 

**Evaluation of Become’s Care Advice Service – inviting Expressions of Interest**

**About Become**

Become is the national charity for children in care and young care leavers. We put young people at the heart of everything we do, helping them be powerful agents of change in their own lives, the care system and society. We help them understand their rights and entitlements so they can get the support they need now, develop their skills, access education, and overcome challenges they face. We amplify young people’s voices and empower them to speak out and campaign for change, so that the care system works better for all children and young people, now and into the future.

**Overview of Become’s Care Advice Service (CAS)**

The Care Advice Service consists of a Care Advice Line, Rights & Entitlements workshops for young care leavers, and Young Trainers programme.

***The Care Advice Line (CAL)*** is Become’s flagship service. It is a freephone telephone service open Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm. It can also be contacted by e-mail, using the contact form on Become’s website, or via What’s App. The CAL is open to all children and young people with experience of the care system, up to the age of 27, and to their supporting adults (professionals, foster carers, and loved ones). The CAL aims to:

* provide an independent and non-judgemental **listening ear** to children and young people
* support children in care and young care leavers to understand and access their full **rights and entitlements**
* support children and young people’s access to relevant **advice and support services**, which may be Become’s own or may be provided by other organisations that we trust, and
* when necessary, **safeguard** children and young people in partnership with other agencies and professionals.

Through the CAL, our CAL team:

* source **information** to pass on to the caller at the next contact
* **refer** the child or young person for support from other Become services and participation opportunities
* **Advise** professionals and supporting adults working directly with care experienced people
* **liaise** with other professionals or agencies to put support in place or to ensure full access to rights and entitlements
* **constructively challenge** other professionals or agencies if we feel that they are not fulfilling their obligations to the child or young person
* take steps to **safeguard** a child or young person
* Offer **1 to 1 support** for up to 6 sessions, where needed
* **check-in** with the caller to see how they’re feeling, or whether things have changed or improved since the last contact

The most common themes of calls on our CAL are advice and support around:

* housing and **homelessness**
* **mental health** challenges and **wellbeing** support
* support in and access to **education**, and
* **rights and entitlements** for children in care and young care leavers

Our CAL works towards several outcomes, as set out in our **CAL Theory of Change** (at end of doc). During 2023 we have developed a new suite of activity and impact measures, and we are currently part way through implementing these.

***Rights & Entitlements workshops for young care leavers:*** through delivery of our CAL, we know care experienced children and young people are often unaware of the support they are entitled to. This is a major barrier to them being able to advocate for and access their entitlements as care leavers. By delivering free group Rights & Entitlements of Care Leavers workshops to young care leavers in partnership with external organisations, we aim to build young people’s understanding *before* they encounter difficulties and need advice through our CAL.

***Young Trainers Programme:*** we offer an accredited training opportunity for young care leavers to build their skills in workshops facilitation and online delivery methods. They then have opportunities to co-facilitate online Rights & Entitlements of Care Leavers workshops to other care leavers.

**Evaluation of our Care Advice Line**

With generous support from the National Lottery , we are planning an external evaluation of our Care Advice Service, to explore:

* the impact of the Care Advice Line (CAL) (for young people and supporting adults), of Rights & Entitlements workshops for young care leavers participating, and of our Young Trainers programme for young people involved, and any differences across groups of young people reached,
* how the CAL complements other services that exist for children in care and young care leavers (e.g. advocacy),
* what are the features of our CAL offer most valued by children and young people.

This will be a time bound evaluation, using use a mixed methods approach, involving field work with young people and supporting adults and analysis of routinely-gathered impact and evaluation data (Lamplight case recording system and other sources). The evaluation will focus on delivery under our National Lottery grant period.

**Timing of evaluation and tender process**

Deadline for expressions of interest: 5pm Monday 8th Jan 2024

Evaluator confirmed: end Jan 2024

Contract finalized: during Feb 2024

Evaluation activity: March - Nov 2024 (8-9 months)

Report writing: mid-Nov – mid-December 2024

Draft report: end December 2024

Final report: end January 2025

**Budget/ cost**

We have maximum budget of £25,000 to spend on this evaluation between June 2024 and May 2025.

**Young people influencing this evaluation**

With the support of our Senior Outreach & Participation Officer, we aim for young people to advise on aspects of this evaluation, including recruitment materials and research tools.

**What we’re looking for from an external evaluator**

We are seeking someone/ an organisation with experience of research and evaluation relating to care experienced young people and / or services designed to support them. They will need to have an awareness of the challenges many care experienced children and young people face, be empathetic, and be able to apply trauma-informed approaches in their work.

**Expressions of interest**

To express interest in delivering this evaluation, please submit an expression of interest to Chloe Grant, Director of Services, by 5pm Monday 8th Jan 2024. This should include your/ your organisation’s suitability based on the above requirements, a project plan outlining how you would deliver this evaluation, and a budget overview. Please contact Chloe Grant with any queries: chloe.grant@becomecharity.org.uk

**Appendix 1: CAL Theory of Change:**

