



VOYPIC

VOICE OF
YOUNG PEOPLE
IN CARE

Strategic Plan 2021-2026



VOYPIC is the charity for children and young people with a lived experience of care in Northern Ireland.

VOYPIC was created in 1993 by a group of young people in care and professionals. Our job is to promote the rights and voice of children in care and care leavers.

WE LISTEN, WE LEARN, TOGETHER WE CREATE CHANGE

Our Mission

Working together with children and young adults for a better care experience and life after care.

Our Vision

Every child in care in Northern Ireland feels safe, valued and loved. Every young person leaving care does so with dignity and respect, and thrives into adulthood.

We want to ensure that all children and young people living in care throughout Northern Ireland are given the best care and protection, they feel safe, their rights are respected, and their views and experiences matter.

We want young people leaving care to have robust support, quality housing and the resources and opportunities to follow their ambitions and live happy and fulfilling lives.

Our Values

Relationship Based

We are driven by the needs and aspirations of children and young people. We listen, learn, and work in partnership with them to ensure their voice is heard. We are dedicated to empowering young people so that they reach their potential in whatever they choose to do.

Commitment

We are committed, passionate and enthusiastic champions for change. We are persistent and determined in promoting the voice and defending the rights of children and young people in and leaving care.

Social Justice

We work to a strong moral code rooted in the ideals of social justice. We challenge the oppression and discrimination faced by children and young people in care and seek to reduce the stigma they face in their daily lives.

Respect for Rights

We respect the rights of children and young people and are prepared to challenge others to do the same.

Solution Focused

We are positive about the future. We are proud of what we do and what we have achieved. We face problems with a solution-oriented mentality and we encourage our staff, stakeholders and young people themselves to be problem solvers.



Our Work

Advocacy and Awareness-raising

We raise awareness of the rights of children and young people, their views and experiences living in and leaving care, and their priorities for change.

Making Connections and Capacity Building

We connect young people with a lived experience of care with their peers. We host regular groups, participation forums and activities that build self-confidence, personal, social and life skills, whilst making new connections and friends.

Independent Advocacy and Advice Service

We support young people to exercise their rights by providing assistance to: voice concerns, access information, resolve issues or to identify available support options.

Youth Participation and Coproduction

We help children and young people to find their voice and set their own agenda for change! We create a culture of listening that enables children and young people to influence the world around them. Our programmes equip and prepare young people to take part in co-production activities.

Influencing Change through Policy Advocacy

We use our specialist knowledge and insight into the views and experiences of children, young people, we work in partnership with them to influence the development of legislation, policy and practice.



Empowering Children and Young People

- Young people have strong peer support and networks to share their views, experiences, and agree their priorities
- Young people develop personal, social, and life skills to deal with the challenges they face
- Children and young people have the knowledge, skills and confidence to exercise and enjoy their rights
- Young people are partners in the plans and decisions made about their lives

What young people have said

Young people often feel isolated, and this affects their emotional health and well-being, their self-esteem, and their confidence. Many young people are not aware of their rights and how they can take part in decisions affecting their daily life in care. Too many young adults are leaving care unprepared and without the skills and knowledge for a successful transition into adulthood and independence.

What VOYPIC will do

- We will create safe spaces and opportunities for children and young people to come together to have fun, share experiences, learn new skills, and create their own agenda for change
- We will develop our Information, Advice and Advocacy Service and reach more young people and the adults who support them
- We will pilot new services to meet the practical and emotional support needs of children and young people



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Innovating Practice Through Co-Production

- Young people have the confidence, skills, and opportunity to engage in co-production activity
- Our creative co-production partnerships transform practice
- Young people's voice is at the heart of decision making
- Adults supporting children in care and care leavers know their rights, can articulate their views and are clear on their priorities

What young people have said

Young people think that more adults need a better understanding of what it is like to grow up in care. Young people are the experts in their lives in care and they want to be involved in activities and plans to make care better. To be involved they need to have the skills, resources and opportunities to engage with professionals and decision makers as equal partners.

What VOYPIC will do

- We will develop our capacity building and participation programmes
- We will seek out opportunities to involve young people in co-production activities, so that they are at the heart of developing new services and practice
- We will develop our peer led training and consultancy work to educate and support adults caring for children in care and young people leaving care about their experiences and their agenda for change
- We will develop our youth leadership strategy and ensure that more people with a lived experience of care are represented across our staff and leadership teams, volunteers, and Board



Creating Change

- Young people are positive influencers for change
- Our collaborations in engagement and research informs strategy and policy development for children and young people in care
- Children and young people's experience of care in NI is improved through changes to policy and practice
- People and organisations are held to account, ensuring children and young people are heard and their rights upheld.

What young people have said

Young people value the opportunity to speak directly to those who are the key decision or policy makers. They want to be at the heart of positive changes in the care of children and young people of Northern Ireland. They want to do this by working with practitioners, social work managers, government officials and politicians, in Northern Ireland and beyond.

What VOYPIC will do

- We will seek out opportunities to collaborate in research to improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers
- We will continue to develop our membership scheme and reach more people with a lived experience of care
- We will increase opportunities for young people to shape and participate in our policy advocacy and influencing work and talk directly to decision makers
- We will work in partnership with young people to campaign for change on the issues important to them



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Growth and Stability

- VOYPIC generates income to increase financial independence, sustainability, and to pilot new initiatives with children and young people
- The talents and passion of our staff and volunteers are nurtured; they have the tools and resources needed to engage and support young people
- VOYPIC maximises its use of technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- VOYPIC has an effective organisational design with good governance at all levels

What VOYPIC will do

- We will increase VOYPIC's capacity, resilience and long term sustainability. To achieve our strategic objectives it is vital that the organisation has the appropriate financial and human resources.
- We will increase opportunities to involve volunteers from all walks of life in our work.
- We will review and develop our use of technology to improve data collection, impact measurement, and reporting.
- We will review our organisational design to ensure it is fit for purpose





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