



**29 OCTOBER 2013**

## **CARE LEAVERS' CHARITY WELCOMES NATIONAL CARE LEAVERS' STRATEGY**

### **'THIS IS A GREAT PLACE TO START'**

The Care Leavers' Foundation today welcomed the publication of the first ever cross-Government Strategy for Care Leavers.

The strategy, published this morning and announced by Children and Families Minister Edward Timpson at today's annual National Care Leavers' Week Conference, sets out for the first time a cross-Government approach to supporting vulnerable young people leaving care.

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

"The Care Leavers' Foundation very much welcomes the Government's care leavers' strategy. This is the clearest statement yet that Government is taking responsibility, right across departments, to address the many problems facing care leavers in their first decade of adult life.

"We are also very pleased that the Government has involved actively the many organisations working with care leavers, including Catch22-NCAS, the Princes Trust and A National Voice. They all contributed to the 2012 'Access All Areas' report which set out, for the first time, the key areas of support that care leavers need.

"Placing care leavers at the heart of decisions about their lives represents a stepchange in the Government's approach. This is the beginning of a long journey. We look forward to continuing to work with the Government to continue to develop the support available to care leavers and remove barriers to success."

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 in crisis, or who want to take control of their lives and develop new skills. It provides real and practical support when often it is needed most.

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.

## ENDS

### **Notes to editors:**

1. Further information from [Linda Martin](#) on 0796 108 5886.
2. 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. Care leavers also available for interview.
3. The Department for Education is funding the 'New Belongings' project with a grant of £100,000. It will run from now until October 2014.
4. The [Care Leavers' Foundation](#) is an independent charity (no 1081410). It supports young adult care leavers. It makes small grants to care leavers aged 18-29 who are in crisis, or who want to take control of their lives and develop new skills. Contact the organisation at: The Care Leavers' Foundation, PO Box 202, Bala, LL23 7ZB.
5. The Charter for Care Leavers was published in October 2012 jointly by the Department for Education and the Care Leavers' Foundation. It sets out key principles for the Government and local authorities in delivering the best possible services for care leavers.
6. The Care Leavers' Foundation founded National Care Leavers' Week in 2002. The Week aims to highlight the needs of these individuals, and encourage the agencies responsible for looking after them to work in a more coordinated and effective way. It brings together a number of organisations working with care leavers.
7. The Foundation is running the '[New Belongings](#)' project. Working closely with - and funded - by the Department for Education, the project is working with local authorities

up and down the country to improve the way that care leavers are supported.

**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.