

Report title	Children in Care Survey 2023	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Christopher Burden Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable director	Alison Hinds, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
Accountable employee	Jazmine Walker Email:	Head of Children and Young People in Care jazmine.walker@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Children and Young People in Care Meeting	20 December 2023
	Childrens Social Care Leadership Meeting	21 December 2023

Recommendation for action:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Children in Care Survey 2023 report.

Recommendation for noting:

Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The findings of the Children in Care Annual Survey for 2023 and the highlighted areas for development.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Parenting Board on the Children in Care Annual Survey 2023 results and findings.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The City of Wolverhampton is determined to be the best possible Corporate Parents to its children in care. To achieve this, the Council seeks to hear and support where possible and co-produce services with children in their care. The Children in Care Annual Survey is a key annual activity to understanding the wider children in care population's views and experiences and this survey feeds into the work of the Council to support children in its care and provide the best possible services throughout the year.
- 2.2 The full findings from the Children in Care Survey 2023 can be found at Appendix 1 and a summary of the findings is provided below.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 Strengths highlighted by the survey include:

- 76 children and young people, 25% of the children in care population (310) aged 5-16 within the city of Wolverhampton, completed the Children in Care Survey 2023. An increase in response rate by 16% from 2022.
- 64% stated they were aware of the advocacy service.
- 90% rated their relationship with someone who cares for them at home 8/10 or higher.
- 75% reported their relationship with their social worker 8/10 or above.
- The majority of young people attend their reviews and 74% reported they were comfortable with how their child in care reviews are conducted. 55% reported their relationship with their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) as 8/10 or above.
- Over 92% reported feeling supported with their education by their social worker, adult who cares for them, and their school.
- 69% reported attending their personal education plans (PEPs) all of the time or sometimes with 87% finding this a useful process.
- The majority of young people reported feeling supported with their hobbies by the adult who cares for them and their school.
- Young people are accessing a range of enrichment activities and 53% did not want to be offered anymore activities feeling satisfied with their current level (or suggesting currently this was already high).
- 64% reported they were aware of the Children in Care Council.

Areas for improvement highlighted by the survey include:

- Only 4% (three young people) reported they lived in a Children's Home compared to 16.1% (five young people) in the previous year. This suggests the voices of children living in a Children's home are not being heard.
- 53% young people reported that they did not feel people treated them differently because they are in care, compared with 15 young people (48%) last year.

- On average young people reported their relationship with their IRO as 6.92/10, down 0.36 from last year.
- Young people felt less supported by their social worker (a decrease of 11.4%) and IRO (a decrease of 15.7%) with their hobbies this year compared to last year.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 The annual survey is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the service, therefore social workers, foster parents, and children's home staff need to be proactive in encouraging all young people to complete the survey. Following changes to the survey and continued reminders from staff and the use of a prize draw incentive participation with the survey increased this year.

4.2 It was evident from the results that there had been an increase in awareness of the support services, groups, and activities on offer for care leavers, including a greater awareness of the CICC. However, there is more that we can do to achieve our ambitious aims as corporate parents for our children and young people in care and the following recommendations have been made in order to hear and act upon our children in care's voices:

- Continue to strive for increase in response rates; target for next years is 35% (the average from national benchmarking). Including how we can use YouTube, Snapchat and TikTok which are our CIC preferred social media platforms.
- Increase the number of children living in children's homes responding to the survey.
- Continue to promote positive achievement of CYPIC and develop a process to ensure any discrimination is reported and challenged.
- Further work is required to understand why on average young people reported their relationship with their IRO is rated lower than last year.
- Some questions did not provide any additional insight into the lives of CYPIC and some questions did. It is important those that didn't are removed to ensure the survey is concise for children to be willing to complete it and those that are useful are repeated and are used for comparative purposes.

4.3 In all 2023, has continued to be a year of growing successes for the CYPIC Service.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 There are no budget implications arising from this report.
[JG/19122023/R]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 There are no legal implication arising from this report.
[SB/18122023/A]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the recent motion to recognise Care Experience as a protected characteristic within City of Wolverhampton Council, the Local Authority have a duty to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all Children and

Young People in Care and Care Leavers. Care leavers are asked to begin their journey into adulthood earlier than most young people.

8.0 All other Implications

8.1 There are no other implications as a result of this report.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Children in Care Survey 2023 findings.