



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

18TH JULY, 2018

THE BLUEPRINT FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, CABINET & PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with an update of progress made by the Blueprint Forum the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report attached at Appendix 1.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The primary focus of the Blueprint Forum is to provide looked after young people and care leavers in RCT the opportunities to have their voice heard and to promote their lived experiences at a strategic, policy and legislative level both locally, regionally and nationally.
- 3.2 Receiving personal experiences of the Council's services from a young person who has utilised the system assists the Corporate Parenting Board in establishing where the Council needs to focus priorities for the benefit of the children in the looked after system and for care leavers to ensure that they receive the support and same start in life as everyone else.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As stated in the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2015-16, the Board felt it was important to receive updates from Voices from Care to learn of their progress made and future initiatives.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

9.1 The work of the Blueprint Forum links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan priority – 'Rhondda Cynon Taf's Children will receive a great start in life...'

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The Corporate Parenting Board feel it is necessary to receive regular updates in respect of the progress and future initiatives made by the Blueprint Forum.

10.2 The updates provide an opportunity for Members and Young People alike to pose any questions they may have to one another.



The Blueprint Forum

Progress Report: September 2017 to April 2018

VOICES FROM CARE

45 The Parade, Cardiff CF243AB
Authored by: Christopher Dunn

A summary of activities from Voices From Care's Blueprint Forum participation project with RCT Local Authority.

The Blueprint Forum

Progress Report: September 2017 to April 2018

The primary focus of the Blueprint Forum is to provide looked after young people and care leavers in RCT the opportunities to have their voice heard and to promote their lived experiences at a strategic, policy and legislative level both locally, regionally and nationally.

Headline Achievements

- BBC Alfie Army, Cardiff Half Marathon
- Challenge Wales Voyage
- RCT Children's Services Interview Panel
- 'Money and Wellbeing' Guide for Young People
- AFA Cymru IRO charter
- Forum highly commended by WCVA

Summary of Blueprint Meetings, Local & National activities.

October

- **Blueprint: Children in Wales – 'Money and Wellbeing guide**
Young people from the RCT forum worked with Children in Wales to develop and create content for a guide a round 'Money and Wellbeing' – this guide will be published online by the end of August and presented back to the next CPB meeting.
<http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children/>

Alfie's Army Half Marathon

Four young people from RCT were supported by Voices From Care to participate in the BBC Alfie's Army Cardiff half marathon. All the Young People completed the race successfully and were recognised for their achievement by the Mayor at a celebration evening at the Mayor's Parlour alongside, family, support, representatives from RCT and BBC.

November

- **Blueprint Session**

Corporate parents attending Blueprint to find out what the group have been working on, this was a key session on developing links between young people and corporate parents. The group were introduced to Elected Member Christina Leyshon. The group re-capped on the Children in Wales 'Money and Wellbeing' guide to revise content before publication in August. Halloween themed including carving and group work activities.

- **RCT Corporate Parenting Board**

Young person from RCT attended the CPB supported by Voices From Care. Young person was able to feed back to the board about opportunities the RCT forum has been involved in, and how young voices have been promoted.

December

- **Visit to 10 Downing Street**

Children from RCT attended 10 Downing Street Christmas Celebration in London. The visit was the young people's 1st trip to London & one's first trip on a train. During this unique opportunity the young people attend Downing Street Christmas party in addition to a sightseeing tour.

- **RCT Forum Christmas celebration meal**

Young people who are part of the forum decided where to have their Christmas meal. The meal is to celebrate the work and achievements of those who are part of the forum in the last year and celebrate as an RCT care family.

January

- **Blueprint forum**

AFA Cymru attended to devise IRO standards with young people at the RCT forum in an introductory workshop. This was an opportunity for young people from the forum to influence the standards for IRO's in Wales.

- **Preparation for Corporate Parenting Board**

Voices From Care supported young person from the RCT forum to prepare to present at RCT's Corporate Parenting Board. Ensuring that the young person has the support that they need and has influenced the information to be presented at the board.

