



THE GRAPEVINE

Hundreds of Young People Missing from Care

CLA research has found that nearly 400 children and young people have gone missing from local authority care and have not been traced.

In early 2008, the CLA surveyed 172 local authorities, using the Freedom of Information Act, to find out how many young people had gone missing from their care since the year 2000 and had not been traced since. On the 10th December 2008, we published our results. The research found that almost 400 children and young people are missing, without trace.

Victoria Hull, the CLA's National Development Worker, was quoted on the [BBC News](#) website, [The Guardian](#) website, [Community Care](#) website and in [The Independent](#) newspaper and [Children & Young People Now](#) magazine as well as several local newspapers. She said:

It is worrying that hundreds of the UK's most vulnerable young people seem to be disappearing into thin air. That some local authorities could not answer our questions because they did not keep track of the data is shocking. If those local authorities can not even keep track of where their vulnerable young people are, how can they be relied upon to ensure their safety?

Victoria was also interviewed for BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Radio Newcastle, BBC Radio Swindon and Mercury Radio.

Will McMahon, CLA Chair said: *The widespread media reaction to the research has encouraged the CLA to pursue this matter. We feel a responsibility to stick up for all children in care but in particular those who go missing without trace.*

Many local authorities reported that they could account for all of the young people in their care. However, 41 (24%) of the 172 surveyed reported that they had at least one young person missing and had no idea of their whereabouts. Some local authorities reported much higher figures. The highest reported figure was 110 missing young people.

Whilst we are pleased that the majority of local authorities can account for all their young people, it is very worrying that hundreds of some of the UK's most vulnerable children and young people seem to have simply disappeared. Another worrying finding from the survey was that 6 local authorities do not keep a central record of the young people missing from their care and whether or not they have been traced.

The figures reveal that there is a particular problem in the South East of England, where the reported figures tend to be higher. Also, around one quarter of local authorities reported that all of the young people missing were unaccompanied asylum seekers. This raises important questions about the possibility of children and young people being brought into the UK from overseas for trafficking purposes. However, this is a nation-wide problem, which involves both UK-born and unaccompanied asylum seeking and should be treated as such.

The Care Leavers' Association would like to see local authorities responding to a child going missing from their care as any parent would be expected to react to a child going missing from home. Everything should be done to ensure that the young person is traced and is in safety. The Care Leavers' Association is now considering what further work we might do on this issue.

If you have comments about this subject, or would like to share your experiences, please contact us at grapevine@careleavers.com.

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GET IN TOUCH!

If you would like to comment on anything you have read in *The Grapevine*, or if you would like to submit a story or article yourself, then contact us:

By Post: Care Leavers' Association, Suite F113, 23 New Mount Street, Manchester, M4 4DE

By Email: grapevine@careleavers.com

General enquiries: 0161 953 4046 or email, info@careleavers.com



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Recent Meetings

Annual General Meeting November 2008

On Saturday 1st November we held the CLA's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is a chance for CLA members to get involved in planning the activities for the year ahead and to vote for the new Executive Committee.

This year, the meeting was held at Manchester Town Hall. Several members of the Jersey Care Leavers Association (JCLA) came all the way from Jersey to attend the meeting. It was great to have them there and find out more about all the campaigning work they have been doing since the beginning of this year.

We also had a number of CLA members come along. Victoria, Jim and Will gave an overview of the things the CLA had done since the last AGM, including, work with the JCLA, the access to records campaign, the launch of the



quality mark and the fundraising cycle challenge.

The annual report and accounts were presented for approval, then we had a general chat about some of the activities the CLA has planned for 2009. Afterwards, we all headed to a nearby pub for a drink and a chat.

Next get together: February 7th 2009, London

NEWS & UPDATES

Media Round-Up

(To read any story on full, click on its title)

10/12/2008 [Hundreds of young people missing from care](#). The Guardian website reports the CLA findings that many children and young people are missing from care, without trace, across the UK.

10/12/2008 [Hundreds of children missing from care](#). Robert Verkaik reports of the results of the CLA's research in *The Independent* newspaper,

13/11/2008 [Victims renew call for inquiry](#). The *Jersey Evening Post* reports the JCLA's renewed call for an independent inquiry.

12/11/2008 [Jersey chief officer suspended](#). The BBC News website reports on events in Jersey and the JCLA response.

7/11/2008 [Fostering and smoking - compatible?](#) John Gaunt writes in *The Sun* about Redbridge council's decision to ban smokers from fostering.

Want to get more involved?

Why not join as a member?

[Click here](#)

Work for a local authority or voluntary agency?

If your agency joins as a group supporter you could give our newsletter out to all the care leavers you are in contact with.

New Executive Committee for 2009

At the Annual General Meeting on 1st November, CLA members elected a new Executive Committee. The Exec for 2009 is:

Will McMahon (Chair), Jim Goddard (Secretary), Zachari Duncalf (Treasurer), Michael Shelton (Historic Abuse Representative), Christopher Simpson, Honor Donnelly Stephen Norman, David Wood (PR and Marketing Representative)

We would like to say a big thank you to the members of our Executive Committee who stood down at the end of 2008: Mary Clear and Michelle Jobson. Both Mary and Michelle continue to be members of the CLA. Thanks to them for all their hard work!

CareleaversReunited is growing all the time. We currently have **3757 users** and **1338 homes**.

Haven't logged on recently? Do so now!

www.careleaversreunited.org

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

7th Feb 2009, Keep In Touch bowling (London)

9th May 2009, Keep In Touch (Manchester)

5th Sep 2009, Keep In Touch (London)

7th Nov 2009, AGM (Manchester)

For more information, contact us:

0161 953 4046 info@careleavers.org

NDW Comment

Victoria Hull, the CLA's National Development Worker gives us a quick run-down of what she's been up to in the last month

Hi everyone,

What a busy six weeks this has been!

At the start of November we held the Annual General Meeting, which you can read more about on page 1, and elected the new Executive Committee.

We launched the CLEARmark (see page 5) on 31st October, so during the first week of November I began to promote this to a pilot selection of local authorities. Hopefully it will encourage access to records officers to sign up and promote best practice in this area.

In early November, several members of the Executive Committee and I met with Eireann, Chair of the JCLA, and some of the Friends of JCLA in London, to think about action points for the Jersey Care Leavers Association. They have a busy year ahead of them and we are thinking about how we can continue to support them with their campaigns. Supporting the JCLA will continue to be one of the main activities for 2009.

On 26th November, Jim, Will and I met with the Social Exclusion Task Force. The government is focusing on care leavers as part of PSA 16 on socially excluded adults. We met with them to see how we could input into the PSA and how we could include as much feedback from care leavers as possible into it.

During the last couple of weeks, I have been finalising our research on the number of children missing from local authority care (see the front page). On 10th December I launched our results with a press

release to the national and local media. I'm pleased to say that the issue received a lot of attention and hopefully this has highlighted this worrying issue for the public.

We've also been working on the redevelopment of the websites. Watch out for our new-look website coming in the Spring!

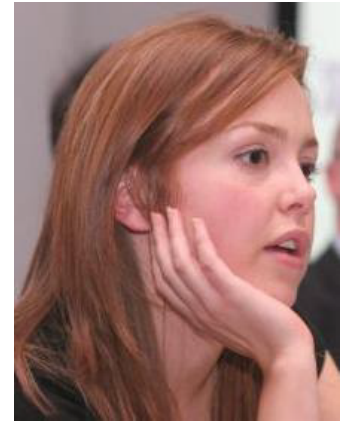
In the office, we have been busy with fundraising, preparing for the Executive Committee strategy weekend, which we held on 6th/7th December and finishing off the end of year accounts. Vicky Halliwell has been really busy training on Quickbooks accounting software and getting the accounts up to scratch. She also put together a newsletter for the Jersey Care Leavers' Association, which has gone out to all Friends of Jersey Care Leavers. The JCLA will also be distributing it across the island.

The new year promises to be just as busy for the CLA. On behalf of myself and everyone at CLA I'd like to thank you for your continuing support.

Best wishes for the festive season and a happy and healthy new year!

