

Impact Report

April 2021 –
March 2022



BECOME.
THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

Introduction

from Katharine
and Hugh

This year, as we emerged from the pandemic, Become has continued to grow, building on its strong foundations, new ways of working, and the lessons of the last few years to reach more children and young people and increase our impact. The context of the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care meant our work to ensure young people’s voices are listened to and to work with them to campaign for change was more vital than ever.

We are particularly proud to have improved our reach and impact with young people and professionals (see [p5](#) for more), launched a nationally accredited pilot training programme (see [p21](#)), and co-created a new youth-focused website with an amazing group of young people (see [p19](#)). We have also moved to a new model of participation which involves creating a network of young people who can engage in a way that best suits them, and small, focused groups to work on projects – such as shaping our response to the Care Review.

With record numbers of children in care, the system under growing pressure, the rocketing cost of living and real economic uncertainty, our work feels more vital than ever. We know we need to redouble our efforts to reach more children and young people and to work with them to ensure their voices are heard and that together

we create change in the care system. We will continue to be ambitious about rising to that challenge, optimistic that change is possible – and the voices and experiences of children in care and young care leavers will remain at the heart of everything we do.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees we would like to extend thanks to all the individuals, Trusts and Foundations, and corporate supporters for all that you do to help deliver a better care system and transform the lives of care-experienced children and young people. We also received a generous legacy last year and are extremely grateful to have been remembered.

With your continued support, we know we can look forward to the future with determination and confidence.

Katharine Sacks-Jones, CEO
Hugh Thornberry, Chair of Trustees



Contents

Our impact	5
Reflections	7
Stories	9
Spotlight on services	13
Spotlight on campaigning	15
Spotlight on coproduction	19
Spotlight on training	21
Thank you to our supporters	23

Our impact in 2021/ 22

Become is the national charity for children in care and young care leavers. Since 1992, we've stood shoulder to shoulder with care-experienced young people, helping them get the support they need and working alongside them to make the care system the best it can be.

Top themes we've supported YP with:

- Housing and homelessness
- Higher Education
- Advocacy
- Rights and Entitlements
- Mental health

944

young people supported directly and via adults in their lives through Become's direct services



...with 98% reporting a positive impact

186

young people shared their views, told their story, or fed into our policy and participation work to influence change

14

young people supported to get places at university

115

people fundraised for us

35

Personal Advisors joined our pilot PA course

383

professionals trained

4

new trustees

recruited, with our Board now 50% care-experienced



193

people donated to us on a regular basis

“

Coaching helps me to realise that my goals are possible.

What went well in 2021/22

Participation projects with young people that fed into and influenced the thinking of the [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#).

The [APPG Spotlight Inquiry](#) which heard from 130 care-experienced young people and was shared with every MP across England.

The relaunch of our [Coaching service](#) which has received brilliant feedback from young people and the professionals that support them.

Becoming even better in 2022/23

Looking at how we can reach more young people from diverse communities who can access our services and grow our participation network.

Introducing a new impact measurement framework so that we can better understand the difference we make.

Continuing our digital transformation to make our services more accessible for young people.

Following the Independent Review and in the lead up to the next General Election, investing in our capacity to campaign for change, so we can push for reforms that will make a difference.

Reflections



Ty's story

Ty first went into care when he was 15 and, like many teenagers, aspired to play football professionally.

“But I wasn’t good enough – I’m not gonna lie! So I had to find something that I liked and enjoyed, and that was being a teacher. But you can’t just be a teacher – there are obstacles you have to go through.”

For many children, entering care can be hugely disruptive to their education. The instability of moving to a new home, with new people, and potentially a new school, means that many finish school without the qualifications they want for the future.

“Become were supportive through my writing and exams and just for emotional support as well. We’ve had some deep, meaningful conversations. I heard about Become’s [Link-Up](#) [our weekly online social] through Instagram and I joined because there were other care leavers

there as well. I got to spend time with people like me who have been through the care system.

“We’d been meeting up online for a few months and then from that opportunity we were able to meet up in person. It was almost a surreal event! There was painting, food, we went to an escape room, which was great. So I got people’s numbers and some of us have planned to meet up outside Link-Up.”

As Ty’s relationship with Become progressed, he got involved with more opportunities – such as representing England and facilitating a virtual workshop for Care Day 2022 with the 5 Nations 1 Voice alliance.

Ty continues on his journey to become a teacher and Become continues to be there for him.

