

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW WEB RESOURCE FOR CARE LEAVERS

A new-look website for care leavers to get grants to help them access training, education or deal with a crisis situation – was launched today by Care Leaver's Foundation.

The Care Leavers' Foundation is an independent charity, which supports young adult care leavers. It makes small grants to care leavers aged 18-29 who are experiencing problems, or who want to take control of their lives and develop new skills. It has today revealed its overhauled website, which also brings 'National Care Leavers' Week' under the Foundation's online banner.

Janet Rich, a trustee of the Care Leavers' Foundation said:

"Care leavers have already had a difficult start in life, and independence at an early age can be incredibly difficult. We need to do much more to support these vulnerable young people. The Care Leavers' Foundation can provide much needed help when it is needed, making a real difference. On our new-look website care leavers can apply for vital grants, as well as finding information about National Care Leavers' Week."

The website also provides information on a series of projects led by the Care Leavers' Foundation, including:

New Belongings: A new project funded by the Department for Education, which is working with five local authorities in England to at how they can improve the service they provide to care leavers. Care leavers need services which are integrated, easy to access, embedded within local communities, and which treat them with respect.

National Care Leavers' Week, 24-30 October 2013: Bringing together a number of organisations working with care leavers, the Week highlights the needs of care leavers and encourages the agencies responsible for looking after them to work in a more coordinated and effective way.

Charter for Care Leavers: Published jointly with the Department for Education, the Charter sets out key principles for the Government and local authorities in delivering the best possible services for care leavers.

Care leavers face multiple challenges. Many have had difficult childhood and teenage years, then are expected to live independently without the emotional and financial support that most young people are lucky enough to get from their families. And most young people leave care while they are still aged 18 or under – around ten years younger than most people leave home in the UK.

A lot of care leavers, despite their early move into independence, are resilient and determined. They can overcome their difficult start and begin to build much more solid foundations for their adult lives - particularly as they come towards their mid or late twenties.

But too many struggle. Care leavers can find it difficult to get into adequate housing, higher education and jobs. Many are permanently estranged from families and have experienced frequent changes of school and neighborhood, lacking supportive local networks of friends, family and neighbours.

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Notes to editors:

1. Further information from [Linda Martin](#) on 0796 108 5886.
2. The Care Leaver's Foundation is a registered charity, number 1081410.
3. Janet Rich, trustee of The Care Leavers' Foundation is available for interview. Please ring Linda Martin, as above. We can also help put you in touch with care leavers who are willing to be interviewed about their own experiences.
4. The Department for Education is funding the 'New Belongings' project with a grant of £80,000. It was announced on 22 May 2013 will run until October 2014.
5. The Care Leavers' Foundation founded National Care Leavers' Week in 2002. This year, National Care Leavers' Week will run from 24-30 October.
6. The Charter for Care Leavers, published in October 2012, sets out key principles for the Government and local authorities in delivering the best possible services for care leavers.

Some statistics (Source: Department for Education):

- Ten thousand young people left care in 2012. Around 20 per cent of them were under 18.
- A quarter of young women leaving care are pregnant or already mothers, and nearly half become mothers by the age of 24.

- One third of young care leavers are not in education, employment or training - compared with 13 per cent of all young people.
- Only 13.2 per cent of children in care obtain five good GCSEs - compared with 57.9 per cent of all children.
- Only 6 per cent of care leavers go to university - compared with 38 per cent of all young people.
- Of the adult prison population, 27 per cent are care leavers – 40 per cent of prisoners under 21.