

Impact Report

April 2022 –
March 2023

BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS



30 years of
the who
CARES?
Trust
BECOME.



Introduction

from Katharine and Hugh

2022/23 marked Become's 30th anniversary. We took time to reflect on three decades of amplifying young people's voices and fighting for change, from our origins as the Who Cares? Trust magazine to now, while also crucially looking towards the future and the changes we'll continue to fight for (p14).

Our 30th year coincided with the release of the long-awaited Independent Review of Children's Social Care, a pivotal opportunity to improve the care system. We were pleased to see 13 of our recommendations included in the Review, and worked hard throughout the year to influence the Government as they developed their subsequent plans for the future of children's social care (p15).

Against this backdrop of taking stock while pushing forward, we launched our young person's design group, 'Future of Care' (p12), to set new measurements of success for young care leavers, and amplified the voices of hundreds of young people during Care Day with our #KnowAboutCare theme (p13). We also continued to positively impact the lives of care-experienced young people and professionals, once again training more professionals than ever before (p11), and reaching care-experienced young people in new settings such as HMP Pentonville (p10).

With record numbers of children in care, mounting pressure on the system, the soaring cost of living, and prevailing economic uncertainty, the need for change is more vital than ever. As we look forward, we will intensify our efforts to reach more care-experienced children and young people, so we can be there, helping

them to understand their rights and entitlements, access the support they need, develop their skills, and overcome challenges, and ensure their voices and experiences are at the centre of our calls for change. We will redouble our efforts to fight for a care system that works better for all children and young people, now and into the future.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we express our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals, Trusts and Foundations, and corporate supporters who play a vital role in enhancing the care system and transforming the lives of children and young people with care experience. Your unwavering support fuels our determination to keep pushing forward. Thank you.

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

Contents

Our impact.....	04
Reflections.....	06
Stories.....	08
Spotlight on Services	10
Spotlight on Training	11
Spotlight on Participation	12
Calling for change	14
Thank you to our supporters.....	16

This report was created in-house at Become.

Our impact in 2022/23

Top issues we've supported young people with include:

- Higher Education
- Housing and homelessness
- Advocacy
- Mental health
- Understanding and accessing their rights and entitlements

983

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

“ —

I feel so much better, I just wanted to thank you. I rang many charities for support and none got back to me. You were there and listened and helped me.

“ —

I am feeling much better than before, these sessions are so uplifting. The space you create allows me to reflect on things, see them more positive. Things are a lot better than I think. I see myself in a different light.

“ —

I feel better talking to someone who is not directly involved in my story, giving a point of view that I can relate to.

542

professionals trained

220

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



“ —

Thank you so much for such a comprehensive list of support sources, this is fantastic!

32  young people supported to get places at university

“ — This is the first time I have lived alone and the support from [Become] has done this for me. I wouldn't be at uni without you helping me get the support in place for my disability and helping the uni understand what I need. I am beyond happy to be where I am, I can live independently and know I am safe if I have a fit.

16  new staff, with five care-experienced staff members and five care-experienced trustees

