

Listen!

The newsletter for Children
Looked After and Care Leavers

Visions of Success Newsletter,
Issue 1, 2017

WHAT IS VISIONS OF SUCCESS? (VOS)

Having a say and making a difference

Grown up in care in Lambeth and want your voice to be heard?

Want to meet other young people in care in Lambeth and share your views with Senior Managers at the Council?

Visions of Success is Lambeth's voice for Children in Care and Care Leavers. It is Lambeth's Children in Care Council. This means that it is designed by you for you.

What do we do?

The purpose of VOS is to represent young people in care to make a difference by coming up with ideas to improve the service you get from Lambeth council. VOS members have experienced life in care and aim to reach out to other young people in care to get their views to decision makers at Lambeth Council. VOS is also a great way to meet people and make new friends.

Where and When?

VOS meet on the first Wednesday of every month from 5.30-7.30pm at International House in Brixton.

Important info:

Interpreters can be booked if English isn't your first language

Child care can be provided if you are a parent

If you can't attend a meeting, maybe because you don't live in Lambeth, you can join through a Skype call as long as you have an Outlook account

You will receive a **£10 Love2Shop voucher** for every meeting you take part in whether in person, over the phone or on Skype.

LAMBETH HUB LAUNCHED

Visions of Success (VOS) launched The Lambeth Hub at Pop Brixton on the 30th May to an audience of adult professionals. The audience included; local Jobcentres, Young Lambeth Cooperative, Barnardo's, Councillors and Social Work managers. Young people spoke about their ideas, performed poetry and told personal stories.

The Lambeth Hub will be a relaxed space where young people in care can network with each other and adult professionals. This could then lead to older young people mentoring younger ones and helping with independent living skills. Pop Brixton have agreed to provide free spaces for The Lambeth Hub so we look forward to seeing you there soon! For more details on both VOS and The Lambeth Hub please contact Victor Searle, Participation Officer (contact details on Page 4.)



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PROGRESS MADE ON SAVINGS!!!



Based on their own experiences, VOS think that many young people are unaware of Lambeth savings procedures, such as; a minimum of £5 per week should be saved for under 18's, IRO's monitor savings at review meetings and that Care Leavers also receive an ISA account of around £200 when they turn 18.

VOS believe that Lambeth should be making more of an effort to keep track of young people's savings . The following suggestions have been made to councillors and directors at Lambeth Council by VOS:

⇒ *Those who have joined care closer to their 18th birthday should have a bigger savings commitment. Simply because they could be placed in the same position as someone who has up to 10 years of savings.*

⇒ *There could be a section on the care plan that records savings.*

⇒ *Savings should be monitored each time a young person changes placement.*

Lambeth are now devising a new approach to savings with these suggestions in mind. Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers have also been asked to record and discuss savings more often.

HAVE YOUR SAY

A VOS member has led on creating a survey for Lambeth's care population. With help from other VOS members she has edited the questions and thought about the layout and design of the survey.

We know that not everyone wants to be in VOS or just doesn't have the time. For VOS, the survey is an opportunity to represent young people who aren't involved in VOS. If you're not in VOS this is your opportunity to be heard.

The survey has been mailed out. Please complete it when it comes your way. Contact Victor Searle if you don't have a copy (contact details on page 4)

"Those who have joined care closer to their 18th birthday should have a bigger savings commitment. Simply because they could be placed in the same position as someone who has up to 10 years of savings." - VOS Member

JUNIOR VISIONS

Junior Visions is Lambeth's Children in Care council for 5-11 year olds. It is the younger version of Visions of Success. Junior Visions have parties during the school holidays. As well as having fun at these parties, Junior Visions talk about their experiences in care.

Contact arrangements were discussed at the Junior Visions Easter party. Most young people said they would like to see more of their families. An exercise will now be done to find out who in your family you would like to see and what you would like to do with them.

At the Spring Half Term party, Junior Visions discussed school and PEPs. Information from the discussions was shared with Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and the Virtual School. This information will affect future plans made by the Virtual School.

The next Junior Visions party will be on Wednesday 14th February 2018 from 10am-1pm at the:

Henry Fawcett Children's Centre
Clayton Street
Kennington
London
SE11 5BZ

Please contact Victor Searle, Participation Officer (contact details on page 4)

LETTER TO THE CARE KID BY ASMARA CAMMOCK

Dear Social Services, Dear Foster Carers, Dear Social Workers, Duty Managers, Reviewing Officers, Dear Youth Workers, Charities, Agencies, Safe Guarding Officers and Pastoral Care Teachers.

I just wanted to let you know that I made it out. I made it out without a stereotype in sight. I made it out without a criminal record, without a baby, without failing school, without turning to drugs or alcohol. I made it out without being bitter, or angry. I made it out of the care system.

To my foster carers who instilled love and care, to those who drove abuse or spite, to those who saw money signs, who enjoyed the badge of "good citizen", to those who loved me the best they knew how. I made it out of care.

I remember being around 4 or 5 years old and being picked up by my social worker and being whisked off to somewhere strange, somewhere far, but all too nearby. To a new place I was told would be my home. There I found new people, new glares and stares, new energy, new yeses and no's. I found fear and pain, both physical and verbal, I found theft and bullying both by me and to me. I found manipulation and gain. I found my skin, I found my Afro hair, I found my teeth and cavities and I even found an aeroplane, I found Malaysia and Thailand. I didn't find my mother, I didn't find my street, my road or my home. I did not find the Jamaican lady sitting on the block waiting passionately to cane row my messy mane. I didn't find police escorting me from my nursery to the station when my mother had somehow not turned up to collect me.

Who knows of the things I found and did not find, on all the journeys to places "they" said would be my home, on all the introductions to kids who'd already decided they did not like me. To the new schools with fresh shiny uniforms, to primary school teachers who called me bright, when they knew I was just "nuff" and to the after school club leaders who saw all of my sparkle. To Nikki and Gina at PlayPlus who watched my one woman variety shows, with props and paint, with off pitch singing and bombardment of flexibility, the splits and even unsuccessful handstands. To you I say I made it out, I made it out of the care system.

BARNARDO'S ADVOCACY SERVICE

Barnardos are Lambeth's advocacy service for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

Advocacy means helping you to express your views and making sure that these views are taken seriously.


Barnardos are a confidential service, their workers will not tell others anything you have said without permission, unless they are worried about your safety or the safety of someone else. Barnardos are independent from Social Services and they will; advise you of your rights,

and express your wishes and feelings in meetings.

Barnardos can be contacted on Freephone: 0808 800 0017 or 020 8768 5058

Or Email: advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk

Barnardos can also help you to make a complaint about Social Services or you could contact Victor Searle (contact details at the bottom of the page).

Believe in
children
 Barnardo's



For anymore information or to get involved with any of these opportunities, do not hesitate to contact:

Victor Searle, Participation Officer

vsearle@lambeth.gov.uk

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