



The Importance of the 'Keep Caring up to 18 Campaign'?

Monday 13th December 2021

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[#keepcaringto18](https://twitter.com/hashtag/keepcaringto18)
[#BASWK18](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BASWK18)



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Carolynne Willow

Director,
Article 39



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#keepcaringto18
#BASWKC18

A teal-colored circle containing text.

Keep
caring
for
children
up to 18



#KeepCaringTo18

1. If a child is being looked after by the state, they should receive care – up to at least 18 years.
2. All children need care for their well-being and development, and this can be provided alongside respect for growing autonomy.
3. Children, young people and care leavers must be at the heart of policy development in this area. This includes those who are currently in secure settings and those who have had extremely difficult experiences in care.
4. All forms of accommodation for looked after children must be regulated and inspected.
5. We reject the creation of two tiers of children’s residential care. The regulation of supported accommodation for looked after children must include a guarantee of care. One obvious way forward is for these settings to follow the children’s homes regulations and standards, which already apply to children up to age 18 and beyond.
6. The government must provide sufficient financial resources for local authorities to meet their statutory duties to all looked after children.

Keep
caring
for
children
up to 18

31 March 2021

80,850 children in care
in England

18,900 aged 16 and 17

23%

Department for Education
(18 November 2021) *Children looked
after in England including adoptions*



Care Matters:
Transforming the Lives
of Children and Young
People in Care



2006

This Green Paper signals a turning point in the way young people in care are treated as they grow older. We want to abandon a system where young people are forced to leave care as early as age 16. We want an approach which continues to support them as long as they need it, which ceases to talk about ‘leaving care’ and instead ensures that young people move on in a gradual, phased and above all prepared way.



Care Matters:
Transforming the Lives
of Children and Young
People in Care



In 2005 28% of care leavers were aged 16,
and those in residential care were most
likely to leave at 16.

2006

Keep
caring
for
children
up to 18

Today...

Over one-third of 16
and 17 year-olds in
care live in non-care
settings



No Place at Home

Risks facing children and young people who go missing from out of area placements

The final report on the Inquiry into children and young people who go missing from out of area placements

September 2019

Care Matters:
Transforming the Lives
of Children and Young
People in Care



Unregulated

Children in care living in semi-independent accommodation

September 2020



House of Commons
Education Committee

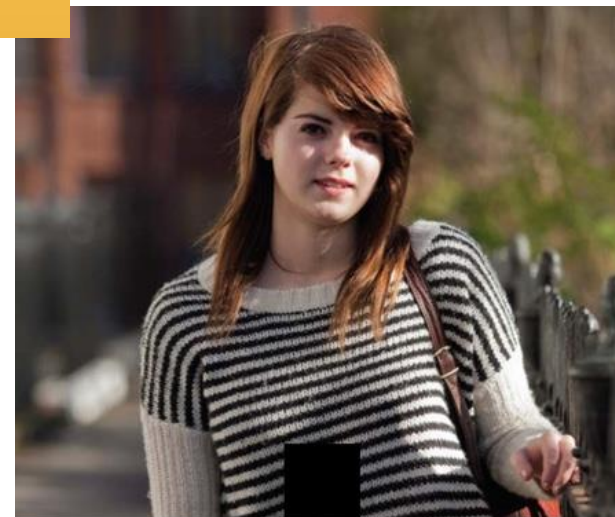
Into independence, not
out of care: 16 plus
care options:
Government Response
to the Committee's
Second Report of
Session 2014–15

Third Special Report of Session
2014–15

Annual Report 2020

Patterns in practice, key messages
and 2021 work programme

BRITAIN'S HIDDEN
CHILDREN'S
HOMES



On your own now:
the risks of unsuitable
accommodation for older teenagers

September 2015

“There are no circumstances where a child under 16 should be placed in accommodation that does not keep them safe.

That is unacceptable and I am taking urgent action to end this practice and drive up the quality of care provided to all vulnerable children.”

**Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary,
12 February 2020**



February 2020 consultation

- Legislating to ban the placement of children under the age of 16 in independent and semi-independent settings.
- New national standards for providers of independent and semi-independent provision.

On 31 March 2019...

