



## the children in care council

### ANNUAL REPORT

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

ESCC Children in Care Council has been well established since 2008. The fifth CICC commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Due to Covid, they will serve for an extended 12 months until summer 2023.

## Introduction

The Children in Care Council continues to meet monthly. Its members have stayed focussed and committed to their role throughout the past year, this ensures other young people's voices have been heard. It is crucial that the views, wishes and feelings of cared for young people are considered in all that we do on their behalf in Children's Services. This keeps the work of the CICC prominent and as important as ever.

The CICC composition was reviewed and in the past year further recruitment has been made to ensure membership is as inclusive as possible. This will continue going forward ensuring proportionate representation from black and minority ethnic groups and the inclusion of young people with neurodiversity and additional needs are represented.

The following summary report outlines the areas of work the CICC have covered this year and my thanks go to the CICC members and CICC coordinator for all of their dedicated hard work.

Tracey Millen  
Practice Manager  
Fostering/CICC



CICC members visiting Silver Birches residential care home

## What is the Children in Care Council (CICC)

The Children in Care Council is a group of cared for young people aged 12 - 18 all living in East Sussex. They are a representative voice for all children and young people looked after by East Sussex County Council. CICC members hold a key role in raising issues affecting children in care both locally and nationally.

The CICC is supported and managed by Placement Support, Children's Services.

## Membership

CICC Membership strives to be as inclusive as it currently comprises of 16 young people (8 male and 7 female and 1 trans young person) aged 12 - 18. 6 young people are not Neurotypical and may have additional needs. 9 are White British, 1 is from a Traveller background, 3 are White/Asian, 1 is White/Black Caribbean, 1 is Black.

In addition, we have two members attending university who participate during holidays or virtually when possible.

## Summary of CICC activity

April 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 - March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023

### Participation

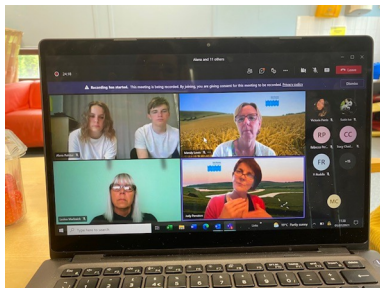
Participation this year has resumed to pre covid levels.

CICC staff deliver sessions and support with a nurturing approach, enabling the young people to feel valued, which in turn encourages long term commitment and participation. Communication, although this can be done via technology, it is primarily done by post, as members have expressed their preference for receiving their own mail.

This has been a positive year for CICC members and their role, their confidence has grown significantly and many of the senior members are taking on bigger roles, in advocating for the voices of cared for young people in East Sussex at a national level.

Solid friendships have been made and they have continued to support and socialise with each other outside of the meetings.

CICC's time together is very limited, the formal meetings are only once a month but without members continuing their CICC work outside of these meetings their voice would not have such a positive impact. They give up hours of their spare time to get their work done. This demonstrates passion and commitment to their role.



CICC members on a teams call with Virtual School



Our Care Rally - The Houses of Parliament



CYPT Conference

They have participated in **89** opportunities to promote their work to get the views of cared for children heard and promoted and have acted as representatives for CICC in a supportive or “expert by experience” role.  
(Appendix 1)

## National Participation

**It's our care.**

7 CICC members along with 87 cared for young people from all over the UK, attended a day at Westminster to lobby Parliament about issues they feel are important. Our young people raised concerns around education and placement stability with one member having a one on one discussion with the education secretary at the time Nadhim Zahawi.



## Independent care review

2 CICC members were invited to a zoom meeting with Josh McAlister and other care experienced young people, to discuss his recommendations from the independent care review. They raised questions about Josh's ideas for a national advocacy service and also how young people not meeting the threshold for CAMHS will be supported with their mental health needs.

## APPG

CICC have resumed their post covid attendance at the national APPG (All Parliamentary Party Group) sessions. These meetings are made up from cross party parliamentarians and are aimed at promoting the voice of care experienced young people. These are usually themed, with siblings and mental health services covered this year. East Sussex will endeavour to raise at least one question on behalf of East Sussex.



