

# National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum

Annual Report – 21/22



Mark Riddell, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers speaking with YPBMF Sessional workers & Champions, YPBMF Celebration Event, Oct '22

“Lots of excellent Practice to take back to home to my Local Authority and nothing better than being able to quote Ofsted and DfE to get attention when you get back home!”

Leaving Care Manager, March '22 Manager's Event

# About the Forum

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## Our Vision

The aim of the forum is to stimulate and disseminate best practice on a national scale to improve outcomes for care experienced young people.

## Our Activities

The National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum (NLCBF) has a large and active membership of 129 Local Authority leaving care teams. At the heart of the forum is the Young Person's Benchmarking Forum (YPBMF), with the voice of care leavers shaping the direction of the forum and integral to the forum's events and work. Our activities are focussed around three areas:

- 1) **Membership** – We hold regular specialist peer learning and development events for Leaving Care managers and Practitioners and a number of role-specific online networks. The membership website offers access to regular policy and practice updates; peer enquiry forms and leaving care resources. Care experienced young people from members Local Authorities are invited to be part of the YPBMF which meets regularly to identify priorities and advocate for these.
- 1) **National Influence** - Influencing Leaving Care policy and practice through a close working relationships with government departments, HMPPS, Ofsted, and other leaving care organisations.
- 1) **Research** - Promoting and supporting the development of the latest research around leaving care.

## NLCBF and Catch 22

The Forum is run by the charity Catch 22 and funded through membership fees from Local Authorities. The Forum has a steering group of 9 Local Authority representatives who work closely with the staff team at Catch22 to shape the development of the Forum.



# Impact of NLCBF 2021-22

## Membership:

- 9 Local Authorities joined the Forum, bringing the membership to 129 or 85% of English Local Authorities and hosted an event for potential members
- Events delivered on themes of: Education, Employment & Training; Criminalisation of Care Leavers and Identity
- Offer of additional online events including: Student finance and John Short Policy workshops
- Returned to 'In Person' events but also launched hybrid access
- Local Offer Development Day
- Launch of online networks: Participation Network, EET Network in partnership with Care Leaver Covenant & Care X Apprentice Network.
- 20 'Discuss it with Darren' 1-1 sessions for manager/team leaders
- Significant improvements made to member's website
- Equality & Diversity plan developed and steps taken to ensure events are accessible and inclusive.
- Peer Learning group for 10 Local Authorities around increasing employment delivered.



# Impact of NLCBF 2021-22

(Continued)

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## National Influence

- Hosted Speakers at Events from Care Review, DfE, HMPPS, Ofsted, MHLUC, Care Leavers Covenant etc.
- Care Review: Responded to consultations throughout the process of the review, arranging for YPBMF & leaving care professionals to be involved.
- Ofsted: Delivered training for inspectors and active member of regular Ofsted Care Leavers consultative group
- Education Select Committee – Gave evidence re. Children’s Home Enquiry
- HMPPS – Worked closely with HMPPS on their care experienced strategy & on Board for Innovation Unit’s ‘Always Hope’ project
- LGBTQ+ Youth in Care Network – Working closely to share training resources
- Unregulated Accommodation: Responded to consultation
- Universal Credit APPG – Presented about needs of care experienced young people
- Youth Justice Board – Work around over criminalisation of care experienced young people
- Mental Health – Event delivered and follow up report with Drive Forward Foundation
- Public Health Reproductive & Sexual Health Strategy – Responded to consultation

## Research

- Shared latest research at events & via website including piloting themed videos of research findings from Coram Voice
- Consultation with care experienced young people around: Coming out of Covid, Employment & Apprenticeships, Identity, LGBTQ+
- Steering group member for Care Leavers, Covid-19 and Transitions from Care Study.

“The amount I have learnt from others in the network has allowed me to do a much better job! I have enjoyed the get togethers when it’s been a fantastic opportunity to listen to loads of creative ideas that have inspired me.”

Leaving Care Participation Worker,

# Young Person's Benchmarking Forum 21-22

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This year, the Young Person's Benchmarking Forum (YPBMF) has worked in creative ways to ensure that care leavers have been involved in planning our events, reports and outputs and importantly that care experienced voices and experiences are heard:

- **YPBMF does Eurovision** – well not quite but they did design and deliver an event that was attended by care experienced people and professionals in two venues and 10 other hubs across the country as they celebrated care leavers week 2021.
- **Hosting Virtual events** - YPBMF have run a host of virtual events using Hopin covering a range of topics including Identity, LGBTQ+.
- **Cross Ministerial Board for Care Leavers** – Liss Phillips, an a YPBMF Champion attended a Cross Ministerial Board for Care Leavers about health and wellbeing where she talked about support for Young Parents.



**YPBMF Sessional Workers & Champions at Managers Event – Nov 21**



# Young Person's Benchmarking Forum 21-22 (Continued..)

"I liked hearing different opinions and perspectives and gaining ideas that I can bring back to my LA." Care Experienced young person, Oct 21

- **Ofsted** – NLCBF Care Experienced sessional workers have worked with Ofsted and leaving care charities such as Become, Coram Voice, NYAS and Care Leavers Association to co-design an event for care experienced people to explore the role of an inspector. The event is to be delivered in June 2022.
- **Care Review** – A group of 10 care experienced individuals including champions and sessional workers worked with NLCBF & the Care Review Team to help shape a coproduction process called 'Bridging The Gap' over a 3 month period. This formed a significant part of the care review's engagement activities and identified ideas which formed part of the review's recommendations.
- **LGBTQ+ Key Messages**– YPBMF Champions have delivered key messages to NLCBF members (practitioners and managers) about the resources and practice improvements required to support care experienced individuals.
- **Criminalisation of Care Leavers** – YPBMF ran a series of workshops with the Youth Justice Board to develop key messages for NLCBF and the Youth Justice system about the over representation of care experienced individuals within the care system
- **YPBMF Chats** – Sessional workers and Champions plan and held podcast chats on subjects such as culture, religion and UASC which have been made available on the website.

