

REACH OUT!

Update



Making Sure our voices are heard

Hi. Welcome to the latest update from Reach Out!

(Slough Children's Services Trust's Children in Care Council)

What's it all about?

Reach Out! started as a group for Slough's young people looked after aged 13 and above. In December 2015 we started Reach Out! Juniors for children aged 8 to 12 and we now have a forum for care leavers.



Throughout your update, you will find out more about all the different activities children and young people have got involved in, the difference they have made and how you too can get involved!



www.scstrust.co.uk
Newsletter produced April 2018



Children and young people wanted to create a space where they could meet and feel comfortable to express their views and a space that they could make their own.

And guess what...young people got involved in choosing the name, furniture and items and helped to transform an old meeting room in to a space that is now child-friendly, comfortable and colourful.

Reach Out! meet up once a month in The Chat Room to hold their forums. The room is used by lots of other children and young people for their activities.



Care Leavers' Forum

Care Leavers meet up for their forum twice a year. As well as meeting to share their views, young people also take part in an activity. The group met in December for a lovely meal at Nandos.

What did young people say?

- The support they receive from their Personal Advisor (PA) was going well.
 - The Trust needs to ensure young people know about the role of their PA and about the Leaving Care service.
 - Young people need to be given an alternative number to call if they can't contact their PA.
- On page 3 you will find out about two new information packs and postcards. The pack for care leavers provides lots of useful information including what the role of the PA is.

If you haven't received your pack please speak to your personal advisor.

Your Service

Reach Out! had the opportunity to preview and share their thoughts on the Trust's brand new website www.scstrust.co.uk

We think the new website is good especially as Reach Out! has its own section

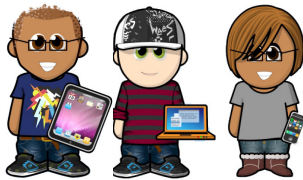
The 'Your Service' and 'Reach Out!' sections provide enough information.

Young people checked out the 'Your Service' section which has lots of answers to questions you may have, for example, about your education, your reviews and your health.

Young people also helped to put together their own section all about 'Reach Out'. They wanted a section where they can promote what they do and get more children and young people involved.

If you can't attend a Reach Out! group you can get in touch via the website.

We really like the look and layout of the whole website.



www.scstrust.co.uk...tap on

Me and WHO?

Me and WHO is one of 3 animations children and young people have created to help answer some of the questions you may have about what it means to be looked after.

Reach Out! came up with the idea of creating an animation to explain more about the different adults who are there to help and care for you.

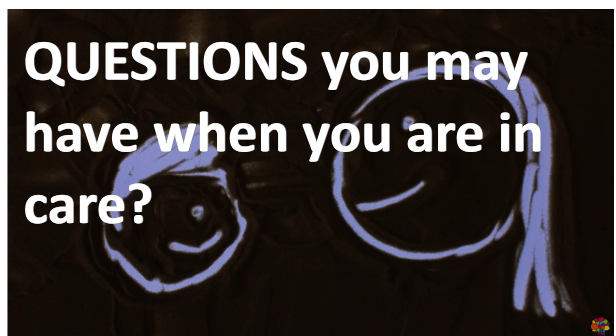
Not just one but three animations were made by 12 of our children and young people looked after.

As well as making each animation, everyone involved received an official accreditation and were invited along to the official launch of the animations, which took place at The Curve in Slough.

Well done to all of you who helped to make each of the animations.

You can find the animations on the Trust's website under the 'Your Service / My Care' page.

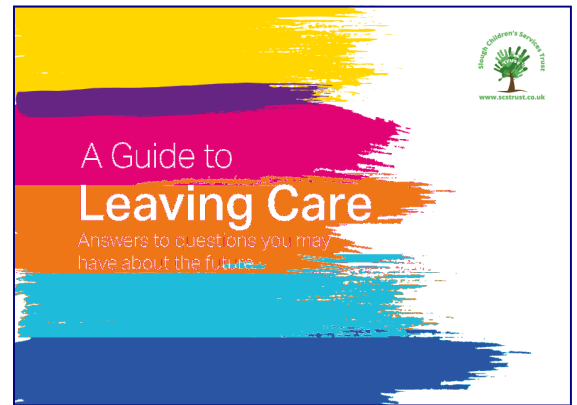
You can also ask your carer, social worker or IRO to show them to you.



A Helping Hand

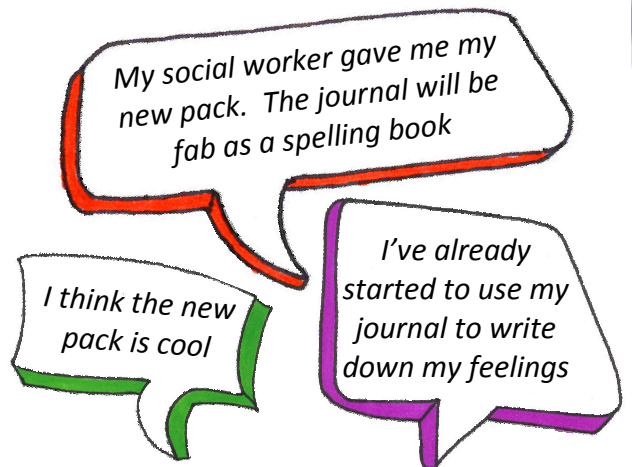
Two new information packs have been created for all our children and young people looked after and care leavers. The packs contain lots of useful information about being looked after, your health, education, getting an advocate and how to make a comment or complaint.

If you are aged from 5 to 15 years old then you should have received a green pack called 'A Helping Hand'.



If you are aged 16+, you should have received an orange pack 'A guide for Care Leavers'.

This pack also contains a very useful booklet that explains young people's financial entitlements.



Got an idea about anything else for the pack? Let Sharon know.

HELLO



Reach Out! Juniors suggested making these cards for social workers and personal advisors to give to each of their children and young people. The cards for children looked after also say what the social worker's role is and when social workers will see their children and young people.

Celebration time

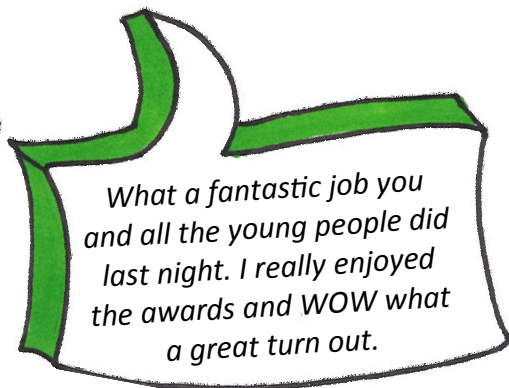
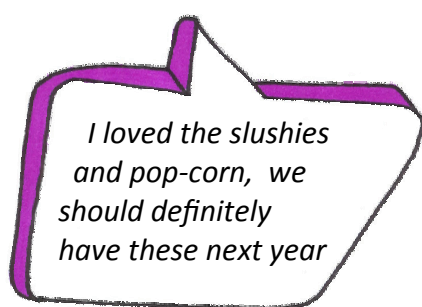
Last November we held your very special ceremony to celebrate your achievements. As well as hosting your ceremony; each year children and young people from the Reach Out! groups also get involved in organising it.



Young people said they wanted plastic gift cards, a slushy and popcorn machine and thought it would be great if more children and young people performed.

Five young people got up and sang their hearts out to an audience of over 200 people. You were all amazing.

We listened to their ideas and we have received some amazing comments. . .



'Your life, your care'

Some of you will remember taking part in this survey that asked you questions about your care, feelings and what was important to YOU. Here are some of the things you said:

- Those of you aged 8 to 11 said you all had a good friend and had fun at the weekends.
- Almost all of you aged 11 to 17 said you trusted your carer and your social worker.
- Make sure all children and young people know who their social worker is!

We listened to what you said and spoke to Reach Out! Juniors about how we can ensure you all know who your social worker is.

GO to page 3 and check out the fab new postcards that Reach Out! Juniors asked us to create!



Foster Family Fact File

Reach Out! came up with the idea of creating a 'fact file' about foster families to be given to children before they go to live with their new foster family.

The group said the fact file should be child-friendly, really colourful and have important facts and photos about each family including any pets, their home and what they like doing.

We listened. These 'fact files' are now in the process of being made!



What makes a good foster carer?

Some of you took part in a fun activity day whilst your carers attended their training day. As well as making badges and drawing some amazing pictures you also shared with our participation officer what you think makes a good foster carer.

Foster carers should:

- have empathy
- always be helpful
- always be loving
- really love children
- be kind and caring
- treat us equally
- have discipline, patience kindness

"We want to be treated the same as foster carers treat their own children"

Foster carers should:

- know what our favourite food/dinner is
- allow us to have a pet
- let us have our say
- let us have an opinion and feel like we are listened to
- be open to solving conflict/problems
- not expect us to be the same as their own children
- have discipline, patience and kindness

"Our carers should know what we like to do, what hobbies we have or would like to attend i.e. gymnastics"

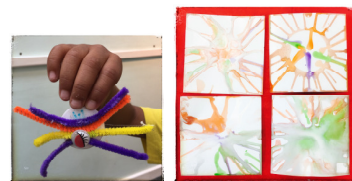


Thank you to all the children who took part in the activities. All of your views and thoughts help the Fostering Service to make sure we have the right foster carers looking after you.



