



One minute guide

Have a Voice Council

No. 5, Sept 2020

What is it?

The Have a Voice Council is a group of young people who are currently in the care of, or have recently left the care of, Leeds City Council. They work with decision makers to improve children's social care services.

Council members can be any young people aged 12 to 18 who are: living in foster care; living with kinship carers or family network carers; living with parents on a care order; living in residential care; young care leavers and young people who have come to this country on their own as it is unsafe to live in their home countries.

The Have a Voice Council is complemented by the Care Leavers Council for young people who have left our care. Young people who have recently left care may choose to stay on the Have a Voice Council for a while before deciding to join the Care Leavers Council.

Why are we doing it?

In Leeds we believe that our services are improved in the best ways when they are informed by children and young people.

In the [12 Wishes for a Child Friendly Leeds](#) children and young people told us they wanted the chance to express their views, feel heard and be actively involved in decisions that affect their lives.

Also, under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 12 and 13, every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, to have their views taken seriously, and to seek and receive information.

Having a Children in Care Council is a statutory obligation, and in Leeds, the Have a Voice Council, helps to ensure children and young people who are looked after have the opportunity to exercise their rights. Members of the Have a Voice Council and Care Leavers Council are also youth representatives on the Corporate Parenting Board and attend regular meetings.

When is it happening? Where is it happening?

The Have a Voice Council meets fortnightly and spend time looking at the services they receive from Leeds, discussing what works and what needs to change.

In these sessions Have a Voice often meet with the Corporate Parents, such as Heads of Service and elected members. It is their responsibility to ensure that Leeds City Council provides the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after.

What do they do?

The young people get involved in a range of activities. These include:

Sharing their priorities with decision makers

Working with services to develop new materials, for example a 'What to expect when I change placement?' document

Developing films to train social workers and teachers

Taking part in recruitment and commissioning panels

Re-launching '[The Promise](#)'

Delivering training for staff and speaking at events

Planning the annual [STARS](#) Awards

Running 'Takeovers' of Corporate Parenting Board meetings

Producing newsletters for looked after young people in Leeds- to raise awareness of their work and opportunities to get involved.

For more information and the key contacts

If you want to find out more about the group visit the Voice Influence and Change Team's web pages on Breeze <https://breezeleeds.org/have-your-say/voice-and-influence-for-looked-after-children>

Any Leeds young person aged 12 to 18 in care is eligible to join the Have a Voice Council. To find out more speak to the below contacts:

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Have a Voice Council working with Corporate Parents at the 2020 Takeover