

PRESS RELEASE



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#LookActCare for Children and Young People on VOYPIC's Care Day

You might think you know the full story about children in care, but VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care) wants you to LOOK, ACT, CARE again on Care Day, Friday 17 February. Starting with just one day, everyone is urged to take a fresh look and act to change the story for children and young people in care.

The Care Day campaign started in 2016 and after only one year has become a red letter day on the calendar of children in care, care leavers and the people who support and care for them. As well as here in Northern Ireland, the campaign is running in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

A highlight of this year's campaign is The Care Factor – an evening with Rockaoke in QUB's Whitla Hall. Children, young people, foster carers and families will join VOYPIC to sing and dance to celebrate children and young people in care.

There are almost 3,000 children in care in Northern Ireland and each one of them has their own story. That story may explain why they came into care as well as telling the tale of their life with their carers, their social worker, their family and friends. Some stories may be hard hitting and reflect real challenges but there are also stories of resilience, hope and success. Young people do need privacy about their lives, but they also want to share their positive stories and images of care. On Care Day, we are calling on everyone to LOOK, ACT, CARE to challenge negative perceptions and replace them with positive messages and stories.

Vivian McConvey, CEO of VOYPIC explained the campaign

“We had the first ever Care Day last year and I'm delighted to say that this year is shaping up to be even bigger and better. Northern Ireland has again risen to the challenge to LOOK, ACT, CARE with over 60 events on this theme taking place during the campaign. We're asking people to think about care, look at it in a different way and take action by making a pledge for care and the children who live in it.

From dawn to dusk, there's an activity or event going on where people will be talking about care. Everything from fundraisers to football matches, cake sales to conferences will feature on Care Day to change the story for children and young people in care. Our Five Nations, One Voice friends and colleagues in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland will all be marking the day in their own way.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. VOYPIC has joined forces with like-minded organisations in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland to set up *Five Nations, One Voice* (#5N1V). All five will celebrate #CareDay in their own regions. There is a dedicated Facebook page which lists all the activities and events <https://www.facebook.com/5N1VCareDay/>
2. This year there's a fundraising element to the #CareDay campaign with Text to Donate CDAY17. Text your donation of £1, £2, £5 or £10 to 70070. Your text for example: CDAY17£10 to 70070.
3. **Voice of Young People in Care** (VOYPIC) is an independent, Northern Ireland charity that aims to improve the life chances of children in care and care leavers.
4. **Numbers** of children and young people in care in Northern Ireland by placement type at 31 March 2016
 - 2,890 children in care
 - 77% in foster care
 - 13.5% placed 'at home with parents'
 - 5.8% in children's homes or residential care

[Source: Delegated Statutory Functions Annual Corporate Parenting Statistical Report, 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016]