Care Leavers' Association

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Presenting findings from the…

Listen Up! Report

- Set up in 2000 by a group of adult care leavers to create a platform for change and a support network for all care leavers

What is the Care Leavers' Association?

- Carried out in 2009 and published in 2010
- Understanding experiences of being in Care and leaving care across the life course
- Unique research
- Adult care leavers
- Sample- 310 aged 17-78

Listen Up! Report

- Listen Up! Research
  - Highlight Themes and Results
- Linking issues to recent CLA project work:
  - Networking
  - Young People's Project

Listen Up!
CLA Projects and the Issues

» **Top 5 areas that respondents thought CLA should campaign on**

	Total
Access to records	20 (11.4%)
Long term support for the education of care leavers	16 (9.1%)
Core support/acknowledgement of care leavers beyond the age of 25	15 (8.5%)
Long term, free counselling/emotional support for care leavers	13 (7.4%)
Abuse in the care system	10 (5.7%)

Listen Up! Findings

» Top 5 issues identified by respondents as affecting current care leavers

	Total
Lack of support (in general)	55 (26.6%)
Being unable to settle in one location/poor accommodation/poor location (for example, respondents cited being placed in dangerous or impoverished areas)	45 (21.7%)
Feeling alone/isolated/vulnerable/abandoned or feeling as though there was nowhere to return to	36 (17.4%)
Financial issues/difficulties with budgeting/not knowing what bills to pay	35 (16.9%)
Lack of employment opportunities and/or lack of help with this	35 (16.9%)

Listen Up! Findings

» Top 5 negative experiences of leaving care

	Total
Had to go back to live with family which were problematic/abusive/difficult	30 (14%)
Felt alone/abandoned/dumped/rejected/forgotten about	29 (13.5%)
Poor accommodation or area/evicted soon after leaving care/went to live in a bedsit or hostel	22 (10.2%)
No support (in general)	20 (9.3%)
Became homeless	18 (8.4%)

Listen Up! Findings

» **Other themes are as follows:**

- the need to acknowledge care leavers and the issues facing them across the life course
- the need to recognise the difficulties still facing younger people as they leave or prepare to leave care
- foster care is not necessarily a better option than residential Care
- older care leavers have a wealth of knowledge and should be included in current research, policy and practice
- care leavers of all ages want a voice

Other Emerging Themes

» **The need to recognise the difficulties still facing younger people as they leave or prepare to leave care**

- Speaking Out
- Young people want a voice and need to be better informed about leaving care
- National Committee
- Leaving Care Guide
- Educating practitioners on the needs of care leavers

CLA Young Peoples' Project

- **The need to acknowledge care leavers and the issues facing them *across the life course***

- Networks
- HE – Listen Up Age Groups
- ATR – Age groups accessing files
- Emotional needs as related to residual issues
- Aspirations in younger care leavers
- Joined up services (Adult and Children)

» **Foster care is not necessarily a better option than residential Care**

- Historical Experience
- Transition to Foster Care
- Is it better – honestly (members' views are diverse)?
- Focus on individual needs, not a "one size fits all" approach
- Personal Journey

Open Debate

» Care leavers want a voice

- What the CLA means to care leavers
- Issues faced when under 25 span across the life course

Voice and Influence

» **Positive images of care leavers**

- Stigma attached to being in Care
- Raising Aspirations
- Leaving Care Guide written by young people
- DVD “Made in Care”
- Raising profile of Care Leavers (Manchester Evening News)

Positive Identities

- We are user led Charity
- Clare and Darren- care experienced

- Diverse Experiences of Care
- Learning from each other
- Not all the same
- Learn from positives as well as negatives

To conclude…

Society should be aware of the ***challenges*** that care leavers face. However, the public also need to made aware of the fact that ***the negatives can often become positives***. Society as whole should be more supportive and not so quick to exclude

www.careleavers.com

A message to those who want the best for care leavers is:

"If we are going to call it care, lets do what it says on the tin And Care!"

And finally...