

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

A new voice for children in care

Children and young people living in care in East Sussex will have a voice on the issues that matter to them with the setting up of new Children in Care Council.

The new council was launched at a special conference organised by East Sussex County Council attended by more than 40 young people this week (July 5).

Set up for children in care including those in foster care, living in children's homes, and care leavers, the new council will provide a forum to represent the views of young people. It will also have a role in forming and monitoring the pledge that the County Council will make to children in care.

Cllr Meg Stroude, the County Council's Lead Member for Children and Families said: "I think this is a really exciting initiative. The council forms part of the Care Matters agenda and for us it actually builds on the consultation work we have already been doing for some years with young people in care through user groups."

As part of the process of setting up the council young people in care have been asked for their views on what the council should do, what issues it should discuss, how it should get the views of all children in care, and how it can best represent those views.

But the council will be more than just a talking shop and won't just be about providing children in care with a voice. It will also provide them with access to various skills

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training opportunities including through the Keystone Awards, and involvement in volunteering programmes. It will look to develop the existing Volunteering Project.

How the council operates, what it will be called, and how it is structured is yet to be decided and the young people themselves will have a key role in deciding the way forward. However, it will hold its first meeting in September.

Cllr Stroude said: "We are totally committed to helping children in care reach their full potential and providing the very best we can for them. We are, after all, their corporate parent and we have a very real responsibility to ensure that all our children in care get the support, advice, and best opportunities possible.

"This new council will provide them with a forum in which they can discuss issues, raise ideas and concerns with us, and, on another level, meet new friends and take part in new activities. I am so looking forward to working with them in this way."

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