

# East Lothian Champions Newsletter March - April 2026



**Spring Has Sprung!**



***Don't look now....but it's May already!!!***

Welcome to the second Champs Newsletter of 2026 - a round up of all the great activity and work being done by the Champs and in the background with East Lothian Kin members.

*Enjoy!*



# What Have We Been Up To?

**Dr Jillian Adie** (Programme Manager, Maternal, Children & Young People's Health, NHS Lothian) and **Hannah Robinson** (Palindromicals) visited the Junior Champs and invited them to co-develop a new animated video on the UNCRC. It will be a short animation, informed by children and young people, to share key messages with them about how NHS Lothian is working to uphold their rights – particularly the right to be as healthy as possible.

The Junior Champs really enjoy being involved and are looking forward to the ongoing collaboration towards the completed video.

**Kate McCracken** (*East Lothian Council, Service and Practice Development Officer*) came for her 3rd planned visit to the Junior Champs to discuss the final section of the 'My Voice Matters' survey results.

**Kari-Ann Johnstone** (East Lothian Council, Corporate Parenting & Children's Rights Officer) visited the Junior Champs to explore 'Terms of Reference' for the East Lothian Kin Board.

**Keith Ward** (former Champs Development Officer) and **Sophie Morris** (original founding staff of Champs and former WCS Advocacy Worker) visited the Champs as a surprise. They were very warmly welcomed back and everyone loved seeing them again.



We really appreciate all our guests making time to visit the Champs to build relationships and collaborate on important matters.



# Ambassador Cafe

## ELK and Champs Ongoing Work in the Background

The Champs provided feedback to **Kari-Ann Johnston** regarding what should be included in East Lothian's UNCRC update.

**Hannah McBride** asked the Champs to review the language and content of a presentation to be given to school pupils on what it means to be Care Experienced.

**Dr Jillian Adie** shared feedback in relation to the first tranche of work done on the UNCRC animated video.

**Kate McCracken** asked the Champs for their input on an idea relating to Social Workers having biography info-cards to introduce themselves to young people.





# Ambassador Cafe

Are you 'With The Champs'?

The Champs are keen to meet and engage with all East Lothian Kin on projects close to their hearts.

Big **thanks** to everyone who visited in March and April!



Dr Jillian Adie



Keith & Sophie



# EAST LOTHIAN KIN COLLECT THEM ALL!



Laurence



Lindsey



John



Jennifer



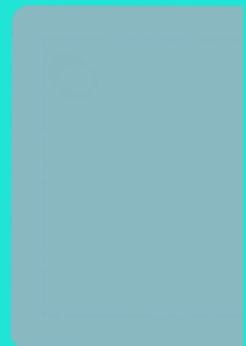
Hannah



Kate



Kari-Ann



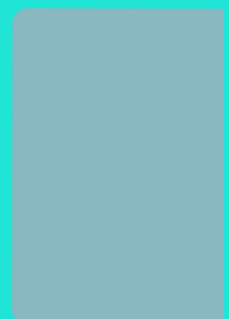
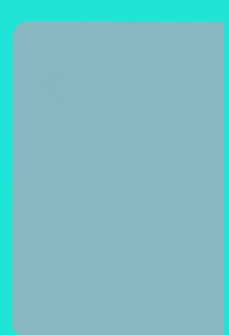
Jenni



Michelle



Jillian



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## Share Your Hobby

Do you have a hobby or interest? If so, we warmly invite you to visit Champs to tell them all about it and share your passion.

Bring any kit or materials related to your hobby or interest and hopefully you'll introduce Champs to something new. It might just change someone's life.

Contact Neil to arrange your visit: [nfindlay@whocaresscotland.org](mailto:nfindlay@whocaresscotland.org)



# We Say “Bon Voyage” to Nicole

Nicole Isherwood has been the Champs Participation Assistant for the past 2.5 years.

We are very proud (but sad) to share that Nicole is starting a new job supporting young people at New Horizons.

We asked Nicole to share her thoughts on what Champs has meant to her.



*“I started Champs when I was 16 and at the time I didn’t realise how much it was going to mean to me. The staff were Sophie, Kari-Ann and Beth. They made me feel safe from the start. I was quite shy and kept to myself a lot. But Champs slowly became somewhere I could be myself, without overthinking everything.*

*Champs became way more than just a group. It was somewhere I felt understood and where I could talk about my experiences and actually feel listened to.*

*My all-time favourite memory has to be going on the Isle of Skye residential trip. It was such a deep emotional time for all of us. Everyone bonded and when we came back it honestly felt like we were all just closer than ever. Something definitely changed after that.*

*(continued on next page)*



# We Say “Bon Voyage” to Nicole

(continued)

*“Becoming the Participation Assistant was a big moment for me. Especially because I didn’t get it the first time I applied. It wasn’t until the role became available a year later, that I was successful. I obviously wasn’t ready the first time and that showed me how much I’d changed and grown in that year.*

*I had grown up in Champs with my peers and then suddenly I was helping support their ideas and helping their voices be heard. One of the most special parts of that for me was Sophie. She was my Advocacy Worker when I was 14 and the one who first introduced me to Champs. Getting to grow up as a Champs member, and then work alongside Sophie later on just felt really full circle and something I will always cherish.*

*Champs has been a huge part of my life. It is where I found my voice, built my confidence, and met people I will never forget. I will always be grateful for it.”*

We wish Nicole every happiness and success in her new job and new adventure. Champs won’t be the same without her!





# "Bon Voyage" Nicole





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## What's Coming Up in May - June?

### Visits planned from...

- Housing - Wendy McGuire & Bex Astin
- NHS - Dr Jillian Adie
- Police - Liam Arbuthnott
- ELC - Lesley Brown
- VCEL - Mandy Harrington

Please contact Neil to arrange ***your*** Champs visit





...and finally

## ★ NEW MEMBERS WELCOME ★

If you know a Care Experienced young person who might like to get involved in Champs, they are welcome to come along to see what it's like.

There's no obligation. No paperwork. No registration.

Junior Champs – S1 – S4, fortnightly on Wednesdays, 4:30pm - 6pm

Senior Champs – age 16+, fortnightly on Mondays, 4pm - 6:30pm

The Champions groups are safe, supportive and fun spaces where young people can make new friends, take part in activities and share their voices on the things that matter to them. And engage directly with ELK to drive positive change in matters affecting all Care Experienced people.

Groups are held at The Gatehouse, Lewisvale Park, Newbigging Road, Musselburgh, EH21 7JY (across from the Grammar School)

Contact Neil to discuss: [nfindlay@whocaresscotland.org](mailto:nfindlay@whocaresscotland.org)