"My favourite thing from the event was the feeling of comfort and safety." Care experienced young person, Jan 2022

# NLCBF Events 21-22

Event Attendance excluding Network meetings:

Date	Event	No. of attendees	No. Local authorities (where available)	% Rating event good /very good (where available)
April '21	Student Finance 27th April	102		
April '21	Potential members event	12	8	
May '21	YPBMF	74	30	
May '21	John Short Policy Workshop	63	41	71%
June '21	Practitioners' Event	139	61	100%
July '21	Managers' Event	55	45	100%
Sep '21	Practitioner Event	78	47	100%
Oct '21	Local Offer Day	32	22	
Oct '21	YPBMF Celebration Event	70	22	100%
Nov '21	Care Experience & mental Health	54		
Nov '21	Managers' Event	75	68	100%
Dec '21	PA Event	81	27	94%
Jan '22	YPBMF Day One	37	24	95%
Jan '22	YPBMF Day two	25	17	95%
Feb '22	John Short Policy Session	39	28	
Feb '22	Student Loans - professional event	30	19	
Feb '22	Student Loans - Young person's event	11		
Feb '22	Practitioner's Event:	87	49	90%
March '22	Manager's Event	118	73	100%

## Youtube and Soundcloud views

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, we have made video and audio recordings of sessions available to members.

During this year there were:

- 1,700 Views of Session videos on Youtube (836 previous year)
- 75 Plays on Soundcloud of audio content from event sessions (78 previous year)



# Partnerships, Challenges & Opportunities

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## Partnerships

- The Forum continues to work closely with the Department for Education, Ofsted, HMPPS, MHLUC and the Youth Justice Board.
- We work closely with Leaving Care Organisations including Become, Care Leavers Covenant, Coram Voice, Drive Forward, Rees Foundation, National House Project, My Bnk etc.
- The Forum are active members of the Children In Care and Care Leavers Alliance and LGTBQ+ Youth in Care Network
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation funded the Local Authority Peer Learning Group.

## Challenges

- Covid-19 – We were only able to resume delivery of ‘In person’ events in September & had to run our January YPBMF events online. This has required flexibility from the team & our members.
- Hybrid Event delivery – Learning how to deliver engaging hybrid events has been another steep learning curve.
- Financial sustainability – Running costs have increased & we are working with the NLCBF steering group on how to manage these.
- Capacity of Team – We receive a high number of worthwhile opportunities & are constantly having to identify our priorities.

## Opportunities

- Care Review – With the publishing of the Care Review, we have the opportunity to influence how this is implemented
- Hybrid Offer – Being able to offer quality hybrid and online events gives us options to engage with a wide audience very easily
- Increased profile - We have been raising the profile of the Forum with partner organisations and this will lead to further opportunities to work together
- YPBMF Impact Plan – We are starting to implement this plan to maximise the impact of the YPBMF & are about to recruit a YPBMF Representative to our steering group.

“Loved HOPIN (*online conference platform*) - what a great way to attend a meeting and actually feel like you are part of it and not just watching! Also loved Mentimetre - really good way to get feedback quickly (going to steal this).”

Leaving Care Practitioner, Feb '22

# Future Plans 2021-22

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## Membership

- Grow the forum through engaging with existing & potential LAs.
- Deliver high quality hybrid events on themes: Place & Purpose; Challenging Stigma & Accessibility; Interdependence – ensuring voices of young people are at the heart of our events.
- Offer additional workshops: Transitional Safeguarding, 2 Tier LAs, Pathway Planning, Student Finance & Local Offer development
- Develop and promote Participation & EET Networks
- Develop training offer, including PA Induction
- Sustainability of forum– work with steering group to develop a plan that ensures the ongoing impact of the forum’s work

## National Influence

- Care Review, Unregulated accommodation & Ofsted Standalone judgement – Engage with consultations and implementation.
- Cost of Living – Campaign about the impact on care experienced young people
- Continue to work closely with HMPPS
- Explore opportunities to influence mental health provision
- Raise the profile of the forum and views of young people through development of public facing website, social media & podcasting.

## Research

- Promote latest research to forum members, including through themed videos from Coram Voice ‘What Makes Life Good.’
- Collect and share evidence on key issues with decision makers.

## YPBMF

- Deliver high quality engaging events
- Develop Care X Apprentice Network
- Collect, collate and share young people’s views on key issues through reports, podcasts and videos.
- Recruit a YPBMF Steering Group Representative
- Deliver an event for decision makers with key messages from care experienced young people.



YPBMF Celebration Event, Oct 2021

“On behalf of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales may I share huge thanks to Jasmine, Victoria and Ralph for leading today's presentation- I am as ever in awe. Our thanks also to all at the NLCBF for supporting this project. We hope that the materials created during the project will make a difference to children across the UK.”

Nicola Kefford, Head of Stakeholder Engagement,  
Youth Justice Board, Sept 2021



Thank you to our YPBMF Champions,  
the NLCBF Steering group and  
Stakeholder Group who have given their  
time to support the forum this year.

## National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum

Email: [nlcbf@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:nlcbf@catch-22.org.uk)  
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