



# EVERY CHILD LEAVING CARE MATTERS



Campaign Newsletter – A letter from the Chair

April 2016

EVERY CHILD LEAVING  
CARE MATTERS

PLEASE SIGN  
THE PETITION

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Hello from the epi-center of our campaign. Apologies for the delay in getting a newsletter out – as I hope you will read on to see it has been a busy time for us over the last few months and I confess we have prioritised action over communication to an extent – not always a good thing to do but we have to cut our cloth the best that we can.

### POLITICIANS

Politically it has been a quieter period in terms of tangible results although this is not to say that we've been quiet.

The great news is that we have gained the support of our first County Council with Councillor Matthew Tomlinson taking the 'ECLCM motion' through successfully at Lancashire. Yet again there was no opposition which is testimony not only to Matthew but also what appears to be the collective opinion of all those councils that we have approached thus far to the justice of our campaign.



A brief calculation of the populations of all those councils who have 'signed up' so far takes us to a figure well in excess of 2,000,000 which is not a bad proportion of the 53,000,000 who live in England!

We are in active discussion with other councils in the North West and West Midlands but it would be improper to identify them at this point in time.

Support from Parliamentarians remains relatively static but we continue to gain supporters – notably Cat Smith who is MP for Lancaster who we are hoping might be able to team up with Emma Lewell-Buck in coordinating activities for us in Westminster.

The publication of Sir Martin Narey's review grows ever closer and we understand from him that he will be presenting his report to the Prime Minister on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016. We hope that many of you will have been partly responsible for the delay in this happening by being among those who have made submissions.

We have gained an impression that Sir Martin has been incredibly thorough in his review and has been at pains to seek views from all of those who hold an opinion on the quality of our children's homes. He will most certainly not seek credit from us but we will go on record at this point to state that we feel that we have been listened to with respect and cordiality.

## ACADEMICS



Amazingly, to us at least, none of the newspapers who we approached (the Times, The Guardian, The Independent, The Indy and The Telegraph) expressed any interest in publishing the letter signed by many if not most of the country's leading academics in the field. As such we are publishing their letter below. Please feel free to contact any of the above publications to ask why they were not interested in the inequality visited upon

### **Draft letter to press for signature by academic followers**

As academics, we wish to share our concern at the impact of changes to the support given to young people leaving care introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014. The Act introduced the opportunity for children in foster care to 'Stay Put' in their final placement beyond the age of 18 if it is their wish, agreed by the carers and considered to be meeting their needs. We welcome this but are concerned that the Act has imposed limitations upon this provision that we consider unacceptable.

The 'Staying Put' option is limited to young people in foster care. As such, it excludes 9%<sup>1</sup> of young people in care who are placed in residential care and other settings. Moreover, the 'Staying Put' option is not funded by central government and as a result, some authorities are not providing it. Recent data suggest that only 25% of the young people entitled to 'stay put' are doing so.

The 'Every Child Leaving Care Matters' (ECLCM) campaign, formed in December 2013 in response to this provision, has called this discriminatory legislation. We support the aims of the ECLCM campaign and want to see part 5 Welfare of Children (98) of the Children and Families Act 2014 extended to include all care leavers up to at least the age of 21, irrespective of their placement.

There is a wealth of academic research into of the lives of children in care and their outcomes, and we recognise that such outcomes for children and young people need to be improved and, currently fall well below what we would want for all our children. Moreover, the majority of the most troubled and vulnerable children and young people tend to be those placed in children's homes and other residential settings and are often those for whom a family setting is not suitable. The Children and Families Act 2014, aimed to offer vulnerable children in care the opportunity to continue to live in homes where they were settled and feel safe but in practice it excludes the most vulnerable from doing so, based only on final placement and not assessed need.

In our view, it is unacceptable and ill-judged to exclude young people as young as 16 years old who are leaving residential care from the 'Staying Put' option. To expect this group to be able to cope and successfully make the transition to adulthood is inhumane and flies in the face of the wealth of evidence on their struggles and outcomes post care. The evidence on the disproportionate number of care leavers in the prison and secure hospitals population alongside the numbers who are unemployed and homeless has been repeatedly highlighted, including by the government's own Education Select Committee in their report 'Into independence, not out of care: 16 plus care options'.

