Somerset Council

Somerset Care Councils

Summer 2025

SiCC & SLCC Newsletter

Somerset in Care Council & Somerset Leaving Care Council

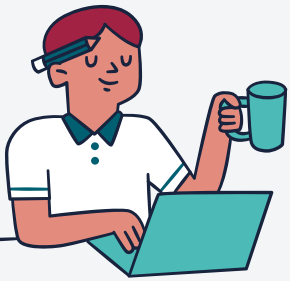
www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk

Who are SiCC and SLCC?

SiCC & SLCC stands for the Somerset In Care Council and the Somerset Leaving Care Council. We ensure that the voices of children looked after and care leavers are included within the planning and reviewing of services.

Who are the SiCC and SLCC Creatives?

The SiCC and SLCC Creatives are a group of young people who use art, poetry, and music to have their voice heard. The crew express their lived experiences, their needs and the things that they'd like to change through creative means.



Who are the SiCC and SLCC Films Crew?

The SiCC and SLCC Films crew help to develop films and animations to share their views, help other young people who may be going through - or are about to go through - similar experiences to them and to help shape services for other young people. The crew are directly involved with the creating, designing, writing, voicing and production of every SiCC and SLCC Films animation and film.

If you would like to join SiCC and SLCC, if you have an idea for an article or have some artwork that you'd like to include in the next issue of the newsletter email **somersetincarecouncils@somerset.gov.uk**

Dates for the Diary!!

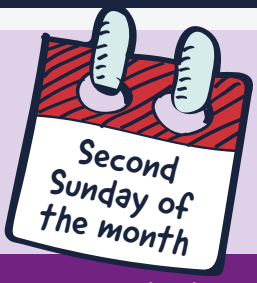
SiCC and SLCC Core Group meetings

We meet in person on the **second Sunday of each month**.

Meetings are from **11.00am – 3.30pm** and we provide lunch.

The next core group meeting dates are:

- **Sunday 15th June**
- **Sunday 12th July**
- **Sunday 9th August**



"Being a new member has opened me up to new opportunities which I didn't know existed and how welcomed the group made me feel and how supportive they were about my contributions.**"**

Celebrating Care Leavers – Making a Difference Together Conference

In March, members of SiCC and SLCC MC-ed at the 'Celebrating Care Leavers – Making a Difference Together' Conference, which was held at the Canalside in Bridgwater. Member of SiCC and SLCC, Amber-Jane wrote this article about the event.

SiCC and SLCC attended a care leavers conference on the 12th March. The conference was about why it is so important that care leavers need access to employment or training. Many incredible employers attended the conference and provided some amazing opportunities and ways to help care leavers. One of those employers was Mulberry. They made two pledges. The first one was a financial pledge which is their promise to help fund programmes that directly benefit care leavers. Their second pledge was a stepping stone pledge which is them promising to provide opportunities for care leavers to gain independence and advance in their careers. They also promised £5,000 for a care leavers fund.

We had a young person who has care experience share his experience since leaving care. Connor shared his journey through care and his struggles throughout his journey. Connor found an amazing opportunity after care by signing up to Camp America. This began his journey of travelling and he went on to travel to Australia and has plans to travel more around the world. Connor said "his

present is not defined by his past". He wants to find ways to fund travel for a young person in care.

SiCC and SLCC asked participants to write their own pledges to care leavers. Some of the pledges are offering exciting opportunities in their employment such as work experience and to build more funding for the care leavers fund. They want to widen the world of employment and highlight the positives young people can bring to the job.

The conference provided some amazing opportunities to hear from lots of different employers and ways they pledge to help young people find a career they love. We had some amazing feedback on the conference, Harriet Gardiner from Mulberry said "the organisation of the day has been incredible and the speakers have all given some memorable speeches". Heather, who is the lead member of the Children, Families and Education also said "we should never underestimate young people, they have such a range of personalities, but they need the environment to flourish". We also had an amazing singer, Rayah, who sang her own song 'Promises' which had everyone in tears.

Amber-Jane

You can read more about the conference at **www.somerset.gov.uk/news/celebrating-care-leavers-making-a-difference-together-conference-pledges-support-for-somersets-care-leavers/**

You can listen to Rayah's incredible song 'Promises' on Rayah's Sound Cloud page at **www.soundcloud.com/rayah-jayde**

NOMINATIONS OPEN

for the

Young People's Awards

Personal Achievement

Positive Pastimes

Helping others

Courage

Education, Training and Employment – Virtual School Award

Adult's Awards

Foster Carer of the Year

Children's Social Care Worker of the Year

Teacher of the Year

You can make your nominations at **www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk/annual-achievements-2025** or by scanning the QR code

Nomination Deadline:
Friday 27 June at 5.00pm

Members of SiCC and SLCC give input on Judges Toolkit – Update!

In November members of SiCC and SLCC looked over a draft of a Judges Toolkit for the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (NFJO), giving their recommendations on ways it could be improved.

The toolkit was sent back to the NFJO, where the President of the Family Division reviewed it, taking into consideration the comments from SiCC and SLCC. There was some incredibly positive feedback from professionals who have looked at the group's input on the project.

The President of the Family Division and the Family Justice Young People's Board will be making the final changes to the toolkit and publishing it within the next month or two, and are really excited about the potential changes this work might bring about and are incredibly grateful to the members of SiCC and SLCC who have contributed.

The Toolkit was published on the 26th February, and the President of the Family Division had this to say about young people's contributions to the Toolkit:

> "I am very grateful to all who have been involved in developing this most valuable resource, but I would particularly like to thank the young people who have contributed. Their endorsement of what is said here should give judges solid confidence that, if they follow these guidelines, they are likely to produce a message that will be of real and lasting value to the young person who has been the centre of their concern."

For more on the Toolkit and to have a look at it yourself visit **www.judiciary.uk/guidance-and-resources/president-of-the-family-division-publishes-guidance-on-writing-to-children-developed-with-the-family-justice-young-peoples-board/**

To download and read the Toolkit visit **www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Writing-to-Children-A-Judges-Toolkit-V1.7-1.pdf**

Care Experienced Young People shape new Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Somerset Corporate Parenting Board has unveiled its new strategy, co-written with children in care and care leavers. This strategy outlines Somerset Council's guidelines and aims to ensure that children and young people in care are nurtured to grow and thrive.

The 2025-28 Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy asks, 'Would This Be Good Enough for My Child?'. When a child enters the care of Somerset Council, the responsibilities that would normally belong to a parent become the legal and moral duty of everyone at the Council and its partners, making them Corporate Parents.

The Strategy is built around seven key responsibilities:

1. Ensuring health
2. Giving young people a voice
3. Assessing their needs
4. Taking a trauma-informed approach
5. Having high aspirations for them
6. Being rights-based
7. Providing stability and security

These responsibilities guide the Council's actions for children and young people in care over the next few years. The Corporate Parenting Board monitors, challenges, and influences the services Somerset Council and its partners deliver to continually improve outcomes.

Working with members of the Somerset in Care and Somerset Leaving Care Council (SiCC and SLCC), a Pledge was developed, symbolised by a sunflower to reflect happiness, admiration, optimism, honesty, and resilience.

A member of SiCC and SLCC said:

> “The Pledge is like a sunflower as it’s striving for brightness, always looking for the sun and finding the light.”

In addition to the new Strategy and Pledge, a short film was produced by SiCC, SLCC, and the Somerset Council Engagement and Participation team. This film will be used for Corporate Parent training for all new staff and Councillors.

Cllr. Heather Shearer, Lead Member for Children, Families and Education, said:

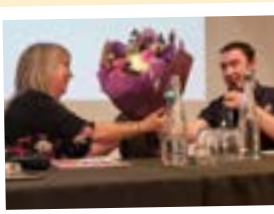
> “I’m delighted to support the launch of the new Corporate Parenting Strategy for Somerset that runs until 2028. This strategy, co-produced by the Corporate Parenting Board and young people of SiCC and SLCC, reflects the principles of the national ‘Stable Homes, Built on Love’ strategy, promoting the health, well-being, hopes, and wishes of all care-experienced children and young people.
>
> “The Board encourages everyone at Somerset Council and our partners to undertake the refreshed Corporate Parenting training to ensure we all answer the question – ‘Would This Be Good Enough for My Child?’”

SiCC and SLCC is a group for young people in care and care leavers in Somerset, enabling them to have a voice to challenge and shape the services they use.

The 2025-28 Somerset Corporate Parenting Strategy, Pledge, and training film can be found, along with other useful documents can be found here **www.somerset.gov.uk/corporate-parenting/**

You can contact the team by emailng **SomersetCorporateParentingBoard@somerset.gov.uk**

Member of SiCC and SLCC speaks at the Future of Supported Accommodation conference



Leon Isaac, a member of the Somerset Leaving Care Council was invited as keynote speaker at the Commissioners Conference – The Future of Supported Accommodation at the Birmingham Conference and Exhibition Centre on 4 March 2025.

Leon was asked to talk about the work of Somerset in Care and Leaving Care Councils (SiCC and SLCC) on Principles of Care that they undertook with the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (NFJO). As well as talking about the project and its outcomes, Leon told the 200 strong audience of commissioners and providers about the benefits of young people having a voice – for organisations and for the young people themselves. His presentation was the final keynote speech of a very informative and interesting conference, where Leon had also co-facilitated a workshop with Dr Beverley Barnet Jones of the NFJO.

Kira's Youth Mentoring Project with Councillor Heather Shearer

Recently Kira, member of SiCC and SLCC took part in a mentoring project with Councillor Heather Shearer. In this article, Kira tells us about the project and how it affected her.

I had a really good experience doing the youth mentoring project pilot with Heather Shearer, I feel very privileged to have been able to be in a position to share my lived experience with someone in a decision making role like Heather is in.

Through doing this project I was able to grow my confidence in telling my story, and felt listened to which isn't something that I have always felt throughout my life being a care experienced person. My for the future is that this project can be replicated because I feel it could be so impactful for many young people and professionals in a position of power.

Kira

Kieran meets the Prime Minister over Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Recently Kieran, member of SiCC and SLCC went up to London and met Prime Minister Kier Starmer at the House of Commons over the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25, a Bill designed to improve the safeguarding of children and to raise education standards.

While at Westminster, Kieran shared his thoughts and voiced his experiences of being a young person who has been both a child looked after and a care leaver in a speech. During his speech he also talked about the hard work that SiCC and SLCC do to raise the profile of young people in the care system, to challenge services and help them meet the needs to care experienced young people.

In addition to meeting Prime Minister Kier Starmer, Kieran also met Members of Parliament Jess Asato and Munira Wilson.

Kieran said of the experience: "I wanted to make a change to unfunded care and schools, make all of us be heard and noticed. It was amazing to meet the Prime Minister, I actually had a little chat with him, so that was really nice to talk someone who is running the country. It was once in a lifetime."

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25 looks to make provision for the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people with 40 different measures that aim to remove barriers to opportunity in schools and improve the education system, making it safer for every child and young person, as well as strengthening regulations, improving quality of care to ensure it meets the needs of children and young people.

Smokefree Somerset

Vaping

It's a quit tool not a cool tool

If you don't smoke, don't vape

Young people who vape may experience the following side effects:

Shortness of breath | Coughing | Headaches | Dry mouth | Sore throat

The long-term effects are still unknown.

Most vapes contain nicotine, a highly addictive drug that's easy to get hooked on and hard to stop.

Myth Busting: Vaping doesn't relieve stress, it can actually increase stress and anxiety. Nicotine withdrawal may cause irritability, sleep problems, and trouble concentrating.

Vaping is only recommended as a quit tool for adults who smoke, and it is illegal for nicotine vapes to be sold to anyone under 18 years old.

For more information on vaping, support to quit, and managing stress, scan the QR code or visit:
www.smokefreesomerset.org.uk

Somerset Council

NHS Somerset

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The Somerset Care Councils NEED YOU!

We want to hear your views on things that matter to you, so come and join us!

Who are we?

Any young person in care or leaving care is automatically a member of SiCC and SLCC. We meet in person and online.

What do we do?

We meet monthly to help support the creation, review and updating of the services that we use. This includes creating films and animations, reviewing services, interviewing new staff, mystery shopping and the use of art, music & spoken word to have your voice heard.

Visit the Somerset In Care Councils Website at:
www.somersetincarecouncils.org.uk

To find out more, please email the team
somersetincarecouncils@somerset.gov.uk

Or complete our online form
https://tinyurl.com/SiCCandSLCC