



# **LAC & Care Leaver Participation End of year review 2014/15**

## **London Borough of Merton**

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## 1. Context

- 1.1 We have the highest ambitions for our Looked after Children and Care Leavers, and we judge our success by a range of criteria including being able to demonstrate that the voices of those children and young people are listened to, and have informed and improved our service offer.
- 1.2 In 2014 Merton's Children's Trust launched a User Voice Strategy to further implement one of the eight core values of the Children and Young People's Plan, which highlights the importance we give to listening and responding to our children, young people and service users. ***"We listen, respond to and value our children and young people. Children and young people have rights to participate in decisions affecting their lives and participation provides opportunities for them to develop important life skills. Services should not only listen but should help children and young people shape services they receive. We should also canvas and respond to the views of parents and carers"***.
- 1.3 Our ambitions are in line with and underpinned by key legislation, policy and regular guidance. The **Children Act 1989 and 2004** for England and Wales recognises children as citizens with the right to be heard. The Act made it a legal requirement for the views of children to be taken into account in any court decisions affecting them. The Children Act 2004 (section 53) amends sections 17, 20 and 47 of the Children Act 1989. It requires that when working with children in need, their wishes and feelings should be ascertained and used to inform making decisions. **Working Together 2015** states that one of the key principles for effective safeguarding arrangements in a local area is to take a child centred approach: 'for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children'. In addition the document is clear that assessing need and providing help should focus on 'the needs and views of the child'. **Ofsted Joining the dots (March 2015)** highlighted that 'Senior leaders in [Good and Outstanding] authorities sought feedback from a variety of sources including children and families, staff and partners. Leaders in these authorities kept a relentless focus on demonstrating how they were improving outcomes for all the children who received the services. They saw gathering feedback as a crucial element in driving forward such improvements.
- 1.4 Children and young people in local authority care are greatly affected by the policies and decisions of the local authority as their 'corporate parent' Being able to influence those decisions is a fundamental right. Enabling young people in care to work together to create change for themselves and their peers is a crucial role for local authorities. Participation for children and young people in care can range from having a say over their individual circumstances and being able to express one-off views about the quality of provision (for example through complaints and comments procedures).
- 1.5 Our User Voice Strategy provides a framework by which we capture and monitor feedback to influence service design, delivery and continuous improvement. The Children, Schools and Families Department deliver this through an annual programme of user voice activity embedded within our service planning process. This report summarises some of our key successes in including children and young people's

voices in our daily practice and service improvements and how we have delivered our five User Voice Strategy commitments during 2014/15.

- 1.6 A central component of Merton's User Voice Strategy is a commitment to encouraging and supporting Looked After Children to give us feedback and to ensure that their views are key to informing decisions about care planning as well as informing wider service planning and delivery.
- 1.7 We listens to the views of children and young people, carers, parents and other service users through four key avenues. These are:
  - An approach expected of all practitioners and managers which puts children's wishes and feelings at the centre of decision making and planning
  - Merton's youth participation promise
  - Targeted user feedback
  - Complaints and compliments

## **2. The LAC Participation Team**

- 2.1 Staffing in the team is as follows:
  - Participation Officer – 1fte
  - Apprentice Participation Officer - 2fte
- 2.2 The role played by the Participation Officer has been key in supporting the work of the Child in Care Council, improving the engagement of young people in their reviews and developing opportunities to ensure that young people's voices are heard through the Corporate Parenting Board. Successes to date include the development of young people's chairing of their own reviews, the re launch of the Care Leaver's Pledge and key improvements in the work of the CICC. The CICC's success has been in its capacity to engage the older young people who are in or who have left care.
- 2.3 In 2014/15 we undertook a review of the role of the Participation Officer and the resulting consultation concluded that children and young people's participation is a priority for the London Borough Merton. As a result we have expanded the role of the worker to encompass a broader range of participation activity including working with children who are subject to child protection plans and those 'in need'.

## **3. Action Plan Activity**

### **Activity 1: Develop links between the Child in Care Council and the Merton Children's Safeguarding Board**

- 3.1 In 2014-15 discussions were started with the interim LSCB Board Manager to agree how best to ensure that the Child in Care Council have a voice on the safeguarding board and ensure that a two way communication is promoted between the board and the council.
- 3.2 The apprentice will ensure that the voice of the child is considered in all discussion. They will be able to ensure that local and national issues are fed into both the work being done by the participation team and into the CICC.

- 3.3 This piece of work is being taken forward in 2015-16 and a meeting is planned with the Independent Chair of the LSCB on 8 September.

### **Activity 2: Develop a website for the Child in Care Council**

- 3.4 We aim to launch a new Merton Website for LAC which will utilise up-to-date technology and be a hub for children and young people's interactions. Young people will be able to access it whilst being on the move via their smart phones and tablets.
- 3.5 Young people will be able to access information, join debates, and fill in questionnaires all from the palm of their hand whether Merton offices are open or not. The website must be kept up to date with Apps, features, and information if it is to be a success with young people, this website could possibly be the main way young people living away from Merton keep in touch with the service due to their living distance from Merton.
- 3.6 The specification for the website has been developed and signed off by the Corporate Technical Design Authority. As part of the specification process we held a themed Child in Care Council Meeting which enabled young people to participate in a workshop focusing on the design and functionality of the website. We are now awaiting the proposal from the commissioned company and hope to be able to progress the build in the coming months.
- 3.7 In the interim period prior to the implementation of the website we have agreed that the Participation Apprentice will set up a webpage on the council website that will have information for our looked after children and care leavers.

### **Activity 3: Develop leaflet and information pack for children and young people in care**

- 3.8 We have developed a LAC Pack for all children and young people who are accommodated by the local authority. The pack contains introductory information on various aspects of being looked after including health, education, advocacy and complaints.
- 3.9 This resource pack was developed by the apprentices working in the participation service. This initial pack was prepared with older young people in mind and for the 2015-16 plan we will be looking at developing information for our younger looked after children.

### **Activity 4: Voice of the child in foster care**

- 3.10 The Fostering Team worked with young people from the Child in Care Council to produce the 'Let's Talk' document. The document supports the recording of a monthly discussion between the foster carer and the child in placement. Subjects covered in the discussion relate to the child's awareness of their care plan, how they feel about the placement and how things are in terms of school.
- 3.11 Information from the Let's Talk discussions are shared with the child's social worker to ensure that areas for further discussion and exploration are taken forward.

3.12 From the "Let's Talk" forms recently reviewed all the young people said that they enjoyed the leisure activities afforded them in their placements, (one young person was going to watch his favourite team Manchester United play at White Hart Lane). One young girl enjoys singing, writing songs and drama but she is not happy with the number of social workers she has had since being accommodated. She told her carer that she "misses her home which she can't wait to go back to". This sentiment was shared by another young person who said that it was "sad as it is planned that I will stay in care long term, but I have to accept it and wait until I can go home" All the forms sampled showed that the children and young people were in full time education and had good friendship groups at school/college.

### **Activity 5: Young people involved in foster carer training**

3.13 In 2014-15 we developed a session within the Foster Carer Preparation Training to involve young people from the Child in Care Council. A young person-led Saturday morning session focusing on the fostering experience from the perspective of the young person is now a regular part of this training. This has also been invaluable in providing live evidence of prospective foster carer interaction with young people. As part of this process, the young people also provided written feedback of their impressions of the applicants.

3.14 We have also developed a course 'Welcoming the child into your home'. As part of this course, a member of the Children in Care Council spoke about what was beneficial from a young person's point of view, in terms of the foster carer helping them to settle into the foster home. This was well received by the foster carers who attended the course.