“You’re always welcome to come to Become. It’s a great place to hang out. Don’t go through what you’re going through alone. Maybe now’s not the right time, but there will always be a right time. And when it is the right time, you’re welcome.”



“

Don’t go through what you’re going through alone.

Zara's story

Zara started at university, far away from home, during the height of the pandemic.

“Everyone was in isolation. You couldn’t go out and meet new people. I saw on Twitter about Become’s Link-Up where you could meet other care-experienced young people, play games, and socialise. It gave me an escape a couple of times a week to meet new people. It can be hard to meet people who share similar care experiences to you.

Since I’ve become more involved with Become, it’s given me lots of opportunities that I probably wouldn’t have had the chance to do otherwise. For example, I have helped them on interview days, I was involved in their Propel project, and I got the opportunity to talk to BBC News and write an [article](#) for the Independent, too.



So currently things are much better than when I first got involved with Become. My situation at the time at university wasn’t great and I was quite down due to the circumstances. Whereas now I’ve just completed my first year at university. I’m feeling much more positive and I think Become and their support has played a big role in that.

If you’re a young person right now who’s maybe not feeling the greatest or just wants to make some new friends – I’d highly recommend getting in touch with Become, attending their [Link-Ups](#), or calling their [Care Advice Line](#) if you need some advice because everyone’s genuinely really friendly, they’re really supportive, so I’d go for it.”

“It’s given me lots of opportunities that I probably wouldn’t have had the chance to do.



Spotlight on services



Meet Becca, our Senior Support & Advice Officer

“I answer calls on Become’s Care Advice Line from young care-experienced people, as well as professionals and carers supporting them. Many young people feel alone and lost in a care system that leaves them without the support they deserve.

“

Every call with someone who has experienced adversity and trauma can be an opportunity for healing and growth.

To me, working on our Care Advice Line means providing a listening space for care-experienced young people, it means practical support, and it means giving young people information so they can have a say in their own lives.

The coronavirus crisis shined a light on the everyday barriers young people face. These challenges will persist beyond lockdowns which is why I’ll still be here supporting young care-experienced people. I believe every call with someone who has experienced adversity and trauma can be an opportunity for healing and growth and we strive to provide that opportunity for every young person we work with.”

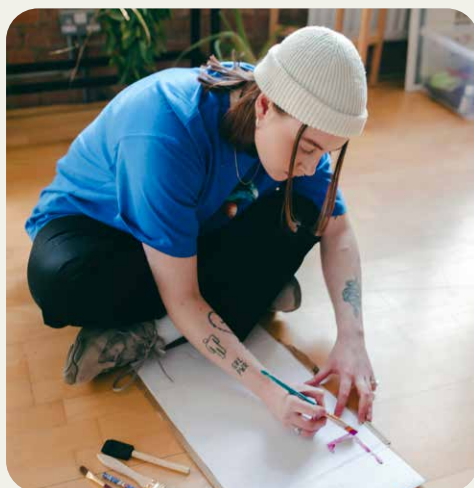
Spotlight on campaigning

APPG Spotlight Inquiry

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Looked After Children and Care Leavers is a cross-party group of parliamentarians which looks at issues relating to care-experienced young people and makes recommendations to government. We act as the secretariat for this APPG and have done so since helping to establish the group in 1998.

This year, we launched the APPG's Spotlight Inquiry, asking what makes young people feel part of the communities that matter to them and how does the care system help and hinder them in feeling part of those communities?

The Spotlight Inquiry heard from 300+ people with experience of the care system, of which 130 were care-experienced young people across England. Our focus was 'community'.



“

I do think stigma prevents people like me from getting into the world where I'd ever be chosen to lead a review, become an MP, or even a civil servant.

108,070

children in care in the UK

44,580

care leavers
aged 17–21

What did we find in England?

Young people told us that **‘place’** matters to them. They wanted stability so they could feel safe and build lasting relationships.

7,230

children moved more than three times in 2021

16,720

children placed 20+ miles from home



It takes more than just stability to feel part of a community. Strong relationships matter too. During workshops, young people shared concerns around **stigma**.

Once young people **leave care**, ‘community’ becomes even more important because they often have smaller and more fragile support networks as a result of both going into care and the instability within the care system.

30%

of care leavers in foster care when they turned 18 were able to ‘stay put’ until the age of 19 or 20

2,230

care leavers aged 17–21 living in accommodation that their own local authority thinks is unsuitable for them



What did the report recommend?

A stronger sense of place

To support children to build links with their communities, serious action is needed to reduce the number of children being moved ‘out of area’. A national strategy for children’s residential care needs to be developed to ensure there are the right types of homes in the right places that keep more young people close to the communities that matter to them.

Reducing stigma

A national public awareness campaign and media pledge to improve the public’s understanding of the care system, and a new requirement for professionals in children’s services and all front-line roles (including teachers, healthcare staff, and the police) to receive training to reduce stigma and prejudicial behaviour.

Improving support for leaving care

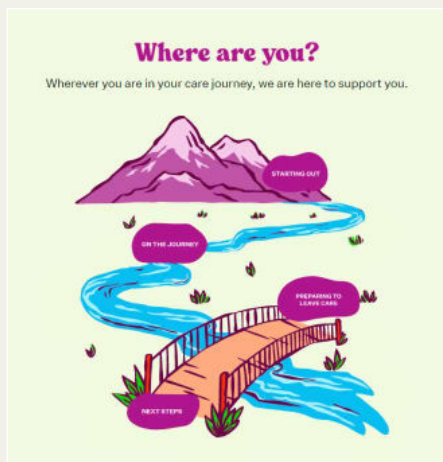
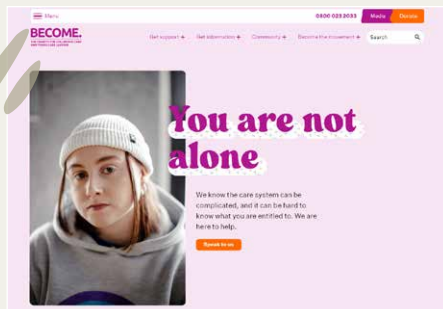
The current ‘leaving care’ system needs to be reimaged to **end the care cliff** of support typically experienced by young adults at ages 18, 21, and 25. This should guarantee a core level of support into adulthood regardless of where someone is living.

“

9/10 times we are not believed because of our ‘reputation’ as care kids.

The Spotlight report was shared with the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care to influence their thinking in advance of their final report, and we sent copies of the report to all MPs in England, along with a two-page fact sheet focused on their region, asking them to consider what support care experienced young people in their constituency would want to see.

Co-creating our new website



In July 2021, we began work on a brand-new website for Become, joining forces with co-production experts, Effervescent UK, and web design agency, Venn Creative.

We put a call-out for care-experienced young people (aged 13 to 26) from across England to join our Web Design Team and help create a website that enables young people to access support and build connections.

We had a fantastic response! Our final 10 members of the design group showed us their impressive creativity, skills, ideas, and commitment to shaping a website for young people, by young people.

The website you see today is a direct result of all of us working together to make a safe, reassuring, and empowering online space.

“

This website has brought us all together and has shown creativity in all of us.

Austin Dewson, 16 years old

It's a website that better reflects our organisational values and culture, and is more accessible and attractive to young people, providing them with the information and advice they need to navigate the care system, access support, and help create change.

As well as positive feedback from individuals, we're measuring our new website's success by more people visiting the site (and staying for longer), and clear, accessible, and effective journeys for young people, professionals and supporters.

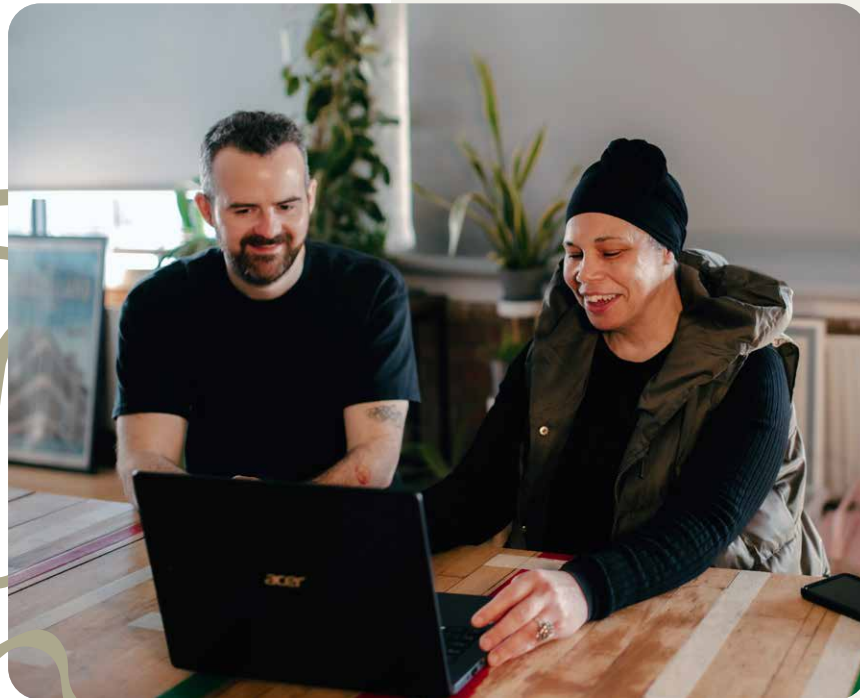
With special thanks to our Web Design team members:

Amelia Whyman, age 25 (Become)
Amy Grant, age 28 (Become)
Austin Dewson, age 16
Corey Dunford, age 20
Dani Knight, age 22 (Effervescent)
Eloïse Malone, age 44 (Effervescent)
Emily Turner, age 22
Emily Statham, age 22
Henrietta Imoreh, age 27 (Become)
Leah Musekiwa, age 15
Louise Hannaford, age 26 (Venn Creative)
Meg Mitchell, age 21
Phil Innes, age 51 (Effervescent)
Sam Turner, age 31 (Become)
Shakira Henry, age 44 (Become)
Sancia Williams, age 24
Taeja Clarke, age 18
VJ Clarke, age 14
Yaaseen Azam, age 22
Zander Grinfeld, age 42 (Venn Creative)

Spotlight on

coproduction

Spotlight on training



Launching a pilot training programme

Through calls to our Care Advice Line, research and consultations with care leavers, Personal Advisers, and managers, we learned that – although there are examples of excellent practice happening in many areas across England – it is not consistent, and some young people are not getting the support they need from Personal Advisers, the professionals there to support young people leaving care.

“

We're committed to co-designing our work with the key people that it impacts.

In January 2022, we launched our pilot training programme for Personal Advisers, thanks to support from The Clothworkers' Foundation. The training programme is designed to ensure Personal Advisers have the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to support young care leavers to live the life they choose.

Our ultimate vision of this training programme is to bring about life-enhancing changes to care-experienced young people's situations, whilst at the same time transforming the way that Personal Advisers do their jobs, and how local authorities approach their work with care leavers.

At Become, we're committed to co-designing our work with the key people that it impacts and speaks about – and so the PA programme content has been developed with young care leavers and Personal Advisers throughout the process. Thanks to Buckinghamshire, Coventry, Essex, and Kirklees local authorities for partnering with us and connecting us to those involved.

As part of the first cohort of students, 35 Personal Advisers have participated in the Personal Adviser pilot course – between them, they support over 510 care leavers.

Thank you to our supporters

We would like to thank all the trusts, foundations, businesses, and individuals whose generosity makes our broad scope of work possible, including:

Angus Lawson Memorial Trust

BBC Children in Need

Clothworkers' Foundation

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

Garfield Weston Foundation

Global's Make Some Noise

Jane & John Hutchinson

Kate Somerville – Skin Health Experts

Lincoln Private Investment Office Foundation

The Listening Fund

Mark Law

Mark Leonard Trust

National Lottery Community Fund

Neil Morrissey

Oso Foundation

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Priscilla Terrazas

Robin Swindell

Swire Charitable Trust

Timothy Barr

Will Houghton Foundation

Brand founder, **Kate Somerville**, knows first-hand the challenges young people face trying to find their way in the world and understands the impact a helping hand can have. Kate Somerville is proud to partner with Become to support the life-changing work the charity does in the UK for young care leavers to help make their dreams possible.

Mark Law raised a remarkable £27,311 by Busking for Become. He told us “I passionately believe that care leavers are hugely valuable members of a society that often doesn't serve them well. I therefore decided to do something about helping to end the ‘Care Cliff’”. Thank you Mark for your fantastic efforts.

Gill Timmis led Biking for Children in Care in their 20th year fundraising for us. In June, over 50 riders cycled from Crewe to Aberystwyth raising over £63,000. This brings their lifetime total to over £890,000!

In their second year, our **Become Players** community of gamers and streamers loaded up consoles and PCs to fundraise for us. Over the year they raised £12,000, bringing their lifetime total to nearly £26,000!

We would like to thank everyone who donated to Become in 2021/22, including those who wish to remain anonymous.

“

Care leavers are hugely valuable members of a society that often doesn't serve them well.

Mark Law



**If you would like to donate to
support our vital work, get in
touch with the team:**
fundraising@becomecharity.org.uk

Become Charity

Unit 151, 264 Lavender Hill
London SW111LJ

@Become1992

mailbox@becomecharity.org.uk

becomecharity.org.uk

BECOME.

**THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS**