

Loudspeaker

In this issue: Transport for under-18s – Young NCB investigates



Should we learn about diversity and culture in school? • Member news and views

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Welcome...



Hello and welcome to your new-look Loudspeaker magazine. Earlier this year, the Young NCB advisory group decided it was time for a Loudspeaker makeover. You may remember filling in a questionnaire, asking for your ideas on how you'd like Loudspeaker to look; well, this is the result. You all made plenty of suggestions, which the designer used to create something that, hopefully, you will all like. The advisory group had the final decision on what colours and fonts should be used. Enjoy!

7 There has been lots going on since the last issue and we have tried to pack as much as possible into the next seven pages. You may remember that earlier in the year, Young NCB chose three priorities for our work to focus on. One of them is improving transport for children and young people in England (in particular trying to make it free, or cheaper, for everyone, not just for those who live in London). Check out pages 4 and 5 to see what's been happening and how you can help. We've included a questionnaire with this Loudspeaker; don't forget to fill it

in for your chance to get your voice heard on this important issue.

Turn to page 3 to see what Ming Li got up to when he did three weeks' work experience with Young NCB, and read all about Alice Thomas' experience of sitting on a recruitment panel for the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

On page 6, find out what Michelle Gee and other Young NCB members talked about when they went to a consultation about school nurses. You can also read about NCB's summer reception and get the gossip on Carla Read and Emrys Green's (our Big Idea steering group members) latest movements.

Flick to the back page to get the low down on your fellow members, Mike Hlavaty and Jack Curtis.

Don't forget, we always want to hear what you've been up to and it doesn't necessarily have to be a Young NCB activity. If you've got a story to tell, something to shout about or artwork to share, then get in touch. Our contact details are at the bottom of this page.

Happy reading!
Adriana Byrne,
Young NCB Participation Officer



Young NCB members speak to the education secretary

Five Young NCB members spent an evening mingling with over 200 people who work in the children's sector. Ayesha Modi, Emily Middleton, Hamza Modi, Idris Olasupo and Nishant Mittal attended NCB's summer reception near Westminster on 3rd July 2006. Emily, who is also a member of Young NCB's advisory group and NCB's board of management, introduced speakers at the reception, including NCB's president, Estelle Morris, and the education secretary Alan Johnson.



Work experience with Young NCB

On 14 August 2006, I began my three weeks' work experience with Young NCB.

On the first day Adriana introduced me to her NCB colleagues. The staff were really friendly and made me feel incredibly welcome. I was there to work in the Participation Unit, mainly with Adriana Byrne and David Curtis. In the first week I spent most of my time assisting Rachel Monaghan put together the Big Idea resource pack. I really enjoyed working with Rachel, sharing my ideas and having input into the pack.

Interviewing Susie Baker, the architect for the Children Centre Project (CCP), was probably a highlight of my time with Young NCB. In the interview I found out a lot more about how buildings are

designed and the architect's first experience of working with young people. It was definitely one of my favourite days and I felt really lucky.

I also helped Adriana to find out if the Big idea steering group members were up for being interviewed about the Big Idea resource pack by telephone or email. That was interesting because I've always wanted to know how the Big idea members can get information in a short period of time.

During my three weeks with Young NCB, I did tons of exciting stuff. I helped a member of the Participation Unit design an invitation for the Children and Youth Board's celebration event. I really enjoyed having the opportunity to share

my ideas about the design and in the end the invitation looked really good and I was really proud of myself.

The staff at NCB were really lovely and wherever I went in the building I was always greeted with a big smile. It was a real contrast to other work experience placements I've had, I was made to feel part of NCB, treated with respect and given interesting jobs to do. NCB brought me happiness and added to my experiences.

Thank you to everyone at NCB. I really enjoyed working with you.

Ming Li, 17, Barking

I helped recruit staff for the Office of the Children's Commissioner

When an email first popped into my inbox requesting helpers to interview at the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC), I had little idea of what it might entail, but it seemed like a simple way to get more involved. So I volunteered.

When I arrived at the main office in London Bridge for the introductory session, I could tell immediately that the rooms had all been designed with the help of children and young people. Everything, from the crescent moon sofa in reception to the inflatable armchairs, was comfortable, colourful and fun.

David and Adriana from Young NCB were there to help five other young people and me to prepare for the interviews. We did so through a series of exercises, including writing a couple of questions to ask the candidates. I was assigned to the panels for the commissioner and CEO's diary manager and personal assistant, along with three other young people. When we arrived for the first interview we were each given a copy of the job description and CVs of the applicants. I was really

pleased to note that all of them had experience of working with young people.

In the interviews, we took turns to ask questions and discovered that we were learning as much about the process of organising an office as the interviewees were about the OCC. For example, did you know a diary manager could work an 18-hour day just trying to work out where their employer needs to be tomorrow? It certainly made me more appreciative of my seven hours at school.

On both days, we were allowed to use the computers in the lunch break and the office ordered pizza, which was really good – though I'm not sure how it fits in with promoting healthy eating for children! On the second day, the commissioner, Al Aynsley Green, helped out with the interviews so we were able to find out more about his role and he listened to our thoughts and ideas.

I know the rest of the interview team will agree with me when I say that it was a great experience. We witnessed the interview process from the other side of

the desk, and the OCC can only have benefited from including young people. I'm sure that given our success, they will continue to do so in the future.

Alice Thomas, 17, Bromley

What is the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC)?

The OCC was set up by parliament to speak up for children and young people, and to make sure that their opinions are taken into account. They:

- listen to what children and young people have to say
- find out children and young people's views and opinions about the things that matter to them
- help to influence decisions made by the public, parents, carers and politicians
- try to improve the world in which children and young people live.

If you want to find out more about the OCC, ask them a question, or tell them something, you can contact them on 0844 8009113, email info.request@childrenscommissioner.org or send a letter to Office of the Children's Commissioner, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG.



Transport for Under-18s – Young NCB investigates

Since members Emily Middleton and Hamish McCallum took Young NCB's transport priority to a NCB board of management meeting in March, a transport group has been set up for NCB staff. Its primary purpose is to try to influence the government, transport providers and transport policy to consider and act on the interests of children and young people.

There will be lots of activity taking place over the next few months, as we lead up to an event for transport providers, policy-makers and Young NCB members. This is a great opportunity for you and other children and young people to get your views and ideas on transport heard by the decision-makers who can make the changes.

We also need to balance Young NCB's priority (fares for children and young people in England) with NCB's transport priorities, which are:

- bus, road and rail safety
- behaviour on transport
- access to transport
- travel training.

Members of the advisory group have been doing lots of work over their last two meetings to come up with a way of finding out your views and the views of other children and young people. They decided that the best way to do this would be to ask you to fill in the enclosed questionnaire or answer an online survey.

Once everyone's views have been collected, the advisory group can

decide how it wants to present the information.

So please, please take some time to fill in the questionnaire and post it back to us in the freepost envelope or to Young NCB, Freepost, London, EC1B 1DB.

Speak out and make yourself heard – your views really do count.

If you would rather complete the survey online or want to tell your friends about it, please email Adriana at abyrne@ncb.org.uk who will send you the link.



Your shout...Your shout...Your shout...

**Is transport a problem for you?
Does the cost of travel stop you
doing things you want to do?
What else would make it easier
for young people to get around?**

I attended the last advisory group in Bristol where we all spoke a lot about transport. I think it's a good topic and it's something I have wanted to bring up before. I'm still sure that making buses free for every under-18 will make some young adults lazy and less likely to walk. It may affect their health and they may blame the government, but the government isn't doing anything wrong.

I think making buses free has got its advantages and disadvantages and these need to be carefully weighed up. I think there should be a timetable so there won't be free buses every single day. Walking is a good form of exercise and from my

own experience I know that sometimes good things can bring bad things as a result.

Tunde Olasupo, 15, London

I think that transport is a nightmare, it costs way too much and the timing of buses arriving is ridiculous. I thought the whole point of having a bus ID was to make it cheaper for youths and children to travel, but there is hardly any difference – when you're on your own and you're paying a single it costs 75p. Even if the bus company lowered their prices they would still get a lot of money out of it because more people will be travelling.

Aiyshah Bushara, 13, Brighton

The best bit about going to college is the train journey, which takes 30 minutes. It's so nice just to look out the window and watch the world go by. The only problem is that it's costing my mum £10 a day to get me on the two buses and train that I need.

The fares keep changing and it's one price for the tickets at a shop and another price at the station. I would have to pay £7.40 for my peak ticket at the shop but only £6 at the station; it's totally ridiculous.

I do like the new trains though, they're green and have those light displays inside so that you know where you are all of the time.

I also think that it would be a good idea to make fares for young people cheaper all over the country, not only in London. This would be the best way for the government to decrease the amount of cars on the road. Surely, if young people didn't have to pay for their journey then they would be encouraged to use public transport and parents would be less likely to drive them places as it would save money.

Kimberley Budd, 16, London

What School Nurse?

In August, I attended a session run by NCB in partnership with the Department of Health focusing on the role of school nurses. The aim of it was to give young people more information about the role of school nurses, and to use this information to write a leaflet for other young people.

During the day, young people from all over the country were able to discuss the different issues surrounding school nurses. We were given information about their role and the way in which it will develop in the future, and we established that a school nurse's job is much more involved than many people had thought.

School nurses have a large part to play in educating young people about a variety of health issues. Our discussion highlighted the fact that part of their work is to run group information sessions for students, as well as being there to talk to individual students with any concerns or questions.

After we had been given all the information we would need, we set about designing the leaflet. We wanted to ensure that all young people would be aware of the full range of services that their school nurse can offer them.

As a group we felt that it was really important that the leaflet be 'young person friendly'. Young people should find the design attractive and understand the content.

Since August, we have been sent updates on the leaflet's progress, enabling us to continue our involvement at every stage. This work is really important as it will give young people a chance to access services provided by their school nurse that they may not have been aware of in the past.

Michelle Gee, 17, Shropshire



Young developers help launch the Big Idea resource pack

On the first day of the last half term, two members from the Big Idea steering group attended the launch of the NCB resource pack, *The Big Idea: Young Developers and the Built Environment*. This resource outlines how young people can be involved in the process of designing buildings. We spent the morning at NCB's offices, preparing for the seminar, before presenting at the launch event at the Office of The Children's Commissioner.

We spoke to all the adults attending about our experiences, the activities we had been doing, and about our input into the project and how we had developed personally during it. We shared our design ideas; for example, having floors made of chocolate, and discussed our opinions on how young people should be involved in projects and the benefits of their inclusion.

As well as this, adults from across the country, each from different backgrounds, questioned us on how it had affected our lives. One person from an architect company compared us to TV presenters, and a number of people said we were 'articulate' (communicative, expressive and generally clear-talking).

We look forward to the upcoming events and projects that will enable us to help children and young people to have a say on building projects across the UK – watch out, we may be seeing you soon.

**Emrys Green, 16, Bury St Edmunds & Carla Read, 17, Portsmouth
Young Developers, The Big Idea steering group**



Young NCB discuss culture and diversity

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) asked if we could unearth young people's views and opinions on how diversity issues are covered across the national curriculum and if modern British cultural and social history should be included in the citizenship curriculum or somewhere else.

So, we decided to hold a consultation day with Young NCB members about diversity. We made the day fun and interesting, so members who came along would want to talk with us and share their views. Eleven young people attended and their efforts and contributions made the day a great success.

The messages that we passed onto the DfES were:

- British cultural and social history should be part of the citizenship curriculum, or there should be a way of increasing young people's understanding of the subject and giving greater importance to it.

'Some young people view culture as an integral part of them as a person. So if you understand their culture you will be able to understand them as a person.'

- Time should be dedicated to making sure subjects that look at culture do so better and in more detail. This will give young people plenty of opportunities to learn how culture fits in with that subject and the importance of it.

'It's important to learn about each other to understand why different races believe certain concepts.'

- Both young people and teachers do not take the PSHE/Citizenship lessons seriously enough. Lessons

need to be better monitored and it should be made into a GCSE to make it more important to young people and teachers.

'Teachers give you handouts in PSHE and then get on with something else themselves.'

'PSHE/Citizenship is a time to talk with your mates and is a free lesson.'

- Any new subject or programme looking at culture should cover youth culture. This would make young people feel more involved and would increase their interest in learning more about the whole subject.

'Youth culture is more real to us, we see it around us all the time and it affects us everyday.'

- Real life experiences of cultures should be part of a subject looking at culture and diversity. This should include things like culturally specific trips, food, music and hearing from people about their own cultures.

'If people came and spoke about their culture and religion it would be far more interesting as you can ask them how they feel about the things they find difficult.'

The views and comments Young NCBs shared with us at the consultation day and through an online survey were made into a report and given to the DfES. The DfES are going to use the report to help them with their decision-making on diversity issues and the national curriculum.

David Curtis, Young NCB Coordinator



News

Shropshire County Council recruits three young people for new Participation Team

Who better to help service providers in Shropshire find out what young people want than young people themselves? This is the principle behind the appointment of the newly formed Shropshire Children's Trust Participation Team. The three new jobs have been created because partners on the Trust said that they want to find out the views of young people, but need help carrying it out.

The three posts have been paid for under the new Local Authority Agreement funding regime, which helps support new and innovative ways of working. For each of the 10 priorities the trust has, the team will do a consultation, piece of research or a participatory activity around that area to help service providers get young people's views on how they can improve. The team will also be available to give advice to people organising their own consultation events, and to help all the partners of the trust to reach Hear by Right position one (when adults consult young people in key decisions) by 2008.

Although the project has a lifespan of two years, it is hoped that by establishing a strong business base the team can gather further external funding in the future. This will ensure that Shropshire's services to young people are fit for purpose, effective and make a difference beyond the lifespan of the project.

Ayla Louch, Dean Coe and Katie Challenor are now all in post.

Dean Coe, 16, Shrewsbury

Views

I want to tell people about an organisation called Connexions. I think it really works and is really good, but the problem is that lots of people don't know about it. In fact, I didn't know either until I followed my friend, who was asking for some advice about his life, there. I think it needs to be advertised everywhere young people go so they can hear about it. I see lots of bad things happening to 15 and 16-year-olds but they don't know where to go to for advice. They should know about Connexions.

Tunde Olasupo, 16, London

13-19? Living in England? If you want information and advice designed just for you, or just someone to talk to, then Connexions has it all. Visit their website at <http://www.connexions.gov.uk> or if you need to speak to someone now you can call them for free and in confidence on 0808 001 3219.

Member profiles...



Jack Curtis is one of our youngest members at age seven and comes from Chessington in Surrey. He's a big brother to baby Alexandra and has already been busy spreading the word about Young NCB.

What have you been involved in so far?

I helped to get more Young NCB members in Brighton.

Wow, thank you. What do you like doing in your spare time?

Playing on the PC game *Lord of The Rings*, going shopping at Games Workshop and playing tennis.

Who do you most admire/like?

My baby sister.



Mike Hlavaty is 14 and lives in Southampton. He found time between speeding around racetracks and thinking about robotic dogs to fill us in on his world.

How did you find out about Young NCB?

Um, this is going to sound quite stupid, but I can't remember.

What have you been involved in so far?

I am on the YNCB advisory board, so just going to meetings.

What do you get up to in your spare time?

I love rugby and sailing. I am also a member of the sea cadets, which is really good because they discipline you a lot.

Who do you most admire/look up to in your life?

I look up to Lawrence Dallaglio as he is a really good rugby player.

Ah, what a lovely big brother. What is the most fun thing you have ever done?

Going to the Isle of Wight, Cyprus and learning to write my name in hieroglyphics.

If you could build or invent one thing, what would it be?

A double spatula for cooking.

A what? I'm puzzled, remind me to ask you about that later! If you could be famous for the day, who would it be and why?

David Beckham because he has a lot of money.

What are the main things that stop young people from being heard?

Adults not listening to children and ignoring them.

Anything you would like to tell the world?

Be good at school.

What is the most fun thing you have ever done?

Probably having a driving experience a few weeks ago, it was off road and there were no speed limits. Check out the website: www.rockingham.co.uk

Free advertising, just another service Young NCB provides! If you could build or invent one thing what would it be?

A robot dog, but you would need to oil it when it rains.

Hmm ok then. What are your plans for the future?

I would like to join the navy, and become a Warfare Officer, which involves being in charge of all the ships weapons.

What are the main things that stop young people from being heard?

The media, saying all youths are jobs. It's only a few people who are jobs.

Anything you would like to tell the world?

If you ever get the chance to do something amazing, don't be scared just do it.

Good advice from Mike. If you want to feature on this page let Adriana know by calling 020 7843 6099 or emailing abyrne@ncb.org.uk