



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019**

### **VOICES FROM CARE – RCT FORUM**

#### **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 RCT Forum during October 2018 – March 2019.

##### **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 RCT 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 RCT 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 RCT Forum.

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



# RCT's Annual Report

Progress Report: October 2018 to March 2019

**VOICES FROM CARE**

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A summary of activities from Voices From Care's project with RCT CBC.

# RCT's Annual Report

## Progress Report: October 2018 to March 2019

The project was agreed by Voices From Care Cymru and RCT Council. The main focus was on developing a project framework that supports and consults with care experienced young people on their educational experiences and provides young people with the opportunity to influence national policy, practice and guidance. The young people who participated in the project also have access to Voices From Care Cymru's national participation activities.

### Key Statistical Information

Number of young people involved in project activity:	20
Number of Sessions:	6
Number of Young People engaged in wider VFC activities	5
Number of young people referred to support or advocacy services.	0

### Key Annual Outcomes:

Below provides a summary of the key initiatives and outcomes from the work of RCT Forum:

#### October 2018 – Advisory Group

#### Young People: 6, Professionals: 2 (2 x VFCC)

The RCT Forum has been working with Voices from Care Cymru to discuss the National Advisory Group. The purpose of this session was to get their perception of what this should look like, how it can be adapted and put into practice. The session was designed to get thoughts, perspective and ideas on what young people feel they should look like and how they are able to build a foundation to create a three-year strategy plan. This was a planning stage/session with the idea of continuing at the beginning of 2019.

#### Key Outcomes:

- Care experienced children and young people having the opportunities to have direct conversations with young people within the group;
- Children and young people had the opportunity to meet with their peers and support one another in sharing their experiences with children's services

- The idea of developing of a Young Person’s e-guide on CLA reviews and chairing their own meeting/review
- The group have been inspired to develop resources for young people on chairing their own reviews.

### November 2018 – Feedback on Commissioning Guide

Young People: 4, Professionals: 2 (2 x VFCC)

The focus on the group is Jayne Thomas (RCT Local Authority) attended and facilitated the session. RCT local authority are currently consulting young people on what to ask in an advocacy service and what do they expect from it. Jayne prompted the group to speak about the support they did/haven’t received, what they found helpful and the barriers they felt they faced along with any stigma they had to manage being care experienced. This is an ongoing piece of work with the local authority.

#### Key Outcomes:

- Understanding the experiences young people have had;
- Demonstrate how to work as part of a team in a given task;
- Accepting opinions and thoughts on topics;
- Contribute to achieving team goals for a given task;
- Feedback on personal experiences and outcomes for young people

### December 2018 – Christmas Celebrations

Young People: 10, Professionals: 3 (3x VFCC)

The RCT group joined in the festive spirit by attending our Christmas party/event at Adventure Golf and then food at Frankie and Benny’s. The young people attended had a great time and interacted with others. This was a great opportunity for the young people to engage with the members, socialise and enjoy time together. They showed their skills on the golf course and also team spirit. Overall the young people had a great time!

#### Key Outcomes:

- Interaction with others;
- Communication;
- Fun;

- Enjoying the festive season

### **January 2019 – NSPCC Launch Event**

#### **Young People: 4, Professionals: 4 (1x VFCC, 3 x NSPCC Workers)**

We had 1 new addition to the group which is positive. NSPCC attended the group and delivered their feedback on the consultation regarding mental health services for young people. The young people engaged really well and gave constructive feedback regarding their personal experiences with the mental health services within Wales. NSPCC were able to feedback the work that they had collaborated to the young people to get their views on their findings and to add to it. This information will then be collated once again and presented at the NSPCC launch on 11<sup>th</sup> March in Future Inn Hotel, Cardiff by the young people. The young people shall be taking part in speaking on the evening.

#### **Key Outcomes:**

- The young people were able to feedback their thoughts on mental health services;
- They were able to consult with professionals on their opinions;
- The young people were able to give suggestions on change;
- Sharing valuable opinions and personal experiences;

### **February 2019 – Therapeutic Family Team (Charlie Chapman – Therapist)**

#### **Young People: 3, Professionals: 3 (1x VFCC, 2 x Therapists)**

Therapeutic Family team attended the group and delivered their session. The aim of the feedback session was to get the young people's views on what they see family therapy is, their opinions on how they perceive it and good and bad things that have happened to them previously.

Charlie and Katie then discussed situations in how things can be seen from a professional's view and asked their feedback on if the young people feel this is correct and if not how to can they approach things differently. They then showed the young people a logo that was created by other young people and asked their thoughts on it. The young people liked it as it was personal and very attractive. They asked if it was in colour and Charlie said no. Charlie asked if the group could colour them in for affect. They agreed. Overall it was a really good session and the young people engaged really well. They have asked if Charlie can feedback their views to them once it is all collated. Charlie was happy to do this.

#### **Key Outcomes:**

- Understanding the experiences young people have had;
- Demonstrate how to work as part of a team in a given task;

- Accepting opinions and thoughts on topics;
- Contribute to achieving team goals for a given task;
- Feedback on personal experiences and outcomes for young people

### **11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 - NSPCC Launch Event, Future Inn, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff**

#### **Young People: 8, Professionals: 2 (2 x Support Workers)**

The young people attended the NSPCC launch, which was held at the Future Inns Hotel, Cardiff Bay. The young people prepared speeches in preparation to deliver to the audience on the night. There were 4 young people in total from RCT and ECHO groups who did an introduction and recommendations and they were great. The launch gave an opportunity for the young people to be able to express their views on the current mental health services and the support they are receiving. They gave recommendations of what could be changed within the mental health services and the Welsh Assembly Government had representatives at the launch to hear the young people and their views as young people.

