

Say It Loud!

Welcome to another edition of the children in care council's newsletter, we have worked really hard to change the service for all young people to give them a better experience of being a looked after child and a care leaver. We are going to tell you some of the things that the CiCC have been up to the last few months.

Awards Evening

This year the awards evening was held on Friday 24th October. It was the biggest event to date, with over 200 nominations and over 100 young people attending. Cllr Versallion presented the awards and said: "I'm always delighted to attend this awards event, and to hear some of the amazing achievements by these truly inspiring children and young people. They really do prove that if you put your mind to something then the sky's the limit.



Summer Activities

During the summer holiday we arranged a variety of activities for the young people to participate in. We did activities such as Kempston outdoor centre, Gulliver's land and the cinema. During the activities the older children in care council acted as peer mentors, this would give them a chance to ask any questions that they may be afraid to ask their foster carers or social workers about.

Children's Commissioner

Two members of our CiCC have been attending meetings with the Children's Commissioner young expert group in London. We have been meeting to change the national survey that goes out every year to the young people, this is so we can get views and opinions on how good services are and how they can be improved. We have enclosed a leaflet with information on where to find the survey and would be grateful if you could complete this so we can also use the results to make things better in Central Bedfordshire.

Christmas Events

Monday 22nd December – Flitwick Village Hall. Christmas Party for young people over 16. For more information or to book a place please speak to your worker.

Tuesday 23rd December – Pizza Hut & Cineworld, Bedford. For young people aged 8-15, places are limited please contact Marie Short on 0300 300 4881.

Introducing Sue Harrison



We have a new Director of Children's services, her name is Sue Harrison (pictured left), we met up with her to introduce the CiCC and what we do. Sue is really interested in what our views are and we will be meeting with her to give her updates. Sue has written a blog for children and young people and we have added it to the back of our newsletter.

We looked forward to working with Sue and welcome her to Central Bedfordshire.

THANKS FOR READING OUR NEWSLETTER! DAYTONA, CHARLOTTE & AMY!



SUE'S BLOG FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Hello,

You may well be wondering who is this person writing a blog? Well, I am your new Director of Children's Services. I have a wonderful job as I am responsible for making sure that young people in Central Bedfordshire are supported by good quality services from the moment they are born until they reach adulthood. These services include Children's Centres, youth work, schools and social work teams. I have already been able to visit some wonderful schools including Redbourne Upper School, where I was pleasantly surprised to find a real life farm as part of the school! I saw some amazing art work produced by students at Robert Bloomfield Middle School.

This is my first blog written especially for young people. I write a blog each month which you are all welcome to read, but it is aimed at an adult audience. I hope that you will tell me whether you have found this blog interesting to read and whether you think it would be a good idea for me to write a regular blog for young people. Thank you to Amy, Charlotte and Daytona, from the Children in care Council, who gave me useful feedback on my first attempt!

I am sure you have all experienced starting a new school. It's an exciting time, a chance to make new friends but like any new experience there are nervous feelings too! Starting a new job is a bit like starting a new school. There are a lot of new faces and names to learn! I am very grateful for all the support that everyone has given me since I arrived in Central Bedfordshire council six weeks ago. From my secretary, Annette, who has made sure I get to the right place at the right time, to our head teachers who have kindly invited me to their schools, and all the staff who are so proud of the children they support.

I have two grown up children. My son lives and works in Switzerland, and my daughter is studying for an English degree at Leeds University. My daughter had to spend a considerable amount of time in hospital as she was growing up, so I understand how for some young people there are additional challenges that are part of life. Overcoming these challenges is daily routine for some of you and I am committed to making sure that all children and young people have the best support to help you make the most of your individual talents.

I would like to find out more from you and discover what you are most proud of as a young citizen of Central Bedfordshire. Perhaps you have questions for me or ideas of services you think I should go and visit. Perhaps you would like to tell me more about your experiences growing up here. I am very interested in your views and hope I will meet you when I am visiting schools or at one of our young people's summit which I will be telling you more about next time.

Sue Harrison