

## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – MARCH 2018**

<b>Title of paper:</b>	Children in Care Council – 2017 Have Your Say Survey Results		
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Helen Blackman – Director, Children’s Integrated Services	<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
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<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>			
<b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>			
Strategic Regeneration and Development			<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools			<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning and Housing			<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Services			<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy, Sustainability and Customer			<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs, Growth and Transport			<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults, Health and Community Sector			<input type="checkbox"/>
Children, Early Intervention and Early Years			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leisure and Culture			<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>			
<p>a. The findings from the 2017 Have Your Say survey of Children in Care and Care Leavers have been analysed by the Children in Care Council and Your Voice groups who have assessed performance using a Traffic Light rating system and compared with the results of previous years</p> <p>b. Have Your Say survey questions are based on the commitments or ‘pledges’ in the Children in Care and Care Leavers Charter which the Corporate Parenting Board uses to help quality assure its performance.</p> <p>c. The findings provide insight into how Children in Care and Care Leavers perceive the quality and value of services they receive. It is recommended that these findings are used by Board partners to inform and guide relevant action plans.</p> <p>d. Based on this year’s results, three areas have been identified for further focus through the termly Corporate Children in Care Council meetings. These are regarding the following Children in Care and Care Leavers Charter commitments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “We know that a change of home, carer, social worker or school can easily cause problems for a child or young person so we promise to do all we can to prevent such changes unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well.”</li> <li>- “We will help them to achieve at school and elsewhere to the very best of their ability.”</li> <li>- “We will help our children and young people to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood.”</li> </ul>			

<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	
<b>1</b>	The findings from the survey results are used to inform relevant service and corporate action and business plans.
<b>2</b>	The Board recognises the hard work done by the Children in Care Council and Your Voice (Care Leavers) groups in the planning and assessment of the Have Your Say survey, and acknowledges their role in the co-production of services across children's social care.
<b>3</b>	The Board to implement the findings of the 2017 Have Your Say survey as appropriate.

## **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Ensuring that the views of service users are used to inform service improvement is a cross-cutting theme of both the Children and Young People's Plan and the Corporate Parenting Action Plan. It is one of the principal means by which the Corporate Parenting Board demonstrates the active participation of corporately parented children and young people in decision-making at strategic and operational level.
- 1.2 Other significant drivers include the various safeguarding related inspection criteria that require the Board to evidence service user participation; these include the Munro Report recommendations on developing a child centred approach to service design and delivery; and Nottingham City CYP Participation Strategy commitment to Article 12 on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 1.3 Previous iterations of the survey have provided significant insight into the views and experiences of Children in Care and Care Leavers, which in turn has been used to shape improvement plans for a number of service areas.

## **2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

### **PART 1: Summary of Children in Care and Care Leavers' 2017 Have Your Say survey process**

#### **Purpose and structure**

The survey questionnaire is structured around the Children in Care & Care Leavers' Charter in order to establish how Nottingham City Council and its partners, acting as the Corporate Parent, is delivering against it. This is a qualitative rather than quantitative exercise, testing experiences and perceptions of care services and support. The results presented are the collated sum of subjective individual responses and therefore should be regarded as a suggested rather than prescriptive guide to future improvement action.

As in previous years, a traffic light system (Red, Amber and Green) has been used by young people from the Children in Care Council and Your Voice (Care Leavers) groups to rate each commitment. This enables the groups to easily identify things that work well, things that need to be looked at with a view to improving them, and things where progress isn't evident or it is felt there is a problem that needs resolving.

In addition to helping the Board understand how it is performing, these findings are used to inform service improvement plans. Detailed survey result analysis is made available to

relevant children's social care teams for further interrogation and application. Since 2013, a simple version of the survey questionnaire for younger children (between the age of 3 and 7) has been circulated to gather their views about the care they receive. This is detailed separately in the following report, as the information captured on the easy read is different to the main survey.

