

# Worcestershire's Children in Care and Care Leavers



Councils  
Big Voices,

Who Cares We Care



and

Speak Out



# Who are we?

- **Big Voices:** Looked after Children's six weekly fun activities for children 0-12 years
- **Who Cares We Care** started in Worcestershire in March 2008 for Looked After Young People 12-18 years.
- **Speak Out** began in October 2011 for Care Leavers 16+.
- Recently we met every three weeks on the same evening. The groups have now become so popular we now have to meet on separate nights.
- **SO:** first Monday in the month  
**WCWCG:** third Monday of the month.

# How many of us?

- **Big Voices:** Numbers range depending on the interest of the activity.
- **WCWCG** has 10 active group members currently with 3 satellite members (these are members Youth Voice keep in contact with but the young people choose not to attend all the meetings).
- **SO** has 9 active members currently with 3 satellite members.

# What's our purpose?

- Government Guidance says:

Local authorities are required to establish a Children in Care Council to represent the views of looked after children to those responsible for the service.

Guidance suggests that 'It is essential that a local mechanism is established that works for CPB and CICC , otherwise there is a risk that the corporate parenting group and the Children in Care Council will operate in parallel rather than collaboratively'.

# So what did we get up to in 2018?

<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
<p>Speak Out spoke with Barbara Carter about staying put arrangements and that 29 Young Adults were currently placed under this accommodation.</p>	<p>We organised and ran the West Midlands regional event at Worcestershire Cricket Club with 13 Local Authorities attending the day. It was a great day and thank you to Cllr Roberts for opening the event.</p> <p>Speak Out members involved in commissioning process from start to end of Mind Of My Own</p>	<p>Speak Out attended the Care Crisis Consultation Event in Sheffield.</p> <p>Met with Social Workers from Russia and exchanged what happens in Russia and what happens in Britain for looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>

<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
<p>Who Cares We Care and Speak Out, along with other young people supported by SENDIASS services, met with Ofsted inspectors to talk about their experiences around Education, Health and Care Plans.</p> <p>Young People and their carers also attended the Chairman's Service at Worcester Cathedral. One of them was even brave enough to deliver a speech and introduce the choir.</p>	<p>Big Voices held their annual Early Years Celebration Event in partnership with Libraries and Learning.</p> <p>Speak Out members attended the Foster Carer's Conference to share all the things they had been up to and to encourage new members to join.</p> <p>Who Cares we Care had visitors to ask them about ideas and branding for the Alternative Delivery Model.</p>	<p>Sian Brown from SENDIASS met with Who Cares and Speak Out to talk about the support her service could offer to those on a EHC plan.</p>

## July

Who Cares We Care ran the reception at The Education Awards .

Two members of WCWC attended the APPG for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Westminster. The young people spoke with Lord Listowel about who they were and where they had travelled from. The meeting talked about overcoming stigmas attached to young people in Care.

We ran the Looked After Children annual Fun Day which over 300 children and foster families attended, carried out interview panels and met with Rees Foundation.

## August

NHS commissioning services and Youth Forum invited Speak Out to join them to consult on the possibility of Youth Commissioners. We are still waiting to see what the future holds around this.

Lucy Whitehead held a Tech Take over. Two of our Speak Out members attended and found the day useful.

## September

Who Cares spoke with Andrea from the Virtual School about their ideas for The Education Awards in November.

Who Cares invited Dan Adams to one of their meetings to talk about having a Social Workers pledge. Dan came in January 2019 and work has started on this.

<b>October</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>December</b>
<p>Who Cares we Care, Speak Out and Cllr Tom Baker-Price organised and held the first Corporate Parenting Roadshow to promote services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This was to help Corporate Parents know where they could sign post colleagues and members of the public to for to support our children and young people. The event was held within Care Leavers week and proved to be successful with 70 people attending the day.</p>	<p>Speak Out carried out interviews to recruit Early Help Family Support Managers, while Who Cares we Care again ran reception for the Secondary Education Awards and were rewarded with wristbands for the Safari Park rides.</p> <p>Youth Voice made nominations for Tryangle Awards for our Young People . Charlie has been invited to receive an award for his community work.</p>	<p>Who Cares and Speak Out evaluated the Corporate Parenting Fair Roadshow with Tom.</p> <p>Who Cares met with Herefordshire Children in Care Council to plan for a professional's development day to be run in February 2019.</p> <p>All groups ended with their Christmas Parties.</p>

# What differences we think we make

- Working with people like housing raises the profile of Care Leavers and helps them to understand what our needs are and our worries. Worcester City have changed their guidance so the term homeless is not used for Care Leavers in search of a tenancy. They also have a Housing Pathway Worker who works with Care Leavers to assist with Care Leavers to keep their tenancy.
- People come to our meetings to ask our opinion about things. This helps them improve services to Looked After Children and Care Leavers based on what Young People want. Last year we spoke with Worcestershire's Children First, Care Leavers Team, Babcock Prime, IROs, Principal Social Worker, Specialist nurses, CAFCASS, Herefordshire CICC, HR, Fostering Services, SEND Services, Housing, Libraries and Learning.

## Differences Continued:

- We have recently supported Cllr Tom Baker Price to carry out the first Corporate Parenting Fair to share with Corporate Parents the support services available to the Care Experienced.
- We help to keep looked After Children and Care Leavers as real young people to Corporate Parents rather than qualitative and quantitative data and someone else's responsibility.
- We play an active role in being part of the decision making in hiring key staff to Worcestershire County Council such as Chief Executive WCC Assistant Director to Children's Services. This supports us with understanding interview practice for our job prospects and it supports our CVs.
- We feel we help others who feel they are not able to talk for themselves to have a say on things that matter to care experienced.
- It is a good opportunity and helps our confidence.
- It's great to spend an evening with people of your own age and who know what you are going through.

# Plans for the future

- Keep doing what we are doing.
- Keep looking at social media and keep up to date on what sites are used by young people. We put updates in Together news about what we are up to .
- Work with Care Leavers Team and Rees on having a Celebration Event for Care Leavers.
- Work with Dan Gray Principal Social Worker to have a Social Care Workers Pledge. Produce a short film to promote this and launch at the Social Care Conference in September.
- Keep gaining new members to the groups by having our Fun Days, Early Years Celebration Events and attending Foster Carers Meetings and Events. We continue to send information to Designated teachers and Tutors and attend the Skills Show. Relationships with IROs and Social Workers is important so they remember to spread the word as well.
- We hope to have a clear understanding and a voice within Worcestershire's Children First and look forward to developing good working relationships for the future.

# What needs to improve

- We always need to encourage more Young People to have a voice but know how difficult it can be to have the confidence to join a new group. When we have talked to other Children in Care Councils we find they all struggle with this.
- When seeking our views and feelings people need to be sure that these are considered and acted upon. Our participation should not be tokenistic.
- We hope to have a Looked After Children's Survey in summer 2019 so everyone has the opportunity to be heard. We can then help decision makers to stop, start and continue with the things that matter to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Thank You  
for  
Listening

