

**NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST**

**21<sup>ST</sup> September 2009**

**Young People's Council  
Report to the Children's Trust**

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Government's 'Care Matters' white paper in 2008, stated that all Local Authorities were expected to set up a Children in Care Council '...to make sure that every child gets a chance to have their say and put their experiences of the care system directly to those responsible for running it in their area'.
- 1.2 The Government did not issue guidance, therefore North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) consulted with their looked after young people and care leavers, to find out what form they would like their council to take.
- 1.3 Ten of these young people presented their proposals to the Corporate Parents Working Group in February 2008. All the young people's proposals were agreed and their Children in Care Council was renamed 'Young Persons Council'

**2.0 The Young Person's Council (YPC)**

- 2.1 The YPC is made up of 12 looked after young people and care leavers aged between 14 -25 years. It is attended by the Children's Director; Assistant Director; Executive Member with the lead for looked after young people; the Young Person's Champion; Children's Rights Officer and an Independent Chair.
- 2.2 The YPC meets formally every three months on a Saturday in York. They also meet in between to discuss progress.
- 2.3 Young people are financially rewarded for their travel and time at the meeting and their travel expenses are paid, they also have lunch.
- 2.4 The young people will invite professionals to the meeting as appropriate and request that reports are written in plain English with no jargon.

**3.0 Structure**

- 3.1 Young people are elected onto the YPC by their peers in their area Participation group (4 groups across the County -Selby, Northallerton, Harrogate, and Scarborough, three young people per group). A young person will sit on the YPC for 18 months.

- 3.2 The YPC young people representatives attend and present reports to the Corporate Parenting Standing group, the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) and have presented at several conferences
- 3.3 Four care experienced young people are employed through the NYCC Apprenticeship scheme, to coordinate running the YPC. The apprentices are employed full time for 12 months.

#### **4.0 Progress**

- 4.1 The four participation groups presented the issues they wanted the YPC to raise and address, the YPC then developed an action plan (see attached).
- 4.2 The key issues are:-
- Foster carers to be well trained and have more awareness and understanding of young people's issues.
  - Looked after young people and care leavers to know about their financial entitlements.
  - Improve information, advice and support to looked after young people and care leavers.
  - Improved accommodation for care leavers
- 4.3 The YPC has terms of reference and developed a pledge (copy attached).
- 4.4 Several months ago, the YPC held a consultation event at Lightwater valley amusement park, inviting a hundred looked after young people and their carers, to be able to capture the views of younger looked after young people. The report for this event is currently being compiled.
- 4.5 The YPC is also very keen to ensure they hear the voice of disabled looked after young people and care leavers and will be addressing this in the future.

#### **5.0 Future**

- The YPC would like the Children's Trust to support them by addressing the issues that have been identified.
- The Children's Trust to uphold the Pledge and ensure that it is promoted across all the agencies.
- The YPC would like all the agencies to involve young people from the groups, to help develop their services.
- The YPC would like the Children's Trust to offer them long term commitment and financial support.

**Report Prepared by:  
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## Young People's Council Action Plan (draft 24.08.09)

Desired Outcome	Link to CYPP	Link to Pledge	Actions Planned	Tasks/ Links to work	Timescale	Success Criteria <sup>1</sup>	Lead	Resource
1. Foster Carers to be well trained and have more awareness and understanding of the young people's issues.	Stay Safe 2.6 "Improve the lives of Looked After Children"	Stay Safe "We will ensure that you get good information about your placements, community and services and a proper introduction to your carers (unless you move in an emergency)"	1.1 Consultation on Foster Carer home information packs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YPC to have input in their design.</li> <li>• Packs to be provided in a format suitable to the young person's needs.</li> <li>• Information packs to be provided by all foster carers.</li> <li>• Views from looked after young people on the packs.</li> <li>• Audit on how many packs have been written.</li> </ul>	YPC/participation groups to meet with Fostering managers, more looked after young people and foster carers.	March 2010	Design of packs meeting the needs of foster carers and young people.  Age appropriate packs to be made available for looked after young people.	Annie Shaw Paul Nixon	Reward monies for the young people to undertake the work.
			1.2 Robust Training Programme for Foster Carers. To include that all foster carers undertake Sexual health and relationships training.	Link to Training Programme (CYPP 2.6)	March 2010	Training programme delivered	Vanessa Handley David Molesworth Carly Walker	
			1.3 Young people to have more of an active role in the foster carer's annual review and are involved more in the fostering recruitment process.	Work with General Manager (East) and Fostering managers. YPC to raise with Social Care SMT	December 2009	Views of young people being systematically heard to ensure that the service is responsive to their views.	Paul Nixon Annie Shaw	

Enclosure 6- Appendix 1

Desired Outcome	Link to CYPP	Link to Pledge	Actions Planned	Tasks/ Links to work	Timescale	Success Criteria <sup>ii</sup>	Lead	Resource
2. Looked After Young People and Care leavers to know their entitlements.	Stay Safe 2.6 “Improve the lives of Looked After Children”  Achieve Economic Well-Being 5.7 “Tackle Child Poverty”	Stay Safe “We will ensure that you get good information about your placements, community and services...”	2.1 Find out current financial entitlements; - Foster care allowances - Looked after young peoples entitlements - Leaving care finances.	YPC -research - contact policy officers	October 2009	Young people have a clear understanding of what financial support is available to them.	Paul Nixon Howard Smith Annie Shaw	
			2.2 Consult with looked after young people and care leavers about their views of financial support.	YPC/Participation groups	October 2009	Hearing directly from young people about their views on financial support	Paul Nixon David Molesworth	Young people to be rewarded for their time to undertake the consultation
			2.3 YPC task group to meet with main contact for finances and foster managers.	YPC/General Manager (East) and Fostering managers.	October 2009	Consultation work to be agreed and timescales identified.	Annie Shaw	
			2.4 Consider the possibility of additional payments where needed for LAC		November 2009		David Molesworth Annie Shaw	
			2.5 Consider a ‘basic allowance’ for LAC		November 2009		David Molesworth Annie Shaw	
			2.6 Publish information through the YPPW newsletter, on young people’s entitlements regarding support and finances.	Work with General Manager (East) and Fostering managers.	October 2009	Looked after young people and care leavers to be better informed about their entitlements and the information is included within their care plan	David Molesworth Annie Shaw Howard Smith YPPW’s	Funding publication and distribution of a newsletter

