

Thurrock Young Voices - Corporate Parenting Committee Report March 24

Corporate Parenting Report March 2024

Thurrock Young Voices currently has 22 members with 10 attending meetings in person. We have 2 chairs who also attend Corporate Parenting meetings.

What have we been doing since the last CPC?



We had another Young Voices Group meeting on 16th February 2024, this was attended by 7 young people.

We have been involved in the planning of the Children in Care 2024 Awards which will be held in May. We have so far picked the venue and the theme which will be "carnival" - celebrating everyone!

Our young person recruitment panel have interviewed for Team Managers and Service Manager for Family Support Service.

Some of us attended the "My Health In Care" project on 19th February

Progress on our 2024 goals...

Our goals for 2024-

- To bring Back the 'Power of Participation' Training 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

The Power of Participation Training - this is training for workers which is facilitated by young people. We have dates for us to start planning this training which we are hoping to hold in March. The first workers we will train are Personal Advisors from Aftercare.

We have a craft session planned to create members packs for our Thurrock Young Voices Members.

We have a day at Grangewaters booked in for 23rd August 2024

My Health in Care Project

My Health in Care Project

- Are you a young person in care or have care experience?
- Are you aged 11-25?
- Want to have your say about health support for children in care?

If YES was your answer to these questions, then this is the project for you!

Help us to ensure young people are well supported with their physical and mental health whilst in care by sharing your views with us!

Have your say whilst having some fun, food and drinks and bag yourself some freebies too!

Date: Monday 19th February 2024

Time: 10am – 3pm

Venue: Tilbury Youth Hub, Centenary House, Tilbury, RM18 8AF

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This project was to find out how supported young people in care feel about their physical and mental health and what can be done to support them further. We spent the day with professionals from SET CAMHS, HealthWatch Thurrock and the Looked After Children's Nurse. We also completed a survey, which asked us a bit more about us, our health and what services we use.

We were able to talk about our experiences of mental health services, our health assessments and what our priorities are for our health. We had lots of craft and play time as well as some nice food.





- We did an exercise where we were given a 30 million budget to allocate to things that were important to us. Lots of our money went to Children's Social Care, A&E service and Elderly people.





What did we find out?

Health Assessments -

- Not everyone knew what they were or what they were for. Feels like a "tick box exercise".
- Can be really uncomfortable for us- this means we might not be open with the nurse or be able to ask questions we want to ask.
- They make us feel different to our friends when held in school
- The gender of the nurse is important to us as if they match us, we tend to feel more comfortable.
- During the assessment the nurse weighs, measures and checks our health and then writes everything on their laptop. We do not see what is written and we want to be more involved and for it to be less formal.

- Young people get information from the internet or social media when they do not feel comfortable to ask an adult about their health.

Our Health Priorities-

- Mental Health - Some young people had experience of CAMHs and others did not, one young person had counselling in school.
- Sleep - reasons given for poor sleep were late nights, using devices and drinking tea late at night, this has an affect on our mood. Tips were given for ways to relax.
- Diet - School helps us learn to cook for when we leave care. When we eat bad food we do not feel good. Carers cook everything for us, so we do not learn at home.
- Exercise - Exercise makes us feel better. Walking, swimming, PE at school and dancing.
- Dentist - those in care went to the dentist but Care leaver had not been since being in care.

Other feedback

- GP Appointments - Not everyone knew how to book a GP appointment or feel comfortable to go, some said they would not bother unless urgent.
- Not all young people feel listened to generally. "As a young person who has been in care, I have done everything for myself, myself so far. If I have got myself this far, I would rather deal with things on my own. I don't trust that someone will help me or care" – I feel as though I won't be listened to and nothing will be done.
- What happens when we leave care? There was some discussion around young people leaving care without the skills they need, like cooking, taking care of themselves, booking health appointments etc and when they turn 18 "we are expected to know everything, and we don't". "Support as a care leaver is reduced and then when we turn 25 we are completely on our own. If you do not have a family network you have to figure everything out by yourself which impacts your mental health". As care leavers "we are always going to need support".

Suggestions -

- We want to be asked where we want our Health Assessment meeting held.
- Optional survey before the health assessment so that young people might feel comfortable to ask questions or talk about things that are difficult.
- The health assessment form being left with the young person to complete independently.
- Every Foster Placement with Female Looked After Children to have a basket of sanitary wear available to them without having to ask.
- More opportunities for exercise for young people in care.
- More opportunities for young people in care to cook at home.
- More support for young people to learn how to book and manage health / dentist appointments in preparation for adult hood.