#### **Key Outcomes:**

- The young people were able to feedback their thoughts on mental health services;
- They were able to consult with professionals on their opinions;
- The young people were able to give suggestions on change;
- Sharing valuable opinions and personal experiences;
- Recommendations on how the mental health services can be improved;
- Building confidence and self esteem

### **March 2019 – Emotional Wellbeing and Mindfulness Course**

#### **Young People: 6, Professionals: 4 (2x VFCC, 1 x Gofal, 1 x NAFW)**

The young people wanted to have some training and support about mental health and wellbeing. Due to the need of the group, Candice Ringer from Gofal came to do an introductory session on mindfulness and this is the first one of many. The course will take place over the next few months where the young people will have the opportunity to gain knowledge, share experiences and learn how to be mindful. The group really enjoyed the first session and is looking forward to the next few months.

### **March 2019 – Amber Lewis – National Assembly for Wales**

#### **Young People: 6, Professionals: 4 (2x VFCC, 1 x Gofal, 1 x NAFW)**

Amber attended the group to inform them of what her role is within the National Assembly and to let the young people what is on offer for them at the Assembly. Amber explained that she is currently working with young people within the education sector to encourage them to have a voice. She did a

survey with young people and they identified mental health is the priority for young people and that the Assembly should realise that there needs to be more put into these services. It was a very informative session

### March 2019 – Feedback from Therapeutic Family Team

#### Young People: 6, Professionals: 4 (2x VFCC, 1 x Gofal, 1 x NAFW)

Following the session from the Therapeutic Family Team Charlie Chapman sent me feedback from the group so I shared this with the forum. They appreciated the feedback given and was happy with the comments and suggestions raised with this.

#### Key Outcomes:

- Understanding the experiences young people have had;
- Demonstrate how to work as part of a team in a given task;
- Accepting opinions and thoughts on topics;
- Contribute to achieving team goals for a given task;
- Feedback on personal experiences and outcomes for young people;
- Building confidence and self-esteem;
- Learning to deal with personal experiences and following it through;
- Feeling valued

#### Voices From Care's Regional Groups:

Voices From Care have developed 5 regional participation groups for care experienced young people, which provide an opportunity to influence regional and national policy, practice and guidance. The groups meet three times per year in the school holidays, with young people from Merthyr Tydfil being joined by their care experienced peers from Rhondda Cynon Taf.

## National Advisory Group

A key purpose of this group is for care experienced young people to actively engage with VFC's strategic and operational activities. A young person from RCT will be elected to sit on this group as a representative from RCT. Some members recently attended a residential at the Urdd Centre, Cardiff for 2 days to meet one another and together build a three-year strategic plan for the advisory group.

The idea behind this was to promote, achieve ideas and thoughts about promoting proud. The concept behind this was superheroes theme. This was an opportunity for the young people to promote their aspirations and goals through demonstrating them on their superhero. This was a great project for them to be creative and to demonstrate their aspirations through their superhero. Overall it was a great residential and the young people achieved a lot from it.

## Participation Programme

Voices From Care Cymru's participation program aims to provide care experienced young people with opportunities that promote their welling and aspirations. Opportunities that young people from Carmarthenshire have engaged with include;

- **Proud To Be Me** is Voices From Care's national celebration event. 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. A group from RCT attended the event, in addition to a member of RCT's group speaking at the event.

## 5 Nations

5 Nations 1 Voice is a project that brings care experienced young people from across the UK and Ireland together to promote the lived experiences and enact proactive change for care experienced young people. Activities that Carmarthenshire young people have been involved in include;

- **Care Day 19**
  - **Lighting Up Wales Millennium Centre-** Care Day in Cardiff included a number of professionals and young people promoting why they care on social media, concluded by meeting for an informal celebration outside Wales Millennium Centre as part of the National Advisory Group residential which also took place on this day.
- **5 Nations young person planning residential.** Voices from Care Cymru offered a space to a representative from Echo's at the 5 Nations planning residential, but unfortunately the young person was unable to attend. This weekend focused on providing young people and 5 Nations staff with the opportunity to inspire each other, build friendships, have fun and share views about the experience of living in and leaving care. The main focus for the residential is to reflect

on each nation's 5N1V journey, discuss the impact of Care Day, to gather thoughts and ideas of how care day can be celebrated in 2019.

## AGM

- **Voices From Care Cymru's AGM** brought young people from across Wales together to elect new professional and young people trustees, to hear young people highlights of the year and how they would like to see the organisation move forward.

## Outreach Roadshow

Voices From Care Cymru have produced a mini workshop along with a presentation to deliver to schools within the RCT areas to encourage engagement and outreach to young people in care who are currently not aware of the forum. We have successfully completed 3 workshops over the course of 3 months to 12 young people who are currently being looked after. It was a great opportunity for education sectors and Voices From Care Cymru to work together. It is encouraging to know that the schools/education are keen to work with us. We hope to have more attendance over the next few months.