



**WOLVERHAMPTON
CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL**



Children in Care Council

Annual Report 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Group Demographic	4
Annual Survey 2023	6
Corporate Parenting Board	8
2023 Achievements	10
CiCC Priorities for 2024	19



Introduction

This year's annual Children in Care Council (CiCC) report focuses on the highlights and achievements of the CiCC and their continued commitment to improving children and family services.

The CiCC is the forum where children and young people in the care of Wolverhampton can have the opportunity to share their voice and experiences to co-design, co-produce and influence service delivery.

This year a new cohort of passionate young people have joined the CiCC creating greater stability and consistency for the group.

This report will highlight the work and achievements of the forum over the last 12 months in 2023.



Background

The CiCC consist of children and young people in the care of Wolverhampton aged between 11 – 17 who want to make a positive difference.

Over the course of 12 months the CiCC have met 24 times.

Each meeting lasts no longer than 2 hours. CiCC meetings are held at The Oasis Co-Production Hub. To ensure meetings meet the needs of young people these meetings can be held virtually and a hybrid model to allow those who are placed out of the city to participate regardless of how far they may be.

The group meets twice a month minimum with a focus on an agenda-based meeting where professionals are invited to speak with group members and a workshop meeting where the group focus on project work and prepare for guest speakers.

The group usually consists of a chair and vice chair who both lead on agenda items in meetings to ensure all members have the opportunity to have their voice heard. With the new cohort of young people being established throughout the year we are now in the plans of instituting a new chair and vice-chair for the group in 2024.

Group Demographics

During the last 12 months a total of 12 Children in Care have engaged in the forum.

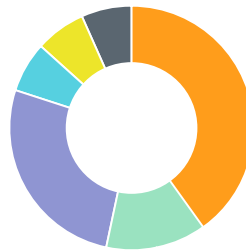
On average in 2023, 5 or more Care-experienced young people consistently attend a CiCC meeting.

Gender of Group



● Male - 4 ● Female - 8

Ethnicity of Group



- White British - 4
- Asian Indian - 1
- Black British/Caribbean - 3
- African - 1
- Mixed White/Black Caribbean - 2
- Other European/Albanian - 1

Annual Survey 2023

Children and young people in care ages 5 to 16 years were asked to complete the annual Children in Care survey between 22nd August 2023 to 29th October 2023. The survey is produced with the Children in Care Council. The data was collated using a Microsoft Forms questionnaire. The information will continue to inform the priorities of the service and any areas for improvement.

Each year the CiCC co-produce with CAYPiC service the annual Children in Care Survey. 76 young people completed the survey and provided feedback of their experience on the support they receive to help provide insights for professionals but also to help shape the priorities for the CiCC.

The key purpose of the Children in Care Survey is to improve the life chances and achieve the best possible outcomes for children whom the City of Wolverhampton Council is their Corporate Parent.

Corporate Parenting Board

At the start of the year members of CiCC have had the opportunity to present the Children In Care Survey results from 2022 and 2023 at the Corporate Parenting Board to help share the thoughts, feelings and experiences of children and young people in the care of Wolverhampton.

From that meeting the Children and Young People in Care team commitment:

- Do more to promote the advocacy service
- All CaYPiC workers to promote the Wolves Children In Care website
- All CaYPiC workers to promote CiCC and the Quarterly CaYPiC Newsletter

From the voices of young people across the city CiCC the following priorities were set out for 2023:

- To use these results to reflect and help shape the priorities for the CiCC moving forward into 2023. **(Achieved)**
- Reflect on the annual survey to see what can be done differently to increase responses for the next annual survey including having an age cap of 17 years. **(Achieved)**
- Improve the Wolves Children In Care website and to try get more traffic to the website from YP and Professionals. **(Ongoing)**
- More promotion of the advocacy service for Children in Care. **(Ongoing)**
- Continue to strengthen relationships between young people and professionals. **(Ongoing)**
- To increase CiCC scope to reach more young people who didn't get the opportunity to express their voice on their experiences and concerns via Designated Teachers internal CWC teams. **(Ongoing)**
- Increase visibility of CiCC both internally and externally via Designated Teachers using marketing resources and comms. **(Achieved & Ongoing)**

After the CiCC presented the results of the 2023 CIC Survey to the Corporate parenting board who suggested the following moving forward:

- To do a survey focusing on children and young people in the care of Wolverhampton to help gather the thoughts and experiences of those aged from 5 – 10 years old
- Look into the feelings of possible discrimination that a cohort of young people feel from being in care

The feedback from the survey will form part of the Corporate Parenting Board Workplan. The CiCC will be updated on the work plan at Corporate Parenting Board meetings and by guest speakers at their CiCC meetings.



