

CHICC

(Children In Care Council)

NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION 2017



Welcome to the Spring edition of the CHICC newsletter! You'll find updates on recent activities, plans for the rest of 2017 and things we've helped to change recently about being in care.



RECENT EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Cuffley camp

On Tuesday the 14th of February we had a CHICC event at Cuffley Camp with 25 young people attending. Everyone really enjoyed themselves; most of the day was spent outside in the fresh air with lots of surrounding woods to run wild in!!!!!! We did orienteering, puzzle solving and an assault course. Consultation on the day was around top 10 tips for social workers - what should they be? Following on from this, and more consultations we now have the draft top 10 tips for social workers for Hertfordshire to use (see below).

Writers Work Shop

Also in the February half term, we held a writing workshop for young people in care. Published author, Caroline Green ran the session, coming up with some fun writing exercises and giving advice to our budding authors about how to turn a writing hobby into a career. One young person described the workshop as 'awesome'.

Junior Young Commissioners

On the 16th of February, CHICC held a junior young commissioners training session. The day was for any young person 7-11 years to come along and learn about how to get involved and eventually become a young commissioner. Jaqueline Gear from the Commissioning Team popped by to explain more about the project. We had 5 young people attend and worked on some team building activities at the ware youth connexion centre.

Joint CHICC – helping to change things

Four times a year young people from CHICC meet with senior managers and directors in Children's Services. This is our opportunity to talk directly to the people who run services for young people in care. We met in March. Some of the things that young people had their say about were:

Missing people: what happens when a young person in care does not come home at the expected time? What efforts are made to check with the young person's friends and contacts before the Police are involved? We found out that an organisation called Missing People deals with this for Hertfordshire. A meeting was arranged so that young people could ask them some direct questions. It was very useful with young people finding out a lot more about it. An example of something positive the young people found out was that you can have a choice of who interviews you when you return from a missing period. Young people are going to help write a new set of procedures about missing people, following some changes happening at a national level.

CAMHs: young people ask senior managers for regular updates about a number of things. The information is called the 'CHICC dataset'. It includes information about how young people are supported with mental health, how many young people are being helped by CAMHs and how many people are seen within timescales. It was positive to learn that all new referrals have been responded to by CAMHs within 28 days. But young people wanted to raise lots of issues about CAMHs, for example, why is it always CAMHs who get involved – couldn't other organisations help? Why is there a limit to the number of sessions provided? Who can support a young person with mental health issues when they leave care? It is a really important topic, and everyone had so many views and ideas to put into the discussion, so we've been invited to meet with the person who is responsible for reviewing the services provided by CAMHs in the next few weeks. There is a CHICC health group, who will stay involved in this and other health issues affecting young people in care and care leavers.

Top Ten Tips for Workers: at our events in the February half term, we asked young people what tips they would give to workers. We put all the ideas together and then voted on them at the Joint CHICC meeting. There's still a bit more work to do on them, but below is the list of top ten tips we've come up with so far. Do you think the list is right? Please let us know – our contact details are at the bottom of the newsletter.

1. Stay in contact with us regularly
2. Don't judge us by our files. Take time to get to know and understand us. Find out about our interests, hobbies and what we like. Be persistent. Remember we're young and we're individuals
3. Refer us to CHICC! Help to introduce us to other young people in care in our area
4. Be honest and always do what you say you are going to do
5. Listen and take on board what we say
6. Don't make decisions without letting us know
7. Use power in the right way. Don't forget, you have power to make a change for us
8. Respect our values and beliefs
9. Don't leave without introducing us to our new worker
10. Don't focus on the negatives but on the positives and do positive file notes

Young Commissioners

Lots more young people in care are getting involved with Young Commissioners. But what are the Young Commissioners? We spoke to Caitlin, a young person in care who is involved to find out:

What is commissioning?

It's about buying things and making sure you get the best value for money. Like if you were buying trainers – you'd need to think about style, comfort, how long they will last etc, and you'd base your choice on all these things. This is basically what commissioning is all about. Hertfordshire County Council buys a lot of services in for young people in care, so it's to make sure the



services are good quality, meet needs and are good value for money.

What do the Young Commissioners do?

First of all you go on a training course. This is with other young people – some in care, some not in care. You learn about commissioning and get to have interesting discussions about what you would prioritise. Once you've been trained you can get involved in lots of different projects – like visiting residential homes to see if they are meeting needs, looking at tenders for accommodation for care leavers, etc

Why did you get involved?

I wanted to meet new people, get my views across and listen to other people's opinions. I also want to help improve services and I think Young Commissioners can really help make a difference.