- **Corporate Parenting Training**

Young person from the RCT forum attended Corporate Parenting Training with Practice Solutions and Voices From Care. Young person co-delivered a presentation on 'What it means to be looked after in RCT' and ran an ice-breaker around how it feels to be looked after.

February

- **Blueprint forum**

AFA Cymru attended to finalise IRO standards with young people at the RCT forum. This was an opportunity for young people from the forum to influence the standards for IRO's in Wales and to see what work has taken place since the January session with AFA.

- **Blueprint Forum**

Gathering young people's thoughts around RCT's Two Sides website – what is good about the website, how it could be improved, thoughts around the content on the website and how young people can engage in the website. These were then sent back to the IRO team to carry out further work with Blueprint.

- **Preparation for RCT interview panel – outreach visit & RCT interview**

Voices From Care supported young person from the RCT forum to prepare questions to be asked in the interviews for a new position in RCT. Voices From Care attended their local area (Swansea) to help prepare the young person and introduce them to what an interview is and interview set ups. Supporting the young person with further information and confidence skills along with supporting another young person from the RCT to devise and prepare question to be asked in the interviews. Ensuring young people had everything they needed in preparation to being on the interview panel.

- **RCT interviews**

Voices From Care supported two young people to attend and take part on the young person's interview panel for the new RCT role. Young people had the opportunity to lead on the interviews, to share their feedback on candidates and to meet with professionals from RCT to share their thoughts on suitability for the role. Young people felt empowered and listened to.

March

- **Blueprint: NYAS taster session**

NYAS attended to deliver a taster session to young people at the RCT forum around Peer Advocacy and Peer Advocacy Training – including how young people can be involved in taking part in the training.

April

- **‘When I’m Ready’ in residential care**
Young person from RCT shared their views on their experience of residential care with support from Voices From Care. Young person’s experiences and views then fed into the final findings around introducing ‘When I’m Ready’ into residential care.
- **RCT Children Looked After (CLA) Awards**
Representatives from the RCT forum attended the CLA awards and supported the event by working on the sign in desk, providing attendees with information along with a young person becoming the mascot of the Awards as a Welsh Dragon. Young people from the forum were also nominated for numerous awards, being awarded at the event.

Interactions with National Projects:

Below provides a snapshot of some of the Blueprint Forums’ interactions with Voices From Care’s Regional/National Membership Programme.

October

- **Challenge Wales Voyage**
Young people from RCT and the Care 2 Work programme took part in a one day voyage to gain an entry level 3 ‘Team Work’ qualification with Agored Cymru. The day consisted of young people working the boat, supporting their peers and taking on challenge including completed a work booklet.
- **Public Accounts Inquiry for Looked After Children**
Welsh Assembly supported a digital media workshop to film young people around ‘What it means to be looked after’ to be fed into the report to give a visual representation of voices of young people.
- **Passport Campaign Event for Young People**
Young representatives from the RCT forum attended the regional event held in Cardiff to present the views of young people around those who leave care to have a valid passport. Young people were able to have a voice, be heard, help influence change and have direct conversations with professionals and peers.
- **Voices From Care choir with Wales Millennium Centre**
Children and foster carers from RCT who are interested in joining the RCT forum attended the Voices From Care choir rehearsals led by Old Men Aloud’s Craig Yates. The choir is made up of children, young people who are, or have been looked after including

those who support them such as; Foster Parents, Foster Siblings, Support Workers and Social Workers. The choir's aim was to perform at the opening ceremony of the Festival of Voice at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Bay. These rehearsals would take place twice a month until April 2018.

November

- **Listen Up Regional Group**

Young representatives from the RCT forum attended Voices from Care's regional event in half term to share their views on education; what works well, what needs improving and things that need to change.

- **Pen Y Fan Hike – Children in Need**

Young people were attended a Pen Y Fan Hike arranged by Voices From Care. This was an opportunity to develop new skills, meet peers, overcome barriers and be inspired to reach goals and ambitions. All young people completed the hike, in celebration of Children in Need day. Young person from RCT forum also attended the Children in Need launch evening in Cardiff. Both young person and support attended the evening which was the recording of Children in Need's Wales show at BBC studios in Llandaff.