- 6,190 children in care were living in independent and semi-independent accommodation.
- 98% of these children were aged 16 and 17.
- Over half (51%) of children in care living in semi-independent accommodation were from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
- Six times more unaccompanied children were living in semi-independent accommodation compared to other children in care (36% versus 6%).
- 39% of children started living in semi-independent accommodation within less than a week of becoming looked after.
- Nearly a third (29%) of children were the subject of a care order.
- 77% of semi-independent accommodation for children in care was run by private providers. Local authorities ran 10% of provision and charities/voluntary organisations 9%.

“The consultation has made clear to me that we must take action in this area. I cannot imagine a circumstance in which a child under the age of 16 should be placed in a setting that does not provide care, and is intended to support young people to live independently.”

**Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary,
19 February 2021**



STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2021 No. 161

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS, ENGLAND

**The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment)
Regulations 2021**

Made

18th February 2021

Laid before Parliament

19th February 2021

Coming into force

9th September 2021

May 2021 consultation

- New national standards for providers of independent and semi-independent provision.

Deliberately omit care so providers do not have to follow existing quality standards for children's homes

Care vs support

1. The quality and purpose of care standard
 2. The children's views, wishes and feelings standard
 3. The education standard
 4. The enjoyment and achievement standard
 5. The health and well-being standard
 6. The positive relationships standard
 7. The protection of children standard
 8. The leadership and management standard
 9. The care planning standard
1. Leadership and management standard
 2. The protection standard
 3. The accommodation standard
 4. The support standard



8-9 February 2022

Grounds of judicial review

1. The 2021 Regulations irrationally discriminate between children aged 15 and under and those aged 16 and 17.
2. The 2021 Regulations fail to have regard to specified equality needs. They discriminate against 16- and 17-year-olds on the basis of their age, and they disproportionately impact upon boys and children from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
3. The government's 2020 consultation was unfair.

Act now to
call on the
government
to guarantee
care up to
age 18

Keep
caring
for
children
up to 18



Help us get 10,000 signatures

8,651

8,651 people have added their name. Will you help us get 1,349 more?

Stand up for children in care

It takes just 30 seconds.

First name *

Last name *

Email address *

Postcode

Are you happy for the #KeepCaringTo18 campaign to add you to their supporter list (this is held by Article 39 children's rights charity) and to send you email updates?

Yes, add me to the campaign supporter list

We'd love to keep in touch about Together Trust's work and how you can make a difference.

Yes, keep in touch by email
 No

Take action now!



You're in control. Our privacy policy explains how we look after your details, [read it here](#).



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Rebekah Pierre

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BASW England

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Revisiting Diary Entries from Care: An Exposition of the Challenges of Unregulated Placement Settings

