



Welcome to the Spring Edition of our newsletter!

In this issue, find out about the fun days out we have had and what our Children in Care Councils have been up to. Also, find out how you can enter our latest competition!

We love to hear your ideas about what you would like us to include in this newsletter and on our Kent Cares Town website.

Email us:

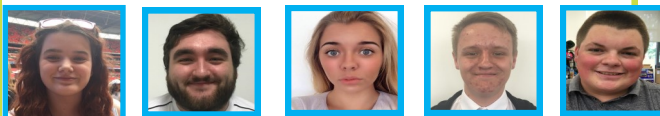
VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk

or send your pictures, news and info to: Reece Graves

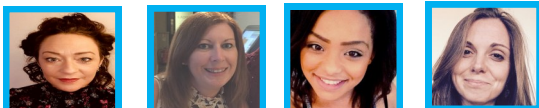
Virtual School Kent, Worrall House,
30 Kings Hill Avenue,
West Malling, Kent , ME19 4AE

Included in this issue:

- OCYPC Update
- Activity Days
- Kent Pledge
- Advocacy Contact Details
- Revision Tips
- Mind Of My Own
- Upcoming events
- Competition



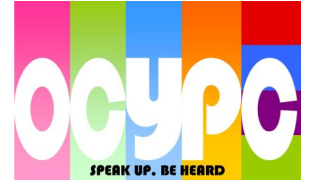
Tia Tom Chelsea Reece Rob



Andrea Jo Sophia Sarah



OCYPC

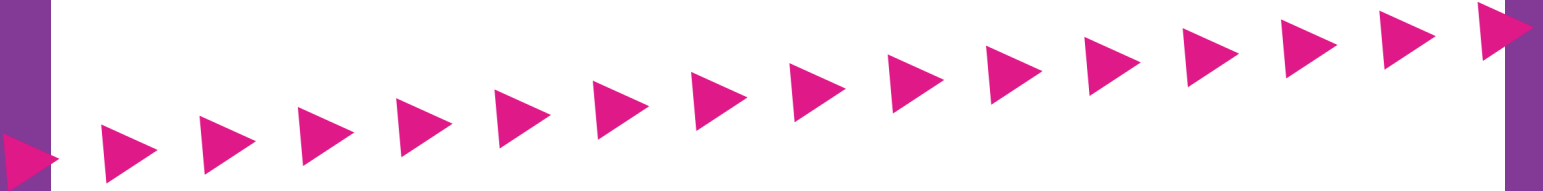


OCYPC stands for 'Our Children and Young People's Council.'

Kent's Children in Care Council for young people aged 11 to 16. OCYPC have been involved in important projects and decisions made about young people in care. 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 drink provided! Being part of one of the Councils is extremely beneficial as it gives you 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 Reece or Sophia via Reece.Graves@kent.gov.uk or Sophia.Dunstan@kent.gov.uk



During the February half term, we were really excited to meet up again with our OCYPC members. Not only were we holding our OCYPC meeting in West Kent and our OCYPC Extra meeting in Thanet, but for the first time we were holding a meeting in South Kent. This means we now have two mobile OCYPC groups, so even more of you can get involved, have your say and help make positive changes for young people in care in Kent.

We began each meeting with a fun ice breaker to help us get to know each other better before moving onto our next task. For World Social Work Day, Kent County Council is contributing to an E-Book packed full of writing and artwork created by Social Workers about what their role means to them, their best experiences working with young people and why they do their jobs. But, it was really important to include young people's ideas and experiences too.

So, OCYPC members set to work. They began by describing their ideal Social Worker.

In Thanet, members said that Social Workers should:

- Believe in us
- Listen to what we have to say
- Be there for us
- Be helpful, caring, honest, and funny
- Smile at us

Members of OCYPC Extra South thought Social Workers should:

- Be themselves
- Get to know us properly
- Be interested in their young people
- Be courageous and stand up for young people

And finally, Maidstone OCYPC members suggested that Social Workers should:

- Be on time
- Care about us
- Be understanding, kind and funny
- Be on our side
- Tell us the truth
- Listen

Next, OCYPC members discussed some of their favourite Social Worker moments. These included being taken on trips or to get food (even cheesy chips on the beach!), Social Workers helping them to visit their family, stay in contact with their parents, create a memory book or workers being there for them when they needed them even if things were tough. They wrote up some of their best moments and illustrated them so they could be included in the e-book.

