

Cared For and Care Experience Engagement

April - June 2025

Middlesbrough Council facilitates open, safe, inclusive spaces and opportunities 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.

Volunteer Voice and Change Ambassadors (Previously known as Care Ambassadors)

- Two care experienced young adults are co opted onto the 'You Matter to Us' Corporate Parenting Board. In addition to being part of the Board they have opportunities to volunteer during our engagement events with cared for and care experienced young people and 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.
- In April 2025, Jade Brown a cared for young person was successful in getting the volunteer role. Recently she has asked to step away from her role, so we will look for another volunteer to cover the work in the interim.
- Caitlin applied again and was given the role until March 2026.
- Jade and Caitlin decided to change their volunteering role title to Voice and Change Ambassadors.
- Adam Hart continues to volunteer.

'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 six young people.
- 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.

The groups are supported by:-
Kathy Peacock - Voice and Influence Manager
Caitlin O'Connor - Voice and Change volunteer
Jade Brown - Voice and Change Volunteer
Adam Hart - Care experienced volunteer
.....And members of the teams

Engagement Activities

'We Matter'

- **Regional Children In Care Council Annual Residential.** Fran, Jade and Harriett attended. We went gorge walking, did the high swing, played hide and seek and worked on what they wanted for the Regional Conference.
- We Matter invited cared for young people and their families to have tea with them at pizza hut. They talked about their group and asked if anyone wanted to join their group.
- Jump 360 - We Matter arranged for other cared for young people and their families to join them and have fun. 15 young people came along.

'Voice and Change' Ambassadors

- Level X on the 9th April- Purpose, to invite those supported by Pathways to come together, have fun and hear about getting involved in other opportunities Seven older care experienced young adults came along, did Bowling, Go Carts and some played air hockey. Afterwards most then had tea at Pizza Hut. Sean expressed an interest in getting involved.
- Jade and Caitlin attended the Virtual school annual conference. They heard some inspirational messages from the Key note speakers.
- Jade and Caitlin worked with Priory wood 16+ students to help them design and be part of the 'My Voice Matters' Conference. They helped run the event, supporting 60 students from eight educational settings to have fun, hear inspirational messages and have a voice.
- Jade and Caitlin supported the development of the 'Support Me' film - [SUPPORT ME - FINAL!.mp4](#) and this was shown at the event.
- Children's Homes Awards - Jade and Caitlin have supported the residential service in developing the celebrations, judged the award categories and will announce the winners at the celebration event on 2nd July.
- Jade and Caitlin have been involved in meetings with Patrick (Paddy) Woods - Service Manager Stronger Families and created a survey to go out to young people across Middlesbrough about what they would want from the Middlesbrough Youth Offer.
- They are working with the Pathways team to support eight care experienced adults to create a music video and start a choir. Work on the video will hopefully start in July.
- Caitlin and Adam will attend the 'Raising Aspirations for young people in care' conference on the 1st July, organised by Teesside university. They are part of the Question and Answer session in the afternoon.
- Caitlin, Adam and a member of the Youth Council - Cole, will interview candidates for the Executive Director of Children's Service post.

Current Plans for 2025

A schedule of fun and engagement activities for cared for and older care experienced young people/adults has been created for 2025 early 2026 - Engagement themes for the year · Safe and stable homes, Opportunities to succeed, Support to be healthy and happy, A strong sense of identity and connection, Direct input into their plans and the Development of services for them.

We are hopeful that the new Hub will be available soon, so we can regular meet with our young people/adults, get them engaged and have fun.

We have written a survey to be completed by Pathways young people to tell us the issues that are important to them and asking how they would like to get involved. We will share some of the findings from the survey at this meeting.

We would like to propose that our Corporate parents have an informal engagement activity with us on:-

- **25th September - 5- 7pm** Fountains Court - Direct input into their plans and the Development of services for them.
- **27th November - 5- 7pm** Fountains Court - Safe and stable homes, Opportunities to succeed.
- **19th February - 5- 7pm** Fountains Court - Support to be healthy and happy, A strong sense of identity and connection.

Key dates for your diaries

- **25th July- 11-2pm** - MFC Herlingshaw centre - Football event for cared for and care experienced young people/adults
- **29th October** - Halloween party 4-6pm - My Place
- **November 2025** - Care experienced month. We will work with cared for and care experienced young people/adults to plan activities during this month
- **10th December** - We Matter Christmas party 5-7pm - Teesside university