

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL (CiCC) Annual Report April, 2012 to April, 2013

The CiCC is a group of children and young people (CYP) aged 12 – 25 who meet with people who make decisions about the care system in Oxfordshire. At each CiCC meeting senior officers tell everyone what has happened since the last meeting in response to what the young people told them. Following each meeting CiCC member's feedback to the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) on the topics discussed. Key to the success of the CiCC is the 'CiCC Management Team' made up of Social Care Managers, CPP Manager, CiCC Coordinator, CiCC Chairs established to ensure management and staff support.

CiCC topics discussed this year:-

- ✚ Education – raising aspirations & barriers
- ✚ Building strong trusting relationships with staff
- ✚ Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Children
- ✚ New CiCC logo discussed
- ✚ Cards / gifts for CYP in care
- ✚ Reaching out to all CYP in care
- ✚ Apprenticeships, focusing on NEET groups



Jo & Sammie with the Children's Minister, Edward Timpson, at the launch of Rees Centre

CiCC members attended the launch of 'The Rees Centre' researching into improving better outcomes for CYP in foster care.



Attendance & involvement at major conferences:

Social Workers Good Practice Conference: CiCC members made a film about 'How my Social Worker helped me', to show at the conference. Coasters and posters were made of the front cover of the Munro report (designed by CiCC members) and a CiCC member interviewed Lord Lamming.

CiCC members were involved in a 'Safe and Successful' conference, hosted by the Virtual School. They delivered presentations, attended workshops and talked about their perspective on education and the needs of those in care.

Interviewing people for jobs in the care system: CiCC members interviewed many people this year, including the Corporate Parenting Manager and social workers, helping to ensure the right people are in the right jobs.

Involvement in National Care projects

CiCC members attended All-Party Associated Parliamentary Group, the SE Regional CiCC Chairs Forum and Young People's Benchmarking Forum (YPBF) sharing good practice to influence change, inputting into the draft Leaving Care Charter and Welfare Reform Bill. At a YPBF meeting in Oxford, the Director of Children, Education and Families, signed the Leaving Care Charter and increased payments for those moving into independent living, in line with national good practice (from £800 to up to £2,000).

Brookes and Ruskin - Voice of Experience: CiCC members met social workers and psychology students to share experiences and discuss good practice.

Ofsted National Good Practice Model: CiCC members met Ofsted with a view to CiCC going out as national good practice model on their website.

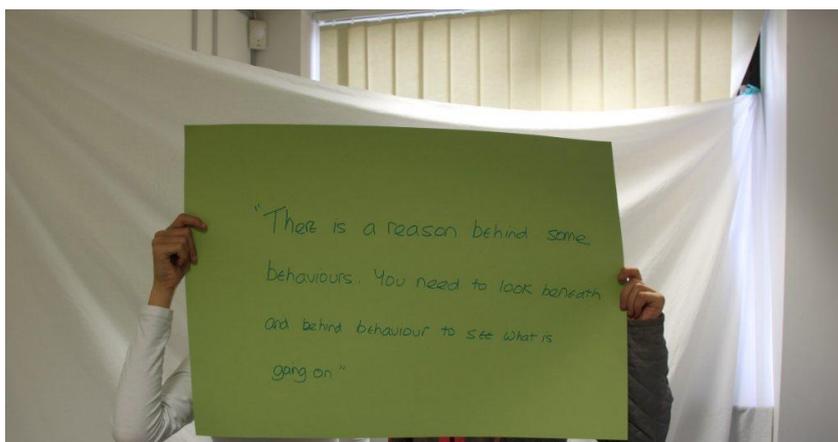
On-line medical recording: Views fed into the consultation on the new system.

A CiCC member designed a '**Fostering Questionnaire**', which is being replicated as an online version too, for CYP to complete when they go into foster care, to get to know the family & environment they are entering. The information will be accessible when placements are being set up.

On-line mentoring & Raising Educational Achievement: A Facebook page was introduced for out-of-county CYP and an Interventions Manager is being appointed. Schools are encouraged to use the pupil premium and where there is no pupil premium the Virtual School offers funding for 10 sessions. The Virtual School has applied for funding for a mentoring project that will include care leavers and have appointed a learning mentor. The Virtual School run training for schools about the needs of young people in care and held a major conference on education. Two CiCC members are Governors of The Virtual School.

Safeguarding discussion: CYP stressed the importance of *'never giving up on a child, making every effort to understand the story and believe what we say'*.

CiCC members also talked about the stigma of being in care, and how positive images of children in care helps. Their involvement in Stigmatisation of CYP in 'Takeover Day' was one way to raise their positive profile.



