

## PARTICIPATION SUB GROUP: MARCH 2010

### Summary of Key Issues:

- Members are asked to note the findings of the Local Area Trust Board Review
- Members are asked to note the updates included in the report

### UK Youth Parliament

Elections for membership of the UK Youth Parliament culminated in a very exciting Announcement event on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at County Hall, hosted by Cllr Louise Chapman. We celebrated the achievements and contribution of the outgoing members, and then they announced the winners for this year. They have all worked incredibly hard on their campaigns at both local and national levels, including:

- Organising a 2nd Transport Summit on Takeover Day on accessible bus routes in rural areas
- Making two films campaigning for positive images for young people in the media
- Taking part in the first ever sitting of the UK Youth Parliament in the House of Commons
- Successfully campaigning for a change in the Sex Education Law 2009

25 candidates stood for election across the county, the 6 new candidates are:

Oxford City	MYP – Diko Blacking	DMYP – Joseph Lawes
North Oxfordshire	MYP – Sam Hatzigeorgio	DMYP Francesca Ingal
South Oxfordshire	MYP – Helen Walker	DMYP – Alex Longworth – Krafft



*“UKYP has become a part of me and has helped me develop into the person I am today, before UKYP I really struggled in School and did not have a lot of friends or confidence. Due to the support of the workers in Oxfordshire and being part of something like this I have learnt so much and that is priceless.”*

Nathan Sinclair, North Oxfordshire Deputy  
2008 - 2010

## Children in Care Council (CICC)

The CICC meets with their joint Chairs, Sarah Lawrence & Alidja Templer. Members are updated on developments, e.g. on the Local Area Trust Boards, involvement in recruitment etc. They also discuss key issues, e.g. on improvements to support Children Looked After & Care Leavers in school.

Members are currently reviewing the CICC Pledge and Workplan. Sarah & Alidja recently met with managers and worked through the entire plan, asking managers .. *'what's been done', 'what's still to be done', 'why the delay', and 'deadline for completion'*. The Chairs presented their findings to the CICC meeting and asked members to prioritise key issues, demonstrating the principle of accountability in action. CICC members were so engaged, that they unanimously said they wished they could continue rather than finish on time!

One member said about their membership of the CICC: *"Before I became a CICC member I was always complaining about having Social Services in my life. Now, as result of the work we do and the involvement with our Corporate Parents I have the confidence to question and suggest things so we can improve the experiences of Children Looked After and Care Leavers. I know we have a voice now and that our Corporate Parents are listening"*.

## Vtalent

The VTalent programme celebrated the end of its first year with a joint Graduation ceremony at County Hall, with the OCC Apprentices. Vtalent is the first full time, year long, youth volunteering programme based within children's services, funded by DCSF through V.



Fifteen volunteers were drawn from very diverse circumstances, but most were either NEET or had faced some very challenging circumstances. Their journeys through the year on the programme have been extraordinary and for some young people, transformational. Similarly, the change they have instilled in the staff and organisations they have worked within have been

equally transforming, as described by one colleague: *"We were wary initially, given his past, but he has shown us that young people can really turn their lives around – it's changed how we think about young people"*

Over the year we have had 20 young people involved in the project, 5 completed the full year of volunteering, and a further 7 completed 6 months or more. 12 volunteers also completed their Level 2 certificate in Community Volunteering. Overall the volunteers have done 535 weeks of volunteering between them!

### **Involving parents, carers, young people and children in Local Area Trust Boards**

In March 2010, ten parents, carers, children and young people who have been involved as representatives on the Local Area Trust Boards, met with the local Chairs, to review their involvement. As well as some very pragmatic suggestions about the timings, venues, food, jargon, papers etc, the representatives also talked about their involvement and what would help them to contribute more fully. This included, for instance, using small groups more, discussing things that can really make a difference, having some consistent Terms of Reference across all the Boards etc. An Action Plan was agreed to take forward their suggestions. The full report will be available at the CYPT meeting.

### **IYSS: Mystery Shopping**

In October, a secret project took place! Young people from 3 youth groups went 'mystery shopping' in all of Oxfordshire's Connexions Offices, Young People's Centres and Youth Offending Service offices. Feedback to other young people is posted on [www.spired.com](http://www.spired.com) including a short video with young people explaining what they saw and experienced. Young people who took part as mystery shoppers said: *"It's good to know that you can go into any youth centre and expect respect and to be welcomed"* and *"It's interesting to see other centres, to see what they've got"*. A full report is available with recommendations for taking forward an improved service to young people.

In January, young people from the African-Caribbean Project worked with an artist to produce a calendar for 'professionals' and a credit card size fold out leaflet explaining the services available through IYSS. Young people described the skills of staff within IYSS as including being *"supportive, not gossipy or judgemental"*, *"able to deal with difficult situations without being scared or offended"*, *"able to help find out what you need to know"* and *"know what they're on"*

*about*". The calendars and leaflets are being distributed, and will help young people, parents, professionals and others to understand IYSS better.

### **Therapies review**

Parents, carers and disabled children and young people from OYE! (Oxfordshire Young Enablers C&YP Disability Forum) have been involved in the re-commissioning of Therapy Services, and are now being trained to be part of the tendering process. Copies of the report will be available at the CYPT meeting.

### **OYE! Crystal Maze event**(OYE! is the Oxfordshire Youth Enablers C&YP Disability Forum)

The Ormerod Base at Marlborough School was transformed for a *Crystal Maze Challenge* run by OYE! 32 disabled C&YP from across the county took part in the game with an amazing set designed by the Pegasus Theatre team. This was an event to celebrate and recognise the achievements of the C&YP during the first full year of OYE! which has included setting 'gold standards' for recruitment of staff working with disabled C&YP, and successfully campaigned for changes to be made to the DCSF website regarding free transport.

### **Winter Ball**

8 children and young people raised £9.5k to plan and design a massive red Winter Ball for 200 children and young people who are rarely celebrated for their achievements and contributions. They were invited from projects across the county including the Youth Centres, the Children in Care Council, Parasol, District Councils, BYPP etc. They were celebrated with a 3 course dinner, award presentations from the High Sherriff of Oxfordshire and the CEO of Oxfordshire United, and a disco to follow! Comments on the evening include:

*"A very sophisticated classy and elegant evening. Thanks to all the organisers, it was really fantastic. I would just like to emphasize how fortunate we are to live in an area where the authorities embrace the ideas of young people and make an effort to involve them."*

*"Thank you for the invitation to this wonderful event. I am very impressed with it all and everyone involved should be very proud. Well done"* Calvin Thomas, Chairman, Oxford Utd Football Club.

### **C&YP Sounding Board**

The next C&YP Sounding Board meeting on 11th March is focussing on Poverty. It will debate the impact of poverty (in all its forms) on us all and in particular on the 3 priority areas within the

CYP Plan. The views will inform CYPP Delivery Plan and the Tackling Poverty programme in Oxford and Banbury.

### **Parents/Carers Sounding Board**

The next Parent/Carer Sounding Board on 4<sup>th</sup> March will involve parents/carers of disabled C&YP. Oxfordshire Family Voices is a parent-led forum funded through Aiming High for Disabled Children and they have chosen to focus the meeting on a) transport issues and b) access to extended services.