

ISSUE 9 - 2016-17

# BACKCHAT



Information, news and views from children and young people involved in Camden services

**Inside:**

**Make decisions**

**Have your say**

**GET INVOLVED!**

**Find out what young people have  
been involved in since the last issue**

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

**Camden Young Inspectors - inspection  
of services supporting teenagers**

**Youth MP elections**

**Takeover Challenge 2016**

**Backchat online recent photos**

Camden makes every effort to ensure children and families receive 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 young people been involved in since the last issue?

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

## The Children in Care Council (CiCC)

The CiCC provides a voice for children and young people in care.



**Making decisions** – Young people have been involved in making decisions on issues affecting children and young people in care and other young people in Camden. This involved discussing issues at Corporate Parenting Board, making recommendations for priorities of the work of Camden Safeguarding Children's Board; additionally, there were discussions on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths) opportunities for young people in Camden and on making improvements to the Backchat website.

Attending Corporate Parenting Board meetings is one of the main aspects of the CiCC work and it is an opportunity to be involved in making decisions about services. At these meetings, young people talk to councillors, the Director of Children's Safeguarding and Social Work and senior managers about their experience of services, what is working well and what needs improving.



**Speaking at Council meetings** – Young people from the CiCC attended the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee in October 2016, where they presented findings of the Young inspectors research. In November 2016, they attended the Full Council meeting to talk about their personal achievements in education and training.

**Organising events** – This included organising the Looked After Children Stakeholders event for young people, foster carers and professionals. The event was in July 2016. Young people organised the programme and facilitated activities for all participants. At the event, stakeholders signed individual pledges to support the work of the CiCC.

## Celebrating achievements of looked after children

Children and young people's achievements were celebrated at the annual awards event at the Emirates Stadium.

October 2016

## Visit to the Houses of Parliament

May 2016

This was led by Councillor Georgia Gould, Camden's Cabinet Member for Young People, Adults and Health, and Keir Starmer MP.

## Camden Summer University film

A film about refugees was made by Summer University students. The film was also screened at this year's Holocaust Memorial Day event at the British Library, on 27 January 2017, which was attended by the Mayor of Camden and Lord Alf Dubs.

<http://news.camden.gov.uk/what-are-you-doing-this-summer/>



## Real Talk

October 2016

More than 60 young people joined a debate about mental health at the Town Hall during our Real Talk event. Thanks to all who came and our fantastic hosts Remel London and Femi Oyeniran.

## Youth MP elections

Camden's Youth MP, Esther Joy Boadu, 17, was elected with a record overall turnout of 6,737 young people – over 40% of the borough's 13 to 19 year-olds.

<http://news.camden.gov.uk/camdens-new-youth-mp-elected-in-record-turnout/>



April 2016

Youth MP and two Deputy Youth MPs with Cllr Georgia Gould (2nd from right).

## Youth Parliament debate

November 2016

Esther Joy Boadu, Camden Youth MP, was among those taking part in the national UK Youth Parliament debate in the House of Commons in November 2016. Visit [camden.gov.uk/youthcouncil](http://camden.gov.uk/youthcouncil)



# Takeover Day

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. This year's topics:

Access and aspirations to careers in science, technology, engineering, art and maths (STEAM)

Police training on stop and search methods

Improving mental health education and challenging stereotypes

Effective communication with young people

Promoting healthy living

Children's  
COMMISSIONER

50  
Camden kids took  
part in workshops

Takeover  
Challenge

November  
2016

**Training social workers and foster carers** – The training is called TOTAL RESPECT – listening to young people.

Young people planned and facilitated three training days for social workers, managers and foster carers.

The young people who deliver the training always receive excellent feedback from participants.

## Young Inspectors programme

The project involves young people undertaking inspection of services in order to put forward their own recommendations aimed at improving services.

Every year, a team of young inspectors undertake research into the views of other service users and professionals about the services provided by the Council and partner agencies to safeguard children.

In 2016 the team inspected services supporting teenagers and made 10 practical recommendations for service improvement.

Their findings have been taken seriously by the Corporate Parenting Board and the CSF Scrutiny Committee resulting in real changes and improvements to the service.

**Iyesha** (team co-leader)

I gained better insight into the services that Camden provides and the issues that many young people are facing, some of which I could relate to.

**Jenny** (team co-leader)

The project taught me how Camden prioritises young people who really need help with the challenges they face and the different kind of support they offer for those young people.

## Evaluation of the inspection by Young Inspectors



**Rose** (inspector)

This project has shown me that I can dedicate myself to improve the effectiveness of the services.

**Sophie** (inspector)

I gained confidence to ask questions in meetings with professionals, which I would not have been able to do before.

**Sean** (inspector)

The most enjoyable aspect of the project was making recommendations for Camden stakeholders who provide services and support.

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



## MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE



Children in Care Council

Jenny

I am 18 and I've been involved with the Children in Care Council for nearly two years. I've been a part of many projects such as improving the Backchat website and presenting the work of the CiCC to councillors and to the Mayor of Camden. Together with other members of the CiCC, I was involved in organising a Stakeholders event for professionals, foster carers and young people. Most importantly, I have been attending Corporate Parenting Board meetings to talk about our experiences of services for looked after children, to senior managers and councillors who make decisions about services.

### What is the Children in Care Council?

The Children in Care Council is for children and young people who are in care. Young people meet once a month and meetings are open to all looked after children and care leavers. If your placement is not in Camden and you would like to give your views or feedback, please send a message to the CiCC on the **Backchat Online**, or contact Elzbieta Chandrasena at [elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk](mailto:elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk)

I am studying photography in college and have been invited to take photos at high profile events in Camden.

In modern society, it is difficult to be a good photographer and to stand out from the crowd which creates a challenge that I enjoy.

In the photo gallery below are some of my favourite pictures. See more of my pictures on Backchat Online.

Jenny

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

**GET INVOLVED!**

If you would like to get involved, 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 or your youth worker.

## Backchat Online photo gallery



SEATTLE SPACE  
NEEDLE



CELEBS



THE LONGEST  
TREE



IN THE SUN



See these photos and many more on **Backchat Online**  
[www.backchatonline.org.uk/photo\\_galleries](http://www.backchatonline.org.uk/photo_galleries)