We call on the government to review and overturn the exclusion of children in residential care and other settings from the option to 'Stay Put' as a matter of urgency.

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<sup>1</sup> As Professor Mike Stein, Emeritus Professor of Social Policy Research Unit points out this (official) figure is a little misleading "A very similar percentage of young people, aged 16-18 and over, leave care from residential and foster care placements. For the year ending 2014 just under a third (32%) of young people left from all types of residential placements: children's homes, secure units, hostels (21%), 'other residential settings' (9%) and residential schools (2%), representing a slight increase in the use of residential placements (2%) from 2010 - whereas just over a third (37%) of young people left from foster placements, down 2 per cent from 2010."

## Academics 'signed up' to letter

1. Dr Brid Featherstone – Professor of SW Huddersfield
2. Anna Gupta Senior Lecturer - Royal Holloway University
3. Jason Schaub – Senior Lecturer University of Bucks
4. Dr Jenny Pryboda – Forensic Psychologist
5. Bob Banks - Academic Group Leader (SWAPH) Staffordshire
6. Dr Jim Goddard - Head of Sociology and Criminology.
7. Jane Callaghan - Prof of Psychology, University of Northampton
8. Dr Janet Boddy - Professor of Child, Youth & Family Studies; Co-Director Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth at University of Sussex
9. Dave Mason – Senior Lecturer in social work Staffs University
10. Prof. Hugh McLaughlin PhD - Professor of Social Work
11. Peter McParlin - Consultant Child Psychologist
12. Ffion Evans - Senior Lecturer Manchester Metropolitan University
13. Dr Simon John Duffy - Centre for Welfare Reform
14. Dr Reima Ana Maglajlic - Senior Lecturer in Social Work/Course Lead, MA in Social Work
15. Professor Anna Maslin PhD
16. Kirstin Parkes - Lecturer in Social Work
17. Dr Julie Shaw - Senior Lecturer in Criminology
18. Dr Sue White - Professor of Social Work (Children and Families)
19. Dr Justin Rogers - Lecturer in social work University of Bath
20. Peter Simcock - Senior Lecturer in Social Work Uni of Staffs
21. Glen Jankowski
22. Judy Furnivall - Residential child care lecturer
23. Daniel G Scott - Associate Professor Victoria BC, Acting Graduate Advisor School of Child & Youth Care University of Victoria
24. Laura Steckley - Course Director, MSc Advanced Residential Child Care Joint Editor, Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care School of Social Work & Social Policy/CELCIS University of Strathclyde
25. Varda R. Mann-Feder - Professor Graduate Program Director for Youth Work Department of Applied Human Sciences Concordia University
26. Donna Peach - Universities of Salford and Huddersfield
27. Alyson Daley - Lecturer Bradford College
28. Dr Delyh Hughes
29. Professor June Thoburn
30. Professor Mike Stein - Emeritus Professor, Social Policy Research Unit University of York
31. Cathie Jasper - Senior Lecturer MMU
32. Gavin Heron - Lecturer, University of Strathclyde
33. Hadi Jameel
34. Dr Mandy Chivers - Director SHIFT HAPPENS, Associate Manchester Business School, Faculty NHS Leadership Academy Nye Bevan, Non Executive Director The Alternative School Ltd
35. Marie Lebacqz - Principal Lecturer in Social Work MMU
36. Dr Yvon Guest - UWE Bristol
37. Dr Julie Selwyn
38. Rosie Canning - Doctoral Student
39. Val Houghton -Lecturer Salford University
40. Dr Helen Limon - Newcastle University
41. Karen Smith MA - Doctoral Researcher
42. Professor Andrew Kendrick - Professor of Residential Care, University of Strathclyde
43. Dr Louise Almond C.Psychol (Forensic) AFBPS - Snr Lecturer University of Liverpool
44. Dr Kate M Bennett - Liverpool University Reader

## BOARD MEMBERSHIP



We are delighted to formally announce what many of you will have picked up in social media that we have two new Board Members. Paula Doherty from Birmingham University and Ian Gould, a long term supporter of the campaign have agreed to become Board Members and we have already appreciated the additional wisdom and ideas that each has brought to the party. Paula has been of great assistance (well someone with her academic and personal background would be) in helping us improve our information pack and a new edition should be available soon. The work Jane did in putting the original together has already reaped considerable dividends and Paula's input will add a gloss and detail that we would not have been capable of without her. Danni has relinquished her place on the board due to the pressure of having to meet academic deadlines but has agreed to continue to serve the campaign as an ambassador, a role that we need to refine but which will prove invaluable as we go forward. Thanks also to Ben who has also resigned as a board member given his full time employment and studying in his new post but will, as ever be the strongest of advocates for the campaign that he helped to start as one of our founder members.