As we have been thinking about the information young people receive when they come into care, members of OCYPC also thought about the advice they would give their younger selves which might have helped them when they came into care.

They came up with lots of great ideas including:

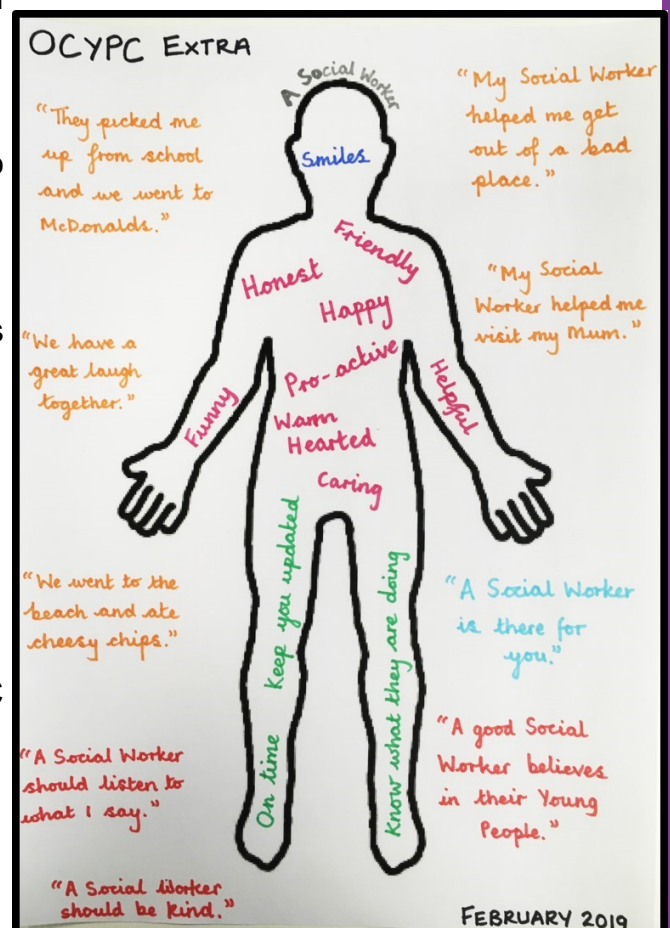
- Remember there are people out there to help you
- Stay calm
- Remember things may not be as bad as you think and will get better

Finally, like at all meetings we finished with some food and a bit of time to socialise and catch up with friends.

It was a great week for the OCYPC, as it brought even more young people together.

If you would like more information about OCYPC or think there should be a council group in your area, why not get in touch at:

VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk



VSK ACTIVITY DAYS

Over the February school holiday, there were two activity days held in Kings Hill and Canterbury. Young People could come along and take part in different workshops - African Drumming, Chinese Dance and Asian Shadow Puppets - to learn about some arts from different cultures.



The African drum that we played was called a “Djembe” and it is found in West African Countries and made from goat skin.

We also learnt there are three main sounds of the Djembe that can be played which are the bass, tone and slap. We were then shown how to make these sounds ourselves. Once we had learnt the different sounds we could play, we started to learn rhythms on the Djembe which was so much fun. At first, it was difficult to remember the rhythms but with practice and help from the tutor, it became a lot easier to remember and we were soon jamming along!

We also had Chinese ribbon dancing. This is a traditional art form that originates from ancient China and is performed with a thick satin ribbon on a stick.

You use the ribbon to create patterns and designs in the air. At first, everyone felt a bit silly and shy to take part but once we went through the moves and had a giggle about how we all looked together, everyone enjoyed themselves. It took some practice to make certain patterns in the air because it was harder than it looked but it was so much fun. We performed our dance to traditional Chinese music. By the end, everyone had mastered the dance with one and two ribbons without getting them tangled, twisted or knotted.



We then made Asian Shadow puppets. The puppeteer went through the different kinds of puppets there are; such as, finger puppets, hand puppets, marionettes, and shadow puppets. We learnt that shadow puppets are a part of an ancient Indian culture, they deliver a good moral or message within the story. The shadow puppetry is performed behind a white sheet with a light beaming through so the figures of the shadow puppets are easier to see. We made our own shadow puppets with black card and a stick and used them to produce a story about an elephant and a dog which is an Indian folktale.

If you would like more information about VSK participation days, email us:

Vsk_Participation@kent.gov.uk

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.



Are you in care or a care leaver?



Struggling to get your voice heard or people to understand you?
Need support at meetings? Unhappy about the support or care you receive?
Want to make a complaint?
Do you know your rights and entitlements as a young person in care or care leaver? Want to find out more?



YLF advocates can help you tell professionals how you are feeling and your views about important decisions. They help you to understand your rights and entitlements and can support you to raise any concerns you have about the care you receive.
Our advocacy service is confidential and independent of Social Services



If you would like to find out more or receive advocacy support

Call us on our freephone number : 0808 1640 096

www.ylf.org.uk



TOP 8 REVISION TIPS

With exams coming just around the corner, here are some tips that you may find helpful:

1. Create A Revision Timetable

Building a revision timetable can add structure to your revision and help you identify which subjects you need to prioritise to get better marks.

2. Take Regular Study Breaks

Taking regular study breaks and exercising is proven to help engage your brain in studying and improve your exam performance.

3. Use Mind Maps To Connect Ideas

If you find it difficult to remember lots of new study notes, mind maps may be the key to improving your memory.

4. Practice, Practice, Practice

One of the biggest recommendations that past GCSE students recommend is to do as many GCSE past papers as you can.

5. Reward Yourself

People who manage to find the right balance between study and leisure are the ones who get the top marks. For example go to a cinema with friends after a productive day of revision.

6. You Are Not Alone

If you are taking your exams for school consider revising with other people - they may be able to help you with areas you are struggling with.

7. Make Sure You're Actually Revising

There's no point staring at a book doing nothing, if you find you've stopped concentrating, take a break or have a drink and a bite to eat, and then get back to revision.

8. Think Positive!

Following these tips you will get loads of work done, feel great about yourself and still have plenty of time to relax. Good luck, now get down to some revision!

Mind Of My Own

Have you tried the Mind of My Own App? If you are 8 or over, you can sign up for your own account.

Mind of My Own lets you send your thoughts and feelings about different topics, like Share Good News, Change Something or My Worker is Visiting to your Social Worker or IRO when you want, where you want!

Why not sign up and have a look? Ask your carer or Social Worker to help!

How's it going?

Use the slider to show how happy you are.



Slide me!

www.mindofmyown.org.uk



Angru



Enthusiastic



Unsafe



Hopeful

COMING UP!

Over the next few months we have a lot of fun activities planed such as :



Biking
Skateboarding
Castle Visits
Water Sports
And lots more!



If you would like to come along ask your Foster Carer or Social Worker to email us at:

Vsk_Participation@kent.gov.uk

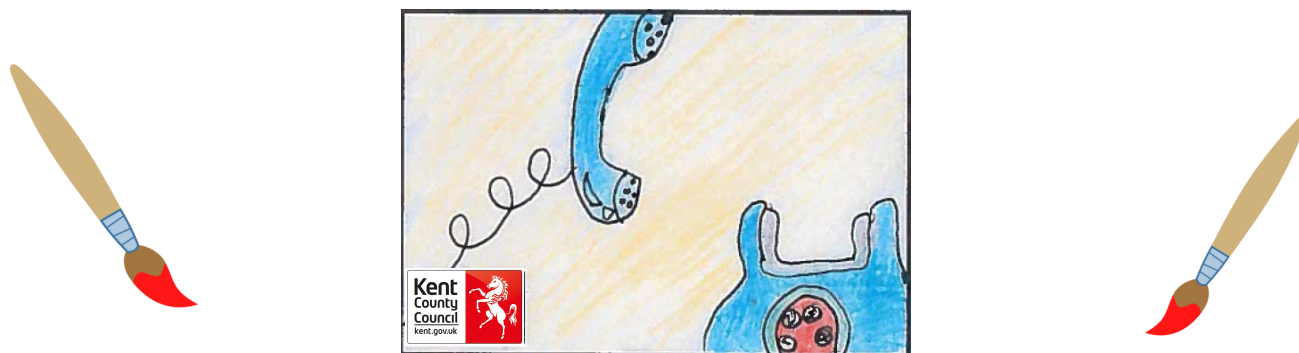
COMPETITION TIME

Young people have told us that they wanted to be able to get in contact with their Social Workers more easily. So, we created Social Worker business cards that workers could give to their young people with all of their contact details.

We are now looking for new designs for business cards for Social Workers and other Kent County Council workers!

We cannot wait to see how creative you are!

This was our 2015 winning entry:



Please send your designs to: Reece Graves: Worrall House,
30 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4AE

or email: VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk

Design ideas to be sent in by **26th APRIL 2019**