



Stockton's Children in Care Council.

How Our Voices Are Heard!



Children and Young People

Big plans for the young people of our Borough

"Every single child in the Borough is important to us. So we are determined to give each and every one of them as many opportunities as we can to help them be the very best they can be in life. We'll do all we can to protect those children who need our care and we'll keep striving to provide the best in education.

To give them the confidence to grow into valued, respected and included members of the community. Our promise is that not one child in this Borough will be knowingly forgotten or let down.

We're on with it."



Children and Young People

Big plans for the young people of our Borough

Stockton's Children in Care Council

- ▶ The Children in Care Council are a group of young people who are passionate about shaping and improving the services which are offered to Young People in Care in Stockton and across the North East.
- ▶ There are currently 68 young people involved in various ways, in the Children in Care Council.
- ▶ There are 2 groups which are:
 - ▶ Let's Take Action (LTA), 12+ year olds, Cultures Café, Every Monday from 5-7.
 - ▶ Positive Activities group, 8-12 years old, various locations, every month.

Consultation - Hannah

- ▶ It is important that our voices are heard and thoughts/opinions are acted upon.
- ▶ We are often consulted on when it comes to a service which directly impacts Children in Care.
- ▶ Over the past couple of years we have been very active in trying to shape the services which are offered to Children in Care in Stockton. We feel that as a group of young people who have lived or are living in the care system, that what we have to say and contribute can and is improving the services for Children in Care.
- ▶ For example - We were asked for our Top Ten Tips for Social Workers working with CiOC and we responded. The following are just a few examples of where our voice has or is making a difference.

Transport - Liani

- ▶ Transport for us is sometimes difficult and can have an impact on our social, emotional and mental health as some places people live may not have access to affordable public transport.
- ▶ This subject has often come up as something we need to focus on and improve.
- ▶ We included this issue in last year's Corporate Parenting event and invited a manager from Arriva along so he could understand the issue directly from us.
- ▶ From this we have spoken to both Arriva and Stagecoach and will hopefully soon have the agreement in place for reduced cost transport tickets. The tickets will be available for children who are involved with positive activities such as volunteering, college and work placements.

Recruitment - Charlie

- ▶ Over the past year we have been involved in the recruitment of new Social Workers. This process was a separate interview and was designed to show how the candidates respond to young people they may end up supporting. For this we came up with all the questions and our views had a direct impact on the candidate employed.
- ▶ We have also been involved in a 3 day recruitment drive for the new Outreach Family Support Workers.
- ▶ Recently we also sat on the interview panel for new Residential Workers.
- ▶ Currently we are involved in the making of a video which will be used for training foster carers in Stockton Borough. The video included our advice for new carers and how to look after and help settle in new foster children.

Family Time – Liani

- Family time with siblings is vital to our social and emotional development. It allows us to continue to build a bond with our birth parents and gives us the opportunity to get answers to questions we may have.
- The Edmund Harvey is a dedicated Family Time centre and is equipped with rooms and facilities to enable and encourage spending time together in a safe and secure environment.
- In our eyes this centre is for young children below 10 years old. This is something we felt needed to change and improve.
- We have now been allocated one of the large rooms in the centre, an artist to help create our vision and some funding to purchase age appropriate equipment. We are going to commence this change as soon as possible and we hope it is a better change for families.

Working with External Agencies – Hannah

- We have been involved in supporting external agencies. The most current one is with Arc on the More Stuff Like This project. Our opinions and ideas created the initial 6 week taster sessions, these have now become the backbone for other sessions. Staff from Arc are now meeting with the group on a regular basis to plan future activities and to obtain further opinions.
- One of the interview sessions was with Family Action, they called and asked us to be part of the panel and that they would prefer us to create our own questions.
- We are also currently supporting Health Watch on the inspection of care homes around Stockton.
- We fed back to the Department of Education's call for evidence on improving the teaching of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) and PSHE.
- We worked with Newcastle University for their study of alcohol in the lives of care leavers.

Regional Children in Care Council - Liani

- ▶ We are very involved in the Regional Children in Care Council.
- ▶ We hosted last year's event which saw over 95 professionals from the North East and further afield attend.
- ▶ Being part of the Regional unit allows our voice to be heard on a larger playing field.
- ▶ We have been involved in increasing apprenticeship opportunities for young people in care and improving the leisure offers of different LAs.
- ▶ The focus of this year is cooperate parenting and aspirations, however other counties are doing different projects to do with foster children.

Independent Support – Charlie

- ▶ For independent living we need support around a variety of areas, these can include finances (budgeting), cooking, transport, equipment etc.
- ▶ Finance was again something we included in last year's Corporate Parenting event. From this the Virtual School set up a session with the London Institute of Banking and Finance. We now have the opportunity to undergo a budgeting qualification which can lead to a level 2/3 qualification.
- ▶ Cooking is a very important skill and something we enjoy. We have planned sessions with Little Sprouts, starting on the 10th November, for the delivery of a 6 week cooking project with the option of a Food Hygiene L2 qualification at the end.

Surveys – Hannah

- ▶ We have been involved in both creating and delivering surveys.
- ▶ These surveys have been aimed at young people who are leaving care. We wanted to find out about their time in care and what, if anything can be improved.
- ▶ We collate the results which are then used to improve the service which is offered.

Future dates and opportunities that the L.T.A. and P.A. are involved in.

- ▶ PA session 25th October.
- ▶ Beamish for both carers and young people 26th October 70 place.
- ▶ Regional Children in Care Council Conference 2nd November.
- ▶ Activity taster session week commencing 7th November for 7 weeks.
- ▶ Foster Carer training 8th November.
- ▶ Food Hygiene 10th November.
- ▶ FREE Cinema session for carers and young people 13th November.
- ▶ Joint young person and Cllr activity 17th November.
- ▶ Corporate Parenting event 22nd November.
- ▶ FREE Cinema session for carers and young people 4th December.
- ▶ Panto 19th December 105 place.

Young Inspectors - Alisha

- The L.T.A ensures that young people's opinions are heard in Stockton.
- A Young Inspectors Apprentice was appointed and is working on establishing a Young Inspectors group made up of young people in care. This group will work on the following :-
- Recruiting Young Inspectors and link with the care home champions.
- The Young Inspectors will inspect Council services and voluntary sector provision that is commissioned to ensure that they are improving provision for CiOC.
- We are planning to roll out The Pledge across Council departments. We are hoping that Council Services will adopt The Pledge and we will inspect them on their work towards meeting The Pledge.

Young Inspectors - Alisha

- We are setting up training for the Young Inspectors.
- The 1st inspections (of Leaving Care homes) is set for 26th November 2018.
- We are starting the Inspiring Voices meetings to which service managers will be asked to come to discuss how their service can improve the lives of CiOC.
- We are working on the Welcome Booklet to be given to each young person coming into care.

We said, you did!

- ▶ We want our voices heard, so you attend our sessions and take our views forward.
- ▶ We wanted a central location for our group, you organised the Cultures Café for our sessions.
- ▶ We wanted support with transport, you are working on reduced tickets with Arriva and Stagecoach
- ▶ We wanted apprenticeship opportunities, you have created these roles.
- ▶ We wanted an improved space to meet our families, you have supported us with this which is currently happening.
- ▶ We want support with our finances, you have brought in a course to help with this.
- ▶ We wanted to be involved in training those who work with us, you got us involved in training foster carers and social workers.

Thank you for listening to us!

- ▶ Have you any questions?