



Overview

Welcome to the first six monthly Development Officer, Participation and Engagement report.

Activities are highlighted throughout that fit with and meet the below criteria and this is noted for each example:

	Activity	Outcome
1	Youth engagement and participation	Care experienced young people will have opportunities to share their views across a range of media.
2	Young people development	There will be examples of young people making contributions to Aberdeen City Champions Board.
3	Partnership working	Core partners will engage in Champions Board and each will demonstrate and impact.
4	Information, awareness-raising and promotion	Co-produce events which highlight corporate parenting role.
5	Monitoring and evaluation	Gather, hold evaluate information concerning core activities impact on young people and investment in exit planning strategies.

This report highlights many (but not all) of the activities we have been doing from January 2019, to June 2019. For information about all the activities, the workplan should also be viewed.

Prior to December 2018

The new post for the role of Development Officer, Participation and Engagement, commenced on December 10, 2018. Prior to this the role was filled by a worker from Aberdeen City Council, seconded across to Who Cares? Scotland.

During this time, the ACE (Aberdeen Care Experienced) group was developed and young people would meet once a fortnight at Westburn for support and discussion and activities. In addition, there was a Sports Group run in partnership with Sport Aberdeen.

After this person left the role, it remained vacant for a number of months. A number of other people stepped in to assist in maintaining contact with young people and occasional activities. However, this meant that the role became an additional part of other people’s work and required a great deal of effort on their behalf to maintain the group as it was.

December 2018 to January 2019

This month was spent settling into the role and meeting key people.

An ACE Christmas party was held that was attended by around 15 people, primarily staff supporting around 5 young people. There was also an ACE group meeting which no one attended.

January 2019 to June 2019

Meetings were held immediately after Christmas with young people to establish what they wanted from ACE and what they would be interested in. This was also to re-establish links and connections with young people, many of which had waned over the period when the post was vacant.

Young people said that they would attend fortnightly but also acknowledged that they were not able to commit to this on a regular basis, and they added that while they enjoyed the social aspect of this, they were not really engaged in any 'voice' activities whereby they had access to policy makers and felt that could make a difference. They expressed need for young people to feel that they had a social connection, but also were engaged in development work as a key theme from many discussions in large and small groups and one to one with young people throughout January. Meetings were held with 24 young people in various locations, including their own homes to establish what they wanted from their group, and on the 31st January, 2019, with a further 10 young people, the first ACE meeting was held to discuss in full, these issues.

At the meeting, young people agreed that a fortnightly social meeting no longer met their needs. They noted that the previous groups would be attended by up to 3-5 young people, often the same people and that also, other times no one would attend due to other commitments. Importantly, however, they also said that they wanted to feel more engaged in a range of issues that they felt strongly about. They added that they could not always come to a meeting, and often did not wish to for numerous reasons, but that this should not impact on their ability to be engaged.

ACE; no longer a group, but a gathering for belonging

Outcomes: 1, 2

Based on feedback from young people, and their capacities, as well as the need to develop a sustainable engagement, the ACE group was moved from fortnightly to monthly, with the express agreement with young people to hold other meetings throughout the month. The ACE group as it stood was a social gathering and this would be maintained, but more focussed work, such as forums, meetings, focus groups would occur out of this meeting time.

This meant that young people could now attend to meet their needs for social activity, and also meet at other times in more focussing and specific groups.

The ACE meetings have continued to change as young people continue to attend as they like. The meetings are now a social gathering and belonging event, held monthly and include regular social activities, but through which, they can express needs and issues which are then turned into other group or meeting activities.



Learning through belonging

Developing a sense of belonging is a major strategy for the ongoing work of ACE. This often means spending time with young people in small and large groups and one to one developing their sense of participation, capacity and belonging.

“I would not always go to ACE in the past... I am not confident with people and felt like it was hard to talk to people... I would get left out. It’s different now, I come to the group more often and (the Development Officer) makes me feel part of it now. I know I am part of the Vulnerable Adults group and we are talking about issues to go to the Champions Board about what life is like for us... in our own words. I feel more confident to come to the social things we do as well... I feel accepted”.



