



EVERY CHILD LEAVING CARE MATTERS



Campaign Newsletter - A letter from the Chair

EVERY CHILD LEAVING
CARE MATTERS

PLEASE SIGN
THE PETITION

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Happy New Year

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2017

On behalf of the whole ECLCM Board may I take this opportunity to wish all of our supporters and followers a very Happy New Year – one in which we have a realistic hope that some tangible progress will be made to improve options for all residential care leavers by the introduction of a properly funded and viable 'Staying Close' option for them to consider. I will return to 'Staying Close' a little later in this Newsletter.

I would also like to thank Ellie Meakin from Coram Voice who contacted us very recently to ask that we include something from them in this edition of the Newsletter. We are, of course thrilled to be able to do so and not a little flattered that an organisation like 'Coram' took the trouble to contact us because they feel we are a group worthy of asking.

Our Board

I am very pleased to inform readers that we have a new Board Member – Nikki Leddingham. Many of you will have noticed Nikki's unbelievably tenacious support for the campaign in social media and we are delighted that she has agreed to join our little band. I am hoping that both she and Ian Gould will be sending through a brief 'bio-pic' for us to include on our website very soon so that you can all have a better idea of 'who they are and why they are supporting our efforts. We are hoping that Nikki might take a lead on coordinating our presence on Facebook – something, I admit, that is relatively alien to me as some of you may have noticed ("Old dog and new tricks" comes to mind!)



Politics and stuff!

Our list of M.P.'s who are openly supporting the campaign continues to grow, see below, and if memory serves me right there are eight new names added to the list since our November Newsletter. Once again the list below does not include the parties represented by these M.P.'s not least because we – and I suspect they – do not see our campaign as having any particular political party relevance; it is simply something that any fair minded person or politician should see as being 'the right thing to do'. What I can say for those of you who do not follow events in Westminster too closely is that the list below represents 'cross-party' support.

You will all be aware that our campaign has fastidiously retained its position on being a single issue cause. This is not because individual members do not hold views on a range of issues as you will have noticed if you look at some of our personal tweets. We have debated this issue in board meetings on a number of occasions and always maintained that we are right to remain as we are publicly. However you perhaps should be aware that the Children and Social Work Bill is something that exercises our thoughts fairly persistently. Obviously this is potentially a massive piece of legislation that could, if enacted, have a dramatic impact on everything related to children's services – including 'Staying Put', 'Staying Close' and everything that our campaign is fighting for. At this point I will not, in line with our Board decisions offer any opinion but feel that our readership should be aware that it is a live debate within our membership as, we are sure it must be in most discussions around Children's Social Work.

Members of Parliament openly supporting ECLCM

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Alan Johnson | 14. Jeff Smith | 27. Margot James |
| 2. Alex Cunningham | 15. Jenny Chapman | 28. Mike Wood |
| 3. Andrew Gwynne | 16. Jess Phillips | 29. Norman Lamb |
| 4. Andy McDonald | 17. Jim Shannon | 30. Rachael Maskell |
| 5. Bill Esterson | 18. Jo Johnson | 31. Sarah Champion |
| 6. Cat Smith | 19. Johnny Mercer | 32. Simon Buck |
| 7. Catherine McKinnel | 20. Jonathan Reynold. | 33. Simon Danczuk |
| 8. Craig Whittaker | 21. Karl Turner, | 34. Sir David Ames |
| 9. Emma Lewell-Buck | 22. Kate Osamor | 35. Stephen Twigg |
| 10. George Howarth | 23. Kerry McCarthy | 36. Thangam Debbonaire |
| 11. Gordon Marsden | 24. Khalid Mahmood | 37. Tom Brake |
| 12. Holly Lynch | 25. Liz McInnes | 38. Tony Perkins |
| 13. Ian Mearns | 26. Lucy Allen | |



Staying Close

Discussions with DfE on the design and piloting of 'Staying Close' continue at a pace. Ian Dickson and I have made a number of trips to London and are now feeling almost at home in Sanctuary House. It must be said that those with whom we are meeting have gone out of their way to make us feel absolutely comfortable and included as equal partners in the discussions that have taken place this far. We definitely feel 'listened to' and the DfE representatives have been fully prepared to make adjustments and amendments to documents on the basis of what we have been able to say and evidence to them on the basis of our hands on experience and knowledge. At this stage it remains inappropriate to share detail of the discussions as much of what we are involved in is the preparation of papers for consideration by Ministers and due process dictates that they should read what is proposed in official briefings, not ECLCM's Twitter or Facebook accounts! To be fair we have not been able to share details with fellow Board Members but we have all taken the view that if that's the price we pay for being involved (and we hope influential) then it's worth it.

