



# EVERY CHILD LEAVING CARE MATTERS

Campaign Newsletter – A letter from the Chair

March 2020

EVERY CHILD LEAVING  
CARE MATTERS

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THE PETITION

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## OUR BOARD



Who was it who came up with 'Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing'? Bruce Tuckman, I think. Well it's been a bit like that over recent months but this is where we have come to.

The current Board comprises:

Ben Ashcroft, Jane Billows, Rob Gillespie, Delyth Edwards, Ann-Marie Hayes, Rachel Picton, Fiona Cust (though Fiona is currently absent for a brief period) and yours truly.

Ben and I have been there since the outset and are determined to be there at the end if possible.

We are supported by a small army of Ambassadors including:

Nikki Leddingham, Ian Gould, Thomas Keaney, Annie Bishop and Julie Warren-Sykes

We have accepted in principle that we need to create a Vice-Chair but have yet to determine who that will be – hopefully we will get this sorted at this month's Board Meeting.

## POLITICIANS

Inevitably, I suppose, one of the outcomes of the last election was that some of our supporting M.P.'s have left Parliament – some by choice and others by the ballot box. There have been times over the course of this campaign when collecting M.P.'s has been a little like climbing a slippery slope – just as you seem to be making progress you slide back a bit. Nonetheless, we carry on and our friend, Ian Gould continues to write his letters and emails and we have already begun to make up for some of the losses.

There is, of course, also a new Children's Minister, Vicky Ford. We have gone through a few in the last 6 years. Now it would be wrong to say that Vicky has declared her support but she has at least

been willing to engage with us on Twitter and I have to say it's good to see she has a sense of humour which I hope I will not dent by asking as many of you as possible to send her a little (polite) twitter message @vickyford asking that she might grant us a meeting to talk about our campaign which is not, after all, seeking something outrageous, just equitable.

We were invited to attend the launch of the Children's Services Development Group's newly published report '[Destination Unknown](#)' in Parliament on 26<sup>th</sup> February. The event was chaired by Tim Loughton M.P. who was described in the introduction as the best Children's Minister we have had for some time – something with which I personally agree – and currently Chair of the APPG on Children. The audience included a number of members of both Houses and a range of interested parties. It was also good to share the platform with several people who earnestly support the idea that we must bring about improved options for Care Leavers, including Jamie Crabb who was speaking for the Care Experienced Conference group. I am grateful to Andrew Isaacs who leads the CSDG and Cameron Wall for inviting ECLCM to be included in this high-profile event which gave us yet another opportunity to state our case.

I am delighted to let everyone know that we have a new Patron of the campaign – Bill Esterson, M.P. who has been a real stalwart of the cause since we first started back in 2013. Hopefully Bill and Emma Lewell-Buck, who remains as co-Patron will continue to speak for us in and around Parliament whenever the opportunity arises.

I would also like to publicly thank Holly Lynch M.P. who is setting about inviting us to hold an event in Parliament prior to the House breaking up for summer recess in or about June this year.

As ever, please do contact your own M.P. and ask if they will support the campaign or, if already doing so, continue to push our case in Parliament.

## SEEDS OF HOPE CONFERENCE

One of our ECLCM ambassadors, Ian Gould and another great supporter of the campaign, Jacqui McCartney are organising a second #CEP Conference – hopefully it will be sometime in 2021.

We have a blog from them both about this on our website but just in case you have missed it read it [here](#)



## FINANCE

We owe everyone a huge **'Thank you'**!

As mentioned previously we launched an appeal on Just Giving to fund our trips associated with the campaign. Well, thanks to the generosity of our supporters we reached our target of £1000 and closed the page for donations as promised. This is now safely tucked away in the bank and will be used sparingly.

We have had an additional thought though.

Recently, we received a number of enquiries asking if we had any of the ECLCM/@rescareto21 badges that we could send out. We are searching through our collective bottom drawers for any we can find but if we can't meet demand then we will discuss at this month's Board Meeting the viability of ordering some more and paying for them from the funds raised by you all.

## AN AMBASSADOR MESSAGE

Ian Gould has been good enough to provide this piece for the Newsletter

Wow, Its over 5 years since I first connected with @ResCareTo21. Your most welcome to read a little of my own [Journey](#) via eclcm.org (Meet the Team/Ambassador). Those who follow [@langould5](#) will know of certain strands/themes to my adulthood, faith, vocation, scuba diving and swimming and I guess I've shared a little of my passion for our children and young people in Care along the way.

Last week, Every Child Leaving Care Campaign celebrated its 69th MP and also welcomed an ECLCM stalwart Bill Esterson as our second Patron. I'm hugely proud to have journeyed alongside our resolute and ever hopeful challenge of the discrimination experienced by young people in residential care and that of wanting to do the 'right thing' by our [#CARINGTEAMS](#) efforts.

