



The  
Children's  
Society



NSPCC

Believe in  
children  
Barnardo's

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022

Rt Hon Liz Truss MP  
House of Commons  
London, SW1A 0AA  
*By e-mail only.*

From the office of  
Barnardo's Chief Executive  
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Dear Liz Truss MP,

Congratulations on being one of the final two candidates hoping to become the next leader of the Conservative Party and the UK's next Prime Minister.

As the UK's leading children's charities, we support some of the most vulnerable children in the country. If elected, we call on you to put vulnerable children at the heart of your Government by prioritising implementation of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Children's social care is a vital public service that helps families stay together and protects children from harm. But it is not working. Every year, more families are being torn apart and children are being seriously hurt or even killed. Every year, the system grows more expensive for local authorities, forcing them to overspend overstretched budgets.

In 2019 we welcomed the Conservative Party's manifesto commitment to reviewing the children's social care system. With the Review's final report published in June, we are calling on both candidates to commit to implement the Review's recommendations as promised by the end of this year. Now is the time to deliver on your manifesto pledge and create stable, loving relationships and to give children and young people with the support they deserve.

Without action to deliver on this commitment, outcomes for children and families will remain stubbornly poor. In the next ten years there will be approaching 100,000 children in care, up from 80,000 today, and a flawed system will cost over £15 billion per year, up from £10 billion now (Independent Review of Children's Social Care, 2022). Young people who grow up in care are three times less likely to be in education, employment or training by the time they reach 19.

Our latest research, *Stopping the Spiral*, also shows spending on late intervention services soared by more than a third (37%) over the last decade, from £6bn to £8.2bn. This is skewing the system towards crisis intervention, and too often families cannot access help with problems such as mental health, domestic abuse, or drug and alcohol misuse until it is too late.

Our charities have been working with care-experienced young people, listening to their experiences and insight, and supporting them in contributing to the Review. Their stories reflect a system that is broken.

They speak to the deep trauma, heartbreak and anger, caused not just by the situation that had befallen their family, but by the system itself. Some told us they resorted to running away from

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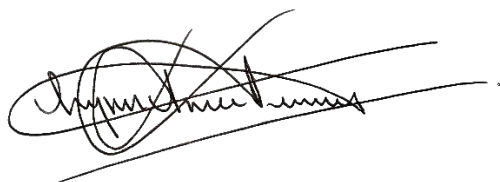
placements; that they were broken apart from everything they knew and given no clarity about the future; how much they struggled with no financial support after they turned 18; and even that they felt they had to hurt someone or be hurt to get any support. Of the hundreds of young people we, as expert organisations, have come into contact with throughout the Review process, the unifying sentiment is that the care system let them down, and badly.

Unfortunately success stories are the exception to the rule. The knock-on impact it has for the rest of these young people's lives, but also for wider society, is stark. Care leavers are estimated to make up around a quarter of the adult prison population, are 70% more likely to die prematurely and far more likely to be unemployed or not reach higher education.

If you become Prime Minister, we urge you to commit to prioritise implementation of the Review. We owe it to young people to create a better system which provides the care, stability and love everyone needs while growing up.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to radically reform the children's social care system in England so that fewer children enter the system and those who do are provided with the best possible care. Our charities stand ready to work with you to put vulnerable children at the heart of your Government.

Yours sincerely,



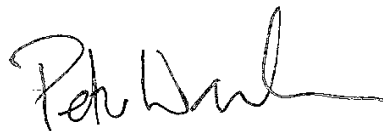
Lynn Perry MBE  
CEO, **Barnardo's**



Melanie Armstrong  
CEO, **Action for Children**



Anna Feuchtwang  
CEO, **National Children's Bureau**



Sir Peter Wanless  
CEO, **NSPCC**



Mark Russell  
CEO, **The Children's Society**

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