

RCT Forum Annual Summary Report

Introduction:			
Name of Project:	RCT Local Group	Funder:	RCT Local Authority
Team Member:	Francesca Pritchard	Project Timeframe:	June – November 2021

Project Summary:	
Young People connected with	<p>Over the last six months, the project engaged with a total of nine (9) care experienced young people throughout the RCT area – through a total of four (4) sessions. Of those young people engaged in the sessions - three (3) were aged 16 – 21-year-old and six (6) were aged 21+ year olds.</p> <p>From the nine (9) young people that have engaged in activities over the last 6 months – six (6) young people have expressed an interest in maintaining their engagement with the local group; three (3) who have previously been involved with the local group and three (3) new to the group.</p> <p>Of those (3) new members – two (2) have engaged as a result of outreach work completed by the development officer and one (1) via an internal referral from VfCC Wellbeing Services.</p>
Projects Themes	<p>The RCT forum’s sessions principal areas of focus have been as follows.</p> <p>Engagement into the group: Throughout the Summer the Local Groups Development Officer ran several fun activities and sessions – as an open access event to engage new members to the group; in addition to networking with several external organisations working with care leavers throughout the local authority. As a result of this, a total of four (4) new young people attended the sessions – (2) of which have expressed an interest to continue their engagement as highlighted above. In addition to this, (1) previous member of the group re-engaged due to face-to-face sessions taking place once again.</p> <p>Establishing the priorities of the group: Whilst gaining consistent attendance by members into the group were initially difficult; through consultation during all the local group activities over the last 6 months - we were able to establish key themes impacting individuals within the RCT area. As such it was highlighted by the group there were difficulties with regards to healthy relationships,</p>

independent living, and overall feelings of isolation. Overall, the group members expressed a gap in consistent support and feelings that their main source of support came from their peer group. Throughout the next quarter we hope with the now established cohort of group members; to develop and further our understanding of these issues to create clear implementation plans of focus for the group.

Care Leavers Week:

During Care Leavers week the group took part in several themed activities – linking to those themes identified above and bringing individuals within the care community together. One of those activities included an art therapy session focussing on the development of a young person's space within the VfCC office; with the room now being designed and inspired by the wishes of our local group members.



Engagement in corporate parenting group

Having worked with our one of our members we have successfully been able to identify and support a young person to represent the RCT Local Group moving forward.

<p>Project Successes</p>	<p>Working groups: Over the last 6 months we have now established places on two working groups within the local authority. As such we will be engaging in both the Engagement and Participation Group and the Safeguarding Week task and finish group; and currently awaiting further information and dates from leads within the authority, to progress with our involvement.</p> <p>Development of Best Practice Charter: We have supported local group members and other care experienced parents from the RCT area to contribute and develop a best practice charter with our partners at Cardiff University (CASCADE). As a follow up to Dr Louise Robert's research exploring outcomes for care experienced parents – this charter has been developed to strengthen the role of corporate parents' and the intervention available to care experienced young people prior to and after becoming parents. Further information and access to digital resources around the charter can be found in the links below; https://www.exchangewales.org/supporting-parents-in-and-leaving-care-messagestocorporateparents/ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzrpMtVca14</p>
<p>COVID Recovery Response to Near Misses.</p>	<p>As a result of the global pandemic our local group saw an overall drop in engagement and additional external factors impacting on the delivery of the group. Having consulted with young people and partners we have established several ways in which we are seeking to recover in response to this.</p> <p>Connections with RCT schools At the end of the last financial year, sessions were set up with Tonyrefail Comprehensive school to consult with a younger age demographic within the local authority. Whilst these sessions were agreed; we experienced non-attendance with feedback from the YEPS service, that this was reflective of the digital fatigue experienced by those engaging in their work. This feedback has also been reflected in the experiences and a previous drop in numbers to the group, during that year. Plans to pick up this work will now be used as part of our wider COVID recovery plan.</p> <p>Access to appropriate venues As a result of non-operational venues previously accessible to the group; we have used a variety of venues to continue in the delivery of a face-to-face sessions. This has had a direct impact on the ability to consistently deliver the sessions as hoped, due to the availability of suitable venues following COVID-19. We have however, successfully found an appropriate venue and planned sessions until the New Year.</p>

LOCAL GROUP DATES



MERTHYR TYDFIL

Thursday 4th
November

Thursday 2nd
December

17:30 - 19:30

High Street Baptist Church



PONTYPRIDD

Friday 5th
November

Friday 3rd
December

15:00 - 17:00

The New Pontypridd Library



BURRY PORT

Friday 12th
November

Friday 10
December

17:30 - 19:30

Burry Port Methodist Church

A Chance for care experienced young people to come together, share their experience make friends and have a lasting and positive experience on the care system in Wales.



@voicesfromcarecymru



To find out more call or text Annie on
07497391355

Expansion of Care Community Groups

Over the last 6 months and following on from feedback from care experienced young people from the RCT area, engaged in the local group and our parents peer support café; we have recognised the significance of the peer role in supporting the wellbeing of needs of individuals in the care community.

We have therefore expanded our reach and offer of support to young people through the expansion of our peer support model – in which we will seek to run the groups for care experienced young people who may wish to seek support around the following experiences -

- Criminal Justice Involvement
- LGBTQ* Identities
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Students
- Care Leavers (Preparation for Independent Living).



Outreach activities/expanding the group

Whilst we have increased our reach over the last 6 months and engagement into the group has increased. We have endeavoured to embed outreach activities and events to continually increase numbers into the group longer term. As part of this we will run fun activities to engage with care experienced young people throughout the local authority in November and have agreed to attend the Leaving Care Team Christmas events throughout December in the hope to

generate new members into the group.

We recognise the local group needs to represent the whole care community in RCT to ensure a holistic approach to delivery and connections. Therefore, we are working with current members to explore how we can widen members through various mechanisms and innovative approaches by using the lessons learnt from the pandemic and engagement activities with young people. We will explore how the care experience community wish to connect with us, how they see their involvement, some ideas could be yearly consultation conference, surveys, listen and act events etc. In order to see success and growth within the local group and for it to be representative across all ages. We would welcome support from the local authority in the dissemination of information to reach all ages of the care community, to highlight the existence of the group and to be the communication vessel. It would also be beneficial for the local authority to share themes they wish to consult on to support the groups function of influencing and developing local change.