

**AGENDA ITEM 3**



# The Blueprint Forum

Progress Report: April to September 2015

**VOICES FROM CARE**

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

# The Blueprint Forum

## Progress Report: April to September 2015

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 and nationally.

### Participation Group Details

<b>Number of Meetings:</b>	6
<b>Number of Young People worked with;</b>	17
<b>Average group attendance;</b>	6
<b>Age range:</b>	15-22
<b>Foster Care:</b>	1
<b>Residential Care:</b>	6
<b>After Care:</b>	10
<b>New Members to the group:</b>	5
<b>Group Drop off</b>	0
<b>Members Linking in with VFC National Projects</b>	10

### Headline Achievements

- Involvement in Children's Commissioner for Wales 'My Planner' App.
- 3 young people voted onto Voices From Cares Board of Trustees.
- A young person evidencing participation to The National Assembly for Wales's Health and Social Care Committee.

### Summary of Activities

#### April

The Blueprint Forum were joined by participation groups from Swansea and Caerphilly to consult on the Children's Commissioner for Wales 'My Planner App', which is an advice /

information guide for young people in the process of leaving care or have left care. The session was designed to give young people the chance to discuss how they would use the app, how it should be designed and importantly its content. The session also gave the young people from each project the opportunity to interact and discuss how they provide support and opportunity for looked after children and care leavers in their area.

### **May**

Due to a number of new attendees, this session was adapted to introduce the new young people to blueprints ethos, activates and members. During this session the group also had a final discussion on RCT's LAC packs.

### **June**

This session was intending to have a guest speaker to consult with the group on RCT's Children's Service Remodeling. Unfortunately speaker was unable attend the session, so the group discussed what projects or schemes the group would like to build links with and possibly invited to attend a group meeting. This included the Care to Work scheme in RCT, the Miskin Project, Valleys Kids and other national participation groups.

### **July**

Voices From Care were commissioned by the Welsh Government to develop a national consultation, gathering looked after young people's views and experiences in education. The results of which have been developed into a report that will inform the Welsh Governments strategy on improving the educational attainment of Looked after children.

### **August**

The Blueprint summer trip took place in August. With young people decided that they wanted to go to the recently opened Crazy golf course based in Cardiff. The group felt it was important to have activates that promote a team ethos.

### **September**

September's meeting included preparing a presentation and attending at Voices From Care AGM. The presentation focused on what Blueprint and Voices has achieved in the last 12 months. The young people from the blueprint forum, alongside others from across Wales elected who they would like to become trustees of Voices From Care, with Three subsequently being elected.

## Interaction within Voices From Care

Below provides a snapshot of Blueprint Forums interactions with Voices From Care's National Membership Program.

- A young person gave evidence at the **National Assembly for Wales, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee**, looking into CSSIW service users engagement framework. The invitation to present originated from the groups involvement in CSSIW and Voices From Care Independent Evaluators pilot project. The young person is also involved with CSSIW National Advisory Board.
- A member also took part in an event held by **Cardiff University** on the Fostering Health Futures initiative.
- Three members delivered a Q & A session at **Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers AGM**.
- Several members have received training from the **4'C (Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru)**. The training delivered was on the commissioning of services.
- Two members assisted in the delivery of the **Wales Governments** Young People's Citizen Panel events in the summer.
- Several young people have been involved in **Voices From Care's 5 Nations Project**, which aims to promote the voices of looked after children and care leavers from across Wales, England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. The involvement has been from attending a summer camp in Scotland, to participating in a residential, which assisted in the development of the 5 Nations strategy over the next 3 years.
- A Young Person has also presented to a member of the **United Nations, Children's Right Committee**. They have since been invited to be part of the UK delegation that will present young people view to the full committee in Geneva.

## Initiatives for the Next 6 Months

- **Group Mentors & Young Reps.** The group mentor initiative, which will begin in October, aims to give young people greater control over the development and delivery of the group's sessions. The Young Reps element, which will begin in Q4,

aims to encourage members to participate in sessions and to act as a liaison between members and group facilitators for less confident members when needed.

- A session is being developed with the National Assembly for Wales, focusing on how young people can become engaged with Assembly Members and the Senedd. The session will also inform the young people on the up and coming election.
- The group will be developing their second newsletter, with assistance from RCT's press and promotions team.
- The group will work with RCT on the development of the Blueprint Forums section on RCT's advice and guidance website for looked after children.

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