

Corporate Parenting and Children's Rights



Leicestershire
County Council



HAVE WE GOT NEWS 4 U

Celebrating YOUR Achievements

This year's Celebration of Achievement Awards events will again be held in the Council Chambers at County Hall.

The event for 5-14 years olds will be 5.30pm-8pm on Wednesday 13th October and the one for 15-21 year olds will be 7pm-9.30pm on Thursday 14th October.

David Akinsanya is coming to present the awards again this year.

Here in the Corporate Parenting Team we are busy making plans for both events and reading about all the wonderful things you have been doing this year and the efforts you have made. Every year we are amazed by the range of things people have been doing, the achievements they have made in either their

personal life or important educational achievements at either school or college.



It's all change in the Corporate Parenting Team

In June Sue Carter moved to temporarily manage the 16+ Team at Hinckley. While she was doing this Maria Hunt has been managing the team as well as carrying on with her role as Children's Rights & Participation Officer.

Maria is also going to be moving on to a new job soon. After almost two years working as Children's Rights & Participation Officer she felt that she was ready for a different challenge. She will be working as an allegations manager based in the Safeguarding Unit. This involves chairing meetings when an allegation has been made about someone who works with children. This could include people such as carers, teachers, scout leaders etc.

The Corporate Parenting Team is also going to be moving into the Safeguarding Unit along with the Independent Reviewing Officers so we will still be working closely with Maria in her new job.

Another change in the team is that Emma Dilodovico, the Corporate Parenting Support Worker will be coming to the end of her two year contract in October. This post in the Corporate Parenting Team is for a young person who has been in care themselves. The experiences that young people who have held this post bring to the team is invaluable. This post will be advertised in the near future and all young people eligible to apply will be contacted with details.

There are letters from Sue and Emma on pages 10 & 11 of this newsletter. In the mean time Elaine Constable will continue to work as Children's Rights & Participation Officer and Katharine Goodacre will support the team as Corporate Parenting Clerk

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Teenagers 2 Work Summer Scheme

During the summer holidays the Corporate Parenting Team helped to arrange work experience placements for 15 young people. From the feedback we had it seems that most of you had a very enjoyable experience and as a result were able to earn some extra cash.

We are sorry if we were unable to find everyone the sort of placement they were looking for, unfortunately we were limited by what was being made available to us. There are also difficulties because of health & safety rules - many work places have rules which make it difficult to support young people in a placement.

We will be working hard over the coming months to look at finding new ways of identifying more placements in time for next summer when we hope the scheme will be able to run again.

For one young person, the 2 week summer placement has turned into something more long term. Sam went to Redgates Animal Sanctuary and is now going there on a more permanent basis as a volunteer helper.

Here is what Sam wrote about his placement:

When my carer first told me about Redgate I thought that it would be boring but when I went for my first day it was good. I did a lot of work and there was always something to do. I cleaned out the dogs and walked the dogs. I cleaned out the goats, sheep, cats, rabbits, horses, chickens, pygmy goats, cows, pigeons, ducks and geese. I have had a lot of experience with animals. After I had finished my work experience I decided to go back there to do more work. It is a good thing to get into for me because it keeps me occupied so I am not bored at home.

CiC Young Reporters

In the last issue of the Corporate Parenting & Children's Rights Newsletter we asked for young people who were interested in getting involved in producing the newsletter. With this issue of the newsletter you will also receive a copy of the Shout Out which contains information about the summer activities for looked after young people which were organised by the youth service.

If you would like to get involved in producing the next issue of Shout Out get in contact with Joe Roughton, Youth Worker 07950-355274 and he will explain how you can start to get involved



Celebrating YOUR Exam Successes

Well done to all of you who have been studying hard and taking exams recently. We are very proud of all your efforts and hope you have been rewarded with the grades that you wanted to achieve.

The Corporate Parenting Team will pay you £10 for every GCSE or equivalent that you pass and £20 for every 'A' level or equivalent you pass. By now most young people should have received their money for exams they passed this summer.

Several care leavers have done very well in their exams and achieved excellent A Level results and will be going off to college or university in the next few weeks. We wish you all every success.

Children's Rights Annual Report 2009-10

During the year from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010 there were 260 referrals to the Children's Rights Service involving 115 children and young people. This is a similar number to the previous year but there was an increase on the number of young people who having contacted Children's Rights Officers once, come back later in the year with another issue.

