

Youth Voice

Review of our Year

2023-2024

<p>OUR VISION</p> <p>Worcestershire to be a wonderful place for all children and young people to grow up.</p>	<p>WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST </p>	<p>OUR MISSION</p> <p>Supporting children and young people to be happy, healthy and safe.</p>
--	--	--

OUR VALUES

				
<p>CHILDREN AT OUR HEART</p> <p>We will keep children and young people at the heart of everything we do.</p>	<p>VALUE FAMILY LIFE</p> <p>We will support and empower parents to care for their own children.</p>	<p>GOOD EDUCATION FOR ALL</p> <p>We will value education as the best start in life for all children and young people.</p>	<p>PROTECTION FROM HARM</p> <p>We will act in a professional and timely way to protect children from harm.</p>	<p>EMBRACE DIVERSITY</p> <p>A progressive culture of championing equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>

Participation & Co-production.

Participation means taking part and there are various levels of participation where you could participate in a variety of ways. An example is planning an activity where you might participate in the activity or potentially also take part in planning the activity.

Co-production is like participation but you are involved at the very start of the planning. It means everyone who might be involved would have a conversation to produce a solution and plan together.

What do we do?

We believe we should do **“Nothing about You, Without You.”** We support you to make sure that Worcestershire’s youth voice is heard and provides opportunities for young people to be actively involved in decision-making that affects them, their families and communities. We work with all of Worcestershire’s youth, offering support for young people and young adults to enable their voice to be heard.

We plan and host consultation events, working with partners and colleagues to hear the voices of children and young people across Worcestershire. We work together with various partner agencies and projects linked to the participation groups.

We run the children in care council called Who Cares We Care, the care leavers council called Action Speak and the Youth Panel which is a group of trained young people who interview staff across the organisation. Another group is the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet who campaign on issues that matter to young people, linking in with Youth Parliament and the British Youth Council. We also support focus groups run by public health, events, and commissioning opportunities. We also plan events, training, and workshops.

Meet the Team



Celena
Supervisor



Nathan
Mentor



James
Group Manager

Contact



Telephone: **01905 846498**



Email:

youthvoiceteam@worcechildrenfirst.org.uk  Instagram: [@youthvoiceworcs](https://www.instagram.com/youthvoiceworcs)

Who Cares We Care

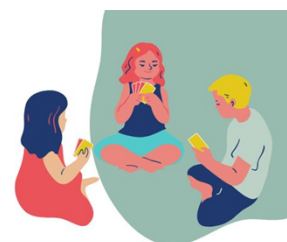
The Children in Care Council is a statutory service to gather the views of children in care. The service started in 2008. We follow the guidance from the National Children's Bureau for best practices with the resources available. [Guide to Good Practice in Running of a Children in Care Council \(ncb.org.uk\)](https://www.ncb.org.uk/guide-to-good-practice-in-running-of-a-children-in-care-council)

How do we do it?

7 active members that meet monthly aged between 11-17. All members are care experienced and meet both online and in person at our base in St Johns. We keep agendas and minutes for all meetings. We keep reports of events to reflect on practice and feedback.



We meet monthly at our base to have fun, make friends, have food and use our experiences to help professionals shape our services.



We work closely to plan fun events for children in care and had over 100 people come to our annual fun day. Plus over 120 people at the fostering pool pizza party.

Focused
Understanding
Nurturing



Young people's aims.

- ① To bring Looked After Children and young people together to share their ideas and experiences.
- ① To provide opportunities to ask looked After Children and young people their views on different things.
- ① To give looked after children and young people the chance to say what they want and what they need.
- ① To make sure everyone listens to look after children and young people and take their views into account.

- ⊙ To provide all looked-after children and young people with information about the Child in Care Council and what it is doing.
- ⊙ To inform adults, build relationships with senior leaders and raise awareness of the needs of all looked-after children and young people.

Achievements in 2023

- 🏆 Contributed to WCF (Worcestershire Children First) fostering / planning of activities for Looked After Children.
- 🏆 Instrumental in planning Fun Day 16th July with over 100 people booked to attend including foster care, and Children/Young People.
- 🏆 National independent review of care contributions
- 🏆 Attended residential teamwork event with 2 youth cabinet members & 2 Who Care We Care members.
- 🏆 Contributed feedback on “What makes a good advocate” with Coram Voice
- 🏆 Attended the Amplify (Coram Voice) event in London.
- 🏆 Provided questions for WCF fostering panels.
- 🏆 Created a new mission statement.
- 🏆 Contributed to safe care risk assessment form for Worcestershire Children First Fostering.
- 🏆 Took a lead role in interviews for WCF staff to include Family Support workers and social worker for the Anchor Team.
- 🏆 Consultation at Worcester University around the voice of the child for social workers in training.
- 🏆 Contributed and presented at a Local Family Justice Board event in April.
- 🏆 Led a bug Hotel project in partnership with Crowngate Shopping Centre.
- 🏆 Corporate parenting board pre-meetings and attendance from group members
- 🏆 Attended a cooking event at the Heart of Worcester College and left with full bellies of tomato pasta and garlic focaccia.
- 🏆 Celebration event at the end of the year with a fun session at the buzz in Worcester.

Our Goals for 2024

- ⊙ Host further events.
- ⊙ Fun Day 2024
- ⊙ Collaborate further with Coram Voice, WCF’s commissioned advocacy partner.
- ⊙ Develop a questionnaire to seek the views of Worcestershire Looked After Children.
- ⊙ Attend team meetings across WCF to raise awareness of Youth Voice
- ⊙ Develop Participation across WCF teams.
- ⊙ Increase membership.
- ⊙ Develop our communications & use of social media.
- ⊙ Celebration event for Looked After Children’s achievements.



Action Speak

Action Speak (formerly Speak Out) is a group of young people aged 17-25 who are care experienced. Following a request from older children in care council members, we set up this group in 2011. The group's name was changed in 2022 at the request of its members who co-produced the group's new Logo

How do we do it?

We meet in person every 4 weeks at our Worcester base, keeping agendas and minutes for all meetings. We keep reports on events to reflect on practice and feedback information to help shape services.

Mission Statement.



Achievements this year!

- Created our own coat of arms and updated groups mission statement.

- Increased membership
- Involved with and attending the Corporate Parenting Board with a member attending every meeting.
- Corporate Parenting Board pre-meetings giving feedback around agenda items which is then shared at Corporate Parenting Board meetings and bring information back for discussion and comments and Action speak meetings.
- Held a coffee and catch-up meeting, separate from the formal meetings that Action Speak holds to have a more informal space for members to chat and socialise.
- Attended the Coram Amplify event in London Coram Voice Amplify event representing Worcestershire at this national event.
- Worked collaboratively with Worcestershire Care Leavers to develop a new pathway plan through consultation events ran by the Care Leavers team.
- Developed a presentation to co-host a Regional Offer Participation Group in collaboration with Birmingham Children's Trust, which 40 YP across the West Midlands.
- Attended an event in Birmingham looking at the Regional Care Leavers Offer where young people gave their opinions and feedback.
- Continued contributing to Care Leaver's feedback on WCF's Care Leavers service.
- Worked with the Rees Foundation (Care Leavers Charity) to name a new service they will deliver in the new year.
- Provided feedback on the WCF complaints procedure.
- We have attended and engaged with several Benchmarking Forum events both online and in-person, including:
 - an event around interdependence
 - an event around neurodiversity
 - an event around a Local Offer
 - Care Leavers Week celebration event was also attended by HRH Princess Anne.
- We have started an allotment project at Green Fingers located at Top Barn Farm. We have planted some vegetables with the intention of developing cooking skills at future meetings using the produce they have grown. So far we have a small group that attends with plans to expand to allow more to attend.
- Attended various Care Leavers Events throughout 2023
- 6 Action Speak members took part in an opportunity provided by Worcester Museums, looked down in the archives, and gave really good feedback to the museum. We gave our opinions on museum displays at the museum's request. We have been invited to return in the future.
- We held an end-of-year celebration event at Ye Olde Talbot, where we also celebrated the continued support of members for several years. 10 members attended with Farewells to two members who are now 25.

Feedback

Feedback from the members of Action Speak is important as it helps us know where the young people feel the group is going well and where it needs improvement.

How has being involved made you feel?

Feedback Received:

“Action Speak has been good but we do need to refocus on future issues rather than old things as we are not here to change the past but make the future better for new care leavers”

"Empowered, given a sense of purpose, gained social skills."

“It has been a great support to me and my confidence”.

What have you enjoyed the most?

‘Getting to know new people and taking part in the meetings.’

‘I did action speak for nearly 3 years and enjoyed meeting new people over the years.’

"Events in other areas”.

"Getting to know new people when they join the team "I've enjoyed getting to meet all the wonderful people from our small community - putting plans to action and feeling as if we are making a difference and having a voice.

Our Goals

- ⊙ Create a welcome pack for Care Leavers post 18+
- ⊙ Increase membership.
- ⊙ Inspire young people to take their next steps in life.
- ⊙ Cooking sessions to learn/teach cooking skills and create Cookbook.
- ⊙ Support the Care Leavers team to think about post 25 ending of relationships.



Young Peoples Interview Panel

What it is?

This is a group of young people aged 12-25 years old, who are a crucial part of the employment process and are trained to sit on recruitment panels.

How do we do it?

Panel members are invited to sit on panels for jobs across the departments and where young people cannot attend their questions can be used on recruitment. Most interviews are in person, but some take part online.

Teams who ask young people to take part thank young people for their participation.

Achievements

- 🏆 5 active current members
- 🏆 Been involved with interviews for anchor team social workers & family support workers.

Feedback from young people

"It has made me feel like a part of Worcestershire as I go to school in Staffordshire".

"Has helped with my confidence".

"It helps me focus and feel more grown-up".

"Knowing my views are listened to."

Feedback from professionals.

- ✓ The young people who supported the panel were fantastic and so professional in their approach. I appreciated their commitment and dedication to the task at hand (as well giving up their time).
- ✓ "The young people who attended the youth panel recruitment training were enthusiastic, committed and motivated in helping us to ensure we only appointed the right staff to our organisation.



Youth Cabinet

What it is?

This is a group of children and young people aged 11-18 who represent all children and young people across Worcestershire, which started in 2006. They work closely with the British Youth Council and Youth Parliament to link into national campaigns, e.g. [British Youth Council | UK Youth Parliament \(byc.org.uk\)](#) Find out more on our web pages: [Worcestershire Youth Cabinet | Worcestershire County Council](#)

How do we do it?

The young people work together with the county council, district council and local organisations and charities. This focus of the group changes every year with Make Your Mark. Make Your Mark is a national consultation for children and young people aged 11-18. We pull together the data from the Worcestershire area of Make your mark's results and use this for Youth Cabinet's campaigns: [British Youth Council | Make Your Mark - UK Youth Parliament \(byc.org.uk\)](#)

Skills Show Consultation 2023

We attended the Worcestershire Skills Show to advertise opportunities and consult with young people we had 113 responses.

We Asked:

If you oversaw Worcestershire for the day – what changes would you make?

- 🏆 113 responses in the skills show consultation.
- 🏆 Previous members go off to education and employment opportunities.

Our Goals

- 🎯 Re-shape the group
- 🎯 Marketing for more membership
- 🎯 Promote make your mark and get as many Votes from Worcestershire Children and Young people
- 🎯 Attend Worcestershire Skills show.
- 🎯 Work with partners to promote youth voice opportunities.
- 🎯 Attend meetings and events to raise awareness of the Youth Cabinet
- 🎯 Make introductions to new councillors that have been elected.
- 🎯 We are working with Director for Education , Sarah Wilkins to work more closely with schools to develop voting processes and volunteers.

