



# 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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