



## Corporate Parenting Forum - Report Summary for Kickback

<b>Report title:</b>	Care Leavers Participation Report / Care Leavers Participation week
<b>Who's presenting the report</b>	Laura Roche Team Manager - Children in Care Team 3 & Leaving Care Team Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF Email: laura.roche@achievingforchildren.org.uk
<b>The main things we have found are</b>	When targeting the 18+ cohort around issues of significance to them, very purposeful engagement is received.
<b>The reason we did this report</b>	In AfC we are passionately focussed on enhancing the voice of our Care Leavers and committed to promoting their active participation in decision-making processes about their own lives and improving service design and delivery. This requires active engagement with Care Leavers as well as collaboration between key stakeholders to ensure Care Leavers receive comprehensive and tailored support as they transition into adulthood. This report provides an overview of participation activities with Care Leavers in AFC; what is working well; what we are worried about and areas for development.
<b>What we did to get the information in this report</b>	Information has been collated for this report through a review of the various different participation activities taking place. Leaving Care Personal Advisors; the Children, Young People & Families Engagement Lead; the Virtual College and Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Team have provided information which contributed to this report.
<b>What we have found that is working well</b>	<p><b>Finding 1: Engaging with individual Care Leavers about issues that are relevant to them has been successful</b> - the Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers up to 25, agreed in October 2021, was achieved in co-production with Care Leavers whose participation was achieved through individual emails and text messages.</p> <p><b>Finding 2: The Care Leaver Covenant</b>, is a promise made by private, public or voluntary organisations to support care leavers aged 16-25 to live independently. The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) provides the governance to support the delivery of the Care Leaver Covenant and promote a 'Whole Council Approach' to being a corporate parent. Five strategic partnership boards have been created involving political leadership, Directors and representatives from each Council department and external key partners. The workstreams focus on: Independent Living; Education Training and Employment opportunities; Safety and Security; Mental &amp; Physical Health; and Finance.</p> <p><b>Finding 3: A Care Leaver Champion</b> post has been created and a care experienced person appointed to support the Engagement Lead to enhance</p>

participation with care leavers through the development of social media campaigns; and regular communication about the services available and decisions affecting them.

**Finding 4: The 'Changing Voices' Group** - provides the opportunity for care leavers to meet with and speak to the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member. These meetings are held virtually, 6 x times a year, which ensures accessibility for young people who live outside of the borough.

**Finding 5: The Big Conversation** - was held during September 2023 and provided an opportunity for Care Leavers to meet with the Children's Social Care Senior Management team (CSMT). 10 Care Leavers participated and shared their views on a range of issues (please see attached questionnaire) Care Leavers said they valued the opportunity to meet 1:1 with CSMT.

**Finding 6: Care Leavers Week** took place from 25th October - 1st November 2023 to coincide with National Care Leavers Week. A series of events and workshops aimed at specific groups of care leavers were held. Workshops included: Parenting as a care leaver (5 parents / 5 children attended); Independent living (5 attended); UASC workshop (13 attended); Support for Care Leavers not in education, employment or training (NEET) - (0 attended); Support for Care Leavers in further and higher education (3 attended); and the BBQ / social event (9 attended) Some Care Leavers attended multiple sessions. (Please see attached schedule schedule of sessions)

An evaluation session was held on 14th November 2023 and learning will be used to inform planning for future participation events. This includes drawing on support from the Corporate Parenting Board to access resources from council departments, such as Housing and external stakeholders, such as Merlin Entertainment.

**Finding 7: The 'Have My Say'** digital consultation tool has been co-produced with children and young people and is designed to provide another tool for participation. This has been implemented for young people under 18 and discussions are taking place to extend the app to Care Leavers.

**Finding 8: The Welcome Programme** - has provided opportunities for engaging with UASC Care Leavers. Feedback from a participation session held on 12th July 2023 included: *"I like learning English/School"*; and *"I like where I live - it's clean and in a nice area"*. Young People asked for more help with *"learning English"*; *"access to a solicitor"* and *"more activities for our mental health"*.

**What we have found that we are worried about**

**Finding 9: The Care Leavers Hub** - sessions are held bi-monthly and are a mixture of information, social and discussion themes linked to the Corporate Parenting Strategy. Despite personal invites, financial incentives, adjustments to dates / times etc attendance has been extremely limited with an average of 1 person attending, and some sessions having no attendance.

**Finding 10: The Care Leavers Christmas social in 2022** was cancelled due to only 1 person accepting the invite. They were given vouchers for a meal instead. There is a need for Care Leavers to continue to have options to attend social events, particularly at times of the year such as Christmas when they may be isolated.

	<p><b>Finding 11: Care Leavers do not want to be asked to complete surveys.</b> The last large-scale attempt to gain the views of Children in Care and Care Leavers via a survey was in 2021. A service decision was taken not to continue approaching Care Leavers in this way following their feedback that they did not experience this as a purposeful exercise.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participation activities must engage Care Leavers with issues that are pertinent to them.</li> <li>2. Regular social groups should be offered to specific groups of care leavers, such as parents and children and UASCS, building on the success of care leavers week.</li> <li>3. The Big Conversation should be an annual event.</li> <li>4. The viability of the Care Leavers Hub needs to be reviewed.</li> <li>5. Care Leavers Champion and Engagement Lead to continue developing digital engagement tools such as Whatsapp groups to engage Care Leavers.</li> <li>6. Have My Say App to be used to gather Care Leavers feedback for Pathway Plan meetings.</li> <li>7. Participation strategy to be updated and reflected in Service Improvement plans across all services to create a joined up approach.</li> <li>8. Embed a framework for monitoring and evaluating participation through audit activity.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Other documents to read</b></p>	<p>Questionnaire for the Big Conversation:  <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aO-fEDr-vxPFBggJ8P5dmI2OvJY0eZIJ5N7bJNGmRzI/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aO-fEDr-vxPFBggJ8P5dmI2OvJY0eZIJ5N7bJNGmRzI/edit</a></p> <p>Schedule for Care Leavers week:  <a href="https://app.luminpdf.com/viewer/6554e99e6cda7c90b21867d3">https://app.luminpdf.com/viewer/6554e99e6cda7c90b21867d3</a></p>
<p><b>Did you attend a Kickback session to discuss your report prior to writing it?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Do you intend on attending a Kickback session to discuss the report after it has been completed?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Was there anything specific that Kickback highlighted when you spoke to them about your report</b></p>	<p>N/A a this time</p>

Please see example report as a best practice model:

 [Best Practice Example Corporate Parenting Forum Report Summary for Kickback July...](#)