139

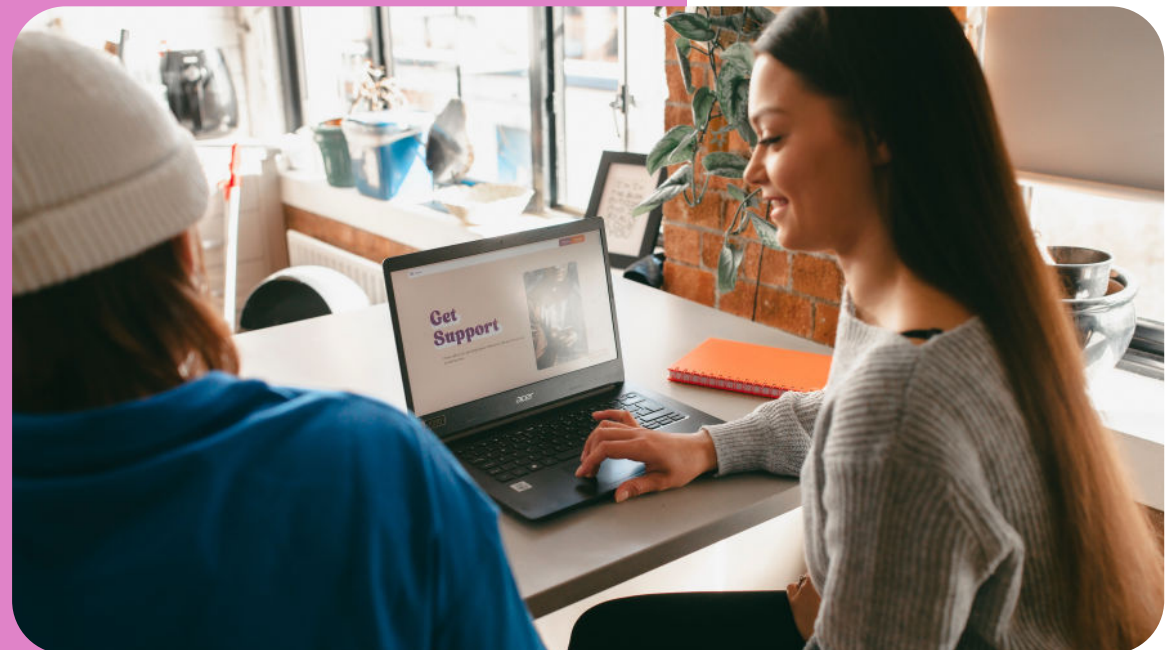
supporters fundraised for us



202

people donated regularly

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.





Reflections

Updates from last year

We said we'd grow our participation network of young people...

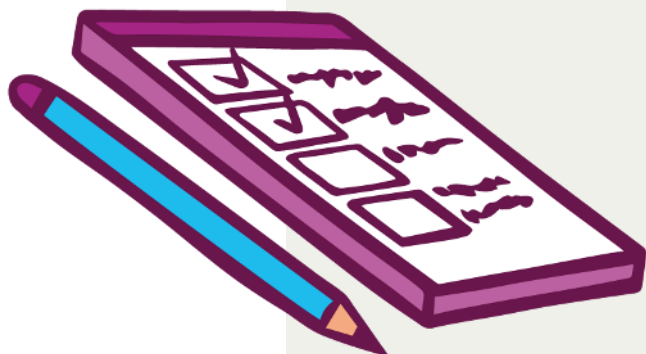
We more than doubled our Become the Movement network numbers.

We said we'd introduce a new impact measurement framework...

We brought in experts and will be launching in 2023/24.

And we said we'd continue our digital transformation to make our services more accessible to young people...

An online chat function will be available on our website soon!



What went well in 2022/23

We amplified young people through national media, meetings with decision-makers in Parliament, our Care Day #KnowAboutCare theme, and our various creative coproduction projects such as Future of Care and Sky's the Limit.

We identified 13 of our recommendations in the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, and eight policy proposals the Government has fully agreed to take forward, as well as eight the Government has partially agreed to take forward in their subsequent plans, 'Stable homes, built on love'.

We trained 542 professionals over 40 learning sessions, indirectly supporting even more care-experienced children and young people.



Becoming even better in 2023/24

We will launch a new campaign to improve stability for children in care.

We will connect with more supporters, including companies looking to support care-experienced children and young people.



Stories⁺⁺

Eliza's* about to leave care. Olu, our Care Advice team member, is here to help her...

Eliza's Personal Adviser (PA) had told her she was expected to leave her foster care home by the end of the year – but her foster carers weren't willing to tell her what month her notice period would be, and her Personal Adviser was unhelpful – rarely taking notes of Eliza's requests, barely communicating, and not connecting Eliza with a new social worker after her previous one resigned. Eliza said she was worried how all this uncertainty was impacting her studies.

In our first conversation, it was very clear Eliza was unaware of her rights and entitlements as a young person leaving care – so we made sure she was armed with these as a first step. Frustrated about not knowing how or where she'd be moving on to, we also spoke directly with Eliza's PA to establish her Pathway Plan.

