



Have We Got News 4 U

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Time To Spend - T2S

T2C recently decided to give a new name to the 'fund for individual social, cultural and leisure activities'.

It was about time it had a new name!!

It's now called 'Time to Spend', but the rules are still the same :

- It's for money to let you try out new activities.
- It's to support you in getting really good at a sport or hobby.
- It can be used for lessons, equipment, transport or anything else that helps you to get on.

- You can make an application yourself or get a carer or social worker to do it for you.



- Your carers have to be paying for at least 1 activity for you already.

Competition

In the last newsletter we asked for ideas for a name for this newsletter.

Thanks to the 5 young people who sent their ideas in.

In the end T2C decided none of the suggestions were exactly what we needed but sent all those who entered a £10 voucher to say thanks for taking part.

T2C Residential

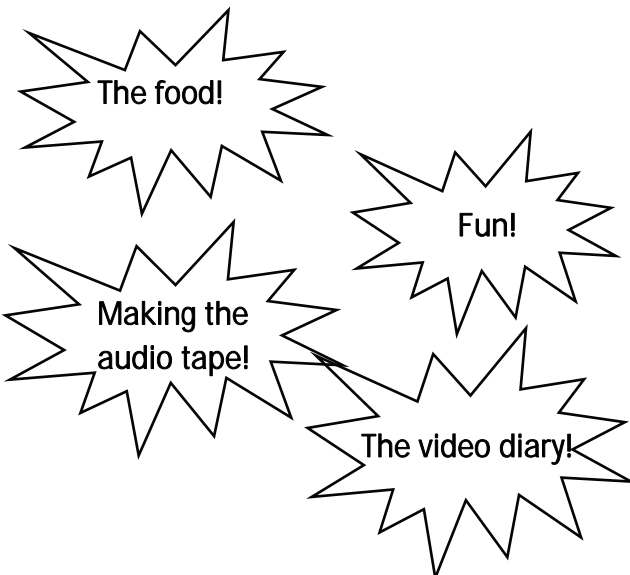
T2C are this good looking bunch in the photo. They meet every week to make decisions about the time 2 spend fund and get involved in lots of other stuff to do with making social services better.

They went on a residential in the Easter holidays (with equally good looking grown ups pictured). Two nights were spent in a really big holiday barn in Derbyshire. It was a weekend of hard work (with lots of wild karaoke) and some of the things that'll come out of it are:

- A poster campaign aimed at teachers to get them to think differently about looked after young people.
- A postcard aimed at looked after young people encouraging them to go to college or University.
- A training course for teachers and social workers.

These are some of the comments from the group at the end of the weekend.

What I liked about the residential?



What we'll do different next time



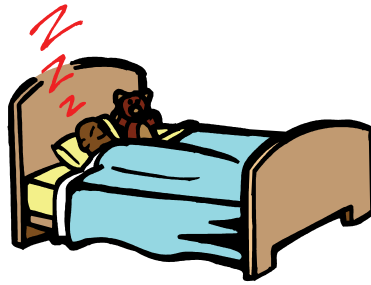
Sleepovers

The rules on sleepovers have changed! Before, if you wanted to sleepover at a friend's house, Social Services used to do a police check on adults in the house first.

This stopped a lot of you in care asking to sleepover because it was embarrassing or awkward to have this done and made you different to your mates. It also meant that it took a long time to get a decision so you couldn't get an invitation and take it up there and then.

The government and Social

Services realised that this wasn't fair and have changed the rules to treat you as much as possible like other young people.



Most of the time now, police checks (called CRB checks) aren't needed for sleepovers.

If you're in a long-term foster placement, your carers can usually OK a stay over or otherwise your Social Worker can give the OK. There might be times when they decide a police check is necessary, but these will be very few.

T2C found out about the rule changes recently and thought that lots of young people still didn't know.

They've written a letter to every foster carer and every Social Worker to remind them.

Fancy A Laptop??

After some long discussions with the leaving care team, we've made a change to our laptop scheme.

If you are doing a full time course at college or university and need access to a computer, you'll need to talk to your leaving care worker.

There are 3 possible results of this discussion.

1. It'll be suggested that you use the computers actually at college (for example, if you don't need to do a lot of coursework or are on a really short course)

2. You'll be loaned a laptop whilst your in education (if for example your course is up to 1 year long)

3. You'll be given a laptop to keep (e.g. if you're doing a course over several years)

This means that everyone who needs a PC still gets access to one.

If you have very particular needs, e.g. are disabled or are a carer for someone else, this will be taken into account when the decision is made.



New Pocket Money Rates for 2005/06

Every year Social Services review the amount of pocket money or personal allowance young people who are Looked After should receive. It is a **recommended** amount. How much you actually get can depend upon your carer and your personal circumstances.

If you think you are getting much less than you should be entitled to for your age you should speak to your Social Worker or contact the Elaine Constable, the Children's Rights Officer on 0800 0830 652.

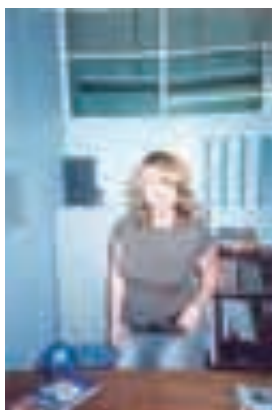
All carers are given this information by Social Services Finance Department. It is suggested that children and young people should be given their pocket money in cash each week, or some in cash and some of it is saved in a savings account.

Young people who are 16 and over should also receive some of their clothing money as a personal allowance from their carers. That way they can start to learn some budgeting skills which they will need when living independently.

It is helpful if you have a bank account which this money can be paid into. Your carer should be able to help you with this. **Young people must be able to keep any saved money if they move to another placement.**

Age	Amount
0 - 6	£1.85
7 - 8	£2.40
9 - 10	£3.00
11	£4.00
12	£4.50
13	£5.40
14	£6.70
15	£7.50
16	£8.90
17	£11.30

"A day in the life"



I was extremely flattered to be chosen by you to be the first person on your "day in the life" feature and will do my best to answer your questions. Here we go...

1. What do you do in your job day to day?

One thing I love about my job is that no day is the same. I have a caseload which includes looked after children; family support work, which means I work with children and families in their own homes; Court proceedings when Social Services apply to the court to obtain Parental Responsibility for children; adoption work where children are going to be placed in alternative families; step-parent adoptions where a child's step parent wishes to become their Legal Parent.

My days are very varied. Some days I am office based in order to keep on top of the mountain of paperwork we have to do (!!!!!) and answering, making and returning lots of telephone calls. Some days I am "out and about" visiting young people, their families and/or foster carers or attending Court Hearings, Case Conferences and Review Meetings.

The ages of the children I work with range from newborn babies to young adults aged 16. Some days are longer than others are as sometimes I need to make evening visits, but no day is ever dull!

2. Do you get emotionally attached to some young people?

I tend to get emotionally attached to the majority of the young people who I work with. Being a Social Worker in a long-term team often means you are a child's Social Worker for many years, so you get to know them very well. I worry about the young people I work with when things aren't going well for them and I have had many sleepless nights over the years! However, I get so much pleasure from the young people I work with, as spending time with them is the best part of my job!

3. Why did you want to work with kids?

I fell into working with children by accident. When I did my social work training I took the Probation option as I had worked as a Probation Service

Assistant in Lancashire where I am from. However, during my social work training I did some casual work for Residential Services and really enjoyed working with young people. When I qualified as a Social Worker I worked as a Probation Officer for a short period but realised I would rather work with children and their families. In 1996 I applied for a job in the Child Care Operations Team in Market Harborough. I got the job and have been here ever since...

4. Do you drive around a lot and do you like it?

I do a colossal amount of driving. I mainly enjoy it although I get bored of the same routes and hate traffic jams with a passion. However, I enjoy listening to Radio One as I love music and get to learn about new bands and singers this way. I enjoy the driving most when I have a young person with me as when you drive around with them a lot, you get to know them very well. The only thing I don't like is when a young person makes me change the radio from Radio One to Leicester Sound...

5. What are your hobbies?

I swim every morning before I start work although this is more of a chore than a hobby at times! I love listening to music and spend lots of money on CD's. I also enjoy reading as I find it very relaxing to get lost in someone else's life. However, my favourite hobby is shopping for clothes – particularly shoes!

6. How long have you been a Social Worker?

I qualified as a Social Worker in July 1995. Before I qualified I worked for 2 years as an unqualified Probation Officer and also as a casual Residential Social Worker.

7. Do you have kids of your own?

I don't have any of my own children although I have 2 stepdaughters – Gemma who is 19 and Nia who is 15. They are complete madams but I love them very much and am very proud of them!

8. When you take kids out why do you always go to McDonalds?

Usually because the kids want to go there! However, I have to admit to enjoying a quarterpounder with cheese meal and I love their chocolate milkshakes...

9. Do you like cheesy chips?

No, I prefer mine with vinegar.

Complaints - Helping Social Services Get It Right

Social Services like to hear what people think about the help and support they receive. They welcome any comments, suggestions or complaints you make. Your views are very important as they help the people who run Social Services to get things right.

They want to know what you like and if you found the support you received was useful but they also need to know when we get things wrong. This helps us make future plans and get things right.

What happens when I complain ?

Stage 1: You should first discuss your complaint with someone from Social Services who knows you well. You might then want to speak with a more senior person who will look into your complaint and get back to you in 10 working days.

Stage 2: If you are not satisfied and want your complaint to be looked at from a more independent point of view you need to get in touch with the **Complaints Officer**. They will make the necessary arrangements for someone who does not work for Social Services to look into your complaint. They will interview you and other people who are worked with you to try and find out what went wrong. At the end of the investigation, which can take up to 28 days, you will receive a written report with findings and recommendations.

Stage 3: If you remain unhappy after this you can ask for an independent review panel. This consists of an inde-

pendent chair and two County Councillors who will decide whether the investigation was fair, the conclusions were reasonable and if any further action needs to be taken by Social Service to put things right for you.

You can tell Social Services about your comments or complaints by;

- calling the **Complaints Officer** on 01530 513815/513816
- contacting any member of staff at any County Council offices or children's home
- email: social-services-tell-us@leics.gov.uk
- writing to the Complaints Officer at: Social Services Department, FREEPOST NAT 8605, Coalville LE67 3RZ

You can also contact the **Children's Rights Officer** if you want to make a complaint. Elaine Consstable is the Children's Rights Officer and she can be contacted on 0800-0830-652. This is a FREEPHONE number so you don't have to pay for the call as long as you don't call from a mobile phone. Elaine will help you say what it is you want to complain about and will support you.

Letter from some Future Stars

To all of the Corporate Parenting Team, thank you for the extra football funding you gave to us. We enjoyed it very much. I am Beckham 2, I am on the left.

We were the best players there, Shirley is very proud of our footwork. We hope you like the photos and think we are cool.

Jed G
Wayne G
Danny G

Who Cares ? Magazine

If you are aged 10 or over you will receive the latest issues of **Who Cares Magazine** with this newsletter. The Who Care's Trust print four magazines each year. Copies are sent to all young people who are aged 10 years and over. Some time in the next year they are going to start printing a magazine for younger children who are Looked After. Once this happens copies will be ordered and sent out to the younger children who are Looked After by Leicestershire.

Each issue has a **special theme**. The main themes in the magazines this time are **Your Money**, **Teenage Drinking** and **Going Home**.

There was a delay in distributing the Winter issue of Who Cares? So the closing date for the competition has already passed. The closing date for the competition in the Spring issue is 30 June.

"A day in the life"



1. What do you do in your job day to day?

On a daily basis I oversee the running of the children's bit of Social Services. I rarely meet families or young people but do get to hear a lot about

the most difficult situations.

I meet regularly with each of the nine Service Managers who are responsible for different parts of the service and they keep me up to date with what's going on.

I make decisions about the most risky cases and about how much money we are able to spend on various parts of the service. I spend a lot of time in County Hall!

2. Do you get emotionally attached to some of the young people?

In the past, when I was a Social Worker, I got very attached to some young people and in fact I still visit a young woman with a learning disability and it's nearly 25 years since I was her Social Worker!

3. Why did you want to work with kids?

Mainly I just wanted to work with people although I am quite impatient and I did find old people were a bit slow and that I really liked teenagers. I also liked social work because you could wear what you want (I'm naturally scruffy!) and can plan your own

work.

Once I had my own children though, I only ever wanted to work in Children's Services.

4. Do you drive around a lot and do you like it?

Social Workers drive around a lot but unfortunately Senior Managers are much more office based. I really miss not getting out and about.

5. What are your hobbies?

My daughter has a horse and my spare time is spent taking her to competitions and being her groom. It's completely different from what I do at work and I love it.

6. How long have you been a Social Worker?

I qualified in 1980!

7. Do you have kids of your own?

I have a son who is 20 and a daughter who is 18. When they were little I worked part time.

8. When you take kids out, why do you always go to McDonalds?

I used to take kids to McDonalds because they liked it! I'd like to think I asked them where they'd like to go but it was a long time ago....

9. Do you like cheesy chips?

Well I really like chips but I've never actually tried them with cheese!

Did you know?

Summer Work Placements

As you may know we ran 'Teenagers To Work', the one day work placement in April. It was a real success and we had positive feedback from the young people and staff involved.

The 'Summer Work Placement Scheme' provides you with the opportunity to get involved in the actual work of the County Council rather than just watching what happens. It may also help you to decide what you want to do in the future.

About the Placements?

- Available to young people aged 14+ (with priority going to older young people)
- Happens over the summer school holidays
- Might be anything from 1 week to 6 weeks.
- Placement can be between 1 day and 5 days a week
- They are mostly within the Council, although sometimes we can arrange for placements with other organisations

What do I get out of it?

- You'll learn new skills
- It might give you ideas as to what you want to do for a job
- You'll learn what the world of work is really like
- It'll give you experience you can use when you apply for jobs later on (you can use it as a reference)
- You'll get to meet lots of new people
- We'll pay you expenses of £8 a day - that's £40 for a full week.
- We'll pay for your transport
- If your at County Hall, we'll also pay for your lunch in the canteen
- Work is serious, but we want you to have fun!

What happens now?

- Get in touch with the Corporate Parenting Team (or get someone else to do it for you)
- One of the team will talk to you and find out what your interested in doing
- We'll then try and find a placement that fits in with what you want
- Before you decide to come, we'll introduce you to the person you'll be working with to make sure you are both happy to go ahead with it.