

Become welcomes MacAlister's criticism of the state as failing to act as 'pushy parent' as too many young people come to the charity struggling to secure vital support

National charity for children in care and young care leavers, Become, has welcomed the first report from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care. It is encouraged to see the Review's central question about care: 'If we were creating care today that was good enough for all our children, what would it look like?' and the emphasis on loving homes and life relationships, which answers the charity's calls for a bold reimagining of the care system – one that provides young people with stability and helps to build loving lifelong relationships as the norm.

In particular the charity is pleased to see a strong focus on the experience of leaving care, which Become had been calling for when the Review was first announced.

Become supports the idea that if we were to design a completely new care system today that would be good enough for all children, the concept of 'leaving care' may not even exist. For young people in care, turning 18 signals an abrupt change in how they are treated, from being a 'looked after' child with very little freedom to being called, and disregarded as, a 'care leaver' overnight. The charity works alongside many young care leavers who describe the experience of leaving care like 'falling off a cliff edge' as the support and relationships they have relied upon quickly disappear.

During a meeting for young people with the Care Review team, which Become organised earlier this year, a care-experienced young person, Alice Downing, said:

"Leaving care was a desperate attempt to get away from social services. If they'd provided me with the love, stability and support I needed, I wouldn't have felt the need to leave."

Another key issue of the report highlighted by Become is MacAlister's criticism of the state for failing to act as the 'pushy parent' that children in care need, particularly when it comes to advocating for the young people that they have a duty to look after.

One young person who called Become's Care Advice Line earlier this year said:

"Genuinely in the 10-minute call [with Become] I had more help than in the last 18 months."

Responding to today's report, Victoria Langer, Interim CEO at Become, the national charity for children in care and young care leavers, said:

"From the calls to our Care Advice Line, we see first-hand how children in care are frequently let down by not having anyone pushing for the support they are entitled to. As a result, many young people are missing out on a range of support, from basic household goods to funding to go to university. We know that when charities like Become step in and advocate for these young people, these basic entitlements are often unlocked very quickly – so we fully support the notion of the state being a 'pushy parent' for young people in care and care leavers."

"The Review must now work alongside those with lived experience to rebuild a system without cliff edges and where young people can expect love, stability and safety. Anything less is not good enough."

ENDS

About Become

Become is the national charity for children in care and young care leavers in England.

www.becomecharity.org.uk

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