**Voice and Influencing Manager**

**£36,183 pa, London**

Become is a small charity with a big reputation. We’ve been leading the way for 26 years in getting the voices of children in care and care leavers heard (we were called The Who Cares? Trust until 2016) and this remains at the heart of our work.

We work with young people with lived experience of the care system so that their voices can be heard, their messages understood, and their opinions and insights taken on board by decision makers and by the public – leading to concrete change. We want to create a cultural shift in the way society treats children who are unable to live with their birth families, ensuring they have respect, understanding and agency.

We believe the care system is the right and best place for some children to be, but that it’s still a long way from creating stable, loving environments for most children in its care. We know the answers aren’t simple – but we also know that when people responsible for making decisions really listen to young people and understand how it feels to be ‘done to’ rather than ‘done with’, they see things in a new light.

That’s why we’re looking for someone with a passion for working with children and young people, combined with the influencing skills to get decision makers to open their doors, hearts and minds.

You’ll have a talent for leading engaging, lively, focused sessions with young people as well as finding less direct ways to gather the views of care-experienced children and young people around England. But you’ll be equally comfortable and confident representing Become (often in partnership with young people) in meetings with policy makers, on advisory groups and at conferences, able to relay key messages clearly and impactfully.

In return we can offer you a vital cause, an open friendly workplace and the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of children in care and young care leavers. If you have the skills, passion and personality to make sure we continue to deserve our reputation as the voice of children in care, we’d love to hear from you.

**How to apply**

Please send your CV and a supporting statement of up to 1,500 words telling us why you’re the right person for the job to recruitment@becomecharity.org.uk

Closing date: 9am, Monday 25th June

All applications will be acknowledged, however only shortlisted candidates will be contacted after the closing date.

**Job Description**

**Purpose of job:**

* To help care-experienced children and young people believe that their feelings and opinions matter and should be listened to and acted on.
* To listen to children and young people and to gather, understand and channel their accounts of their experiences and their opinions about what would improve care (the postholder will be required to represent the views of children in care and care leavers in a range of settings.)
* To support and work alongside young people who want to lead the charge for change to make sure they are listened to by people in power.
* Hold people and organisations that have power over and within the care system to account.
* Work with young people to address the stereotyping and stigma that many children in care and care leavers experience (particularly through campaigning and media opportunities).
* Work to create a sense of community - and the strength that can come from that - among care-experienced young people in England.
* To listen to care-experienced adults and ensure that their perspective informs our understanding of the care experience and life after care, and how to improve it.
* This role will also help the Chief Executive and trustees to ensure that all Become’s work is grounded in lived experience, and that our staff, volunteers and trustees are drawn increasingly from the care-experienced community. Our integrity matters to us and we want to be sure we are sufficiently representative of the people we exist to help.

**Key responsibilities:**

**Young people**

* To run our Ideas and Influence Council – a group of young people who help Become shape its work and priorities.
* To run our Policy Advisory Group – a group of young people who help us devise policy positions and campaigns.
* To run sessions where Become facilitates consultation with young people for external individuals and organisations (for example, academic researchers, other charities, government bodies, TV dramas).
* To work with the Policy and Campaigns Officer to elicit the views of care-experienced young people around England on specific issues, and to develop campaigns and policy positions on issues where you judge we can help to create change.
* To manage our award-winning Passport to Parliament project which empowers groups of care-experienced young people (often from groups most at risk of poor life outcomes) around England as agents of change.
* To work with the Communications Manager to help identify, support and prepare young people who want to share their story with the media.
* To ensure that young people are prepared and supported appropriately when sharing their experiences.
* To ensure that our work with young people in ‘voice’ activities is ethical and offers development and learning opportunities for participants where possible.

**Influencing**

* To work in partnership alongside care-experienced young people to influence decision-makers (eg politicians, policy makers, children’s services managers) and caregivers (eg foster carers, residential workers) who are in a position to make the lives and outcomes of these young people better.
* To represent Become on a range of groups and in one-off meetings with policy makers and practitioners, particularly on education issues (for example, organisations which exist to promote the educational outcomes of care-experienced young people), which is a key strategic priority for Become.
* To develop particular expertise around what helps (and what doesn’t help) care-experienced young people to succeed in post-16 education, starting from their lived experience but also taking on board the findings of academic research and the experiences of ‘widening participation’ practitioners in education.
* To help raise awareness of Become’s Propel ([www.propel.org.uk](http://www.propel.org.uk)) website among UK higher education institutions and professionals who advise young people on post-16 education choices, and to work with the Policy and Campaigns Officer to keep the content updated and relevant.

**Reports to:**

Chief Executive

**Manages:**

Policy and Campaigns Officer.

Passport to Parliament Officer (contingent on securing new funding as current three-year funding coming to an end).

**Works with:** The role will work extremely closely with the Communications Manager to ensure that messages reach target audiences using appropriate channels and platforms.

**Person Specification:**

**Essential experience**

* Working with young people to empower and enable them.
* Campaigning.
* Line management.

**Essential personal attributes**

* Passionate commitment to improving the lives and opportunities of children in care and care leavers.
* Highly confident and able to put across views clearly and persuasively.
* Able to build rapport quickly and to earn respect and trust.
* High level of emotional intelligence.
* Excellent judgement but ability to be non-judgemental and neutral (putting aside own views) when listening and consulting.
* High degree of personal resilience and self-care.

**Essential skills**

* Able to communicate naturally and empathetically with young people.
* Able to communicate with credibility and authority in high-level meetings.
* Good IT literacy, particularly Microsoft Office.

**Essential knowledge**

* How the care system works and the rights and entitlements of children in care and care leavers.
* Understanding of the emotional, psychological and practical issues often faced by young care leavers.
* Understanding of how pre-care experiences and being in care can affect learning and educational outcomes.
* Sound working knowledge of safeguarding.
* Good understanding of the role digital and social media play in campaigning.

**Preferred**

* Personal experience of having been in care.
* Knowledge of the higher education sector.
* Experience of policy and/or research work.
* Experience of working for a charity.