

# Participation and engagement with children, young people, parents and carers in 2024-2025



**achieving  
for children**

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# 1. ABOUT

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Achieving for Children (AfC) is a not-for-profit organisation that supports children and young people in the Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK), and the London Borough of Richmond (LBR) and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). Our aim is to help children and young people live safe, happy, healthy, and successful lives.

[AfC's Strategic Plan](#), published in April 2024, was created with the help of children and young people, as well as parents, carers, and professionals. Feedback from these groups helped shape what is in the plan and what our main priorities should be. A child and young person-friendly version of the strategic plan was also produced. Young people helped design this version to make sure the language was easy to understand and the design was bright and eye-catching.

AfC always puts children and young people first. A big part of our work is called participation. This means creating chances for children, young people, and families to share their views and help shape the services they use. Until now, we haven't brought all of this participation work together in one place. This report, which covers March 2024 to April 2025, shows some of the main examples from across AfC.

Participation happens in many different ways across AfC. It is not just one activity or group. We involve children, young people, and families in different parts of the organisation, including services for children with SEND, youth services, and parent and carer support.



## 2. OUR COMMITMENT

In 2024, AfC published our first official [participation strategy](#). This plan explains why involving young people and families is so important and sets out what we want to focus on to make participation even better. As part of this work, we have created an [action plan](#).

We have listed our priorities and some of the activities we have delivered so far.

### Priority one: creating a consistent approach

This means that Achieving for Children wants everyone across the organisation, in all teams and all three boroughs, to include children, young people, and families in their work.

The aim is that by having a consistent way of working, the voices of young people and families will be heard more clearly and be at the centre of everything AfC does.

Since launching the strategy, we have had meetings with senior leaders to decide how participation will be organised. This includes making decisions about who meets, how they meet, when, and how choices are made. This is an important first step.

In October 2025, young people gave their ideas for a new toolkit to help staff involve children, young people, and families in projects. This toolkit is now being developed to support staff across the organisation.

We have also started work on creating a new role called 'participation champion'. These champions will help teams understand how to involve children and families in a meaningful way.

A group of young people also shared their thoughts on what makes participation feel meaningful and work well. Their feedback is being used to shape a new set of participation principles that will guide how AfC involves people in the future.



## Priority two: Developing a framework for inclusive participation

This priority is all about making sure that everyone can participate, no matter who they are. AfC is dedicated to making sure our work with young people and families is fair and includes people from all different backgrounds.

To make sure participation works for everyone, we will create specific guides or instructions on how to involve young people and families from all these different backgrounds. This will help make participation more consistent and ensure that everyone in the areas AfC serves can get involved.

Since the participation strategy was published, a strategic equality, diversity and inclusion lead has been recruited. This role will be responsible for making sure that the actions taken for this strategy really do work from an inclusion point of view.

We are also reviewing how we check the quality of our services by reviewing our quality assurance framework, so we can include new ways of getting feedback from children, young people, parents, and carers. This will go beyond just individual audits and help us learn more from people's experiences.

## Priority three: Sharing feedback

This priority is about making sure that feedback from children, young people, and families is shared appropriately across AfC. By doing so, we aim to reduce the need for people to repeat themselves and ensure their experiences and views are reflected in wider conversations. This helps to improve the quality and consistency of our services and makes it easier for families to engage with any part of the organisation.

This is AfC's first ever annual participation report covering the whole organisation. To support this, work has begun to develop a system for tracking participation activity throughout the year, not just for this report. This will help AfC better understand, recognise and celebrate the wide range of participation taking place across services.

In Kingston and Richmond, the youth engagement lead delivered training to 20 youth service workers. The focus was on equipping staff to set up and support youth-led forums within their local youth clubs. As a result of this training, one youth forum has been established in Kingston, with five forums now running in Richmond youth clubs.

# 3. DEFINING PARTICIPATION

Participation is about working with our colleagues, children, parents and carers instead of just working for them. The ultimate aim is to ensure our actions have a meaningful impact. Some examples of what is and isn't participation are given below.

## Participation is:

### Youth initiated and shared decision making with adults

Here, young people take the lead in coming up with ideas, and then work with adults to make decisions.

### Adult initiated, shared decision making with adults

This is when adults already have an idea or plan, and work with young people on an equal level to make decisions and plan for the future.

