

VOYPIC

voice of young people in care

NEWS



A MAGAZINE FOR CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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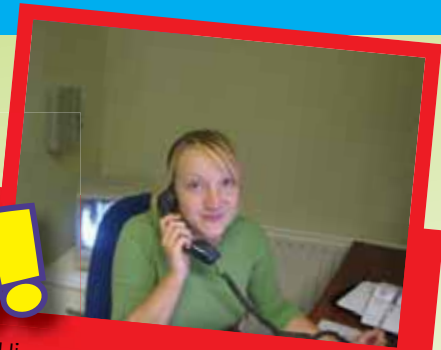
EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello Guys,

Welcome back to the 17th edition of VOYPIC News. As usual we have a fun filled edition with lots for you to get involved in. Check out page 5 to see what you can do in your area! Hey check out page 12 and make sure you don't miss out on our **Young People's Conference on 26th September**. We hope you enjoy this edition and as always if you have any poems, artwork, stories or articles you would like to see in the next edition please email maelisa@voypic.org or call VOYPIC on 02890 244888.

Enjoy the hols!!

NEW FACES!



Hi everyone,

My name is Mary and I'm the new full-time administration worker in Belfast. You'll hear from me or see me when you phone the office or call in.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all soon!"



Hi folks I'm Claire and I'm your new Information Officer. I'm sharing an office with Sarah but only one of us is genuinely English! Before joining VOYPIC I worked at the other end of the age spectrum with Help the Aged in Northern Ireland and before that with Age Concern Northern Ireland. Scarily, I was adding up the number of years I've worked in the advice and information field and it's seventeen years, yikes – spot the oldie!

My main role is to create a virtual library known as the 'Library in the Sky' which will house resources such as statistics, legislation, research and guidance on Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

I live with my dog by the sea and want to buy another motorbike but can't afford four wheels as well as two. Also I'd have to get a motorbike with a side car (not very cool) for my dog!!



Hi Everyone! My name is Ciara Rush and I am the new part time administration worker in the Derry VOYPIC office. I will now be answering the phones and making myself useful in whatever way I can! I am very happy to be part of the VOYPIC team!

ADVOCACY

Speak out, have a voice

LET THE GAMES COMMENCE - "I'M A CELEBRITY GET ME OUTTA HERE" ACTIVITY DAYS!

Yes everyone it's that time of year again and the VOYPIC Advocacy Service are inviting all Children's Homes who are currently operating the Visiting Service within their unit to get involved in our annual 'I'm a celebrity get me outta here' activity days.

Last year was a massive success with 15 children's home taking part, but this year we want to be bigger and better! So if you are game for a jam packed day full of outdoor activities, fantastic prizes and more shocking surprises in the famous 'Bush Tucker Trails' then we want you to get involved!

Teams of young people and staff within each unit will compete against one another in a variety of exciting outdoor team challenges to win lots of

fabulous prizes. Each day a children's home will have the opportunity to win a GAMES CONSOL and this year we also have an ULTIMATE PRIZE as well. This will be an amazing three day trip to Manchester for the lucky team, including a trip to Alton Towers and a tour of Old Trafford. To win this and the title of 'Ultimate Champions' receiving the Champions Activity Day Cup, the team must demonstrate team work, sportsmanship and enthusiasm!!!

You don't want to miss out so get registered now! For more information about how you can get your unit involved contact your Visiting Advocate.



**If you're not in
you can't win!**

DATES & VENUES...

- Monday 17th August Belfast Trust, Belfast Activity Centre
- Tuesday 18th August South Eastern Trust, Belfast Activity Centre
- Wednesday 19th August Southern Trust, Lurgaboy Adventure Centre
- Thursday 20th August Northern Trust, Woodhall OEC
- Friday 21st August Western Trust, Castlearchdale

MORE FROM THE ADVOCACY SERVICE

As well as the activity days we've also been involved in some exciting new pieces of work. We've been working with RQIA the body responsible for monitoring and inspecting social services. We have spoken to 51 parents across Northern Ireland to find out their opinions of family support and child protection services. This work makes sure that families who use services have a say in how they are delivered. This was a very important piece of work and we'd like to thank all of the people who took part.

