

PRESS RELEASE



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GET SOCIAL, GET VOCAL, GET TOGETHER – GET INVOLVED IN #CAREDAY18

VOYPIC (Voice of Young People in Care) wants you to be part of Care Day on Friday 16 February. Care Day is the world's biggest opportunity to recognise and celebrate the rights of children and young people with care experience. You can do anything you like on #CareDay18 so long as it promotes their rights. Whether it's social or vocal, you can do something to celebrate the rights of children in care.

This is our third Care Day and it's already a red letter day on the calendar of children in care, care leavers and the people who support and care for them. But the campaign is not limited to Northern Ireland, they're marking it in England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland as well.

A highlight this year in Northern Ireland is our finale - Night at the Museum – an evening of fun, food and festivity at the Ulster Transport Museum, Cultra. Children, young people, foster carers and families will join VOYPIC to party alongside social workers and professionals all of whom are part of the care family.

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 foster 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 challenge the negative and celebrate the positive messages and stories instead.

Vivian McConvey, CEO of VOYPIC explained the campaign

"We only started Care Day two years ago and I'm delighted with the growing support for it. 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.

During #CareDay18 somewhere in Northern Ireland people will be talking and taking action about care. Everything from achievement awards to awareness raising activities will feature 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 #CareDay18 in their own regions.
2. **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.
3. **Numbers** of children and young people in care in Northern Ireland by placement type at 31 March 2017
 - 2,983 children in care
 - 78% in foster care
 - 12.2% placed 'at home with parents'
 - 5.5% in children's homes or residential care

[Source: Delegated Statutory Functions Annual Corporate Parenting Statistical Report, 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017]