

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **18, 21, 24...the best time to leave care?**

Leading children's charity VOYPIC is taking on the hot topic of supporting young people leaving care and asking what age is the best time to leave care? This year's Care Question Time will be on Saturday in W5 at the Odyssey, Belfast.

VOYPIC is delighted to have Marie-Louise Connolly, BBC Northern Ireland's Health Correspondent, as MC for what promises to be a lively panel discussion. Special guests, Who Cares? Scotland, will share their experiences of securing extended support for care leavers under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Duncan Dunlop, CEO, Who Cares? Scotland said

*"We are delighted to join our colleagues in VOYPIC to help change the story for children in care. We've made great progress for care leavers in Scotland and want to share our experiences of our successful campaign to extend support for all care leavers up to the age of 25."*



Vivian McConvey, CEO, VOYPIC welcomed this year's Care Question Time panel members saying

*"I believe that young people should be part of the conversations about their needs and how best to meet them when they are leaving care. This event will build on conversations we've started with our local policy makers and MLAs."*

This is a chance for young people in care and care leavers from across Northern Ireland to discuss and debate some of the key issues and concerns facing young people leaving care today; from education and housing to emotional and financial support.

- Ends -

## NOTES TO THE EDITOR

1. This year's panel of experts include Steven Agnew, MLA and Leader of the Green Party; Duncan Dunlop, CEO, Who Cares? Scotland; Charlotte May, VOYPIC Young Rep; Eilis McDaniel, DHSSPSNI; Stephen McLaughlin, WHSCT; David Morgan, Empowering Young People in Care and Darren Smith, VOYPIC Young Rep.
2. VOYPIC is a charity working across Northern Ireland promoting the rights and improving the lives of children and young people cared for away from home. They may be living at home in care; with foster or kinship carers; in children's homes; in secure settings; or in supported accommodation. They may be preparing to leave care or be care leavers.

3. At 30 September 2013, there were 2892 looked after children in Northern Ireland:-

• In foster care	2172 (75%)
• Placed at home with parents	343 (12%)
• Residential care (children's homes)	213 (7%)
• Other care (hospital, secure, intensive support)	164 (6%)

(Delegated Statutory Functions, including Corporate Parenting Report, Statistical Report 30 September 2013, Health & Social Care Board)