

CICC ARTICLES

THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN CREATED BY YOUNG PEOPLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Welcome to the 3rd edition of the Durham CICC newsletter. Here are some of the articles that have been written by care experienced young people (aged between 8 and 18) capturing their experiences and thoughts regarding their life choices and support received.

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BEFORE I WENT INTO FOSTER CARE I DIDN'T DO MANY ACTIVITIES BUT NOW LOOK WHAT I HAVE DONE!

MAKING NEW FRIENDS

- Meal at restaurant
- Dog Walking
- Baking
- Athletics
- Arts and crafts
- Hall Hill Farm
- Playing with friends
- Lots of Reading
- McDonalds
- Nintendo Switch
- Just Dance
- Trivial Pursuit
- Board Games
- Playing in the mud
- Bowling
- Holidays
- Birthday Parties
- Youth Club
- Homework
- Bike/scooter
- Swimming
- Seaside
- Trampoline
- Guitar Lessons
- Lightwater Valley
- Ukulele Lessons
- Football

SOCIAL WORKERS & US

Social Workers often get a bad reputation. You have the amazing ones who are always there for you when you need them as well as taking you to your favourite places such as McDonalds. There are also some that may not have such a good impression. So, we are here to discuss what we believe is an ideal Social Worker.



We are both care experienced young people and have been in the care system from a very young age so we have definitely had our fair share of Social Workers. Some we couldn't wait to see again and some we couldn't care less if they came back or not. A few were even that bad we gave them our own nicknames. Lesley thought one was even a witch.

The most important point is all Social Workers MUST put us first and explain and be honest with us. We deserve to be treated as an individual as no two young people are the same, we all have our own story and quirks to tell. NEVER judge us on either what you read on paper or when we have a bad day. We should be able to trust you not to make promises that you can't follow through on.



Everyone says that respect is earned and ALWAYS remember that it works both ways. You need to earn our respect and show us that you do care and want the best for us.

*Written by Caitlyn & Lesley
Aged 16 & 18*

AN IDEAL SOCIAL WORKER

An ideal social worker
Is there for all those in need
Making them the forefront of all they do
An ideal social worker
Is easy to talk to
They listen without judgement
And support me through the tough times
Cheering me on through the good.
An ideal social worker
Is someone who listens to us and makes our voices heard
Chatting over ice-cream to help us open up
Visits, texts and WhatsApp keeping in touch through the bad times and the good

*A poem written by CiCC members
and Social Work Academy Students*

MY JOURNEY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

My journey on public transport has made me scared until I was 16. I was nervous to go on trains and buses due to the amount of violent crimes such as fights, arguments and people throwing things at windows. These incidents occur frequently every year in Britain. This made me feel anxious to go on public transport by myself until I got support from an assistant Social Worker called Louise whilst I was in care to overcome my fears. Louise helped me overcome these fears by different strategies such as going on trains to see family at appropriate times such as early afternoon around 2PM when less people are travelling. I also learnt whilst travelling on a bus you can download the Stagecoach bus app - <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/app> and it informs you when the bus is usually busy and when it is quiet by having a colour code, red means the bus is very busy, orange means the bus has got a few people on and green indicates there are only a small majority of people on the bus. This helped me with my fears of getting on buses because when I got on the bus at quiet times I felt less anxious and the more I got on the bus the more I had overcome my fears.



*Written by Mitchell
Aged 18*

New app feature:

How busy is my bus?

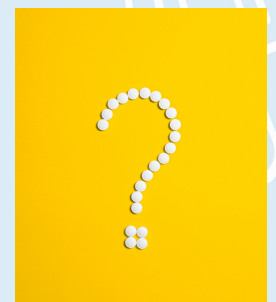
Not too busy Quite busy Very busy



MY VIEWS ON WHAT MAKES A GOOD FOSTER CARER

'What makes a good foster carer?' is a question I am always asked, and there is no correct answer. To different people a good foster carer is made up of different aspects. To me a good foster carer needs the following attributes.

