

Date of Panel	2 September 2013	Item Number	6
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CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL: TODAY'S CHILDREN TOMORROW'S FUTURE

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Division: Children and Families Integrated Support and Social Care

Report Summary

Purpose:

To update Corporate Parenting Panel about the activities of Milton Keynes Council Today's Children Tomorrows Future (TCTF) since the last report.

Background:

Local Authorities are required to establish mechanisms which empower young people to act positively and effect change in their own lives. A Children in Care Council (TCTF) has been established to enable regular, good quality dialogue and involvement in the planning and delivering services, and to ensure that the Children in Care Council has direct links to the Director of Children's Services and Elected Members.

The existence, quality and effectiveness of this arrangement is monitored by Ofsted through inspection.

Corporate Priorities:

TCTF represent a central plank in the council's participation agenda through which we seek to provide responsive and effective services. Through active engagement with and listening to service users we aim to ensure that those services meet the expressed needs and improve outcomes for children in and leaving care in line with the Council's Children & Families 2013/14 priority to deliver effective services to children and young people in and moving on from the council's care.

Performance Information:

N/A

Equality and Diversity Impact:

The Corporate Parenting service is provided for children from across the Milton Keynes community. It therefore needs to provide interventions that can meet the diverse needs of the children and young people in the Council's care.

Recommendations /Proposals:

That the report be noted.

Full Report

Since the last report TCTF and TCTF members have:

- i. **Designed a user friendly version of the Finance Policy.** Leaflets set out young people's financial entitlements as Milton Keynes care leavers. These are being distributed to social workers, fostering social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers, for them to hand out to care leavers and those approaching leaving care. Copies are being uploaded onto the KIC:MK and Foster Carers websites.
- ii. Taken part in an **interview training** day for young people, to learn skills to conduct an interview and devise questions for professionals working with children. The training day was well received and will be rolled out to other young people in care. Since the training day, TCTF members have interviewed candidates for 2 positions. The feedback from young people, candidates and professionals has been very positive.
- iii. Met as part of a wider group of children in Milton Keynes' care and care leavers, to discuss **the Care Leavers Charter** proposed by DfE and temporarily adopted by MKC. Young people agreed with the majority of the Charter but felt the points were too vague and were concerned they could easily be ignored. The young people proposed amendments to the Charter.
- iv. Met with Charles Greer (Head of Delivery, Corporate Parenting Team) to discuss key themes for inclusion in the Milton Keynes **Children in Care strategy**. Young people spoke about what they feel is important. When Charles fed back to young people about the final strategy for 2013-14, they were pleased to see that the priorities they had identified had been included.
- v. Attended the **True Triumph event** and collected **feedback from other young people in care**, who felt there were areas for improvement, such as the range of activities at the event. TCTF will be involved in organising next year's event, and will work with the participation worker to plan it.
- vi. Taken part in the **training for potential Foster Carers**. Both participants and young people found this very useful.
- vii. Responded to a request to **design a front cover for health history folders**. Young people created 2 designs which have been digitally adapted and are now used when a care leaver receives their health history.
- viii. Worked to raise their profile, acting as representatives on **MK Youth Cabinet**, at **regional Children in Care Council meetings** and at the **British Youth Council**. They regularly attend the national **All Party Parliamentary Group** for children in care and care leavers.
- ix. Discussed how best to **demonstrate to professionals what it is like to be in care**. It was suggested that young people in care could keep a diary. TCTF discussed how to safeguard the young people in relation to how the diaries might be used, who might see them and what the impact might be. TCTF offered to trial the diaries. The members have said they are enjoying keeping the diaries and they will be reviewed at the next meeting.