### Consultation

In this case, the project is designed and led by the service (like AfC). However, young people, children, parents, and carers understand the process, and their opinions are collected and taken seriously.

### Assigned, but informed

Children are assigned to a project and may not start the project themselves, but they are fully informed about it (eg, a school garden project) Children may still feel they really own the project.

Participation means people being involved in decisions that affect their lives. For AfC, this means respecting services users' right to be involved in helping to shape and review the services that impact on their lives.

## Participation isn't:

### Tokenism

Involving children, young people, parents and carers in a superficial way without giving them a real influence or consideration.

### Manipulation

Using children, young people and families without their consent or understanding.

### Decoration

Including children and young people in events or activities just to make it look inclusive without valuing their input.



# 4. PARTICIPATION IN ACTION THIS YEAR

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While the examples in this report highlight specific activities, it's important to recognise that participation is happening all year round.

Across AfC, the views of children, young people, parents and carers are found in a variety of ways. These include forums, one-to-one direct work, feedback gathered by Independent Reviewing Officers, advocacy services, formal consultations, and general day-to-day feedback.

There are also many representative groups where children, young people, parents and carers can give their views. These groups organise and lead much of this work, alongside engagement that takes place within individual services. They play a vital role in making sure the voices of children, young people and families are heard, valued and acted upon. These groups include the following:

- Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Council
- Kingston and Richmond councils
- Youth club based youth forums
- Girls forum
- Parent carer forums in Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead
- Kickback - RBWM Children in Care Council (CiCC)
- Richmond CiCC
- Kingston CiCC
- Inclusion ambassadors

Other mechanisms of participation throughout AfC include:

- one-to-one work
- independent reviews
- surveys
- focus groups
- online polls
- pathway plans and care plan



# PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN KINGSTON AND RICHMOND

## Kingston and Richmond Children in Care Council (CiCC)



Children in Care Council Richmond

The CiCC for Richmond and Kingston is a group of young people who are in care. They work together to share their experiences and help change decisions and improve the services they receive.

They provide feedback through the corporate parenting panel and quarterly managers meeting, take part in shaping policies and have been involved in activities such as staff awareness and Skills to Foster. AfC has given the CiCC a platform to be heard, build confidence, and make a positive impact on their care.

The CiCC initiated a new monthly group dedicated to care leavers who are also parents. This group of ten people meet regularly to establish a community, feel heard and supported and offer each other practical support. For example, they held a Mother's Day celebration.

The Annual Celebration of Achievement Awards in 2024 brought together 220 young care experienced people to celebrate their extraordinary achievements. There were 11 awards with 25 trophies, including for personal development, inspirational role model and young person of the year. Following shortly from the annual awards, the CiCC held a Christmas party attended by over 150 people at Richmond Hill Hotel which included food, art activities and a Santa's grotto.

The time put in by this group is highly valued and further achievements of this group's involvement include contributing to the exemption of care experienced young people to 25, an increased grant for those who have young children and the reopening of the leaving care hub in Twickenham for young people to drop in without an appointment.

In September 2024, 10 young people who had left care took the lead and worked with the Leaving Care Team to update AfC's 'local offer' pages. Because of their help, there are now extra pages for young people who are leaving prison, young people who came to the UK alone seeking asylum, and young people who are becoming parents. This shows how their input helps improve support that goes beyond just the legal requirements.

Members of the Children in Council have also become 'young inspectors'. They have already visited four supported housing places. This project makes sure that the opinions of young people who have been in care are heard to check that their housing is safe, supportive, and meets their needs. The young inspectors provide feedback, and a report with their suggestions is then given to the housing provider.

## Kingston and Richmond parent carer forums

The Kingston and Richmond parent carer forums are independent groups led by parents and carers. They are for families of children and young people (from birth to age 25) with any type of special educational need or disability. These forums give parents and carers a place to talk about important issues and make sure their voices are heard by the people who plan and deliver services.

In autumn 2024, the forums held five meetings with local schools and the NHS. The aim was to explore how therapy services for children, especially those with SEND, could be improved. Families said they wanted clearer information about how and when services are delivered, and easier ways to access support. Schools said they needed more flexibility and earlier help to support children.

The feedback from these meetings is now being used to help the NHS plan improvements. Parents and carers also spoke with the NHS about needing direct contact with health professionals. As a result, email addresses are now easier to find, helping families know who to contact when they need support.

Parent carer forum representatives also sit on the Autism Pathway Review Steering Group, where they help make information about autism assessments easier for families to understand. This led to the creation of eight short videos that explain the process in a clear and simple way.

In June 2024, the Kingston and Richmond parent carer forums worked with the Commissioning and Short Breaks teams to host two sessions focused on improving the short breaks service for families with SEND. An online survey was also shared for those who could not attend. These sessions helped shape future plans, and further focus groups took place later in 2024. Both parent carer forums also took part in the tendering process, which began in February 2025.

## Kingston and Richmond Youth Council (KRYC)

The KRYC is a group of young people who are democratically elected through schools and youth clubs every two years to ensure the voice of young people is heard and acted upon in both boroughs.

This past year, they ran a huge election process. 5,500 young people got involved and voted in a fully democratic election led by young people themselves (with some adult help). This involved 20 schools, eight youth clubs, and 70 candidates, with young people electing 38 representatives for the two areas. KRYC elections have been taking place in Kingston and Richmond for 18 years.

Alongside the elections, the KRYC ran an online vote to identify the top issues the new youth council should focus on. The most important issues chosen were:

- crime and safety
- sexual harassment
- mental health
- racism





In response to the top issues, the following work was youth initiated and supported by adults.

- 30 members of the youth council took part in racial literacy training to better understand and lead work on this topic. Knowledge from the training was used to inform the development of the racism and young people survey, which gave young people the opportunity to discuss their experience of racism. 1,300 young people completed the survey, the results of which were presented to headteachers, AfC and Kingston and Richmond councils. As a result of their efforts, a new racist incident reporting form has been created for schools.
- They also secured funding for 12 KRYC members to lead a £5,000 film project, exploring how racism affects young people. This short film will be shared in schools and youth clubs once it is completed.
- 1,100 young people completed a survey about vaping. 30 youth council members received training on vaping and health. The findings were shared with Public Health and headteachers, and have helped shape school guidelines and the local vaping action plan.
- 15 youth council members completed training on sexual harassment and used their learning to design a survey which was shared with over 1,000 young people. The results were shared with council leaders and helped inform the violence against women and girls (VAWG) action plan.
- Two podcasts have been created exploring the topic of masculinity, encouraging open conversations among young men from a variety of backgrounds. The podcasts covered themes such as popular culture, gender expectations, and identity.

## National Youth Parliament

The National Youth Parliament started in 2000 and includes 300 elected 11 to 18 year olds across the country so that they can express their views. This group creates and delivers its manifesto and discusses important topics such as whether 16 and 17 year olds should be allowed to vote in all elections and referendums.

Members of the youth parliament have held two meetings with the executive director of children's services, during which they suggested a method of involving young people in the review of the child and young people plan. This was adult initiated with a shared decision with young people.

7,000 young people in Kingston and Richmond completed a 'make your mark' ballot, giving their opinions on a range of topics before voting on the direction of the 2025 campaigns for the National Youth Parliament. The results of the ballot will be used to inform local needs and the KRYC and UK Youth Parliament Manifestos.

## Recruits Crew

The Recruits Crew Panel is a group made up of young people aged 11 to 18 who have SEND. These young people are from Kingston and Richmond areas. Their main job is to be part of the interviews for people applying to work at AfC. This means they get to have a real say in who gets hired by AfC.

In the past year, members of the Recruits Crew have been involved in 24 interviews. Being part of this group gives the young people insights into how job interviews and hiring work.

## SEND Futures conference

In October 2024, over 230 delegates including parents, carers, schools and education and childcare providers attended the SEND Futures conference, an in-person event featuring a choir of children with SEND, a key-note speaker and several workshops. The Kingston parent carer forum facilitated a workshop on how best to engage with parents and carers. The event was very successful, with 61% agreeing that they were very satisfied with the day and 89% saying they were very satisfied with the keynote speaker.

## SEND Parent Champions

SEND Parent Champions are a group of local parent and carer volunteers who are supported to inform other families with a child or young person with SEND about useful services in their area. Here are some examples of the work this group has been involved with:

- consulted and helped inform the update of the accessibility strategy
- led an event supporting families with SEND children arriving from Hong Kong
- encouraged other local authorities to set up their own champion schemes
- co-produced a guide for parents with SEND children going into Year 7 to understand the school's SEND processes

## Making the most of secondary school: what do the students think?

(a sample from the guide for parents with SEND children going into Year 7)

### Comments from students currently in Year 7

“ Mums and Dads, don't worry about everything. Your child will get into things they didn't know at primary. You have more freedom about what you do and you get independent but everyone gets help. It makes me feel the same as everyone else. ”

To show how valued these people are, one parent won an award at the Coram SEND parent champion awards in May 2024, with the organisers saying that:

“ X has tirelessly dedicated herself to empowering local SEND parents, offering unwavering support, guidance and resources. Through her passionate commitment, she has fostered a community where parents feel heard, understood, and equipped to navigate the challenges of raising children with SEND. X goes above and beyond, advocating for inclusive policies, organising informational sessions, and providing a compassionate ear for those in need. ”

## Takeover Challenge day

The Takeover Challenge day in Kingston and Richmond puts young people in charge, giving them a taste of what it's like to make decisions in real organisations. It helps young people learn new things and get some work experience. Organisations like AfC and the council also get to hear some fresh ideas and perspectives from young people. Members of the youth council were involved in planning both events. The events in Kingston and were also chaired by the Chair of Kingston and Richmond Youth Council as well as the Member of Youth Parliament for Kingston.

Last November, 80 young people helped shape Richmond Council's future plans. The young people chose to focus on two big issues that matter to them, crime and safety and climate change. They explored what the council was already doing in these areas and shared their views on how funding should be used. As part of the process, the young people prepared and asked questions to adults from Achieving for Children, the council, and the police, giving them the chance to challenge and influence decision-making directly. In the afternoon, they visited local youth centres to look at how these spaces could be more environmentally friendly and how to involve more young people in leading positive change.

# SEND Young Voice group

Young Voice is a group made up of young people under 25 with special educational needs and disabilities. The idea is that they can meet up, connect with others, and find out about ways they can get involved in shaping services and decisions that affect them.

Earlier this year, six young people from the group shared ideas on how to make participation sessions more accessible for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. They gave feedback on how the service could better meet their needs, including choosing the name of the group, how often it should meet, and the best times and places to get together.

From the Young Voice group, 21 young people with autism and ADHD formed focus groups. They worked on developing the autism and ADHD strategy to make sure the plan actually focuses on the things that matter in their real lives. The source highlights that this feedback is really important for shaping the strategy, which is due to be launched later in 2025.

In March 2025, 20 young people aged 11 to 20 from schools across Kingston and Richmond also took part in work to improve the forms used by SEND occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Their feedback was used to make the documents easier to understand, which will help reduce anxiety, support clearer communication, and make therapy sessions more effective by better reflecting each young person's needs and preferences.

**About Me Key Outcomes**



**18** said they would find it helpful to read before meeting the person

**18** young people liked the photo

**12** said that the writing was easy to read.

**11** said that there was just enough words

**18** found the widget/images helpful and that there was enough images and pictures

**Background colour**

**11** said that a white background is good.

**7** didn't like the white background

**1** was unsure about the white background.

Preferred colours are: **Blue, Purple, orange, pink, brown**

(Photo of the outcome of the feedback)

# PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

## Changing Voices

The Changing Voices group in Windsor and Maidenhead meets every other month. It brings representatives from all the youth groups that we have established to create a consistent voice for young people to be heard. These young people are able to meet with senior leadership in an informal way.

In summer 2024, 12 young people spoke with the director of children's services, senior leaders and cabinet members about how it feels to be a child or young person living in Windsor and Maidenhead, what's working well and what needs improvement. This allowed AfC to understand the top issues for young people in the borough and consider their thoughts on any future plans.

Young people brought their concerns about the fact that TfL did not extend their 50% discount offer to all care leavers and highlighted that there was potential discrimination towards care leavers not living in a London borough. Young people asked senior managers and the Corporate Parent Forum to write letters to TfL and the Mayor of London about this issue. A 'You said, we will' document is created following each meeting to show how AfC plans to respond to what was discussed and this is revisited at each meeting.

The screenshot shows a document titled "Changing Voices July 2025" with the logo on the left and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead logo on the right. The document is divided into two columns: "YOU SAID..." and "WE DID OR WILL DO...".

YOU SAID...	WE DID OR WILL DO...
..... Could we explore the idea of having better apprenticeship possibilities in RBWM and AfC, and not just business administration ones	..... Liaise with other local authorities to see what they have to offer in terms of apprenticeships eg Wokingham have 'young experts' role
..... An ongoing request for help to raise numbers in our youth voice groups - You still need help from senior managers to advertise and promote your groups so that you can get more members	..... Sarah will pick up the BASH event with Lin and get a date in the diary for when we can go to this. We will invite Michael Connors from Ops1 to attend this to showcase how it all works in the Kingston and Richmond Youth Council

## Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Council

The Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Council is a group of 14 to 19 year olds. Their main aim is to communicate the needs and views of young people to make sure the council hears what young people need and think, so they can help make positive changes for young people in the borough.

The Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Council co-designed a youth page on the 'Healthier together' NHS website following a discussion with NHS representatives about how inaccessible the webpage was. The new look website is easier to navigate and understand for young people. Young people decided on the layout and content of the webpage and created posters and videos to promote the webpage. This was adult initiated, with shared decisions with young people.

The Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Council wrote a letter in response to the 2025/2026 budget consultation and once again their input was noted. Officers and councillors responsible for the budgets met with the youth council for a Q&A session before writing their response.

## Girls Forum

The Windsor and Maidenhead Girls Forum started in 2018. The Girls Forum is a group for 12 to 19 year old girls and young women living or going to school in Windsor and Maidenhead. The young women in this group want to make a change in the community, inspire and empower and ensure girls' voices are heard.

In April 2024, the Girls Forum got involved in a campaign called 'Tackling period poverty'. They teamed up with an organisation called The Baby Bank. Through their efforts, the girls made a real difference in their community by collecting £200 worth of period products. All these products were then given to The Baby Bank to help people who needed them.

The Girls Forum organised an event called, 'Girls empowerment day'. The focus of the day was to hear from young people living in the area with a disability or a neurodivergent diagnosis about how to make services, workplaces, and schools and colleges more welcoming and inclusive. 18 people came to the event, including 10 young people and eight parents and carers. Importantly, the people who attended had the chance to share their lived experience of living in the borough and to share their opinions on lots of different things that affect their lives, such as education and transport. This event helped gather important feedback straight from the people using these services.

Workshops, guest speakers and a series of questions were asked throughout the day. Questions such as the following were asked.

- Do you believe Windsor and Maidenhead is doing enough to advocate for the voice of young disabled girls?
- Do you think Windsor and Maidenhead does a good job in co-production?
- Do you think young people can learn new skills working in co-production with local councils?

A report has been written on findings and submitted to the council and relevant senior leaders. Girls Forum will follow up with some of the findings as their focus for the coming year.

The Girls Forum, alongside the Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Council, organised a podcast workshop training session, giving them the opportunity to learn more about podcasts, including how to plan, create and share your podcast. This also gave a chance for young people to grow their communication skills. In total, eight young people attended the session.

“ I like that Girls Forum allows me an outlet to actively address my concerns about gender inequality in a safe space, whilst also being able to make changes in my local area. This is such a unique group, as we don't only address policy but can make events, book collections, etc that educate people as well as taking action to prevent ignorance. ”

The Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Council and Girls Forum were consulted by the Windsor and Maidenhead Strategy, Policy and Performance Team to work with them on how to better engage with young people in Windsor and Maidenhead. Because of these workshops, the council created a 'youth engagement pledge'. This pledge is a promise from the council about how they will make sure young people's views are part of their everyday work.



**Youth Engagement Pledge** 

**As a council, we understand the importance of communicating with and listening to our young people and youth groups. We make the following commitments in our engagement with young people:**

- We will involve you in decisions, especially ones that impact you the most.
- We will let you know what we want from you and what we have done with your feedback.
- We will be honest about the difference you can really make.
- We will use language that is clear and easy to understand.

## Anti-vaping campaign

Members from all groups in Windsor and Maidenhead were approached by Public Health to work with them to create an anti-vaping campaign aimed solely at young people. Posters were created specifically targeting young people and trying to raise awareness of the harmful nature of vaping. The campaign has been very successful in raising awareness about the harmful nature of vaping. The posters were distributed throughout the borough, including in 75% of the schools.

## Takeover day

In October 2024, Windsor and Maidenhead hosted a takeover day for young people within the borough aged 12 to 18. They took over roles of elected members, senior managers and officers of the council and AfC to work with them in a variety of different service areas. They were given the opportunity to 'take over' some of our decision making, and get an insight into the work we do on a daily basis and most importantly given the opportunity to have their voices heard.

“ I loved it and had tons of fun. ”

“ I learnt lots about how the executive members in the borough function. The day was very informative and the staff were extremely friendly. ”



## Inclusion Ambassadors

Established in 2022, Inclusion Ambassadors are representative of young people from a range of schools who meet every term to discuss how the council can do better to include, be more inclusive and advocate for young people. Inclusion is important to these young people and Inclusion Ambassadors want to ensure the voice of all children and young people is heard.

In April 2024 the Windsor and Maidenhead Inclusion ambassadors hosted an inclusion activity day to celebrate diversity, raise awareness of inclusion issues and create a welcoming environment for their peers to feel trusted, respected and empowered. The day included a DJ and Brazilian percussion workshops as well as a guest speaker. Young people were involved in the planning and running of the event and their hope is to have this as an annual event.

Some funding was allocated through 'Delivering Better Values' to the creation of a piece for the Windsor and Maidenhead Local Offer. The Inclusion Ambassadors spoke passionately about getting the correct help when it's needed from professionals. The group have created their 'top ten tips' for professionals who work with young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These tips are meant to give practical advice on how to understand young people better, improve communication, and really grasp what they're trying to say.

Alongside the top tips, the group have started a project called 'Just believe me'. The group have collated a script having shared their lived experiences about transitions in school, getting a diagnosis and being in stressful situations. They are working with an animation company to bring their stories to life. These tips and animation videos are going to be published online on the SEND local offer page.

## Youth Voice Matters Conference

On 20 February 2025, a number of young people from Windsor and Maidenhead attended the Youth Voice Matters Conference in Manchester. The event is designed and planned and hosted by young people with the support of adults.

During the event young people are consulted on different topics and asked to share their opinion. The day concluded with an invaluable opportunity for attendees to share their views and help shape research on co-production in local councils, directly with the Department for Education. The [report](#) has now been published.

“ I thoroughly enjoyed the Youth Voice Matters conference! It was my first time attending, and it was so amazing to see the event being led primarily by disabled and special educational needs young people as we were able to directly address key issues that are important to young people. young person. ”

“ Inclusion ambassadors means to me being able to talk about struggles and our experiences without being judged and knowing you're helping others understand more. ”

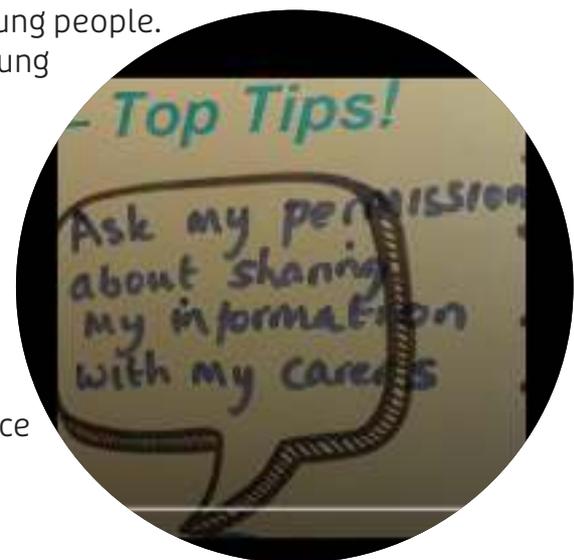
Kickback is the Children in Care Council for Windsor and Maidenhead. The young people in this group make sure that young people who are in the care of Windsor and Maidenhead have their voices heard in the services that affect their lives and enable young care experienced people participate in the planning, delivery and evaluation of local authority services.

Between six and 10 young people join monthly sessions to decide their own annual programme and the activities and consultations they want to do that year. In 2024, Kickback took part in a Q&A session with MP Janet Daby, where six young people had the opportunity to ask questions and share their views on government plans for care experienced young people.

Kickback worked closely with the Children in Care Council in Berkshire to create training materials for school nurses. These materials were designed to help nurses better understand the needs of children in care. As part of this work, 25 young people from Kickback also took part in looking over the health assessment form that's used for young people in care. They wanted to make sure the form reflected their actual experiences and helped improve the whole assessment process. Specialist nurses were also invited to attend a workshop where the health plan was talked about and information shared about what young people liked and disliked about their health visit. Because of their feedback and input, the form used by specialist nurses was significantly changed to match what works better for young people. The specialist nurses created a version of the report that is young person friendly in the shape of 'You said, we did'.

This is a screenshot of a video produced to guide nurses on what's important to young people.

In March 2025, eight young people from Kickback visited the new residential children's home currently being developed in the borough. They shared their views on the refurbishment to help shape what the space should feel like for the young people who will live there. Their feedback will directly influence the design and layout of the home, ensuring it reflects what young people value in a safe and welcoming environment.



“ Kickback is really good and I enjoy meeting new people and having my voice heard is incredible and I feel like Windsor and Maidenhead has made some great improvements. Kickback is also like a family and a sense of belonging. ”

## Big Conversations

Each year, care experienced young people in Windsor and Maidenhead are invited to take part in the Big Conversation, which is a chance to speak directly with senior members of the Children's Social Care Management team. These one-to-one conversations give young people the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a safe and supportive space.

The most recent Big Conversations took place in May and November 2024. The topics for these two discussions included your safety, stability and permanence, your health and wellbeing and your education, training and employment. These conversations help shape how AfC will continue to develop and improve its services for care experienced young people. Following each conversation, AfC created a detailed 'You said, we will' action plan which outlines what young people told us and how we plan to respond to their feedback.

Total Respect training is a training course delivered to professionals, including elected members, by members of Kickback four times this year. The training included a series of workshops and a range of different activities to encourage debate and develop a better understanding of what it is like to be in care and how the ways we work with young people can really influence them. Real lived experience shapes the training. The session focuses on exploring the rights of children and young people and how advocacy benefits children and young people in care. This training is about listening to the voice and experience of young people in care. At the end of each course attendees make a personal pledge about how they will improve their working practices to take account of children's views.

## Care leavers week

Care leavers week was created in consultation with some of our care leavers. We asked them what they would like to have as part of their week and organised the week accordingly.

Held in October 2024, it included workshops on wellbeing, health, first aid, and staying safe in the community, with participation from police colleagues explaining their role in the UK.



## SEND Voices

SEND Voices Windsor and Maidenhead is a group specifically for parents and carers of children or young people (from birth up to age 25) who have special educational needs or disabilities in the Windsor and Maidenhead area. It's known as the parent carer forum (PCF) for the area. Their main goal is to make sure that services in Windsor and Maidenhead actually meet the needs of local children with SEND and their families. The group currently has over 90 members.

They have played a key role in updating and improving the 'local offer page' online. This is a place where information about support for SEND families is published. They helped with how it looks and by putting together important resources for other parents and carers. As part of this, they created a 'You said, we did' document (showing how feedback led to changes) and a newsletter to keep parents informed and raise awareness.

They are part of running an Annual Inclusion Summit in Windsor and Maidenhead. This event has been happening every year since 2019. It's put together by different groups, including SEND Voices, schools, the Children and Young People's Integrated Therapy Service, and the Independent Advice and Support Service.

The event held in October included 160 people. People who attended gave really positive feedback, with one person saying it was great to see everyone working together with a "forward thinking plan to support disengaged young people", and another finding it "very helpful to support my son in his learning" and being "really uplifting to see the children's performance at the end".

## 5. FIND OUT MORE

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For more information about participation at AfC, use the following links.

- [AfC info page](#) for more information about engagement with young people in Windsor and Maidenhead
- [AfC info page](#) for more information about engagement with the care experienced in Windsor and Maidenhead
- The Kingston and Richmond [AfC info page](#) will direct you to multiple groups such as the youth council and youth centres.
- Kingston and Richmond [Parent Champions Network](#)
- Information on family hubs:
  - [Kingston](#)
  - [Richmond](#)