Activities This Year

The Youth Voice Team support Worcestershire Children First teams to participate with children and young people through various activities, events and groups working together with Fostering Teams, The Virtual School, Green Fingers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Social Work Teams, and the Care Leavers service. We also support young people to attend other networks, groups and activities run regionally and nationally.

We attend Care Leavers Team meetings to champion youth voices and stay informed about opportunities and activities for young people. This relationship also helps us promote opportunities for Personal Advisors to share with their young people.
















We also attend the Youth Engagement Network Group for Worcestershire to meet with youth, education, police and community groups and workers. This helps us promote wider in the community and learn about local opportunities for young people.

Fun Day

On 16th July the Participation Team hosted the looked-after children's family fun day at Perdisswell Young People's Centre. We had around 100 people in attendance . The Children in Care Council- Who Cares We Care helped plan the event. Our wonderful corporate parents supported the event including Cllr Steve Mackay who is now our Lead member for Children and Families in Worcestershire and chair of the Corporate Parenting board.









The fun day provides an amazing opportunity for children and young people to experience new things and learn new skills all while having fun in an environment where they can feel safe and socialise with other young people in similar circumstances. As well as a chance for carers to get together over a cup of tea and a few biscuits to share with those who understand what it is to be a foster parent.

Activities on the Day.




-  Bouncy castle
-  Photo wall
-  Cake Decorating
-  Café
-  Playdough
-  Treasure Hunt
-  Football golf and shoot out
-  Museums Worcestershire
-  Bug hotel
-  Face Painting
-  Nail Art
-  Arts and Crafts
-  Sensory Space
-  Harry Potter Activities – to include games and crafts.
-  Picnic Area – Changed to indoors due to the weather

Feedback from the day

What did you enjoy?

-  Arts and crafts and bouncy castle
-  Range of activities, things to do for all ages, nice venue.
-  Photos and bouncy castle
-  Lovely to see more new faces and some different activities.
-  A very good range of activities and plenty of space to move around and for the children to explore. My child particularly enjoyed the treasure hunt.
-  The cake decorating, face painting, photos, and nail painting.
-  Celina in the bouncy castle, councillor's attendance and getting to speak informally to foster carers.
-  Arts and crafts the bouncy castle the photo shoot. Face painting

Reach of Participation

-  Worcestershire skills show was attended by over 4,000 students. Youth voice received feedback from 113 students at this event.
-  We attend and deliver events that are local, regional and national.
-  The annual Looked After Fun day was attended by 100 children and carers.

- ⊙ Our Youth Panel members have been actively involved in staff interviews for WCF.
- ⊙ Who Cares We Care Group is attended every month by 8 members.
- ⊙ Action Speak monthly meetings were regularly attended. The group has 8 active members.
- ⊙ Worcestershire Youth Cabinet currently has 6 active members.
- ⊙ Youth voice have attended WCF Team meetings to promote participation across the service.
- ⊙ Youth voice have also attended 2 WCF Marketplace events to promote Participation with partner agencies and internal teams.
- ⊙ Over the past year youth voice team have improved engagement through the use of social media and reached an increased engagement with the use of Canva and menti which has received positive feedback
- ⊙ Youth Voice attended the Life Beyond School event and consulted with children who attended the event, particularly asking how the voice of SEND students is captured and should there be a specific group as part of the WS3 Task and Finish group: Voice of C/YP and interacted with well over 200 students.

[\(1\) Life Beyond School 2023 - Thank you - YouTube](#)

Moving Forward in 2024

We will continue to seek feedback across our events, we will consult with children & young people who receive services in our day-to-day practice and we will provide the outcomes of this to the Leadership Teams & Corporate Parenting Board.

We will build on the positive work within Corporate Parenting Board and with our Children 's Champions but we will respectfully ask more of you in 2024 to support our young people with to update our Local Offer to Care Leavers.

We would like you help with;

Travel
Leisure

Care Leaver dedicated Apprenticeships in WCC & within districts.

And more