



# DRIVE FORWARD AMBASSADORS

POLICY FORUM | SHARED VISION

## MISSION STATEMENT

*To address the disconnect and widening gap between policy makers and care experienced people.*

Our Policy Forum Ambassadors have come together to create a document detailing the group's vision for improved care across the UK. The ambassadors have selected the themes of Accountability, Stability, Opportunity & Aspiration, Love and Community to convey their agenda for improving the lives of care experienced people.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

*'Staff should have higher aspirations for looked after children and support them to be independent in care and after care.'*

Increased and more effective accountability can be achieved with:

- Specific training for local authorities on their role and responsibilities as corporate parents, and more consistency across the board. Greater sense of consequence for workers dealing with care leavers to ensure they fulfil their duties, as well as an awareness of these duties.
- Greater transparency for individuals in the care system.
- All members of society taking a proactive approach in improving experiences, akin to Scotland's approach to the corporate parent.
- Improved recognition that you do not stop being a care leaver after 25, with retroactive action for any systematic failures.

*'Foster carers, social workers and staff that have a direct influence on the outcome for care leavers should be held accountable for their outcomes.'*



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## STABILITY

*'I am concerned for those that fall through the gaps or have done, I feel that the government needs to do a regular check after the age of 18 to make sure care leavers are okay.'*

More stable environments can be achieved for care leavers with:

- ✓ Increased access to suitable, affordable and accessible homes, and a dropping of the 'intentionally homeless' designation.
- ✓ Stable placements and school environments where bespoke support is offered to help ensure young people stay on the right track.
- ✓ An intersectional and early interventionist approach.
- ✓ Improved access to mentoring and consistent one-to-one support.
- ✓ Discussion of mental health at an earlier age with access to appropriate support.

*'There needs to be better outreach support, assessing the young person's capability to think and act responsibly with bills and wellbeing.'*

## OPPORTUNITY AND ASPIRATION

*'The local authority needs to put the young care leaver at the forefront of decisions.'*

The opportunities and aspirations of care leavers can be improved by:

- ✓ A more proactive approach from Local Authorities, making positive things happen rather than just preventing negative outcomes.
- ✓ Making those in care more aware of opportunities and services available to them.
- ✓ Care leavers themselves being involved in the making of these opportunities, acting as ambassadors and championing best practice.
- ✓ A greater access to bursaries and scholarships for education and employment.

*'There needs to be proportionate financial and human resources to support those who are achieving, rather than disproportionately focusing on those who are not.'*



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## LOVE

*'For those in care to be treated not as a guest, but as a member of the family.'*

More love will be felt in the care system with:

- ✓ An emphasis on compassion and an individualist approach from professionals.
- ✓ Public services all being responsible for those in care and care leavers.
- ✓ More regulation of foster parents and greater training opportunities for them.
- ✓ Care workers focusing on making bespoke opportunities for their young people.
- ✓ More innovation and modernisation in keeping separated siblings connected.
- ✓ A closer focus on the 'whys' of someone acting out, rather than just punitive measures.

*'To do the job out of care rather than a job.'*

## COMMUNITY

*'To make more of a care experienced friendly society.'*

A stronger sense of community can be achieved with:

- ✓ The active encouragement of appropriately qualified care experienced people working in and advising on services in the care system.
- ✓ A network of care leavers to help upskill those in care.
- ✓ More opportunities for care leavers to come together and connect.
- ✓ A greater awareness from society of care related issues.

*'We all go through various trauma before care and whilst in care, that needs to be addressed by friendly, caring and supportive services.'*



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