



## The Leeds Voice, Influence and Change Newsletter – May 2020

Welcome to our spring edition of the quarterly Voice, Influence and Change newsletter. As we are adjusting to “the new normal” we have still been hard at work developing ways for children and young people to continue to have a voice and influence in our city. Through this publication we aim to bring you some of latest in voice & influence news, resources, consultations and opportunities. As always, we encourage you to share within your teams. If you have any stories, groups or events that you would like us to feature in a future issue please get in touch or send your articles to [vic@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:vic@leeds.gov.uk)

### News and updates

#### Introducing the new Members of Youth Parliament



Since our last issue, three new young people have been elected as our local Members of Youth Parliament with the role of representing young people from the city at a regional and national level. Once the votes had been counted we were proud to announce that; Lanre (Roundhay High School), Gurman (Allerton Grange High School) and Lois (Cardinal Heenan High School) are the newest MYPs for Leeds. They will now be working with the Leeds Youth Council Working Group on the current national UK Youth Parliament campaign, ‘tackling climate change’ as well as attending regional and national meetings.

We’d also like to extend our thanks to the outgoing MYPs; Samuel, Sylvia, Harry and Arqam for their hard work and commitment to the role. A summary of their achievements can be found [here](#)

#### Leeds Children’s Mayor 2020 – Schools invited to enter



Despite the Coronavirus outbreak, the city will still be holding elections for the next Leeds Children’s Mayor (LCM) this year. The LCM team have adapted and tailored the programme to enable year 5 children to participate even if they’re in a home learning setting. Primary Schools in the city who would like their year 5 cohort to participate can now download a teacher information pack and home entry pack from the [Leeds Children’s Mayor](#) portal.

The deadline to submit entrants is Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June and we would encourage you to promote this [short video](#) from Wania our current Children’s Mayor who kindly explains what she likes about the programme

#### Outer East Leeds Youth Service. Young People My Group



The YPmyG voice and influence group have been attending their usual monthly sessions. The group have been involved in various projects including planning the Outer East February & Easter school holiday programmes for the Garforth & Swillington / Kippax & Methley wards, ordering new arts & crafts and sports equipment for groups in the areas and discussing how to improve recycling facilities in the local youth clubs.

They have been involved in reviewing the areas Youth Activity Funding applications. This involved discussing the application and deciding if they thought the organisations were value for money per young people attending, if they thought the activities were appropriate, and then scoring the bids.

Finally, the group have also worked in partnership with Micklefield Parish Council to help design the awareness posters for the newly planted wild meadow area. They are looking forward to seeing it completed and continuing to support projects across the 2 wards.

### **Young People encouraged to share their Covid experiences**



Across the city, the lives of children and young people have been dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They are having to come to terms with a whole new normal way of living and finding different and innovative ways to cope. The COVID Diaries project run by CEG (a national business) and Leeds City Council offers a way to capture their experience and will provide a valuable historical snapshot of Leeds for future generations

People of all ages across Leeds are being invited to share their stories, experiences and thoughts about the coronavirus pandemic, but they are particularly keen to hear from children, young people and families.

You can submit your entry, absolutely anything you want, in any format! It can be hand-written, typed, drawn, painted, recorded etc. and can be a blog, video diary, song, piece of music, social media post, a photo, a poem, a piece of artwork ... it doesn't have to be a diary entry! For more info & to submit entries, visit: [www.coviddiaries.co.uk](http://www.coviddiaries.co.uk) or @covid\_\_diaries (Instagram) and @Covid\_\_Diaries (Twitter/ Facebook)

### **Child Friendly Leeds**



*Child Friendly Leeds have been running fortnightly competitions to keep young people busy during lockdown. This fortnight's competition has the theme 'Skills for Life' and they have joined up with the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality Team to create some 'climate-friendly' ideas for young people to try.*