2023 Achievements

Reviewing Annual Reports

Before annual reports are shared with the Corporate Parenting Board they are brought to the CiCC. This ensures that the group has the opportunity to endorse, challenge and share their opinions on reports.

The following reports were shared with the forum:

- Fostering Annual Report
- Adoption Annual Report
- Annual Health Report
- Virtual School Annual Report
- Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report

Total Respect Training

The group continues to deliver Total Respect to Councillors, professionals and Foster parents which focuses on delivering engaging exercises to help share a snippet of their experience going through the care system. Total Respect training addresses some of the issues which can affect a young person, issues which can affect placement stability and follows their journey into independence. Members of CiCC and CLIC also both help to co-produce activities to add to the training to ensure that their own emotive experiences are shared.



Recruitment

The CiCC have had a massive impact in supporting the recruitment of staff for children's and family services for the Local Authority. CiCC members interview candidates who want to work with our most vulnerable young people and families in the City. Candidates have to come to a Children and Young People Panel where the young people have a say on who has the skills and qualities needed. CiCC members in 2023 have supported with the recruitment of over 100 staff who now work for the local authority!

Some of the roles include the following:

- Deputy Director of Social Care
- Social workers (DCYP, NQSW, Fostering etc)
- YPA
- Service Managers
- Participation Officer
- Corporate Parenting Officer
- Staying Close Coordinator
- Plus many more!

Sufficiency Strategy 2023

With the sufficiency strategy tender being up for renewal CiCC had the opportunity to approach this piece of work again and work alongside our Care Leavers Forum and Head of Children's Commissioning to help co-design the sufficiency strategy to provide the best assets, provision and outcomes for Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers that the LA have a responsibility for.

Fostering Engagement

CiCC have worked closely with CWC Fostering Team where they have supported with the following:

- Assisted in the co-design of fostering resources to support with relationship building and engagement with children & young people
- Helped shape the method and process of recording Life Journey work with young people
- CiCC members spoke at the annual fostering conference as a Fostering Champion to share the importance of fostering teenagers who need good foster parents and the positive impact it can have on them.
- Been informed on the status of recruitment regarding foster parents.

Child In Care of the Month (CICOTM)

Each month children and young people are nominated by foster parents and professionals for the achievements they accomplished that month. Once all the nominees are collated, the CiCC have the honourable opportunity to discuss and vote on who wins each month. CiCC are now co-designing certificates with our design team for the CICOTM nominees as well as the winners to further acknowledge the achievements of all those amazing children and young people put forward.

Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Commissioning

CiCC met with Head of Commissioning for CAHMS to discuss the CAMHS service and their experience of it. With the service being commissioned it was important to ensure that the service is useful and effective. CiCC contributed by sharing how the CAMHS service could support them better regarding their mental health. This was very productive and this has influenced engagement and feedback from all other CiCC across the Black Country.

Emotional Wellbeing Assessment Workshop

CiCC were contacted by CORC (Child Outcomes Research Consortium) to take part in a workshop to get the thoughts and feelings regarding the emotional wellbeing of care-experienced young people to add to the commissioned emotional wellbeing assessment done by Anna Freud.

Children in Care Week 2023

CiCC helped to shape the initial offer for a new initiative called Children In Care week which mirrors our established week for our Care Leavers. This is a week where the LA provides funded opportunities for care-experienced children and young people and families to come together to enjoy activities which would benefit their wellbeing and inform them on what the LA can offer to support them.

Families First for Children Pathfinder

CiCC members had the opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions regarding the three pillars that Wolverhampton as a Local Authority are focusing on for the Pathfinder initiative which was Family Help, Child Protection and Family Networks.

Please visit our website for regular updates and important information:

www.wolveschildrenincare.com

Sidewinder and Leaflet Co-Designed for CiCC

CiCC wanted to create a sidewinder and leaflet design to aid with recruitment to the forum and the visibility for CiCC and the Wolves Children In Care website.



CiCC Newsletter

Sharing information about services children and young people in the care and Care Leavers from the city is a priority for CiCC. This has led to a co-produced Yo! Voice Newsletter. This newsletter goes out quarterly to young people, parents and professionals to inform them on opportunities and the achievements of our youth voice forums and includes our CiCC!

To check out the Yo! Voice Newsletter please visit: www.yowolves.co.uk

CiCC Priorities for 2024

Following all of the information and reports presented to the CiCC in 2023, the CiCC have chosen to focus on the following priorities for 2024:

- Consistent mental health support for children and young people in care
- More help with support links as children and young people in care grow e.g. Family Friends, Previous Foster Families, Old School Friends etc.
- Support the promotion of 1-2-1 tuition support outside of school to support with learning to children and young people in care
- Focus on the importance of implementing positive language used towards children and young people in care by Foster Parents, Professionals, Peers etc. to reduce any forms or feelings of discrimination



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