3.15 Feedback from potential/ current foster carers suggested that the training increased their understanding of the needs and experiences of looked after children; the aim is that this will have a positive impact on their practice:

- 'I have learnt about how to welcome a child. Let the child know you are there for him'
- 'Listening to the young people who experienced foster caring was very useful, as hearing their stories and what went wrong and right in their placements made me think of ideas on how to use my skills in working with young people'
- 'The best information was from the young girl called Michelle, who spoke very confidently to the class, and made the class aware of children in care from the child side. It was very informative to me when she said that children need to join in decisions about rules in the house'

### **Activity 6: Voice of the Care Leaver – annual survey**

3.16 We ran the care leaver survey in September 2014 and the findings were shared with the Child in Care Council members in January 2015. The recommendations from the survey were as follows:

- Ensure all workers are aware of the 'Skills support for Care Leavers' and are utilising this to support care leavers to understand further education options and the range of supports available.
- We will undertake an annual review of the Setting Up Home Allowance with our Child in Care Council

- We will undertake an annual review of the Financial Provision document.
- Develop a housing pathways/options guidance
- Run a housing themed Child in Care Council meeting on an annual basis
- Run the Care Leaver Survey on an annual basis and consider the results at the Child in Care Council

3.17 Since the survey was completed we have held a themed Child in Care Council meeting with a focus on housing issues and queries. We have reviewed the financial provision guidance for care leavers and involved the members of the council in this review (this work also included a review of the Setting Up Home Allowance). We are currently reviewing the Care Leaver Survey and will aim to run this in October 2015. In September 2015 we will be seeking to recruit an ETE worker to be based in the Virtual School to work specifically with our Care Leaver cohort. Part of this role will include awareness building in respect of national initiatives such as the 'Skills support for Care Leavers'.

### **Activity 7: Review the Child in Care and Care Leaver Pledge, and develop the Care Leaver Strategy**

3.18 In August 2014 an event was held to review the LAC and Care Leaver Pledge. The event was well attended by our young people and was supported by the DCS and Cllr Maxi Martin (Lead Member for CSF). During the event activities were carried out to support young people to review and amend the detail of the pledge which was then formally signed off by the DCS and Lead Member with key members of the Child in Care Council.

### **Activity 8: Supporting young people to make complaints and give feedback**

3.19 All children and young people entering care are given a 'Have your say' leaflet in their LAC Pack that advises them how to make a complaint, compliment or comment. All looked after children are also given information about the local advocacy service.

3.20 The issues that have been raised by young people are set out in Section 5.

3.21 Following feedback from our Child in Care Council about a reluctance to give formal feedback we set up informal drop in sessions one evening a month at a local coffee shop. These sessions offer our young people a time to socialise and meet up with other LAC and care leavers. The meetings are attended by managers, social workers and benefits maximisation officers and offer young people the opportunity to discuss issues or seek advice.

### **Activity 9: Support participation in LAC reviews**

3.22 The involvement of children and young people in LAC reviews must take into account the range of age, ability and communication requirements of the individual child, and ensuring the participation of all children in their LAC reviews should be a priority for social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's).

3.23 Participation of the child/young person at LAC Reviews will usually mean physical attendance at meetings but it is not limited to this. For some children attending meetings may be extremely stressful, and for some they are considered boring (as reported by one member of the CICC). There are many other ways a child can be

encouraged to express their wishes and feelings to the review meeting, from briefing others such as their advocates or through the use of artwork.

- 3.24 In 2014-15 the LAC Participation Team worked on a project to support children and young people to chair their LAC reviews. A leaflet was developed for the LAC pack to explain to children about their LAC reviews and about what it means to chair/co-chair your LAC review.
- 3.25 Participation in LAC reviews continues to be an area of focus for Children's Social Care. The Service Manager for LAC has developed an action plan to seek to support improvement in this area (we have already seen an improvement with Q1 data indicating that 86.4% participated in their LAC review, compared to 65.7% end of year 2014/15). One of the longer term activities within the plan is also featured in the LAC & Care Leavers Participation Plan 2015/16 and relates to an ongoing project to gather the views of young people about their experiences of LAC reviews. This will then feed into service development work to ensure that LAC review meetings and the consultation processes are more child friendly.

