



# Next Steps

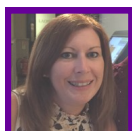
## Welcome to the Spring Edition of our newsletter for those of you aged 16+.

We want to make this newsletter full of lots of useful information to help you think about the choices you have to make as you get older.

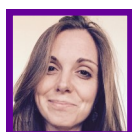
We also want to hear about you and what you are up to! Email us at [VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk) or via the Kent Cares Town website.

Our Participation Team is growing which means we have more time and opportunities to get out and meet you. This really is the best part of our job! Our team is led by Jo. Sophia, Tia and Andrea work in East and South Kent, and Chelsea, Tom, Robert, Sarah and Reece work in North and West Kent. Read On to find out more about what we have achieved over the last few months!

## VSK PARTICIPATION TEAM



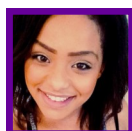
Jo



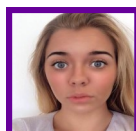
Sarah



Andrea



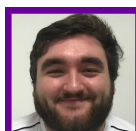
Sophia



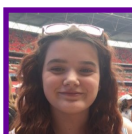
Chelsea



Reece



Tom



Tia



Rob

## Included in this Issue:

- YAC
- 16+ Bowling Activity Day
- Kent Cares Town
- Vlogger interview
- Mind Of My Own
- Revision Tips
- Care Leavers Covenant
- Young Lives Foundation
- Apprenticeships
- Kent Cares Town

## Jake Kemp, VSK Apprentice

I joined KCC as a Business Support Apprentice in April 2018 and Over the last year I have learnt many new skills and completed many challenges. I have had the opportunity to try new things, this included supporting the organisation of a Conference, Awards Events and meeting other members of KCC. In my every day role, I provide administrative support for VSK locality teams. One of my responsibilities is also maintaining the Kent Pledge laptops.

Being an apprentice has also helped me gain qualification as well as experiencing a working environment, unlike being stuck in a class room. Being an apprentice has also given me opportunities for the future. I am currently aiming to work as part of an ICT team within KCC to further my knowledge and career prospects

From my experience I would highly recommend becoming an Apprentice as it builds skills, knowledge and most of all you have fun.



# YAC

The Young Adult Council (YAC) is a forum for young people in care and care leavers aged 16+. We discuss the current issues around the care system and come up with ways to make things better for everyone.

YAC meets up on the first Thursday of every month. We always have food and we will pay your travel costs to get to the meetings too.

At the meetings, we like to make them as fun as we can yet still focusing on current issues that young people face in care.



We had a very busy YAC Meeting in March. Not only was it our first meeting in East Kent but we were pleased to welcome 4 new members to the group.

For the first half of the meeting, we were very pleased to welcome a film company known for making tv series like One Born Every Minute and 24 Hours in Police Custody. They explained to the group that they are in the research phase for a documentary about foster care made from young people's perspectives. They had come to YAC to find out their opinions about a show involving young people, what they thought might be the positives (and negatives!) of making a documentary and the topics young people thought should be covered. YAC were very interested in the film company's plans and felt that it might be a good way to challenge the misconceptions and stigma that surround children in care, as well as showing the diversity of children in care and care leavers and the potential they all have.

After a short break, YAC then welcomed the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Champions. The Champions are a group of young people who have come to the UK without family to support them. They have chosen to join together to increase their knowledge of living in the UK so that they can live safely and independently. They have taken the opportunity to complete training courses such as fire safety training and now aim to spread their learning about living in the UK with other young people who have arrived in the UK more recently. They are also starting a football team in the near future! YAC loved learning about their experiences of living in the UK and were particularly impressed by their English skills. Everyone thought it would be great if the group came to YAC more regularly and enjoyed spending some time socialising at the end of the meeting (and eating lots of pizza!).

**Contact Us:**

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**We love hearing from you**

## 16+ Bowling Activity Day

During the February half term, the Participation Team held our latest 16+ event at Hollywood Bowl in Maidstone.

Nearly 20 young people attended – Young People still in Care, Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People. It was great to see so many Young People getting to know each other whilst bowling, dancing and eating lots of chips and nachos! We were also really pleased that some of the Care Leavers 18+ Service Personal Advisers were able to join in the fun. Not only were some of them really competitive, but they were happy to get stuck in, dancing to the Macarena and Cha-Cha Slide!

Overall, the evening went really well and we can't wait for our next 16+ Event – an Escape Room! These events and activities are a great opportunity to meet with other Young People, make friends and have lots of fun. There's nearly always food and if you travel independently, we can support you with paying for this too!

If you want to find out more about future 16+ Events, be sure to contact Chelsea



### Contact Chelsea:

**Email:** [VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk)

**Office:** 03000 418328

**Mobile:** 07773 080864

## Recruitment and Selection Training

Rob recently took part in the Recruitment and Selection Training. Below is an account of his day.

I was taking part in the recruitment and selection training along with other young people. Firstly we looked at the recruitment process as a whole, from posting a job advert right through to a final job offer. Throughout the day we then looked at different areas of recruitment such as positive body language, unconscious bias and how they influence who an employer could pick.

There were also opportunities to work as part of a team in an exercise to show how important it is to consider other opinions and their reasons for making the choices that they make.

Another great skill we practised was taking part in mock interviews, it gave us a great chance to write our own interview questions and then try them out and also gauge the responses of the interviewees. This was also invaluable as when you sit on interview panels within KCC you get to interview all sorts of different people from different back grounds.

One of the training exercises was to look at the qualities of a Social Worker and what we thought anyone considering this role should have. Overall, I think that the training was really fun and went really well. We all enjoyed it and it made us really think about what to look for and how to act whilst doing the interviews. I'm looking forward to sitting on an interview panel with some of these young people soon!

If you would like to attend training in the future, please contact us at [VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk)



## Competition

**Share your biggest achievement for your chance to win 40 hours of driving lessons with the AA**

IMO, the website where Children in Care and Care Leavers can share their stories and experiences, is running an amazing competition for teenagers over 16 in care and Care Leavers up to the age of 25.

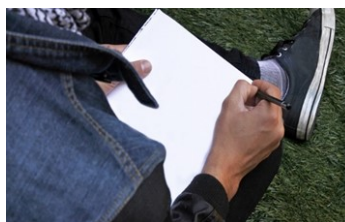
IMO is asking you to send in a blog post, short story, article, poem, photograph, video, vlog or podcast about your biggest achievement for your chance to win a full set of driving lessons. As long as it fits the theme, you can be as creative as you want! You could write about how you coped with being in care or moving to a new placement, passing your exams, starting a new job or taking on a new challenge. It's entirely up to you!

The competition will be judged by Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England. The lucky winner will win 40 hours of driving lessons from the AA, whilst three runners up will each receive a pair of Curzon cinema tickets and a year long subscription to Tastecard.

To find out where to send your entry, check out the T&Cs and find the competition entry form,

go to <https://imohub.org.uk/competition-win-driving-lessons-the-aa/>

The deadline is midnight on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019 so get creating!



## Revision Tips:

1. Make a plan—create yourself an revision timetable and try to stick to it
2. Make summary notes—this will make information easier to retain
3. Put aside specific hours in the day for revision—decide what time of the day you work best
4. Try not to revise more than two subject a day— you don't ant to overload your brain
5. Eat properly— a healthy diet is good for the brain
6. Take lots of breaks— sitting too long without a break is counter productive
7. Use diagrams— visual learning is an effective way of retaining information
8. Test yourself—or get someone else to test you on what you have revised
9. Add colour— this helps categorize subjects and aids effective learning
10. Reward yourself—have treat or phone a friend or do something you enjoy
11. Find a quiet space— turn off all electronic devices so you are not distracted
12. Exercise—a healthy body is a healthy mind.



Sophia is a radio presenter, Oxford University graduate, foster care advocate and vlogger.

You can watch her videos on her YouTube channel, Care Leaver Sophia. We decided to ask her a few questions to find out more!



### **What prompted you to start making videos for Children in Care and Care Leavers?**

When I first went into the foster care system it was during a summer, and my social worker wasn't contactable. I had all of these important questions about my new situation, but no one to ask. After scouring Google for answers but finding none, I turned to YouTube to see if there were maybe any vlogs or advice videos about the UK foster care system. After finding nothing, the idea of a YouTube channel aimed at young care experienced people stuck in my mind and began to develop. This January, I decided it was time to bring the idea to fruition and made it my New Years Resolution to launch 'Care Leaver Sophia'.

### **What can Young People expect to see when they watch your videos?**

Predominately my videos are aimed at those still in the system or recent care leavers and they offer advice on coming of age topics. However, I try and stay inclusive and also include material for social workers, foster carers and the general public. In future videos I'll be discussing topics such as job applications, finances, living on your own, holidays, new foster parents, and education. Later in the year I'll be posting some videos with celebrities who also come from care backgrounds. I've been excited to learn that there are some pretty famous people who have care experience, so watch this space!

### **Why do you think it is important that Children in Care and Care Leavers have their voices heard?**

OMG. So many reasons. When I first went into the system, a police officer told me I should lie to my school friends and not tell them I was a foster child. This was because he was worried my friends and my friends parents might get the "wrong idea" and associate me with the unfair stereotype of "foster children" the press enjoyed writing about. I never want another child to feel like they have to hide who they are out of fear of being stereotyped against. Foster care is a big part of society and I want to work to improve the knowledge of it in mainstream society. By telling our stories we are BREAKING DOWN this negative stereotype. We have the potential to change the connotations surrounding the words 'foster child' for the better.

### **Where do you see yourself in 5 years?**

Running the music scene in London no but seriously, I love music, it's what I studied at Oxford, and I'm really good at it. I'd like to work my way up in the industry (think Simon Cowell - but lower waisted trousers and into Jazz music). However, I also want to keep being an advocate for foster children and would like to be involved with human rights and politics. I went to the World Government Summit earlier this year and really enjoyed interacting, brainstorming and presenting ideas in front of world leaders. The dream would be working on children's rights with the United Nations, and I'm looking into internships around this topic for the summer. I guess we'll have to see what happens... Also, I'd really like to get a dog!

# Care Leavers Covenant

The Covenant is a promise that was made by private, public or voluntary organisations to give the support needed for care leavers aged 16-25. This is mainly the skills to help them live independently.

All young people who leave care at the age of 16, 17 or 18 are provided with support in the form of the Local Offer. This should include help in the transition to living independently, support with funding accommodation and with any other costs of participating in education, training and employment.

However, to do this, wider society also needs to play a key part, which is why the Care Leavers Covenant comes in. Down load the app and take a look



0800 077 3557 INFO@MYCOVENANT.ORG.UK



## Are you in care or a care leaver?

Struggling to get your voice heard or people to understand you?  
Need support at meetings? Unhappy about the support or care you receive?  
Want to make a complaint?  
Do you know your rights and entitlements as a young person in care or care leaver? Want to find out more?

YLF advocates can help you tell professionals how you are feeling and your views about important decisions. They help you to understand your rights and entitlements and can support you to raise any concerns you have about the care you receive.  
Our advocacy service is confidential and independent of Social Services



If you would like to find out more or receive advocacy support

Call us on our freephone number : 0808 1640 096

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



Contact the VSK Participation Team for more information:

Email: [VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk)

# Apprenticeships:

**Not wanting to go to college? Want to go into the world of work?**

**Why don't you apply for an apprenticeship.**



It's a real job, with hands on experience, a salary and the chance to train while you work. Apprenticeships create a dynamic way of working while teaching you the ins and outs of the job, through practical working. This means you are able to earn money while you gain the necessary skills and knowledge that you will need for your chosen career path.

**Did you know:**

- Apprenticeships are available throughout different job roles, within many different organisations.
- These apprenticeships are open for all age groups above the age of 16. This could be whether you are leaving school or looking to get on the job ladder, whether you have been working for a few years or are looking for a new career path.
- They normally take between one to six years to complete depending on the type of apprenticeship, the level you are studying and your personal experience.

**But why should you choose an apprenticeship?**

- Apprenticeships normally build confidence, while learning new skills, able to do better in your current job or take steps towards getting a different job.
- You will earn a salary from day one.
- As an apprentice, you will be able to gain transferable skills such as working in teams, problem solving, communication and using new technology as well as developing the skills you will need for your chosen career path.
- Best part of an apprenticeship is that 9 out of 10 apprentices continue in employment or further training after their apprenticeship.

**ALSO:**

**If you are a care leaver aged 16-24, you will receive a £1,000 bursary payment to support you in the first year of your apprenticeship.**

**How much will it cost?**

Your training is cost free. You will not have to pay a single penny towards your training or assessment. This cost will be covered by your employer and training provider.

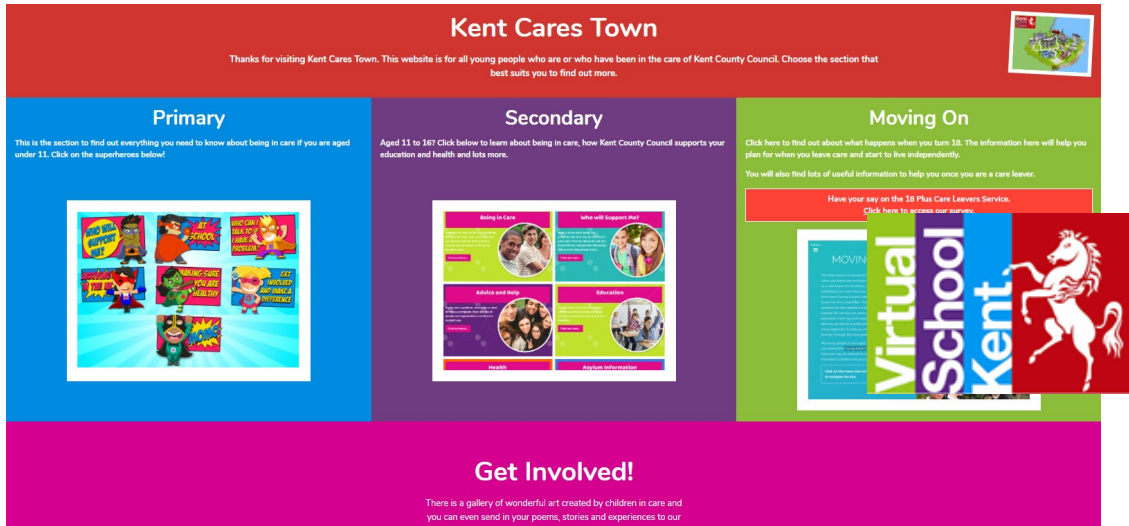
If you are under 25 and have been in local authority care, you should tell your employer and training provider as they should be able to get additional funding from government to support you in your apprenticeship.

**For more advice and information about apprenticeships:  
Visit <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>**

**Contact the Apprenticeships helpline at:  
[nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk) or on 0800 015 0400**

# KENT CARES TOWN

## MOVING ON AND CARE LEAVERS PORTAL



**Kent Cares Town** is for all young people who are or who have been in the care of Kent County Council. You can visit the website find out about what happens when you turn 18. The information there will help you plan for when you leave care and start to live independently.

<https://kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk/>

# Mind of My Own

The Mind Of My Own app has had an update, have a look at the new logos on the website below

Just a reminder that the Mind of My Own app is a great, safe and secure way of contacting your PA, Social Worker and other KCC workers. Just sign up for an account and follow the easy sign up process to get going.

Check it out at:

How's it going?  
Use the slider to show how happy you are.



Slide me!



Angry



Enthusiastic



Unsafe



Hopeful