

ISSUE 8 - 2015-16

# BACKCHAT

Information, news and views from children and young people who have a social worker

Inside: There are many opportunities to...

## Give your views

GET INVOLVED!

**Camden Young Inspectors inspect the health service for looked after children**

**Meet members of the Children in Care Council**

**Reactive Forum gets involved in Camden's Local Offer**

Find out what we have been involved in since the last issue

**Backchat online photos**



Camden makes every effort to ensure children and families get a high quality service. The views of children, parents and carers are very important in making changes and improvements to our services.

[www.backchatonline.org.uk](http://www.backchatonline.org.uk)

# What have we been involved in since the last issue?

## Children in Care Council (CiCC)

Young people from the Children in Care Council (CiCC) have been involved in making decisions on issues affecting children and young people in Camden including: safety in Camden, planning, development and design of the new youth base (The Hive) and presenting the work of the CiCC and experiences of being in care at full council meetings in April and November 2015. The CiCC has also met with young people from Islington CiCC.

Young people have been attending Corporate Parenting Board meetings.

At these meetings young people talk to councillors, the Director and senior managers about how to improve services for young people in care and care leavers.



These are some of the activities and events children have been involved in over the past year.

## Making decisions about services

Young people are regularly involved in selecting the best people to be in charge of Camden services. This year included interviewing candidates for the job of Assistant Director in CSF, selecting the best agency to take charge of The Hive (a new service for young people) and meeting with a senior finance manager to give feedback about Camden's financial challenge proposals.

## Achievement celebration event for children in care

In October 2015 children and young people's achievements were celebrated at the annual awards event at London Zoo, which is always much-enjoyed by children and carers.

## Training social workers, managers and foster carers

The training is called **TOTAL RESPECT** and is about listening to young people. The young people who deliver the training always receive excellent feedback from participants.

In July 2015, young people delivered a workshop for practice educators who supervise and train new social workers. The workshop title was "**Relationships with young people – not for the faint-hearted**" and it was a huge success. Young people have been invited to do it again in 2016!

## Takeover Day in November 2015

Takeover Day is a national event led by the Children's Commissioner for England, which young people from Camden have been involved in since 2012. It gives children and young people the chance to work with adults and get involved in decision-making about services.

Young people played an active role in prioritising topics for discussion, hosting the event, interviewing participants and welcoming guests: Councillor Nadia Shah, Deputy Mayor of Camden, Councillor Angela Mason, Councillor Georgia Gould, Martin Pratt, Director of Children, Schools and Families and Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England.

Young people taking part in the day were involved in making decisions about:

- Police training on stop and search methods
- Using technology to support children and young people's health
- Camden's substance misuse strategy
- The development of new youth centres in Camden
- Tackling racial and religious discrimination in the borough.

## Camden Shout Out 2015

In April 2015 Camden's Youth Council held the annual **Shout Out** Event at UCL Academy. Topics for the workshops were selected by young people and the event was hosted by young person, Sulekha Farah.

## Camden Youth MP Elections 2016

Vote in the Camden Youth MP Election, March 2016 – visit [camden.gov.uk/youthcouncil](http://camden.gov.uk/youthcouncil)





# Camden's SEND Local Offer

[www.localoffer.camden.gov.uk](http://www.localoffer.camden.gov.uk)

The Local Offer website sets out information, advice and details about support and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

Young people with disabilities from the Reactive Forum and from the Seven O'Clock Club made very helpful suggestions on how to improve the SEND Local Offer.

We really want to continue to improve it, to make sure that the Local Offer meets the needs of children with special needs and disabilities. It is really important that young people help us by telling us what's good, what's not so good and how it could be improved.

If you have any thoughts, ideas or feedback, tell us what you think by emailing [localoffer@camden.gov.uk](mailto:localoffer@camden.gov.uk)

## Young Inspectors programme

### Young Inspectors EVALUATION OF THE INSPECTION



Young Inspectors  
**REPORT**  
2015

*IT INVOLVES YOUNG PEOPLE IN INSPECTING SERVICES WITH THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS BEING USED TO CHANGE AND IMPROVE SERVICES.*

*THIS IS A VERY EFFECTIVE WAY OF REVIEWING THE SERVICE, AS IT IS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCE OF RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM THE SERVICE.*

In 2015 young inspectors inspected services for child sexual exploitation (CSE) and made 17 recommendations for service improvements. Their findings were welcomed by the Corporate Parenting Board and the CSE strategy group, resulting in real changes and improvements to the service.

#### **Meron** (Lead inspector)

The project gives young people the opportunity to do something important and help Camden's social care service improve.

#### **Jenny** (Inspector)

More people should know the signs of CSE and what they can do to help CSE victims.

#### **John** (Inspector)

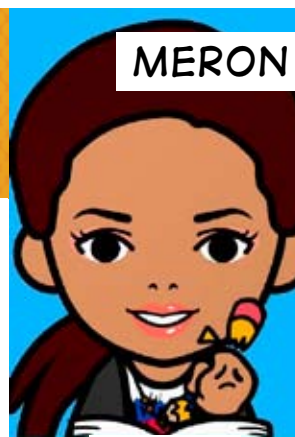
I found this project valuable and it has inspired me to try to help stop CSE and try to support the victims.

#### **Lewis** (Inspector)

We came up with ways to support young people who are victims of CSE.

#### **Sophie** (Inspector)

I learnt new skills such as Excel, how to manage focus group discussions and conducting interviews.



MERON



LEWIS



SOPHIE



JENNY



ELZBIETA



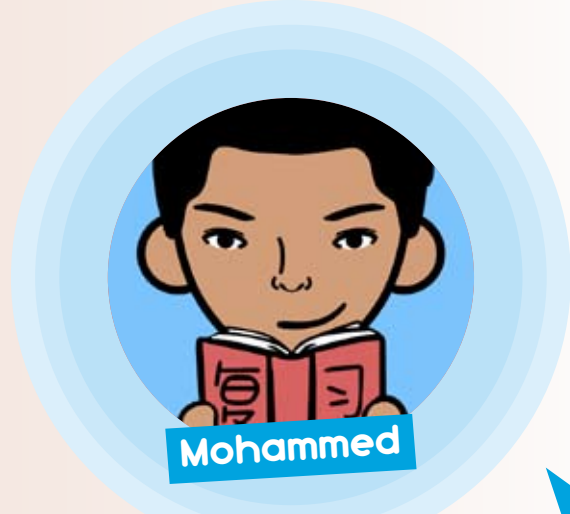
JOHN

You can see the full report on **BackChat Online** – Young Inspectors Reports

## MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE



Children in Care Council



I was appointed to the role of apprentice for participation – to work with the senior development officer for participation in Camden's family services and social work service. I am a care leaver and becoming an apprentice for participation has been quite an experience. It's like learning to ride a bike – there's a lot of stopping and starting but that's understandable when there's so many new things to learn.

I realise how lucky I am to be in this position and to be able to gain experience of real-life work. I have been working on various consultations and engagement projects across departments in the council, organising consultation events and writing blogs.

The knowledge, experience and networks I am gaining are invaluable; it's the difference between studying in a classroom and first-hand experience in an apprenticeship.

Mohammed – Apprentice for Participation

### What is the Children in Care Council?

The Children in Care Council is for children and young people who are in care. It provides the opportunity for them to give views about services for children in care and to make decisions about how to improve services.

CiCC meetings are once a month and we welcome all looked after children and care leavers to be part of the group. If your placement is not in Camden and you would like to give your views, please send a message to the CiCC through BackChat online or [elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk](mailto:elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk)

### GET INVOLVED!



There are many opportunities for you to give **your views** about the services Camden provides and to be part of making **improvements** to them.

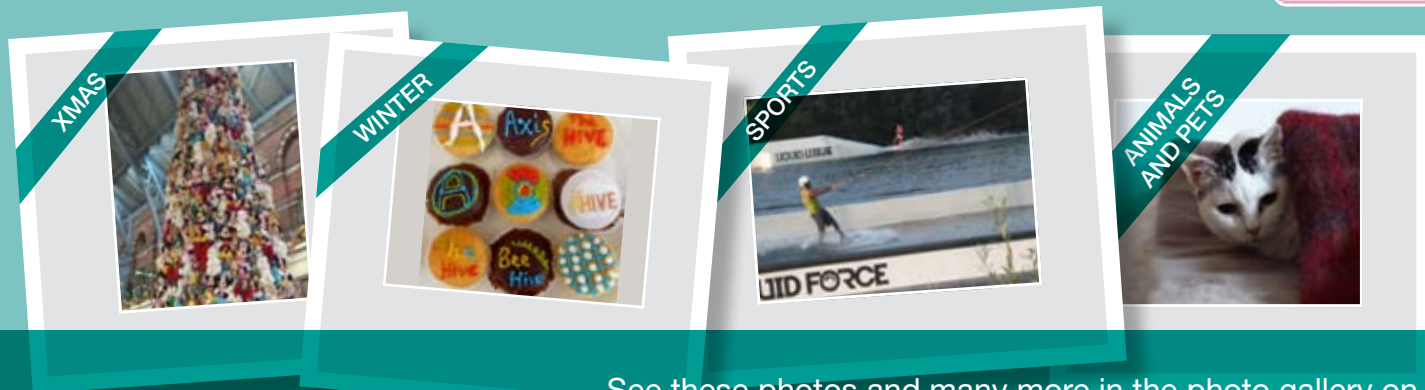
Please contact Elzbieta Chandrasena, senior development officer for participation: [elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk](mailto:elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk); tel: 020 7974 1850 or talk to your social worker.

Would you like to be part of the **BackChat online website group**?

Would you like to **get involved** in the Children in Care Council?

Do you have **ideas** about helping children and young people to **give their views** about the social work service?

## BackChat online photo gallery



See these photos and many more in the photo gallery on BackChat online [www.backchatonline.org.uk/recent\\_photos](http://www.backchatonline.org.uk/recent_photos)