

ISSUE 4 - SUMMER 2010

BACKCHAT

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**INFORMATION, NEWS AND
VIEWS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE**

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S
FORUM
NEWSLETTER**



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Young Inspectors

The Young Inspectors project has been around for a while and is a great chance for young people to have a chance to inspect the social work service in Camden. Young people who use the service are the best judges of the standard of the service. Since the last newsletter, teams of Young Inspectors undertook an inspection of the Multi Agency Liaison Team and of the Schools Social Work team.

These are some of the things Young Inspectors said about being involved in the project:



"I have learnt new things, met new friends and had a great experience. I intend to pursue a career in being an organiser of events in future." *Phoebe*



"There were new skills and knowledge to learn everyday. It is a once in a life time experience" *Liya*



"I had learnt a lot from this experience and it will look good on my CV" *Rebecca*

"The main aim of the project was to give a microphone to young people. It was a great experience"

George

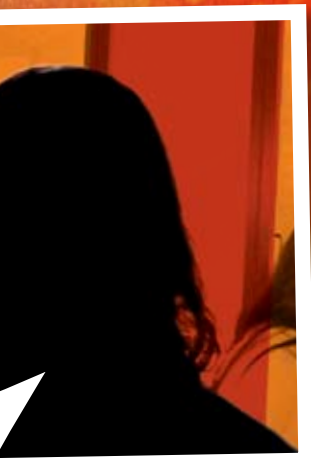
"This project made me think what I want to be in the future" *Jabeda*

great opportunity for young
We believe that young people
and what needs to change.
Inspection of the MALT

involved in inspecting services:



"Interviewing social workers helped me to gain a greater understanding of the role that social workers play in Young People's lives." *Emmanuel*



"This was a big turning point in my life. It has helped me to understand myself" *Harmony*



"I realised what my strengths are and that I can be very thorough with the tasks I am set." *Sadie*



"Working within the Camden council was the best thing I have done." *Jabeda*



What is the

Young People's Forum?

The YP's Forum is for young people who have at some point had support from Camden's social workers and who want to give their views and make decisions about how to improve social services for young people.

HAVE YOUR SAY • BE HEARD • MAKE DECISIONS

What have we done since the last issue?

These are some of the things **young people have been involved in** since the last issue of Back Chat in Summer 2009:

1 Training social workers, managers and foster carers in **Total Respect** to help them understand sessions about the importance of listening to young people's views when making plans that affect their lives. This training programme is a fantastic opportunity for young people to develop confidence, presentation and training skills. It is an ongoing programme of training with four one day sessions each year.

2 Celebrating Achievements of children and young people in care event in November 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Camden Lock. Young people were involved in preparing a performance of their own songs, and showing a DVD to guests at the event about their experience of the 16+ service and other aspects of being in care.

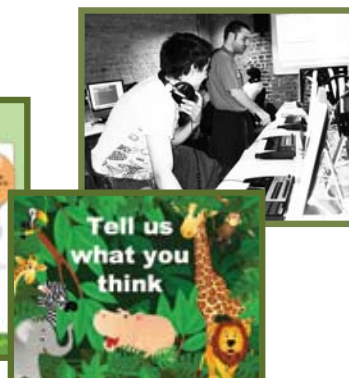
3 Attending the Associate Parliamentary Group debate with the Government representative at Westminster. Young people gave their views about the Social Work Task Force recommendations on improving the support social workers

receive to help them give a better service to young people. Young people were also invited to Xmas lunch at Westminster and met John Bercow, the Speaker of the Houses of Parliament.

4 Organising the **London Pledge** consultations jointly with the **Care Matters Partnership**. Two consultation events were held for children aged 6-11 at London Zoo in April and young people aged 12-21 at the Roundhouse in June. The aim of the consultations was to get young people's views on the London Pledge and to select the main areas to be included in the Camden Pledge for children and young people in care.

5 Meeting with **Young Evaluators** from the Family Group Conference Service to exchange ideas about ways of involving young people in improving the service.

6 Helping to design a poster to advertise **Camden's Safeguarding Children Board** (CSCB) website. Young people made decisions about what information to include in the poster and what colour scheme and pictures would be most catchy to attract young people's attention to the message. It was important to get it right as the poster will be displayed in all public places in Camden including schools and libraries.



MEET THE MEMBERS

Conor



When I first went into care I was 14; I was rebellious and didn't want to do anything with my life. I wasn't going to school and was always getting reported missing. There were times when I wanted to make something better of myself but I was always convinced not to by friends.

My life started to change when I was introduced to Vanessa, the Service User Participation Officer at St Christopher's. Vanessa's role was to get young people involved in decision making.

As well as getting back to college, I started voluntary work as an assistant of the Participation Officer and was helping to set up and run a radio station at the residential home to give young people a voice.

I also went on Participation and Voices training with the Care Matters Partnership (CMP). The training helps young people gain confidence; be able to talk to people in a professional way and learn how to manage tricky situations.

As result of doing the training I was offered a work experience with CMP. I jumped at the opportunity! I worked together with the team to prepare for the National Leaving Care Conference in October 2009. I was treated like a successful young person.

I am now employed by the Care Matters Partnership. This is best thing that ever happened to me. I feel like I had made a massive accomplishment with my life.

In my eyes, participation is the way forward for young people. It shows them that there are always better ways of handling situations that may get them into trouble.

WE NEED YOUR VOICE

We want your views and ideas about making Camden social services better for young people. For more information on how to get involved in the Young People's Forum, please email us via the Backchat website.

GET INVOLVED!

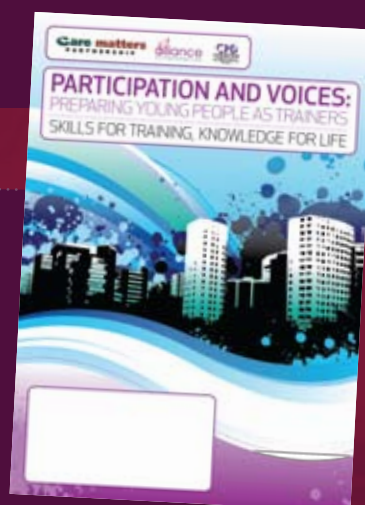
Care Matters Partnership

The Care Matters Partnership (CMP) is an organisation that looks into the rights and needs of children in care. CMP brings ideas and knowledge to **train professionals** to help them give the best start in life to children they work with and to **train young people** to help them gain skills and knowledge for life.

Participation and Voices training for young people - coming to Camden in 2010

The Participation and Voices training course has been prepared using the best bits of what is known about involving young people in care in planning (for example: how a children's home is run or how support is provided).

The training course prepares young people, to train professionals and managers who care for children.



If you would like to know more about the training, please contact the Participation Development Officer tel **0207 974 1850**.

Winners!

Your Views

In the last issue we asked you to give your answer the following question:

What can social workers do to make sure adults listen to young people at a meeting?

Here are some of the answers

"Young people should be able to have a say about who they would like to attend their meetings" **Rebecca, 17**

"It helps to know your social worker well" **Leigh, 15**

"Constantly check what the child thinks about the topic you are talking about" **Phoebe, 17**

"Have a one to one meeting with young person always before the big meeting" **Tabeda, 18**

"Bear in mind that the young person is the centre point of the meeting, ask their views at intervals and about their thoughts when a new subject is brought up" **Sadie, 16**

"Social workers could give YP training and some tips to help them" **Tabeda**

"Meetings should have an allocated time for the young person to speak" **Rahina, 20**

"Social worker should emphasise the importance of young people's voices being heard by encouraging the YP to have the confidence to speak, knowing that what they say is **ABSOLUTELY PARAMOUNT** to the meeting" **Emmanuel, 18** **Winner**

"Always have a one to one meeting with young person always before the big meeting" **Bianca, 20**

Competition - tell us what you think

DEADLINE April 31 2011

What would make getting help from social work service better?

The best entry voted by young people from the Forum will receive a £20 ODEON Cinema voucher



Send your answer for free to: Back Chat, FREEPOST 413/6 Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, Unit 6-7, London NW1 1BD

Your Name: -----

Address: -----

Tel: -----

Age: -----