



Edward Timpson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

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I am delighted to be funding this project and would like to congratulate the care leavers who have been involved in every step of the concept, design and delivery of this initiative. I find it impressive that so many care leavers, who have had far less positive experiences of being in care and leaving care than we would have liked, end up not complaining about their own lot. Instead, they want to use their experience and learning to improve things for future generations of care leavers.

The group of care leavers who come to talk to me on a quarterly basis, and before that met with my predecessor Tim Loughton, have come up with initiative after initiative to address the problems that they have highlighted to me in our discussions.

In April 2012 the department gave its backing to the Access All Areas campaign. This campaign aimed to bring together all the departments across government to ensure that care leavers were not unintentionally blocked from accessing the support, housing, education and opportunities that we want them to have. This has been a very successful initiative and discussions across departments are on-going. In October 2012 we published the Charter for Care Leavers. Written by care leavers, this was a strong statement of the values and styles of delivery that they, and the department, believe should be apparent in all care leaver services.

When you came to me with a further proposal to try and ensure these two areas were being addressed not just by central government but at the local level, where care leavers really experience the impact, I was delighted to support you.

You have told me that you want to embed the principles of the Charter for Care Leavers and Access All Areas within individual Local Authorities, through the New Belongings project, and in addition make specific efforts to engage the wider community, so that care leavers are able to become full members of the community.

I admire the optimism and fresh thinking in your ideas and look forward to seeing how these work in practice when applied to the day to day activities and services that care leavers access. As I am unable to be at the launch I would also like to thank, and welcome, the nine local authority pioneers that have bid successfully to be part of the New Belongings project.

I look forward to receiving regular updates and wish the project every success.

Best wishes,

Edward.

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