

BACKCHAT



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

Make decisions

GET INVOLVED!



Opportunities

for young people to get involved in developing services and making decisions included...

REAL
TALK



Reactive
Forum



cico
Children in Care Council

Find out what Young Inspectors
say about their inspection

Camden
Young Inspectors

CAMDEN
YOUTH
COUNCIL



Meet Shanae, member of the Children in Care Council



Coronavirus

Information, guide and help links

اللغة العربية
الكورونا وایرس لاریتود
করোনাভাইরাস
Udhëzimi Koronavirus
Huong Dẫn về Coronavirus

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.

There are many opportunities for young people to give their views and get involved.

If you would like to find out more, please contact: Elzbieta Chandrasena, Senior Development Officer for Participation, elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk, tel: 020 7974 1850 or talk to your social worker.

backchatonline.org.uk



What young people have been involved in since the last issue

The Children in Care Council (CiCC)

The Children in Care Council 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 leaving care. This included: developing an app for care leavers with an easy access to information explaining what services and support they can expect from Camden services, taking part in selection and commissioning of potential providers of Pathways services for care leavers, interviewing candidates for the post of Head of Quality Assurance Unit, designing a logo for the Virtual School, developing content and design of the new guide for looked after children. You can view the Pocket PA app by scanning the QR code.



Speaking at council meetings – Young people attended the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee in December 2019; they presented findings of the Young Inspectors' research and key recommendations for the support services for the emotional and mental health of young people aged 14-19.

Attending Corporate Parenting Board

These are an important opportunity for young people to influence decisions about services. At these meetings, young people talk to councillors, the Director of Children's Safeguarding and Social Work, Executive Director of Supporting People and senior managers about their experience of the services, what is working well and what needs improving.

Takeover Challenge

Takeover Challenge November 2019

Takeover Challenge was originally set up by the Children's Commissioner for England to give children and young people opportunities to learn how professional organisations work including local councils and national government. Camden young people have been taking part in the Takeover Challenge activities since 2012.

This year, Anes Bouzouina from Camden Youth Council and James Hunt from Camden Children in Care Council hosted the Takeover Challenge day.

Over 70 pupils from Camden primary and secondary schools came with their teachers to 'take over' the Council on 29 November, as part of the annual Takeover Challenge event. The pupils, aged 8 to 14, were at the Crowndale Centre all day where they worked with Council officers and other local professionals to prepare presentations and discussions on four key topics:

- Climate change
- Healthy weight
- Feeling safe
- Mental health.

The children and young people moved to the Council Chamber in the afternoon, when they presented their findings and ideas to the other pupils, their teachers, senior Council officers, Councillors and the Mayor of Camden.

Feedback from young people

"I enjoyed the day, I got to speak to other young people and shared my ideas."

"I liked my lunch and got to make my own healthy smoothie on the smoothie bike."

"I used listening box to put in my ideas and I got to listen to presentation and take part in presenting."

"It is good to let adults in the council know what we are thinking and what is important and goes well and what does not work well and how we can change and improve things."

The event, which gives children a valuable insight into the process of decision-making and the world of work, is organised locally by Camden Council, Camden Learning and other local partners.

What young people have been involved in since the last issue

WINNERS

Fitzrovia Youth in Action



Youth Safety week, February 2020

Young people get their shout during Youth Safety Week 2020

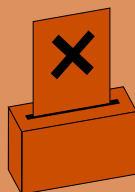
Young people voted on ideas for new projects and ideas to improve youth safety during the Shout Out debate in the Council Chamber Thursday 13 February 2020. The event, organised by Camden Youth Council and Camden's Youth MP, was attended by youth clubs and projects across the borough, as well as local secondary school students.

About 100 young people voted on which of six presentations they preferred at the event. The winning presentation was by young people from Fitzrovia Youth in Action on 'Opportunities for Young People' - looking at ways to offer more attractive options for young people to succeed in their lives legitimately - so they won't be drawn into joining gangs to make money.

Other presentations included a proposal for young people to be given free music studio time, more youth involvement and input into how police carry out stop and searches, a programme of school talks and mentoring, opening more youth clubs and increasing the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12.



Shout Out



CANDIDATES WHO WILL BE STANDING IN THE FORTHCOMING YOUTH MP ELECTION IN MARCH ALSO HAD A CHANCE TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES AND MAKE THEIR FIRST APPEAL FOR LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE TO SUPPORT THEIR CAMPAIGNS TO BECOME THE NEXT YOUTH MP OR DEPUTY YOUTH MPS.



Thank you to the young people who stood up with their ideas for how to solve youth violence. We can and will solve this problem. This event has given me renewed hope for the future.

Athian Akec, Camden's outgoing Youth MP



REAL TALK DEBATES

REAL TALK ANNUAL DEBATES ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 - 21 TO GIVE THEIR VIEWS AND GET INFORMATION ON TOPICS IMPORTANT TO THEM.



In 2019 and 2020, young people discussed issues around:

- Identity – conversations on gender, identity and sexuality
- Youth safety – One Choice Many Lives.



Find out more:
sandra.soteriou@camden.gov.uk

What young people have been involved in since the last issue

Projects for young people with disabilities

COUNT ME IN project

The Count me in project is part of the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS).

It supports young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) aged 13-25 years.

The project helps young people to access youth clubs and engage in various activities providing opportunities for young people to build on their social skills including their self - confidence, self - esteem, teamwork and communication skills.



Reactive Forum

Reactive Forum provides opportunity for young people aged 13 to 18 with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) to be proactive and use decision making to build on their knowledge and have access to a broad range of information.

The forum provides opportunities for disabled young people to have a say on what they think about services and allows opportunities to influence strategic decision making. Advisors and consultants visit sessions to offer information to young people.

This year, young people met with Transport for London, Community safety officers, Employment advisors from Connexions, internet safety advisor, Council policy consultants, Duke of Edinburgh advisor and Brooke advisory service.

The decision makers

Young people from Reactive Forum took part in many events and meetings including decision- making panels such as: Real Talk – one choice many lives, Shout Out, Disability Oversight Panel to provide feedback on services, Youth Safety week event and the Takeover Challenge.



Young people said

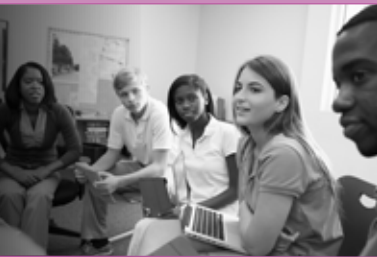
- they enjoyed attending events, they meet Mayor of Camden, other young people and share their ideas
- attending events can be scary at first. It gets easier the more events they go to.



Find out more:
catherine.andrews@camden.gov.uk

What young people have been involved in since the last issue

CAMDEN YOUTH COUNCIL



Who are we?

Camden Youth Council is a non-political, independent group of young people who meet to organise events, discuss and campaign on issues that are important to the youth of Camden.

The Youth Council includes and is led by the Youth MP and Deputy Youth MP's who are elected by young people in Camden every two years.

What do we do?

The Youth MP's and Youth Council members meet with local (Camden Council), regional (London Assembly/Mayor of London) and national (Parliament) decision makers to ensure that the views and interests of young people are taken into consideration when decisions are made which affect their lives and community.

- Organise and host events for young people and/or those who work with young people such as Shout Out, Real talk, Takeover day, etc
- Advise on programmes and initiatives for young people on mental and physical health, youth provision, funding for youth projects, employment, etc.
- Attend meetings and events at council offices, Downing Street, House of Commons, London assembly
- Campaign on issues that affect the lives of young people such as youth violence, mental health, votes at 16, etc.
- Write articles for local and national publications and take part in radio/TV interviews

Who can join?

Anyone aged 13 to 19 who lives in Camden or attends a school, college or youth club in Camden, or works here, is eligible to join Camden Youth Council.

Contact: rashid.ali@camden.gov.uk or camdenyouthmp@outlook.com



TOTAL RESPECT TRAINING

Training programme for social workers and foster carers

Looked after children and care leavers continue to be involved in the planning and delivery of Total Respect training. The training focuses on listening to young people and on key aspects of communicating with children and young people. Good communication is the key to developing a trusting relationship that is vital for safeguarding the child.

The training programme is co-designed with young people and is delivered by them to social workers, foster carers, managers and partner agencies.



Young people receive training

Young people have the opportunity to decide what messages they want to include in the programme and to provide direct feedback to delegates.

Young people receive training and support to help them develop their skills and confidence to be fully engaged in the delivery of the training programme.



Young people deliver training



Emotional wellbeing and mental health

Every year, a team of Young Inspectors undertake research into the views of other service users and professionals about the services provided by partner agencies responsible for safeguarding children.

The Young Inspectors are young people aged 16 to 22. They are selected by interview and are involved in designing and conducting each inspection. The strength of the Young Inspectors is that they can apply their own experiences and knowledge of the service to the inspection.

The aim of the Young Inspection was to:

- Find out young people's perspective on emotional wellbeing and mental health, their interpretation of wellbeing, what they are most worried about and what type of support they find most helpful
- Obtain feedback from parents and foster carers about their experience of supporting their child, who they ask for help, what type of help has made a difference
- Hear from social workers about which emotional difficulties they see most in the children they work with, what support they get from organisations and what other support they may need.

Evaluation of the inspection by Young Inspectors

Sean

Young Inspectors team co-leader

As a team leader, I found it challenging to have a right balance between expressing authority and at the same time remaining friendly and approachable. The project gave me an insight into the world of professional work, their knowledge and vast experience.

Hanifa

Young Inspectors team co-leader

The focus group with a room full of people who don't speak English was a new experience and gave an opportunity to develop new communication skills with the aid of interpreters.

Gjesika

Young Inspector

The most enjoyable part of the project was interviewing professionals like psychologists, who gave information about mental health and how much they work to help young people who have difficulties.

Having discussions with other young people in focus groups helped us to decide what recommendations we should make for services.

Redwan

Young Inspector

Being part of the team has helped me to get better at understanding and speaking English. I enjoyed meeting other young people. The project helped me to feel better about myself and my problems. I have learnt how to look for information on the computer.

Jessica

Young Inspector

What I found most enjoyable was interviewing senior managers. I met different people and I learnt a lot about mental health from different perspectives.

I have gained experience in teamwork, planning focus groups and running focus group discussions. This project has helped me to think about what I want to do in the future.

Jamie-Lee

Young Inspector

I liked meeting and getting to know everyone and learning new things.

The project made me aware that I need to improve my motivation and get used to being able to come on time.

I have gained communication and teamwork skills as I am not used to working with other people. Also, it made me manage my time better and be more organised and independent.

You can see the full report on

Backchat Online – Young Inspectors Reports



Key themes and recommendations

Key themes identified from the consultation responses and from the research are:

- Importance of removing stigma of mental health so young people are able to seek help and talk about their difficulties.
- Universal services like schools, colleges and youth clubs have a key role in providing support and early intervention to young people around mental health.
- Importance of the role of community awareness in recognising early signs of emotional and mental health difficulties.
- Importance of sustained support from the same professional, to enable young people to develop trust and be able to benefit from the support.
- Importance of continuing the specialist support for emotional difficulties and trauma experienced by unaccompanied asylum seeking children currently provided by CAMHS and social care.

Key recommendations for the development of a specialist adolescent-centred approach arising from this inspection, include the following:

- 1 Support young people to be involved in making decisions about the help they receive by providing information on the range of services available.
- 2 Monitor the continuity and stability of staff providing support to ensure that stable and enduring relationships are developed so that young people are able to build secure and trusting relationships.
- 3 Work towards developing ways of reducing the waiting time for CAMHS support.
- 4 Raise awareness amongst professionals about cultural differences in the way mental health is perceived.
- 5 Support families to maintain a good relationship with their child to enable children to share emotional difficulties and be supported by their family.
- 6 Consolidate the existing a range of approaches that help young people with mental health difficulties such as: peer support, individual counselling, group support, group activities and strengths based approaches.
- 7 Continue to develop and provide a greater emphasis on mental health in schools, giving children the language to express their mental health needs and provide a safe space to talk.
- 8 Ensure staff are able to recognise the early signs of emotional difficulty.



Find out more:
elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk
www.backchatonline.org.uk/enquiry_forms/talk_to_us/enquiries/new

MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE



Children in Care Council

My  MDEN

Hi

My name is Shenae and I am a Camden lover. I love the borough I work and live in.

I feel I live in a beautiful borough with places to relax, exercise or just take a breath.

I have really enjoyed connecting with other young people in the Children in Care Council (CiCC).

Our monthly meetings are relaxed but very informative. I learn so much about social care and the council and I get to share my views with other young people.

Recently we launched Pocket PA, an app for care leavers with all essential information for young people about education training, housing and money.

Children in Care Council gives me a voice so I can say how I feel about things and hear the views of my peers.

I meet and make friends in many ways. My apprenticeship forum is another place where I learn and make friends. We have monthly and quarterly forums where we meet with the Head of the apprenticeship team. We get updates and share views of the progress so far. Even while working from home, the monthly forum has continued and I really appreciate that.

Thank you Camden council apprenticeship team!

My Camden council placement has taught me a lot not only about the borough I live in and the people who are behind the scenes of it but also about myself.

I never thought I would get in a Camden apprenticeship as I attended high school in Europe and thought I was underqualified, until Tracey, a worker from my hostel pushed me to apply.

He really believed I could do it do. I applied and was amazed to get an interview.

The apprenticeships interviewer was relaxed, had bright colours and had a beaming personality. I knew this is the placement for me.

I want to give back to the community that gave me a home. So, I am aiming to work as a social worker. I had the best social worker when I came to Camden. I felt comfortable right away and want that for all the young people in the pathway systems.

Let's make tomorrow's Camden brighter today.

SHENAE

GET INVOLVED!

Contact Elzbieta Chandrasena, senior development officer for participation:

elzbieta.chandrasena@camden.gov.uk tel 020 7974 1850 or talk to your social worker or a youth worker.

CORONAVIRUS GUIDE, INFORMATION AND HELP

Coronavirus is an illness that affects people's **breathing** and lungs.

It can be spread from person to person by coughing or touching surfaces or skin that has been contaminated by the virus.

If you are worried, below are some of the organisations you can contact:

Childline.org.uk tel 0800 111

Kooth: an online mental health support for young people www.kooth.com

MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Children's Guide to Coronavirus

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Translation of the information:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/193qQN9I04Dvf0N9L5zeWTiXK_DRbrAxx

Anna Freud: Self-Care and Coping Strategies www.annafreud.org/selfcare/

BBC: How to protect your mental health www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799

CBBC: Video and Questions www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51861089

Young Minds: Feeling Anxious about Coronavirus <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus>