

CiCC MAPPING PROJECT

2010-11

CiCCs across England: mapping
performance and function

Report By ANV for DfE

Autumn 2011

Contents

Executive Summary 5

Main Findings 9

Structure, Governance and Funding 9

Reporting and Influence 13

Engagement, Diversity and Out of Borough 17

Monitoring 21

Common Challenges Facing CiCCs 23

Recommendations 25

Methodology 27

Statistical Context 27

Initial Barriers and Difficulties When Carrying out
this Research 29

Changes Since April 1st 2011 31

Executive Summary

A National Voice (ANV) worked with the Department for Education (DfE) throughout 2010–2011 to build a national picture of the current position of Children in Care Councils (CiCC). The aim was to map the strengths and weaknesses of CiCCs across the country and monitor their progress and development.

It was a key objective of the organisation and the Department that CiCCs continue to grow in confidence and become established as an effective influence on the policy and practice of Corporate Parents in Local Authorities across England. This report identifies good practice that developing CiCCs can use to improve their function and impact on services. It also highlights common challenges faced by CiCCs who may be struggling to achieve growth and clear purpose.

By the time this research began it was already an expectation of Government that all Local Authorities should have or be taking steps to set up Children in Care Councils, as outlined in the Care Matters White Paper guidance 2007.

A General Election in May 2010 and subsequent Comprehensive Spending Review created a particularly interesting environment in which to conduct this mapping exercise. There was a strong indication from our conversations with both workers and young people that reduced budgets, redundancies and restructuring, or at least the perceived threat of these conditions, had been a factor in the commitment that some Local Authorities had shown their CiCCs. As the year 2010-11 progressed, the air of pessimism appeared to grow and many workers who were uncertain about the future of their posts were equally uncertain about the future of their CiCCs.

We gathered information for this mapping exercise by issuing all 152 Local Authorities in England with detailed questionnaires about the structure, function and impact of their CiCC. Questionnaires were sent bimonthly by email throughout the period April 2010–March 31st 2011 to the following four groups:

- Young people Looked After (Young People)
- Elected Member for Children's Services (EM)
- Directors of Children's Services (DCS)
- Lead Worker (LW)

There were two versions of the questionnaire; one for professionals and a slightly shorter version for Young People. In this way we expected to be able to monitor change over time and pick up on any discrepancies within the same LA's. Both versions of the questionnaire covered the four main themes of

- Structure, Governance and Funding
- Reporting and Influence
- Engagement, Diversity and Out of Borough
- Monitoring

In addition to issuing questionnaires ANV hosted a series of regional meetings with the DfE and the Office of the Children's Rights Director. Young people and LW's from every CiCC were invited to 9 regional meetings. These meetings proved to be a valuable source of supplementary information and anecdotal evidence. In particular, many examples of the good practice recommended in this report were gathered during the course of these meetings. We were very pleased with an overall attendance rate of around 60%. Young people attending the London Boroughs meeting also welcomed the contribution of the Minister for Children and Families, Tim Loughton.

Overall, given the positive reception that the nine regional meetings received, the high response rate to the questionnaire and the broad cross section of professionals and young people from whom they came, we have been able to generate useful information on the current state of CiCCs in England and a robust basis for our findings and recommendations.

Following the mapping of CiCCs, ANV found the following:

- 150 out of 152 Local Authorities responded to our questionnaire or 99%
- **Bexley** and **Pool** were the only Local Authorities who did not respond despite several attempts to contact them over 12 months
- 147 of the responding Local Authorities had a functioning CiCC or 97%
- **The Isles of Scilly** and **The City of London** do not have CiCCs because they have no Care population
- **Middlesbrough** was the only other Authority to respond who did not have a CiCC
- 76% of CiCCs who responded reported regularly to the Corporate Parenting Board
- Less than 8% reported regularly to Elected Members
- Very few CiCCs have their own dedicated website; limited budgets and safeguarding hurdles are given as the main difficulties
- Almost 60% of CiCCs who answered the question had a newsletter or similar to promote the service. This was their main method of advertising the CiCC and engaging young people
- 96% of CiCCs were chaired by young people. How the Chair was elected, how they were supported and how long they held the post varied, although these structural decisions were usually young person led.

