

Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00, Tuesday, 8 October 2019

Progress Update - Edinburgh's Champions Board

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 note the progress on Corporate Parenting actions, the work of the Champions Board, and endorse the future programme of work.

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Progress Update - Edinburgh's Champions Board

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Corporate Parenting is a multi-agency responsibility. It is reflected in the 2012 Corporate Parenting Plan that was developed in collaboration with partner agencies and written in consultation with children and young people. The work contained in the plan has delivered a range of improvements and benefits for our care experienced young people which are detailed in the attached appendices.
- 2.2 The Children's Partnership benefits from the Champions Board, and funding was provided from the Life Changes Trust in the Summer of 2018 to establish this arrangement in Edinburgh. The Champions Board meets monthly to ensure that the voices of care experienced young people drive further improvements and actions. It takes cognisance of the Corporate Parenting Plan and informs current delivery. The Board is comprised of care experienced young people (Champions), senior managers from a range of agencies with Corporate Parenting responsibilities (Ambassadors), and an elected member. Funding from the Life Changes Trust has enabled us to recruit two Participation Officers to increase membership and support our young people to influence the way the Partnership delivers services.
- 2.3 In June 2019, further Life Changes Trust funding was awarded to expand and extend the work of the Champions Board and associated Corporate Parenting initiatives for a further two years.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Edinburgh Champions Board was established in the summer of 2018 with aim of providing "a platform for care experienced young people to influence the policy and practice of corporate parents through a range of participation and engagement activities".
- 3.2 Since inception, the Champions Board has grown and broadened its membership to involve young people who have experienced a range of care provision.
- 3.3 The Champions Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month with a range of participation activities taking place between meetings. This activity is captured in the appendices below.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Initial grant funding for one year was secured from the Life Changes Trust in summer 2018 to support the development of the Champions Board. This enabled the Council to recruit two care experienced young people to newly created full time Participation Officer posts. The purpose of these posts is to specifically support the engagement of care experienced young people in the work of the Champions Board and in wider Corporate Parenting activities. The recruitment for these posts was ringfenced for care experienced young people only. Both posts are located within Children's Services and are managed by a Throughcare & Aftercare Team Leader.
- 4.2 The Life Changes Trust awarded the Council a further two years grant funding commencing in November 2019 to sustain and develop the Champions Board model. A summary of the full three year funding award from the Life Changes Trust and the associated match funding from this Council is provided in Appendix 1. To date, funding for the Champions Board activities and associated support has been met wholly from the Life Changes Trust and one-off savings from Communities and Families service resources. The annual costs to support the work of the Champions Board are £130K. The Life Changes Trust has awarded the Council £50K per year for two years, commencing in November 2019, leaving a residual £80K per year to be identified to sustain and develop the Champions Board model. To support the model, the Council will provide support from existing budgets for senior management leadership, operational management of the Participation Officers, business support, accommodation and other central support.
- 4.3 An evaluation process undertaken in partnership with the Life Changes Trust will commence in September 2019. The purpose is to explore the learning and outcomes achieved through the Champions Board to date. A summary of progress and learning against initial themes and activities is set out in Appendix 2.
- 4.4 Participation Officers and Champions draw on their own personal experiences of care to inform ideas for service improvement. For care experienced young people this will involve reflecting on both the positive and more difficult elements of their life before and during the time they were in care. It is essential that the Council and partners provide the necessary emotional and practical support to these young people and whilst this is provided through mentoring, accessibility of officers and through the valuable work of the Participation Officers, there is more to be done. Champions Boards in other Council areas have reached similar conclusions
- 4.5 The Life Changes Trust have acknowledged this and accepted a proposal to match fund a dedicated coordinator post to oversee and manage this support. In Edinburgh, this post will also cover the coordination of multi-agency Corporate Parenting activity, which currently sits with the Senior Manager for the Service and does not reflect the true partnership responsibilities of Corporate Parenting. Other neighbouring local authorities provide match funding to establish the co-ordinator role. The Life Changes Trust has provided part funding of £50k for the next two years to enable this post to be developed. All partners are now required to identify resources to bridge the £80K gap for each of the two years.

- 4.6 The themes and objectives which underpin the second and third year of Life Changes Trust funding is set out in Appendix 3.
- 4.7 Amongst a range of activities, two residential leadership experiences have been planned and delivered by Champions Board members. In February 2019, Champions and Ambassadors participated in a three-night residential leadership event at Columba 1400 near Loch Lomond. This offered a valuable opportunity to develop action plans and build working relationships between Champions and Ambassadors. In August 2019, a bespoke residential event for prospective new Champions was designed and delivered by existing Champions, a Participation Officer and three social work staff from Children's Services. Ideas generated from participants have led to specific actions being progressed such as the development of an interactive welcome pack for young people entering a new care placement as well as enhanced opportunities for care experienced young people to participate in the recruitment and training of foster carers, the recruitment of council staff, changes to Council Review of Looked After Children practices, and input and opportunities to participate in the design of new children's homes.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Agree that Corporate Parenting Partners are approached to secure the required match funding to continue this work.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The annual cost to provide the model is £130K. The Life Changes Trust will provide £50K a year for two years starting in November 2019. The balance of £80K per year for the two-year period needs to be identified to enable the model to be delivered.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Corporate Parenting Action Plan reflects consultation and action with children and young people through the Young People in Care Council from 2012 and since Summer 2018, through the work of the Champions Board.
- 7.2 The work of the Champions Board is participatory and designed to have an impact on the design and delivery of services across all relevant agencies

8. Background reading/external references

None

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Life Changes Trust Funding Award
- 9.2 Appendix 2 Life Changes Trust Year 1 – Themes, Activities and Outcomes
- 9.3 Appendix 3 Themes and Objectives: Champions Board Year 2 and 3

Appendix 1 – Life Changes Trust Funding Award

	Life Changes Trust Funding	CEC Match Funding (includes in kind funding)	Total
Year 1	£60,400	£16,500	£76,900
Year 2	£59,500	£85,600	£145,100
Year 3	£59,500	£85,200	£144,700
Total	£179,400	£187,300	£366,700

Appendix 2 – Life Changes Trust Year 1 – Themes, Activities and Outcomes

A. **Theme 1** - *The development of a meaningful relational working culture between care experienced young people and professionals involved at Champions Board, strategic and service delivery level manifesting in genuine engagement activity.*

Associated Activities	Outcomes
Commitment from all members to fully participate in and promote the work of the Champions Board	Current. Commitment made by all Champions and Ambassadors.
Recruitment of two Participation Officer posts ringfenced for applicants who are care experienced young people.	Completed. Participation Officers recruited in November 2018. Delivery of a range of participation activity e.g. Residential unit visits, attendance at TCAC drop in meetings ongoing
Participation by members in a bespoke Columba 1400 leadership programme to strengthen relational working and underpin planning for a celebration event in early 2019	Completed. Current Champions and Ambassadors undertook 3 day residential in February 19. A bespoke residential week for new Champions was designed and delivered by existing Champions and Families and Communities staff in August 19.
Acknowledge and challenge power imbalances between professionals and care experienced young people through a range of regular activity opportunities	Current. Champions Board activities promote collaborate working between Champions and Ambassadors e.g. Residentials, Exit Plan group activity, Xmas meal, team building, and focused planning activities
Create a process to invite, welcome and induct new members to the Champions Board	Completed. Induction pack and process in place. Participation Officers support new members to become active Champions

Theme 2 - *The development of a learning and reflective culture and environment which values of experiences of those participating at all levels.*

Associated Activities	Outcomes
Identify and evaluate the management and support (including external mentoring) required for the Participation Officers acknowledging the potential for the post holders to manage the likely dual roles of service users and employee	Current. A range of support including line management and mentoring is in place. Proposed coordinator post for Year 2 and 3 will enhance provision of support.
Establish working relationships and learning exchange opportunities with Champions Boards established in other local authorities	Current. Links and visits made with other Boards via Participation Officers
Participate in Life Changes Trust Learning Hubs and working relationships Champions Boards established in other local authorities	Current. Champions and Ambassadors have attended regional

	events. South east regional event was hosted by Edinburgh in September.
Coordinate and host an event in early 2019 to celebrate achievements and seek views for future developments.	Not progressed. Champions Board decided to prioritise other engagement activities above this action.
Evaluate the awareness of the Champions Board and its activities across care experienced young people and other corporate parenting partner agencies.	Current. Year 1 evaluation and learning process scheduled for September 2019
Evaluate the personal experience of Board Members and other key stakeholders	Current. Year 1 evaluation and learning process scheduled for September 2019

Strand 3 - *Positive systemic change that is underpinned by the views and experiences of care experienced young people*

Associated Activities	Outcomes
Development of an Action Plan for Year 2 and 3 informed by the views of care experienced young people and produced in a young person accessible format	Completed. Year 1 Action Plan completed. Year 2 and 3 plan and Objectives and Action Plan set (See appendix 3)
Development of a communications plan to publicise the existence and purpose of the Champions Board using a variety of mediums to all key stakeholders	Current. Presence on social media being progressed, bespoke branding and promotional materials have been produced. Corporate documents produced in accessible and visually interesting formats for young people.
Co-chairing of the Corporate Parenting Member Officer Group provided by care experienced Champions Board member.	Completed. Participation Officers plan the agenda and co-chair the meeting with the Vice Convenor, Education, Children and Families. This is a multi-agency meeting of Corporate Parents.
Recognition of the role and work of the Champions Board in the Children's Services Plan, the Corporate Parenting Action Plan and the corporate parenting plans of partner agencies.	Current. Further engagement with full range of corporate parents to ensure recognition and inclusion in all key service plans.
Exploration of meaningful participation of young people in recruitment of foster carers and staff within the Council and wider corporate parenting partner agencies.	Current. Young people have participated in recruitment panels for social work managers and delivered training to foster carers.

Appendix 3 – Themes and Objectives: Champions Board Year 2 and 3

<p>Theme 1 - Participation - <i>Involving care experienced children and young people in the work of the Champions Board, so that they can be the driving force behind change.</i></p>
<p>1.1 - Champions and Participation Officers to develop and regularly update short videos that will support the communication of key messages from the Champions Board. These are to include videos focusing on “What makes a good.... Social Worker, Residential Care Officer, Police Officer, Children’s Hearing Member).</p>
<p>1.2 - Provide training opportunities to prepare and support care experienced young people to: participate in the recruitment process for incoming social work staff across CEC and partner agencies; attend Champions Board promotional events; deliver training; lead group work activities with staff or other young people</p>
<p>1.3 - Participation Officers will increase their visibility across different care experienced forums within Edinburgh, such as Through Care drop ins, Kinship support group and the Young People in Care Council.</p>
<p>1.4 - Awareness raising of the lived care experience and learning for the team around the child. Develop a short video “My first 24 hours in care”.</p>
<p>Theme 2 - Review - <i>Focusing on areas that young people identify as needing improvement, reviewing service provision, and recommending areas for change/improvement.</i></p>
<p>2.1 - A young people led audit of all 23 corporate parenting bodies and their corporate parenting plans on an annual basis, reporting on results and offering ideas for change and improvement.</p>
<p>2.2 - Sibling contact practice reviewed by a Champions Board led focus group, with members including care experienced young people</p>
<p>2.3 The Corporate Parenting Plan will be refreshed in 2020. Actions and objectives identified by Young People will be submitted for consideration as news additions to the agreed plan during the February Education, Children and Families Committee.</p>
<p>Theme 3 – Campaign. <i>Campaigning for change and action for care experienced young people through targeted and focused pieces of campaign work.</i></p>
<p>3.1 - Opportunities for care experienced young people are increased through access to sporting, cultural and leisure opportunities, with the Champions Board becoming the central point of contact and distribution of benefits, e.g. tickets, discounts, etc.</p>
<p>3.2 - Working as part of the Champions Board network, participating in Scotland wide care experienced reviews and campaigns.</p>
<p>Theme 4 - Consultation – <i>Working with partner agencies and the public to develop an understanding of what being cared experienced means to them, and how this compares to the lived experience of care experienced young people, and what agencies/individuals can do to help.</i></p>
<p>4.1 - Developing working relationships with all Corporate Parenting partner agencies, through consultation, training, and networking opportunities.</p>

4.2 - Developing links with external agencies, seeking support and participation opportunities for care experienced young people, as well as offering insight into being care experienced e.g. work with financial institutions such as banks.
4.3 - Networking and information gathering on the work of other Champions Boards, including hosting national and regional networking events
Theme 5 – Promotion. <i>Raising awareness of the work of The Champions Board amongst the care experienced population, the public and partner agencies.</i>
5.1 - Communication Strategy developed and implemented to raise awareness of the Champions Board, highlighting the rights of care experienced young people and promoting the role of corporate parents, in an accessible manner
5.2 - Communicate and raise awareness of City of Edinburgh Council’s Corporate Parenting Plan to all care experienced young people, members of the public and professionals. This should include opportunities for care experienced young people to design and deliver training and awareness raising activities.
5.3 - Offering individual grants to care experienced young people through an award scheme designed and run by care experienced young people, supported by the Champions Board members.