

HARROW PARTICIPATION STRATEGY
Annual Report: Sept 2016 – Aug 2017

Reported to: Corporate Parenting Panel due Jan 2018
Next report due: Oct 2018

Introduction

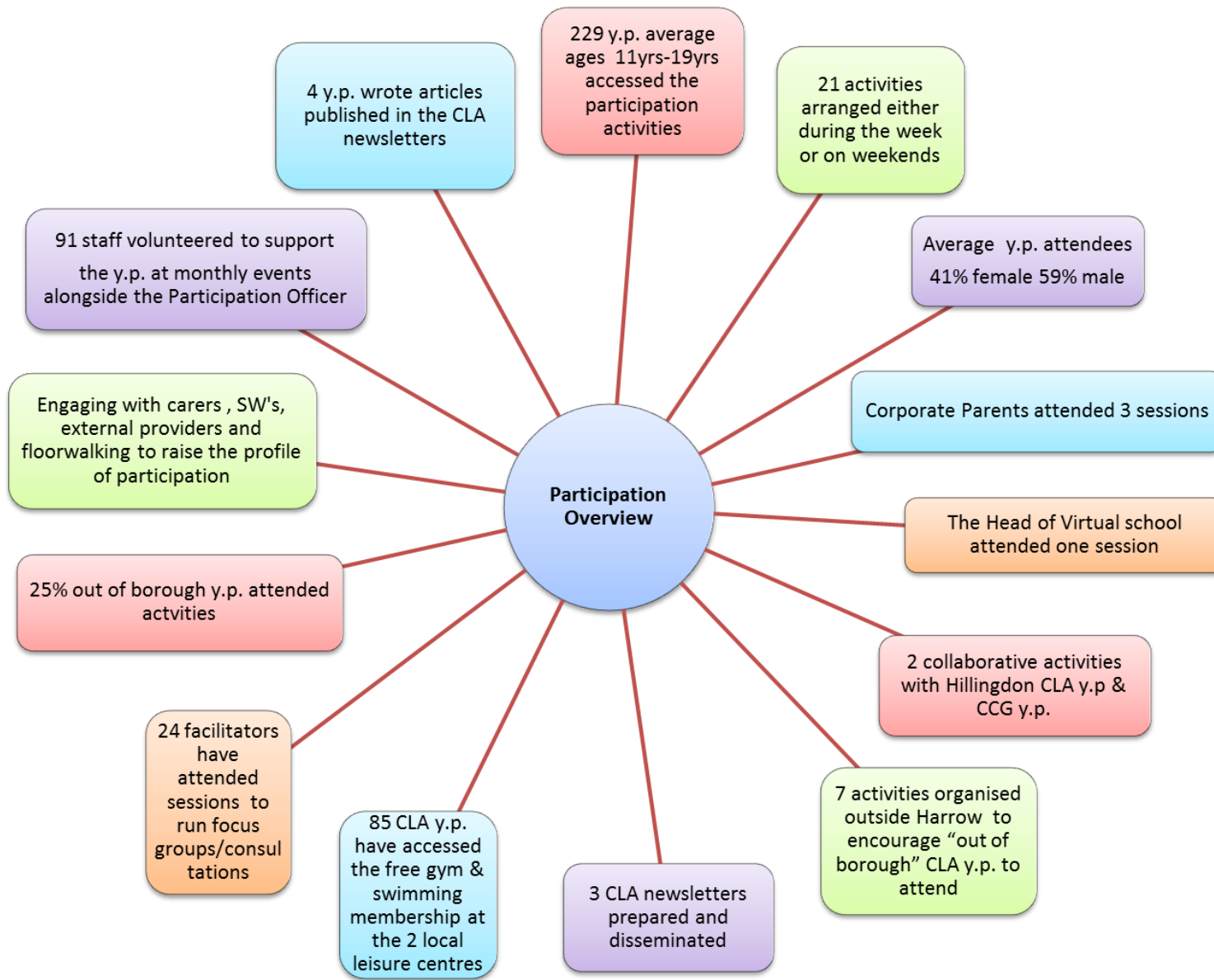
The aim of participation is to listen to children and young people's opinions, to be the voice for all children in care and to liaise with professionals to support the children/young people to help make improvements. Participation is a process where someone influences decisions about young people's [Y.P.] lives and this leads to change.