## **4. Child in Care Council**

- 4.1 The role of the Merton Child in Care Council is as follows:
- Provide a voice for the wider population of children looked after and care leavers
  - Help to monitor and implement the Merton Pledge
  - Bring together service users and senior managers to influence positive change
  - Develops skills and confidence building
- 4.2 The Child in Care Council meets at the Civic Centre on a monthly basis and there is an established core membership of 8 young people. This year in response to the feedback received from the care leaver survey we have held themed meetings on housing, health, e-safety and the Child in Care website. We extend the membership to themed meetings to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to participate.
- 4.3 We have also used the Child in Care Council meetings to consult on the following developments within the service:
- Staying Put
  - Financial Provision for Care Leavers
  - LAC Health Needs Assessment

## **5. Advocacy Service**

- 5.1 We currently commission an independent advocacy service from Jigsaw 4U to provide support to Looked After Children to ensure that their voice is heard and is central to decisions made about their care, since 2013 this has been delivered as an opt out service. We receive feedback from the advocacy service when there are specific issues or areas that need addressing. Examples of specific issues raised are:
- A young person experiencing a number of changes of social worker
  - A young person raising some issues in respect of his placement (not safeguarding)
  - A child raising questions about the contact that she has with other family members



- 5.2 Where issues are raised by individual children the advocate will liaise with the relevant social work team to seek resolution.

## **6. Celebrating Success**

- 6.1 There are 2 events held during the calendar year to celebrate the success of the children and young people in our care. In August 2014 we had a BBQ for our 14+ LAC and Care Leavers and in February 2015 we held a science themed event for our 5-14 year olds. These events are well attended by our looked after children, care leavers and their carers and give everyone the opportunity to recognise the achievements of the previous year.
- 6.2 In March we had an event to support positive engagement in leisure activities which took place at the Wimbledon Park Watersports Centre where young people had the opportunity to take part in a number of outdoor activities including kayaking and archery.

## **7. Action Plan**

- 7.1 Our participation work is tracked through an annual plan that is reviewed on a quarterly basis. The plan for 2014-15 is attached as appendix a and has been rag rated to indicate the progress made. The plan for 2015-16 is attached as appendix b.

## LAC & Care Leavers Participation Plan 2014/15

Action/Activity	Lead Officer	Timescale	Impact	RAG
<p><b>Develop links between the Child in Care Council and the Merton Children's Safeguarding Board:</b> One of the Participation Apprentices has been identified to attend the MSCB and ensure the voice of the child in care council at the board. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Junior Nelson/Sarah Daly	April 2014 Ongoing	<p>The Child in Care Council will have a voice on the safeguarding board and will ensure that a two way communication is promoted between the board and the council. The apprentice will ensure that the voice of the child is considered in all discussion. They will be able to ensure that local and national issues are fed into both the work being done by the participation team and into the CICC. LAC young people will play a role in the MSCB annual conference.</p>	
<p><b>Develop a website for the Child in Care Council:</b> The Participation Officers and Service Support Manager are currently working through the procurement process for the new CICC website. Good practice examples have been used to inform the specification of the website. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Junior Nelson/Lisa Richardson	November 2014	<p>All looked after children will have access to the Child in Care Council website. The website will ensure that looked after children have up to date information on all aspects of being looked after. The website will enable us to advertise events and CICC meetings and support participation through blogs and surveys. We are hoping that we will be able to engage a care leaver apprentice to support the development and maintenance of the website.</p>	
<b>Develop leaflet and</b>	Junior Nelson	July 2014	All looked after children will receive an information pack when they are	

<p><b>information pack for children and young people in care:</b> The Participation officers have been working on an information pack containing leaflets on a variety of subjects including LAC Health, Virtual School, IRO's and the Advocacy Project. Further work is being done to review the independence guides that are provided to young people aged 16+. A further resource pack will be developed for younger children. <b>(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)</b></p>			<p>accommodated (carers will also be provided with a pack). This will contain useful information on a variety of areas including health, education, complaints and what it means to be looked after.</p>	
<p><b>Voice of the child in foster care:</b> A template is developed to ensure that a monthly conversation between the carer and the child is formally recorded</p>	<p>Sadi Atim/Sarah Daly</p>	<p>August 2014</p>	<p>Foster carers are prompted to hold regular discussions with children and young people about key areas of their lives (including health, education and their care plan). The information from these reports is reviewed by the Supervising Social Worker and shared with the child's social worker. This will support early identification of issues.</p>	
<p><b>Voice of the Care Leaver – annual survey:</b> A survey document has been prepared and will be circulated to care leavers</p>	<p>Junior Nelson/Stuart Barker</p>	<p>November 2014</p>	<p>Care leavers will be asked to complete an annual survey to feedback on their experiences with a focus on accommodation, ETE, health and social work support. The messages from this survey will inform service development.</p>	

