

Spotlight
on practice

Rights & Voice



Cambridgeshire and
Peterborough Councils

Young Inspectors improving contact centres

July 2023

Young inspectors (aged 13 to 25) wanted to improve supervised contact centres so that they were more welcoming for children in care & their families. Before visiting centres the group discussed and agreed the sorts of things they would look for and processes for giving recommendations.

This is a practice example from A NATIONAL VOICE

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/for-professionals/co-production-and-participation-with-young-people/>

Why? The ANV AMPLIFY awards aim to champion and recognise the work of children in care councils and care leaver forums. They were held in October 2022 ([Amplify - Coram Voice](#)) – Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Young Inspectors programme were nominated for the ‘Participation award’.

What did they do?

Eight young inspectors inspected four supervised contact centres and made more than fifty recommendations to the services on things such as accessibility, furniture, resources & storage. They also recommended the centre were re-decorated and paintings put up to brighten the rooms.

The work won the ANV award with people judges saying *“It is a fab idea to make family time more special. Fab they did so many paintings on their own! It’s a really good and thoughtful project and piece of work well done. It is clear they know what participation means, congratulations to the young inspectors”*.

What difference is it making?

This nomination won the Participation award at the 2022 ANV awards. The Young Inspectors report was presented to councillors at the Corporate parenting committee – actions so far include: removing old signs, clearing gardens, decoration and new furniture ordered.

Young inspectors organised an art day & created 40 pieces of work to hang in the centres with plans to create a mural wall in partnership with local artists. Young people enjoyed the work and felt their confidence grow as a result.

Cabinet Member for Children’s Services said: *“A huge congratulations to the young inspectors for winning A National Voice award in the Participation category. We are so proud of the young inspectors for their involvement to enact meaningful change to help improve the experience of children and families at contact centres across the county. They have demonstrated an incredible level of confidence and empathy to deliver their recommendations to better the spaces for the benefit of others.”* <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/news/young-inspectors-work-is-celebrated-with-a-national-voice-award>

Here is the Peterborough & Cambridgeshire entry to the ANV awards



The Young Inspectors
Peterborough & Cambridgeshire
Inquisitive, persistent, creative!

What they did: The Young Inspectors group (ages 13 to 18 years) discussed how supervised contact centres could be improved to be more welcoming for the children and young people who use them. They arranged to visit the supervised contact centres across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, meeting in advance to talk about the things they would be looking for and how recommendations should be given.

Eight Young Inspectors inspected four supervised contact centres and made more than fifty recommendations to the service including on accessibility, furniture, resources and storage. They also recommended the centres were re-decorated and paintings put up to brighten the rooms.



What difference they made: The report was presented by the Young Inspectors to councillors and officers at the Corporate Parenting Committee meetings. The service is working through the recommendations and updates are being taken back to the Corporate Parenting Committee meetings.

Action taken so far in response to the report include removing old signage, clearing gardens and patios, refreshing resources, general renovation and decoration, and ordering new furniture.



One of the recommendations was to hang up paintings to make them brighter and more welcoming. The Young Inspectors arranged their own art day to create 40 pieces of artwork, which are now in the centres. They are also working with local artists to create a mural wall for one of the centres.



Why they should win: The inspection group covered multiple centres and improved family contact for many children and young people. The Young Inspectors give up significant periods of their holiday and leisure time traveling across the county to complete inspections, with two of the inspection group having complex needs including diagnosis on the Autistic Spectrum and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The group developed confidence in giving critique to established settings, councillors and professional practitioners to advocate for improved contact space. The inspectors also thought of how they could support improvements by creating artwork and working with local artists to create a mural wall.