Enclosure 6- Appendix 1

						and in the pathway plan.		
3. Improve information, advice and support to Looked after young people and care leavers	Achieve Economic Well-Being 5.3 “improve access to high quality information, advice and support”	Stay Safe “We will ensure that you get good information about your placements, community and services and a proper introduction to your carers (unless you move in an emergency)”	3.1 Website (or section of GIMI) dedicated to LAC	YPC reps to be part of the GIMI steering group	October 2009	Looked after young people and care leavers had easy access to information relevant	Paul Nixon David Molesworth	
			3.2 YPC newsletter for all Looked after young people and care leavers.	YPPW’s to gather information to put in their Newsletter and disseminate	October 2009	Sharing of information to all young people.	Paul Nixon David Molesworth	Funding publication and distribution of a newsletter
			3.3 Text alerts to keep LAC informed if information on website or policies change	Looking a other scheme’s in the NYCC or another Local Authority	March 2010	Ensuring that young people can access up to date information	Paul Nixon David Molesworth	Funding to develop a pilot scheme for the text alerts.
			3.4 Care leavers helpline for advice, support and information, which is free from mobiles	<i>Explore link to Family Information Service/ Service Directory</i>	March 2010	Providing care leavers will the right support at the right time.	Paul Nixon David Molesworth	Funding required
			3.5 Someone to help/ represent the YPC in how to write/ email reports and opinions to be influential	YPC to identify what support they require and when required. CRO to create learning / training opportunities	December 2009	The YPC being able to produce their own minutes/reports/pr esentations.	Paul Nixon	
4. Improved accommodation for young people leaving care.	Achieve Economic Well-being 5.4 “ Develop the capacity of children and young people to manage	Achieve Economic Well-Being “We will work with you to give you all the help and support you need to make a success of moving	4.1 YPC to find out who are the key contacts for accommodation, and make contact by letter, followed up by phone and email	Link to development of accommodation strategy	December 2009	Having direct contact with those who make the housing decisions.	Paul Nixon Cllr Caroline Patmore	
			4.2 Identify what sort of accommodation and where people want to live.	Link to development of accommodation strategy	December 2009	Highlighting to people about what housing young people want.	Howard Smith Cllr Caroline Patmore	

<p>their manage their transition to adult life</p> <p>5.6 “Ensure that children and young people are living in decent, secure, affordable housing and have appropriate support</p>	<p>on from care to adult life</p>	4.3 Identify where housing is poor and who is responsible	Link to development of accommodation strategy	December 2009	Highlighting to people the current problem.	Howard Smith Cllr Caroline Patmore	
		4.4 YPC to meet with people from the District/ Borough Councils to talk about accommodation issues	Link to development of accommodation strategy	January 2010	Highlight the accommodation issue to those who are providing the accommodation	Howard Smith Cllr Caroline Patmore	
		4.5 Identify one district/ borough Councillor who pledges to be a champion in their area to promote better accommodation for care leavers	Contact details from the Lead member for Looked after young people	March 2010	Local champion to support young people.	Cllr Caroline Patmore  Paul Nixon	
		4.6 YPC representative on the Support People steering group	Contact chair of group.	March 2010	Young people have a voice.	Paul Nixon Carol Armstrong	
		4.7 Review the Points system to prioritise care leavers (i.e. not having to be resident in one area for a number of years)	Link to development of accommodation strategy	March 2010	Young people being able to live in different areas.	Paul Nixon Howard Smith District Councils	
		4.8 Develop a regional accommodation list that is maintained.	Link to development of accommodation strategy	March 2010	Accommodation is easily identified.	Paul Nixon Howard Smith	
		4.9 Tackle boredom and isolation	Positive Activities Strategy	March 2010	Accommodation won't become lost due to these difficulties.	Ian Marr Learning Youth and Skills	
		4.10 Improve the quality of hostels and develop a list of appropriate accommodation that can be used for care leavers in an emergency.	Link to development of accommodation strategy	March 2010-	Emergency Accommodation is easily identified.	Paul Nixon Howard Smith District Councils	
		4.11 Ensure there are formal procedures supported by paper work for accessing accommodation	Link to development of accommodation strategy	March 2010	Accommodation is assessed regularly and information shared.		

			4.12 Regularly review accommodation and ensure that local information is shared with leaving care teams in other parts of the County.	Link to development of accommodation strategy  Youth Charter Leaving Care PA's	March 2010	Identifying the quality housing and poor housing.	Ian Marr Paul Nixon Howard Smith	
			4.13 Offer life skills training for care leavers	Identify Adult learning courses.  LAC/LC teams to look at this training.	March 2010	Preparing young people for independence	David Molesworth Paul Nixon	

Boxes highlighted green are actions that should be highlighted to those responsible as requests from the YPC for consideration, rather than direct work by the YPC itself.

<sup>i</sup> SMART targets for success criteria. This should include NIS targets/ local targets for success. Where these are LAA targets, they should be emboldened.

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