over the summer. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b>				
<b>Review the Child in Care and Care Leaver Pledge and Charter and develop the Care Leaver Strategy:</b> Consultation has taken place with the CICC and the Merton Pledge will be re-launched in August 2014. A Task and Finish Group has been established to develop Merton’s Staying Put Policy which will be a key component of the Care Leaver Strategy. <b>(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)</b>	Junior Nelson/Stuart Barker/Sarah Daly	October 2014	Care leavers will have a good understanding of their entitlements and will have had input into the development of a local pledge. Merton will have a policy in place that sets out the services and practice standards that will meet the needs of our young people and support their transition into adulthood. A launch event will ensure that all young people are aware of the pledge and to ensure that it is a live document the pledge will be considered at all Care Plan/Pathway Plan review meetings. All social work practitioners will be asked to sign the pledge.	
<b>Young people involved in foster carer training:</b> Care leavers are now supporting one of the preparation groups run for prospective foster carers and feedback from these sessions has been positive. Several care leavers have also attended a meeting with the local foster care	Junior Nelson/Steve Butcher	April 2014	Prospective foster carers will meet members of the child in care council as part of the preparatory training that they undertake. It is hoped that this will support their understanding of the needs and the stories of the young people who they will be caring for. It is also hoped that some foster carers may then make the decision to extend their age category to care for teenagers. It is hoped that we will be able to expand this offer so that our looked after young people are supporting more of our core training.	

<p>association to discuss participation and the experience of the young person in care.  <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>				
<p><b>Supporting young people to make complaints and give feedback:</b></p> <p>Re-launch of the complaints process through distribution of leaflets and awareness building in respect of the advocacy project run by Jigsaw4U.</p> <p>Regular ‘drop in’ sessions for young people will be held to support them to meet social care managers and other partners/agencies who can offer support and advice.</p> <p>To support the initial set up of these meetings social workers will be asked to accompany at least one of their young people to these events.</p> <p>All LAC young people presenting at the Civic Offices will be asked to complete a short feedback</p>	<p>Junior Nelson/Stuart Barker</p>	<p>July 2014</p>	<p>The anticipated outcome is that Looked after young people are supported to make complaints and raise issues about all aspects of their lives. Young people will have an improved understanding of the services available to them and have the opportunity to discuss issues in an informal setting.</p>	

<p>form. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>				
<p><b>Support participation in LAC reviews:</b> Fully embed the project to support young people to chair their own LAC reviews through the distribution of leaflets and awareness building regarding this opportunity. In July all looked after children aged 12+ will receive information on chairing their LAC review. Social workers and IRO’s will be asked to discuss will all children whether they wish to be involved in the chairing of their reviews. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	<p>Junior Nelson</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>All young people aged 12+ will be offered the opportunity to chair their LAC reviews, the anticipated outcome is that young people are chairing meetings and are fully involved in the reviewing of their care plans. Young people will have a better understanding of the review process and more of a voice in the process. Their participation will support them to ‘own’ their care plan.</p>	

## LAC & Care Leavers Participation Plan 2015/16

Action/Activity	Lead Officer	Timescale	Impact
<p><b>Develop links between the Child in Care Council and the Merton Children's Safeguarding Board:</b> The Participation Apprentice will have a formal link to the MSCB and ensure the voice of the child in care council at the board. The Chair of the MSCB will meet with a group of young people on a 6 monthly basis. An initial meeting will be set up between the participation apprentice and the MSCB chair in September 2015 <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	August 2015 ongoing	<p>The Child in Care Council will have a voice on the safeguarding board and will ensure that a two way communication is promoted between the board and the council.</p> <p>The participation apprentice will ensure that the voice of the child is heard and responded to. They will be able to ensure that local and national issues are fed into both the work being done by the participation team and into the CICC.</p> <p>Care Leavers and LAC young people will play a role in the MSCB annual conference.</p>
<p><b>Participate in the 'Help keep us safe' project:</b> The participation apprentice will be invited to participate in and support the project being run by Southbank University <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/Paul Bailey	Ongoing from September 2015	Loui will be involved in the project to ensure that the voice of the care leaver and looked after child is represented.
<p><b>Develop a website for the Child in Care Council:</b> The specification has been written and agreed by the Technical Design Authority (TDA). A session has been held with the CICC to get ideas for</p>	Loui Garrett/Lisa Richardson/Sarah Daly	April 2015 ongoing	<p>All care leavers and looked after children will have access to the Child in Care Council website. The website will ensure that care leavers and looked after children have up to date information on all aspects of being looked after.</p> <p>The website will enable us to advertise events and CICC meetings and support participation through blogs and surveys.</p> <p>We are hoping that we will be able to engage a care leaver apprentice to</p>

<p>look, feel and functionality. In the interim develop a web page for the CICC (LG to go on training). <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>			support the development and maintenance of the website.
<p><b>Develop leaflet and information pack for children and young people in care:</b> The LAC Pack is in place and shared with all newly accommodated children. We will now look to develop a pack for our younger LAC. <b>(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	Ongoing	All looked after children will receive an information pack when they are accommodated (carers will also be provided with a pack). This will contain useful information on a variety of areas including health, education, complaints and what it means to be looked after.
<p><b>Voice of the child in foster care:</b> Attend a fostering association meeting to ask foster carers about their views on this and the Let's Talk leaflet <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/Sadi Atim/Sarah Daly	October 2015	Foster carers are prompted to hold regular discussions with children and young people about key areas of their lives (including health, education and their care plan). The information from these reports is reviewed by the Supervising Social Worker and shared with the child's social worker. This will support early identification of issues.
<p><b>Voice of the Care Leaver – annual survey:</b> A survey document has been prepared and will be circulated to care leavers in October. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	October 2015	Care leavers will be asked to complete an annual survey to feedback on their experiences with a focus on accommodation, ETE, health and social work support. The messages from this survey will inform service development.
<p><b>Review the Child in Care and Care Leaver Pledge and Charter and develop the Care Leaver Strategy:</b></p>	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	Q4 2016	Care leavers will have a good understanding of their entitlements and will have had input into the development of a local pledge. Merton will have a policy in place that sets out the services and practice



<p>Consideration to be given as to how best to review the pledge and to ensure that all LAC and Care Leavers are aware of the promise made by the LBM.</p> <p><b>(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)</b></p>			<p>standards that will meet the needs of our young people and support their transition into adulthood.</p> <p>A launch event will ensure that all young people are aware of the pledge and to ensure that it is a live document the pledge will be considered at all Care Plan/Pathway Plan review meetings.</p> <p>All social work practitioners will be asked to sign the pledge.</p>
<p><b>Young people involved in foster carer training:</b></p> <p>Care leavers are now supporting one of the preparation groups run for prospective foster carers and feedback from these sessions has been positive.</p> <p>Several care leavers have also attended a meeting with the local foster care association to discuss participation and the experience of the young person in care.</p> <p><b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/ Steve Butcher	Ongoing	<p>Prospective foster carers will meet members of the child in care council as part of the preparatory training that they undertake. It is hoped that this will support their understanding of the needs and the stories of the young people who they will be caring for. It is also hoped that some foster carers may then make the decision to extend their age category to care for teenagers.</p> <p>It is hoped that we will be able to expand this offer so that our looked after young people are supporting more of our core training.</p>
<p><b>Supporting young people to make complaints and give feedback:</b></p> <p>Consider this as a themed event at the CICC and invite Jigsaw 4 u to attend.</p> <p>Ensure that we are learning from the issues being raised through the advocacy service.</p> <p><b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly	October 2015	<p>The anticipated outcome is that care leavers and looked after young people are supported to make complaints and raise issues about all aspects of their lives.</p> <p>Young people will have an improved understanding of the services available to them and have the opportunity to discuss issues in an informal setting.</p>