"There is a reason behind some behaviour; you need to look beneath and behind some behaviour to see what is going on". A comment from a child at the Child Sexual Exploitation discussion at a CiCC meeting

CYP Health and Wellbeing Board: A CiCC or Oxfordshire Youth Parliament member has a seat on the C&YP Partnership Board of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Building a strong trusting relationship with professionals: The Safeguarding Manager led a discussion with the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) about issues raised e.g. "I know you're busy but some 'me' time", "I don't like people letting me down" & "it's like a script that they can't come off". Messages were taken to the Social Work Good Practice Conference and included in the LAC Safeguarding Report that went to CPP in January and to OSCB in March 2013.

Health Assessments: Key messages from CiCC members were included in information given to CYP about their health assessment process. The Health Passport wording and content was redesigned to include CiCC member's comments.

Cards / gifts for CYP in care: We are looking into the possibility of converting art designs by YP from children's homes into cards, at their suggestion.

Children in Care Council logo: 3 new CiCC designs were shown to members, but still more work to do to make them representative of all CYP.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children: Comments, videos and messages were taken by the Kingfisher Team to be used in their on-going work and shown at an OSCB conference on CSE. A 'Pushes and Pulls' diagram, showing the reasons why CYP stray from home was used to demonstrate this and has been widely used in strategic and service discussions to illustrate the views of C&YP about 'going missing'. CiCC members attended a conference on CSE and were shown a play called 'Chelsea's Choice' for their approval, which is now being shown in Oxfordshire's schools.

Apprenticeships: Comments are being fed into the review of RAISE & Virtual School.

Reaching out and involving all CYP in care in the CiCC: One group who are not involved as much as we would like in CiCC are CYP in out-of-county placements. CiCC members suggested some ideas we are taking forward:

- ✚ Creating an information and recruitment card (pictured)
- ✚ Running a survey of all CYP in the care system.
- ✚ Using the C&YP website www.oxme.info
- ✚ Redesigning the complaints process.



CiCC members completed a **Mapping Project** which examined CiCC nation-wide. The survey is being carried out by 'A National Voice' on behalf of the Department for Education to map the activity and progress of CiCCs.

CiCC members were involved in a **Sounding Board** this year, Thriving Families and also made a presentation to organisations in 'Hidden Populations'.

The CiCC continues to have a page in the Oxfordshire **Foster Care magazine**, so foster carers can support CiCC and involve their CYP.

Attendance at meetings of CiCC is consistent at around 15 - 20 CYP, so CYP in foster care, independent living, young mums/dads, in education or not, etc. The CPP Manager said: *"We want the CiCC to be tackling the most challenging issues that are coming up, meaning that the workshops and discussions will involve a degree of challenge and risk"*.

The stand-in Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel said: *"CPP wanted it to be noted that the CiCC members are doing an excellent job in tackling difficult issues"*.

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or through our children and young people's website
www.oxme.info

The Spring Ball 2013

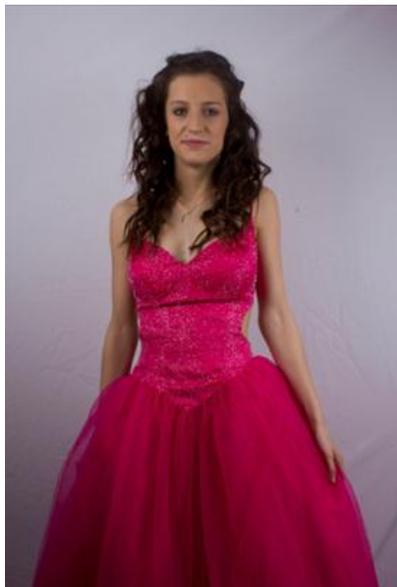
Over 100 CYP in care and leaving care attended this spectacular event at the Four Pillars Hotel in Oxford

Highlights included: Oxford and Cherwell Valley College students held a hair and make-up workshop; a three course sit down dinner and an official photographer (a care leaver); amazing performances from care leavers Sara and Chelsi; a disco; Lego desk and mask making workshop...



Case study

“Hello my name is Amber I am 15. I joined CiCC a year ago after going into care. Being involved has given me more confidence, it has helped me gain experience for my CV which I am really proud of. I have made new friends which has helped me see the brighter side of being in care. I have gained an awareness of political views that affect children in care.”



“Amber has participated fully in all the opportunities offered to her; the AAPG, the Children’s Commission and the Children in Care Council.

These roles have had a positive impact on her self-esteem and her confidence”.
 MCFT -
 (Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care)



For Emily