- 30% of CiCCs could not respond at all to the question about budgets. Most were unclear about exactly how much they had access to and how it was made up.
- Many CiCCs referred to a 'Care Matters' budget that they were under the impression had been ring-fenced but then removed
- 35% of CiCCs responding said that they had real difficulty getting Lead Members or Children's Services Directors to attend their meetings regularly
- 30% of CiCCs considered the Pledge their greatest achievement to date
- The CiCCs with the most developed 'terms of reference' or constitution appeared to have the most success and influence with their Local Authorities
- The most established and developed CiCCs reported real influence in operational and policy areas such as budget control, Leaving Care Grant and recruitment
- There was little change in responses from repeat questionnaires over the 12 month period.

Specific and general examples of good practice are highlighted throughout this report in text boxes.

Main Findings

Structure, Governance and Funding

147 of the 150 responding Local Authorities had a functioning CiCC or 97% by the end of March 2011

Middlesbrough was the only Local Authority with a Care population who responded but did not have a CiCC. **The City of London** and the **Isles of Scilly** did not have one because they did not have any looked after children.

Over 90% of functioning CiCCs had been set up within the previous 3 years. Several Local Authorities previously had a 'user group', 'young advisory board' or similar that they consulted with. On the whole these LA's considered this previous experience a positive influence on the development of their current structure. However, we believe that there is some cause for concern in these instances as there is a danger that there hasn't been an adequate shift in perception. Ironically completely newly constituted groups that have had no previous model to influence them seemed able to embrace the new CiCC model more easily than those who were inclined to adapt or amend what already existed.

1. Table showing attendance during regional ANV led CiCC meetings 2010/2011

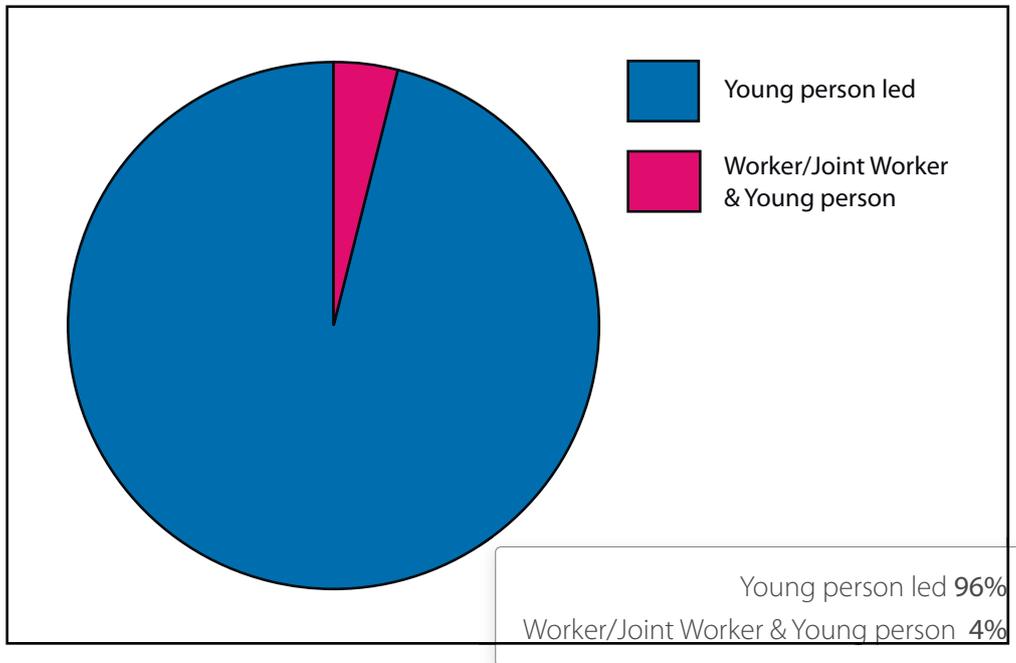
Total Workers Attended (of 152)	Total YP Attended (of 152)	Total Non-Responding (of 152)
91	96	19
59.9%	63.2%	12.5%

Around 92% of all Local Authorities that responded were found to be conducting and running their CiCCs in fundamentally similar ways. Although the frequency varied and there was no real precedent, most usually took place every 2–4 weeks. However, it also seemed quite popular to hold meetings quarterly as in the case of **Knowsley** and **Stoke on Trent** and some were held as infrequently as bi-annually, as in the case of **Hammersmith & Fulham** and **Essex**. It should be noted that **Essex** were almost unique in that they had a complex arrangement of sub-groups that met more frequently but only came together twice a year.