<p><b>Support participation in LAC reviews:</b></p> <p>Children and young people are involved in a project to ensure that LAC reviews are child centred.</p> <p>There will be a themed CICC event in September and an event for our younger LAC in October to support children and young people to influence the local development of child centred LAC reviews.</p> <p>Training will be run for foster carers to enable them to prepare children and young people for their LAC review.</p> <p>Training will be run for children and young people in chairing their LAC reviews.</p> <p><b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	<p>Loui Garrett/Judy Walsh/Sarah Daly</p>	<p>Q2-4 2015-16</p>	<p>Children and young people will have a better understanding of the review process and more of a voice in the process. Their participation will support them to ‘own’ their care plan and express their views.</p> <p>Children and young people will have been proactively involved in the consultation process and will influence the development of local practice in respect of the LAC review process.</p>
<p><b>Hold Celebration Events for the 14+ Team and younger LAC:</b></p> <p>The annual event is held in the summer. SW’s provide statements for all young people recognising their achievements. All children and young people are presented with a certificate.</p> <p><b>(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)</b></p>	<p>Loui Garrett/Tayo Phillips (14+)</p> <p>Loui Garrett/ Aneesa Kaprie</p>	<p>August 2015 (14+)</p> <p>February 2016</p>	<p>All children and young people receive recognition for a personal achievement.</p>

<p><b>Participation Events 0-6 &amp; 7-13:</b> Specific events are arranged to support the participation of the younger looked after children. Consider whether this is run as a separate part of the CICC with older members supporting events <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garret/SW/ Aneesa Kaprie	½ termly	The views of younger looked after children are sought and influence practice and service development.
<p><b>Social Work/Child/Young person Survey:</b> A questionnaire is developed asking social workers and young people a series of questions about imagining going into a foster placement/how it felt going into placement. This information should feed into a training event supporting social workers to better understand the experiences of our children and young people. <b>(CSF Priority: Improving outcomes for YP with complex needs and continuous improvement)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/ Sarah Daly/ Paul Lawrence	Q3& 4 2015-16	<p>Social workers are encouraged to better understand the experiences of the children and young people who are placed in care. This will support reflective practice.</p> <p>Young people will have the opportunity to share their experiences with practitioners and support practice development.</p> <p>This training will be an extension to the training provided to our in house foster carers ‘welcoming a child into your home’, which has been well received by our carers and by the young people involved.</p>
<p><b>LAC Health Study:</b> A questionnaire is circulated to our LAC and Care Leavers asking them about their experiences of LAC health services. A report will then be prepared to feed into the LAC health needs assessment. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Rebecca Devine	August 2015	We have an understanding of the experiences and views of our young people and this informs service development.

<p><b>Young person on the fostering and adoption panel:</b> The participation apprentice is a member of the panel <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/Eva Lindsay	September 2015	The apprentice will consider applications along with other panel members and work to ensure that the issues that are important to young people are taken into account within the approval process.
<p><b>CICC – Functionality and membership:</b> Revisit the allocation of roles and responsibilities, agree a chairperson. Links with partners/corporate parents are revisited and formalised <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/Sarah Daly	October 2015	The CICC members have roles allocated to them and are supported to develop links to officers in the council. The feedback loop to the CICC is improved and there is a greater understanding of the role of the corporate parent in the council.
<p><b>Child in Care Council present to the Corporate Parenting Board:</b> Participation apprentice to work with the CICC to prepare a presentation for the Corporate Parenting Board <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	CICC/Sarah Daly	March 2016	The CICC are participating in the Corporate Parenting Board and present key issues and challenges to the board.
<p><b>Communication with children and young people</b> Develop a newsletter and calendar of events <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b></p>	Loui Garrett/Sarah Daly	October 2015 and ongoing	There is clear communication to all looked after children about the events and activities that are going on. All LAC, Care Leavers and carers are aware of planned events and activities. The newsletter will also be an opportunity to celebrate the events that have taken place.
<p><b>Young people are involved in the interview process</b> Training is delivered to support young people to understand the interview process.</p>	Rebecca Devine/Dee Elliot	Ongoing Training in August 2015	Young people are involved in all panels (either by joining with the formal interview process or with separate interview panels). They are involved in the decision making around the appointment process.

Young people are involved in the interview process for all social work and management roles in CSC. <b>(CSF Priority – Empowering young people to play an active role)</b>			
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