#### Demographics of respondents to the 2017 survey

- Questionnaires were sent to 715 Children in Care (CiC) and Care Leavers, aged 3 and over. The easy ready version was sent to 65 children aged 3-7 and the full version was sent to 651 CiC and Care Leavers aged 8+.
- There were 136 usable returns received, achieving a 19% response rate, slightly higher than last year's 18.5% response rate.
- Response rates varied between age range. 28% of children receiving the easy read version responded (age 3-7), while 23% of CiC responded (aged 8+). However this was noticeably lower with care leavers, who had an 8% response rate.
- There were more responses from females than males, 55% vs 45%. This is opposite to the gender breakdown of last year's respondents.
- More than half of respondents were aged 11-17 (54%), with over 18's having the lowest response rate. Two thirds of respondents identified as White British, 34% as BME.

#### **PART 2. Summary of results with commentary and RAG rating by the CiC Council/Your Voice assessment group**

Commitment 1: "We will treat all our Children and Young People with respect and with regard to their age and understanding."

**Key finding: more CiC feel respected by carers and less CiC feel respected by social workers/personal advisors.**

- The proportion of CiC who felt that social workers or carers 'never' treated them with respect has either stayed the same or decreased in the last year. Proportions are small respectively, at 2% of social workers and no CiC feeling carers 'never' treat them with respect. This is the first year since the survey began there have been no CiC stating this, a positive move.
- 90% of CiC felt their social worker treated them with respect 'all/most of the time'. However, this is a decrease on last year and the lowest proportion since 2013. Almost all CiC asked stated their carer treats them with respect 'all/most of the time' (98%). There has been a year on year increase in those feeling respected by carers 'all/most of the time' since 2014, with this year having the highest proportions reported.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

RAG rating = **Green**

Commitment 2: "We will give our Children and Young People enough time and help to understand (and be happy) with their circumstances."

**Key finding: Overall, more children feel carers and social workers have enough time for them.**

- There has been a decrease in the proportions who think social workers/personal advisers 'never' have enough time for them, from 5% to 4% this year. Much

progress has been made since a 25% high in 2012. There has also been a decrease in proportions who felt their carers 'never' had enough time for them, with no children stating this was the case this year.

- There has been an increase in proportions of children reporting social workers/personal advisors and carers have enough time for them 'all/most of the time' (75% and 96% of CiC respectively). This is a positive step as there had been a year on year reduction in perception of social workers having enough time since 2014 and carers having enough time since 2012.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

RAG rating = **Green**

Commitment 3: "We will make sure they know about the advocacy and complaints services in case they want help to have their views heard or are unhappy with us."

**Key finding: Overall, more children in care know where to go if they want to make a complaint.**

- This year, 92% of respondents knew where to go if they had a problem or wanted to make a complaint, a 5 ppt increase on last year (87%).
- There has been no change in the proportion who knew where to go if they wanted to speak to an independent person apart from their social workers/personal advisors or carers (87%).
- 'School', 'Carer' and 'Social Worker' remain the top three answers in 2017 when we asked children and young people who they would talk to if there was a problem with their social workers or carers. However, this year more CiC would talk to their social worker and carer and less to their school. There was a 6ppt decrease in those who would speak to the complaints service and a 1ppt decrease in those who would speak to the advocacy service.
- More CiC stated they found it hard to talk to anyone (11% in 2017 compared to 7% in 2016).

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

There was some concern here that the number of CiC who don't feel as able to talk or share views with school staff is on the increase, albeit only slightly. Overall it was felt that more could be done to make CiC aware of advocacy and complaints services. To support this the CiC Council suggested issuing an information pack when things change and new services are introduced or changed significantly.

RAG rating = **Green/Amber**

Commitment 4: "We will listen to our children and young people and involve them in planning for their care."