There has also been a large increase in the number of children and young people who are involved in consultation and participation and the Children in Care Council.

The Children's Rights Officers have been involved with:

- Supporting children and young people in review meetings
- Raising concerns about placements, carers, rules and sanctions
- Contact with family and friends
- Attending meetings when there are concerns about the behaviour of young people or when allegations and complaints have been made in relation to carers or other people in positions of trust

In the last year there have been the following developments in the Children's Rights Service:

- New publicity information including leaflets and posters promoting the service
- Improved support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children including visits to Dreamers Youth Centre and the BACA Housing Project
- Improving support to young people who are placed out of county with visits to them in placement wherever possible separate to visits by social workers, placement officers and Independent Reviewing Officers
- Allegations, complaints and grumbles training was devised with staff from residential homes and all homes were provided with "Grumble cards" which young people can fill in and send to the Children's Rights Officers if they are unhappy about the care they receive

In addition the Children in Care Council held 6 participation days which involved about 40 young people. The comments they made at these events helped to form The Pledge. In addition a number of smaller sub groups were held to discuss specific issues such as residential care, adoption breakdown, leaving care, and computer & Internet access.

An interview with

Recently Lauren , a care leaver came to County Hall to speak to Walter McCulloch about all the changes which are going to be taking place in Children & Young Peoples Services and to ask how these changes are likely to affect children and young people who are in care. Walter is the Assistant Director with responsibility for Children's Social Care Services.

Can you give me an overview of the restructure and how this will improve services for young people?

There are three main parts to the restructuring, I hope that once it has finished the services offered to young people in Leicestershire will be much more consistent. At the moment there can sometimes be a different response depending on where in the county the young person or their family live.

Once all the changes have taken place I hope there will be quicker responses to requests for help or to child protection concerns, there should be a more consistent response to families no matter where in the county they live, and there should be a high quality service provided to all children and young people in care and care leavers.

From 27th September there is going to be a new access point here at County Hall where all initial telephone enquiries including child protection calls will be dealt with. Social workers will still make visits from the local offices but it will mean that there will be a more consistent approach to the first contact anyone makes with the department. I think this will be better for young people because it means that workers from the offices can concentrate on making visits and seeing young people and their families.

The second part of the changes will be new teams that will only work with children & young people in their own homes. At the moment social workers can be working with families in the own homes as well as being responsible for children and young people in care. As a result, young people in care can sometimes suffer because their social worker is too busy supporting families and dealing with child protection or court work. In the new structure there will be Safeguarding Teams dealing with this.

The third part of the changes will be the setting up of new teams of social workers who only work with children and young people who are in long term care and care leavers. These workers should have more time to spend with young people because they are not having to do all the child protection work and going to court.

Are young people going to be involved in the restructure (e.g. interview panels)?

All of the senior managers posts that have been recruited over the past year or so have had direct input from young people with members of the Children in Care Council sitting on a separate interview panel, which is a good thing.

In terms of the restructure there hasn't been the need to hold interviews for many of the posts, and I don't think it would be appropriate to have an additional panel when workers are really just reapplying for something which is the same or similar to what they are already doing.

Walter McCulloch

How will young people be involved in decisions regarding the budget?

We have not made any cuts to services to children in care so far, but we may have to in the future. The new government is saying that they will publish a comprehensive spending review by mid October. We will then have a better idea about that savings that will have to be made.

Leicestershire County Council Children & Young People's Service have already had to make savings of £5 million but so far, none of this has come from social care (social services).

I am talking to Jan Slater (Head of Children in Care) about setting up a reference group so that young people have an opportunity to influence things all of the time, not just when cuts are being made. Jan has done this when she worked elsewhere and we want this to start as soon as possible in the autumn.

The focus group could become "young inspectors" and give regular feedback about their experiences of working with the department. For example, in relation to any decisions about the budget, I would be interested in knowing what would be the 3 top things young people would want to see protected if we had to make cuts?

As a result of the restructuring some young people are going to have a change of social worker. How are they going to be supported through the change?

I hope they will be supported properly through this. What young people have said to me is that often their key person is not their social worker but a team support worker. Some say that it is difficult to have a good relationship with their social worker because they are too busy with child protection and court work.

I expect young people to be supported through any changes that have to be made and that there will be proper introductions and handover. Managers have all been told that there will have to be a transition plan. I accept that some young people will be upset, some have already contacted me about this. Some social workers have also spoken to me about being unhappy about the arrangements too. There is a big cultural change that needs to happen but hopefully the services to young people will improve once the changes have all taken place.