ADVOCACY AND POLICY WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

As you know 'Leaving Care' is a big issue for young people and we were delighted to work alongside DHSSPS to ensure young people had a voice in their Regional Leaving Care Conference held on Friday 13th March 2009.

VOYPIC'S Advocacy and Policy teams worked together alongside young people from across Northern Ireland to make two DVD's that were used to open the conference. These DVD's highlighted what life was like before the Leaving Care Act and what improvements this new law has made. Also on the day three young people made speeches at the conference and we successfully delivered a workshop which looked at the issue of Rights. Everybody worked really hard and that paid off as the conference was a huge success!!

MENTORING

reaching your goals and future aspirations

NORTHERN TRUST

We are really busy at the moment, having sent out 52 application forms to new mentors, and interviews during July. We had a quiz night in June during Volunteer week, to thank all our current volunteers for the hard work they do. Everyone dressed up in Rock'n' Roll clothes, don't they all look great in our photo? Our volunteers and young people had an activity day together, bowling at the Sportsbowl in Ballymena, and all the young people had a workshop to get to know each other. We will have a Healthy Eating workshop during the summer, and another activity day in August. Now that we have settled into our new offices in Ballymena, we were able to hold a coffee morning to show everyone our new building! Why don't you call in for a coffee too sometime?



BELFAST TRUST

Hi from the Belfast Mentoring Team!! VOYPIC Volunteer Mentors have done a great job so far and we celebrated their hard work with a quiz night during Volunteer Week. Good News – We have recently been successful in a funding application from the Big Deal with money from the National Lottery. This funding will help our project and the young people attend exciting events throughout the year with trips to Craigavon Watersports, Grand Opera House and go-karting all of which are the young people's favourites.

WESTERN TRUST

In May we had an activity night and dinner with young people and mentors at the bowling alley and also held a creative workshop for young people which was a great success, a similar one is planned for Omagh in August. In August we have a music workshop planned in Derry and a careers workshop for all young people in Omagh. There will be more fun in August for young people and their mentors at our away day in Castlarchdale, Enniskillen.

We are now recruiting 15 new mentors to come on board in September, so if you would like to be matched to one of these new mentors please contact Caoimhe at 02871370291 or visit our website: www.voypic.org



SOUTHERN TRUST

In April of this year Nicky Johnston the project worker for the Southern Trust left to take up a new post. We had an excellent response to our recruitment of a new project worker and I am delighted to report that Anna-Marie McCann took up post in July. We are planning a Live Music Now workshop on 18 August and an Away Day at the end of August to give Anna the opportunity to meet all our young people and volunteers. To celebrate volunteer's week we held a fund raising quiz in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry. We had a great response from volunteers who dragged along family and friends and helped us raise £487 which will go towards activities for young people and volunteers.

SOUTH EASTERN TRUST

Our last group activity on the 20th July was a 'Road Trip' to Ballymena Hope Centre!. Mentee's took part in a range of workshops exploring the issues of drugs/ alcohol and healthy living while also having the opportunity to pump some iron at the gym and make the most of relaxing complementary therapies! The first big Away Day for South Eastern in mentoring relationships will be on the 14th August to Craigavon Water Sports Centre!! Future plans include a Christmas trip to the Grand Opera House and a wiz round the tracks at Eddie Irvine's in February.

PARTICIPATION

get involved, make a difference!

PARTICIPATION

get involved, make a difference!



Young Women's Group

Want to know about personal issues? We look at love life, relationships, emotions, making decisions, sexual health and lots more girlie chat!

PARTICIPATION

get involved, make a difference!



PEAS

Preventative Education on Alcohol and Substance Misuse.

Want to know the real facts about drugs and alcohol? We can come to you...

PARTICIPATION

get involved, make a difference!



Mind How You Go

Want to know how to feel good about yourself, boost your confidence and manage stress?

We look at keeping healthy and having a positive outlook on life

PARTICIPATION

get involved, make a difference!



Can't Cook, Can Now

Want to be the next Gordon Ramsey??

Can't Cook Can Now is a cookery programme that helps you learn the basics in producing fabulous meals!

PARTICIPATION

get involved, make a difference!



Crime Awareness

Do the Crime pay the Time!!!
Want to know why you get involved in crime and how to STOP? Why not find out more about our Crime Awareness Programme.

PARTICIPATION

get involved, make a difference!



Health and Wellbeing

Was your New Year's Resolution to get healthy and fit? If yes then why not ask about our healthy living programme and find out how to become physically healthy.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN ANY OF OUR PROGRAMMES THEN WHY NOT CONTACT THE PARTICIPATION TEAM IN YOUR AREA:

BELFAST	028 90 244888
DERRY	028 71 378980
LURGAN	028 38 313384
BALLYMENA	028 25 632641

**REMEMBER
WE CAN
TRAVEL TO
YOUR SPECIFIC
AREA TO RUN A
GROUP SO JUST
ASK!!!**

PARTICIPATION GRADUATION JUNE 2009

This year the Participation Graduation celebrated the success of young people from the Western and Northern Trust Local groups who completed a range of Participation Programmes such as 'Cant Cook Can Now' and 'Crime and Justice'. Other graduates on the night included, the trainee's who completed their year long training as part of the Sessional Project Workers Programme and the Young Reps, who completed their OCN Level 1 Peer Education.

Our special guest was Michelle O'Neill a local MLA for Mid Ulster who congratulated all the graduates and wished them every success for the future! Well done guys!!



Michelle O'Neill MLA for Mid Ulster



Bopping the night away at the awards disco

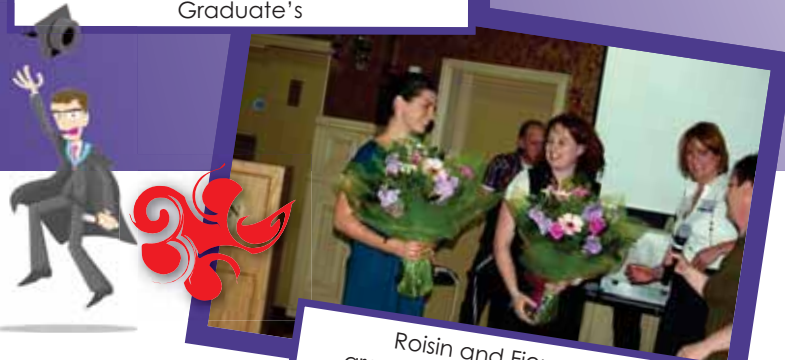
Congratulation's to one of the Graduate's



Congratulation's to one of the Graduate's



Congratulation's to one of the Graduate's



Roisin and Fiona Participation group facilitator's receive their flowers



Watch out here come's 'Strictly come VOYPIC!!'

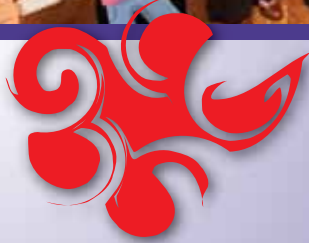
VOYPIC CELEBRATES SUCCESS



The PACE Programme (Promoting Active Citizenship Education) wins the Peace Award at the Northern Ireland Youth Awards in May.



VOYPIC launches new resources at regional road shows.



The Mentoring and Participation staff receiving their Investor's in Volunteer Award, presented by the Lady Mayoress of Belfast



COMPETITION TIME!

Remember in our last edition we offered you the chance to win a mobile phone for your poems?? Well below is the winning poem HOPE and the runner up poem NEW FEELING. The winner won the phone and the runner up got a HMV voucher for music. If you would like to win vouchers of your choice then why not send in your poems, art work, photos etc to:

Maelisa Kennedy

Voice of Young People in Care

9-11 Botanic Avenue , Belfast, BT7 1JG

Tel: 02890 244888

HOPE

Hello my friend
I am Heroin
who will destroy you all.
No one knows where I come from,
It's a long way away
where poppies grow.
I arrived in silence
and never got found
I take away every one's
pounds.

I'm already in England
and also in Wales,
my popularity is growing and never
fails.

I take a rich man
who now is poor
and the girls also open the door.
We all know that Heroin can destroy,
It's a crazy thing but we think it's a toy.

I had many mates
I now have none.
Heroin sound's sweet
but was bitter to taste,
If I get help now my life's not a waste.
Now I've got help and there's a
message for you:
If you go on that journey
you'll be sent right to hell.
I'm getting stronger and stronger
each day.

I will get my mates back
this time to stay.

NEW FEELING

When you think your life is rough
and you don't know what to do
Just stick with your family
and you can muddle through.
If you have no family
you can do it on your own.
I'm only gonna do this once
so don't say you weren't shown.

You need a new feeling of hope, a sense of
relief, to take away that awful pain and get
rid of all your grief.
When you get this feeling don't ever let it
go. When your told it feels real good you
can say you know.

You feel like you have been born again, this
life is really great. The best thing about you
now is that your never in a state. You went
to work one gloomy day and still you had a
smile all day.

You need a new feeling of hope, a sense
of relief to take away that
awful pain and get rid of all your grief.
When you get this feeling don't ever let it
go, and when your told it feels real good
you can say you know.

This feeling overpowers you and makes
you feel the best, instead of running
around all day and being such a pest.
I think the lesson has been learned,
a new page has been turned. In this
chapter of your life you won't carry that
big knife.

You need a new feeling of hope, a sense
of relief to take away that awful pain
and get rid of all your grief.
When you get this feeling don't ever let it
go, and when your told it feels real good
you can say you know.

DO THE CRIME PAY THE TIME

MY TIME INSIDE



When I was in Hyde bank Prison, my life turned upside down, being away from my family and mates, and not being allowed to smoke.

My freedom was taken away from me. I had to say "Yes Sir", "No Sir" and that wasn't good! Being locked up for 23 hours a day was bad too.

I just thought I lost everything and everyone. It felt like I was a 'nobody' and that no one liked me anymore. I felt like I was all on my own for the first time.

When I was out of jail, I was drinking, going AWOL and taking drugs. But when I was inside I used to pray to get out to see my family. Being away from them taught me to respect them more and to love them more. The reason I went

inside was because I was drinking and getting into trouble with the cops.

I used to live with a foster family for fourteen years but was taken out for being in so much trouble with the cops. It broke my heart because I thought of them as my real mum and dad and that felt like I lost my family forever. That made me go mad and got me into a lot more trouble, but I plan to get on with my life and never go back inside again.

If you read this just remember to respect the people who care for you and love you, and you will get somewhere in life!

By young person

HERE'S THE LOW DOWN ON OFFENDING...



Young Offending

The age of criminal responsibility in Northern Ireland is 10 years old, which means that from 10 onwards, a young person can be charged with criminal offences and brought before a court. All those under the age of 18 accused of criminal activity are sent to youth courts.

STEP 1: LEGAL RIGHTS/ YOUR RIGHTS

These include the right to:

- have an appropriate adult present during questioning by the police
- request that your solicitor be present
- get a solicitor to represent you
- have your relative/whoever cares for you informed about your arrest
- have the charges explained to you in a way which you understand
- an interpreter
- obtain legal aid



DON'T DO THE CRIME

and you won't pay the time

STEP 2: YOUTH DIVERSION SCHEME

One of the aims of the Youth Diversion Scheme (YDS) is to discourage young people from getting involved in crime in the first place. This means that YDS officers will monitor nuisance behaviour and take action to make sure it doesn't go any further. However if a young person has committed a crime the police will take into account a number of factors, including the seriousness of the offence, whether or not there is an admission of guilt, previous offending history, etc. in deciding how to deal with it.

There are three possible outcomes:

- an informed warning
- a restorative caution
- Referral for prosecution

STEP 3: DIVERSIONARY CONFERENCES

Conferences can only take place where the offender has admitted the offence. Diversionary conferences are organised by the Youth Conference Service directorate of the Youth Justice Agency. The aim is to provide a forum of discussion with the offender, the victim, and anyone else affected by the crime. Discussions at the conference provide the opportunity for victims to explain the impact of the crime on their lives, and for the offender to make amends and be held accountable for their offence. The conference plan could consist of one of the following:

- an apology to the victim
- reparation to the victim or to the community
- payment to the victim in compensation
- supervision by an adult
- work or service for the community
- restrictions on conduct or whereabouts, e.g. curfews
- participation in activities designed to deal with offending behaviour, or to offer training or education, or to deal with problems such as drugs or alcohol.

STEP 4: GOING TO COURT

If you are charged with an offence, you will usually appear before a youth court. However, if you are charged jointly with an adult, your trial may be held in the Magistrates' Court or, for more serious offences such as murder, in the Crown Court. The Youth Court is a less formal and more open section of the magistrates' court. You and your family will be encouraged to participate by appearing in court.

All young people appearing in court are entitled to be represented by a solicitor. The defence solicitor acts independently in the best interests of the young person, takes instructions from them, and provides them with legal advice on the charge, procedure, and plea (guilty or not guilty). They also speak on behalf of the young person in court.

STEP 5: RELEASE OR REMAND?

You will normally be released on bail, except in cases where you are considered a risk to the public or for certain offences. If the court decides that you should be remanded in custody, the magistrate must give reasons in court for doing this. In this case, you will probably be remanded to the Juvenile Justice Centre in Bangor. If you plead not guilty, a date will be set for your trial when the magistrate will hear all the evidence and decide whether or not you are guilty. If the decision is 'guilty', the magistrate will decide on the most appropriate sentence.

To find out more, why not sign up to the Criminal Justice programme in the Participation Project in your area.

See page 5 and contact your local VOYPIC office and ask to speak to the Participation Team to find out more.

Also check out www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk for more info!





POLICY

you shaping legislation, policy and practice

Working Together for Change Recruiting all young people!!!

Can you ever remember having a Guardian Ad Litem? A Guardian Ad Litem means your 'guardian in court'. You will have been appointed a Guardian Ad Litem if you have a Care Order or Secure Accommodation Order. The guardian would have talked to you about your wishes and feelings, about where you wanted to live and who you wanted to keep in touch with. Then they would have told all this information to the judge and court.

If your answer is **YES** and you would like to get involved in a new exciting VOYPIC group please let us know!
Group activities will include:

- **Team Building**
- **Improving how Guardian Ad Litem's work and get feedback from young people**
- **Producing young people friendly information for NIGALA**
- **Commitment—meet every month!**

Please contact Sarah on 90 244 888 if you would like to know more!

COMPETITION WINNER!!!



Ashley, Samantha (carer) and Dr Michael McBride Acting Permanent Secretary

The DHSSPS NI funds a scheme that is unique to Northern Ireland which enables young people in foster care to remain living with their foster carer until they are aged 21 (or older if they are completing a course of education). The scheme has been operational for almost 3 years and currently 183 young people aged 18 - 21, which is approximately 1 in 3 of all care leavers, are continuing to live with their foster carers. The scheme was known as "Former Foster Carer Scheme".

The Department ran a competition with assistance from VOYPIC and the Fostering Network inviting entries from foster carers and young people to identify a new name. Ashley's entry "Go the Extra Mile" (GEM) was selected as the winning entry which will feature shortly on all Trust promotional material related to the scheme.

Congratulations to Ashley who won £100 worth of gift vouchers!

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

COME ALONG TO VOYPIC'S ANNUAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE. THE CONFERENCE PROVIDES YOU WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART IN A NUMBER OF FUN WORKSHOPS, HAVE SOME CRAIC AND MEET OUR SPECIAL GUEST. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!



**WHEN?
SATURDAY
26TH SEPTEMBER
2009**

**WHAT TIME?
10.30AM -
3.30PM**

**SOMETHING
DIFFERENT**

**WHERE?
BELFAST CENTRAL
MISSION
GROSVENOR HOUSE
BELFAST**

**WHY?
WE WILL HAVE LOTS
OF FUN ACTIVITIES
AND A MYSTERY
GUEST!**

Please complete the reply slip and return to the address below or contact the P Team on 02890 244888



I would like to attend the Young People's Conference on Saturday 26th September 2009:

Name: _____ Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____ Contact Number: _____

9-11 Botanic Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1JG
T: 028 9024 4888 F: 028 9024 0679 E: admin@voypic.org W: www.voypic.org