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SUBJECT:	<b>Change Council Update</b>
PURPOSE:	<b>To update members on Change Council activities from July- Sept 2019</b>

## 1. Young Achievers

Our Young Achievers Awards evening was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019. 10 Children Looked After and Leaving Care young people won an award. One member of the Change Council 16+ won a highly commended for volunteering. Another member of the group helped on the evening whilst another presented an award.



## 2. Care leavers Lunch/Cook book

Leaving Care Young People invited professionals from TfC, Gentoo, Health, Education and Sunderland City Council to come along to the event and have lunch prepared by our young people on **Thursday 11th July**. The event was supported by Sunderland City College, who allowed TfC Leaving Care young people to take over their City Campus Restaurant. All the young people involved in the lunch received a slow cooker and starter pack for their hard work. The starter pack includes a range of necessities that young

people will need when starting out on their own. The CCG have provided the initial funding for the packs and these will now be given to all young people who are moving into semi-independent or independent living from August 2019.



### **3. BBC Radio Newcastle**

Following the successful event two young people involved in the Care Leavers lunch were interviewed for BBC Radio Newcastle to discuss the aims behind the event and to raise awareness of the limited budget care leavers have for food and necessities.



### **4. Works Experience**

A member of Change Council requested to complete her works experience with the Participation and Engagement Team. She completed a week with the team from 8<sup>th</sup> July-12<sup>th</sup> July with us. This included a variety of tasks including reviewing the Young Achievers Event, shadowing team members, and attending a Mental Health Charter Mark assessment meeting. She enjoyed her week on works experience and took the opportunity to get involved in as much as possible.

### **5. Sixteen**

Two members of Change Council were part of an arts exhibition 'sixteen' that has travelled to different venues across the country. We travelled to the exhibition in Liverpool to see the exhibition where both photographs and stories were on display.



## **6. Washington Youth Council**

A member of Change Council went along to Washington Youth Council's open event, raising awareness around the issues that children and young people face in Washington. This encouraged a natural link between Washington Youth Council, Sunderland Youth Council and Change Council. The groups have arranged to have a joint meeting in October 2019.

## **7. Drop Ins – Next Steps/Residential Homes**

The participation and engagement team have started several drop-in sessions for children looked after and leaving care to young people to have more of a say. The team appreciate that a formal meeting set up is not appropriate for everyone and wanted to encourage others to have a voice. The drop ins that are currently set up are at Next Steps, Grasswell House and Monument View Childrens Homes and will be starting soon with Revelstoke and Colombo Childrens Homes from October 2019. The drop ins are informal and give any of the young people a chance to raise any issues and have a say on the topics that Change Council are currently working on.

## **8. Regional Children in Care Council Update**

Young people are currently working as part of the Regional Children in Care Council to plan the next Conference. The Conference will be held at Sunderland Beacon of Light on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The themes of this year's conference will focus on Mental Health and Post 18 support for Care Leavers. Sunderland's Ambassador is leading the work and is feeding back into the Change Council meetings.

## **9. Speed Networking Event**

Following changes within senior management team within children's social care it was suggested by our young people that we hold a get to know each other better event. The event became a 'speed networking' evening. The aim of the event was an opportunity for professionals to get to know Change Council (both younger and older group) better and

for young people to get to know the professional that are there to keep them safe and ensure that they have the best possible outcomes. The event was a huge success and feedback from both young people and professional was extremely positive.



## 10. Alton Towers Away Day

Following the Regional trip to Alton Towers where only three members of Change Council could attend. Young people decided that they would like to go to Alton Towers as their reward for all their hard work. On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September staff supported both Change Council's to attend Alton Towers, and despite the travel young people enjoyed the day and it was a great opportunity to bring both the younger and older change council together in a fun setting.



## 11. Commitment Update

As an on-going theme throughout the year, both Change Council groups review the commitments we have in Sunderland which holds professionals to account to ensure they get the best possible outcomes. The younger group have been working on '**if you need to come into care we will make sure that you are safe and properly care for**'. The younger group created a survey and circulated this via professional, however the take up hasn't been

great and only a small number of response's were received. We have worked with Children's Social Care to improve take up and have opened the survey again until the end of October. The fostering team will be supporting via text messages to carers to encourage young people to have their say, the team will also be using hard copies throughout half term attending the fostering activities and the participation and engagement group are now attending Vokol monthly. The results will be reviewed and fed back to the Senior Leadership Team and to Corporate Parenting Board.

## **12. Interviewing of Social Workers**

Involving our children and young people in recruitment and selection has now been embedded within Children's Social Care, with a clear expectation that 'our' children and young people should be very much part of this process. In the last few months, children and young people have interviewed social workers along with the adult panel and held their own panel for the recruitment of the last permanent service manager. Young people feed their findings and observations back to the adult panel.

