



### Welcome to our Winter Edition of the Newsletter...

We hope you all had a great Winter Break and a good start to the New Year!

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2018! This Winter Issue is jam packed full of news so you can see what we got up to at the end of 2017 and also what's coming up this year!

We would also like to introduce our new



### Corporate Director— Matt Dunkley CBE

“My role is to make sure that Kent County Council is the best parent we can be for all of the children in our care. In the upcoming months, I will want to meet as many of you as possible and to hear whether we are doing the best we can for you. I want you to help me make Kent the best place for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve.”

### Included in this Issue:

- **Staff Update**

Welcomes

- **National News**

Passport to Parliament and Young Lives Foundation

- **Kent Pledge**

What's in it for you?

- **OCYPC**

October's Meeting

- **Activity Days**

Arty October!!

- **Competition Result**

Send your pictures, news and info to Chloe at

### VSK PARTICIPATION TEAM



From Left to Right: Chelsea, Sarah, Jo, Chloe, Reece, Sophia, Tom, Andrea.

VSK\_Participation @kent.gov.uk

or write to: *Chloe-Elizabeth Mutton*

*Virtual School Kent, Brook House, John Wilson Business Park, Reeves Way, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 3SS*

# STAFF UPDATE

Our Participation Team is growing which means we have time and opportunities to get out and meet you — which is really the best part of our job! Our team is led by Jo, and we have Sophia and Chloe working in East and South Kent, and Reece and Chelsea working in North and West Kent.

We are really pleased to announce that we have 3 new members join our team! Please welcome Sarah, Andrea and Tom to the team.

We hope they enjoy working with the team. They would like to introduce themselves...

## Meet Andrea



Hi, I'm Andrea Wood and I have recently joined the VSK team as a Participation Support Officer. I have lots of experience of working with young people in different settings and am very excited about my new role! Outside of work, I love roller blading and mountain biking. I am looking forward to meeting everyone and working with the VSK team.

## Meet Tom



Hi, I'm Tom, I'm 20 years old. I'm a care leaver and have just started at VSK as an apprentice. My interests range from gaming to history. I can't wait to meet and support everyone.

## Meet Sarah



Hi, I'm Sarah Newman and I joined the Virtual School Kent team in January as a Participation Support Officer. Before this, I was a primary school teacher and have worked with children who are home educated. I enjoy reading and going to the cinema or playing badminton and tennis. I am looking forward to my new role and excited to get started!



# NATIONAL NEWS

## Become — Passport to Parliament

Become is a charity for young people in care and care leavers. The Become Charity have set up a new project called Passport to Parliament.



Passport to Parliament is a project that allows young people in care and care leavers to make changes to their own lives and the care system. This project helps young people to grow their confidence and have a sense of empowerment.

**If you want to get involved or just find out more...**

Website: [www.becomecharity.org.uk/](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/)

Phone number: 020 7251 3117

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

## Young Lives Foundation

The Young Lives Foundation (YLF) is an advocacy service for young people. This means they help young people to have a say in the care they receive either by speaking for them at important meetings or helping them speak up for themselves. It is independent and not part of Kent County Council.

Recently, a group of young people met with Kristy Tidey, the Advocacy Manager, to discuss leaflets that YLF give out explaining their role and how they can support you when you have a problem. The group had lots of fantastic ideas about how they could be improved to make them more useful and appealing to young people which will have a direct impact on the new information leaflets that YLF produce.

Some of the young people were surprised that YLF could give them extra help when they had a problem or felt they weren't been listened to. They thought that more of you should know about it and how to contact YLF!

***Do you need an Advocate? Then contact YLF below:***

Website: [www.ylf.org.uk](http://www.ylf.org.uk)

Email: [enquiries@ylf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ylf.org.uk)

Phone number: **01622 693459**



# 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
- To 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.

## What is MOMO?

Telling people what you want and need can be difficult.

You told us you wanted a more up to date way to tell your worker when you're worried about something, not happy about how things are going or even just want to share some good news.

We think we have found a way that you can do this!

The **MOMO app** will help you say what you want, when you want to say it. It helps you organise your thoughts and makes it easier to tell your worker what you think. Your worker will get a better insight into what's going on, from your point of view.



For more information contact [Reece.Graves@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Reece.Graves@kent.gov.uk)  
or call 03000 411340

**MOMO**  
MIND OF MY OWN

# OCYPC



## **OCYPC stands for ‘Our Children and Young People’s Council.’**

It is Kent’s Children in Care Council for young people aged 11—16. OCYPC have been involved in important projects such as redesigning the Kent Pledge leaflets. OCYPC also get the opportunity to meet with Members and Senior Officers in Kent County Council to voice their views and opinions.

All meetings are designed to be fun and relaxed and of course there is always food and drinks provided!

Being part of one of the Councils is extremely beneficial as it gives a unique opportunity to have your voice heard at the highest levels. Your views and opinions help shape the service that you and other young people in care receive so that it is as good as it possibly can be.

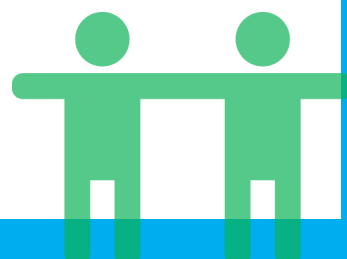
**If you are interested in joining or want more information, contact [Sophia.Dunstan@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Sophia.Dunstan@kent.gov.uk) or call 03000 414214**

The October meeting was the last meeting of the year with the OCYPC Members so we thought we would make it an extra fun one. We also welcomed a new member from the Super Council who is now old enough to be a member of OCYPC.

The meeting started with creating a “Get to know me page” for the Children in Care Council Scrap Book. This book will be shown to other Children in Care who are interested in joining the Children in Care Councils and want to know more about them.

This was an idea raised at the Countywide Event, back in the summer, and everyone agreed that it would be a great way to tell other children and about the great work that all 3 councils do. This book will have information about all 3 Children in Care Councils, and a page about each of the members of the Children in Care Council with their hobbies and interest, along with reasons why they like being a member of OCYPC.

*Your Voice Matters*



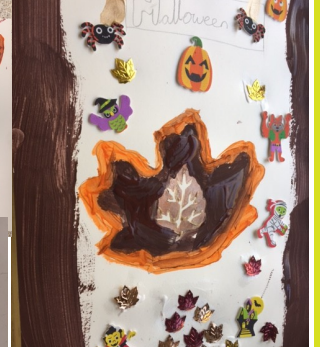
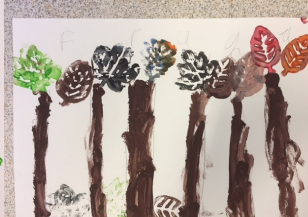
# VSK ACTIVITY DAYS

Over the October school holiday, we ran two art activity days to link in with our Autumn Art Competition!

We had a total of 65 children and young people attend the days.

The young people had the chance to make an entry for the competition, create their own name piece and to do some decoupage. Both days went very well, and everyone had fun even if we did get a bit sticky and messy!!

Here is some of the brilliant art work made:



# COMPETITION RESULTS

Over the Autumn months we held an autumn themed art competition! All entries are displayed in Sessions House Corporate Director's Offices and winners were picked by our Director Sarah Hammond and her team.

Congratulations to our winners:

## For ages up to 7:

1st place: Shayden

2nd place: Poppy

3rd place: Dolcey



## For ages 8-12

1st place: Alfie

2nd place: Callum

3rd place: Summer

## For 13+

1st place: Chloe

2nd place: Melanie

3rd place: Georgegina



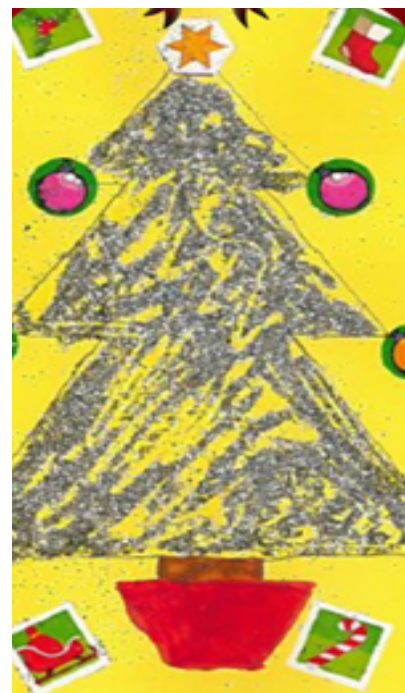
# COMPETITION RESULTS

Every year we hold a Christmas Card competition.

This year we had 4 winners! Everyone's designs were amazing, and as always, we really did struggle to choose the winners!

The winning designs were used as E-Christmas Cards by KCC. So without further ado, please congratulate:

Ajay, Izzy, Lily-May and Luke





# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES!

We have some amazing activities organised for you coming up.

They include:

- **Baking workshops** - Do you want to learn how to make delicious cakes which you can of course take home at the end of the session? If the answer's yes, then you should definitely come and bake!
- **Find Your Talent Workshops and Talent Show** - Eager to learn a new skill or show off one you already have? Come along to our Find Your Talent Workshops where you will have a chance to practise a whole range of new skills. Then, we finish the Easter holidays with a fantastic Talent Show. Remember: your talent could be anything! Telling jokes, singing, dancing, magic tricks, juggling - whatever you enjoy and want to share!
- **Recruit Crew** - If you want to have a say on the people Kent County Council employs to work with you, then why not consider joining our Recruit Crew? We are holding 'Interview and Selection Training' for young people aged 14 and over which will teach you everything you need to know to sit on an interview panel. This training also gives you an accredited LASER qualification which you can put on your CV!

**If you are interested in attending any of these days, have any ideas about future activities or just want to find out more about the Participation Team does, email [VSK\\_participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_participation@kent.gov.uk) or call Sarah on 03000 4225588.**



# CreativeMe

An exciting creative writing competition for all children and young people in care.

**Feeling poetic? Got a story to tell?**

**Deadline – Friday 23rd February 2018**

We are looking for poems and short stories on any theme or topic as long as they are suitable for a wide age range

**Let your imagination  
run wild!**

There are four age categories:

4-7

8-11

12-15

16+

**See your work brought  
to life in a mobile app!**

Winning entries will be published as an anthology available through our mobile app. Winners will receive a book token and certificate.

Submit poems and stories to your Virtual School.

Email your entries to:

[VSK\\_participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_participation@kent.gov.uk)

including your first name and your age.



Pearson  
Publishing

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