New Belongings

# *Fast forward to integrated services for care leavers*

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**The Care Leavers’ Foundation**

**News Release**

 **Ofsted say commitment by staff is “Palpable and Passionate” as it proclaims Trafford services for care leavers ‘Outstanding’**

Ofsted today published their report on Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council’s Children’s Services. The report ‘**Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and** **Review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board’** rated theoverall performance of the council ‘good’, however it was judged ‘outstanding’, the highest available rating, in two important areas. Leadership Management and Governance and Experiences and Progress of Care Leavers.

Ofsted included the quality of services for care leavers as part of their overall inspection of children’s services for the first time in 2013, the same year the New Belongings project began its work. Conceived by care leavers and developed by The Care Leavers’ Foundation, New Belongings aims to restore traditional values to leaving care services, join up disparate departments to provide a cohesive services, and wake up communities to the young care leavers who live in their midst, but are often isolated and apart from mainstream activities.

According to Janet Rich, a Trustee of The Care Leavers’ Foundation, “New Belongings has released permission for people at all levels to do the things they believed in when they first came into the job. No-one trains to be a social worker so that they can let young people down, but it is so easy to become ground down in the day to day bureaucracy of the work and become disillusioned by cuts and lack of resources. New Belongings aims to reignite passion and aspiration in leaving care teams so that care leavers can look forward to brighter futures. Each New Belongings authority will shape its own plans and determine its own priorities as it embarks on the New Belongings journey, however all are expected to look at their values, and how well they listen to care leavers and engage communities, as well as joining up local services to ensure care leavers don’t fall though the net.”

New Belongings worked with nine local authorities between 2013 and 2104, working individually or with other local authority partners. Trafford led a cluster of four North West Authorities which included Wirral, Stockpot and Cheshire East.

Mark Riddell, Operations manager in the Permanence and Transitions Team was one of the driving forces behind Trafford’s ‘New Belongings’ journey. Riddell, himself brought up in care in the nineteen seventies, was ecstatic at the news:

“We are the first in the country to get an Outstanding rating for Care Leavers. As a Care Leaver it’s a wow moment!!!!”

Inspectors concluded that:

“Care leavers receive an exceptionally high quality service from the local authority and partner agencies, which has been sustained over time and has delivered many benefits for care leavers. Progression to a ‘gold standard’ service has been due in part to the opportunity seized by senior managers to participate in the national New Belongings project”

And said “All the young people who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the service they receive, particularly about their PAs. They feel safe where they live and are pleased with the help they get in finding accommodation. They value highly the help they receive to achieve their aims and aspirations”

“Participation in the New Belongings project has enabled a systemic focus on the priorities set as a result of the consultation with care leavers, and all of these have been achieved. There has been excellent, high level support from Corporate Parents”

“The research base and external rigour and challenge provided by the New Belongings project, and the involvement of two care leavers, have each added value. The palpable and passionate commitment and persistence by all the staff involved with care leavers to ‘provide realistic experiential leaning opportunities for young people is one of the most impressive aspects of the service.”

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**Notes to editors:**

1. Care Leavers and Trafford staff available for interview. Please contact Janet Rich 07990576487 janet.rich@thecareleaversfoundation.org
2. The Department for Education is funding the second phase of the ‘New Belongings’ project with a grant of £185,000. It will run from April 2015 to July 2016.
3. The Care Leavers’ Foundation was established in 1999 to make grants to care leavers up to the age of 29 and also gives voice to care leavers who want to influence local and national policy [www.thecareleaversfoundation.org](http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org)
4. In Trafford there has been an in-year rise in the number of care leavers[[1]](#footnote-1) in EET (education, employment and training) from an already good position of 73% of 19 to 21 year-old care leavers in EET in April 2014 to 84% in December 2014. This is above both the national average and the performance of statistical neighbors
5. The full report from Ofsted is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/local_authority_reports/trafford/052_Single%20inspection%20of%20LA%20children%27s%20services%20and%20review%20of%20the%20LSCB%20as%20pdf.pdf>
6. Further details of New Belongings are available on The Care Leavers’ Foundation website <http://www.thecareleaversfoundation.org/About_New_Belongings>

**Some statistics (Source: Department for Education):**

* Ten thousand young people left care in 2012. Around 20 per cent of them were under 16.
* 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.



1. Ofsted 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)