We shared Eliza's local offer of rights and entitlements, and the pressure applied to Eliza's PA helped her receive a new social worker and an up-to-date Pathway Plan.

*Names have been changed



“ ———
I'm really happy with the help Become gave me. They've done a lot of work in a short space of time – especially compared to what my Personal Adviser would have done.

Award-winning Amir

Amir entered the care system as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking aged 15. Now 22, he is a young care-experienced student studying Genomic Medicine at Swansea University. A few years ago, we were delivering training at the university and met Amir as part of their student 'Connectors' programme. Upon learning he was care-experienced, we started to work with Amir to co-deliver the training to Swansea.

Since then, Amir has become involved in all sorts of projects with us – from playing an integral role in our innovative, accredited Personal Advisor programme as a Young Trainer, to being an active member of our Future of Care design group in partnership with the University of Oxford's Rees Centre. Amir has also taken part in Become's influencing activities, attending Parliament for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Care-Experienced Children and Young People, where he asked questions of Josh MacAlister, Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Amir is so brilliant that we nominated him for an award, and as we go to print, we have heard that he has won! Congratulations to Amir for winning the Frontline Award for Young People, in recognition of his efforts to create change for children and families.



“ —

Due to negative experiences with social care, I had walked away from having much involvement with my Leaving Care Team, but working with Become opened my eyes to what I was entitled to and also how I could make a difference for other young people in the care community. What I do with Become makes me extremely happy.

Spotlight on Services

HMP Pentonville Advice Surgeries

This year, we've been delivering monthly, in-person advice surgeries for young care leavers in HMP Pentonville prison – reaching 23 young people with advice on their rights and entitlements as care leavers, enabling young people facing disadvantage to access the support they're entitled to.

Care-experienced individuals are hugely overrepresented in the prison system. Despite care leavers making up around 1% of the population in England and Wales, estimates suggest that over 25% of young offenders have been in care – a sad indictment of a care system not providing children and young people with the support and stability they need.*

As we hear again and again from young people on our [Care Advice Line](#), without knowing what they are entitled to, how can young people access what they should be receiving and get the support they need when they are released?

The Advice Surgery brings our Care Advice Line to care-experienced young people serving a custodial sentence. We plan to build on this in the coming year, extending our offer to other custody settings.

*Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, 2011; Redmond, 2015

Young people attend 1-1 session sessions to seek advice for:

- Key entitlements when they have left the care system
- Advice related to finances, housing, employment, and entitlements for care leavers
- Accessing records
- Accessing (Personal Advisor) leaving care support
- Learning what (multiagency) support is in place on release.



“ This session has been informative and helpful.

“ I feel more educated and able to know who to contact if I needed help.

Spotlight on Training

Improving practice



Through our training service, we seek to improve how young people are supported by professionals so local systems and services are better equipped to meet young people's needs. Over the past year, the training team at Become has delivered over 40 sessions to 542 learners to a wide range of professionals and organisations, from local authorities to charities and fostering agencies.

Training topics have included [An Introduction to the Rights and Entitlements of Care-Experienced Young People](#), a [Beginner's Guide to Care](#), and [Language Matters](#), which discusses terminology used within the care system and the impact this may have on care-experienced young people. A full list of our off-the-shelf training titles can be found on the [training pages of our website](#).

“ All the activities focused on raising awareness of the language used and how this could make a young person feel were really valuable. It has reminded me of the need to take an individual approach with young people and that I should be regularly checking back with them about the language used. It is not enough to trust that I'm doing the right thing "because I care", but that it needs to be led by young people.

Language Matters participant

“ I have my first 1:1 coming up with our designated Looked After Children lead and a young care experienced person who is going to university, so everything I have learned is going to be so helpful and I feel much more confident in the support I can offer and how I can add to the support network at the college.

Supporting Care-Experienced Young People on their Journey to Higher Education participant

This year we began our 3-year research partnership with the University of Oxford's Rees Centre to understand what success means to care leavers.

Researchers Dr Nikki Luke and Dr Áine Kelly, are working alongside our care-experienced design group named 'Future of Care' made up of 12 young people from the ages of 21-25.