A Participation Officer's role is information sharing and dialogue between children, young people, (particularly children looked after and careleavers) and adults based on mutual respect, in which the young people can learn how their views are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes.

This report summarises the progress achieved during this 12 month period and signposts areas for further development.

Harrow Council is the 'Corporate Parent' for all children, young people and careleavers in its care. Because of this responsibility, Harrow Council is committed to The Pledge below:-

- 1. Provide young people with a safe home to live where they feel happy and taken care of.***
- 2. Provide young people with the support to do well in education.***
- 3. Listen to young people about things in their own life and about the care that they receive from Harrow.***
- 4. Be honest with young people about things that have happened in their life and the decisions that are made about their care.***
- 5. Help young people to develop good relationships with the people who care for them and the people in their life that are most important to them.***
- 6. Provide young people with support and opportunities to enjoy their life and to have interests and hobbies of their own.***
- 7. Provide young people with the support they need when they leave care to become independent and to be the best that they can be in adult life.***



The Impact of Participation: examples include

- The monthly participation activities have encouraged the CLA YP and Careleavers to develop strong friendships and they engage with each other on social media so that they can discuss attending the CLA activities together;
- One asylum seeking YP attended the 4 day radio presenting course and presented live on air, even though the YP was self-conscious about their level of English;
- 3 YP who never attended any of the CLA events last year have started to attend every event;
- A fashion, beauty and hair workshop was organised as 2 social workers advised that their CLA YP needed advice about their personal care. 8 facilitators and 7 Civic staff attended. 17 YP attended;
- 21 YP and 12 staff attended a theatre trip. 12 of the YP were LINAB and UASC YP. There was a discussion with the LINAB and UASC YP (see report on the next page);
- During a trip to Lords Cricket Ground, the Middlesex County trainers were so impressed with the standard of play from the Harrow YP that they attended a special cricket session in Harrow to train our YP.

Referrals for further support, arising through participation activity:

- 3 new referrals made to the Independent Visitors commissioned provider;
- Information and advice sourced for carers requesting activities for their YP;
- The designated nurses for CLA YP have been contacted to arrange a health & personal hygiene session at a local semi-independent placement to support the YP.

Consultation Topics Covered

Self-harm; sexual & domestic violence support; the integration of asylum seeking y.p.; bullying; independent visitors information; y.p. travel survey; physical activity; legal rights; drug awareness; dealing with conflict; police consultation around gang culture; health & personal hygiene; apprenticeships with Sky and cyberbullying.

To widen the engagement of YP and raise the profile of participation, there has been consistent participation officer face to face and electronic engagement with a wide variety of individuals, teams and organisations:-

CLA & Careleavers YP, UASC; LINAB; Children in Need (CIN) team; Harrow Young Carers; Harrow Mentoring (Early intervention Service - EiS); Harrow Youth Parliament; Harrow Youth Development Team (EiS); Harrow Virtual School; the Independent Visitors provider (SOVA) and other external organisations.

To view the numerous activities arranged for the CLA YP and Careleavers, see the link: www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200161/children_looked_after. To view the recording sheets prepared after every activity, contact the Participation Officer.

CONSULTATION – Theatre Trip
23.11.16

LINAB & UASC Y.P.

| No. | Ages | Gender |
|------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 12 y.p. | 13yrs-21yrs | 2 female 10 male |

Purpose of the Event – How Important is their integration?

- Encourage the LINAB and UASC y.p. to access and engage in activities;
- Improve their social skills;
- Improve their self-confidence;
- Improve their English;
- Improve their trust in professionals;
- Improve their independence;
- Enjoy & achieve;
- A distraction from their routine;
- Build relationships with the staff;
- Build relationships with other CLA/careleavers;
- Being focused – being safe;
- Engaging with the community – breaking down barriers.

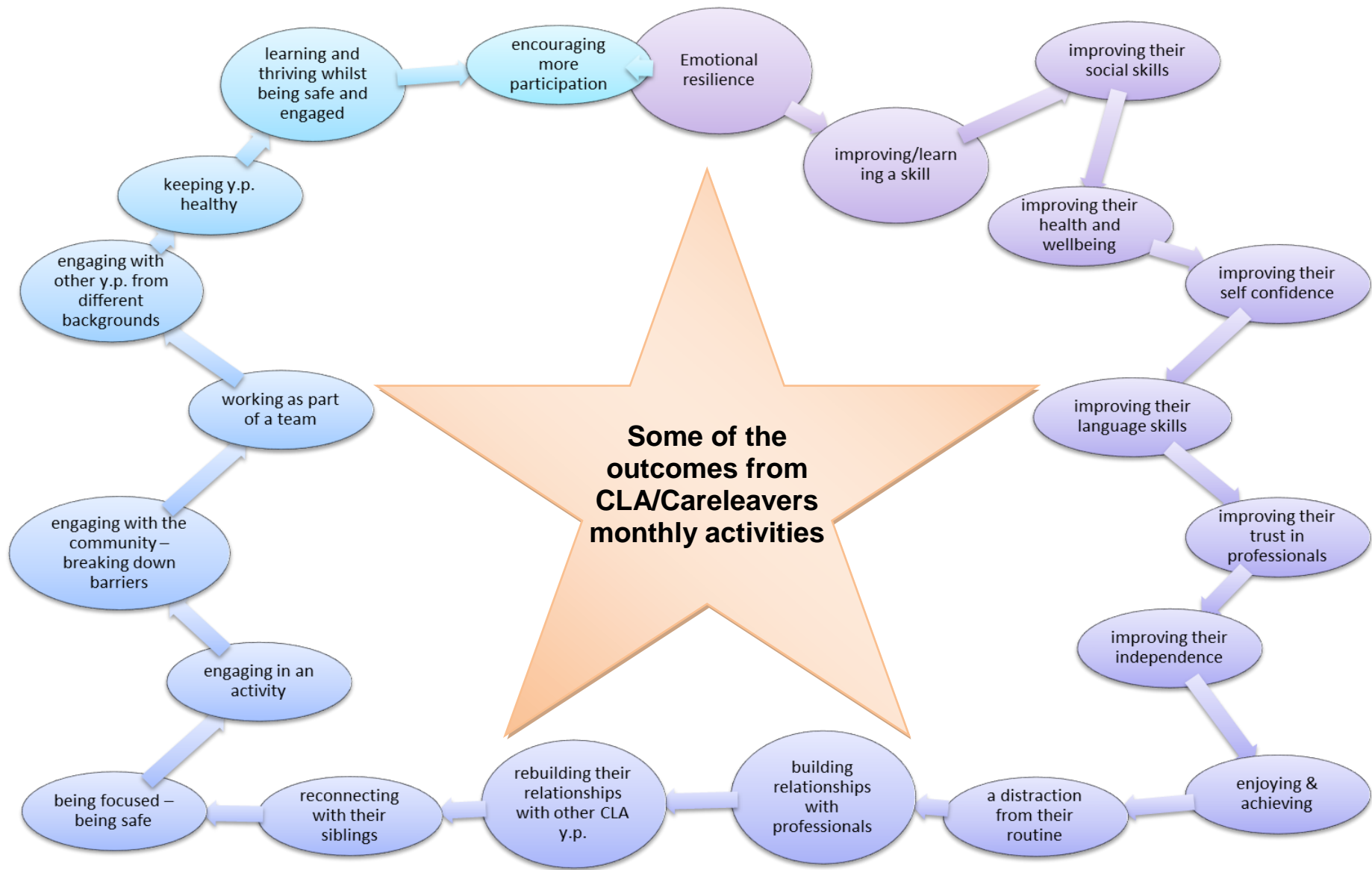
What they gained from the event

Although English is not their first language, the y.p. said:-

- They understood the show;
- They identified with the comedic characters;
- It is very important to them to improve their English language skills;
- It was the first time that some of them had ever used public transport;
- They identified with the African theme of the show;
- The show is young people centred;
- The characters in the show were recognisable from the film;
- They appreciated the music, lighting and visual effects of the show as it was very expressive.

The y.p. said:-

- They appreciated the help they received from their social workers to access these type of activities and that they would like to engage in more of these type of activities;
- This was the first time that some of the y.p. had ever travelled on a train or visited London;
- They had never seen a theatre show before;
- Those y.p. who have been in the UK for longer, were able to translate for the y.p. who are new to the UK and helped them to engage with the staff;
- They enjoyed building relationships with other y.p. from different backgrounds and said it was important for them to make friends;
- They would like to attend activities where they could relax, have fun and where they could meet other y.p. from similar backgrounds.

