

Care Experienced Youth Voice

January - February 2025

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 the Live Well centre 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

- They met with Pathways and are developing an engagement and events plan for 2025. They will all meet once a month to look at progress.
- They met with Tracy Jelfs (Head of Corporate Parenting and Fostering) to discuss progress and will continue to meet every six weeks - to include other Key Decision Makers.
- They will be asked to support several events during Social Work Week.

'We Matter'

- The group had a visit from Susie Turner - Fostering Service Manager. She asked the group their thoughts on the fostering feedback forms cared for young people are given. This work is continuing.
- Two members of the group who are attending the Regional CiCC residential in April, attended a Regional meeting hosted by Sunderland. All the Cared for and Care experienced young people present were asked their views on what should be discussed at this years Regional CiCC conference. They were asked what their views were on being supported to be Digitally Inclusive and they were given information about the residential. We have the Care Ambassador attending the residential as well.
- They worked with the fostering service to put on an event at Jump 360. Two members attended and supported 16 young people to have a voice. The fostering team asked the children who foster about their experiences and the fostered young people were asked questions about who they go to for support, how they share their views in their cared for meeting and what they thought about using an APP to share their views.

'Voice, Influence and Change'

- The group meets the first Wednesday of every month. Numbers are still low and Pathways are working hard to get their young adults there.
- Pathways will identify two champions in the team to promote participation and events .
- One member of Pathways will attend the Voice, Influence and Change group.
- We are having a fun event on the 26th March inviting young adults to come together at Level X, have fun, then food.

Over the next few months:

- The Care Ambassadors would like a decision to be made on the opportunities and incentives that should be made available to care experienced young adults - Including Apprenticeships and Volunteering.
- The change the Language will go Live mid March 2025