## SUSS it (Speak up Sessions)

A CICC member along with the Co-ordinator attended some of the 36 activities giving 66 young people the opportunity to speak out and speak up if they wanted to. It is through this engagement that young people have the opportunity to ask for help with individual issues. (*Appendix 2*)

As expected, issues involving technology have risen. The digital hive has been an excellent resource for helping and signposting young people with issues in their online lives. We expect technology to be a feature in the future, as it has been proven that a significant amount of issues that young people ask for help with, have a digital connection, because the digital world continues to become more embedded in young people's lives.

There has also been an increase in issues with education, the majority of these being requests for extra help. We expect this is due to students all still trying to catch up with their education after the pandemic.



There has also been an increase in general questions and signposting requests. These are often sent in through the CICC email address or can come from adults working with young people.

### **Digital Ambassadors**

CICC members who are digital ambassadors have continued to participate in sessions run by the digital in care project, independently from their CICC role. They have been creating content for the successful digital hive website and have promoted resources for keeping cared for young people safe and resilient online. They have had the opportunity to work with the newest virtual reality technology and use 3D printers. This project will continue into 2023.

### **Corporate Parents and Senior Management Team**

CICC members have met with members of the senior management team and corporate parents several times this year, building a better understanding for each other's roles. They are keen to continue this relationship going forward into 2023, with a new approach in how the voice of young people is heard within the corporate parenting panel.



CICC Members with the Lead Member for Children & Families - Cllr Bob Bowdler

### **University Masters Students**

CICC members facilitated their annual two-hour face to face lecture at Brighton University with social workers undertaking their master's degree. They discussed their CICC role and showcased many of their projects. They delivered a quiz, as well as an interactive "separation and loss" exercise. The University fed back that the lecture was extremely powerful and thought-provoking for all post graduate students.

### **CICC Partnership working.**

#### Pan Sussex

CICC members worked with the CICC from Brighton and Hove to co-produce an evaluation framework, for relationship based social work practice. This was hugely successful with both groups keen to collaborate again.

## Youth Cabinet

Working alongside other youth voice groups is something CICC value. They have made positive links over the years with Youth Cabinet, SEND ambassadors and other youth voice groups within East Sussex. This has brought opportunities for exciting collaborative work, as well as increasing confidence in public speaking and interpersonal skills such as communication and negotiation. They have worked together to discuss council budgets (RPPR) and are currently reviewing new tender submissions for the YES (Youth Employment Service) provision.

## Children and Young People's Trust

CICC supported a refresh of the East Sussex children and young people's plan and its priorities at the annual trust event. This was attended by several youth voice groups as well as adult decision makers. The plan's priorities were discussed further, which enabled links to be developed between decision makers and young people to influence change.

## Foundations for our Future.

Promoting positive mental health and the lack of appropriate support is high on the CICC's priorities. 6 members have undertaken responsibility for representing cared for children, in a consultation project for mental health and wellbeing run by NHS Sussex, Priority 1-54 and ESCC. They have so far consulted and given their views on social prescribing and accessing mental health services offered for young people.

## **Training, Accreditation and Volunteering**

### **Volunteering**

All CICC members have received certificates for the volunteering hours they have completed this year for their CICC role and work in their local communities. The average hours spent volunteering over the past year is **102**, which is amazing.



### **Funding**

CICC have secured an extra **£707.88** in extra funding this year from the HAF and COMF Government scheme. This was used for 2 enriching team building activities - tenpin bowling and Roller Skating during the summer holidays.

Further funding applications of **£330** were successful for life guarding training and online food hygiene courses, for cared for young people to enhance their CV's. - Thank you to ESFCA for their kind generosity.

## CICC Participation (Appendix 1)

### DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF ACTIVITY

10 x Full Meetings  
 2 x Targeted Meetings  
 4 x Smaller Group Meetings  
 26 x Individual Support  
 12 x Junior Suss it  
 12 x Senior Suss it  
 12 x Inter Suss it  
 1 x APPG Meeting  
 1 x Our Care - national rally  
 1 x Skills to foster session  
 1 x Award ceremony  
 1 x Junior award ceremony  
 1 x session with through care group  
 1 x HOS Interview panel  
 1 x University lecture  
 1 x LAC nurse consult  
 3 x new members  
 2 x foundations for future Meetings  
 6 x Digital in care sessions  
 2 x Buddy sessions  
 1 x ANV National Survey  
 1 x NHS Survey  
 1 x Health watch survey  
 2 x digital safety surveys  
 1 x Independent care review survey  
 1 x meeting to feedback on independent care review recommendations to  
 Josh MacAllister  
 1 x IRO consult  
 1 x CYPT annual conference  
 2 x Lansdowne Secure unit interviews  
 4 x NQSW interviews  
 4 x ESCC Interviews  
 5 x Food Hygiene training  
 1 x 3 Month Summer Placement  
 2 x Meetings with Cllr Bowdler Lead Member for Children & Families  
 2 x Meeting with Ade Sewell Operations Manager  
 3 x Meetings with Tracey Millen Practice Manager  
 2 x Meetings with Alison Jeffery - DCS  
 2 x Visits to Silver Birches residential home  
 1 x Celebration trip to Theatre  
 1 x recruitment ESSCP  
 1 x RPPR Session  
 1 x YES tender review  
 2 x connected practice co production sessions.  
 1 x Meeting with Police Service  
 1 x survey for Childrens commissioner's office website feedback

## SUSS IT (Appendix 2)

### Issues raised with CICC 48

#### Theme

Social Worker	2
Contact	8
Placement / Respite	5
Other	6
Education / Employment	13
Digital	8
Mental Health	3
National Insurance	3
Signposting	2
Social workers not responding	2

#### You Said - We Did

You Said	We Did
<i>CICC or other cared for young people</i>	<i>CICC or teams within ESCC</i>
You wanted your key messages for social workers to be heard and refreshed within the teams.	A CICC member attended a SW team meeting to discuss these and other CICC work.
The waiting list for CICC was so long and you have asked several times when you would be able to join.	We held 2 taster days for some young people on the waiting list to have the opportunity to try CICC work. 3 male members were recruited from this.
National Insurance numbers are still taking too long to arrive and are preventing you from starting work.	You raised this concern with Alison Jeffery Director for Children's Services and members of the corporate parenting panel.
It is important young people have an involvement in training adults who work with you.	CICC facilitated a lecture at Brighton University with Students doing their social work master's degree.  CICC continue to participate in interview panels for staff recruitment within ESCC.
<i>You Said</i> <i>CICC or other cared for young people</i>	<i>We Did</i> <i>CICC or teams within ESCC</i>
You are keen to rebuild broken links made with other CICC's and youth voice groups before the pandemic.	Joint sessions have been held with the new youth cabinet and other youth voice groups to discuss issues such as mental health for

	<p>young people and the East Sussex children's plan.</p> <p>CICC has renewed membership for Sussex clubs for young people, A National Voice and Become to broaden opportunities for networking locally and nationally.</p>
You wanted to improve links with young people living in residential care.	<p>Some of CICC attended the official opening of Silver Birches residential home to find out about residential care living.</p> <p>All of the CICC visited Silver Birches to find out about residential care and are keen to set up regular meetings once it is open.</p> <p>One young person living in residential care joined CICC and has attended a meeting. We will continue to support attendance from young people living in residential care whenever possible.</p>
You wanted a CV to apply for part time work.	<p>You had a one-to-one support session in which a CV was written and printed for you.</p> <p>This has been used as a template for many other young people to access this year.</p>
Some young people did not want to change social workers when they reach 16.	You raised this with IRO's and put your cases forward. This was accepted and two young people were able to keep their social workers.
You felt that young people do not always accept they need mental health support when it is offered but realise this when they have declined the help and then it is too late. Therefore, more money must be allocated for MH support.	You highlighted this to Josh MacAllister.
You feel that young person friendly information is needed to help encourage cared for young people to attend their MVM (my voice matters) meetings.	You met with Dawn Price safeguarding operations manager to discuss developing a film explaining the new MVM process in a young person friendly way.
<p><b>You Said</b></p> <p><i>CICC or other cared for young people</i></p>	<p><b>We Did</b></p> <p><i>CICC or teams within ESCC</i></p>
Some young people who are no longer in foster care got in touch to ask to be part of CICC.	They were put in touch with the participation worker for leaving care who has offered participation opportunities for older young people.



The rucksack project should continue into 2023	We still have sufficient funding to ensure this will continue throughout 2023
Many young people do not have CV's that they are confident about, and this can affect getting part time work.	We secured 15 online Food Hygiene certificates and advertised these in the 2023 newsletter. These can be incorporated in your CV'S.
You want to ensure all children cared for by East Sussex know about CICC and can contact you if needed. You are also keen to reinforce positive messages and share experiences.	A newsletter was produced in early 2023 and posted to all card for young people age 8+ including those who are placed out of county and in agency placements.
That too many young people were reporting meetings are being held in school time and that this was a broken pledge promise.	You raised this with the IRO team, SMT and the Virtual School. Designated teachers will be reminded about this and statistics for this are being reviewed.
You felt many young people feel that the changes to the My Voice Matters meetings are in name only and there is not enough information explaining the difference between MVM and the old LAC Review process.	<p>You told the participation worker for the IRO team your views and ideas to improve attendance at MVM meetings. There will be stronger links going forward between CICC and IRO's to improve participation.</p> <p>A new IRO link has been identified and will be introduced in May 2023.</p>
You said you wanted more control in decisions made about your medical appointments.	<p>We met with a LAC Nurse and you to discuss your views on medical appts and annual health reviews.</p> <p>You filled out a survey commissioned by CIC specialist nurses about this.</p>
You said you did not like the name LACCAMHS and also that the service doesn't help those who are not in crisis but need help urgently.	You met with Rhian Taylor from LAC CAMHS and fed back all of your views and ideas. This will be taken back and form part of the service review for CAMHS.
You are keen to ensure there is good quality MH Support for YP as well as wanting to promote talking about mental health and wellbeing.	Several members have joined foundations for our future (ffof) - a group of young people working together in partnership with NHS and Priority 1-54 to campaign for this.
<b>You Said</b>  <i>CICC or other cared for young people.</i>	<b>We Did</b>  <i>CICC or teams within ESCC</i>
You are concerned that there is not enough MH provision for those YP who do not meet the threshold for CAMHS but need support.	<p>You raised this with Alison Jeffery DCS and members of the corporate parenting board.</p> <p>You raised this with Josh MacAllister during a teams call</p>

	<p>You raised this during FFOF meetings</p> <p>You raised this with LACCAMHS</p>
There are many issues that siblings face when living in care.	<p>You raised this at the APPG ( national all parliamentary party group).</p> <p>Nicola McGeown has suggested we could hold a possible webinar about this.</p>
That adults do not always get it right when it comes to understanding your digital lives.	You are part of the digital in care ambassador project working on keeping YP in care resilient online. This will eventually include training for adults working with YP
You are keen to contribute to National Policy and the Government agenda.	We took 8 members of the CICC to Westminster to lobby during the 'its our care' day in which you mt with other CICC's and spoke up to Government ministers about your views
You say that adults still continue to do things that make you feel awkward about being in care.	You wrote an article for the virtual school newsletter, which will be shared internally explaining some of the 'little' things that adults could change which would help this.
CICC were concerned for potential increases in mental health issues following COVID.	CICC raised this at RPPR and asked how the Council are ensuring that young people with mental health difficulties are well supported.
CICC wonder how the council help support those not accessing education or training especially if the drop out of school.	CICC raised this at RPPR and asked how the Council are working to ensure that young people have access to training, activities, and employment opportunities.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report, highlighting the continued essential work of the CICC.

Meshelle Carmody.



CICC Group



CICC collaboration - Connected Practice