*These include cooking a climate-friendly meal, riding a bike, growing a plant or making a recycling poster for their household! Entries are made on social media by using the hashtag #OurChildFriendlyLeeds. The closing date is Friday 5 June. Visit Child Friendly Leeds social media for more details.*

### **Outer South Youth Matters group – Leeds Youth Service**



In return for all their hard work over the year taking part in consultations, weekly group meetings and volunteering, The Youth Matters voice and influence group requested a trip to London. The group has been busy planning, preparing and booking an experience rich trip! There was a lot involved with meetings, budgeting, info sourcing, bookings, Risk assessments and itinerary planning. They booked a west end show, tour of Buckingham Palace and new experiences such as using the London Underground!

Unfortunately the trip had to be postponed due to the Covid19 pandemic.

One group member who was looking forward to the trip said she was gutted as she felt the break would do her good as a single Mum. Another group member also added – “I was looking forward to making a final memory with staff and friends within the group in London but realise we have to stay safe!”

### **Vocal Girls event 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020**



In celebration of International Women’s Day and the relaunch of Vocal Girls, Getaway Girls hosted an event at The Carriageworks, Leeds.

The event began with numerous activities for the girls to get involved in. These included creating bath salts with positive messages, T-shirt designing and badge making. Everyone who was involved with the planning stages of the event was pleasantly surprised at the turn out as both Getaway Girls and girls from other organisations attended.

A focal part of the day was the backdrop presentation which showcased inspirational young women, aged 21 and younger, and their campaigns. The motivation behind creating this was that we saw it as a tool to inspire the young women; it showed them that girls just like themselves can make a monumental difference. Additionally, the presentation linked closely with the Getaway Girls social media. Each of these young women’s profiles were posted daily on the Getaway Girls Instagram throughout March.

After lunch, the girls took part in a variety of workshops including: a creative writing workshop, a period poverty workshop and a Vocal Girls workshop with true and false statements regarding issues which affect girls at both a global and local level. The day ended with a show and tell of what the girls got up to in their various workshops.

The event was a great success! The girls had fun but also gained a lot from attending. They were given a safe space to express themselves and gain knowledge whilst also celebrating International Women’s Day. For more information on the vocal girls project and if this kind of thing is something your young women would like to get involved in, Getaway Girls would love to hear from you! This could be through joining your Zoom meetings or Google hangouts to talk to the girls and hear their opinions or alternatively, we have a [questionnaire](#) which the girls can fill out to help further inform us what issues girls and young women in Leeds are facing. Contact: [kianna.leader@getawaygirls.co.uk](mailto:kianna.leader@getawaygirls.co.uk)

### **Leeds SENDIASS Young People participation groups!**



Young people recently participated in SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice Support Service) roaming steering groups to contribute their views and experiences about access to Information, Advice and Support (IAS) across education, health and social care services. Young people provided us with detailed and thoughtful commentaries, which are informing service development and are supporting a greater service understanding of children and young people priorities and IAS needs in the city. Children and young people also recently took part in a focus group on SENDIASS literature and branding which generated detailed feedback and great ideas including requests to include photographs and simpler explanations of key SEND processes in our published information. Further SENDIASS project work is underway supporting progress towards key children and young people service outcomes this year. This includes:

- Developing the Leeds IAS offer to provide an IAS service commissioned, co-designed and co-developed by parents, carers, children and young people.
- Planning to develop new children and young people service participation tools and to design new service support material and referral processes. This will include developing and testing digital survey tools with children and young people aimed at promoting wider participation in the design of the Leeds IAS offer.
- Launching a new service website during May which will have separate young people pages. Activities throughout the year are planned for children and young people to co-design and develop the IAS website offer using focus groups and participation tools.