In my home I have routines and boundaries I have to follow but are changed and adapted as I get older. For example when I was younger, I had an earlier bedtime because of school and leisure activities needing my full attention but now I am older I have a more flexible time and I know my routine.



Wow

My house rules are that my phone must be downstairs at different times on different nights of the week, however this does not mean I have to go to sleep at this time as my foster parents understand that it takes me a while to become tired due to stress and anxiety. Although I was very young when I came into care and do not remember much of my pre-care life, I still get flashbacks of that time which can cause emotional outbursts. My foster parents are very good at understanding this and have learnt not to take them personally.



They are very forgiving and know that with time and a bit of patience I will open up about what is upsetting me. They are extremely good at this as they understand that I have suffered from trauma in the past and know that even though I may direct my anger towards them, it is not because of them and will help me find a way to settle the on-going situation. This shows me that they care about me and want to be a part of my life which is what I need as I need a family situation as this best suits me personally.

My carers encourage me to try out new activities and experiences which allow me to develop as an individual and be myself. This includes things like visiting the Metrocentre, going to see my friends, cooking and making new foods and treats and building things in my back garden for my nieces and siblings to play with. This allows me to learn independent life skills however, I know that if I may need any help they will do what they can to ensure I succeed. During the COVID-19 lockdown my mum (as I refer to them as my parents) has taught me how to clean the house properly so that I can help do this in order to gain some spending money for the following day and has also helped me learn new hobbies.



They are extremely supportive of anything I may want to try and where they can they will help me to find better or new ways of doing these activities for example, if I ask to make tea one night they will find a recipe for me to try and do not criticise if it is not perfect, instead they will give me tips and advice on how to make it better and will allow me to try again until I feel confident enough to do it without help. For me this is what makes a good foster carer.



Written by Alex
Aged 15

DEDICATION PAYS THE WAY

Let's start with what I do first. I work part time at Best Kebab One in Bishop Auckland. I work six days a week and I enjoy it there. I prepare everything fresh as I go into work and we all have fun. I also go to college three days a week. We all have something we want to achieve in life. Don't let your past stop you from doing that. I never thought I would be going to college at all but I am. We all need to be proud of the little things that happen in life even if we don't think they are totally amazing, just be proud of yourself. I love my job. I always try my best to do the best I can do.

Written by Katy
Aged 17



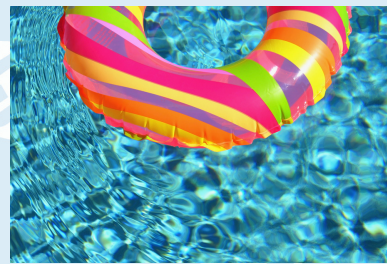
MY TRAVELS IN THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS

On the first week we went to Longleat Safari Park with my sisters, we had so much fun.

In the second week we went to Brighton, London, Portsmouth, and Battle. Once we were in London there were loads of homeless people, it was really hard to see them like that, but also quiet because of Covid 19.

The day we went to Portsmouth, I went swimming in a freezing but refreshing pool. It was so much fun, also in Portsmouth we went on a boat ride and took the dogs and they loved it, their ears flung back like a flag.

When we went to Brighton we had a load of fun seeing lovely shops and having ice cream and collecting pebbles, also the weather was gorgeous, it was so hot I needed that swimming pool in Portsmouth.



Written by Angelica
Aged 14

Wow

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EDITORS BLOG



The 3rd edition of the CICC newsletter shows some fantastic examples of how children and young people have been listened to and supported by foster carers and Durham County Council staff including young people writing about their life experiences and ideas to improve opportunities further in the future.

Well done to everyone who has contributed an article towards the newsletter. They have been so inspiring to read, there is so much talent out there. Keep them coming.

If you would like to feature an article in the next edition then please just get in touch via Rob Johnson:

email: robert.johnson@investinginchildren.net

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