It was common to find that meetings were held with the same frequency and in sync with the Corporate Parenting Panel for effective reporting and influencing purposes. This was positive evidence of 'joined up' thinking.

The structure of most CiCCs is also reasonably homogeneous. More young people than workers sit on the meetings and workers or guests are often present by invitation only. As we would have expected to see, the size of the LA and the number of looked after children in their care appeared to be significant factors in determining the number of young people actively participating in the CiCC.

2. Who is leading the CiCC



The vast majority of CiCCs were chaired by young people who were either elected or used a rota system. How the Chair was elected, how they were supported and how long they held the post for varied, although these structural decisions were usually young person led. The rotation system was particularly popular as the groups seemed to feel that it allowed a greater number of young people to get involved and encouraged 'ownership'. However, other CiCCs differed in that they believed continuity and consistency were a greater priority and that this was better achieved with longer serving Chairs. A few groups effectively 'shared the role' with a worker which they said was to promote confidence.

Only 10 CiCCs reported that it was a worker who regularly Chairs the meeting. Very unusually, **Lambeth** and **Stockport** reported that the Elected Member Chairs the meetings and **Knowsley** reported that the Elected Member and the DCS jointly Chair. It is unclear from the responses so far whether these arrangements have been made out of necessity or at the request of the young people. Some indicated that this was an interim measure and the intention was for a young person to take over as soon as possible. It is important to establish in future research that these professionals, however well meaning, are not dominating the agenda and that their CiCCs are still young person led, in line with DfE guidance and ANV recommendations

Almost all CiCCs had been given a name. The young people felt that this gave them a sense of identity and belonging. By contrast '*Children in Care Council*' had various negative connotations and made them uncomfortable. Some examples include:

- Care 4 Us (Barnsley)
- Voice 4 U (Bolton)
- No Labels (Nottinghamshire)

Budgets were a predictably controversial topic. Many workers referred to a 'Care Matters' budget that they were under the impression had been ring fenced but then subsequently removed. Although they seemed quite certain that this had previously been a statutory obligation, it is our understanding that this was never the case. Notwithstanding this fact, the majority of workers who had been affected by cuts felt strongly that lack of financial statutory obligation left the CiCCs vulnerable. Around 30% of CiCCs could not respond to the question about budgets at all and most were unclear about exactly how much they had access to and how it was made up. Generally there was awareness that there was some funding available but it usually came from wider Children's Services funding and was distributed on an ad-hoc basis. Very few CiCCs had a dedicated budget and fewer still could exercise complete control over how that budget was allocated.

Staffordshire stood out as a rare example of an authority that had a clear, protected budget over which the CiCC had full autonomy.

In the absence of any clear guidance on suggested budgets, amounts varied dramatically. One LA in the West Midlands said that they received absolutely no funding whatsoever to keep the group going. As they were not able to cover even basic travel costs for their young people, the number of active members appeared to be in terminal decline. Those who did receive funding gave figures ranging from £500/year to £70,000/year. However, on further inspection, **Devon**, the Authority that appeared to have the very generous allowance of £70,000/year actually paid for 2 full time posts out of this funding. These were posts that had a number of duties to fulfil as well as supporting the CiCC. As such it was still difficult to establish exactly what budget they thought they were entitled to.

