

**Open Report on behalf of Janice Spencer OBE,  
Interim Director of Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Corporate Parenting Panel</b>
Date:	<b>23 January 2020</b>
Subject:	<b>Voices for Choices (V4C) Update Report</b>

**Summary:**

This report gives a summary and overview of activities with regard to V4C between October and December 2019. V4C is Lincolnshire's Children in Care Council with the aim being to share experiences of being looked after in Lincolnshire and to inform teams who support Looked After Children what does and does not work for them. V4C meetings are held within Children's Services locality quadrants and are delivered by Senior Youth and Community Development Workers and supported by Children's Services Participation Officers.

This report also provides Corporate Parenting Panel with an update with regard to the planning and progress, further to discussions at previous panel meetings, that has taken place to develop V4C in terms of utilising new and alternative venues and activities to those that have been historically used.

**Actions Required:**

Corporate Parenting Panel is invited to consider the update and provide additional comments and recommendations regarding:

- planning and use of future venues outlined in the report
- future use of LCC youth centres for delivery of V4C meetings and activities

## 1. Background

The following items are discussed within this section:

- V4C update and venue planning:
  - Lincoln and West Lindsey
  - East Lindsey
  - North and South Kesteven
  - Boston and South Holland
- Summary of V4C venue planning and visits

- Update on use of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service venues for V4C meetings
- V4C budget summary
- The Big Conversation

V4C activities and planning are detailed below and have been outlined within the 4 quadrant areas. Overall there have been **100** V4C attendances over this reporting period, and in particular attendances in Boston, South Holland and East Lindsey have improved.

### **Lincoln and West Lindsey**

A summary of attendance is provided below:

Month of meeting	Venue	Number of children and young people attended
October	Washingborough Bowl (10 pin bowling)	12
November	Tension Escape Rooms, Lincoln	10
December	V4C Christmas Meal at the Toby Carvery	9

The following venues are timetabled to be utilised between January – March 2020:

January	Karting, Lincoln
February	Adventure Lincolnshire (outdoor pursuits)
March	Escape Rooms, Lincoln

The main focus of V4C work over this period has been looking at reviewing the care pledge and also language that is used by professionals following on from the Big Conversation in October 2019 and how young people can look to play a part in ensuring changes in language will progress. It is expected that this will be reviewed and revisited at the next Big Conversation in February 2020.

In the Lincoln and West Lindsey locality the Senior Youth and Community Development Worker, along with a colleague from the Virtual School will be looking to visit schools and speak to relevant young people with particular regard to attempting to attract an older age group of young people. The worker has also raised the idea of doing a road show of V4C work which we are going to look to progress.

The Senior Youth and Community Development Worker also visited Northolme Children's Home in Gainsborough in December and spoke to 6 young people regarding V4C, discussing with them the aims of the group, new ways it is being delivered and an open invitation to join. While they felt at the moment they were not ready to attend they do want to voice their opinions therefore it has been

agreed that V4C workers will visit once per month and discuss V4C work that has been ongoing so the young people at Northolme can express their views as well. The young people at Northolme are also being consulted on what future activities they would like V4C to offer if they were to attend.

### **East Lindsey**

A summary of attendance is provided below over the reporting period:

Month of meeting	Venue	Number of children and young people attended
September	Skegness Youth Centre	12
October	Lazerquest, Skegness	8
November	Back to Bear – Outdoor adventure centre	Cancelled
December	Eastside Ceramics, Mablethorpe	5

The following venues are timetabled to be utilised between January - March 2020:

January	Christmas theatre trip
February	North Sea Observatory and Chocolate Workshop.
March	Chequered Flag Karting, Holton le Clay Meeting before activity in activity room.

Overall over the past 4 months attendance has improved within the East Lindsey area after a significant period of time where there was little engagement. This does seem to have been in line to a degree with the use of varied activities and venues.

The November date unfortunately was cancelled, as this was due to be an outdoor event and the weather was bad which discouraged attendance. Some young people due to attend feedback that it was a long distance from their homes and this is something which can be difficult to avoid when looking at specific activities across a large geographical area. There were also some individual transport issues on the evening as well and one carer who has four young people in placement was unable to be contacted despite numerous attempts to contact to arrange further.

For the December meeting 5 young people attended. There were 3 new members attending the group and an overview of the work carried out by young people in the V4C group was given.

Discussions took place on the Designated Teachers Conference in April which the V4C groups will be involved in along with discussions on the language that professionals use which will feed into the next Big Conversation meeting in February 2020.

Attendees took part in a ceramic painting activity (results of the fired pieces below) which was a successful activity and venue.



In terms of future planning, venues and activities for January – March 2020 are confirmed with further planning to take place early in the new year. In addition, workers will take on board some feedback regarding days to hold meetings (end of the week), specific transport issues for Barnardo's young people and specific activities for older members.

