

Thurrock Young Voices - Corporate Parenting Committee Report July 24

Corporate Parenting Report July 2024

What have we been doing since the last Corporate Parenting Committee?



Young Voices group has been divided into two separate groups, one for children in care aged 11-16 and now a Care Leaver Forum for 16-25 year olds.

This means our conversations can be more focused and specific to our age range and needs. We also have a new Participation and Support Worker called Jo Kemp who is setting up the forum with us.

The Children in Care Group and the Aftercare forum will be held on the same evening, one after the other, which means we can all eat dinner together in between.

Progress on our 2024 goals...

Our goals for 2024-

- To bring Back the 'Power of Participation' Workshop for workers (Run by young people)
- More activities with workers involved - football/ sports suggested
- Two big events for Young People per year, like 'Young Voices at Grangewaters'
- Young Voices Member packs including t-shirt and hoodie to be created
- Create a Young Inspectors programme

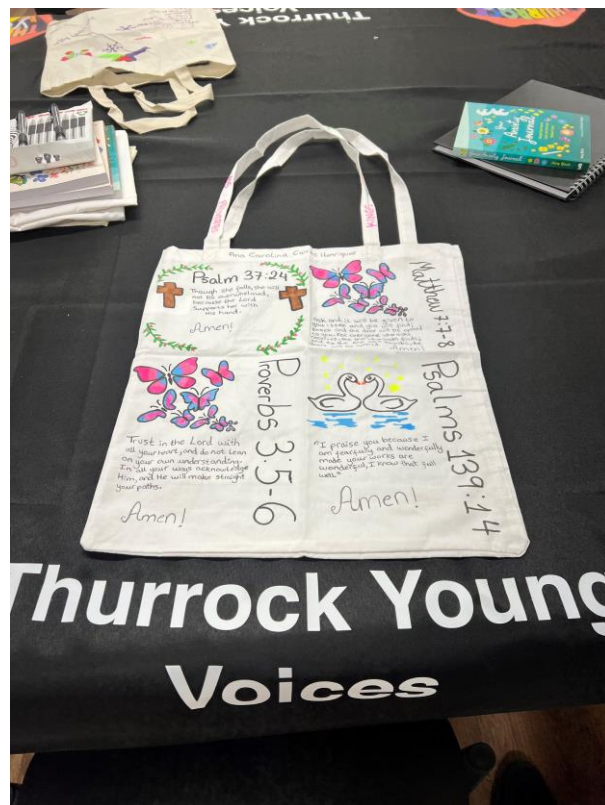
We held the first Power of Participation Workshop on 17th May 2024 (see below for further details)

There are football sessions being held every month at Blackshots fields with workers attending. So far 10 young people have been and played with the staff.

Grangewaters has been arranged for 23rd August and we are included in the planning for this. The day will focus on....

We are working on creating an 'in-person' local offer information event. This will be held on the 16th August and is young person led. This day will bring services for young people into one place so that young people can meet them and understand what is offered.

We had a arts and crafts session where we made our Young Voices bags and were given a hoodie, t-shirt, lanyard, wellbeing journal, notepad and pen.





Young people are now able to sign up to be trained to become Young Inspectors.

Power of Participation Workshop



7 Young People facilitated the workshop for workers on 17th May 24. The training was designed by them and had a focus on relationships, endings and participation. 28 workers attended. There were extremely powerful messages delivered such as “keep us at the centre of everything”, “listen to us”, “say goodbye when you leave”. From these messages a list of promises was created that the workers signed up to.



We plan to hold two further workshops across the year, the next one is 29th July.

We received excellent feedback from the staff who attended including –

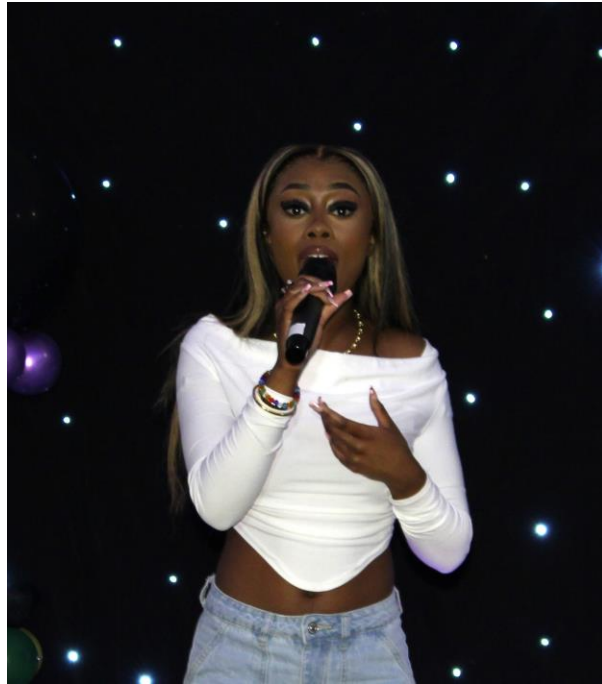
“Very good training, Good to know what young people would like to see in workers to improve their plans.”

“I found the session very powerful; it is very easy to lose yourself in your job title. This training has grounded me again and reminds us of how important the work we do is. You guys are fantastic and delivered an excellent session.”

“Excellent training. I enjoyed every part of this. It was fun and interactive.

Children in Care Awards 2024

We were involved in the planning of the Children in Care 2024 Awards which was held on 31st May 24. We picked the venue and the theme which was "carnival" - celebrating everyone! We had a great night, some lovely food and danced the evening away at the disco. We had a lovely time. We had young people performing on the night which was fantastic.



What makes a good foster carer?

As part of 'Foster East' Care Experienced Young People Working Group, The Young Voices Group participated in a discussion about what makes an 'ideal' foster carer. These were the highlights..

A good foster carer is someone who:

Has the ability to learn and adapt.

Understands that each child is different.

Is compassionate and makes children and young people feel seen and heard.

Is open minded, easy to talk to and approachable.

Is respectful, adaptable, friendly, caring and assertive

Is confident, soft but firm, bubbly, intelligent

Has life experiences, interest in psychology and understanding the brain, easy going.

Is therapeutic and knows how to respond to young people's anxieties and is able to read social cues, behaviours and advocate for young people the right way.

Listens well and makes young people feel seen.

Helps young people to be prepared for life after care; teaches young people things like cooking and cleaning, budgeting, taxes and everything in between.

'Care Experience' as a Protected Characteristic

We would like for Thurrock Council to adopt "Care Experience" as a protected characteristic.

This is really important to us and we decided to work on this with members of the Youth Cabinet. They want to support us to take it to Full Council on 24th July to ask members to pass the motion.

Why should Care Experience be added to the list of Protected Characteristics?

- Young people with care experience face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice in their day to day lives.
- People 'look down' on or feel sorry for young people with care experience which set them apart from others.
- Young people with care experience can lose out on jobs and not do well in education due to stigma.
- This can also affect them with housing, health, relationships, and the criminal justice system.
- Young People might not want to share that they are care experienced for fear of judgement.
- Young people with care experience might face unfair judgements when they become parents regarding their assumed ability.
- Making care experience a protected characteristic would help to create a better public understanding of these issues and therefore improve life chances for the young people.

Something we would like to raise with the Corporate Parents...

Some young people feel they are not leaving care with all the skills they need to be fully independent such as cooking, cleaning, washing, making and going to GP Dentist appointments, paying bills, budgeting etc. They would want more support and commitment from the Council with further training, work experience, better job offers for care leavers to prepare them for leaving care.