

Corporate Parenting and Children's Rights



HAVE WE GOT NEWS 4 U

Children in Care Council Participation Day

March 2009

On 19th February Lauren, Bereket, Abbie, Carly, Kerry-Ann, Rachel and Jennie met with Sue Carter, Elaine Constable and Maria Hunt at Syston Community Centre to talk about a number of issues that are important to most of you as children and young people in care. They talked about which things are so important that Leicestershire County Council should perhaps be making a Pledge (a promise) about them. These included wanting to be treated the same as any other person in the foster placement, seeing your social worker more often and having more say in how often you have contact with your family.

The group looked at some questionnaires that young people are to be asked to complete when their foster placement has broken down. Some important comments and observations have been passed back to the Family Placement Team. Also we talked about the important issue of confidentiality in school as some members of the Children in Care Council were talking to Designated Teachers about this at the Education of Children in Care conference on 5th March.

Everyone accepts that someone in the school needs to know you are in care. However, our group overwhelmingly wanted to have some choice about how many people in school know they are in care and exactly what they know about that.

We'd like **YOU** to get involved in these discussions too. Let us know if you would like to meet up with us. Our next meeting will be at Twycross Zoo on Tuesday 7th April.

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Cash for exam passes !!

Are you due to sit your GCSEs, A levels, GNVQ or other major exams this year?

Don't forget, we, together with the Education of Children in Care service, can help with extra tuition costs and revision guides.



We will be paying you £10 for every GCSE or equivalent you pass and £20 for every A level or equivalent you pass so ask for the help you need and do your very best.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL OF YOU

Contact Katharine Goodacre 0116 3057518, Sue Carter 0116 3067537 or Dave Henderson 0116 3055731

P.S: Don't forget to let us know your results

Teenagers to Work

Would you like to have the experience of a work placement? We shall shortly be arranging work experience placements for any 14-16 year olds who are interested .

There will be one day 'Teenagers to Work' placements on Thursday 23rd April and one or two week placements during the school summer holidays.

If you are interested in either of these schemes please read the FAQ's on page 4 of this newsletter and then speak to your social worker or carer and ask them to contact the Corporate Parenting Team. We will then send out a form which you will be able to complete to help us find an appropriate work placement for you.

Education of Children in Care Conference

On Thursday 5th March 2009 the 3rd annual Education of Children in Care conference was held in the Council Chamber at County Hall. The purpose of the day was to give all those working with children in care, such as teachers, social workers and carers, the opportunity to look at issues relating to your education and how to improve your experience of school and your achievements at school.

Your education is very important and 105 people attended for the day, including 39 teachers, 13 members of the Education of Children in Care service, 18 social workers, 6 residential support officers, 9 foster carers and 10 team managers and service managers.

In addition to this the conference was attended by Gareth Williams, Director of Children and Young People's Service, Ivan Ould, Lead Member for Children and Young People's Service and Frances Craven, Assistant Director Targeted Services. All of these people spoke at the conference, as did Dave Henderson, Service Manager Education of Children in Care service, Anne Rooney, Service Manager Child Care Operations and Sue Carter, Corporate Parenting Manager.

There was a guest speaker called Kate Cairns who talked about how having had a difficult start in life can sometimes affect children's ability to concentrate, learn and control their behaviour. Two young people in care, Lauren and Bereket, helped run workshops where a total of about 45 teachers, social workers and carers discussed the issue of confidentiality at school.

Lauren was very brave and read out an article she had written in front of the whole conference of over 100 people. It was really scary for her but she held her nerve and read it really well. Everyone was very impressed and it had a big impact on everyone there. You can read the article yourself on page 6 of this newsletter.

Teenagers to Work Day - FAQ's

What is Teenagers to Work Day?

Teenagers to Work Day is a scheme run by the Corporate Parenting Team which aims to give young people in care (aged 14 - 16) the opportunity to experience working life through a day's work experience.

When does Teenagers to Work Day take place?

This year it is to be held on Thursday 23rd April.

How does the scheme work?

If you are interested then ask your Social Worker or Carer to contact the Corporate Parenting Team, or you can do it yourself. The Corporate Parenting Team will let you know the kind of placements on offer.

The Corporate Parenting Team will arrange transport for you to get to the placement, provide you with lunch vouchers if you are in County Hall and will sort out any other details to make sure your experience on the day goes well.

What sort of placement will I get ?