### **North and South Kesteven**

A summary of attendance is provided below over the reporting period:

Month of meeting	Venue	Number of children and young people attended
October	Ancaster Leisure - Bowling	7
November	Sleaford Pottery Painting Cafe	7
December	Ancaster Leisure, Belton Site – Archery and Christmas celebration	5

Planning for future venues and activities is to be confirmed:

January	Music Project, Lincoln
February	To be confirmed
March	Bowling at Grantham

The October meeting was held at Ancaster Leisure for ten pin bowling. A Participation Officer attended again to discuss further with the young people in more detail the 'My Placement' game, and began to highlight young people who may be more interested in training, and also who would be suitable for this.

Work activities over this period included discussing the language that professionals use following the Big Conversation in October. The Designated Teachers Conference next year was also discussed and 3 young people are keen to be involved in this. Further planning work regarding the Imp Trail was also undertaken.

At the meetings it has been reported that it has been difficult to get young people to focus on the discussions as they just want to do the activity so the level of information being obtained from the attendees is less than through previous arrangements.

### **Boston and South Holland**

There has been a significant improvement in V4C attendances in this locality. Please see the table below for V4C groups in Boston & South Holland. The Youth and Community Development Worker has undertaken communications with teams, children and young people to publicise the V4C meetings and activities.

Month of meeting	Venue	Number of children and young people attended
October	Boston Bowl V4C Re-Launch Session	8
November	Fun Farm, Spalding	6
December	Boston Bowl	11

Issues discussed were the care pledge and expectations and planning for future activities. Issues following on from the Big Conversation were also discussed over the meetings and also feedback provided for planning the FAB Awards in June 2020. The following programme for January – March 2020 is highlighted below:

January	Bowling, Spalding
February	Bowling, Boston.
March	Scalextric Racing, Spalding.

## **Summary of V4C Venue Planning And Visits**

The Participation Officers and Senior Youth and Community Development Workers will be undertaking further planning to confirm future activities and venues over the next year. The table below confirms investigated options:

Boston and South Holland
Boston United Football Club
Fun Farm (Spalding)
Lincolnshire Wildlife Park (Friskney)
Alleycatz Bowling (Spalding)
Ark Wildlife Park (Stickney)
Scalextric (Spalding)
Doodles (Spalding)
Baytree Owl and Wildlife Centre (Spalding)
Leisure Centre (Spalding)
East Lindsey
Back 2 Bear (Outdoor activity centre at Kenwick)
Altitude 44 High Wire (Skegness)
Meridian Leisure Centre (Louth)
London Road Pavilion (Louth)
Skegness Pool and Fitness Suite
North Sea Observatory
The Seal Sanctuary Wildlife Centre (Mablethorpe)
The Storehouse (Skegness)
Hardy's Animal Farm (Ingoldmells)
Tattershall Farm Park
Tattershall Karting Centre
North and South Kesteven
Adventure Lincolnshire (RAF Cranwell)
Lincoln
Active Nation

In December promotional material was sent out directly to all relevant children and young people which highlighted the V4C activities available over January – March 2020 in addition to other communications being sent out.

## **Update On Use Of Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service Venues For V4C**

Planning is ongoing to establish V4C in potential fire stations and the Participation Team met with the Premises Officer for Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and a representative from the Corporate Property Board. It is hoped that fire and rescue service venues will be incorporated into V4C programmes from April 2020.

### **Big Conversation**

The next Big Conversation is due to take place at the Meridian Leisure Centre in February 2020 in Louth, with a music themed activity to be provided by Sound Lincs. The event will be attended by senior Children's Services staff and Councillors who chair and sit on the Corporate Parenting Panel. The agenda for the meeting will include reviewing progress around 'Language that Cares' as discussed at the Big Conversation in October 2019.

## **2. Conclusions**

Since September 2019 V4C meetings have been taking place in a range of external venues and encompassing different activities:

- Different experiences are being offered to the young people
- Attendances have increased in the areas which were previously had few V4C uptakes – Boston, South Holland and East Lindsey. Over this reporting period V4C activities have therefore been taking place across the county
- There is a programme of V4C meetings and activities through to April 2020 with further planning being undertaken to extend into the new financial year
- The new nature of V4C meetings is creating challenges in some instances in terms of managing to complete work and discussions alongside fun activities, and also in terms of some geographical/transport issues
- Relevant budgets will be monitored strictly to managed expenditure – it will be challenging to ensure there is no overspend

It is intended that by the end of March 2020 the venues and activities that have been used and delivered will be evaluated to inform planning into the new financial year.

## **3. Consultation**

### **Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?**

Risk assessments carried out via the Senior Youth And Community Development Workers

## **4. Background Papers**

This report was written by Ben Lilley, Team Manager (Quality and Standards), who can be contacted on 07876 212470 or at [ben.lilley@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:ben.lilley@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank