



MAKE YOUR MARK



BLUEPRINT

The Blueprint Forum is a group of 14-22 year olds who are or have been looked after in Rhondda Cynon Taf. (R.C.T.).



The group gives young people the chance to discuss the key issues to young people who are or have been looked after. Our main focus is promoting the rights of young people in RCT and highlight the opportunities there are for young people in RCT.

We have participated in several consultations and launch events with The Fostering Network, the Children's Commissioner For Wales and Children in Wales and we work very closely with R.C.T. Corporate Parenting Board, as well as taking part in Voices From Care's national activities.

The Blueprint Forum has two trips for members per year one in the summer and one in the winter. This year our members enjoyed a day out to Go Ape and the Swimming/surfing centre in Swansea, as well as ice skating and a Christmas meal at Frankie and Bennies.



If you are aged between 14-22 and live in Rhondda Cynon Taf and you're interested in joining, you are welcome to come along and try it out. Just call Martin or Chris at Voices on 02920 451431.

My Name is Laura-lee,

I have been a part of the Blueprint Forum for nearly 6 years. During my time at Blueprint I have achieved things that I didn't think were possible. I've gained lots of experience which this has helped me build my confidence in and outside the group.

People often ask me why do I come to Blueprint? Well I come because it gives me the chance to see the people I was in care with and don't see day to day, you go and make new friends with people that you have a lot in common with. I also go because the atmosphere is wicked, everyone has a laugh and the fact that we instigate positive change to the care systems makes it a great thing. Best of all I feel like I can make a positive change to the lives of other young people.

Going to Blueprint allows me to have a voice, a voice that I was scared to use. Many young people like myself don't realise they have a voice, they don't realise that they have rights and lots of other things, so coming here gives me the courage to fight for my rights, other young people's rights and use our voice.

Have you ever thought about joining a group, but didn't know how? You can contact the Voices From Care office on 02920 451431 or Tweet us @VoicesFromCare.

Every year we go on at least two trips one for the summer and one for Christmas, we are able to choose where we would like to go or what we would like to do.

Everyone is super friendly, hey, you even get to have free food, tea and coffee, I mean who wouldn't want that! Meetings are never boring and we do have times were we just do games and craft and other fun things.

Thank you for reading.

CHEAP & SIMPLE TREATS

Tuna and sweet potato jackets for 2.

Ingredients: 2 small sweet potatoes, 185g can of tuna drained, ½ red onion chopped up, juice of 1 lime, handful of coriander leaves.

Method: Wash sweet potatoes and prick with a fork. Place on a microwaveable plate and cook on high for 18-20 minutes, or until tender.

Split in half and place each one (cut-side up) on a serving plate. Flake drained tuna with a fork and divide between sweet potatoes. Squeeze lime juice over the potato jackets and add coriander.



Veggie option: Replace tuna with feta cheese.

Ham and cheese omelette

Ingredients: 2 eggs, 50ml milk, 1 slice of ham, margarine, cheddar cheese.

Method: Wash and slice ham. In a bowl, combine eggs, ham, milk, salt and pepper then mix together well. Heat frying pan on medium and melt margarine.

As the omelette begins to set, lift up edges with a spatula, so uncooked portion of egg can flow under the cooked portion.

When eggs are set, sprinkle ¾ of the cheese over it. Fold one edge of the omelet over the cheese, then sprinkle the rest of the cheese over the top. Slide omelet onto the plate and cut into portions.



UP TO MUCH?

Recently the Blueprint Forum has had the opportunity to work on the Looked After information packs that all young people in RCT get. The group looked at the layout of the packs, information booklets and who young people can contact. We also had a look at the design and feel of the information in the packs, with the aim of using our experiences to make the packs more useful to young people when they first enter care.

All the views and work completed by blueprint will be given to the council and will be taken into consideration when they develop the next generation of information packs for young people.

FUTURE PROJECTS

The Blueprint Forum have been contacted by the office of The Children's Commissioner for Wales and have been asked for our views on the new my planner app that they are developing.

Blueprint Forum is also looking into a Young Person Representatives and group mentoring scheme that will give the young people at blueprint more say and ownership of their group.

And finally, the CHRISTMAS trip is coming soon, get involved and have your say on what we do this year. All trips are completely FREE to members of the blueprint forum.

