

# Corporate Parenting and Children's Rights

## HAVE WE GOT NEWS 4 U

### Celebration of Achievement Awards

Once again we had two fabulous Celebration of Achievement Events this year because you all gave us so many fantastic achievements to celebrate! 38 children aged 5-13 attended on 7th October and 49 young people aged 14-21 attended on 8th October. They were all presented with their certificates by Mr John Kershaw, Chairman of Leicestershire County Council, who attended with his wife, Mrs Freda Kershaw. Other VIPs on stage were Mr Ivan Ould, Designated Lead Member for the Children & Young People's Service, Gareth Williams, Director of Children and Young People's Service, Vanessa Bishop, Assistant Director Specialist Services and Suzanne Boardman, Director of Twycross Zoo. On 7th October we were honoured that Sir Al Aynsley-Green, Children's Commissioner for England, attended and said a few words to everyone. Our compere on both evenings was the ever popular David Akinsanya, Journalist and Broadcaster. Entertainment at the events included a performance by the Phoenix Youth Chorale, face painting, nail art, juggling, a magician and a visit by some small creatures from Twycross Zoo. The achievements rewarded included success in GCSEs and at school, 100% school attendance, improvements in reading, raising money for charity, helping others at home or in the community and sporting achievements to name but a few examples. They were wonderful events which made us all very proud and which we hope made you all feel proud and happy. Congratulations to all those who attended the events and all those who were nominated but were unable to attend. We are already making plans for next year so start notching up your achievements now!



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# News from the Corporate Parenting Team

Here in the Corporate Parenting Team we have had a few changes since the last newsletter.

Sadly **Jitu Mistry (J)** is no longer working in our team. He has written a goodbye article which you will find in this newsletter. J did a lot of work with T2C. He also managed the computer scheme and arranged work experience placements. He will be missed. We wish him the very best of luck in his new job in the Family Information Service Team.

We have a new Corporate Parenting Support Worker, **Emma Dilodovico**, she has written a short article introducing herself to you. Some of you will already have met her busily helping out at the Celebration of Achievement Awards events. A big welcome to Emma. She will be working with us for the next 2 years.

We have appointed a second Children's Rights and Participation Officer to work alongside **Elaine Constable**. Her name is **Maria Hunt** and she will be writing an article for you in our next newsletter.

From Monday 8th December, both **Elaine and Maria** will be based in room 416a at County Hall. Initially they can both be contacted on **0116 3056302**.

Maria will let you have her own extension number when she writes her article.

Quite a few of you will have met Maria. She is currently working as an Independent Reviewing Officer and has also been a social worker at Gladstone Avenue. We are really looking forward to welcoming her into the team.

All this change will hopefully enable us to support you even better. In particular I am really pleased that we will be able to offer more of you the support of our Children's Rights Service. The other thing we will be getting on with in earnest once Maria joins the team is to establish the

## Children in Care Council

I will be writing personally to all of you who have been involved in T2C, the JAR inspection meetings, the Education of Children in Care Conferences, the Year of Reading event at County Hall and the Children in Care Council day at Twycross Zoo to invite you to get involved in the new Children in Care Council, so that you can be the voice of children and young people in care, helping to shape the services you receive and helping to make sure we get things right. I will be contacting the rest of you via your social workers and carers. We hope you will also have some fun and enjoy talking with a wide variety of other children and young people in care.

**Sue Carter, Corporate Parenting Team Manager**

## Consultation Day at Twycross Zoo

On Thursday 14th August a group of young people met for a consultation day at Twycross Zoo. In the morning they spent time talking about things which are important to children and young people in care. They were also asked to give their views about the plans which had been made for the Celebration of Achievement Events which were held at Imago in Loughborough during October .



The group was made up of members of T2C, some of the younger children in care who met with inspectors as part of the Joint Area Review last year and other young people whose social workers or foster carers thought they would like the opportunity to meet up with other young people in care for a fun consultation day.

We all arrived at Twycross Zoo at about 11:00 and spent the rest of the morning getting to know each other and discussing things about being in care with Jitu Mistry (Corporate Parenting Team Development Worker), Elaine Constable (Children's Rights Officer) and Sue Carter (Corporate Parenting Manager).

After having a buffet lunch all the young people were taken on a guided tour of the zoo by Linzi Sandbrooke who works there.

Towards the end of the tour all the young people had a very special surprise. Linzi told them that she had arranged for them to be able to go and help the zoo keepers feed the elephants.



If you would like to take part in any future consultation days or are interested in getting involved in the new Children in Care Council which is going to be set up please contact the Corporate Parenting Team on 0116-3057518 and give your name to Katharine Goodacre.

## Education News from Dave Henderson

### Personal Education Allowances

The government has announced that they are going to give **£500 a year** to every young person in care to help you get the exam results you want. This money is for educational activities, for example, extra tuition but it could also be used to help you gain in confidence .

There is a form (there is always a form if it involves money) that you, your social worker or teacher can fill in to say why the money would be useful to you.

There are some 'rules' from the government which say what the money can be used for BUT if you think that an extra £500 could help you then you should speak to your social worker or teacher who will be able to help you to apply for the allowance.

### GCSE results

This year we have once again had some excellent exam results from young people who are in care.

7 young people got 5 or more A\* to C's this year with others getting 3 or 4. In fact almost all the young people who took GCSE exams passed at least 1. But these figures don't tell the whole story.

It was great to see so many of you at the GCSE dinner who were quite rightly really proud of what you had achieved. For some people it was about actually getting through school and now going on to do what they want to do in college or going straight in to work.

Well done to everybody who worked hard over the last year.



## Good-bye from 'J'

By the time you receive this goodbye message I will have already left the Corporate Parenting Team which I have been a part of since December 2005. I am moving over to the Family Information Service Team within the Education Department. My role will be one of providing free and impartial advice, guidance and information for the whole family - from birth to childcare, schools to careers.



- I will take with me all that I have learnt and will miss working with my colleagues. I will especially miss working with the many young people I have had the pleasure to meet and work with on many different projects. I hope that they have enjoyed working with me as much as I have enjoyed working with them. I'll take all the important things you taught me on to my future jobs.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all those foster carers and social workers who I have had the pleasure to meet and interact with, your support has been appreciated.

I wish the team all the best for the future and hope to hear that things will continue to improve for all children and young people in the care of Leicestershire County Council.

Jitu.

## Corporate Parenting Support Worker



My name is Emma Dilodovico and earlier this year I applied for the job of Corporate Parenting Support Worker. You may remember this is a post within the Corporate Parenting Team which is specifically for a young person who has been in care themselves.

Luckily I was successful and I started work in October. I am really enjoying working with the Corporate Parenting Team.

As part of my job I will be helping out with the driving lessons scheme and I will also be doing some of the general office tasks in the Corporate Parenting Team.

- I attend meetings of the fostering panel. This is a meeting which takes place about once a month to discuss people who want to become foster carers and make decisions about whether they should be allowed to foster children. The meeting also decides the ages and numbers of children they can look after.

I attended both of the Celebration Of Achievement Events which took place in October and was able to meet lots of young people, their carers and family. The evenings were really enjoyable.

I have been looking at all the comments made on the feedback forms which people filled in and I wrote a report which I presented to the group who planned the events. The planning group always try to take the comments people make into account when the next event is being planned.

I will be involved planning next years events. This will include going to visit other possible venues to see if they might be suitable for us to use.

I look forward to meeting many of you over the coming months.

## WHO CARES & KLIC?

In with this issue of the Corporate Parenting and Children's Rights Newsletter you will also find two copies of magazines produced by the Who Cares? Trust.

Depending on how old you are you will have either Who Cares? or KLIC.

There was a delay in sending out the summer issue and the autumn/winter one arrived just before this newsletter was due to be posted out to you all so you are getting a double helping !!

In Who Cares? there are lots of articles about young people in care from all over England doing really well. There are stories about doing well in education, going to university and doing voluntary work abroad. These are the sort of things which can be possible for young people when they leave care.

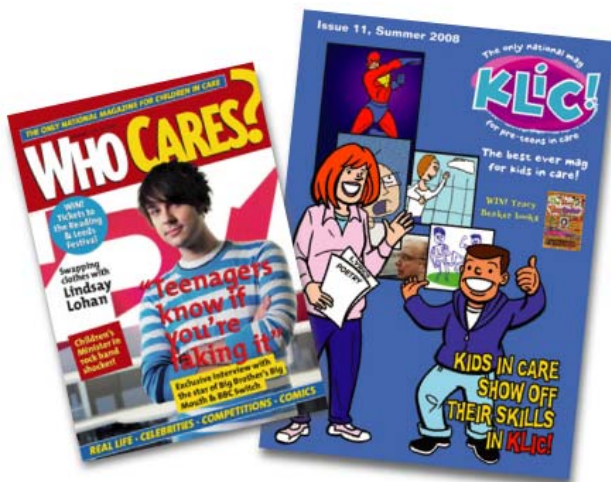
KLIC is for younger children who are in care. The magazines usually have some letters and poems, a picture story and some puzzles or an interview with someone who has been in care or works with children and young people.

The Who Cares? Trust also have a web site where young people can read more stories and poems written by other young people in care. There is also a link to pages in the

“Learning Centre” where there are all sorts of games, puzzles and information to help you with your studies.

You can find out more on this web site

[www.whocaresextra.org.uk](http://www.whocaresextra.org.uk)



## All change at Children's Rights—Elaine is moving !!

You will have read on page 2 of this newsletter that there are going to be changes in the Children's Rights Service with the appointment of a second Children's Rights Officer - Maria Hunt.

When Maria starts working in her new job on **Monday 8th December** we are both going to be based at County Hall in the Corporate Parenting Team office.

Maria and I will share the office with Emma Dilodovico (Corporate Parenting Team Support Worker) and Katharine Goodacre (Corporate Parenting Team Clerical Officer).

There will be more information about the Children's Rights Service and the different ways in which Maria and I will be able to support you in the next newsletter which will be published in the spring.

The sort of things we can do is help young people to talk about

what they would like to happen in their care plan at review

meetings, support you if you want to make a complaint about

anything which has happened to you while you have been in care.

We can also support you if you want to get some independent legal advice about things such as contact with your family or any major decisions which are made about your life.

Because I am moving from my office in Coalville to County Hall I need to have a new telephone number for the Children's Rights Service. This will be 0116-3056302. My mobile phone number will stay the same (**07789-081528**) and the FREEPHONE number will still be **0800-0830652**.

At the time I am writing this article for the newsletter I don't know what Maria's phone number is going to be. Once this information is available we will let you, your social workers and carers know what it is so that you will be able to contact us both.

You can also contact the Children's Rights Service by e-mail on [childrensrights@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childrensrights@leics.gov.uk)

**Elaine Constable, Children's Rights & Participation Officer**