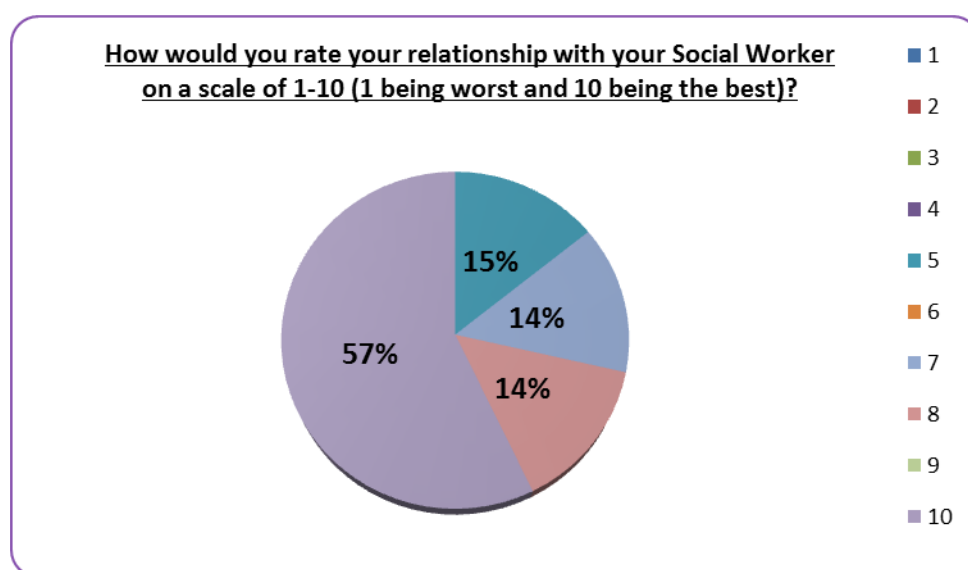


Examples of changes achieved since September 2016

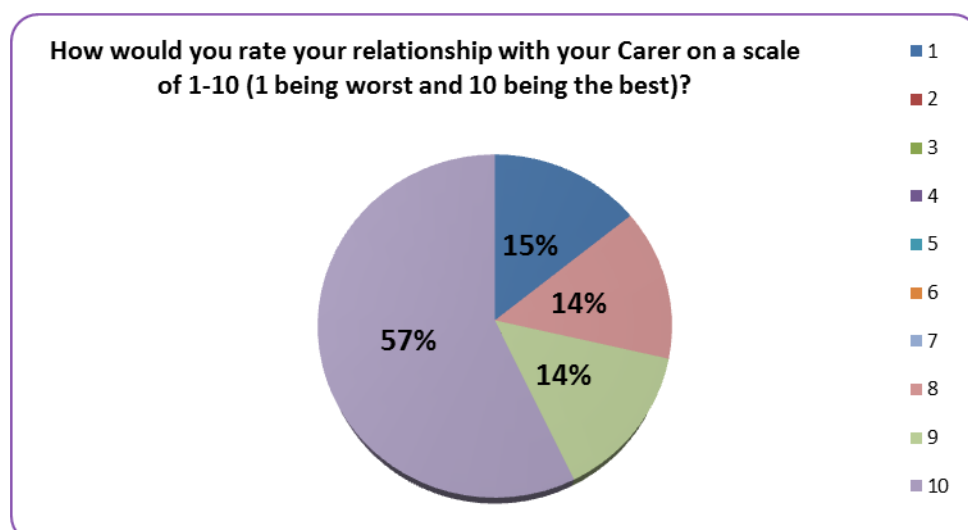
- ✓ 65% increase in the engagement of YP to register with local leisure centre facilities for free gym and swimming;
- ✓ 8% increase in the engagement of female YP attending activities;
- ✓ 27% increase in the engagement of YP meeting 1:1 with the Participation Officer to complete a questionnaire.

Consultations

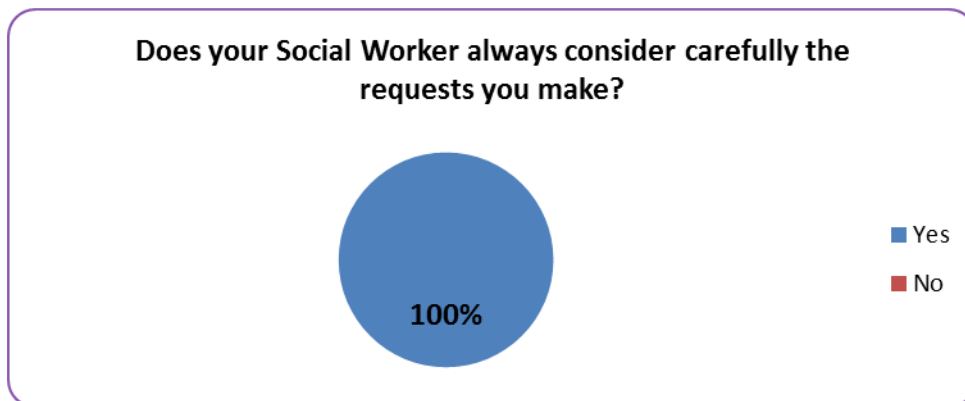
