



Media Release

25th June 2018

£225,000 funding to champion care experienced young people in Glasgow

Glasgow has pledged to listen to and involve their care experienced young people in decisions that affect their lives, thanks to a funding boost of £225,000 from the Life Changes Trust. Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership will use the money to fully involve young people in their Champions Board.

Champions Boards provide a unique platform for young people to draw on their own experiences to act as expert advisors, talking directly with staff and elected members from local authorities, health boards and other public agencies. In this way they can highlight the challenges that being in care can bring and how these challenges can be faced and overcome with the right support.

In 2015, Scottish charity The Life Changes Trust invested an initial £2 million in 10 influential Champions Boards across Scotland and have now pledged a further £2.5 million to double this number over the next year.

Glasgow initially set up a Champions Board in 2007, and it has been developing since then. This funding will be used to support the Board to include care experienced young people in all aspects of their work, putting them at the heart of its efforts to improve their future prospects. Young people will have the opportunity to improve their talents and skills, become more confident and have much more say in the development and delivery of services that affect their lives.

Councillor Mhairi Hunter, Chair of Glasgow City Health & Social Care Partnership, said: "Glasgow has been involving care experienced young people in decisions which affect their lives for more than a decade and we're delighted to be able to use this money from the Life Changes Trust to build on that firm foundation. The money is being used to fund a development worker who is working with our Young Champs to ensure their opinions and experiences influence decision-making. Our Young Champs meet weekly and always ensure that their voices are heard loud and clear!"

Glasgow's looked after children represent approximately 22% of all looked after children in Scotland, and while many care leavers do well despite the challenges they face, as a group, they can experience poorer outcomes such as:

- much higher rates of early death, including higher rates of suicide
- worse mental health and physical well-being
- poorer access to continuing education or training
- greater unemployment and homelessness

By strengthening its Champions Board, Glasgow aims to address this so that when young people leave care, they have positive life chances and outcomes just like other young people. Priority areas for improvement already identified by care experienced young people themselves include educational attainment and achievement, accommodation, emotional and mental health and increased engagement between young people and corporate parents.

Heather Coady, Director of the Trust's Care Experienced Young People Programme said, "We believe that better outcomes for care experienced young people are more likely to be secured if children and young people are listened to, included and involved in the planning of their support and care. Champions Boards genuinely work in partnership with young people to do this. We are pleased to be able to fund Glasgow to be part of a growing network of Champions Boards in Scotland, showing care experienced young people that they are supported, listened to and respected, the impact of which can be transformational"

The Life Changes Trust was set up with a Big Lottery Fund endowment of £50 million to improve the lives of two key groups in Scotland: people affected by dementia and care experienced young people.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Life Changes Trust was established by the Big Lottery in April 2013 with a ten year endowment of £50 million to support transformational improvements in the quality of life, well-being, empowerment and inclusion of people affected by dementia and young people with experience of being in care.

As of 31 July 2016, there were 15,317 looked after children and young people in Scotland.

There are several types of placements that looked after children or young people could be in, including being at home (subject to a Supervision Requirement), or away from home - in foster care, in residential care or in a kinship placement, where they are placed with friends or relatives.

We are committed to working with care experienced young people, care leavers, practitioners and other professionals in Scotland so that when young people leave care, they have positive life chances and outcomes just like other young people.

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