake making)

In February, CiCC members took part in a sugar workshop at Good Food Matters in New Addington which was aimed at providing young people with the basis to understand sugar content in food groups, enabling them to make better lifestyle choices.

As part of this session, young people were provided with information, guidance and advice on how to live sustainably, plant food sources, manage sugar intake and as it was near Shrove Tuesday - make pancakes.



### 3. Song writing

As part of an exercise to learn about the aspirations of the CiCC members, the young people expressed an interest in music and using music as a creative method to express themselves about topics that are relevant to their day to day experiences. In response to this members participated in a music session with professional music producers (The Music Klub) to learn how to write lyrics, produce music and write the song [‘Morley’s Life.’](#)



Through participating in these activities, the young people demonstrated their learning to:

- Set goals
- Explore their individual aspirations, talent & creativity
- Understand their potential
- Use creativity to help make holistic life choices
- Increase knowledge & raise awareness of how music can help express views

### Rewards: Summer Trips Programme

In addition to skills development in areas related to independent living and creative expression, a small programme of trips and group experiences served to provide young people with space for the group to strengthen, grow and for friendships to emerge. Young people who are members of the CiCC were central to the decision making for these trips and experiences and in a group setting researched and selected each visit. Between March and July the CiCC took part in:

- Two restaurant visits
- Two cinema trips
- Ten-pin bowling and Arcade visit
- Day trip to Thorpe Park

**Next Steps:** A further purpose to this programme of trips is to provide space for the group to associate outside of the local authority setting and to become accustomed to being a member of a mixed age-range group.

A number of individuals within the group have complex behaviours and support needs, mainly disclosed to the Youth Engagement team by their carers and social workers. The individual needs of the membership has meant that additional time and support was (and continues) to be provided to them.

These circumstances have meant that a gradual approach has been taken to trips and experiences with an aspiration for 2019 to reinstate a group residential for CiCC members, which follows existing practice across the region and will further strengthen the voice of the group.

# FEEDBACK FROM CICC MEMBERS & CARERS

Regular and continuous feedback has been an important aspect of youth engagement team's approach to supporting the development of the CiCC membership group.

At termly intervals, and upon completion of the review of the pledge consultation young people provided survey responses and free-text comments to enable the youth engagement team to understand group dynamics, satisfaction and likelihood of retention and recommendation.



## QUOTES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

*(sample of free text comments from project evaluation forms)*

“Through the **networking and games**, I got to meet people that I don't know”.

“Being able to be heard. I got to **speak my mind**”.

“It allowed me to interact with other people while **expressing my views**. It gave us a sense of community”.

“I got to know more about the **Pledge**”.

“Hearing other people's experience really got me **Inspired**”.

“I learnt about the different **Opportunities** open to me”.

“I learnt that I matter and that I can make **Change**”.

Young People's Project Evaluation Feedback	Carers Project Evaluation Feedback
<p>100% said they had <b>fun</b>                      100% said they had gained skills in <b>teamwork</b>                      100% said they had gained more <b>confidence</b>                      100% said they had gained <b>new creative skills</b>                      100% said they had made <b>new friends</b>                      100% said they felt more <b>connected to community</b>                      100% said they felt <b>proud of themselves</b> and others around them                      100% said they felt <b>supported, respected and inspired</b> by staff                      100% said felt that they <b>discussed big issues and learnt new things</b></p>	<p>100% said their young person had <b>fun</b>                      100% said their young person had gained skills in <b>teamwork</b>                      100% said their young person had gained more <b>confidence</b>                      100% said their young person had gained <b>new creative skills</b>                      100% said their young person had made <b>new friends</b>                      100% said their young person felt more <b>connected to community</b>                      100% said they felt their young person was <b>proud</b> of themselves                      100% said their young person felt <b>supported, respected and inspired</b> by staff                      100% said felt that they <b>debated big issues and learnt new things</b>.</p>

## CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The running of the Children in Care Council from within the Education and Youth Engagement division has presented a number of key points to reflect and learn from heading into the second year of the project since its reinstatement in October 2017. A key success can be seen in the project retaining its membership numbers in a new and unfamiliar setting. A further success can be seen in the high levels of satisfaction, development and confidence both young people who are members and their carers who have in the project's ability to collect and share views for the benefit of those in or who have recently left care.

A development area for the project heading into the new school year is to empower the existing membership to select core themes related to being a young person looked after and use the session time to interrogate issues, share experiences and make proposals that influence decision making each term. Furthermore, a presence at the Corporate Parenting Panel which is expected to resume in the autumn will enable members to present their work, engage with those who make decisions and see their voices having an impact on local young people who are in a similar situation to them. In support of this, strengthening working partnerships between the young engagement team and key social care teams is crucial to the growth, output and sustainability of the project and ensure that a diversity of members' voices and views are positioned to be heard at various levels.

An exciting development for the months ahead is to empower members to take ownership of the CiCC as a 'brand' and continue work to develop the look, feel and naming of the project. Anecdotal feedback, and sector practice indicates that the terminology of the group i.e. 'children' and 'care' potentially reduce the likelihood of recruitment success and sustained engagement. To address this, the membership will continue an exploration into suitable titles for the group expanding on existing ideas with a view to launching a rebranded CiCC in early 2019.



A further project that CiCC members will be central to in the autumn is the reinstatement of the Croydon STAR Awards.

The awards give families, professionals, educators and members of the community the opportunity to celebrate the success, talents, achievement and recognition of young people who are looked after by the London Borough of Croydon. The awards give these young people a unique opportunity to be acknowledged in a very public way at a high profile event in the autumn.

Croydon hosts one of the largest populations of young people who are looked after in the UK, each and every day they are doing amazing things all over the borough. Be it academic success, sporting talent, personal achievement or that we recognise a hurdle they have overcome, they are all stars and these awards aim to reflect that.

## PROJECT TEAM

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# CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

## Autumn 2018

### IMPACT REPORT (interim)

## INTRODUCTION

The Children in Care Council is a forum where young people looked after by Croydon are able to shape and influence the parenting that they receive at every level. It aims to give young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives and input to the setting of Local Authority strategies which affect those in or who have recently left care.

The forum is structured in a workshop format and aims to be led by young people looked after with the support of the youth engagement team. Sessions take place on a fortnightly basis during term time at Bernard Weatherill House and welcomes all young people looked after by Croydon and care leavers. The forum has a primary function of amplifying the voice of its members by identifying themes and issues relevant to being in or having left care. The views, ideas and feedback being shared with the Early Help and Social Care Directorate, Education and Youth Engagement Directorate, Youth Cabinet and Corporate Parenting Panel.

### Aims and Objectives

- From October 2017 to re-invigorate the CiCC for children and young people who are looked after by Croydon Council
- Give children and young people a chance to have a say about the things that really matter in their lives
- Give children and young people the chance to shape and influence the corporate parenting that they receive
- Help to shape the strategies for looked after children and young people in Croydon

### Key Statistics (updated November 2018)

- 18 members recruited between January and June 2018
- 4 members have Special Education Needs (SEN)
- 1 is a care leaver
- 1 is supported by Children Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- 12 come from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds (BAME)

## SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND PROJECTS (Sept – Nov 2018)

Since the resuming regular fortnightly sessions in mid-September 2018 after the summer activities programme, four CiCC sessions have taken place with the STAR awards in addition. In this period, recruitment efforts have resulted in the addition of 6 new members, meaning the early stages of the term were characterised by objective setting and group development.

The purpose of such an approach was to ensure new member integration and to affirm the group's core themes to explore in the months ahead. Furthermore, work to establish a new brand

title for the CiCC continued in the autumn after initial discussions and research was carried out in the spring.

In the period covering 11 September – 6 November members participated in approximately 8 hours of discussion based workshops covering the above topics and contribution to the thematic planning and design of the STAR Awards.

### 1. Temperature Checking

As part of the new term's activities, young people engaged in a workshop purposed to identify their thoughts and feelings about their relationship with their social worker and those who they consider to advise them. This approach helps the CiCC delivery team estimate how satisfied they are with their situation and what they feel are the pertinent issues which should be explored further.

13 young people who provided responses in a short survey carried out by the Children's Social Care improvement group upon entry to the first CiCC session of the term in September 2018. All statistical and raw free text is forwarded to the Improvement Group for consideration and actioning. All responses are collected and forwarded anonymously.

Statement	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Neither
My social worker tells me what is going on and why.	7	0	6
I am involved in the plans for my future.	3	2	8
My social worker knows me well	8	4	1

### Selected quotes from young people

#### What is working well?

- *"I enjoy respite placement"*
- *"most of the plans that were made in my review are working as planned."*
- *"having contact with my parents, controlling myself and talking to someone about my feelings."*
- *"my social worker is in contact every three weeks and I have contact with my sibling once per month."*
- *"I can state my views and be listened to"*

#### What is not working well?

- *"I want to go back home...I hate being in care and I want to go back home and not my foster carer."*
- *"they [professionals] don't talk to you and take too long. They don't keep me in the loop and hold information from me"*
- *"I would like more help with school"*
- *"I am not always able to challenge the decisions made for me"*

#### Suggestions?

- *"explain things to me in more detail"*
- *"talking about the things I can fix now so it helps in the future"*
- *"I would like to see my mum and siblings more often"*
- *"More communication from my social worker after court."*

### 2. Rebranding as E.M.P.I.R.E.

In spring 2018, young people and the delivery team carried out desktop research to explore the provision and CiCC service offer for looked after young at other local authorities in England and Wales. As part of this they identified that many others, particularly those in London carried a separate brand and visual identity to promote the forum and to bolster its recognition amongst members and prospects. The use of an acronym and plays on words were consistent characteristics of the examples found and young people of the Croydon CiCC proposed to adopt a similar approach.

The working title of **EMPIRE**, which served as an acronym for the words **Empowering, Memories, Positivity, Inspiring, Respect & Educational** was chosen by young people in order for the brand title to represent what they believed the session meant to them. As part of this exercise, young people explored the historical connotations of the very word empire and its sociological references to political control and colonialism. Following an educational workshop carried out by the delivery team in late September, young people determined that the meaning of the word Empire should only mean what they intend from the descriptive terms they have derived and should not make reference to historic connotations. In the latter part of autumn 2018, a small working group of young people will consider design concepts for the brand identity which will feature on future publicity and merchandise in 2019.

### 3. Star Awards

Over **90** looked after young people in Croydon received awards for their achievements and contributions at the borough's first ever STAR Awards. With a higher than anticipated number of nominations across **13 award categories** the Hilton Hotel was the scene for young people to be recognised for their academic, sporting, musical and personal achievements. Special guest Lemn Sissay MBE opened the event and performed his unique brand of spoken word poetry, and with key notes from the Mayor, Cllr Bernadette Khan, the Leader of the Council Cllr Tony Newman and Cllr Alisa Flemming. The event, then saw nominees **aged 8-24** be celebrated by their carer's, social workers, educators, families and the wider community at a glamorous black and gold themed event that will live long in the memory for the young people it recognised.



## AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT & NEXT STEPS

A continuous theme which arises through informal discussion with young people is that the future sessions and term-by-term objectives of the group should focus on educating young people on their rights as looked after young people, and care leavers. As per the revised action plan set out in November 2018, young people will embark upon a young person led piece of work in the new year which gives them a chance to learn and explore their rights, challenge and propose practical solutions based on feedback via the corporate parenting and develop a welcome to care pack, which is distributed to all young people in care in Croydon. Such a publication will outline, like the Local Offer, a clear and accessible set of rights young people have and the responsibilities of Croydon as their corporate parent and enable young people to feel increasingly part of a broad community of young people in the borough.

## PROJECT TEAM

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