For more information or to access information, advice and support with Leeds SENDIASS visit [Leeds SENDIASS](#)

### **Youthwatch Leeds volunteers going the extra mile for isolated carers**



Healthwatch Leeds have been helping Carers Leeds to ensure some of the most vulnerable carers are supported during lockdown. one of our Youthwatch Leeds volunteers Gemma has been a life line to one South Leeds family. Watch her short film about how she is helping out: [Healthwatch Helping Hands](#)

A small team of Youthwatch volunteers have helped over 20 local families. (*whilst keeping a safe social distance of course*) and have received some great feedback about the scheme so far:

"I really didn't think you'd want to come today. It's very good of you to do my shopping. Things are getting serious now aren't they? and I do think about the others who are walking down the street, I am so lucky to have you"

The amazing Youthwatch volunteers Brad, Gemma, Zahra and Emma have helped lots of local people with essential shops, picking up prescriptions and other requests during the current lockdown.

If you are interested in joining YouthWatch Leeds you can find out more by calling 01138980035 or visit our website <https://healthwatchleeds.co.uk/youthwatch/>

Or find us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/youthwatchleeds/>

or Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/youthwatchleeds/>

If you know of any carers who need support contact Carers Leeds on 0113 204300 who will assess the need and make a referral Healthwatch Leeds.

### **Little Owls Nursery keeping families engaged during the lockdown**



Staff at Little Owls Firthfields have been super engaged with keeping children and parents busy throughout these strange times. We have a lot of examples of ways we are engaging with our children and parents during CV19 and would love to share with you what we have been doing. We have turned our Facebook page into fun filled location for our parents and children to enjoy watching videos of ourselves as practitioners being interactive including:

- Story reading videos of practitioners, the response has been incredible some of our parents have filmed their children watching our video's and their reactions have been things such as 'why is ... on your phone mummy', 'do they live at nursery' and also them joining in with phrases out of the stories.
- Exercise video's where practitioners have videoed as a pair doing actions to songs such as 'superman'.
- Nature exercises such as 'nature scavenger hunts' where the children were encouraged to find items that we had posted on Facebook and the response we got was incredible we had over 10 of our individual children take part in this activity and share this with us on tapestry.
- We have an appreciation post every Friday where we take pictures off tapestry and post these onto Facebook to thank parents for these continued support throughout these times and the children find this post a fun activity as they try find there picture in the collage we have made of the photos from the week.
- We have also every couple of weeks posted a 'happy birthday' video for those children who we wouldn't be able to see on their birthdays and the children have loves this, parents have posted reactions to the videos on tapestry and this is lovely to see.

We never thought our Facebook page would become this popular especially with parents and we are super proud as a team that we have been able to produce wonderful content for parents to explore and do at home. Below I will attach photos of activities we have done via Facebook that have received a huge response. We as a team will continue to engage our parents and make the council proud. For more information contact [Dawn.Smith@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Dawn.Smith@leeds.gov.uk)

### Women's Health Matters: What's it like for a girl growing up in Leeds?



Here in the Workforce Development Team we use research to inform the design our training to keep it up-to-date and relevant. The voice of the child is a key part of our research as without it we wouldn't know where to focus our efforts and guide the workforce in Leeds.

In order to support all children, young people and families we need to include the voices of those who are vulnerable and communicate their experiences to guide foster carers, service providers and policy makers.

Our recent project with Women's Health Matters is one example of how we worked with partners to gather research on the subject of what's it like for girls growing up in Leeds. This project involved developing trust with a group of young women and then filming interviews of their accounts. The timeline for this project was long (over 6 months) due to many factors including the availability of the young people, capacity and the quantity of research material we processed.



We made a number of visits to meet the young women and let them guide us on the topics that were important to them. When we initially filmed and reviewed the recordings it became apparent they were talking about such intimate vulnerabilities and issues that we didn't feel it would be safe or appropriate for these to go out as video. We had a discussion with the group about alternatives which included animation or just using the audio and the group decided democratically that we would create animations. The young people then drew the characters which we later adapted for use in the final animation.

The Workforce Development team will be using these animations selectively within our training to let our workforce listen to the voices our young people. The aim is to help highlight where the work with children and families in Leeds will have the most impact leading to better outcomes for the people of the city.

### **Youth Summit on Climate Change**



On 12<sup>th</sup> February, the Voice Influence and Change Team worked in partnership with the Health and Wellbeing Service to host a youth voice summit for secondary schools and colleges in the city. The day was an opportunity for students to learn more about the Leeds City Council Climate Emergency, to ask questions to a panel of experts and to consider how young people, schools and communities could play a role in lowering the climate footprint of the city. Their ideas and suggestions have formed the basis of Leeds City Council climate advice that will be issued to young people across the city via their schools and youth groups.

The event was attended by 116 students and staff representing 21 high schools and colleges around Leeds. The first workshop was co-facilitated by a group of philosophy tutors from Sheffield and Leeds Universities. After morning break, the second workshop was an opportunity for participants to ask questions to a panel of experts which consisted of:

- Councillor Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council
- Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Lead Member for Climate, Transport and Sustainable Development
- Councillor Fiona Venner, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families
- Councillor Neil Walshaw, Chair of Climate Emergency Advisory Committee
- Professor Julia Steinberger, Social Ecology & Ecological Economics – Leeds University

For the third and final workshop, students were joined by elected members and council officers who represented the City Council's Climate Emergency Advisory Committee (CEAC). Students took part in activity designed to shape the content of the official "tackling climate change" guidance that will be issued to students later in 2020. Students worked with CEAC members to consider what the most effective steps would be do reduce the carbon footprint in the following three settings; schools, homes and communities.

**"Dear Year Eleven...."**



One of the members of the Leeds Youth Council Working Group has recently had an amazing article published on South Leeds Life. Alannah (16) who joined the LYC last September is a student at Cockburn High School where she is also the head girl.

Alannah wanted to write a message of support and positivity to her fellow Year 11 students who are still getting to grips on the ramifications of the Coronavirus epidemic on their education and exams. You can read her [amazing article](#) on the South Leeds Life website

### **Young people at Wetherby Youth Offenders Institute make a difference**



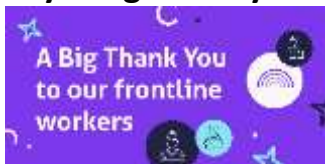
During the current Co-vid 19 pandemic, Charities from across the country are experiencing low numbers of donations. With is in mind Wetherby decided to try and collect donations from staff and young people in our care to help out.

After a positive charity drive on Collingwood Unit in 2019, Wetherby decided to collect for St George's Crypt- A local charity in Leeds. St Georges Crypt is a charity that has been helping the homeless and under privileged of Leeds and surrounding areas since the 1930s. They do this by providing the opportunity for 3 meals a day seven days a week.

An Officer and Custodial Manager spent their time speaking with young people throughout the establishment collecting donations. The collection was explained to all young people and how the donation would help others who are potentially not as privileged as themselves.

A high number of donations were received from 69 young people. 342 Items were collected which included 140 packets of noodles, 43 cake bars and over 70 items of toiletries. In addition to the donations from young people a collection has taken place from staff members which will continue over the CO-VID pandemic period. The support from young people and staff will go a long way to help the charity keep up the good work they complete on a daily basis.

### **Say a big thank you to our Coronavirus key workers and volunteers**



People across Leeds are being encouraged to say thank you to all those currently working so hard to keep us safe and well while maintaining essential services.

The Leeds Big Thank You is an annual campaign which recognises all those who go above and beyond to help people during winter.

It's now been extended to give people a chance to show their appreciation for all those working above and beyond during the current pandemic. This could be anyone, for example, local shopkeepers and supermarket staff, delivery drivers and postal workers, refuse collectors and cleaners, emergency services and health care staff, teachers and chefs, community groups and volunteers, as well as friends, family, carers and neighbours.

The Big Thank You campaign is supported by the city's NHS organisations and, Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police (Leeds District), British Transport Police and community and voluntary organisations. To find out more or to see the gallery of messages, please visit [www.bigthankyouleeds.co.uk](http://www.bigthankyouleeds.co.uk)

**Leeds got locked down...**



Supported by the team at Breeze Leeds, a group of local musicians, artists and producers have come together to create and record an amazing song of hope as we all get through the Coronavirus crisis one day at a time. Set to the tune of the legendary Chumbawumba track, we think this [song and video](#) encapsulates everything that is great about our city.

## Brilliant Barca



Below are examples of ways that the Barca Youth Work team and the Youth Inclusion Project are engaging with children and young people during the CV19 Lockdown.

- 👍 Providing daily online drop-ins for young people at specific times when youth workers are online to chat and offer support (see attached poster).
- 👍 We have developed a Young People's Resource Website which we are updating regularly with useful information on health, well-being and education.
- 👍 Detached Youth Work in key area across the city, advising gathering youths to stay home, offering support and guidance around the community.
- 👍 Weekly Social Distance Activity Sessions (Doorstep activities) – at the moment these are dance sessions with Dazl.
- 👍 Delivering activity and resource packs for children and young people
- 👍 Doorstep visits to vulnerable families
- 👍 Zoom Youth Groups – small groups to engage in an activity such as quizzes and challenges.
- 👍 Creative Challenges – We are having weekly challenges for young people to participate in to win prizes. We had an Easter Competition and this week is a Photography challenge.
- 👍 Supporting families to access food parcels
- 👍 One to one sessions with YP that are still attending school (following social distancing guidelines)
- 👍 Supporting children and young people with their one form of exercise a day (following social distancing guidelines)

Furthermore, The Guardian recently published an [excellent article](#) about how the staff at Barca are working to support young people in their community

## Consultations

### A fare deal for young people



The West Yorkshire Combined Authority are seeking feedback on plans to improve the system for bus fares for young people with changes introduced changes from September 2020, at the start of the next academic year. Young people have said that access to transport is an important issue to them, and can be a barrier to getting to education, work and leisure opportunities.

WYCA are now asking for feedback from young people (under 19s) and parents of young people in West Yorkshire. You can find out more about the engagement by [clicking here](#) to access the YourVoice portal. If you wish to discuss this engagement further, please contact [yourvoice@westyorks-ca.gov.uk](mailto:yourvoice@westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

## Design competition for new Children's Hospital





Calling all young patients, families, artists, budding architects and designers! Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is going to build a brand-new Leeds Children's Hospital and we need your help to design it.

Draw a picture, paint, make a model, write a poem, make it in Minecraft or Lego, make a short video- anything you like, it's up to you! Entries are open to anyone under 18 years old and the competition close on Friday 12 June 2020 – good luck! For a chance to win a £100 Amazon voucher, take a picture of your creation in good lighting (you don't have to do this for a video) and share it at: <https://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/daring-designers-competition>

## And finally

### Voice, Influence and Change Team 2019/20 Annual Summary



We've just published our latest annual summary that brings together the key achievements from across the VIC Team including the Children in Care and Care Leavers Councils, Recruitment Panels, Parent and Carer voice, Takeover Challenge and much more.

The summary report can be downloaded <HERE>

As always, thanks for reading and don't forget to get in touch if you have anything you would like featured in the next edition. In the meanwhile we'd like to encourage you all to stay in when you can, stay safe when you're out and we look forward to seeing you all again in person soon.

Kayleigh  
Richard  
Hannah  
Hannah  
Rajesh

The Voice, Influence and Change Team  
Children and Families Directorate  
Leeds City Council  
[vic@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:vic@leeds.gov.uk)

[www.breezeleeds.org/haveyoursay](http://www.breezeleeds.org/haveyoursay)

Learn more about parents & carers having a voice and influence in Leeds:  
<http://tinyurl.com/LeedsPCFVoice>



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