YOUR CORPORATE PARENTS...AND ME

Cllr Geraint Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Children and Equalities, visited Blueprint along with Andrew Gwynn the Head of Children's services to hear what its like to be in care in RCT. We chatted about what its like to live in RCT and our views on the service and opportunities we receive. We also asked what they could do, as our corporate parents, to improve the experiences of young people looked after in Wales. It was a really good meeting and it was great to meet people who make decision that effect our lives. However, our work doesn't stop there!!!

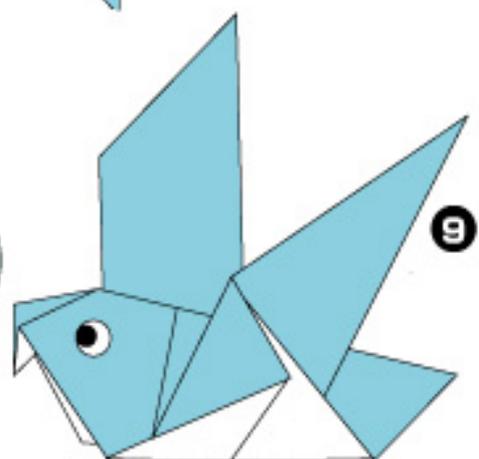
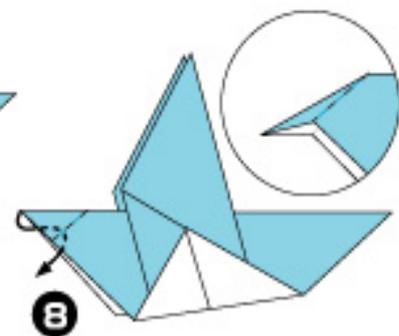
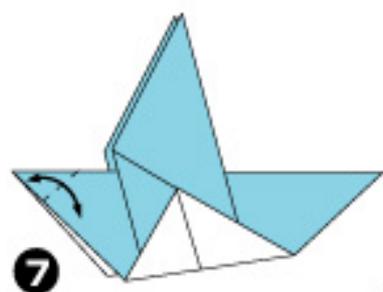
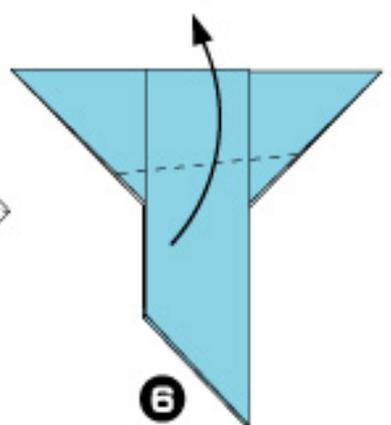
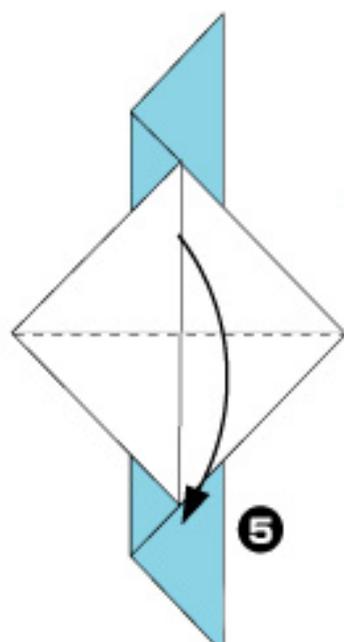
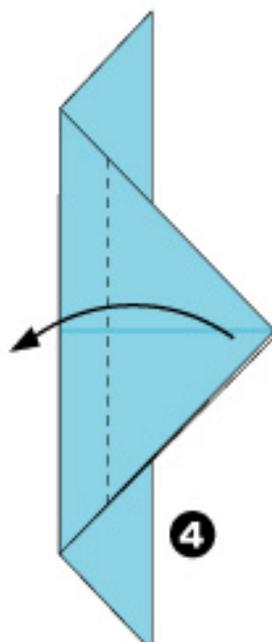
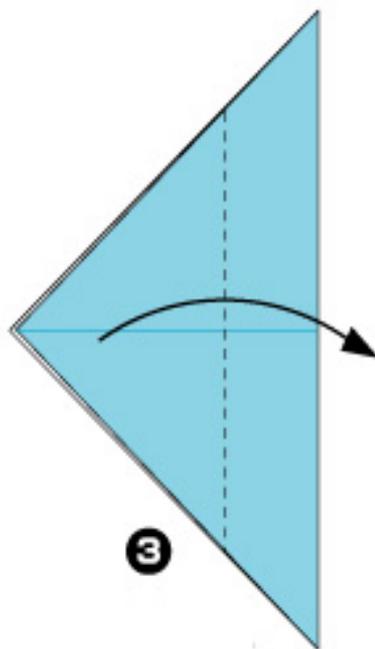
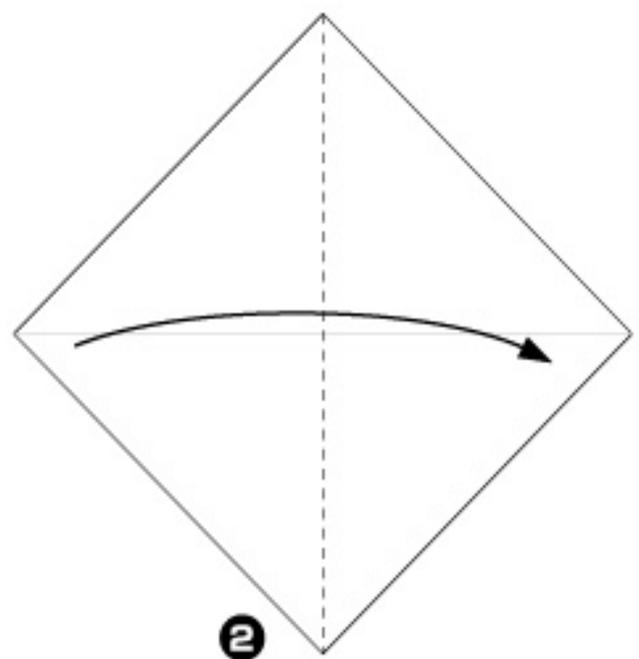
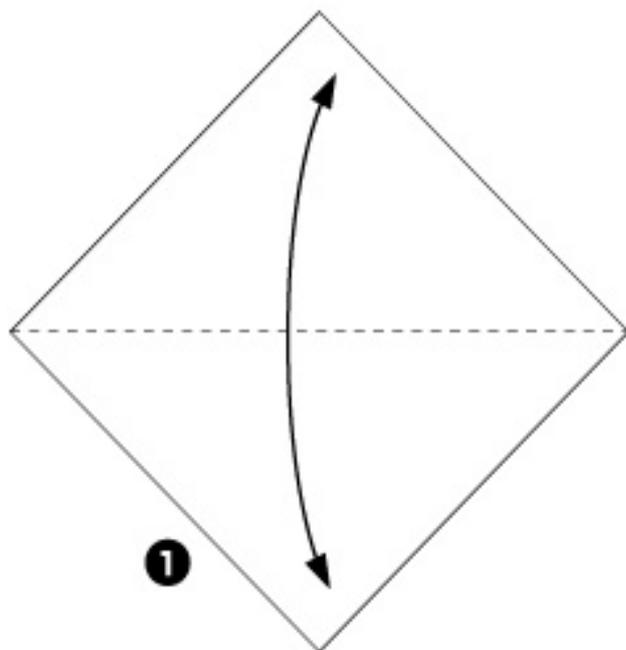


The Blueprint Forum was then invited to present a charter and video to RCT's Corporate Parenting panel on our views on corporate parenting.

So a corporate parent is basically someone who has a duty to make sure you are safe and happy. They have to work together to make sure all looked after children and care leavers in RCT are able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them and to help young people reach their full potential.

We spoke about what corporate parenting means to us, what makes a good corporate parent but mainly who we think are our corporate parents, so social workers, LAC nurses, teachers, foster carers and load more.

GIVE IT A GO



...AND FINALLY

Well that's it from us at Blueprint and Voices From Care. Let our editorial group know what you thought of our newsletter. Anything else you would like to see featured in any future issues? If so then give us a call or drop us an email.

Fancy becoming a part of the group? Go online to sign up or just give us a call and we'll arrange to come and meet with you, and tell you a bit more about the work that Blueprint and Voices From Care does.

So until our next issue.

TAKE CARE AND BE SAFE .

**From all the staff at
VOICES FROM CARE**

**WE WANT TO HEAR HOW YOU THINK WE
SHOULD BE RUN!**



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