- a) Listening to our children:

**Key finding: Overall, more CiC feel listened to and that their opinions are listened to and make a difference to decisions in their life.**

- There has been a reduction in proportion of CiC who feel their carers and designated teachers 'never' listen to them: this is positive, with no CiC feeling carers never listen and 1% of CiC feeling designated teachers never listen.
- However, there has been an increase in the proportion who feel social workers never listen, from no CiC last year to 5% of CiC this year. There has also been an increase in those who feel their opinions are never heard 3% this year, up from 1% last year. Whilst these have increased, it must be noted these are small proportions.
- There have been no reductions and increases almost across the board in proportions of CiC feeling listened to 'all/most of the time'. The biggest increase in feeling listened to is amongst designated teachers, (8% increase to 93%), there has been a 1% increase in those feeling listened to by carers (to 84%), no increase in those feeling listened to by social workers (86%) and a 1% increase in those who feel their opinions are listened to (84%).

b) Involving our children in planning for their care:

**Key finding: Overall, less CiC attend their reviews, less CiC felt they received help to prepare for their reviews, however more feel their voice is heard in their review.**

- 60% attended their 'Looked After/ Pathway Plan review' (down from 67% in 2016), 25% did not attend their 'Looked After/ Pathway Plan review' but told their social worker/ personal advisors their thoughts before the meeting (down from 29% in 2017). There has been an increase in those not attending the meeting and not wanting to tell anyone their thoughts 4% up from 1% in 2016. More CiC are having involvement in their pathway plan in 'other ways' 12%, up from 3% in 2016.
- There has been an increase in those who feel their voice is heard in their Looked after/ pathway plan review 'all/most of the time', 89% of CiC, up from 87% in 2015. Less CiC felt they got help to prepare for their Looked after/Pathway plan review 'all/most of the time', 77% down from 79% in 2016.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

There was some concern from the CiC Council/Your Voice group around the impact that large social worker caseloads on the time spent and quality of contact with CiC, and the effect that this had on enabling CiC to work together with workers on planning for their care. The CiC Council acknowledged the structural difficulties faced by the Local Authority, around not enough social workers and turnover of staff, but said an element of consistency and continuity was important.

RAG rating = **Green/Amber**

Commitment 5: "We will keep our children and young people safe and well."

**Key finding: Overall, more CiC feel they have the right place to live, more feel safe in their home, school and neighbourhoods, more feel healthy. However, more feel worried 'all the time'.**

a) By seeing that they have the right place to live as quickly as possible:

More CiC feel that where they are living is the right care place for them, up 4ppts to 83% of CiC. Less CiC said their care place was not the right place for them (4% a decrease of 6ppts); however, more were unsure (14%, up 2ppts).

b) By making sure that this home is stable and keeps them safe

There have been increases in proportions of CiC feeling safe across the board, in their homes, schools and neighbourhoods. The biggest increase has been in the proportion of CiC feeling safe in their neighbourhood 'all/most of the time', up 7ppts to 90%. 96% of CiC felt safe where they live 'all/most of the time' (up 3ppts) and 95% felt safe at school 'all/most of the time' (up 3ppts).

c) By giving them the right support to be as healthy as possible

- More CiC reported feeling healthy all the time or often, 96%, up 3ppts since 2016. This is the highest proportion feeling healthy 'all/most of the time' since 2013.
- Unfortunately, it appears more CiC are feeling worried 'all the time', 8%, up 3ppts since 2016. There are also less CiC stating they are 'never' worried, 37% of CiC, down 3ppts.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

Results from previous years have been up and down but this year show an improvement across all three areas covered by this question.

RAG rating = **Green**

Commitment 6: "We will help them to achieve at school and elsewhere to the very best of their ability."

**Key finding: Overall, more CiC feel they are doing well at school and more report engaging with their PEP, and less are reporting they would do better with more help.**

- There is a generally positive picture of the way children feel they are doing at school. 71% of CiC said they were doing 'well/very well' at school, the highest proportions since the survey began. Almost half of CiC stated they were doing 'very well' (48%), an 11ppt increase on last year.
- There is also a positive picture across the board in relation to personal education plans (PEP's). More CiC know about their PEP (70% of CiC), more are happy with their PEP (82%) and more are involved in drawing up their PEP than last year (63%). Also, there has been a decrease in the number who feel they would do better with more help 'all/most of the time' (50% down 11ppts). This is in line with an increase in those who feel they would 'never' do better with more help, 25%, up 3ppts, suggesting overall more CiC feel they have enough help than previous years.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

There were a number of concerns about this pledge from the CiC Council/Your Voice group. It was expressed that despite the steady improvement in involvement in PEPs and the overall positive responses many CiC don't feel supported in their education, and in some cases are made to feel as though that because of their status they can't achieve and that they are naughty. As a result they don't get the support they need. It was felt that as 30% of CiC weren't aware of their PEP there was still much to do to ensure engagement. Changes in life, such as a change of placements can impact on school performance. CiC can feel as though they are treated differently to other students, and feel like a light is being shone on them.