Hopefully many of our members will have now read the government's response to Sir Martin Narey's report but for those of you who haven't but wish to here is a link that will 'take you there' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-residential-care-in-england>

There is also a 'Staying Close policy brief along with an FAQ document' that DfE have published which reflects some of the work that we have been party to. This can be found at <http://springconsortium.com/launch-of-an-innovation-programme-targeted-opportunity/>

At this stage it is too early to offer a firm opinion on whether or not we will have a financially supported, properly regulated and viable Staying Close offer to children leaving residential care. What we do not want is an equivalent of the post-code lottery that can sometimes characterise Staying Put for foster children. We will remain engaged in discussions and hopefully the design of Pilot Schemes that should begin to emerge very soon.

We are delighted to say that one Local Authority (without their permission it seems inappropriate to identify them) has actually approached us to visit and make a brief presentation and hold a discussion on Staying Close with Senior Managers in Children and Families. This will take place on 10th January and if they agree to us publicly acknowledging the meeting then check out our Twitter accounts after then.

The Petition

Our Petition continues to grow slowly and although this is by no means our primary focus these days it does remain vitally important to us as it represents a tangible expression of support and to an extent gives us a mandate when we go into discussions with those in power to make things happen. We would be grateful therefore if you can all remember to talk, tweet, or otherwise get the message out there for us that Every Child Leaving Care Matters.

I will leave it there for now before asking you to look at the Coram information below. We will be having a Board Meeting imminently and hopefully planning for the last year that we need an @rescaredo21 campaign.

.....We'll see!

Ed Nixon
ECLCM Chairman



Coram Voice

As mentioned earlier we have been asked by 'Coram' to offer space in our Newsletter to **publicise their writing initiative** the text below is theirs which we are very happy to include in this edition. Please do all you can to let your contacts know about this and for those of you who

Below this piece are a number of tweets that we have been asked to share – we have now it's up to you please.



Do you enjoy writing? Coram Voice is launching its creative writing competition for care-experienced young people!

The youth advocacy charity Coram Voice has announced that 'Voices', its writing competition for care-experienced young people is returning for a second year. The competition launches on 9 January 2017 with the theme 'New Beginnings' and Coram Voice is asking children and young people to draw inspiration from a change in their lives or opportunities they've experienced to try something new.

The competition is grouped in three age categories: primary school, secondary school and care leavers, with a special additional award for migrant children in care or care leavers. Entries, which can be submitted online at coramvoice.org.uk/voices-2017 from 9 January until 21 February, can be in any written style including poems, short stories or newspaper articles, with a 500 word limit.

Work will be judged by a panel whose collective expertise spans writing novels and non-fiction, journalism and experience of the care system. Included are Paolo Hewitt, care experienced author whose work includes biographies of the Jam and Oasis, and Jackie Long the social affairs editor and Presenter at Channel 4 News. Who reports on issues facing young people in the care system.

Steven, winner of the Secondary School category for Voices 2016 said: "I didn't think I'd win so I was really happy when they said I had. I'd say to this year's entrants – even if you think you can't win – as I did – you never know, just try your best."

If you or someone you know would like to enter or would like to find out more, please visit coramvoice.org.uk/voices-2017

Tweets for young people

@CoramVoice has new writing competition #Voices2017 for all care experienced young people to enter!
Enter by 21 Feb bit.ly/2hAKMzJ

Like writing? Share your story about a 'New Beginning' for @CoramVoice's writing competition!
#Voices2017 enter now bit.ly/2hAKMzJ

@CoramVoice writing competition #Voices2017 for care experienced young people! £100 in vouchers
waiting to be won bit.ly/2hAKMzJ

Enter @CoramVoice writing competition #Voices2017 for care experienced young people, celebrate your
amazing voice bit.ly/2hAKMzJ

Are you in care or a #careleaver? Write about your 'new beginning' for chance to win £100 in vouchers
#Voices2017! bit.ly/2hAKMzJ

Want to win £100 in vouchers? Enter #Voices2017 writing competition for young care experienced people
by Feb 21st bit.ly/2hAKMzJ

Facebook post – young people

The charity Coram Voice has launched #Voices2017, a creative writing competition for care experienced
young people! This year's theme is 'New Beginnings' so if you or someone you know enjoys writing and
wants to share your story enter by 21 February, with a chance to win up to £100 in vouchers! (include link
coramvoice.org.uk/voices-2017)