

VOYPIC memories by Liz Osborne

Having worked in residential care for seven years I knew something had to change. My motivation for getting behind this movement was to give young people in care a voice in everything involved with their lives.

It was a very exciting time, working closely with many enthusiastic, hopeful young people to get to the heart of what mattered to them. Commitment to get it right also came with responsibilities. These young people trusted us, looked to us to support them and not let them down.

We were not only listening to what they had to say, we were determined to follow through on sharing their experiences, ensuring their voices represented many more children and young people not able to speak for themselves, many more who would be coming after them. This was about changing systems and the way people thought about young people and the way people looked at residential care experiences.

What was special for me and stays with me to this day is that we didn't know where it would lead! We just started an epic, life changing journey and kept moving forward, inch by inch and sometimes mile by mile. This experiential learning approach to working with people has been my modus operandi ever since. It's built on mutual trust and faith in who you are working with. VOYPIC's success today is built on this foundation where twenty one years ago everyone on the team was committed to changing things for the better.

That first meeting in Whitefield, the dining room, those pillars blocking out some of the eager faces, questions on their faces, why are we here? what can we achieve? Lots of bustle and noise, some chaos thrown in, flip chart pages covering the walls, laughter, tears, distrust and trust and mostly loads and loads of determination all fired up by young people's determination to be heard. We knew it was only the beginning – but hey it was **the** beginning.....!!