Whilst not quite related to the board we are delighted that we have two new patrons for the campaign. Kris Akabussi will, I am certain need no introduction to anyone. I reckon that if you can win as many gold medals as Kris and then reinvent yourself as a media star and motivational speaker with his own consultantancy, then helping us to achieve the opportunity for residential care leavers to 'stay put' should be well within his grasp. Emma Lewell-Buck, MP met with Ian and I in Westminster and agreed with massive enthusiasm to become a patron – perhaps not surprising given her background as a social worker and all round champion for those who suffer inequality. Other 'would be' patrons would be most welcome – please just get in touch with us.

## CARE LEAVERS STORIES

We continue to collect stories slowly but surely and ask all of you who read this to do what you can to help us collect more. In promoting the campaign and seeking to raise the public awareness of the reality of care we are seeking to collect 'care leavers' stories'.

One of the more pleasing aspects of this exercise is that we have come across so many great success stories – not by any means success easily come by but success nonetheless that testifies to the great strength and courage of so many care leavers who, often despite the most difficult of starts have become examples to us all.

Good friend of the campaign, Jude Habib, who has already given of her time to help us continues to be supportive to us in trying to get our message out there. Jude's massive experience in the field suggests

that 'story-telling' is a most successful medium through which we can raise awareness and then perhaps outrage at the fact that approaching the third decade of the twenty-first century we are still failing many of those children who for whatever reason are brought up by the state.



## EVENTS

What a time we have had!

On behalf of the campaign Ian and I were at

Manchester Metropolitan University as part of their World Social Work Day celebrations to address an audience of social workers, students and others in the field of supporting children and care leavers. Ffion Evans, senior lecturer and her colleagues treated us with incredible kindness and generosity and Mr Dickson delivered what I considered to be a wonderful lecture followed by us both taking questions and answers about the campaign



and simply enjoyed celebrating their achievements with care leavers and like-minded professionals. We met the marvelous **Sophie Willan (Who by the way has a gig coming up on 10th June 7.30pm The Lowry Theatre Salford)** and so many good people that the afternoon simply flew by. The general consensus is that there should be Care Leavers Festivals in all regions as soon as possible.

It is certainly gratifying that our (your) campaign has become sufficiently recognised to have organisations like the Children's Society and Care Leavers Association wishing to work with us or inviting us to work alongside them in the interests of care leavers but we still have a great deal to do. We continue to try to engage others in the 'field' to work together on this campaign and use us, if you will to assist them in any way that we can. We absolutely believe in working together putting aside any differences that may exist or may have existed in our common cause.



If things could get better then they did on the following day 16<sup>th</sup> March at the People's History Museum in Salford Quays when we were the guests of

Rod Kippen on behalf of the Children's Society at their 'Care Leavers Festival'

The day was magnificent in so many respects. For one it was the first time we managed to gather all of our team together in the one place. Jane Billows had done a magnificent job in creating with virtually no money (and thanks in part to her brother-in-law, Tony Billows, who donated a magnificent pull-up banner) a superb stall for us to stand proudly alongside others with far more sophisticated infra-structures. It was fantastic to meet so many people in person who had up until then been simply names on Twitter or in Facebook. We boosted the signatures on the petition



Finally we have been invited to North Tyneside on 8<sup>th</sup> July to participate in a Care Leavers led conference. Details on this are sparse currently but we will try to provide further information nearer the time.

Finally, it falls to me on behalf of the Board to thank you all for your marvelous and on-going support – it is a truism to say that we would be nowhere without you.

If you have any questions or observations, please feel free to contact any of us to share your view.

Ed Nixon  
ECLCM Chairman

