



our voices

Newsletter for Children in Care - Issue 11



Welcome to the Spring Edition of our newsletter

In this issue, find out about what fun days out and activities we have planned for you over the Spring and Summer. We also want to tell you about the Kent Pledge, which is about what Kent promises to you as a child in care and tells you what you are entitled to.

We love to hear your ideas about what you would like us to include in this newsletter, what you like and what we could be doing better.

Enjoy the Easter holidays!

Email us:

VSK_Participation @kent.gov.uk

or send your pictures, news and info to:

**Chloe-Elizabeth Mutton - Virtual
School Kent Brook House**

Reeves Way, Whitstable Kent CT5 3SS

VSK PARTICIPATION TEAM



SOPHIA



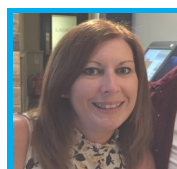
CHLOE



REECE



Gemma



Jo

Included In This Issue:

- **Staff Update**
Hellos and Goodbyes
- **Kent Pledge**
What's in it for you
- **OCYPC**
Children in Care Council News
- **Our News**
Activity Days and what we have been up
- **Bookmark Competition**
How to enter and prizes to be won!

HAPPY EASTER !



STAFF UPDATE

We have four new apprentices joining our team shortly, three girls and one boy. Two will work with Sophia and Chloe in Whitstable and two with Reece in Maidstone. They all have experience of being in the care system, and their job will include organising fun activity days for you to enjoy, help support the work of our three Children in Care Councils and the work that the Virtual School Kent does.

In the next issue, they will tell you a bit about themselves.

So watch this space!

Bella's Goodbye!

One of our long standing apprentices, Annabelle Taylor has successfully completed her apprenticeship and has moved on to work with the Children in Care NHS Health Team. We are very sad to see Bella go, but we wish her all the best in her new job!!

Here is a few words from Bella...

"For most of my life I have been unsettled, uncertain and insecure. I didn't have any hope or aspirations for my future; neither did I have any idea as to what I was capable of. During my time with the VSK Participation Team I realised who I wanted to become and what I wanted to do.

I want to help others to realise and reach their own potential. I have had the opportunity to complete qualifications in Business & Administration and gain the other qualifications that I wasn't able to get during my time at school. Working with children and young people has made me sure my future career lies with helping others.

Though I am sad to be leaving, I know that now is my time to say "yes" to new opportunities given to me and step outside of my comfort zone. I'm so proud of each and every young person I have met in my time with VSK - you have all been a wonderful inspiration to me and have given me many memories to treasure for a lifetime. So after years of being worried about change here I am, for the first time saying....Let the change begin!!!!

With hugs - Bella xoxox



NATIONAL NEWS

Become

Become (which used to be called The Who Care's? Trust,) is a charity for young people in care and care leavers. They provide help, support and advice and help them to achieve their full potential. They also offer advice on money, education, employment, health and wellbeing. In 2015 they reached out to 636 young people, of which 98% of them learnt valuable skills for the future. During Spring 2017, Become are launching their new life coaching programme for young people. This is where they can learn new skills to help them in the future. You can find out more by visiting their website:

<http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/>

BECOME.
THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

Young Lives Foundation

The Young Lives Foundation is a dedicated children's charity committed to improving the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. Recently they came along to our Children in Care Council meeting to let us know what they do, how they can help with many different things, including being an advocate and helping you if you have a complaint or want to find out why certain things have happened. They told us how they will do the investigating for you, and make sure your voice is heard, especially in your review meetings. YFL cannot always change things, but will always help you to understand what has happened and why. You can find out more by visiting their website: <http://yfl.org.uk>

Helping young people in Kent and Medway
get their voice heard!

the young lives foundation
solutions information rights support
ADVOCACY
Young people's Freephone number:
0808 164 0096

The image shows a young person in a red cap and yellow shirt shouting into a megaphone. The text is arranged in a dynamic, overlapping layout with various colors and fonts.

Did you know that ChildLine, has recently released an app call "For Me". This app is discreetly installed, and is free to use. For more information—<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/childline-launches-new-app/>

KENT PLEDGE

Have you received your copy of the Kent Pledge cards?



The Kent Pledge is 6 promises that Kent County Council make to you as a child in the care of Kent. They are to:

- Give you a sense of belonging
- Make sure you have an adult who is always there for you
- Make sure you have a good education
- Help you make good memories for the future
- Help you get ready for being an adult
- Support your interests and needs

We have made the 6 promises into a set of cards that are given to you by your Social Worker. They have been designed with the help of young people in care and are clear and easy to understand. There are 2 versions, one pack for you if you are over 11 and another pack if you are under 11.

If you don't have a pack, just ask your Social Worker.



OCYPC

On the 14th February we held our first OCYPC meeting of 2017. OCYPC stands for Our Children and Young People's Council—it is a meeting that is held every school holiday and is a chance for you to come along, meet up with us and other people who work for Kent County Council and give your views and opinions about being in care.

February's meeting focused on what you thought about your Foster Carers and what you think a good Foster Carer should be like. Everyone gave their ideas about what their ideal foster carer would be like and spoke about what their favourite thing about their carer was. Everyone got involved and gave some fab answers and feedback. After this we decorated cupcakes – Yummy! Some of the qualities that you said that it was important a Foster Carer had were:

- Kind
- Loving
- Fun
- Caring
- Good listener
- Open minded
- Honest



What do you think? Do you agree?



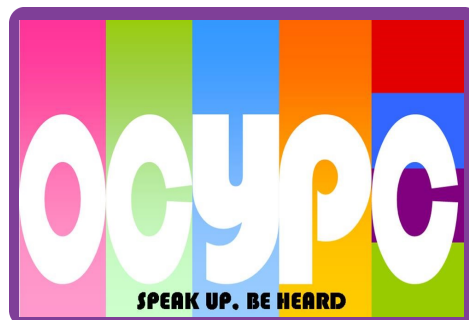
Would you like to join the OCYPC?

Or come along and see what the meetings are like?

This is your chance to have a say and get involved

Get in touch!

VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk



OUR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S COUNCIL

VSK ACTIVITY DAYS

Revolutions

On the 13th February, we took a group of young people to Revolutions Skatepark. Each group had a chance to have a go at rock climbing and have a skate with the scooters. Everyone had a brilliant day, and some even overcame their fear of heights!



Kingswood

On the 15th February 2017 we took a group of 16 & 17 year olds to the Kingswood Centre in Ashford for a 'Transition to Independence' Taster Day - This will be the first of a series of activity days and events that will help prepare you when you leave foster care and start to live independently. We had lots of fun – we took it in turns to climb up to the high see-saw, it was a challenge but everyone took part and gave it a go. We also had team races on the obstacle course with VSK staff getting involved too. After lunch we discussed things like our Pathway Plans and what we could focus on for our future series of workshops.

Before we went home everyone had a go on the Zip Wire, it was so much fun!



This Art of Mine

On the 17th February we held an activity day at one of our favourite venues, This Art of Mine, an arts and crafts centre. We got to decide whether we wanted to print our artwork on a T-shirt or a mug. Over the day we had 42 young people attend and everyone had a lot of fun by getting creative and a little bit messy!!!! Overall we had a great day with a lot of smiles and laughs.



OUR NEWS

Your Review Matters

We have had a very busy few months here at VSK. One of the projects we have been involved in has been working with the IRO Service to produce a short film about why it is important that you attend your Review Meetings.

We had some amazing help from two young people, Stephen and Rhiannon who did a fantastic job explaining what their Review Meeting was about and how they get involved in them.

The film will be available for you to watch very soon, just ask your Social Worker or IRO to see it!



Takeover Challenge Day

Two of our apprentices also took part in the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge. The Takeover Challenge is a project which sees organisations across England opening their doors to young people to take over adult job roles.

In Kent County Council, young people took over the office of Peter Oakford for the day. Peter as Lead Member for Specialist Children's Services is involved in a lot of the decisions that are made about you and what happens to you.

The apprentices and other young people attended meetings and briefings and gained an insight into some of the work that Kent County Council do to support children and young people. They were also able to give us the benefit of seeing things from their perspective as a young person.

For more information about the Takeover Challenge please visit: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/takeover-challenge.

Would you like to be involved with the work we do?

There are lots of ways you could do this, one way is to become part of our 'Recruit Crew'.

This involves helping us to interview Social Workers, Foster Carers and other members of staff and to give us your point of view about whether you think they would do a good job.

WRITER'S SECTION

Welcome to our new section of the newsletter!! This section is for you to write about anything you like. This could include any questions you have for the apprentices, any short stories, artwork or poems you wish to share with us. Get in touch!

To start this off we asked the Participation Team and some other members of staff who work for VSK the following question:

What job did you want to do when you were younger?

Participation Team:

Chloe: That's easy I wanted to be a famous horse rider!! 

Sophia: I wanted to be a social worker!!

Jo: I wanted to be an artist 

Gemma: I wanted to be a vet, but then I realised I most likely couldn't handle with operating on the animals. So I volunteered for an animal rescue charity instead!

Reece: Either a police officer, prison guard or sound engineer

VSK Assistant Heads:

Rachel Calver: I wanted to be an architect! 

Jo Kelly: I wanted to be Chancellor of the Exchequer !!!

Margaret Hamlyn: I wanted to be a pharmacist (like my parents) until I was about 14 but then decided I wanted to be a teacher and I became one!

Joanne Hayes: I always wanted to be a vet but I became a teacher!!!

What do you want to be when you grow up? - Send your answers in and we will print them in the next issue :)

Email us:

VSK_Participation @kent.gov.uk

or send your pictures, news and info to:

Chloe-Elizabeth Mutton - Virtual School Kent

Brook House Reeves Way, Whitstable

CT5 3SS

BOOKMARK COMPETITION



Calling all you book lovers and artists out there, this is your time to shine!!

We need to create some bookmarks and need your help.

We are looking for 2 fabulous designs, to go on the front of our bookmarks,
which will be sent out to ALL Kent Children in Care!!

The themes are **Spring/Summer** and **Autumn/Winter**

Book Related Prizes will be given for the best entries, so get designing!!

So step up the game and grab that favourite book and use as inspiration
because we can't wait to see the results !

Watch out for our next newsletter, where the winners will be announced and
your designs will be featured inside!



Entry rules

- Must be designed by YOU!
- Write your name and age on the back
 - Send your entries to:

*Chloe-Elizabeth Mutton: VSK Brook House, Reeves Way, Whitstable, CT53SS
alternately scan and send them to chloe-elizabeth.mutton@kent.gov.uk*