- **CASCADE Research Methods Training with Cardiff University (2 day training)**

Learning about how different methods are used when carrying out research in Social Care, an opportunity for young people to be involved in different methods, share their views on methods and how methods can be used to provide young people with a voice.

December

- **CASCADE Voices**

Young representatives from the RCT forum attended CASCADE Voices with Cardiff University and Voices From Care to discuss a research bid/proposal. The proposal was about a provision for young mothers/parents rolling out across Wales; looking to support those who have had a child removed to be able to have a family in the future.

- **Street Football Wales Women's Cup Competition**

Young women aged 16+ involved in the RCT forum had the opportunity to be part of Voices From Care's women's football team; taking part in Street Football Wales's Women's Cup Competition. Street Football Wales is a social inclusion charity that aims to bring young people together through sport. The Voices From Care Women's Team won 'Women's Cup Runners Up' awarded with a trophy.

- **Voices From Care's Christmas Celebrations**

Young people from the RCT forum attended the Christmas Celebration which gave them the opportunity to meet with other young people with similar experiences, to develop their social skills and to experience new opportunities including attending Winter Wonderland and ice-skating.

January

- **Voices From Care's AGM**

Young representatives from the RCT forum attended Voices from Care's AGM to take part in hearing what work Voices From Care has carried out with young people, to inform young people on future ideas of work carried out by Voices From Care and also for young people to take part in voting for a new young person to sit on the Charitie's Board of Trustees. This was an opportunity for young people to ask questions to the Board and to hear how they are and will continue to support young people who are, or have been looked after in Wales.

- **Questions to Ask Video – Care Day**

Young person from the RCT forum represented young people's voice as part of Voices From Care's 'Questions not to ask' video – a video to break down stigma, to challenge and to introduce children & young people looked after in a new light. Voice overs from the video were presented on BBC Radio on Care Day February 2018 and the video was launched in North Wales.

February

- **Training delivered to Cardiff Met students**

Young person from RCT forum was involved in co-facilitating training with other young people, with support from Voices From Care. The aim was to promote the experiences of care experienced young people and how best practice has been promoted to support young people.

- **Proud To Be Me**

Young People and elected members from RCT attended Voices From Care's annual celebration event 'Proud To Be Me'. This event was coproduced with our young people and co delivered by our young people. Proud To Be Me brought around 130 professionals and care experienced young people from across Wales to discuss what it really means to

be in care in Wales today. This was achieved through a series of inspirational young people's speeches, our young people hosting the event and through a series of workshop co designed by young people.

- **Care Day 18**
 - **BBC Radio Wales-** Two Young People from RCT forum discussed the ethos of Care Day, 5 Nations one Voices and the stigma care experienced young people face on BBC Radio Wales 'Good Morning Wales' Show.
 - **Care Family Event South Wales-** David Melding AM and chair of the Ministerial Advisory Group for children looked after, hosted Voices From Care & young people at the Senedd (Welsh Parliament) to Celebrate Care Day. We discussed the importance of developing a care community, promoting positive messages and the need to actively break the stigma of being care experienced. During the session we showcased the 2 Care Day videos in which young people from RCT were featured in and attended.
 - **Questions not to ask-** The concept was developed by the young people at the 5 Nations Care Day planning residential, hosted in Wales, in September. The video is a funny take on questions care experienced young people are typically asked which features a young person from RCT. <https://vimeo.com/255896314>
 - **Lighting Up Cardiff City Hall-** Care Day in Cardiff concluded by meeting for an informal celebration outside Cardiff City Hall that was light up in green to support Care Day and Voices From Care.

March

- **National Assembly For Wales (NAFW) – Voting at 16**

Young people from the RCT forum attended to have an input into the discussion around lowering the voting age in Wales with Kelly Harris from the NAFW. Young people's thoughts fed back into NAFW's findings from young people across Wales. Informative session around the Youth Parliament in Wales and how young people can be involved.
- **'When I'm Ready' Consultation**

Young people took part in a workshop around exploring 'When I'm Ready' in residential care in Wales. They had the opportunity to have their say and share their ideas on introducing this scheme into residentials.

April

- **Challenge Wales 2 day residential**

Young person from RCT forum took part in a residential with other young people from across Wales. The residential took place on an around the world 72ft yacht with Challenge Wales. Young people managed the running of the boat, including preparing the boat to sail, cooking food, steering on the helm whilst working towards an Agored Cymru entry Level 3 qualification in 'Team Work' – young person who attended from RCT achieved a level in 'Communication Skills' as previously completed the 'Team Work' qualification.

- **Listen Up Regional Group**

Young representatives from the RCT forum attended Voices from Care's regional event in half term to share their views on the new Advisory Group being launched by Voices From Care – what characteristics should a young advisor part of the group have, how can they represent and champion young people's views and how young people can become part of the Advisory Group.

- **University of South Wales Atrium open evening**

Young people from RCT forum attended the open evening where they had the opportunity to take part in a taster session in Art, Music and Drama. Young people were informed about what the university offers young people and how young people can apply to study at the university. The aim of the day was to inspire young people to further their education and to show what courses are out there for young people to study.

- **'Cathy' performance at the Wales Millennium Centre**

Young people from RCT and other young people from across the region attended a performance around homelessness at the Wales Millennium Centre. This performance challenged stigma of homelessness and offered forum theatre – members of the audience to take part in performing.

Other:

- **WCVA recognition**

The Blueprint RCT forum along with the Alfie's Army group of running from Blueprint have been 'highly commended' by the WCVA for volunteer of the year awards. Young people will be invited to a celebratory evening.

- **Corporate Parents attending Blueprint**

Corporate Parents have attended sessions from April onwards to consult with young

people to find their views on support in RCT for young people transitioning into independence and the RCT Two Side Website. (Update in next report)

Initiatives for the Next 6 Months:

- To build relationships with those who have Corporate Parenting responsibilities in RCT; particularly with departments and bodies that sit outside of social services. The aim of this is to offer insight, advice and guidance on how to support looked after children and care leavers. Have themed workshops per month around Corporate Parenting including housing, health and education.
- To continue to build the relationship between the Corporate Parenting Panel and The Blueprint Forum. For young people from the Forum to be more actively involved in Corporate Parenting Board Meetings as representatives – to start a video conversation between young people and Corporate Parents.
- The group to work on a newsletter to be sent out to young people in RCT around the Blueprint Forum.
- To draft a 'work plan' for Blueprint forum for the year 2018/19 with RCT and young people.
- Young people to have more involvement in the RCT Two Sides Website.
- To engage with more young people, particularly those aged 14-16.
- To train the group up in Peer Advocacy with NYAS.

Upcoming Blueprint sessions:

- 18th July
- 15th August
- 19th September
- 17th October
- 21st November
- 5th December

These sessions are being held at the Old Barnardo's Building (21A Morgan Street) in Pontypridd 5.30pm-7pm.

For more information on this report or VFC events please contact Chris on 02920 451431 or email christopher@vfcc.org.uk

DRAFT

Alfies Army Run

"Do something that inspires you for the rest of your life"

Alfie trained and worked with a 100 young people from across Wales to run in the Cardiff half marathon, five of which were from Voices From Care. All five of our young people ran and

completed the Cardiff half marathon on Sunday the first of October. Gareth 'Alfie' said "Ages 17-21 can be a very troublesome time, but it can also be the one time in your life where you can find something or do something that inspires you for the rest of your life, and that's ultimately

why I wanted to go for this age group."



Angel
"I felt really nervous at the beginning and I didn't know if I could do it. Amber kept me going which was amazing. When I finished I felt as if I had accomplished something amazing and I am considering applying next year".



Alfie's Army 2017 @AlfiesA... · 01 Oct
So proud of @gareththomas14 and all of #AlfiesArmy2017. Congratulations to all the amazing people who ran the #CardiffHalf



2 18 87



Kirsty
"I was really nervous at first but felt really Proud once i had completed the Cardiff half".