

**Become Response to Ofsted consultation:  
Introducing a separate judgement about care leavers within the inspection of  
local authority children's services (ILACS)**

**About Become** - Become is the national charity for children in care and young care leavers. Our vision is that care-experienced people have the same chances as everyone else to live happy, fulfilled lives. Our mission is to help children in care and young care leavers to believe in themselves and to heal, grow and unleash their potential. We work alongside them to make the care system the best it can be.

**Q1) To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce a separate new judgement within ILACS: 'The experiences and progress of care leavers'**

We agree with Ofsted's proposal to introduce a separate new judgement relating to the 'experiences and progress of care leavers'.

It is important that local authority children's services are actively assessed and inspected on the support they provide for, and the wider experience of, care leavers. This should form a fundamental part of the wider ILACS inspection, and the overall evaluation and judgement for local authority children's services.

Introducing a separate new judgement should also lead to inspections providing a clearer statement about the experiences of care leavers, and improve transparency and accountability about local authority's performance in relation to care leavers.

**Q2) What are the most important factors for us to take into account when setting out what good looks like for care leavers? When responding to this question, please also consider how these factors will affect our evaluation criteria for 'the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families'.**

There are a number of important factors to consider, including:

- The provision of a consistent, comprehensive and broad range of support to enable care leavers to move towards independence at a time that is right for them. The support provided by the local authority should be available across a range of areas of life, including but not limited to: education and learning, training and employment, housing, health, emotional and financial support, personal safety, and participation in society and the community.
- Ensuring that care leavers are supported to understand their rights and entitlements, and the support that is available to them through the local authority and other public services. This can be done by ensuring that: care leavers receive appropriate and useful information from leaving care teams, personal advisers and other local authority staff; that care leavers have effective, personalised pathway plans, that reflect their

aspirations and choices, and are updated regularly; each local area has a comprehensive, well promoted and easy to navigate local offer for care leavers.

- Ensuring that care leavers have stability in their home, their communities and in their relationships, particularly with the people that matter most to them. Ofsted should consider housing options, including the local take-up of schemes such as Staying Put, and whether care leavers are able to remain in the communities and areas that they wish to; the stability of education, employment or training opportunities; and the extent to which care leavers are able to develop, maintain or reconnect positive relationships with friends, families, peer networks of care-experienced young people, other important adults, and professionals, including local authority staff.
- The views, opinions and experiences of young care leavers. Local authorities should have mechanisms to hear and learn from the insights and experiences of care-experienced young people. The ILACS framework should also be explicit about how Ofsted will listen and consider the views, insights and experiences of care leavers as part of inspections.
- The provision of good quality, secure, stable and affordable accommodation that reflects the needs and preferences of care-experienced young people. Housing is a crucial factor in the progress and experience of young care leavers. For example: issues around housing and homelessness represent 16% of all initial enquiries to our [Care Advice Line](#).

We have listed below, some ways in which we think that the proposed new judgement on care leavers should affect the judgement on 'the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families':

- Strategic leadership – A focus on supporting care leavers should be embedded across wider local authority decision-making, involving children's services but other departments too, reflecting the duties on local authorities as part of the corporate parenting principles.
- Learning culture – A focus on improving the provision of support, experiences of and aspirations for care leavers should be embedded across all local authority departments and staff, reflecting the duties on local authorities as part of the corporate parenting principles.
- Workforce – Particular attention should be given to the training, development, retention and oversight of professionals that work specifically with care leavers, including for example, Leaving Care Teams and Personal Advisers.

**Q3) To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should introduce the new judgement from January 2023, after all local authorities have had at least one ILACS judgement inspection?**

In principle, we agree with Ofsted's proposed timescale for introducing the new judgement. However, it is important that Ofsted takes into account the Government's formal response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, which is expected later this year. Any policy reforms that the Government commit to, and implement, should be reflected in the criteria for the new care leavers judgement in the ILACS framework, for example the 5 missions for care-experienced people. If the Government's response to the Care Review

comes too late for this to be reflected within the ILACS framework, then Ofsted should commit to refreshing the criteria for the new judgement once the relevant reforms have been implemented.

**Q4) Do you have any additional comments about our proposals?**

The criteria for the new judgement should align with and reflect any reforms proposed in the Government's forthcoming response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

The criteria for the new judgement should align with and reflect any reforms introduced since 2017, such as the statutory guidance: ['Extending personal adviser support to all care leavers to age 25'](#). The criteria should also fully reflect the corporate parenting principles from the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#).

The criteria for the new judgement should be informed by insight and evidence from previous inspections, and [research carried out by Ofsted](#) and others about the experiences of care leavers. We have shared separately some relevant research to inform the ILACS framework and new judgement, including: our 'Sky's the Limit' report; the APPG for Children in Care and Young Care Leavers 'Spotlight; inquiry report; and a summary of our 'Future of Care' research project with the Rees Centre.

**Q5) Please provide any representations/evidence of the impact of our proposals for the purposes of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).**

In addition to the focus on protected characteristics within the Equality Impact Assessment, we recommend that Ofsted should also have due regard to intersectional experiences and consider the impact of the proposals on individuals who share multiple protected characteristics, or who are potentially at risk of multiple forms of discrimination.

Although neither of these groups are categorised as protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, we recommend that Ofsted also have due regard to the impact of the proposals on refugee or asylum-seeking young people who have experience of the care system, as well as care-experienced young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Both groups are heavily represented in the care system, and are likely to experience specific and additional challenges. It is estimated that [at least one in every ten children in care](#), and more than 10,000 young care leavers in England have potential unresolved immigration or citizenship issues. Similarly, [children who live in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods are ten times more likely to be in the care system](#) than children in the least deprived 10% of areas.

**For Further Information:**

Please contact Matt Blow, Policy and Public Affairs Manager at [matt.blow@becomecharity.org.uk](mailto:matt.blow@becomecharity.org.uk).

# BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS