



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

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **VOICES FROM CARE – RCT FORUM**

#### **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 April 2019-March 2020.

#### **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 2020-2021, 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 Forum Annual Summary Report

Introduction:			
Name of Project:	RCT Local Group	Funder:	RCT LA
Team Member:	Francesca Pritchard	Project Timeframe:	April 2019-March 2020

Project Summary:	
<b>Young People connected with</b>	<p>Over the duration of the last financial year the project engaged with thirty-two (32) care experienced children and young people RCT residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ten (10) under 16</li> <li>• Twelve (19) - 16 – 24-year olds</li> <li>• Three (3) 24 + year olds.</li> </ul> <p>With an additional 12 young people being supported by VFCC ‘getting ready’ and ‘wellbeing’ projects.</p>
<b>Projects Themes</b>	<p>The RCT forum’s monthly sessions focused on three main areas, developing information resources from care experienced young people, undertaking a training to become peer mentors who deliver wellbeing and self-care training to their peers and a creative writing project focusing on mental health.</p> <p><b>Resource Development;</b></p> <p>The RCT forum played a key role in developing a series on information guides for care experienced young people across Wales. These resources: developed by Children in Wales, provide young people advice on sibling contact, benefit entitlements and online safety for care experienced young people. The forum where involved in content development, design and promotion of these resources, which can be found using the link below;  <a href="https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children/">https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children/</a></p> <p><b>Peer Mentor Training</b></p> <p>State of Mind is a project delivered by Platfform that helps young people develop everyday wellbeing strategies, whilst talking about mental health and learning new skills. As part of the programme the young people where trained as peer mentors to pass</p>

	<p>on their own learning and support to other young people in their own community. In the next year, we aim to support the group to deliver self-care group sessions to the care experienced community throughout RCT.</p> <p><b>Creative writing</b></p> <p>VFCC and partnered up with Write 4 Word, to deliver creative writing and poetry sessions with the young people, focussing on creative writing to promote positive mental health. Sessions continue to be delivered via virtual means, whilst we remain under lockdown during COVID-19.</p> <p><b>Project Evaluation;</b></p> <p>During the last year the local group was evaluated by the young people. Their feedback has now been implemented as part of the Local Group Development Officer’s action plan for the Local Group moving forward.</p>
<p><b>Project Sucesses</b></p>	<p><b>Former group members employed at Voices From Care Cymru</b></p> <p>In the last year, VFCC have employed two (2) new members of staff who were previous members of the RCT Local Group and participated in the Care 2 Work scheme. One of those members of staff becoming the new Local Group Development Officer, running The RCT Forum.</p> <p><b>Building Connections with RCT schools</b></p> <p>Work has started with Tonyrefial Comprehensive school to consult with a younger age demographic within the local authority. This includes delivering consultation sessions on their experiences and ambitions for the care system in RCT. This work will continue throughout the next financial year, to increase the number of young people we engage with throughout the authority via the local groups.</p> <p><b>Presenting to corporate parents from across Wales</b></p> <p>The group also led on presenting to corporate parents across Wales the findings from ‘Listen, Act, Thrive’, a consultation report on the mental health of care experienced young people. Young people from RCT where involved in the consultation and project design during the year 2018/19.</p> <p><b>Developing the care experienced communities priorities</b></p>

The projects participant played a key role in designing Voices From Care Cymru's strategic plan 19-23. The group; alongside young people from across Wales, developed their top 5 priority area for change. The 5 areas chosen by care experienced children and young people from across Wales were:

- 1) The Importance of mental health and emotional wellbeing
- 2) The importance of sibling relationships
- 3) The Importance of being loved
- 4) Breaking the Stigma
- 5) The importance of stability