Activity Days

As well as the Reach Out! forums, children and young people have got involved in lots of other activities.



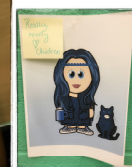
Under 11's activity day



Reach Out! day down at Longridge Activity Centre



Slough Foster Carers activity day



REACH OUT! Extra

As well as all the things in your update, you can also get involved in lots of other activities such as:

- **Interview panels** so you can make sure we have the right people supporting and caring for you.
- **Reach Out! Scrutiny Forum** where you get to meet with the Trusts Chief Executive and other senior people to make sure the Trust and Slough Borough Council are providing you all with good quality services.
- **Staff and carers training or support groups** to make sure they have the right skills to care for and support their children and young people.



Older young people looked after and care leavers get to go into London to attend something called the **All Party Parliamentary Group** for children looked after. Last month young people met with ministers at Westminster to talk about how young people can be better supported with their mental health. Slough's young people have now shared their thoughts with the Trust at the scrutiny forum.

South Regional Young People's Benchmarking Forum offers care Leavers from different areas to come together and share the different ways they are supported. Thanks to the views of two of our young people; all Slough care leavers no longer have to pay Council Tax!

REACH OUT!

Speak out!

My Review...My Views

There are lots of ways for you to have your say.

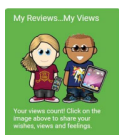
Remember before each of your Children Looked After Reviews you can share your views, wishes and feelings using your My Review...My Views on-line form?

Thirty-nine children and young people looked after used the form last year to share how they were feeling and we want to make sure all of you know about how you can too.

In your new pack is a green postcard that tells you all about My Reviews...My Views. You will need your unique username to use your form; if you haven't received it please tell your carer, social worker, IRO or get in touch with Sharon.

You can find the form on the Trust's website under the 'Your Service / My Voice' page.

Look out for this image



www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/myreviewmyviews

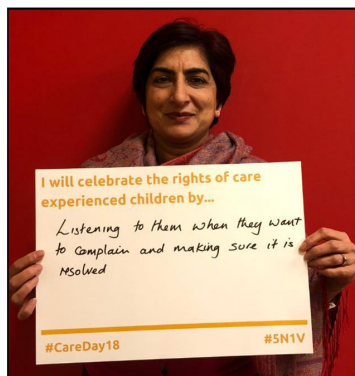
Who's who?

Children and young people have said they would like to know about who is who in the Trust. We listened to this idea and in this update we would like to introduce you too...

Ragena Khan who is the Trust's Complaints Manager.

Whether you are feeling happy or unhappy with the help we are giving you, you should let Ragena know.

As well as listening to you and supporting you with your complaint, Ragena would also love to hear about all the good ways you are supported by the people that care for you (carers, social workers, IROS).



You can contact Ragena by:

Calling 01753 875825

Email complaints@scstrust.co.uk

Who in the Trust would you like to know more about?

Get in touch with Sharon and share your ideas.

Company registered in England and Wales No. 09487106

Do you feel you can't say what you want?

Do you feel like no one will listen to you?

This can be hard so an **ADVOCATE** could help you.

What is an advocate?

- They listen and understand what you are saying.
- They help you get your wishes and feelings heard.
- They make sure that everyone hears what you are saying.

Who can have an advocate?

Any child or young person who needs support to represent their views.

To find out about having an advocate please speak to your social worker, independent reviewing officer or contact Ragena, Complaints Manager.

You can also contact the NYAS helpline 0808 808 1001



Space2talk

Every Thursday
@ St Martin's Place
1pm - 6.30pm

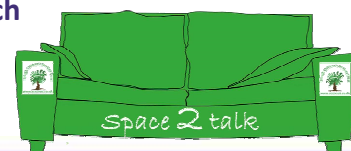
Space2talk drop-in is for our care leavers.

We listened to feedback from young people about how we could improve the drop-in and we are really pleased that the drop-in is now open from 1pm - 6.30pm each week.

Space2talk is held in The Chat Room. As well as getting support from the Leaving Care Team and one another as a group, young people will also be able to talk one:one with a member of the Leaving Care Team.

If you are a Slough care leaver, drop-in, have a hot drink or a bite to eat and a chat with a member of the Leaving Care team. We look forward to seeing you there!

For more info. get in touch with a member of the Leaving Care team on SL. 875760



Thank you and a big well done to all of the children and young people who have got involved in the Reach Out! groups, interview panels and all of the other events that have taken place over the past year.

To get involved please contact:

Sharon Stephenson, Participation Officer

Call/text/WhatsApp 07776 461845

Email sharon.stephenson@scstrust.co.uk