Young people have been offered a variety of placements in the past such as library work, office work, working on the reception desk, forestry work. However, most placements are based in an office and we can't promise to find you a particular placement so you will need to be flexible about what you do.

What do I have to do in my work placement?

During the work placement you will be 'shadowing' a member of staff, this means that you are there to watch what it is they do and help out with some simple tasks.

You will not be expected to do their work for them nor should you be doing any heavy lifting or operating machinery. The Corporate Parenting Team is there to help you if you have any problems during the day.

What information do placement supervisors have to know about me?

Placement supervisors will need to know if you have any medical needs i.e. asthma, epilepsy etc and if you need to take any medication during the day. They will also need to have a contact number of someone to get in touch with in an emergency. Placement supervisors do not need to know anything about why you are looked after or anything else about your life unless you choose to tell them. They are not allowed to share this information with anyone else. If we need to tell supervisors anything that relates to your health and safety we will check it out with you first.

What information do I need to know about my placement?

Before the placement, you will be told what time you need to be there, what you need to wear and if you need to take a packed lunch with you. The Corporate Parenting Team will send you a letter with all the details.

At the start of the placement, your placement supervisor will give you a brief induction, this will let you know important things such as fire exits, toilet facilities, smoking policy, accident procedure etc.

What hours will I be expected to work?

You will usually be expected to work 9.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. If these hours are a problem we can usually change them.

Will I get paid?

You won't get paid for this one day work placement, however, if you choose to do a longer work placement in the school holidays you will be paid £50 for a full week or £10 for 5 hrs or more work you do per day – so look out for more information about that in May.

If you have any other questions please contact the Corporate Parenting Team

The Leicestershire Children's Book Prize



Children and young people in Leicestershire have been busy voting for their favourite books and there is now a shortlist of six exciting books.

Maybe you've already read some of these books – and even voted. But now you have until 3rd April to vote for your favourite book from the shortlist and help select the winner of the first-ever Leicestershire Children's Book Prize.

The shortlist is on the website: www.leics.gov.uk/childrensbookprize

and you can find the books and voting forms in your local library.

You can even vote for your favourite book on line



Caring About Reading is a Leicestershire Library Services project that aims to help children and young people in the care of Leicestershire County Council enjoy reading and discover new ways of enjoying books and other reading material.

If you would like further information please contact the Caring About Reading Development Workers:

Macha Barnden 0116 305 3806

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Who Cares & KLIC Magazines - Out now

If you are aged between 8 and 18 you should have received your copy of Who Cares? or KLIC with this newsletter

Motivational thoughts from a young person in care

Trouble-maker, Unwanted, Argumentative, Under-achiever. Just a few of the qualities that young people in care are stigmatised with. But I wonder, how many of us does that actually apply to?

I just can't understand why people would want to think these things when they don't really know anything about being in care. This may not be through any fault of their own, but that's no excuse for just agreeing with all these stereotypes.

When I think of young people in care I think of talented, strong, mature young people who have been through more than most adults.

We should not be discriminated against because of this, like any other type of unfair discrimination against a group of people such as racism, sexism and so on. Why should we be judged as a group rather than as individuals? Why should we feel embarrassed to be in care? Why should we feel uncomfortable talking about being in care? We shouldn't.

We eat, breathe and sleep, just the same as any other teenager. Distinguishing young people in care from any other young person is impossible – so why should we be treated or feel any different?

Being in care doesn't have to be a disadvantage. We **can** succeed and, if we have the right determination and support, we will. The odds are against us, the overused phrase of 'only 1% of young people in care go to university' is thrust in our faces at every opportunity. People do have a knack for emphasising the negatives.

But that is not important, what is important is that we forget the statistics, forget the comments and remarks from other people, forget anyone who has told us that we cannot do something – prove them all wrong.

If we believe in ourselves, in achieving, in succeeding – **we will!**

This was written by Lauren who attended the Education of Children in Care Conference at County Hall on Thursday 5th March and delivered the speech to an audience of around 100 people, including designated teachers, social workers, independent review officers, foster carers and residential staff and many senior managers from Children & Young People's Service - Well done Lauren.

Participation Day at Twycross Zoo

What are you doing on **Tuesday 7th April** ? Would you like the opportunity to have a fun day out with other young people who are in care ?

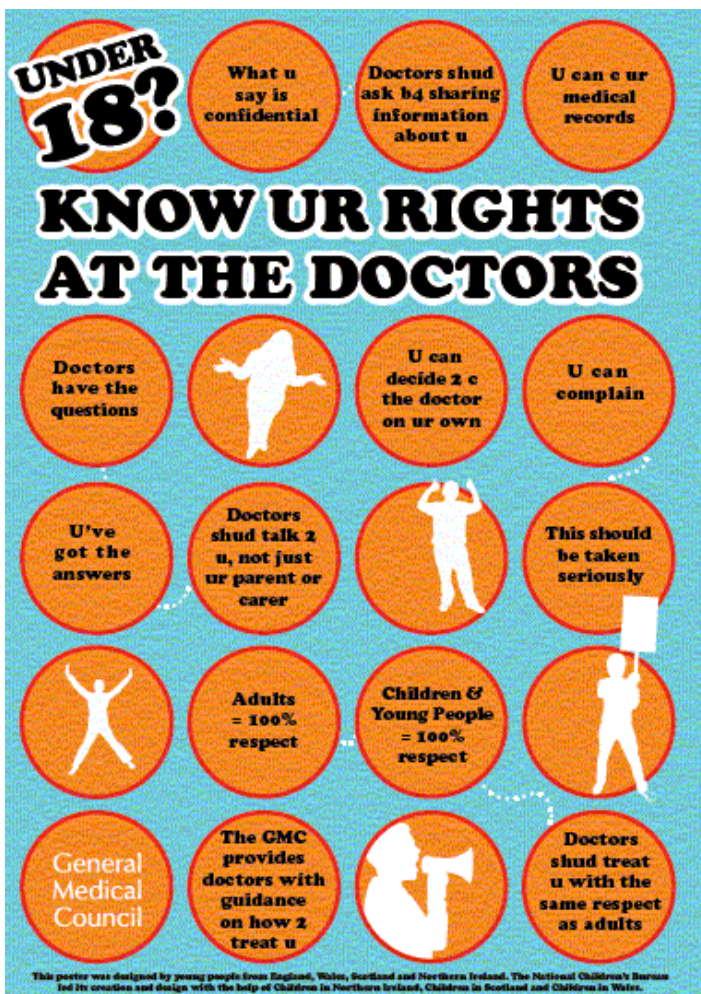
There will be a participation day to which young people aged between 8 and 18 are invited.

If you are interested in coming along please speak to your carer or social worker and ask them to contact anyone in the **Corporate Parenting Team**.

You will have a chance to discuss some of the things which are of importance to children and young people who are in care and also spend some time going around the zoo and seeing all the animals.

If you would like to come along with your carer - that's not a problem. We just need to know in advance so we make sure there are enough refreshments to go round !!

When we went to the zoo last summer we had a great time.



Have you seen this poster ?

A poster telling young people about their rights when visiting a doctor was launched in January. It was designed by a group of young people aged between 13 and 15 years, as part of a project commissioned by the General Medical Council (GMC) and run by the National Children's Bureau (NCB).

New guidance has been introduced which sets out doctors' responsibilities to act always in the best interests of children and young people, to listen to them and to involve them in decisions that affect them.

The poster will be displayed in youth clubs, medical clinics, schools and libraries across the United Kingdom, which will help to improve the working relationship between doctors and young people, and give children and young people the reassurance that their medical problems will not be dismissed by doctors.'

Do you ever get nagged to get off the computer and read a good book? Well here's a way of getting to do both



Some of the best children's authors have really great interactive web sites with lots of fun stuff – games and activities, book reviews, blogs, email links

Here are just a few suggestions for starters.

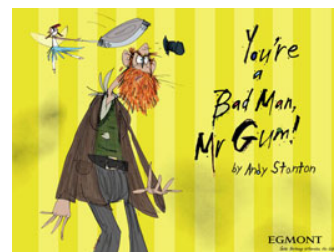
www.jkrowling.com really fun graphics and interactive stuff about all the **Harry Potter** books and **J K Rowling**



www.jeremyststrong.co.uk lots of info about his books and you can even email **Jeremy Strong** himself – and get a reply!

www.roalddahl.com/ You can join the **Roald Dahl Club** and play book related games on this site – absolutely brilliant graphics!

www.egmont.co.uk/mrgum lots of games to play on the **Mr Gum** site – very popular books by Andy Stanton



www.milkmonitor.com

Lauren Child writes lots of very well known children's books including the stories about Charlie and Lola and also Clarice Bean

<http://www.annefine.co.uk> Ann Fine has written lots of popular books for all ages

If you would like further information please contact the Caring About Reading Development Workers:

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