How will the restructure benefit young people and the system as a whole?

The biggest area of contention in the restructuring is the changes being made to family centres. They will not be providing day care for younger children any more. Family centres are not always in the local area where the child and family live and quite young children sometimes have to travel long distances in taxis to attend. They miss out socially because they are not socialising with other children in their area where they will be going to school. With day care going to be provided on a more local level I feel this will be a big improvement from a very early point in a child's life.

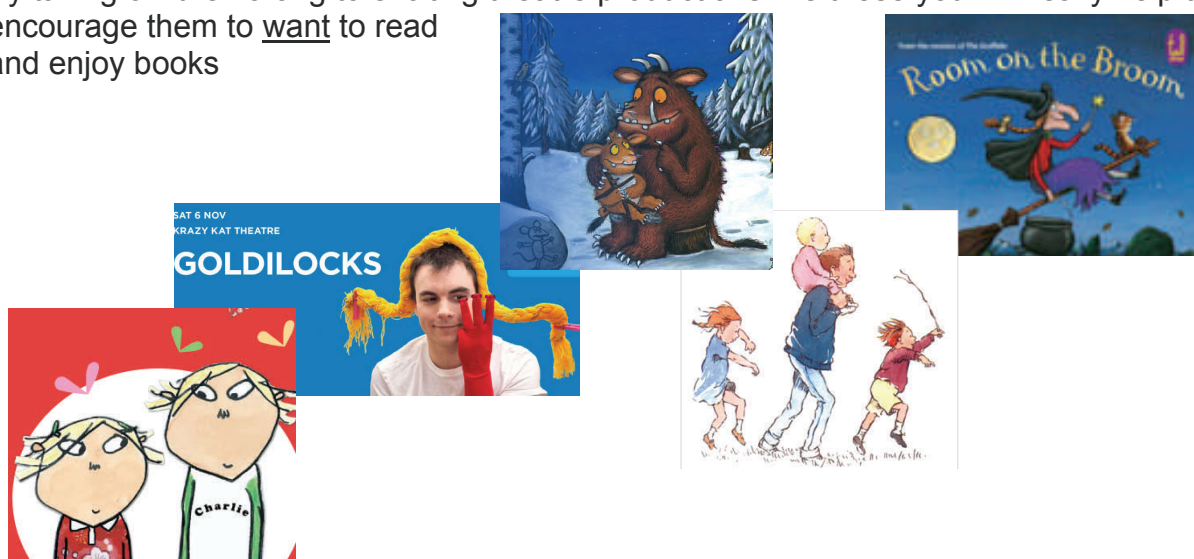


Caring About Reading

Some of our favourite book characters are coming to a theatre near you

There's lots happening at local theatres this autumn and it's all suitable for anyone aged 3 and upwards

By taking children along to exciting theatre productions like these you will really help to encourage them to want to read and enjoy books



Room on the Broom (adapted from the best-selling book by Julia Donaldson, the creator of The Gruffalo) Is on at Nottingham Royal Centre from Thursday 16 - Saturday 18 September 0115 989 5555 or www.royalcentre-nottingham.co.uk for details.

Charlie and Lola's Best Bestest Play (based on the characters created by Lauren Child) is on at the Curve theatre in Leicester from 19 - 23 October 2010

And also on at the Curve are.....

Goldilocks on 6 November 2010

We're Going on a Bear Hunt (based on the all time favourite book by Michael Rosen) from 7 - 11 December 2010

.....and

The Gruffalo's Child (the sequel to the Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson) is on from 21 December 2010 - 9 January

You can contact the Curve for tickets on 0116 242 3595 or at www.curveonline.co.uk

Caring About Reading

And don't forget that foster children and their carers can get FREE tickets for Centre Stage productions in village halls

So look out for these productions, developed from books we all know, coming up this winter.....

Alice in wonderland, Beauty and the Beast and Who's been sitting in my chair? (Goldilocks, of course!)

Check out performance and venue details at

www.centre-stage.org.uk and then contact Katherine at Corporate Parenting for tickets tel:0116 305 7518



Caring About Reading launched this year's Summer Reading Challenge at the Space Centre

Children and carers went with Caring About Reading to the National Space Centre in Leicester on 10 July for a special launch into the Space Hop Summer Reading Challenge. Great fun was had by all and the event was

followed up with workshops at Kirby Muxloe Library to make – and launch! - rockets and make papier maché planets.

And children across the county have been getting down to their local libraries during the long summer holidays to join in with the Summer Reading Challenge. If you have successfully completed the challenge (and you still have until 11 September to do so) then please send a copy of your certificate to Caring About Reading at Library Services, 929/931 Loughborough Road, Rothley, Leics LE7 7NH and we will send you a special golden medal.



An interview with Cllr. White

In May, two members of the Children In Care Council, Abbie Ward and Abi Young interviewed one of the County Councillors who have responsibility for the services provided by the County Council to children in care. Councillor White came to a meeting of the Children in Care Council held at Mountfields Youth Centre in Loughborough



How long have you been a County Councillor and what made you want to do this ?

I have been a councillor ever since 1975. The area I represent includes the parishes of Sharnford, Stoney Stanton, Croft and Elmesthorpe, Sapcote, Huncote, Thurlaston as well as the smaller settlements of Aston Flamville, Wigston Parva, Potters Marston and Leicester Forest West.

I have always had an interest in current affairs and when the local councillor moved away from the area and I decided that I would like to stand for election and been doing the job ever since.

What is your main job and why do you have an interest in Children in Care?

I had my own business in the textile industry Leicestershire. Until quite recently I was Lead Member in the Cabinet for the Community Services Department. This department was responsible for libraries, museums, sport, arts, trading standards, regeneration among other services.

Recently I was asked to go and work with Ivan Ould, who is County Councillor Lead Member for Children's Services. I am starting to find out about the services for children.

What do you want to achieve for Children in Care?

I want to make sure that the services provided to children and young people in care in Leicestershire are as good as possible. It is an area I am still learning about and it is nice to be invited to come and meet some of you here today.

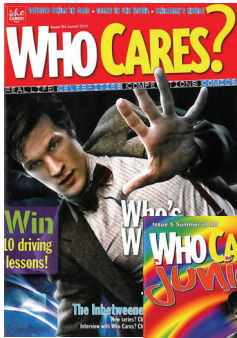
Do you have any children ?

I have 3 children, they have all grown up now and are adults. My eldest daughter is a teacher in a Nottingham upper school, my youngest daughter works at Loughborough University and my son works locally.

What are your interests and hobbies?

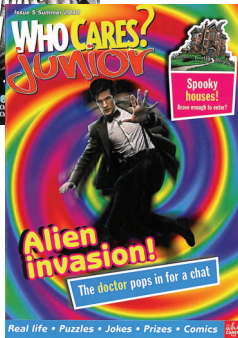
I have a lot of interests, I particularly enjoy sport as well as reading and writing. I am going to be doing the Leicestershire Round - this is a 100 miles walk around Leicestershire. I am hoping to raise funds for the Marie Curie Trust. This is an organisation who provide support to people who have cancer in their own homes. I know too many people with cancer and I want to be able to raise some money for them.

Who Cares ? Magazines



If you are aged 8 or over you will find a copy of one of the publications from The Who Cares? Trust in the envelope with this newsletter.

These magazines are sent to all children and young people in care across the country and contain news articles, letters, puzzles and stories.



The Who Cares? Trust is an organisation which tries to make life better for all children and young people in care.

To find out more check out their website
www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

Children in Care Council E-Safety Day

During the summer there was a meeting of the Children in Care Council where young people met to discuss issues about computers, Internet access and e-safety within their placements.

The day was held at Glenfield Youth Centre and was attended by Simon Genders who is the Safeguarding Development Officer.

Issues discussed included all the different ways it is now possible to access the Internet - it's no longer just from a computer but mobile phones, X-Box and Wii consoles are now capable of accessing the Internet if connected up to a home network.

The young people looked at the acceptable use policy which is used by schools and helped to devise an amended version which could be used in a placement if it was agreed by the young people and their carers.

This is going to be presented to the fostering team in order to get their views on whether this would be helpful.

Senior managers in Children & Young People's Services are keen that as many young people in care who are aged 11 and over have access to the Internet in their placement. Recently, Emma from the Corporate parenting Team has been carrying out a phone survey of foster carers in order to find out how many computers there are in the placement, who can use them and what checks and safeguards are in place for young people when using computers in the home to access the Internet. The results of the survey will be included in the next issue of this newsletter which will be available towards the end of the year.

Good bye from Sue Carter

I just wanted to let you all know that I am moving on from my role as Corporate Parenting Manager in order to be Team Manager of the new Children in Care team for the Hinckley and Coalville locality. Until that team is up and running, I will be managing the 16+ team in Hinckley as I have been doing for the past few weeks.



I have been Corporate Parenting Manager for over 3 years and it has been a most wonderful part of my working life. I have so enjoyed getting to know so many of you and I am very proud of the Pledge we have produced. I particularly want to thank all those young people who have been, or still are, part of the Children in Care Council. You have worked so hard, achieved so much and been an absolute pleasure to work with. I wish you all good luck for your futures.

Much as I have enjoyed the important work of the Corporate Parenting team - funding computers, driving lessons and special interests; working with the Education of Children in Care Service to support your education; organising the Celebration of Achievement events; arranging work experience; providing opportunities for the participation of young people in decisions which affect them via the Children in Care Council; ensuring good access to the Children's Rights Service - I am also excited about moving on.

The new Children in Care teams should allow the social workers in those teams the opportunity to concentrate all their efforts on you, the children and young people in care and those who are leaving care. I want to be part of the new service right from the start and I will do my best to ensure that the Pledge you helped to draw up is adhered to.

Although I will be more in the background this year, I will be at both of the Celebration of Achievement events in October as a helper and I look forward to seeing many of you there and hearing about the wonderful things you have achieved over the past year.

With my very best wishes,

Sue Carter

Good bye from Emma Dilodovico

My time as corporate parenting support worker has nearly come to an end. Over the last two years I have met some incredible young people and some professionals who work really hard to make sure that you receive the best care. I have had some amazing experiences including representing the Young people of Leicestershire in London at The First Annual Ministerial Stock Take this included meeting Baroness Delyth Morgan (The Government Minister for children).

I have been privileged enough to help organise the Celebration of Achievements evenings and I've also had involvement in helping to run the Designated Teacher Conference.

I have sat on the Fostering Panel during the last two years and given my views as a care experienced person about potential Foster Carers and how it might feel to live within their homes. I have had involvement with the Pledge and collecting young peoples views about this.

On a personal level I have managed to complete an NVQ Level 3 and Passed my driving Test!! I've also attended many training sessions including Red box Training.

I am sad my time in Corporate Parenting has come to an end but would like to thank everyone who has made my time so enjoyable.

I would especially like to Thank Elaine, Katharine, Maria, Sue and Julie for all their kindness and support over the last two years.



Children In Care Council Day - Friendships & Relationships

On Thursday 21st October we will be holding another CiC Day at Mountfields Youth Centre in Loughborough. The day has been planned by Emma Dilodovico and two care leavers, Kennedy Evans and Shelly Orr with the help of Joe Roughton (Youth Worker) and Katie Phillips (Teenage Pregnancy Planning Officer).

The aim of the day is to promote positive relationships, develop self esteem and promote local services which are available to young people.

There will be places for up to 18 young people aged between 11 and 17. If you would like to come along to this event please contact either Elaine Constable (0116-3056302) or Joe Roughton (07950-355274).

We will provide a lunch and refreshments during the day and be able to assist with transport for young people attending this event if their carers are unable to help with this.

The Pledge Questionnaire



The Pledge

Our promises to children in care and young people leaving care



In the March issue of the Corporate Parenting Newsletter we sent out a questionnaire asking you all some questions about your experience of being in care. The first 20 young people to return the questionnaire were sent a £5 voucher and their names were entered into a draw for a £50 prize.

Here is a summary of the replies we received:

- **All** of the young people who replied said that they **felt safe** in their placement
- **All** said they were **supported in having hobbies and interests** outside of the home
- **All** said that they were **informed in advance** who would be attending meetings which were held about them
- **All** said they **understood** the reasons why they were in care and had these explained to them
- **27%** said they **did not see their social worker enough**
- **41%** said that they were **unable to access the internet** in their placement
- **95%** of the young people said that they felt that they were **treated as an equal** by their carers
- When asked what would make their social worker better the most popular responses were if they could see them more or be listened to more
- The top 3 people young people said they would turn to if they needed help were, carers, social workers and family

**Winner of the prize draw for the £50 was Shaun F.
Well done Shaun**

We have recently sent out another questionnaire to all young people supported by the 16+ Team to get your views on how well you feel you are being supported. All young people who returned their questionnaires by 3rd September will receive a £5 voucher.