Over the next three years, the team will co produce research materials and outputs, gaining insights from a range of stakeholders including local authorities and other young people, and at the end of the project, will have a new tool that can measure the success of care leavers.

We want to say a big thank you to all the young people who are involved.

Leon Feinstein, Professor of Education and Children's Social Care and Director of the Rees Centre at the University of Oxford's Department of Education, says:

"Parents, carers, educators, policymakers, and other professionals all make assumptions about what a successful adult is and develop policies and practices to fit. This means that outcomes or success factors are at best assumed and imposed on young people, particularly for those in or leaving care.

That's why this research partnership is so important to help us understand how young people perceive their aspirations, personal achievements, and attainments. At the end of the 3-year project, we will have measures based on children in care and young care leavers' own criteria for success which feels right, timely and much needed."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience in the Future of Care design group. It's been great working with other care-experienced young people to help define what success looks like for care leavers, and a fantastic opportunity to work on a project that can make a material difference in the lives of many.

Too often the narrative of what success means for care leavers is controlled by others. Become has done a great job in creating a collaborative space where care-experienced people can all share their perspectives on what success looks like and hopefully rewrite the narrative.

Kudzai Zimowa, a young person in the design group

Spotlight on Participation

Future of Care

"I may not have enough money to do all the things our friendship group wants to do. I have to prioritise my bills and rent."

What Matt (26) wants his friends to #KnowAboutCare

"There are a lot of people in high positions with care experience - very inspirational, if they speak about their journey."

What Sancia (25) wants her colleagues to #KnowAboutCare

"Considering so many of us are care-experienced, we don't have a singular experience of care. People need to understand we are all unique and need to be treated with compassion, kindness, and understanding."

What Cleo (25) wants you to #KnowAboutCare

"We can get separated from the people we love, such as siblings and extended family, which leaves us feeling hopeless."

What Zahra (24) wants her neighbours to #KnowAboutCare

Care Day

Friday 17 February 2023 was Care Day, the world's biggest celebration of children and young people with care experience. We've been leading the campaign in England since the event first began in 2015.

Our aim this year was to challenge common misconceptions about care and tackle the stigma and prejudice that care-experienced young people face by amplifying what young people themselves want YOU to #KnowAboutCare.

Over 360 people joined in and shared their #KnowAboutCare messages on Care Day 2023, reaching 2.1 million people.

#KnowAboutCare

Calling for change

30 years of Become

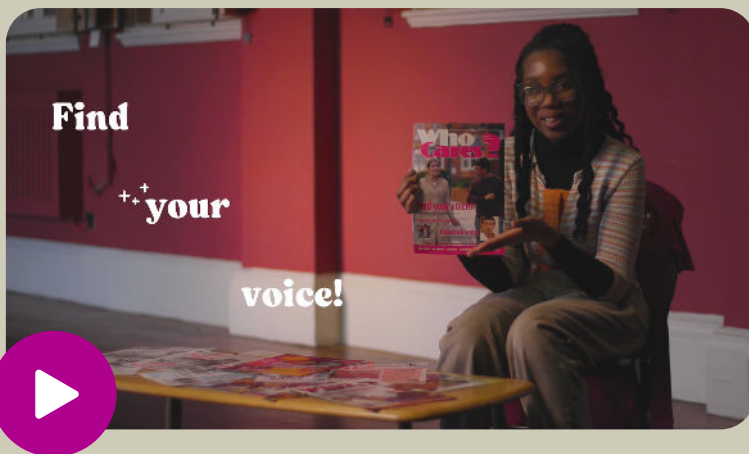
In April 2022, we began marking our 30th year as a charity. Not celebrating – because it's still the case that care-experienced young people do not have the support, power, and systems they need and deserve – but reflecting nonetheless on the progress that's been achieved and the changes we continue to fight for. From our origins as the Who Cares? Trust magazine, providing the first national platform for people with care experience, to the direct support and long-term campaigning we do today standing shoulder-to-shoulder with young people.

We marked our anniversary with an online webinar discussion between care-experienced poet, Lemn Sissay, and young people Rachele, Shona, and Pip. Later in the year, we invited key supporters and young people to an in-person exhibition – where our Young Trustee, Pip, spoke about what Become means to her.



“ In 30 years' time, I expect the changes Become has advocated for to be policy. I expect Become to continue to help us to thrive but not in spite of a failing care system. I expect the government to listen to us in the way that Become does.

Pip Uden, Become Trustee and care-experienced young person





Influencing

Our 30th year coincided with an opportunity for change in the care system. In May 2022, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care was published, and following 18 months of influencing, we were pleased to see the acknowledgement that the care system is not working for too many children and young people and that 13 of our recommendations for change had been included.

In February 2023, the government shared their long-awaited response, setting out its vision to put love and stability at the heart of children's social care. There were some welcome elements that we have been calling for as part of our #EndTheCareCliff campaign that we think will make a real difference such as extending Staying Put and Staying Close schemes, increasing the allowance young people leaving care receive and more funding to support care leavers on apprenticeships – although much more is needed to permanently end the care cliff of support young people being made to leave the system experience.

There were other positives too such as the extension of Corporate Parenting, which is where more public authorities (such as the NHS, schools, job centres etc) play a proactive role in supporting care-experienced young people, something we think will help tackle the stigma that care-experienced people face, and we're now working with young people to understand how they'd like this to happen.

But there was little in the Government's proposed plans to tackle the big issue of instability in the system, which currently sees 7 in 10 children in care experiencing a change in home, school, or social worker each year – and overall their plan lacked the urgent action and investment that is desperately needed.

As we move forward to the next stage of Government consultation, we will continue to put young people's voices front and centre and push harder for the changes which young people tell us will make a difference.

Thank you to our kind supporters

More supporters than ever before took action to help care-experienced young people. To the trusts, foundations, businesses, and individuals who fundraised or donated your own cash – thank you. Our impact is your impact. We wish we could name all of you, here are a few:

BBC Children in Need
Biking for Children in Care
Community
Become Players
Blagrove Trust
BPL Global
BTMK
Capital One
Clothworkers' Foundation
The Considered Ask
Foundation
Cousin Media Group
Dulverton Trust
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
The Francis Laughland Trust
Jane & John Hutchinson
Julius Rutherford & Co
Kate Somerville Skincare
James Laughland
The Listening Fund
Lincoln Private Investment
Office Foundation

Annie Macmanus
Mark Leonard Trust
Mediaworks
Mint Velvet
Pamela Morgan and Christopher Plummer
National Lottery Community Fund
News UK
Oso Foundation
PwC
The Patricia Routledge Foundation
Royal Warrant Holders Association Charity Fund
Souter Charitable Trust
Swire Charitable Trust
John Turner
Chris Wild
Will Houghton Foundation

We warmly acknowledge and remember John Crisp.



“All young people deserve the support they need, to thrive and live happy and fulfilled lives. We can help to make a difference by donating and raising awareness of the work of this charity.”

Sharon McLoughlin, Big Half '22 finisher

To everyone who is helping to fund our work, including those named here, those not named, and those who wish to remain anonymous – thank you for standing shoulder to shoulder with care-experienced young people.

Biking for Children in Care completed their 21st ride for us! In June, 50 riders led by Gill Timmis cycled from Durham to York and raised over £48,000. This brings their lifetime total to over £940,000!

Our **Become Players** community of gamers and content creators is award-winning. We won Best Online Stewardship 2022 at Charity Virtual Events Awards for our supportive Discord server. The community raised £14,000, bringing their lifetime total to nearly £40,000!

Over 60 inspiring people walked, jogged, or ran **The Big Half** for us in September – the biggest running team we've ever had! Together they raised nearly £15,000.

Isaac Neilson was one of many supporters who completed their own creative fundraiser for us. Isaac, a musician, performed a different festive song every day in the run-up to Christmas as a fundraising Advent Calendar, raising £350.



Our impact is your impact.

BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

If you would like to take action to support our work:



scan the QR code with
your smartphone camera



visit our website
www.becomecharity.org.uk



or send us an email
fundraising@becomecharity.org.uk