



# The CiCC

## Share their Take Over Experience

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## Michael's Take-over Story

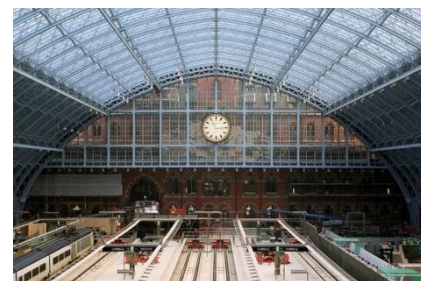
Michael, a long standing and loyal member of the Derby Children in Care Council; a young care leaver and now living independently. Whilst in the care of the local authority, Michael had the benefit of an independent visitor, facilitated by Volunteering Matters. Over a number of years **Michael developed a meaningful and trusting relationship with Rob**, they have many shared interests, including supporting their local football team, the Derby Rams. Consequently, once Michael turned 18, their friendship continued, and Rob has remained a stable and positive influence in Michael's life.



This year, the Children in Care Council decided to embrace Takeover Day – the young people shared their ideas about opportunities they would like to explore. Michael sometimes lacks confidence and he asked for guidance about what to do – **we were delighted when an opportunity arose to visit Parliament**. Given Michael's involvement with the Children in Care Council who adhere to democratic practice, it seemed a natural choice for him. We approached Rob and he was only too pleased to support Michael to make this happen. Arrangements were put in place.

On Monday 14th November Michael and Rob travelled to London to meet and shadow **the Right Honourable Damien Green, Secretary of State for Works and Pensions**, and his Junior Ministers.

Their day began at 06.20am when they travelled to Derby train station to catch the 07.05am train to St Pancras. They were met by Chris Dosset from the Children's Commissioner's Office. Chris took them to Caxton House, the office of Damien Green and his staff, to meet Shareen Russell and Hugo who then introduced them to everyone. Their full itinerary was as follows:



- 10.15 Michael was invited by Damien Green along with his team of Ministers to the weekly meeting discussing progress made during the week, and future plans.

- 11.40 Michael was again invited to the Business Continuity Meeting, which included Skyping film for training purposes.
- 12.00 Michael and Rob attended an informal meeting with Lottie Dexter - a special adviser to Damien Green - Lottie is a Political Appointment and is not a Civil Servant. Lottie's role is to advise on a political agenda, **and has previously worked with David Cameron** on his general Election campaign and the Remain campaign.
- 12.45 Lunch
- 13.40 An informal meeting with Michael, who is Damien's Special Adviser and writes most of his speeches.
- 14.00 A meeting with the communications department who explained how they deal with all media enquiries and produce an intranet forum for the staff.
- 14.45 **Visit to the Houses Of parliament** including to listen to Damien Green on a question and answer session on the bedroom tax.
- 16.05 Leave for St Pancras for 16.57 train home.

During their busy day they met lots of different professionals including:

Sir Robert Deveraux, Damien Hinds MP, Robert Harrington, Penny Mordaurant, Caroline Noakes



Michael really enjoyed the day, he was proud **that he had gone into a meeting with Secretary of State DWP on his own.** Michael has since met with his peers at the Children in Care Council and was evidently buoyant as he proudly announced he had been to London as part of Take Over Day - we have no doubt that it was a hugely beneficial experience for him, causing his confidence to soar; it is particularly heart-warming as he was able to share the day with Rob, someone he once called his independent visitor, but now calls his friend.

**"The thought of going to Parliament made me nervous at first."**

**"Luckily Rob was there to comfort me on the**

**"I found the courage to go into one of the meetings on my own!"**



## Anthony's Day at Court

Anthony is 16 yrs. old and a resident at a Children's home. Though he does not attend CICC meetings, he is kept abreast of opportunities via staff, his independent visitor and the advocacy Clinic.

Anthony expressed an interest to be involved in Take Over day when he saw the opportunities listed in the Focus on Us newsletter – **Anthony fancied aday at court**. Julia Crane Acting Deputy Head of Youth Offending Service liaised with the Magistrates Court and Mr Glyn Plant, a Court Clerk, kindly offered Anthony the opportunity to shadow on Thursday 24 November 2016.

Anthony organised himself to arrive at the Court bright and early. He travelled to St Mary's Gate in Derby and was greeted by Mr Plant. He provided Anthony with a **full tourof the building** – much as Anthony wanted to see the cells, unfortunately, and understandably, due to health and safety risks, they were unable to visit that particular area!



Anthony told us that there is a lot to do to prepare for the Court day which is why he had to be at court "so" early! After the tour, Anthony settled into the Court room where he was able to observe at close contact the procedures. He said that he saw lots of cases; he mentioned robbery as one that stood out. Anthony explained that most of the cases were on their way to the higher courts as they were too serious to be dealt with in the Magistrates. They had a break for lunch and Anthony returned for the second half of the day.

Anthony said that all the staff were friendly and he found the whole experience really interesting, however, he said that he did have some doubts about the police and the way their evidence was presented by the prosecution – Anthony thought **that the security guards had**

**the best job** in the Court house – he said that their job was great, they got to see everyone come into the building, chat with everyone, check their bags - **he would consider working as a security guard in the future.**

Anthony added that he thought the day was really useful to him, he said that Take Over day was different to work experience, he said it gave him **a taste of the working world** and gave him new ideas about different jobs available that he wouldn't have thought of before. He thinks that everyone should get involved if they want to – he would like to do some other things and is particularly interested in getting to Parliament if he can.



**"The security guard has the best job!"**

**"The police could have presented the evidence in a better way."**

**"I want to go to London and visit Parliament!"**

**"It felt like a working day in the real world!"**

**"One day, I'd like to be a security guard too!"**

# Anna discovers her interest in politics

Anna age 14 is one of the more recent members of the Children in Care Council. She joined us in November and quickly established herself as an able and active participant. Anna is great at sharing her ideas about things that matter to young people.



Anna was keen to be involved in Takeover Day, her original idea was to be a DJ – we explored this but due to a

DJ's working times, it wasn't possible this year.

Out of the blue, an opportunity arose to attend Parliament as part of the **Whitehall Takeover' campaign** where young people shadow the minister for a day, immediately we thought of Anna and she was thrilled to take the opportunity. Anna is well versed in negotiations and debates as part of her role in the Children in Care Council therefore it seemed only fitting that she should see how things operate in Whitehall.



Anna had to travel from Derby to London by train – but not before a shopping trip to buy suitable attire! She left Derby early in the morning accompanied by a staff member, to arrive at **Caxton House**, Tothill Street, London by 10am to meet with a representative from the Children's Commissioner for England. She then went on to meet Paulette Sterling and Hugo

Phillips, Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.



Anna was honest in her assessment of the day, she told us that some aspects were a bit on the boring side, so many meetings, so many people, and long walks around the corridors of parliament – However, she told us how exciting it was to watch the

different party members discuss all kinds of topics. She said it was **fascinating how passionate they were**. Anna said she even met the Secretary of State for Works and Pensions, Damien Green, and had her picture taken with him!

Overall, tiring as it was, Anna said that the experience stirred a **bigger interest in politics** for her, and that now she likes to watch discussions from time to time as well as adopting some of their techniques herself when negotiating.



**"Now I try to keep track of politics"**

**"I finally got to visit London! I've never been there."**

**"I got to meet the Secretary of State!"**

**"They all went crazy during the discussion!"**

**"It was fun to watch!"**



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Derbyshire  
Safer”



### Connor as a Fireman!



Connor is a long standing and active member of the CICC – always willing to participate in consultations and events. When Take Over Day was discussed he was quick to say **he wanted to be a Fireman!**

We contacted Derbyshire Fire & rescue service on his behalf. The Service has a dedicated **Youth Engagement Team** working hard to engage with the youth of Derbyshire – they were fantastic in working with us to set something up for Connor.

On 16<sup>th</sup> of December, Connor was a Fireman for the day. He talked about the experience as being interesting and fun. What he liked most was watching them put out a fire. He said their work is fascinating. He met all the cadets and spent time exploring their working space. The day was so special for Connor, that **it made him decide to join the fire cadets himself!**



**“Their work is just fascinating!”**

**“In a few years, I’m going to join the fire cadets!”**



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Safer”

## Natasha is going to be a teaching Assistant!



**ST CLARE'S SCHOOL**

REMARKABLE STUDENTS - UNIQUE ABILITIES

over Day.

Natasha is a young care leaver; she joined the Children in Care Council in summer 2016. Natasha has developed friendships within the group and says she really enjoys coming to the meetings. Natasha is very lively and is always happy to engage with everyone. Therefore it was no surprise to us when she came up with an idea for her Take-

As a child, Natasha went to St Clare's School for special needs in Derby.

She has very fond memories of her time there. **Natasha wanted to return**—

not as a student, but as a teacher! We loved her plan and managed to pull

some strings to help her. St Clare's team try to consider all the unique

abilities of their young people. They have been rated outstanding for the third consecutive time by Ofsted.



Natasha got the **chance to spend a whole week as a teaching assistant** at the school. She talked enthusiastically about the experience, mentioning that it made her think about doing something similar in the future. What she liked most was **helping the children with special**

**needs** and in general working together with other people.



We are so pleased that Natasha enjoyed taking part in the takeover challenge – especially because she didn't just have fun, but also was inspired to find out more. Wanting to find out more, Natasha recently visited a Training, Jobs and Learning Open Day by Connexions together with her peers from the Children in Care Council, where she was able to find information about **how to progress with her dream** of

becoming a teaching assistant.

**"It was so nice to go back and see everything."**

**"Being there every day was like working in the real world!"**

**"It inspired me to become a teaching assistant!"**



## **Dan learns how to make Lasagne!**

Dan has been an active member of the Children in Care Council for a number of years. He's socially-minded and dedicated to the CICC. We are proud to have him as part of the team. Dan was enthusiastic about the concept of Takeover Day right from the beginning and shared with us what he'd like to do: Dan lives independently and wanted to develop his interest in nutrition and cookery. We considered this with Dan and suggested that he might like to be involved in catering – **Dan wanted to be cook for the day!**

Working in partnership with Children's services it was arranged for Dan to **spend a day at Shine** – a children's home for young people with special needs. Dan liaised with the home directly to establish the most suitable date.

Dan told us he really enjoyed it. Finding your way around a kitchen is a life skill and Dan said that **he learned to make lasagne**– he said he wouldn't normally try a recipe like that saying **"it always seemed a bit complicated before but now I can do it!"** He plans to make it again because it was so tasty!

As a bonus to his day, Dan was thrilled to meet up with another member of the CICC while there – he said it **made him feel very grown-up** to be able to say that he was there for work. Dan said that he loved the takeover experience and he would like to do something similar in the future and **would definitely recommend the takeover challenge.**

**"I can't wait to try the Lasagne at home!"**

**"I'm more confident with trying out new recipes now."**





## Rohan's Take-over Story

Rohan has been with the Children in Care Council for several years and is always happy to contribute his thoughts on all subjects. We think highly of him and were delighted when he had his own idea for the Take-over Challenge. Rohan asked if there was a chance to take over Andy Smith's position for a day – he's the **Director of people's services in Derby**. We asked and Andy was happy to let Rohan shadow him.



Rohan made his way to the Council House where he met with Andy's PA (Lindsey) who then took Rohan to meet with Andy. Rohan said Lindsey made him feel really comfortable and relaxed by offering him a warm welcome. He told us that he was given his own name badge, which **made him feel really important**. He was treated very respectfully by

everyone he met. Rohan is an energetic young person, always happy to learn new things; he enjoyed it when Andy took the time to explain to him all about his job and what it involves.

During the day Rohan attended several meetings. His experience as one of our CICC members helped him approach the activities with more confidence.

One meeting was especially interesting. Rohan told us that he felt well informed and that staff were really helpful. The topics discussed concerned health care; **the meeting was completely confidential**, which made it even more special for Rohan to be part of it.



Rohan said he felt that he connected with Andy and they had a laugh – very important to have fun in the work place! We know that Rohan is a very articulate and mature young person and therefore were not surprised when he said **he was able to adjust to the different situations** he faced, he said that he enjoyed the day and was enthusiastic in sharing details with us. He said the whole experience had been really important to him.

**"It made me feel respected, confident and important!"**

## “I want to be Prime Minister – can you fix it???”

### With a little help we can!



George has been a member of our CICC for approximately 8 months. He has a big personality bringing a fun element to our meetings. He is acutely aware of discussions, listens to guests and is supported to ensure he is able to participate fully whilst adhering to the ground rules set by the members. George has big ideas and therefore we were not surprised when he stated **he wanted to be Prime Minister for the day** – for him, this was simple and logical, for us – not quite so.



We therefore contacted the Children's Commissioner for their help – George was invited to join with other young people to “Take over” the **Children's commissioner's office**, George travelled by train to London, supported by staff.



On arrival George made his way to the Department for Education meeting with Chris Dossett, Participation and Engagement Manager. After welcome and introductions, George assisted in taking over **“Help at Hand advice service”** the Children's Commissioner's newly rebranded advice line. Help at Hand offers advice if a young person wants to make a complaint or if they are worried about something – it can be anything at all.



After lunch with the Children's Commissioner's Team and other young people George explored Parliament and Parliament Square, he was excited to find out what happens there and how everything works. Lastly, George had the chance to **take over parliament's social media** and even tweeted a selfie with all the office staff. He was very proud about all the retweets and likes he received!

To make the most of their day, George and his keyworker treated themselves to a ride on the **London eye and a trip to the Shrek Adventure**– a fantastic end to an interesting and exhausting day. The whole experience was exciting and meaningful for George. He enjoyed the experience so much that he put the pictures up in his room together with his train tickets.

**“We had fun on the Shrek Adventure!”**

**“I saw all of Parliament and I posted a selfie on twitter!”**

