



REPORT AUTHOR:	Loren Nergaard (Business Admin Apprentice – Participation and Engagement Team)
SUBJECT:	<b>CHANGE COUNCIL UPDATE</b>
PURPOSE:	<b>To update members on Change Council activities from April- June 2019</b>

## 1. Return home interviews

Both the 10-15 group and 16+ group were asked by TfC Commissioning Team to review the Return Home Interview questions that Barnardo's use when speaking with a young person after a period missing.

Young people from both groups commented on the forms. Below is the information from young people and the response that has been fed back.

### 16+ Group

- The group agreed the form was too long but understood that there is a need for this information, but they would not answer these questions.
- Young people think that the interview should be done by people the YP know and trust – **fully accept this point but it is not possible as the law requires that the interviewer has to be independent of the young person. The key worker that the young person knows should also be supporting the young person through the challenges and trying to work with them to reduce the risks from going missing.**
- If completed by staff i.e. Barnardo's they should be young people friendly – **agree**
- Young people do not want to be interviewed by strangers and find police and professionals intimidating – **accept however the Law requires that the interviewer must be independent of the young person.**
- Wouldn't admit to committing a crime – some children might not realise that a crime has been committed. **The question is there to identify any threats/risks and possibly identify perpetrators. Professionals have to report any potential crime to the police. it doesn't necessarily mean the young person will be prosecuted but that crimes against children can be identified and risks reduced**
- Young people feel that professionals should offer them someone else talk to. – **agree**

## 10-15yrs Group

- Quite overwhelming there are a lot of questions – agree but this is required to try and protect the young person
- There should be a little statement at the top before the interview where the person completing the interview should give the young person a choice of completing the interview - No one would be forced to complete the interview but as it is required by law every effort has to be made to encourage the young person to discuss the missing episode
- Young people said they would never disclose who they were missing with so there is no point in asking – we have to ask so that we can try and identify any potential risks from perpetrators, people influencing the young person and to try and protect them. It can also identify other young people at risk
- Some of the questions didn't make sense at all – is there anything more specific here that we can use to improve these questions?
- They had a feeling the interview would take a long time as there are 6 pages to go through, they agreed that they would get bored and give up half way through or not participate in the first place – a skilled interviewer should be able to get the information without going through the form question by question and making it a tedious and lengthy process for the young person.
- Young people weren't keen on completing a return home interview as they said that they have gone missing for a reason and don't want to talk about it for example, being upset, not happy where they live, meeting friends and going out and they wouldn't be happy telling anyone who they were out with as that would "drop them in it or they will get in trouble" – accept the point but it is a process that has to be followed with the aim of safeguarding children and young people it is meant to offer the chance for young people to disclose anything that they might not want to say to the people they live with etc

## 2. Care leavers cook book

Our Change Council 16+ (Care Leavers group) are in the process of creating a cookbook (to be named) that young people moving into supported accommodation and beyond will be given in a bid to support those faced with finding the money to eat properly.

It has been estimated that those who leave care without a job have only £21 a week to spend on food, drink and transport after bills and the new cookbook follows on from the £21 Challenge we looked at some years ago.

The book will include recipes created by our young people, to support this the City of Sunderland College have kindly agreed to support the event and will allow our young people to use their kitchen facilities to cook up a storm on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

Our young people have invited the SLT to come and enjoy their recipes on **Thursday 11th July** in the City Campus Restaurant and even have the opportunity to cook with them.

### 3. Innovation unit

Early in 2019, TfC commissioned Innovation Unit as a partner in its transformation work. Their role was to help colleagues to identify priorities for change; to develop an investment case to secure additional financial support; and to begin mobilise a wider variety of players across the system around a vision for change. During March-April 2019, they ran a series of conversations with a variety of stakeholders across the system - from senior system leaders to front-line practitioners and children and young people engaged with the care system. Members of Change Council met with the innovation Unit to share their views and opinions.