#Keepcaringto18

Rebekah Pierre



Context

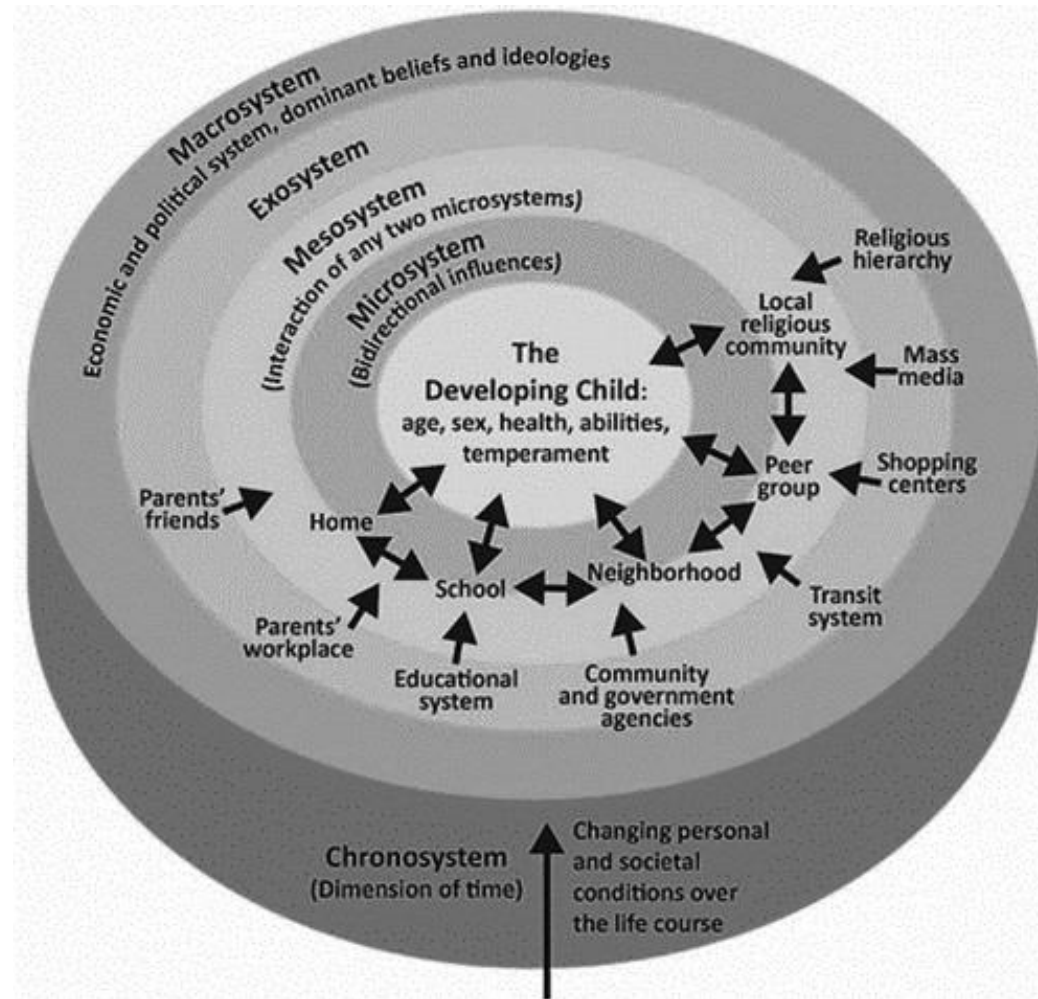
- I entered care at 16 after experiencing childhood domestic abuse – something which happened for as long as I can remember.
- In this presentation, I will examine diary entries I wrote between 2009-2011 when I was in care (a semi-independent provision for 16-25 year olds).
- . I will look at micro, meso and macro challenges I faced back then as a child in care. My full journal article on this, featuring more extracts, [can be found here](#).



Locating the child I was through the lens of intersectionality



Ecological systems theory



Micro level

Key themes: deteriorating mental health, suicidal ideation, trauma, and self-harming behaviours, lack of interpersonal connections

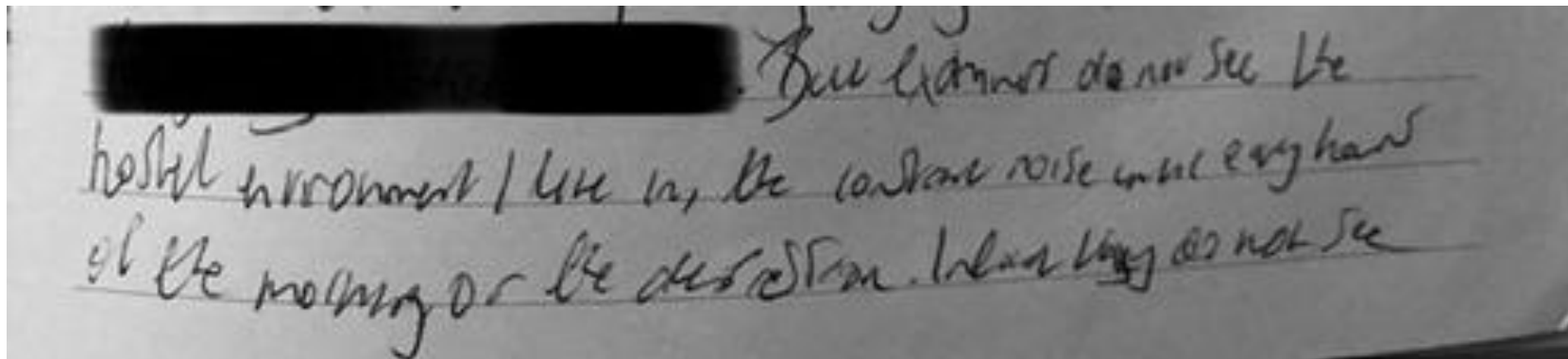
On my journey back here, my mind was gripped with [REDACTED]. All I could do to numb the pain was to imagine the sharp and brutal slit of the knife. The blood that would soon be gushing from my cuts.

Not going to underexaggerate a thing, writing is supposed to help me be true to myself - Presuming no one has gotten their hands on this - in which case please hit this down immediately 😊!

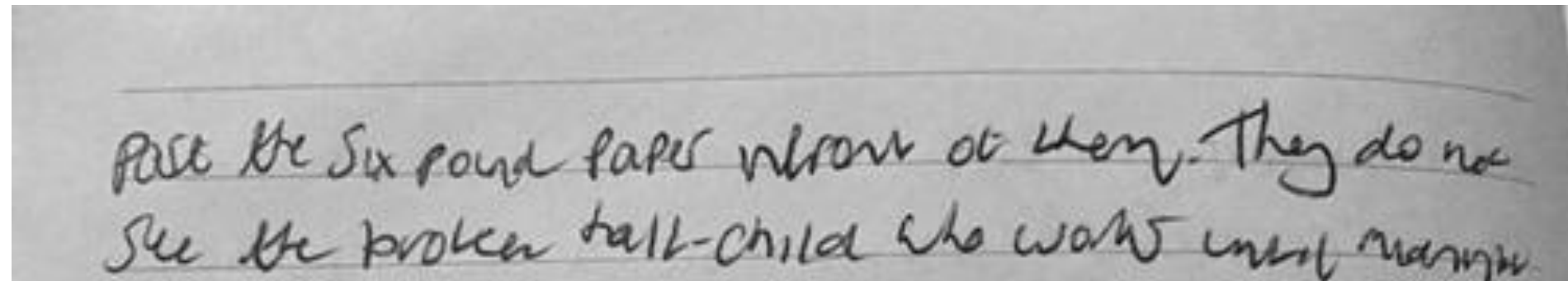
Suicidal thoughts have returned again. I feel worthless. Finding it difficult to withdraw from self harm

Meso level

Key themes: housing, poverty, lack of safety, and lack of support.



[Redacted] but cannot do see the
hostile environment / live in the constant noise and every hour
of the morning or the afternoon. In fact they do not see



Pass the six pound paper without it when they do not
see the broken half-child who works until morning

Macro level

Key themes: systemic sexism, regional inequality, physical safety, and sexual assault.

Living at [REDACTED] is extremely difficult day in days out.
Coming here to a silent flat with no electricity. Being
too frightened to leave the room at times, or being

intimidated by the angry mob outside the entrance,
beating, laughing. The loneliness is unbearable,
if I needed help I could show no one. I have

Conclusion

- My lived experience of unregulated accommodation, as demonstrated above through contemporary diary extracts, evidences the unique disadvantages which can be experienced by young people who reside in them.
- At a meso level, a lack of inter-personal interaction can lead to sustained periods of isolation, poor mental health, suicidal ideation, trauma and self-harm.
- At the meso level, the immediate and local environment of such settings can cause young people to experience inadequate housing, poverty, and a lack of consistent support from staff.
- At the macro level, the impact of pre-existing social inequalities (such as those related to gender or region) are exacerbated, and can lead to increased risk of poor social mobility, criminal and child sexual exploitation.
- 16-and-17-year olds exist in a lottery system whereby those placed in regulated settings are able to access the support they are entitled to under domestic law, international human rights legislation and social work codes of ethics, whilst those in unregulated placements are not.
- I maintain that the issues discussed in this paper are not historic or confined to my own experience. Whilst two-tiers exist, 16–17-year-olds in unregulated placements will continue to be deprived of the nurture and stability to be expected in regulated settings with significant consequences on their long-term emotional, physical and socio-economic wellbeing.



Mohamed Mohamed

Expert by care experience

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How to Engage with the Keep Caring to 18 Campaign

[Keep Caring to 18 Campaign](#)

[Article 39](#)

[Article 39/Together Trust Petition](#)

[The independent review of children's social care website](#)

[BASW England's 10 priorities for the Review](#)

[BASW England's response to Case for Change](#)

[Social Work 2020-21 special ed](#)

[Care Review Watch Alliance](#)

[Celebrating 30 Years of Partnership with the Children Act 1989](#)

- **IRCSC Call for ideas**
- **250 words by 5pm on 15th Dec**
- **<https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/call-for-ideas/>**