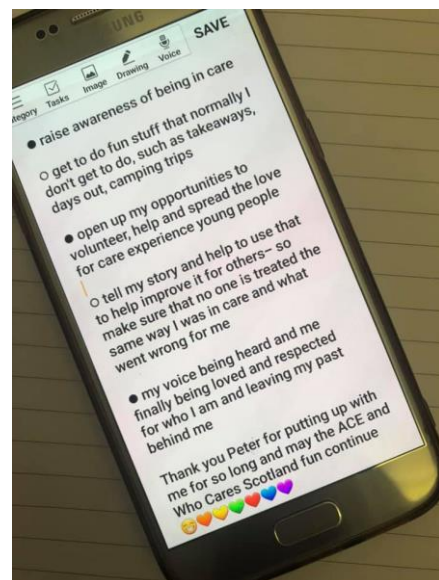
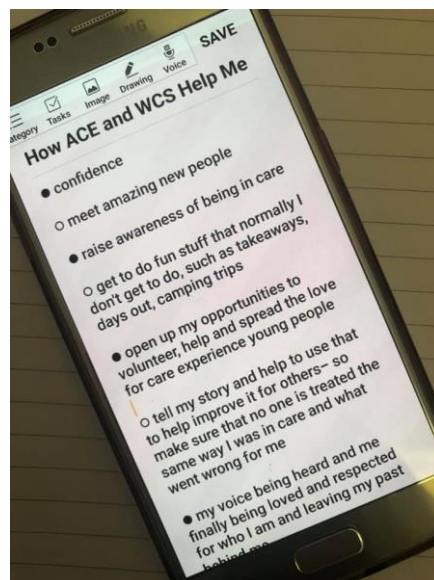
In his own words: Connor told the Development Officer this soon after he also made the beautiful cheesecake as a gift. Connor often drops in for a chat and is working towards attending the Champions Board in person in 2020.

Redefining participation.

Based on what young people had said, and their expressed needs ACE moved from an *attendance based model*, to *virtual participation model*. This meant that groups and discussions could occur at meetings, but also and with equal weight, in the home of the young person (ACE @ Home), online (via social media), via telephone, or any other means that worked for the young person. Their views would be included and be just as powerful as if they had been in a room together. This means that far more information and views can be canvassed, in environment where young people feel comfortable.

In her own words:

Tanera sent this to the Development Officer recently, not as part of the report, but because she wanted to.



- **Example, CAMHS services feedback from consultations with young people and service users.**
- **Outcomes: 1, 2, 3 and 4**

This report is the first example of his model in action. The Development Officer was asked to canvass views from young people on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Aberdeen; this was from a Champions Board meeting in December and there was no further briefing information.

This report required individual and small group meetings with young people who wanted to remain anonymous but still wanted to participate. Importantly, all young people (and some professional staff who supported them) agreed to participate in the strict condition of their anonymity being protected. This meant going to where they were comfortable and interviewing them individually.

“This was such a great thing to be part of, I really felt like I could get my experience to make a difference, even though (they) aren’t going as fast as we need, it is still out there now and they have to make a change”

(anonymous participant in the report – permission given to include their statement)

- **Key results**

Report produced in February 2019. Ongoing discussions have occurred and direct feedback from young people to CAMHS into the development of the new CAMHS services has been adopted, including the inclusion of quiet spaces and a sensory sound post whereby potentially distressed young people can use sound to regain a sense of calm.

In August 2019, young people participated in Step Up - a Leadership program facilitated by Who Cares? Scotland. During an exercise in this program, young people discussed an issues related to access to responsive mental health services for Care Experienced people. This has been further developed by the Development Officer in consultation with young people and on their behalf and meetings are scheduled for planning around this and involving Champions Board members.

Champions Board

Outcomes: 1,2,3,4 5



There have been three Champions Board meetings since the Development Officer took up the post. The first was in December 2018, where there was a discussion about Christmas Cards and the Development Officer as tasked with discussing mental health issues with young people (noted above). Two young people were presents at that meeting.

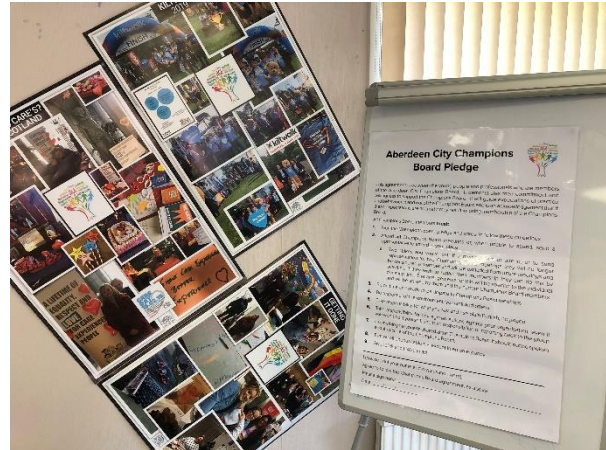
The next was held at the Royal Infirmary and was attended by 8 young people, each of whom was approached by the Development Officer and asked if they wanted to participate and their issues regarding the Champions Board were addressed. This meeting saw challenges with

regard to making decisions and carrying responsibilities forward as Champions. Nevertheless, progress was made, and members felt that it was a productive meeting.

The third meeting was held in June at Westburn after an initial venue fell through and young people told the Development Officer that they felt it would be a good idea to hold it there. This was attended by eight young people and considered a very successful meeting by young people and champions. Young people have noted that all further meetings should be held at Westburn as they are comfortable with the venue, and they are able to easily get there.

Champions Board progress and involvement is central to the work of ACE. All activities, events and work conducted in ACE is directed toward participation, engagement and influencing at Champions board level.

A core part of this is the recruitment and development of young people to attend and participate in meaningful ways in the Champions Board. This often means spending time with young people to ensure that they understand the processes and feel confident to engage and be heard. This also means that young people who may have some additional support needs are fully included.



Records and Writing project

Outcomes: 1,2,3,4,5

A major piece of work has been working with Aberdeen City Council on its project looking at improving records and writing of records. ACE has ensured that the voice of Care Experienced young people has been included at many stages of this work, including:

- A focus group on how records should be written, that fed directly into the review and the work moving forward
- A co-produced training video of Care experienced young people for social work training. Participants used their own words to describe the experience of being written about and how it affects them. This was not scripted and has received very good feedback for those who have seen it. A second version of this video will be uploaded through Who Cares? Scotland to be shared nationally.
- A focus group looking at developing a set of standards for record writing

Children Rights Service Functional Review

Outcomes: 1,2,3,4,5

The voice and participation of young people has been actively included in a major review of the Children Rights Service. Young people have co-design survey for Care experienced young people and they have also co-facilitated the engagement of other young people, and participated in meetings.

National events

As well as all the local events and work, ACE participated in some national events for young people from Aberdeen. These are vital opportunities for young people from Aberdeen to participate in wider work related to Care Experienced people.

“I feel like Scotland is starting to listen to us in Aberdeen more now. It’s so great that we get to go to things like this and be part of it all”

Care Day: February 2019



Outcomes: 1,2,3,4

Soon after commencing in the role, the development Officer began planning the Care Day celebrations for February 2019. In partnership with the Aberdeen City Council. Aberdeen City Council held its first Care day celebrations in February. Young people and workers across the city baked cakes together and shared these at the main event at the Townhouse on the day. Feedback was that this was a very successful day and many people enjoyed participating in it.



“everyone notices how positive the changes are”

Kiltwalk: June 2019

Outcomes: 1,2,3

Kiltwalk is a fundraising event for Who Cares? Scotland. In 2019, the Development Officer used this event as a way to bring the Champions and city together around Care Experienced people. While this was not the first Kiltwalk people had participated in for Care Experience people, it was the



largest. Just over 65 people, including Police Scotland, Fire and Emergency, NHS, Universities, Children’s Homes, Social Work teams, Sport Aberdeen, and of course children and young people, walked with Who Cares? Scotland and raised over £7,500. The most significant impact was that it was a real opportunity to walk along side and engage with young people and



for them to spend time in a relaxed way with champions and workers.

A significant amount of positive feedback was received for people who participated, and many said that not only would they do it again next year, but that they will bring more people along. The event was well supported by Who Cares? Scotland and with registration fees paid and resources provided.



Lifetime of rights and respect: June

Outcomes: 1, 2, 4, 5

Young people and Council staff travelled together to attend the Lifetime of rights and respects event hosted by Who Cares? Scotland.



This event was real opportunity for Aberdeen young people and staff to engage in a broader, national agenda and to actively participate in national conversation about rights and respect for Care experienced people moving forward.



Summer Camp: June

Outcomes: 1,2,4,5

The Who Cares? Scotland Summer Camp is a significant event for Care Experienced young people and Aberdeen was represented with 7 young people, the most that Aberdeen has sent on Summer camp. Summer Camp represents a key moment for many young people whereby they have new and sometimes challenging experiences and can participate in a range of national discussions with other young people, build networks and support each other.



All those who attended from Aberdeen said that they had a fantastic time.

“I am so surprised at myself for the things I achieved on Sumer Camp... I was anxious at first, but I met so many people and feel like I achieved so much”.

Data

01 January to 30 June 2019

Activity	No. of time Activity has run	Total number of attendances
ACE meeting	6	40
ACE@Home	9	19
ACEsport	5	21,
ACEtogether (wellbeing and relationships)	12	42
Focus Groups & Feedback sessions	31	74
TOTAL	63	196

Age	Total
0-5	6
5-12	3
12-16	5
16 +	40
TOTAL	54

Male	Female	Non-binary	Total number of individuals
26	28	0	54

