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# IN CARE, IN SCHOOL

BATH  
SPA  
UNIVERSITY

## Giving voice to children and young people in care

Richard Parker and Michael Gorman,  
January 21 2015

# INTRODUCTION

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-20540351>

*‘Overall, I would like my experiences to make a change within the schools, and to make people more aware about people in foster care’*

Naina Thomas

# 'IN CARE, IN SCHOOL' PACK

*'A learning resource helping school communities understand what it means to be in care and in school'*

- Filmed scenarios with professional actors
- Care leavers talking about school, post 16 and what they are doing now
- Lesson plans
- Accreditation framework
- Training suggestions and follow up materials

# ORIGINS

Centre for Education Policy in Practice, September 2010:

- Every Child still Matters
- Challenge Inequality and Social Deprivation
- Voice and agency for children and young people
- Use research skills of the university to improve lives

Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) In Care Council

- teachers and other students' understanding our needs is the biggest barrier we face in schools
- *'We want to tell them the way it is'*

# FIRST STEPS

- Messy – what do we do?
- Use student mentors to visit individual schools?
- Staff training or PSHE materials?
- Age ranges to be covered?
- *‘Let’s do a day in the life’*

# CORE PRINCIPLES

- The In Care Council agree and determine the pace and direction of the project
- Inform and involve young people in care
- Avoid sensationalism and root scenarios in young people's everyday experience of school
- Involve the next generation of those working with children and young people
- Validate and accredit the contribution of individual In Care Council members
- Must be useable within schools and hold pupils' interest

# THE PARTNERSHIP

- ASDAN
- B&NES Council
- B&NES In Care Council
- B&NES Virtual School
- Bath Spa University
- BAAF
- Buttle UK
- National Union of Teachers
- Off The Record (Bath)
- PSHE Association
- Suited and Booted
- VisionWorks for schools
- Who Cares? Trust



# IN CARE COUNCIL ROLE

- Agree approach– talks v films, age ranges, who is in front of/behind camera etc
- Draft scenarios
- Commission film company
- Work with professional script writer
- Audition actors
- Direct filming
- Involved in feedback from pilot schools
- Briefed Bath Spa Students – PGCE and undergraduate
- Networking and national conferences
- Launches and media, including CYP Now Awards

# THE SCENARIOS

## Primary

Rumours

School Photograph

Sleepover

What did you do at  
the week- end?

Mothers' Day

## Secondary

Autobiography

Christmas

Leave me alone

Think!

What's the  
difference?

# MOTHERS' DAY

[Image redacted due to potential copyright issues]

# WHAT WE DID NEXT: POST 16/CARE LEAVERS FILMS

7 care leavers talk individually about their experience of :

- School
- Post 16 pathway planning
- What they are doing now
- Why they feel it was important to make this film

# IMPACTS

[Image redacted due to potential copyright issues]

# ETHICS

*‘Even though we created these scenarios I still find it hard to watch them – it’s my life we’re talking about.’*

- Action research methodology
- Led by In Care Council
- Vulnerability of young people involved
- Dangers of stereotyping
- Emotional impacts

# WHO HAS USED IT?

- Schools
- PGCE students
- Undergraduate courses
- University access courses
- Young adults and youth centres
- Virtual schools
- Designated teachers
- Local authority members and officers
- Foster care organisations

# STATUS AND ROLE OF THE IN CARE COUNCIL

*'We talked about these ideas for ages at the In Care Council, and now here I am talking to you guys. It's unbelievable.'*

(In Care Council member, to Education Studies students)

NUT National Conference, 7 April 2012

House of Lords Launch, 29 October 2012

Guildhall, Bath, November 2012

CYP Now Awards, 29 November 2012



# YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

- Self-confidence
- Role reversal with some adults
- Children become experts

*'I asked the child in care if he minded me teaching this lesson... He was happy to remain in class. In fact he actively participated. This was really amazing, I thought he was really brave and what he said came over to the class a lot more powerfully than anything I did.'*

(PGCE student)

# CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Feedback from one primary school class:

- *'I didn't know that much about care but now I have had the lesson I know more!'*
- *'This lesson changed the way I feel about children in care'*
- *'This lesson really helped me to not be mean to people in care and that we should treat them like us'*
- *'I think bad rumours shouldn't be passed around about other people'*
- *'This made me think more deeply about people in care'*
- *'I understand how hard it is for people in care now'*

# TEACHERS (1)

*‘Surprisingly, those children [in care] were not reluctant to talk about the issues with this film, nor withdrawn from any part of our discussion; if anything, it was more a question of my own confidence to explore the project without upsetting these children.’*

(PGCE student)

# TEACHERS (2)

- Generally positive
- Concerns about potential impact of lessons on children in care
- Quibbles about lesson detail
- Negative picture of teachers?
- Fear of losing control?
- Management attitudes as crucial
- External support important
- Need for wider training opportunities?

# SOME ISSUES

- ‘OK so what do we do now?’
- ‘What about the other 29?’
- ICC ‘churn’
- ‘Ownership’ of materials
- Disparate nature of foster carers – difficulty in establishing a foundation degree
- Supporting aspirations (eg Liverpool Superstars)

# WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?

- Over 1100 packs disseminated
- 5-10 hits each week on TES website
- Dedicated website
- Work with National Virtual School Heads' organisations and NICE
- Work with other university research centres
- Conference invitations
- Attachment aware schools and emotion coaching projects
- Initial Teacher Education, including Carter Review

# CONTACTS

Website:

[www.incareinschool.com](http://www.incareinschool.com)

*Richard Parker, Bath Spa University*

[r.parker@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:r.parker@bathspa.ac.uk)

*Mike Gorman, Bath & North East Somerset  
Virtual School*

[Michael\\_gorman@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:Michael_gorman@bathnes.gov.uk)