Of the 16 young people who answered the question on the name of their Director we know that 20% got the answer wrong. Furthermore 35% of CiCCs who responded to the question said that it was a major challenge getting Elected Members or Children's Services Directors to attend their meetings regularly. Although some young people sitting on CiCCs had specifically requested that their DCS or Elected Member should not be present, it was more common that the real difficulty was persuading them to attend in the first place. Disappointingly, several explained that while agreements had

been made to attend meetings regularly these commitments had not been honoured. A number of young people also complained that many Elected Members appeared 'out of touch' with their issues and seemed 'uncomfortable' around them. There were a couple of notable exceptions where the Elected Member was highly praised as in **Southwark** or where the CiCC were arranging young person led training for their corporate parents as in **Derby**

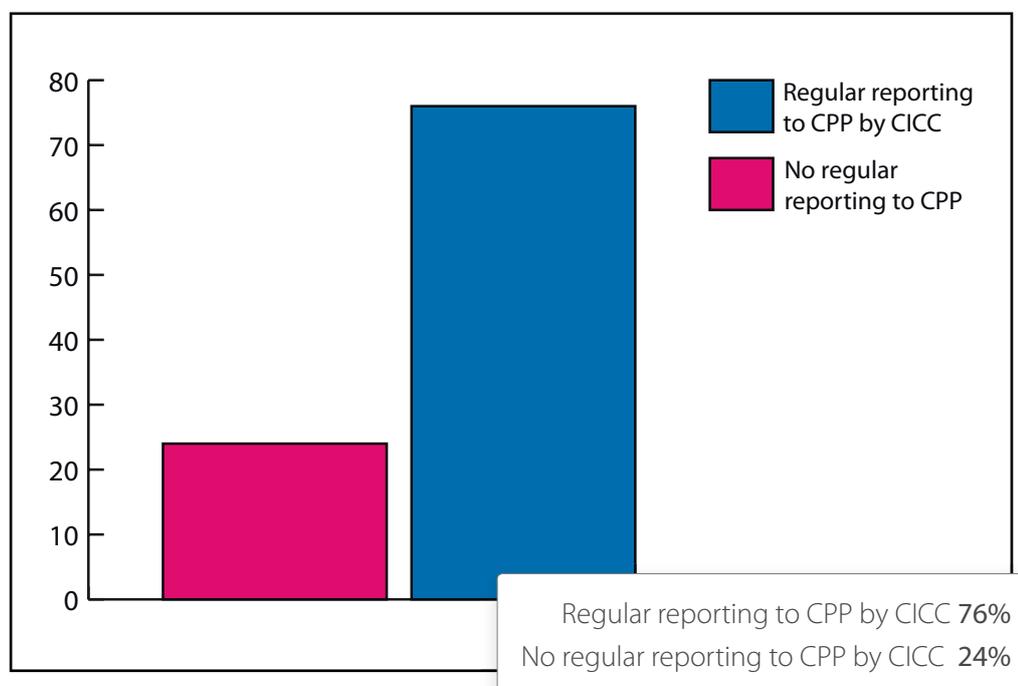
It was not apparent from the questionnaire but during Regional Meetings we have learned that IRO's regularly attend many CiCCs. We are also aware that DCS's who did not attend CiCC meetings would sometimes send their Assistant Director in their place

At ANV we feel that while it is of paramount importance that young people have ownership of CiCC meetings and are comfortable with those who participate, it is clear that the most effective CiCCs have the close involvement of their DCS. Both the Young People and the Directors should be encouraged to see the benefit of attending meetings. There should be compelling reasons for not attending

Reporting and Influence

76% of CiCCs who responded to the question reported regularly to the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP). This was resoundingly the most common way to influence the Local Authority and effect change.

3. Chart showing CiCC influence on CPP



In most cases even where the DCS did not attend the meetings they did receive feedback and action points via the Lead Worker and would present these to the CPP. In these cases they usually passed back updates and outcomes from the Corporate Parenting Panel in the same way. However Less than 8% of CiCCs reported regularly to Elected Members.

In Darlington the DCS personally presents the CiCC update at each CPP.
In another example of good practice, the Derbyshire CPP has two young people from the CiCC actually sitting on the panel.

In **Devon** the Director, who has been attending CiCC meetings, personally took up a particular issue for one young person and pursued this with the CPP until the matter was resolved. We generally found that CiCCs had greater influence with the CPP where they had the close support and involvement of the DCS or EM. Local Authorities who had young people sitting on the CPP were seen as more effective and 'in touch' with the issues facing young people.

The CiCCs with the most developed 'terms of reference' or constitution appeared to have the most success and influence with their Local Authorities. This was also the most common way to address powers of the CiCC. Powers regularly included the election of members and occasionally budget management. In most cases powers were largely restricted to offering guidance and some CiCCs had no decision making powers at all. Having a clearly defined constitution was seen as an important step in a CiCC establishing itself and there was generally more confidence where the CiCC could refer to their agreed powers over areas like budget, minutes and ground rules. Many of the newer CiCCs who were still very much in the developmental stage were working towards a formal constitution as a goal.

In the case of **Stoke on Trent**, although the CiCC does not currently have a constitution, they are able to advise other groups in the Local Authority and are consulted with on a number of issues. They have recommended a particular course of action regarding issues such as employment opportunities, education bursaries and the implementation of Care Matters yet they have no official, independent decision making powers. This CiCC is hosted within the voluntary sector and they felt that this gave them an additional degree of independence. They felt that it was a positive environment in which to develop. We are aware that many CiCCs are actually hosted by workers from outside agencies such as **Action for Children** or **NYAS** but we will look further into how this affects success in future research, as it is difficult to draw conclusions at present.

The most established and developed CiCCs reported real influence in operational and policy areas such as budget control, the leaving Care grant and recruitment. However many LA's have expressed fears that recent cuts will undermine the current strength and influence of the CiCCs. Like several others, **Luton** believed that they were going to lose their participation worker and were concerned about the impact this would have. Where workers were sharing the role of leading the CiCC they were worried about continuity. It appears easier and more effective to share budgets if there is one continuous lead worker who understands the needs of their CiCC.

Almost all CiCC workers and young people that responded said that generally they were proud of the achievements of their CiCC. 30% of CiCCs considered the Pledge their greatest achievement to date. This was by far the most popular example of success given by CiCCs and they were keen to talk about the achievements around it.

West Berkshire stated that their young people "ran the consultation process, designed the document and worked on the DVD to launch the pledge"

Some LA's had won awards for their work on developing their Pledge, several had held a celebratory event to promote awareness of it and others were attending conferences or national events to help develop the Pledge. Many workers seemed satisfied that the DCS

had been very involved with the development of their Pledge and were proud of how the young people had led the consultation process.

Where the pledge was not given as the top achievement there were other common areas of success for CiCCs:

- Increase in the Leaving Care Grant
- Increase in pocket money allowance
- New rights leaflet for young people entering Care
- Better access to Social workers

Gloucester thought that their greatest success as a CiCC was simply developing the enthusiasm of the young people and their ability to work together.

We learned in regional meetings that many lead workers also felt that it was important for their CiCC to be involved in recruitment and selection of staff and corporate parent training

As already stated the close involvement of the DCS and the EM does appear to impact the success and influence of the CiCC. Their commitment is essential for effecting substantial change and the credibility of the CiCC. Without this there is a danger that CiCCs will be considered 'toothless' and tokenistic.

Engagement, Diversity and Out of Borough

Around 43% of workers did not answer the question on making special provision for 'hard to reach' young people.

Workers and young people reported that one of the major barriers to effective outreach was that very few had their own dedicated website. Limited budgets and safeguarding hurdles were given as the main obstacles to creating purpose built websites or accessing social networking. As we have already stated, during our research even ANV found it a challenge to access information about CiCCs through websites, even though this was our express purpose. Given our experience it seemed extremely unlikely that young people would come across this information by chance and discover the opportunity to join the CiCC. This provided a valuable insight into how difficult it must be for young people to get this information.

In particular, Social Networking sites were a 'hot topic' and were greatly discussed in regional meetings. Workers and young people believed that a more liberal approach to social networking would increase the reach of their CiCC and even improve its function. Most had encountered serious reservations at the Local Authority and had been led to believe that safeguarding issues made the problem insurmountable.

There were notable exceptions that disproved this theory however, Staffordshire and Wiltshire are both operating safe, successful sites on Facebook and Twitter and have both agreed to share their IT policies with other Local Authorities to see if they can benefit in the same way

Almost 60% of CiCCs who answered the question had a newsletter or similar to promote their service. This was the most popular method of promoting CiCCs across the country and what they relied on most heavily to engage young people. However, less than 15% of workers stated clearly that they believed all LAC in their area were receiving information about the CiCC. Even then they could not be sure that they all received the newsletters but seemed confident that they were at least intended to reach all of them. Based on the answers given by workers, we discovered that contact through newsletters ranged from 15%-100%. For example **Halton** indicated that they were reaching 100% of their young people. On closer inspection, while they were indeed sending out newsletters to 100% they had no means of measuring how many received them. 100% of workers answered the question on newsletters and over half confirmed that they had no means of gauging what percentage they reached.

Several CiCCs have developed or are working on their own welcome to Care packs for young people. **Staffordshire** for example has produced professional packs including literature, folders and DVD's that tell them about the CiCC as soon as they come into

Care. Naturally, these have been produced only where greater than average budget has been available. These are positive steps but there is still inadequate monitoring of impact to make any conclusions about value for money or the effectiveness of this approach.

Texting and emailing were also used by some Authorities to advertise the CiCC but we were unable to establish how successful these methods were judged to be. We know that young people regularly change email addresses and mobile numbers, making it difficult for Authorities to rely on this approach. Encouraging the support of foster carers, residential home staff and social workers is also seen as a key step to achieving greater outreach. Their help is needed to promote and facilitate attendance.

Portsmouth City has worked hard to set up a dedicated support network for “out of borough” young people and supporting carers is vital to their work.

We need to investigate more how this is achieved at different LA's

Engaging with ‘out of borough’ young people was considered one of the biggest challenges for many CiCCs and where there were high numbers of out of borough placements it was particularly difficult for the Local Authority. **Telford and Wrekin** for example have 60% of their young people out of Borough. In most cases workers seemed concerned that not enough attempt was being made to engage them in the work of the placing Authority CiCC but were at a loss as to how to improve the situation. However, more successful CiCCs had found a number of effective approaches to combat this problem. One Local Authority in London found that they were able to ‘share’ young people with other near-by CiCCs. In turn they would accept out of borough young people in their CiCC and report back to the placing LA. Some Lead Workers said that they had actually taken the CiCC to young people in neighbouring Authorities where the distance was not too far.

Workers also identified a real issue around getting young people involved with the CiCC who, for whatever reason, simply did not want to be. They were struggling to know best how to appeal to these young people.

Ealing had found there was a real spike in interest when they held a large event and invited celebrity guests. For obvious reasons this wasn't a realistic option for most Authorities.

Most relied simply on their websites or newsletters which we have already established often had a low rate of success. In a related issue, there was a general anxiety that CiCCs were naturally inclined to be unrepresentative of the ‘looked after’ population as they usually attracted only a narrow spectrum of young people with similar backgrounds

and attitudes. Ironically a Local Authority in the South West found that after successfully attracting young people who were traditionally considered 'hard to reach', some of the challenging behaviour they exhibited in meetings made existing members uncomfortable and had led the group to break down. More work was needed to see how groups can best support diversity once they manage to attract it. As mentioned previously, Local Authorities who have made better progress with supporting out of borough young people were often working more closely with Social Workers to visit them in their homes and tell them about the CiCC directly. In this way they hoped to combat the suspicion or fear that many young people feel towards authority figures, particularly where there is a language barrier. The 'personal touch' appears to have been working and has encouraged some young people to attend groups in their area.

After out of borough young people, the second group most difficult to engage were those in remote rural areas.

To overcome this problem some workers had been able to rotate the location of their CiCC and make it "travel" out to different areas where they could reach more young people. This has been particularly useful for CiCCs in large rural regions such as the South West and the East.

Nationally less than 12% of CiCCs had more than 6 young people from rural areas at their meetings. In the South West, this figure was almost 45% and CiCCs in the East and East Midlands also showed a trend towards higher numbers from rural areas

It is also worth noting that almost 85% responded to the questions on health care and said that they had made some provision for young people to receive support from the CiCC on these important issues. As part of our on-going work around physical and emotional wellbeing there is some potential to investigate this more fully in the future. We have not yet considered in any great detail what role the CiCC can play in offering this kind of support.

91% of respondents answered the question on disabled members and of those who responded we found that disabled young people were represented across CiCCs in the following way:

- 25% had no disabled young people on their CiCC
- 60% had 1 or 2 disabled young people on their CiCC
- 16% had 3 or more disabled young people on their CiCC

As we did not know what proportion of the size of the CiCC group this represented or how it reflected the disabled percentage of the looked after population in different areas, we have taken no real inference from this data that it reflects either a positive or

negative situation. Generally, there were no answers that gave rise to any deep concern in this area but it is a topic that could be considered in further detail at a later stage

Overall it seemed that the challenges facing local authorities in achieving high levels of engagement or successful outreach/representation went beyond the financial. Technical, administrative, social and psychological reasons all played a part where groups were struggling to attract new members or achieve a wider diversity within the group.

The main concern with this on-going problem is a danger that with lack of information there will be a lack of equal access to services. Young people that remain beyond reach are not only under represented they are underserved.

Monitoring

It has been apparent throughout all aspects of our research into the performance and function of CiCCs that inadequate monitoring of success across all areas was typical of most Local Authorities, even those achieving impressive results. Impressions and observations were generally organic and instinctive rather than clearly defined or measurable.

Where CiCCs did monitor, they largely concentrated on outputs rather than outcomes – they did this in a number of ways. The most popular outputs being monitored included:

- Number of active members
- Number of active members involved in receiving training
- Number of active members involved in delivering training
- Number of active members receiving accreditation

A handful of CiCCs, mostly in their infancy, do not attempt to measure at all. Most CiCCs kept some record of this information, however they were much less active at monitoring successful impact on policy, activity outcomes and their broader achievements.

Feedback forms or evaluation sheets were popular ways to gather information and these were circulated to young people but usually without much consistency. As stated, much more monitoring was 'soft' and usually in the form of anecdotal evidence and individual experience of change. Documentary evidence from the Corporate Parenting Panel seems to be limited but becoming more prevalent.

Achievement awards are a popular way to recognise individual success and most LA's seem to run these with the involvement of the CiCC but generally, it is a concern how little monitoring is going on. There are no set approaches, standards or guidance for this and this is something that we should look more at encouraging or developing in the future.

Common Challenges Facing CiCCs

- Very few LA's measured how many young people actually received the newsletters they send out. Most sent them to the whole looked after population but had no idea how many actually got them
- Monitoring of measurable success and effectiveness is poor
- Most did not have the budget for a dedicated website or were 'lost' in the main LA website which the young people found unappealing
- Only 18% of CiCCs answered the question about knowing the name of their DCS or Elected Member. Of these 60% knew the name of the DCS and 50% knew the name of their EM. These CiCCs were less confident of their success and influence
- There is a tendency to excuse a lack of contribution from DCS and EM's as 'young person led'
- Social Workers are not always seen as the natural allies of participation workers that many hope for
- Local Authorities general staff need greater awareness and understanding of the CiCC so that they can pass on valuable information

Recommendations

- CiCCs should try to hold separate meetings for different age groups
- Less well established CiCCs should consider shadowing neighbouring CiCCs
- CiCCs should be more creative with accessing budgets from the different departments that are represented at the CiCC ('share the burden' more, financially speaking); creating less strain and allowing the CiCC to achieve more with less
- Out of Borough young people can be engaged more effectively if there is some flexibility and neighbouring CiCCs are prepared to work together or 'share' members
- 'Visiting' or 'roaming' CiCCs have shown that they can engage out of borough or under-represented minorities better; taking the CiCC to the young people rather than trying to get the young people to it can help overcome the 'hard to reach'
- Where possible info on the CiCC should be included in any welcome pack that young people receive when entering Care
- DCS and EM should attend as many meetings as possible to fully understand young person issues and young people should be encouraged to see the benefit of them attending meetings
- There should be better cross working between the CPP and young people on CiCCs as in **Derbyshire** where young people sit on the panel
- Corporate parents should receive more young person led training
- Foster Carers can be a valuable source of support when facilitating young people to engage with the CiCC and should be encouraged to understand the work and purpose of the CiCC more
- Future resources could be focussed on the following suggested research:
 - IRO's and the role they play in the CiCC
 - Offering guidance on model constitutions
 - Closer investigation of disabled members needs on CiCCs
 - Reasons for poor attendance of DCS and EMs at CiCC meetings

Methodology

Statistical Context

150 out of 152 Local Authorities returned responses from at least one group. The only Local Authorities who returned no response whatsoever were **Bexley** and **Pool**. Repeated attempts were made to encourage a response from these Local Authorities

Although **the City of London** and the **Isles of Scilly** have not completed a questionnaire they did respond to let us know that neither has a CiCC because neither has a Care population. In the event that a young person does require Care they informed us that they use a neighbouring Authority's service.

Although 99% of all Local Authorities responded to the questionnaire overall, the response rate from the young people, Elected Members, Director of Children's Services and Lead workers varied greatly.

The response rates were as follows:

- 99% Local Authorities represented overall
- 78% of Lead workers responded
- Less than 5% of Lead workers responded more than once
- No other groups responded more than once
- 34% of Director of Children's Services responded
- 16% of Elected Members responded
- 12% of Young People responded
- No Local Authorities gave responses from all groups
- Around 8% of questionnaires were not completed in full

We found no significant discrepancies or contradictions in the information we were given between different groups responding from the same Authority.

Initial Barriers and Difficulties When Carrying out this Research

There were numerous barriers to obtaining information about CiCCs. Initially we had great difficulty just confirming the identities of the various professionals that we needed to send out the questionnaires to. Different job titles at different authorities, for the same role were a common problem. Website searches gave little away and frontline administrators rarely knew the position or name of the people we needed to contact. Even fewer were familiar with what a CiCC may be. On many occasions we were informed that the LA did not have a CiCC when in fact it later transpired that they were running well established groups, as in the case of **Blackpool**.

In addition, basic administrative obstacles meant that email addresses and phone numbers were either unavailable or protected. With Lead Members, we faced an additional challenge when home numbers and addresses were given as primary contact details. Very few Elected Members were successfully contacted in this way. Understandably, we also faced safeguarding issues when trying to survey young people and relied on lead workers to pass the questionnaires along and encourage them to respond to us.

On the whole, as our response rates show it was easiest to track down Lead workers. As one might have predicted this group were also the most responsive and well informed.

Newcastle, Blackpool and **Wokingham** were the last Local Authorities to respond in our year-long project (they responded for the first time in March 2011)

Further to the questionnaires being issued, throughout the period we telephoned, emailed and wrote to every Local Authority multiple times to obtain at least one response. We also searched Local Authority websites extensively for additional information and contact details.

In terms of monitoring progress and development of individual CiCCs this appears to have been unrealistic. Few respondents returned more than one questionnaire during 2010-11 and those that did indicated that the time periods involved were not long enough for outcomes to change significantly. Overall, insufficient change happened quickly enough or was reported to us to observe measurable change.

Changes Since April 1st 2011

At the time of issuing *this* report 150 Local Authorities now have CiCCs

- Only the **City of London** and the **Isles of Scilly** still do not have CiCCs at all. These authorities do not have any looked after children or young people in their Care and so have no support services. In the event that they do need to provide corporate parenting services they use neighbouring Local Authority provision.
- Although **Blackburn with Darwen** do have a CiCC and an active participation service, at the time of issuing this report the CiCC had been temporarily suspended pending a new staff appointment and orientation. They have continued to respond to 2011-12 questionnaires
- Similarly, at the time of issuing this report although **Kent CC** also did not have an active CiCC they were already re-recruiting young people and have indicated that they expect the CiCC to be reconvened soon. The reasons for this hiatus are unclear but also appear to be staff related
- At the time of researching this report **Middlesbrough** was the only LA in England with a Looked After population that did not have a CiCC. Post April 2011 they now have a functioning CiCC.
- **Poole** and the **London Borough of Bexley** were the only LA's who did not respond to the questionnaire during this research period. However we have since learned that they both have functioning CiCCs.

A National Voice would like to thank all those who have contributed to our questionnaires as well as those who have attended our nine regional meetings.



A National Voice