44 YP met the Participation Officer on a 1:1 basis and answered questions about their wellbeing. These included CLA/Careleavers both new and more established. YP rated on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being highest/best. The results were as follows:-



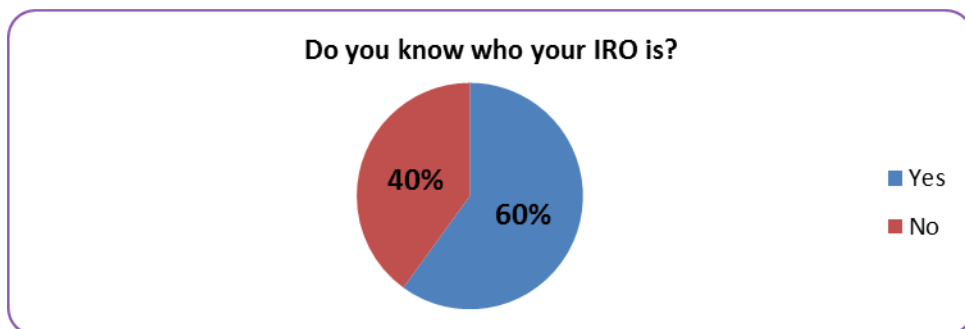
Two thirds of YP responding, rated their relationship with their Social Worker at 8 or 10; 0% rated at 4 or below. 29% of YP rated their relationship between 5-7.



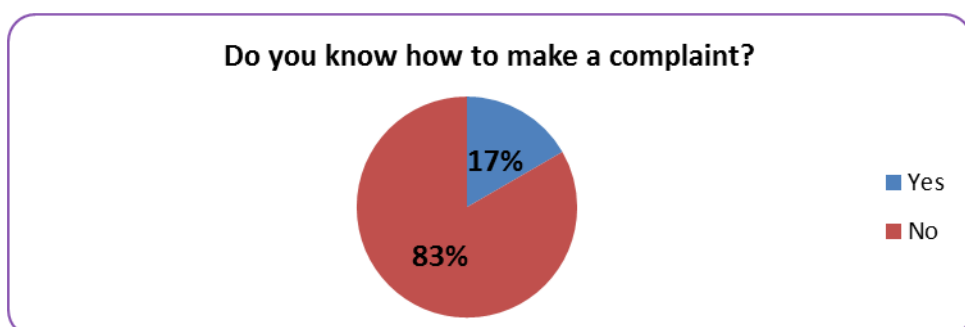
Impressively, just under 3 out of 5 rated their relationship with their carer at the highest possible (10). Only one YP rated their relationship at 1; 29% rated at 8-9; and this is a high number of positive responses.



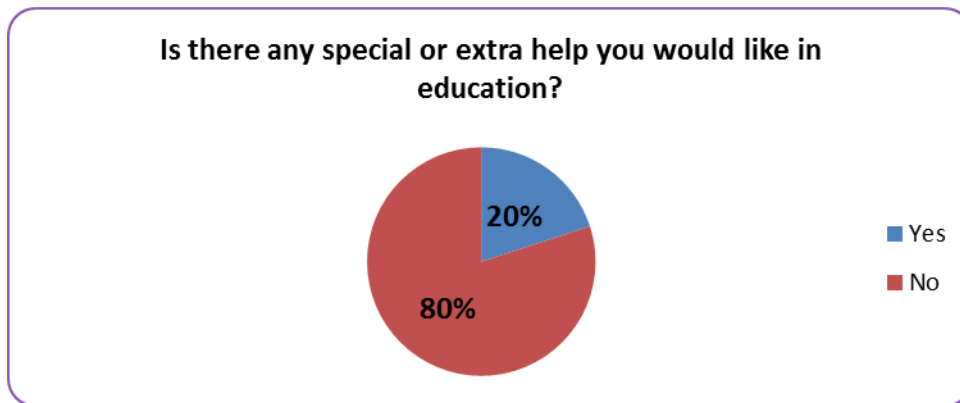
YP report overwhelming confidence (100%) that their Social Worker considers carefully their requests.



60% of YP were clear who their Independent Reviewing Officer was, but a disappointing 40% were not. Corrective action was put in place in 2016 to ensure that IRO's and Social Workers gave out a pocket/wallet sized reference card, detailing the CLA/Careleavers Social Worker and IRO's contact details. This percentage has not increased since last year as YP can recognize their IRO's, but they do not always remember their names.



While 17% of YP were clear how to make a complaint, it was disappointing that 83% were not. This percentage has decreased since last year. Corrective action was put in place in 2016 to refresh practice by issuing information pocket/wallet sized reference cards to ensure that YP are more aware of the complaints process.



Over three quarters of YP did not identify any extra help they would like with their education.

Other question responses identified:-

- 50% knew why they were in foster care;
- 57% see members of their birth family;
- 100% are happy to see their SW at their placement;
- 86% knew why their SW visits them;
- 43% said their SW spends at least one hour with them alone;
- 33% said they have a care plan;
- 57% said they knew where to get health advice from;
- 3% said they would like an independent visitor.

All the YP responses are e-mailed to their IRO and SW, the data is input onto a spreadsheet and uploaded onto Frameworki (electronic social care records system) case record, with referrals made to the Independent Visitors and Virtual School, where requested by the YP.

During the 1:1 meetings with the Participation Officer, the YP are reminded about upcoming activities they can attend. All the YP confirmed that they have received this information sent to them by post.

Improvement - actions taken:

- i. YP cannot always remember their IRO's names: IRO's and SW's have been re-issued with Pledge Cards to complete with their contact details to pass onto the YP. Staff photos on the Pledge Cards was suggested, but the allocated SW's often change;
- ii. YP are being reminded about the Pledge when meeting with the Participation Officer on a 1:1 basis;
- iii. Only 17% of YP knew how to make an official complaint: This information is now being passed onto every YP when meeting 1:1 with the Participation Officer. The complaints team will be invited to attend a CLA activity to raise their profile with the YP;
- iv. We have recognised that there are some challenges in communication between the SW's and YP: A "Total Effect" training for trainers session for YP is due to take place next year, after which the same YP will deliver training to the SW's to improve communication.



London Boroughs of Harrow & Hillingdon Collaboration – CLA/Careleavers Young People Workshop - (12/4/17)

Participants:

7 Young People between the ages of 17-23. 8 Staff members, including Participation Officers, Children's rights officer, and social workers.

Workshops/Focus Group

2 Leap facilitators delivered a two hour session with the Harrow & Hillingdon CLA/Careleavers y.p., introducing the participants to conflict management skills, and some of Leap's core concepts such as FIDO (Fact Interpretation, Decision and Outcome), reaction vs response and touching on the roots of conflict for different people.

The group were interactive, and participated and engaged well with the concepts they were introduced to, which can often be quite challenging at first, especially as for two of the careleavers, English is not their first language.

Leap do not currently target their work to working with young people in the care system. Leap used this session to enhance their knowledge and understanding of this cohort of young people, and to use their expertise to help develop the programme they are hoping to develop for young people in care.

The main outcomes of the discussion were:-

It was recommended that conflict training should be provided for young people in care early on. There is a need for training resilience for young people, as there is often no support system in place for them.

There was an emphasis on the challenges that are brought by the fact that young people in care often face many different placements. It was also suggested that Leap should gain an understanding of the nature/nurture theory. As well as changes in carers and placements, there is also the additional challenge of changes in social workers. The turnover of the adults in their lives is a big issue. Some of the participants were in semi-independent living - Olympic, which is a residential home catering for young people between 16-18 years. In this home there are 25 young people to approximately three staff.

In terms of adults/organisations who have had a positive influence on these young people, they mentioned foster parents, police cadets, sports coaches, key workers, and social workers. Those people in their lives who they found they had the most conflict with was other young people, carers and social workers. It would therefore be potentially beneficial to have strengthened relationships and tools to deal with these conflicts as and when they arise, and Leap will look at designing an intervention which will focus on this.

Disability Team – CLA YP

There are 10 CLA YP supported by the disability team, 8 male, 2 female. 2 YP have an advocate. All are out of borough placements. Due to the severe LD, none of the YP can or have expressed a wish to join Harrow Youth Parliament. The ages of the YP are from 9yrs-18yrs.

Future plans

- Increase the number of CLA/Careleaver YP attending the participation activities;
- Increase the number of CLA/Careleaver YP attending workshops;
- Continue to meet with the CLA YP/Careleavers on a 1:1 basis;
- Continue to keep the CLA YP/Careleavers advised about upcoming community activities that they can engage in;
- Continue to encourage the CLA YP/Careleavers to apply for apprenticeships and employment;
- Continue to encourage impact evidence outcomes based reports received from invited facilitators who engage with the CLA/careleavers YP;
- Collating and reviewing participation consultation activities to inform further development across the Children's Services and the Corporate Parents.