

Care Experienced Youth Voice

May - December 2024

Middlesbrough's Participation Team facilitates open, safe, and inclusive spaces for people to tell us what is important to them. We capture this information and support them to tell key decision makers, so improvements are made to the support they and others receive.

We support our cared for and care experienced young people/adults to be engaged in a variety of different ways.

Care Ambassadors

- Care experienced young adults (two of which are Co opted onto the 'You Matter to Us' Corporate Parenting Board).
- Three young adults volunteer in this role.
- They have an opportunity to support all the engagement activities with cared for and care experienced young people. They also have opportunities to support the wider engagement work - Working with students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, the Youth Council and Parent/Carer engagement as part of the Family Hubs.

'We Matter' (Middlesbrough's Children in Care Council)

- Care experienced young people aged 11 - 16 years meet fortnightly at Easterside Hub 17:00 - 18:30pm.
- Members include five young people (two young people in private residential care, two in a independent foster home and one who lives with her aunt who hopes to make it a Special Guardianship arrangement).
- They have fun, have a voice and create events to hear from their care experienced peers
- They share their views with key decision makers who act on what they say and positively change services to meet their needs.

'Voice, Influence and Change'

- Older care experienced young adults 16-25 years meet monthly at My Place 17:00-18:30pm
- Members include three care ambassadors and three care experienced adults.

The groups are supported by:-

Kathy Peacock - Voice and Influence Manager

Adam Hart , Hollie Sharp and Caitlin O'Connor - Volunteer Care Ambassadors

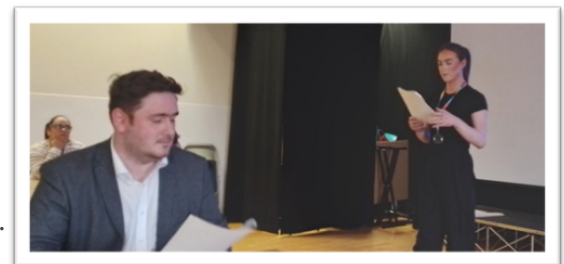
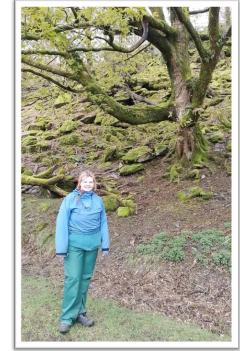
Kalicha Halake Miyo, Jacob Green, Alisha James - Care experienced adults volunteers

Xavier Davies - Older care experienced volunteer

Abiola Dodo- Adult - Non care experienced volunteer

Care Ambassadors

- One Care Ambassador attended the Regional Children in Care Council residential 12-14th April.
- They attended the Mandatory Children's Services induction events - telling new members of staff what groups they support, what is being achieved and their role as Care Ambassadors.
- They attended the fostering support groups and worked with them to develop the 'You Matter' bags for all children/young people who come into our foster care/residential care. These bags will be available at the end of January 2025 and be distributed by the Social worker.
- They sat on a young person's interview panel to interview candidates for the Family Practitioner role.
- They helped develop a housing engagement event where 10 care experienced young adults talked about what they wanted in terms of good housing that will meet their needs.
- One Care Ambassador attended the 'Raising Aspirations for young people in Care at Teesside University.
- One Care Ambassador has been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- One Care Ambassador supported the Youth Council to run a workshop at the Headstart Conference.
- One Care Ambassador supported the delivery of the 'My Voice Matters Conference'. She presented at the beginning and at the end of the day.
- Two Ambassadors helped present at the Children's Services Practice week event.
- Two Care Ambassadors worked with SHIFT to create a film about the work they do. This was shown during the SHIFT Launch event.
- Two Care Ambassadors were nominated for an award at the Coram Voice event - They got Highly Commended for their work as Care Ambassadors.



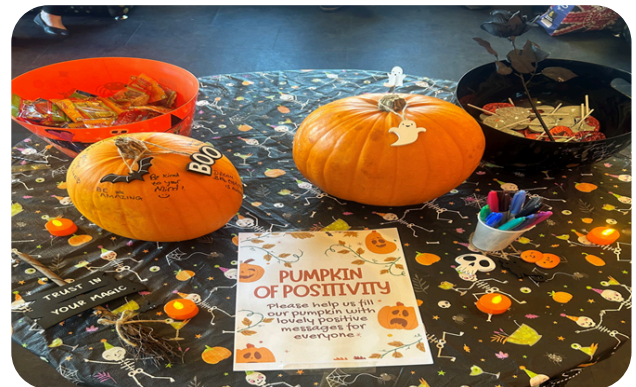
'We Matter'

- They came up with the name of the bags to be given to all children/young people when they come into our foster care/residential care - **You Matter**.
- They attended the annual Football event supported by the Middlesbrough Football Foundation
- A Care Ambassador supported a member of 'We Matter' and young people from Redcar and Cleveland to present at the STSCP Conference
- They had a picnic in Stewarts Park
- They held their annual Halloween party for cared for young people.



The young people were asked to write on the Pumpkin of Positivity.
Some of the things they wrote

- *You are amazing*
- *The more you believe the more you achieve*
- *Be kind to your mind*
- *You are loved*
- *Keep smiling*



They held their annual Christmas Party. The Review & Development Unit team asked everyone to write on the Positivitree - One thing you are proud of, or has made you smile

- *My teacher smiles at me every time I see her*
- *Being asked to play my part delivering for young people as executive member*
- *Being part of these events and loving how everybody works together to make them special*
- *Moving to a new school and enjoying it*
- *I am getting a new cat on Friday*



'Voice, Influence and Change

- They met with Decision Makers to work on - Changing the Language.



- They met with the OFSTED inspectors who reported - *'Impressive 'Care Ambassadors' and 'Voice Groups' are gaining more influence in service design and delivery on behalf of care-experienced young people as participation and engagement with care leavers evolve. Senior leaders recognise and place value on young people's meaningful contribution to the appointment of key leaders and the co-chairing of strategic boards. Young people told inspectors that they are treated as equals, feel heard and that senior leaders understand better what it is like to be a care-experienced young person in Middlesbrough'.*
- They worked with Pathways to create activities during ' Care Leavers Week.
- They met with an artist to design a LOGO for their group - they will be asked to give their view before it starts being used.
- They met with Key Decision makers to look at progress so far and what they should be concentrating on in 2025.



Cared For and Care Experienced Youth Voice

Over the next few months

- The Care Ambassadors are writing a proposal exploring what opportunities should be made available to care experienced young adults - Including Apprenticeships and Volunteering. The proposal will explore young people's remunerations, rewards and incentives.
- The Care Ambassadors are working with Pathways to develop an engagement plan with older care experienced young people plan. Areas to be included - Voice, Influence and Change group, social group (Bright Futures), celebration event, care leavers week and training for Social Workers and Personal Advisors. A survey will be sent to all our older care experienced young adults asking them what is important to them.
- An engagement plan for 'We Matter' is being developed and members of the group will be exploring the five key Corporate Parenting 'You Matter to Us' Board strategic priorities 2024-2027
 1. Safe and stable homes
 2. Opportunities to succeed
 3. Support to be healthy and happy
 4. A strong sense of identity and connection
 5. Direct input into their plans and the development of services for them
- We will continue to develop the pledges and create more opportunities for key decision makers to meet directly with those with lived experience, ensure accountability and be able to evidence that services do want to make a difference.
- We continue to develop the Preparing for Independence training either create something in house or through ASDAN.
- The Change the Language guide is due to go live February 2025.



For more information:
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