

MARCH 2021

# Shaping Lives

News for all that showcases what is going well and some of the highlights from Children and Care leavers participation and engagement.



# Shaping Lives

This newsletter is written and edited by our Young editors and Participation and Engagement officer with columns and information from across Children's Social Care and partners.

The purpose of the newsletter is to highlight what is happening, what is going well and all of the work that children and care leavers are involved in that helps to shape the service that is provided by Children's Social Care.

**A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUNG EDITORS**

You may have noticed that we have now changed name of the showcase newsletter to 'Shaping lives' this was a decision that our Young editors made as they felt the title did not suit what they felt the newsletter had to share. One of our Young editors decided to write a poem to help explain this.

"We hope that shaping lives will mean something to everyone and help to make people feel better and realise that there are lots of good things happening. We also hope that everyone; adults, social workers, children, carers share all the good stuff that's happening and tell everyone about the support they might need to make things happen too. We hope you enjoy our new look newsletter 'shaping lives'".

(J.McL and E.W 2020).

Please read on to find out more....

**SHAPING LIVES**

**WILL OPEN PEOPLES EYES**

**TO EVERYTHING THEY  
HAVE TO SEE**

**WITHIN THESE PAGES**

**THERE IS LOVE AND SUPPORT**

**THAT 'SHOWCASE' DIDN'T  
CAPTURE FOR ME.**

Poem by E.W (2020)

# MOVEMA DANCE Project Chinese New Year



A group of our children attended Movema dance sessions in Kirkby in Northwood community centre early in 2020. The sessions focussed on learning Chinese dance and built upon confidence and self-esteem for those involved. Staff attended from Children's teams and Quality assurance to help support the group. Their final piece was performed in January in China Town and was part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. The children involved had an amazing time and continued to engage in dance classes and some later joined MADE to maintain friendships they formed within the group and to help create groups like this in the future.

**"I have loved this project and I don't want it to end"**

**"I'M GOING TO CARRY ON DOING DANCE"**

**"I never thought I'd have the confidence to get up in front of all of those people in the beginning but we did it"**



**"I HAVE MADE NEW FRIENDS"**

Movema take part in lots of community dance projects across the city region and are keen to work with children across Knowsley too. Contact [info@movema.co.uk](mailto:info@movema.co.uk) or visit [www.movema.co.uk](http://www.movema.co.uk) for more information on classes and projects available

## STORY TELLING PACKS



**Between August and December 2020 a number of children and young people were provided a Story telling box from Culture and Developments Service.**

The boxes had lots of activities, arts and stationary resources and ideas about how children and young people can share their own stories. The aim to promote literacy and support children to have a voice and share their thoughts and feelings in preparation for the 2023 Cultural Celebrations in Knowsley. There will be a lot of local community activities available in the build up to the 2023 Cultural Celebrations in Knowsley so we will make sure to promote news about this in the newsletter for you to view and consider. **Keep an eye out.**

### CONTACT US

Any questions? Contact **Sam McIver** on **07966 830777** or email [samantha.mciver@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.mciver@knowsley.gov.uk)



# Yogi Buddies Yoga project

In November a Yoga project with Yogi buddies was organised to explore a holistic way to lift emotions and help children to relax. The workshops focussed on relaxation, getting to know each other, having fun and sleeping better at night. The children within the sessions lived inside and outside of Knowsley and the sessions were successfully delivered on zoom. Some comments from the children are below:

*"I love yoga, this is the best thing ever. I'm glad I got involved"*

**"IT'S HELPED ME TO SLEEP BECAUSE I STRUGGLE SLEEPING"**

*"This is the best thing. I love being part of the group"*

For more information about Yogi buddies please view link here. Do you know of anyone who would be interested in getting involved in a new yoga course with Yogi Buddies? We would like to begin our second project in May/June. If you are interested please contact [Samantha.mciver@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:Samantha.mciver@knowsley.gov.uk)



## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BOARD – 3rd DECEMBER CHILDREN'S TAKEOVER

The Children and Families Board is a meeting where decisions and discussions take place that affect children and young people in Knowsley. On 3rd December Youth Cabinet and our wonderful care leaver L.C presented during the first children's takeover of the board as representatives of children across Knowsley and those supported and looked after by Knowsley council. They worked together to present their ideas to the board of Directors, Heads of Service, local charities and education leads. Their focus was on: starting

school drop down days being extended across all Knowsley schools, support to assist children with 'curriculum for life' / independence skills session for care leavers. Since the meeting Merseyside police, All Saints school, Lee cooper foundation and the Chamber of Commerce have offered their support in helping shape opportunities for children in care and care leavers. Suitable teams, services and organisations will be invited to attend the Successful adult lives steering group over the next few months to develop their offer. The meeting success was highlighted

within the Liverpool Echo on Wednesday 2nd Dec.