In addition the issue of confidentiality and data protection was raised, with a number of CiC Council and Your Voice members expressing concern that their care status was being

revealed without their consent, for example on smart boards used in class. The need to ensure data protection and privacy whilst ensuring the right support is given to those who need it is the balance that needs to be achieved. The group believed that information on their status should be on a need to know basis, with only the right people aware.

It is recommended that this issue is explored further through the Virtual School Board to ensure professionals are aware of issues around data protection and privacy and look at means to ensure CiC can raise any concerns they have, for example through PEP meetings and with IROs.

RAG rating = **Amber/Red**

Commitment 7: “We know that a change of home, carer, social worker or school can easily cause problems for a child or young person so we promise to do all we can to the support them to prevent such changes unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well.”

**Key finding: Overall, more CiC have experienced a change in the last 12 months, however more report that the support they received to cope with change was good.**

- This year a higher proportion of children reported having a change of social worker, carer, home and school in the last 12 months than last year’s survey respondents. A lower proportion reported a change of personal advisor than last year.
- Change of social worker had the largest increase, up 13% to 57% of CiC responding. The second biggest increase was in charge of home, with 40% of CiC experiencing a change of home compared to 27% the previous year. 37% experienced a change of school (up 6ppts) and 25% experienced a change of carer (up 5ppts).
- Since 2014 there had been a downward trend in CiC experiencing change, as such, it may be worth exploring the mechanism for why this year CiC report a less settled experience.
- For those who have had a change, 73% felt the help they received to cope with the change was very good or good, a continual increase since 2014.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

This is a consistent area of concern in the Have Your Say survey, with more than 50% of respondents having had a change of social worker over the previous year. While the CiC Council/Your Voice group recognised the global nature of the challenge over social working recruitment, retention and caseload management, they believe there are ways in which the situation can be improved.

Group members have previously contributed to social worker recruitment activities. They would like to explore how the involvement of more care experienced young people in recruitment, training and development can support increased retention of staff.

Additionally, a consequence of multiple changes to social worker arrangements means young people frequently have to repeat their story, which they don’t like. It’s recommended that the protocols for staff handover be reviews to ensure all social workers newly assigned to a CiC should read up and understand their story before making contact.

It was recommended that in order to combat the potential negative impact of frequent changes to social worker arrangements, improving CiC and Care Leavers’ resilience and ability to manage change successfully is given greater focus in care planning. This is connected to pathway planning and preparation for independence raised in Commitment 9.

RAG rating = **Amber**

Commitment 8: “We will make sure that a child stays in touch with their birth family and friends as much as possible, considering their safety and wellbeing”

**Key finding: Overall, more CiC report seeing their families as much as they like, however less see their old friends. Fewer care leavers are making friends since leaving care.**

- 23% saw their families as much as they like in 2017, a 2ppt increase from 2016.
- The percentage of children and young people who never go round to their old friends houses to visit, and whose old friends never come to visit them, have remained stable at 69% and 71% respectively. There has been an increase in CiC who never see or speak to their old friends, 41% up 7ppts from 34% in 2016.
- There has been an increase of care leavers who ‘never’ made new friends since leaving care, 24% of care leavers who responded, up from 18% in 2016.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

Support from school and college stops for Care Leavers, therefore having strong, positive friendship groups and a network of supportive people in place are needed otherwise Care Leavers will be disadvantaged. Impacts can include social isolation, struggle with finances, not knowing how to cope, lack of opportunities to socialise, and restrictions on travel and mobility depending on circumstances. This is a concern in particular for Care Leavers, and the Your Voice group agreed that they would explore this further through their forum and the work of the Leaving Care Team.

No RAG rating here – for information only

Commitment 9: “We will help our children and young people to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood.”

**Key finding: Overall, more CiC feel happy with the support they receive to prepare for adulthood, however less feel they have the skills for independence.**

- There has been another increase in the proportion of CiC stating they were “Happy/ Very happy” with the support they were getting to plan for their future, 95% up 4ppts. There has been a year on year increase since the survey began suggesting continual improvement in the support given to CiC to prepare for adulthood.
- There has been a reduction in the proportions of CiC who feel they can do many of the things required for independence, such as cook, clean and wash clothes. There has also been an increase in those who would like help with these skills.
- The thing most would like help with is applying for higher education (65%), then writing a CV (58%) and finding information about jobs and training (53%).
- More CiC know what is in their pathway plan, 36%, up 7ppts. The percentage of those who did not know they had a pathway plan (20%) has remained static at 51%. 17% of CiC did not know they had a pathway plan.

CiC Council/Your Voice assessment:

There was concern that elements of the Pathway Plan, particularly those around life skills, need to be reviewed to make them more appropriate and accessible to those completing them. The Leaving Care Team agreed that it would be good for young people to review the



content and layout of the Pathway Plan, so it was recommended that this be included in CiC Council and Your Voice work for 2018/19.

RAG rating = **Amber**

### **Overall rating for the way Nottingham City Council are taking care of Children in Care and Care Leavers**

- Almost 8 in 10 CiC are 'happy/very happy' with how NCC takes care of them (78%). This is a slight decrease from last year (82%).

CiC Council/Your Voice conclusion:

This year's Have Your Say survey responses show that the Corporate Parenting Board and its partners are doing well overall, with most CiC and Care Leavers in good placements and/or accommodation and enjoying positive relationships with carers, social workers and other key supporting professionals.

But there is a need to explore how to improve consistency and reduce unnecessary change in CiC and Care Leavers' lives, improve education support and help people feel happier in school, and help prepare young people for independence, and these are the areas the CiC Council and Your Voice would like to focus on through the three termly 2018/19 Corporate Children in Care Council meetings.

RAG rating = **Green/ Amber**

### **PART 4: Easy-Read survey results**

The easy read survey was completed by CiC aged 3-7. 18 easy read responses were received. Questions were asked in an easy read format around health and happiness. Below is a summary of responses.

- Happiness: 95% of CiC said they felt happy.
- School: 85% of CiC said 'School makes me feel happy'. However, 10% said school makes them feel sad.
- Health: 90% said they felt healthy.
- Where I live: 95% said where they live makes them feel happy. None said where they live makes them feel sad.
- Safety: 95% said they felt safe and 5% 'don't know'.
- Play: 90% of CiC like to play, 10% 'don't know'.

## **3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 None.

## **4 FINANCE COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

4.1 The cost of the Have Your Say survey is approximately £1000 per year, consisting primarily of printing and postage. This cost is currently met by the Children in Care team, who also provide officer support. The Strategy & Insight team provides survey

preparation, data collation and analysis, with citizen engagement and reporting by the Engagement & Participation Lead officer.

- 4.2 Improvements in services based on the insight from service user views can lead to a wide spectrum of benefits, including resource efficiencies.

**5 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)**

- 5.1 Each survey has a unique reference number enabling all responses to be screened for individual safeguarding and specific service-use complaints.

**6 STRATEGIC ASSETS & PROPERTY COLLEAGUE COMMENTS (FOR DECISION RELATING TO ALL PROPERTY ASSETS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE) (AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS ONLY)**

- 6.1 None.

**7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No

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An EIA is not required because the report does not contain financial proposals or decisions.

Yes

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**8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

- 8.1 Nottingham City Children in Care and Care Leavers' Charter (Appendix 1)

- 8.2 Have Your Say survey (Appendix 2)

**9 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

- 9.1 Nottingham City Children and Young People's Plan