

REPORT

To: YOUTH AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE		Subject: ESTABLISHMENT OF CHAMPIONS BOARD APPROACH IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE	
From: ALISON GORDON, HEAD OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERVICES			
Date 9 FEBRUARY 2017	Ref: AG/SG/MF		

1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

1.1 To provide an update regarding the establishment of a champions board approach in North Lanarkshire with the aim of improving outcomes for looked after children and young people, including care leavers. This follows on from the report and presentation made to the committee in August 2016.

2. Background

2.1 North Lanarkshire's care experienced participation group was established in July 2016 by Your Voice and they provide advocacy services to young people within North Lanarkshire. One of the aims in establishing this group was to encourage care experienced young people to think about how their experiences could influence future service development. The founder members chose the group's name, TNT (Today Not Tomorrow) and chose a logo. TNT now has 5 members and has met regularly since. The members were initially recruited through direct contact by professionals who knew these young people through their involvement and participation in other corporate parenting activities and thought that they may be interested in a champion's board approach.

2.2 One TNT founder member was involved in engagement on participation methods early this year, as part of a video project for the launch of North Lanarkshire's first corporate parenting strategy in February 2016. That video project, Corporate Parenting Matters, worked with a small number of children and young people from across settings: in foster care, in residential homes, and care leavers. The project found that some children and young people wanted to be part of a champion's board approach and therefore an application process to the Life Changes Trust commenced.

2.3 The young people in TNT worked together with Your Voice and with members of the Corporate Parenting Sub Group to put together the application for funding to establish a champion's board approach. This involved speaking to senior managers within North Lanarkshire Partnership (NLP) to establish support and commitment to the approach as well as collating demographic information and researching the current challenges for looked after children and care leavers locally.

2.4 As a group TNT agreed that the two themes they had identified as being priorities for a champions board to explore were accommodation (mainly, support for transitions in placements) and education (mainly, awareness of rights).

2.5 The champions board approach will involve senior members of the management team across NLP and the local authority coming together with care experienced young people firstly to understand and identify the challenges and secondly to agree actions and changes necessary to improve outcomes in these areas.

- 2.6 The application to Life Changes Trust for funding for a Champions Board included establishment of match-funding arrangements which were agreed with Health and Social Work and the voluntary sector, as well as additional agreements in kind. The funding from Life changes Trust includes the establishment of a Champions Board coordinator post which would be filled by a care experienced young person.
- 2.7 Columba 1400, a voluntary organisation which develops leadership skills in young people have already undertaken some work with the TNT group, this is being enhanced by training provided by youth work services in leadership. Your Voice will continue to lead the process of taking forward the actions necessary to support the young people in establishing a champion's board in North Lanarkshire.
- 2.8 A multi-agency steering group will be set up which will be the conduit between TNT, NLP and the Champions Board. It is envisaged that this will be at senior management level.

3. Proposals / Considerations

- 3.1 The Youth Equalities Committee note the content of the report and the need to ensure that there is strategic commitment to support and facilitate the establishment of the Champions Board. Regular updates should be sought and provided regarding progress.
- 3.2 The committee give consideration to representation on the multi-agency steering group in order to help to achieve the above.

4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy / Equalities Implications

- 4.1 Support for a Champion's Board is consistent with the commitment given to Looked After Children and Young People within North Lanarkshire Council's Business Plan (supporting all children to achieve their potential) and North Lanarkshire's Corporate Parenting Strategy. The North Lanarkshire Partnership has also identified 'Looked After Children and Young People' as one of its key priorities.

The Life Changes Trust will support North Lanarkshire Champion's Board through a grant of £180,145 in total over three years. With matched funding and contributions in kind the total value of funding is £357,095 over 3 years. Match funding consists of a direct financial contribution from the Health and Social Care Partnership and in kind support from statutory and third sector partners.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note progress to date and continue to support the work towards a champions board.
- (ii) Provide representation on a champion's board steering group.



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