Victoria Hull, National Development Worker

Remember, if you have stories or articles for *The Grapevine*, send them to grapevine@careleavers.com



Keep In Touch 2009

This year, we are launching a series of 'Keep In Touch' events so that care leavers can keep in touch with each other and with us.

The first 'keep in touch' will be in London on 7th February, from 2pm onwards. We will be going bowling (venue to be confirmed).

We would love for as many care leavers to come along as possible, so please get in touch if you want to come.

The first game will be paid for by the CLA. However, if you just want to come along and chat and watch, that's fine too!

We will need to book, so if you are going to come, and bowl, please let us know by 30th January. Either give us a call (0161 953 4046), or email info@careleavers.org.

The other 'keep in touch' events will be: 9th May 2009 (Manchester) and 5th September (London). If you have any ideas for activities, just let us know!

Trying To Find...

Memories from Hornchurch.

4 of my aunts were in Hornchurch as children. I noticed that a woman called Patricia has written a story about Hornchurch and mentioned two of my aunts by name. I would really like to hear from Patricia or anyone else who may have known my aunts.

-Katie Brooker

...Photos of Collinham Hall, The Ridge & West Lodge.

My mum and her brothers and sisters were brought up at these homes from a young age. As well as some good memories, they also have many sad ones. I would love to talk to anyone who may have know any of them or anyone who may have a photo. I will understand if there were some difficult times and that some things may be upsetting. I wouldn't want to upset anyone, but any information would be great.

Their names were as follows: Patricia, John, Marion, Keith, Janice & Brewin

-Tracy

...Fellows from the Eastry Childrens (Cottage) homes.

I lived there from 1960 through 1968 and would be most happy to offer memories.

I am now early retired in California after a lengthy service with the Queens Regiment and throughout the world in Information Technologies (IT).

If you would like to respond to anyone here. Please email grapevine@careleavers.com

Stories from Stowlangtoft

To all out there who were at Stowlangtoft children's home, during and after the war, from 1943 onwards.

I have recently received a letter from a lady who worked there as nursery nurse, caring for me and others.

She recalls names of only a few but you may be one of them: Keith, Jimmy, Ruth, Paul, Michael, Terry, Robin, Maureen & Rita..

Were you there approximately 1948/49? Aged 2-3-4 years. I have photo taken with the Hall in background with 2 of our nurses and 5 children, one of whom is probably me!

Apparently this was a lovely place to be in as a child, good food and sweets every night after tea. We were sometimes taken into Bury St Edmunds, to the Abbey Gardens where I now live near actually. There were days spent playing

/singing. Staff names I don't remember myself but you may.

The matron was Miss Yorath, and there were teachers: Miss Varley, Miss Jones and Miss Rye plus Pat, Margaret, Irene, Sally & Kathy.

The lady who wrote to me was Pauline. If you need to contact her, please email me first as she is in her 80's now. I live within 10 miles of

Stowlangtoft so if you get in touch maybe we could all meet up perhaps with one of the staff and visit the Home. It is now a nursing home.

I feel so many memories have been answered by this one lady that I needed to share this with as many as possible.

Love to hear from any of you ASAP. Regards Audrey (nee LLOYD)

Get Involved

As a small national charity, the CLA depends on support from members and donors to keep running.

There are lots of different ways that you can help out. This doesn't necessarily involve donating money, although if you do want to make a donation we will be grateful for it! It could mean donating your time, or just simply spreading the word about us.

Here are some of the ways you could get involved:

- Volunteer at the CLA office a couple of hours per week
- Put CLA leaflets in your local library, doctor's surgery, council offices and other public spaces
- Write to your local authority and encourage them to sign up for the [CLEARmark](#)
- Do a sponsored run, cycle, bungee jump and raise money for the CLA
- Come along to one of our keep in touch events and encourage other care leavers you know to come along too.
- Ask your local authority to sign up as a supporting member of the CLA

Find out more [here](#) or [contact us](#): 0161 953 4046

Introducing...The CLEARmark

CLA Launches a quality mark for access to records

On 31st October 2008, during National Care Leavers' week, the CLA launched a new quality mark for access to records.

The quality mark is called the CLEARmark, which stands for: Care Leavers Enhancing Access to Records.

The CLEARmark is based on a set of best practice basic standards, which were put together by the CLA in consultation with members and other care leavers, through the ongoing access to records campaign ([It's Our History, It's Our Right: Reclaiming Our Past](#)).

The CLEARmark will be awarded to local authorities and voluntary agencies which can demonstrate that they meet the following 8 criteria:

- Advertise in the largest paper in the local press at least once per year and in the council newspaper in every issue (LA) or Advertise in each edition of the organisation's highest circulation publication (VA).
- Have a statement of recognition that care leavers have a right to this information.
- Recognise the positive importance of accessing files
- Have an ATR policy that is publicly available.
- Have a monitoring system on requests received and responses made (or to be demonstrably working towards such a system).
- Provide a brief and accessible response letter and leaflet to encourage care leavers to see the process through
- Monitor the effectiveness of the service through use of an evaluation form

The CLEARmark is part of our campaign to improve access to records services and to ensure that care leavers' views are taken into account about how to do that. It is also part of our campaign to ensure that more care leavers find out that they have the right to access their childhood care records, as we know that many care leavers still do not know that.

To gain the CLEARmark, local authorities will need to submit an application, which will then be reviewed by a panel of care leavers to see if the application meets all the requirements. If it does then the local authority or voluntary agency will be awarded our CLEARmark seal (see above). This will show that



care leavers think they are demonstrating good practice in this area.

In the future we hope to extend the CLEARmark so that there are several different grades, perhaps a 1 star, 2 star and 3 star. This will enable us to work with access to records officers to improve their services over time so that the needs of care leavers are better met.

There is more information about the CLEARmark on our website here: [CLEARmark](#).

Why not contact your local authority and encourage them to apply. If you want more information on how to do that, contact Victoria Hull at victoria@careleavers.com.

If you work for a local authority and are interested in finding out more about CLEARmark, you can find out more from our website or request an application pack by contacting us:

Victoria@careleavers.com
0161 953 4047

Why Not Become a Member?

Any care leaver, over the age of 18, can be a member of the CLA. Non-care leavers and organisations can also join as supporters. It's simple, just fill in the form below and return it to us.

Your Personal Details:	Telephone:
Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other:.....	Email :
Forename:	Profession:
Surname:	Where did you hear about us?
Address:
..... Postcode:	Date of Birth:
<input type="checkbox"/> The CLA will keep in touch with you with newsletters & other information about our work. Please tick if you do NOT want to receive this.	

Annual Membership (please tick the category that applies to you):
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Member (care leaver waged/unwaged): £5/£2
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Supporter: £25 (someone who supports our work but is not a care leaver)
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Supporter: £50
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a care leaver. I can't afford the membership fee, but still want to join the CLA
I wish to make an additional donation of £
Total payment enclosed £

The CLA keeps membership fees for care leavers low on purpose, to make it easy for any care leaver to join. However, as a charity, we do need funds to keep running. If you do feel that you can pay for membership, that's great. If you would like to make a further donation, whatever you feel you can give will be a great help.

If you want to set up a standing order so that your membership fee is paid automatically each year, or if you want to set up a standing order donation, you can use the form below.

Standing Order Membership
Donating to the CLA by standing order is a great way to give regular support. It helps us to budget more effectively and cuts down on our administrative costs. This gives us more time to devote to our projects, services and campaigns. Just a small amount per month can make a real difference.
I would like to make a monthly/quarterly/annual gift of £.....
Please provide your bank details below:
To the manager of Bank,
Bank Address
..... Sort code A/c No
Please pay the above amount to: Care Leavers' Association, A/c No 65095940, at The Co-operative bank Plc (08-92-99), Kings Valley, Yew Street, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2JU
Start date: Signed: Date:

Gift Aid Declaration
Please tick the box above if you would like the CLA to reclaim the tax that you have paid on your donations to us since 30th November 2005 and on any future donations.
NB: You must have paid an amount of income and/or capital gains tax (in the UK) equal to the tax that will be claimed (currently 25p for every £1 you give)

Thank you for your support.

Please return this form to: Care Leavers' Association, Suite F113, 23 New Mount Street, Manchester M4 4DE