### Thank you to:

Jill Albertina, Angie Kitching, Nadine Carroll and Alex Roper and Youth cabinet for supporting MADE Senior and care leavers forum to highlight this need. Thank you also to the children involved in the planning and delivery of this piece of work (E.L, J.L, M.J, Y.J, J.F, J.McL, L.C).

**We are all excited to see how this partnership working will benefit the children involved.**

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# NO MORE CAMPAIGN

&@#!

One of the things that the MADE group and other children that attended our groups and activity sessions have been discussing this past 8 months is stereotyping, hate crime, racism. "We have probably all been made to feel bad at some point because of what some people say to us or because people point out our differences" (C.McI 2020). "It's not just about one thing! Some people just need to be reminded how to be decent and kind to each other and not point at you or make you feel different because you are not the same as them" (K.O 2020).

Members of MADE plan to support the No More campaign and working alongside Knowsley youth cabinet to focus on what the council and local communities can do to help out. To find out more about the work of youth cabinet and VIBE and this campaign follow VIBE's Instagram page or visit their website.

## Investing in Children Membership Award™



"This organisation has been awarded membership because it involves children and young people in Dialogue that leads to Change!"

CONGRATULATIONS!

We have received an Investing in Children (IIC) award!



Tel: 0191 307 7030  
www.investinginchildren.net  
Email: info@investinginchildren.net

In October and November a series of meetings with 17 children and care leavers took place with Investing in children. IIC wanted to know how adults in Knowsley's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance team listen to and help provide opportunities to make changes based upon their views, opinions and suggestions for positive change. We are proud to say that the assessment was successfully completed and Safeguarding and Quality assurance have now achieved an investing in children award. Something we hope that each team across children's social care will be supported via their own participation champions to achieve in the future. We are currently looking for care leavers to join this group so please do contact Sam for more information if this is something you may be interested in.

Investing in children assessor stated within the report conclusion: **"There was no doubt that the young people with whom I spoke to felt a positive connection to the service and with various decision-making forums within the Council. They felt supported by a dedicated participation officer, who advocates their ideas and creates spaces and opportunities..... Young people feel that the team (SQUA) provide them with knowledge and information, which strengthens their determination to campaign for changes on important issues they identify to improve young people's futures in Knowsley. "**

**Rob Johnson** (Investing in children assessor)

For more about investing in children please visit [www.investinginchildren.net](http://www.investinginchildren.net)



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# EDUCATION AND LEARNING DURING THE COVID PANDEMIC

This year children who are provided support from Knowsleys Virtual School have completed their own Covid PEPS (Personal Education Plans) to recognise what support and consideration is needed to suit their own individual needs for each child. Some of the detail shared was gathered so we can better understand how to assist children and young people during this time, especially now we can look forward to changes to the current restrictions.

Some of the things children told us about their experiences during covid lockdown are:

**“It has been better doing school work from home because I have more time”**

**“Its not nice having to stay in all the time but its helped me to get more time with everyone and do nice things like go on walks together”**

**“I’m looking forward to having my friends with me all day again”**

We found that everyone has had a wide range of different experiences. Some commented that it has been nice having personal calls from teachers and support workers about school and their learning. If you want to have your say about your experiences over the last year please contact us and we can talk about how we can work together to raise awareness of other children’s experiences too. Contact details are at the bottom of this page.



For some children colouring helped fill time and help with stress relief. Clap for carers and supportive messages were given to the NHS too. Some art work from Children is displayed above.

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# KNOWSLEY YOUNG ADVISORS

In January 2020 Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership commissioned 4 Young advisors (YA's) to take part in exploring what 'Neglect' means to children in Knowsley; with the aim to raise awareness of who to contact, should they need support. The young advisors gained views from children across Knowsley and shared their feedback with the Partnership. Please visit <https://www.knowsleyscp.org.uk> to view details about the neglect awareness week that took place W/C 12th April.



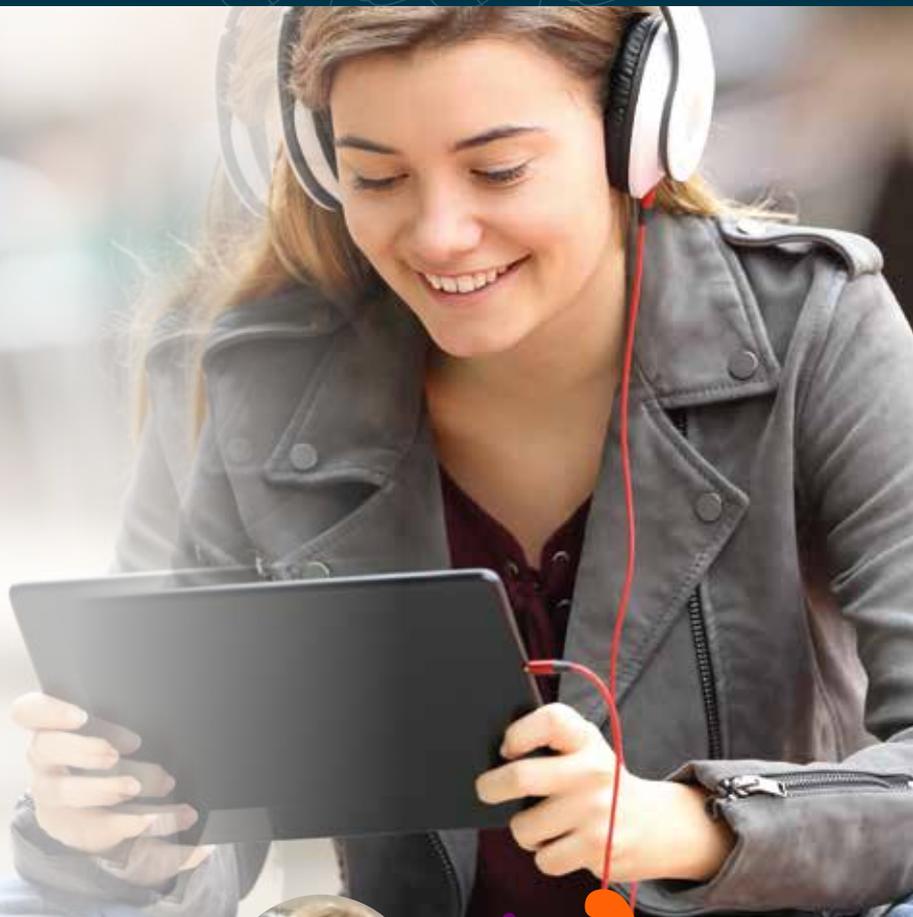
Currently the YA's have been commissioned to consult with children in Knowsley about their own Mental Health. The aim is to reach out to them to gain an understanding of what they feel supports positive mental health as well as recognising developments needed from the support and services available. Children aged 10+ can access the survey by using the QR code below or by visiting <https://www.knowsleyscp.org.uk>.

To find out more information on the work of young advisors please visit: <https://youngadvisors.org.uk/>



## MY MEMORIES CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS ONLINE MEMORY BOX

A few years ago now we developed an online resource for children care leavers and supporting adults to access to save happy and valuable memories such as short video clips, photos and pictures of things that mean something to them such as certificates or happy memories. We now have over 200 registered my memories accounts and wanted to remind everyone to keep their own accounts active by uploading and saving . We know how photos and clips can be lost so its our way of supporting this need for our Children and Care Leavers.



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# MADE Junior and Senior are recruiting

Are you interested in getting involved in regular group meetings with other children and young people who want to have fun together, share thoughts and feelings and help make positive changes to the services children receive from Children's Social Care including education, emotional support and local communities? If so give us a call or email and we can contact you to help you understand a little more about what the group is all about. [www.made.knowsley.uk](http://www.made.knowsley.uk) or call/text Sam on the contact detail below.

Some of the comments our members have made about the group and getting involved:

**"I just thought they wanted to get me involved in something at first but the more I attended I started to feel better about myself and started getting more confidence sharing how I felt about stuff, I learnt more about what I'm entitled to and my rights as well"**

**"Made is a place where you can be yourself and not have to lie about who is picking you up or the fact that you have a social worker. You help to make things better for you and for other people too"**

## IT'S BEEN A WHIRLWIND...



This past year has gone very fast and we have had quite a few bumps along the way with National lockdowns and restrictions to many things, so we would like to lift the mood and show you all of the amazing things that have been worked on and achieved. If you have anything positive to share or anything you feel we may need to consider and highlight please email our supporting officer Sam (details on the bottom of this page).

Over the past 12 months we have been working hard behind the scenes to help improve the service we provide to children, young people and families:

**Practice standards:** We have worked with children from VIBEs youth cabinet and also MADE to build on a list of principles and expectations which set out what you can expect from Children's Social Care supporting adults such as reviewing officers, social workers and staff working to support you. The standards were launched in May and will be a good reminder to everyone of the best approaches in working with children and families.

**Signs of Safety:** Across the whole of the service we are now working within a Signs of Safety model which means that the way and order in which we work with children in families has a stronger focus on everyone working together by strengthening the good things that are happening for children and families as well as planning support from the right people involved. We have already had really good feedback from families so we are really pleased that this is working well.

**Participation champions:** We now have 16 participation champions who are working together as a team to develop more ways in which children can get involved in helping to shape the planning, design and delivery of the service. This will range from children getting involved in care plans, reviews, and survey etc to delivering training, or presenting children and care leaver's views to Directors and Heads of Service. Each team will have their own plan and will work towards better engagement and participation of the children they work with as well as maintaining and highlighting what is already going well. We will keep everyone updated.



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# GETTING TO KNOW YOU INTERVIEW WITH JULIE MOSS (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

A few months ago MADE Junior got to know Julie Moss by asking questions that they were keen to find the answer to from the new Executive Director for Children in Knowsley. Read on to find out more about Julie.

Julie is the boss who has responsibility for Children's Social Care (Social services), as well as other parts of children's services such as education in Knowsley and many other areas of work. So she has a lot of responsibility over services that provide support to children and young people who live in Knowsley and who are looked after by Knowsley.

**MADE Junior decided to ask 10 questions:**

**1) We would like to know some information about who you are and why you wanted to work as a boss in Children's Services. Can you tell us about who you are and what makes you want to be in the job that you are in.**

I have worked across Adult services for Knowsley before I came in to this job. I originally trained to be a Fashion Designer. I worked in a Psychiatric hospital supporting people with Mental Health problems, and I have had lots of experience in working with children. I worked hard and came to be in the job I am in today as the Executive Director for Children. It took me a while to get where I wanted to get but you learn about yourself through your experiences and I believe that all learning, no matter what it is, is very important to everyone.

**2) What do you feel needs to improve in Children's Services that you could help to improve?**

Well we have recently started working with other services across the council and we are looking at three main areas to support to develop and improve.

- 1) Prevention – preventing problems children and families face by supporting them as early as we can.
- 2) Education – Because we believe that if children get a good Education more doors and opportunities are open for them
- 3) Supporting families – making sure to help people in need when they need the support.

**3) What is your favourite food and why.**

My favourite food is meat lasagne. I love it!

**4) Do you have kids?**

I have 2 children but they are adults now. Their names are Mathew (28) and Gabriella (22)

**5) How will you encourage Corporate Parents to help care leavers move on with their lives and feel supported and cared for.**

I will be there and do what I can to make sure the messages from children and about Children in our care are heard and that their messages are spread far and wide. I will help children stand up and shout out long and loud about what they need. I will help people to understand how they can support Children with things such as Education and housing as they grow up to be adults themselves. It's everyone's role to be a Corporate parent. I believe the Children in our care deserve the same level of support as our own children receive.

**6) What is your favourite song 2020?**

"Hallelujah" by Alexandra Burke.

**7) How will you work to support the fostering team to find a good match for the children so they are matched to the right person or people?**

- I would like to see more carers being recruited to Foster in Knowsley because I know how important it is to match the right carer to the Children involved.
- I will encourage listening to Children more and make sure that introductions with children are better.
- I will also look to improve training and to promote carers learning skills to help them as carers too.

**8) Can you tell us any hidden talents that you have? Can you show us it/them?**

I can play the flute. I can't show you now because it's in the attic.

**9) If you could list 3 most important qualities a social worker would have what would they be?**

- The skill of listening – to concentrate and really 'hear' what children are saying
- Being honest because that's very important – Be kind and caring, most importantly to be honest.
- Being patient – This is the best way to help people feel they can be comfortable and relaxed with you.

**10) Do you want to take part in yoga sessions with us online?**

I would love to, Sam has signed me up. I don't get to do much exercise at all so it would be lovely to have a go.

THANK YOU TO JULIE FOR  
TODAYS INTERVIEW.



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## SOME POSITIVE COMMENTS AND THANK YOU'S

"I would like to say thank you to NYAS for continuing to keep in touch with our children and care leavers providing activities and meeting up with children during this time so they can when they can to maintain a positive relationship and promote their interests".

**Kate Perry - Reviewing officer.**

"I think schools are doing a great job of supporting the needs of children and ensuring there is suitable provision in place throughout the lockdown. This is very important for a lot of our children, families and carers".

**Holly Seeger - Reviewing officer.**

"Thank you to our wonderful MADE members and Care leavers who have stuck together and supported each other during virtual meetings. You have all made such a great and valued contribution to making a difference this year and I'm sure I speak for a lot of others when I say how very proud we all are of each and every one of you".

**Sam McIver - Participation and engagement officer.**



# Showcase Newsletter Group

If you would like to get involved in writing articles and shaping what this newsletter looks like or you like the idea of interviewing people for the 'Getting to know you' article then please contact and we can chat about the group and meetings.



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# THINGS TO GET INVOLVED IN AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

## ANNUAL SURVEY 2021

This years Annual Survey for children will include questions about your experiences during the pandemic and how the service can support everyone going forward so please keep an eye out for this as it has a great incentive. One lucky person who completes the survey and provide their contact details will be in with a chance of winning a set of apple Air pods pro. Such a great prize chosen by MADE Senior members.

## MADE WERE SUPPORTED TO RAISE £90 THIS YEAR FOR SHAP!

This year MADE groups took part in 2 fundraising events and helped to raise money for a worthy cause. In July MADE and adults within Knowsley council came together to take part in a lockdown jogathon. Some children carried this out within their own back garden and others used their daily walk/run to complete their 30 minute sponsored exercise. They raised £690 in total for SHAP, which was an amazing achievement. We were informed that the money raised would be spent on supporting Knowsleys care leavers who currently use their provision

Well done for everyone involved and thank you to those who supported and donated this event. For more information please visit SHAP website [www.shap.org.uk](http://www.shap.org.uk)

**This edition was co-produced by our 'Shaping lives' young editors. Thank you to EW, BJ, BO, J.McL, K.S and D.J for your hard work, vision and contributions.**

## NEW YOGA SESSIONS STARTING IN MAY



Last year a group of children took part in a 6 week Yoga project which we have mentioned in the newsletter. We have a new 6 week project starting in May with Yogi Buddies and would like to know if you are interested? If so please contact or discuss with your social worker who can request a place for you.

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# YOUNG PEOPLE TRAINING STAFF AND STUDENTS TO SHAPE THE WAY THAT THEY WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

We regularly attend and train staff through key skills modules and skills sets about the importance of building positive relationships with children, the voice of the child and the benefits of children's participation and engagement. Each session we have children and care leavers sharing key messages and personal views and stories that make a difference to the way in which the student social workers work as well as shaping their future practice for when they become social workers themselves.

Some recent feedback the students have provided about the training and involvement of children and young people:

**"This is the best lesson I have received so far. It's so important to listen to Children and Care Leavers directly"**  
Liverpool Hope SW student.

**"This is the type of thing that stays with you. I can now feel what it's like as well as just reading about it. We all need more of this"**  
Edge Hill SW student.

**"The Children and Care Leavers are so brave and amazing for sharing their views . I think they are just incredible. What they have shared with us today will stay with us all I'm sure"**  
Liverpool JMU SW MA Student.

John Moores and Hope university want to use the pledges the students made about their future practice to the children involved to create a mural or notice board within the university to help students remember key messages. We will keep you updated on the progress.

Please contact Sam for more information if this is something you feel you would like to get involved in. Everyone has something to offer and your views will be valued and respected. Training is a paid opportunity and would look great on your CV . It also helps to build presentation skills and is a great boost for your confidence.

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# Edge Hill University

Edge Hill University are looking for Care leavers who are available on a few days in June to take part in simulations. Simulations provide student social workers with the opportunity to prepare for and act out how they will provide support, advice and guidance in certain scenarios and we need support from care experienced young people to help make this happen. To find out more about this paid opportunity please call, text or email the number below and speak to Sam.



## TRAINING FOR YOUTH PANELS (EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY)

In May we are hosting equality and diversity training for children and young people to join in to. If you complete your training then you can get involved in paid work to interview with professionals for staff that are hoping to work within Knowsley Children's Social Care. Please contact if you would like to take part. Everyone aged 10 + is welcome to take part.

## The Big Ask

Your voice is important and you deserve to be heard!

"Your chance to have a say about what you think is important for your future and what is holding you back." (Rachel De Souza, The Children's Commissioner for England). Please do consider taking the time to complete 'The Big Ask' survey. This is a National survey that is being shared to children and young adults across England. Use the QR code to access the survey.



## PAID OPPORTUNITY - Are you interested in helping to create an animation with other children? £

We would like some help to create some visual pieces to explain our involvement to children? We would really like to create an animation to put on a website or to share as a link to help children and some adults understand what they can expect from conferences and how they can get involved. There will be highstreet vouchers provided to those who are interested in getting involved. This will be a great experience where you can learn new things as well as meet other children too.

If you are interested contact us on the number below.

££

**THANK YOU** to everyone involved in the creation of our 'new look' newsletter.