Feedback from for our young people,

“Please let the Change Council know how powerful and crucial their words and thoughts were to us making this investment case.

It was a real pleasure to meet them all, and I hope you and they are doing well.”

### 4. Young People’s Room at Stanfield

TfC support services moved to Stanfield in May 2019 along with Support Service Children and Young People now have their own dedicated space at the front of the building showing our commitment to ensuring the voice of children and young people are at the heart of our work.

Young people from all the participation and engagement groups share the space and have co-designed how they would like it



## 5. Kooth Launch

Together for Children and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group have commissioned Kooth, an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people that is accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop and free at the point of use.

Representatives from Change Council were involved in the press release for the Launch of Kooth which featured in the Sunderland Echo and took part in a radio interview with Metro radio as they have been involved with Kooth being brought to Sunderland from the beginning.



## **6. Recruitment and Selection of Social Workers**

In the last few months, Children's Social Care have recruited Heads of Service, Service Managers and Social Workers. Members of Change Council have been involved with the recruitment and selection process by being part of the interviewing panel for the above positions. Young people created their own questions to ask applicants which for the social worker interviews have included;

If a young person you work with is going missing a lot and has recently been in hospital as a result of taking drugs and alcohol, what would you put in place and how would you treat the young person?

What made you want to be a social worker?

Young people's feedback has then been used when appointing for the above positions.

## **7. Young Commissioners**

Members of Change Council who have become part of our Young Commissioners group have completed a two day training programme that trains young people aged 11-19 (up to 25 with LDD) to commission and inspect services used by young people. We are working with the commissioning team and young people are becoming more involved in the commissioning process from the beginning.



## **8. Regional Trip to Alton Towers**

The regional children in care council finally got to Alton Towers. This was a reward to the group for the hard work and dedication that the young people put into planning the 2018 children in care conference. The admission to Alton Towers was free, so the costs was a bus trip and a few ponchos. Despite the rain our children and young people who attended had a great time and can't wait to go back, with yet another batch of free tickets.





### 9. BYC Youth Voice Leadership Programme (Swindon)

Two young people from our Change Council along with two young people from Sunderland Youth Council spend the weekend developing their skills to be able to become youth voice leaders.



## **10. 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. Members of Change Council have met with other regions to discuss what the focus of this years Conference should be on. Sunderland teamed up with Newcastle to discuss what they feel the biggest issues they would like to focus on are, possible venues where they could hold the Conference and who they would like to attend. Our regional young ambassador captured the views/thoughts of the group, please see attached appendix 1.

## **11. Sunderland Preventative Programme Digital Survey**

Jamie Scott, Project Manager Prevention and Early Help attended Change Council to ask the group about a project he is working on about being healthy and how we communicate this to children and young people. Jamie created a survey however feedback from the young people was that they didn't like it and would prefer Jamie to attend a group to work through the questions, such as what stops young people doing healthy things, understand what technology young people use to improve their health and what suggestions young people have improving the health of children and young people in the city.

## **12. Commitment Update**

Change Council 10-15yrs have worked on creating a survey to go out to as many young people with care experience in Sunderland as possible to get feedback on Commitment 2; If you need to come into care we will make sure that you are safe and properly cared for. The group tried to cover each point within the commitment, the survey is now complete and ready to go, Change Council will put their finding into a report with recommendations and actions.

## **13. Permanence Away Day**

Change Council were invited to one of the Social Care teams away team days on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019. They were asked to come along to speak to the team about family time. The feedback to our young people;

*'Just wanted to say thank you for your help with this. Jess and Blaine attended (as did Lauren) and they did well to face a room full of strangers and they really made us think about who supervises family time, who pays for things and where it takes place. As well as Family Time we began thinking about venues and just what the Change Council does, and a couple of the Social Workers are really interested in getting more involved. Please let me know if there is anything we can help with, particularly around Family Time'.*