I recall Sir Martins Narey's comments shared with MP's back in Oct 2017 when he said of ECLCM Campaign "It's hugely admirable and motivated by determination to make life easier for children in residential homes leaving care. I think we'll soon see Staying Put up and running and I know ECLCM won't rest until that's achieved". I guess Sir Martin's trust has been well evidenced as the Campaign remains robust in ALL its efforts.

The ECLCM Team are aware this (164/309) is the last chapter of my ECLCM journey as I too look forward to retiring (66) officially. But, hope that in some small way (149 Cross Party MP's) I too have helped raise awareness not only ECLCM's campaign but also the amazing happenings across our Care family over the past 4 years as @ResCareTo21 sends out its newsletters/updates to over 149 Cross Party MP's.

In April 2019, It was great joy to be alongside family/friends and indeed our own Patron Emma Lewell-Buck at the Care Experienced Conference at Hope University. Wonderfully, ECLCM mentioned the Conference in its December 18 and 19 newsletters and got to share its Journey alongside many others with a stall in the Conference Foyer. Wonderfully, two comprehensive reports were written and subsequently presented last November to the Secretary of State Gavin Williamson.

I guess it will come as no surprise to those who follow, I've chosen to undertake one final Journey before retirement. Which, coincides roughly with the unique end of my MP swim marathon too. Alongside, a friend who, I first met at the Birmingham Xmas Dinners in 2018 and who also attended the Care Experienced Conference we, have decided to sow the possibilities of arranging something similar in the Midlands. Which, subsequently has become known as the 'Seeds of Hope Midlands'.

Wonderfully, we held our inaugural meeting on January 18th and I attach a link to my first ever blog, which can be read [here](#). I do so hope that you will enjoy reading of our Journey so far and thanks to @ResCareTo21 for making its inclusion possible in our next ECLCM newsletter.

## THE CARE REVIEW

We, like many others welcome the announcement that there is to be a Care Review. The devil, as ever, may yet be in the detail. What might a good Care Review look like?

It might for example:

1. Have a totally independent chair who can focus exclusively on the needs of children who may or do enter the care system.
2. Afford a viable opportunity for all those interested parties who wish to participate or have their views heard to be consulted and heard this might include
  - i.Children in care
  - ii.Care experienced people of all ages
  - iii.Those who commission care

- iv. Those who provide care
  - v. Those who make key decisions concerning care – such as ‘the judiciary’
  - vi. Those who support children in and who have left care
  - vii. Those academics who have a proven record and history of research into the impact of care
  - viii. The list is almost interminable but if the review is to be successful then no ‘interest group’ that has experience of the care system and can evidence that they prioritise the needs of children at risk of entering or being in care should be dismissed.
3. Look to the Scottish Care review for lessons to be learned – or even mistakes to be avoided.
  4. Include the wider system that leads to children coming into care – if better resources were available to those families are struggling would it be possible to avoid children coming into care – without opening up old wounds I am thinking of things like Sure Start.
  5. Help that range of professional professionals who are working to support families in the community by ensuring that they have the ‘tools for the job’, realistic workloads and excellent leadership and management.

The review will take some time if it is to be done well and endure in the future. This does not mean that things that are self-evidently wrong now cannot be rectified along the way – obviously we are thinking of our own campaign aim in staying this but it might equally apply to other matters such as the issue of Unregulated homes which we understand to be the subject of a more urgent and imminent initiative by DfE.

There will be opportunities for people to have their say but they may take some finding as is often the case with Government actions.

For now we will take the announcement in good faith and accept that it will be thorough and independent. We have never and I hope will never enter into the realm of ‘conspiracy theory’ where we suggest that somewhere in Whitehall everything has already been decided, consultation will be partial and this, that or the other group is excluded. Of course, if any of these things look like happening then we will be more than ready with our response.

## UNREGULATED & UNREGISTERED HOMES

Many of you will have continued to follow the News coverage about the issue of Unregulated Homes. Overall, I have to say that I think the coverage has been excellent and has directly led I don’t intend to say too much on this subject but it has been in the BBC News and Newsnight consistently over recent weeks and months and looks likely to remain so.

Well, all of this has finally pushed the Government to say that they will act. In my working life this has been an area in which I have been heavily involved and though I will very soon cease to have a role in that capacity I will remain active in trying to be a very small part of finding a resolution that means that children in and who have left care are not placed in establishments that have no statutory oversight.

## AND FINALLY

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



Twitter



Facebook

Once again (like a stuck record) I ask that anyone who has a story – ideally of some good news but not necessarily so – please do let us know and we will try to include it on the website or in a Newsletter

**Ed Nixon**  
**ECLCM Chairman**