Would you recommend it?

Definitely. Your voice as a young person will really be heard. You can also develop new skills and it looks good on your CV. I'm really enjoying being a Young Commissioner and I'd encourage anyone to get involved.

There's going to be some more training for Young Commissioners soon. Please contact the Participation Team if you'd like to take part (numbers at the bottom).

UPDATE FROM CHICC CARE LEAVER'S GROUP

CHICC Care Leavers have been very busy recently, helping to develop and improve services. Care leavers have helped to recruit residential workers, managers and social workers and have trained social workers and spoken at various events. The Care Leaver's Group meet monthly, in different locations around the county. At one of these meetings, the idea came up for there to be drop in sessions run by and for care leavers. The idea is that care leavers can help and support each other by coming to a monthly drop in at a Youth Connexions venue in their area. The drop ins will also have staff on hand who can help with information and support on a number of things. We're going to try this in Cheshunt first, and use the learning there to set up other drop ins throughout the County.

MOMO – Get your views into your reviews!

As technology changes so must we to adapt to the way we communicate. With so many ways to share and receive information digitally, Hertfordshire has introduced MOMO (Mind of My Own) an App and online service that allows young people an instant and convenient way to express their views, wishes and feelings, and social workers a smart way to record them.

Young people have been asking for a while about a more up to date and easily accessible way to share their views. You can ac-

cess MOMO on a smart phone, tablet or online. You just need an email address to set up an account and then the App will guide you through how to say what you want, in your own words and who gets to hear it.

You can download the MOMO App from Google Play or the App Store or online: app.mindofmyown.org.uk

Dates for your Diary

Come to one of our events! The events and activities are free and open to anyone in care, but places need to be booked in advance. Please have a look at the information below for our Easter events. If you'd like to come to something, please speak to your carer (or residential worker) and contact us on one of the numbers below as soon as possible. The events and activities are a chance to meet other young people in care and also to get your views across.

Activities Week – Monday 3rd April to Friday 7th April Movie Making

Monday 3rd April and Tuesday 4th April, 10am to 2pm.
Youth Point, 206-210 Lower High St, Watford WD17 2EL

Motorbike Maintenance

Wednesday 5th and 12th April, 4:30pm to 8:30pm
Falconer Road, Falconer School, Bushey, WD23 3AT

Mosaic Making

Thursday 6th April and Friday 7th April, 1:30pm to 4:30pm
The Parish Centre, St Michaels Church, St. Michael's Street, St Albans, AL3 4SL
Tuesday 11th April – JCHICC (7yrs-11yrs)

Easter Eggstravaganza @ Willows Activity Farm

Willows Activity Farm is a Children's farm with shows, fun fair rides, carousels, inflatables, Tractor Ride, acres of outdoor and under cover soft play activities plus entry to the Peter Rabbit Adventure Playground plus Choc-o-bloc fun with the Easter Bunny, Easter Egg and Bunny Hunts with the Easter Eggstravaganza.

To book onto one of these events or activities contact the Participation Team, details below

CHICC IT OUT!



We are on twitter @CHICCCherts so give us a follow



We have a monthly E-News Bulletin with all our up to date info. Just e-mail CHICC@hertfordshire.gov.uk to sign up.



We have Podcast's and films available to listen to and view. Contact us on the details below for more information on this and any of our other work.



You can see all our information and leaflets by visiting www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/youngpeopleincare



The Participation Team

Who are we?

We are Nancy, Mark, Ellie and Jo



Why do we exist?

We exist to support young people in care and care leavers to have their say.

What do we do?

We help to run the CHICC and the CHICC Care Leaver's Group. We run lots of fun activities throughout the year and lots of consultation sessions where we ask for your views. We also support care leavers to help improve services by helping to recruit social workers and train social workers and carers.

How do we contact you?

We are based at County Hall in Hertford (in a very messy office in the basement!) You can call us on:

Nancy - 07812323854

Mark - 07812323851

Ellie - 07812323853

NYAS

NYAS is an independent advocacy service. They support children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents and carers by helping them to be heard. They give confidential and independent advice, information and representation.

Call on: 0808 808 1001
0151 649 8700

Visit at: www.nyas.net
Email to: help@nyas.net

Is there something you want to say about being in care? We would love to include your letters, poems, songs or anything else. Please email any articles to the team, as above or write to the address below:

The Participation Team
Child Protection and Statutory Review Service
Rooms 50-52 Lower Ground Floor
County Hall, Hertford SG13 8DQ

