

# 1. What is New Belongings?

The New Belongings (NB) programme provides a structured (yet flexible) approach to continuous engagement with young people to identify priorities and develop services to meet the needs of local care leavers.

# The building blocks of New Belongings

## Local authority (LA) selection

Each LA submits an expression of interest to join the programme which demonstrates their commitment to the programme and co-production.

## Baseline evidence

All LAs complete a self-assessment (with managers and care levers) and do the Bright spots Your Life Beyond Care survey with their care leavers – to better understand what makes life good for their care leavers and how to improve the support they are offering.

## Action planning

Using the baseline evidence the local authority works with their young people to co-produce solutions to the issues identified. An action plan is produced

## Implementing action plans

LAs spend around 1 year implementing their plan. There are formal reviews measuring progress against the plan with both care leavers and LA staff. Care leavers are supported to review and challenge the LA on progress of the plan

## Review progress & refresh plans

Towards the end of the programme each LA does the Your Life Beyond Care survey & self-assessment again to inform on-going review and refresh of action plans

Throughout all stages of the programme there is a focus on:

Care leaver engagement

Senior leadership  
commitment

Engagement of partners and  
wider community

Peer learning

# Continuing the legacy of New Belongings

New Belongings (NB) started around 10 years ago. It first ran from 2013 to 2016 and involved 23 local authorities.

The programme was originally funded by the Government and was facilitated by the Care Leavers Foundation.

Authorities in the original phase of NB created and tested different practices and approaches to improve services and outcomes. Some of these have influenced national policy.

For example, local authorities taking part in NB piloted approaches like Personal Advisers to 25 and Council Tax exemptions for care leavers long before these became national policy.

An independent evaluation of the original programme was published (2016)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-belongings-programme-evaluation>

Learning from the programme was published in a guide (2016)

<https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/23786/sitedata/files/A-Guide-to-the-New-Belongings-Approach.pdf>

# New Belongings – new home, new phase

In 2019 New Belongings found a new home at Coram Voice with funding from Esmée Fairbairn and Segelman Trust.

The programme was reviewed based on the evaluation and learning from the previous phase and a new 3 year programme began (from July 2019 until July 2022).

This report tells the story of this new phase of New Belongings.

## Evaluation

Coram Impact & Evaluation did an independent evaluation of the programme and produced:

- [New Belongings Programme: Baseline evaluation report \(2021\)](https://www.coram.org.uk/resource/new-belongings-programme-baseline-evaluation-report-2021) - <https://www.coram.org.uk/resource/new-belongings-programme-baseline-evaluation-report-2021>
- [New Belongings Programme: Final evaluation report \(2022\)](https://www.coram.org.uk/resource/new-belongings-programme-final-evaluation-report-2022) - <https://www.coram.org.uk/resource/new-belongings-programme-final-evaluation-report-2022>

*When we started this in 2013, there was so much excitement to join up Local Authorities and share ideas, getting Care Leavers to meet other Care Leavers and ask questions about their own services. We've brought it back this year for a third time to really start to think about **how we can implement National change**.*

*I'd really like to see an **improvement in health services for young people** this year and really considering **mental health and services for 18-25 year olds** and how we can improve support and the transition process into adult services.*

**Mark Riddell MBE,  
National Implementation adviser for care leavers**

**16 local authorities  
applied to join the  
New Belongings  
programme  
8 local authorities  
were selected to  
take part**



**NORTH TYNESIDE**

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**OLDHAM**

**STOCKPORT**

**COVENTRY**

**HERTFORDSHIRE**

**WANDSWORTH**

**DORSET**

# Local authority recruitment

- Each interested local authority was expected to submit an expression of interest, setting out their existing services for care leavers and current youth engagement work.

Prerequisites for participation were:

- A commitment and engagement from senior management including Director level and the Lead Councilor for Corporate Parenting to drive change through the programme,
- An existing care leavers' forum or commitment to set one up and coordinate this,
- Identification of a local authority lead to manage local authority engagement, commitment to dedicate staff time to coordinate local care leaver engagement, survey distribution, action planning and implementation.

*Our CEO, who chairs our corporate parenting panel, has been fundamental in championing the needs of care leavers. He and the Leader of the Council recently drove forward our 'Family Business' initiative to engage local employers in improving Education, Employment and Training (EET) support for our care leavers.*

**LA application**

*New Belongings has the support from senior members of the authority. The submission of interest has been supported by the Children's Services Leadership Team. Within the authority there is a large level of support to further improving support to care leavers.*

**LA application**



# Setting expectations – commitment required from the very beginning

The New Belongings application process for local authorities was clear on what was needed from local authorities. The application process asked for evidence of:

- A **commitment** and engagement from senior management including Director level and the Lead Councillor for Corporate Parenting to drive change through the programme;
- A **commitment** to embed the voice of care leavers in the local authority decision-making process;
- An engaged care leavers' forum or **commitment** to set one up and coordinate this;
- A **commitment** to dedicate staff time to coordinate local care leaver engagement, survey distribution, action planning and implementation;
- A **commitment** to identify a local authority lead to manage local authority engagement in the Programme. It is important that the link person has ready access to the Director of Children' Services and senior leaders and sufficient authority to be able to coordinate activity;
- A **commitment** to join up services across the local authority and with external partners to support care leavers and create opportunities in the wider community.

# In our words: What is New Belongings?



Young people from the participating local authorities worked alongside Coram voice's Care Experienced Consultants (CEC) to define what New Belongings meant to them.



# Coram Voice – critical friend and facilitator

- The New Belongings team included care experienced young adults (Care Experienced Consultants), supported by a programme manager and a participation lead, as facilitators to help the engagement of local care leavers.
- Coram Voice were in charge of running the programme (governance, planning & keeping all on track). The team provided external scrutiny and advice, reminding participating local authorities about the programme goals of co-production and engagement.
- The team also brought people together – partners, leaders & young people both locally and nationally. We provided opportunities to share learning nationally with other local authorities as well as government and policy-makers.



The New Belongings team made sure young people in each local authority had been involved in designing the solutions identified in the action plan. We pushed the local authority to make sure their young people felt like the plan was on track and that it included their thoughts and ideas.

# What Coram Voice originally offered:

- Support over x2 years – critical friend
- Self-assessment tool
- *Your Life Beyond Care* survey (at 2 time points)
- 8 visits to facilitate co-production
- Peer support sessions



# Care experienced consultants (CECs)

The programme employed care experienced young adults (New Belongings Care Experienced Consultants), supported by our programme manager and a participation lead, as facilitators to help the engagement of local care leavers.

*I would like to learn and enrich my understanding of the experiences that care-experienced young people may have. I'm excited to be part of the New Belonging Project where I can offer my insights and assist to implement change that may help other young people.*

**Thuy Ly-Chambers, Care-experienced Consultant at Coram Voice**



# Working alongside CECs

- The programme originally recruited 8 Care experienced consultants (CECs). These were care experienced young people aged 16-25.
- CECs are paid sessional roles managed by the Participation Manager .
- The recruitment and interview process went well. Interviews included a group exercise, an interview panel and Warner interviews.
- The CECs induction process involved training in facilitation skills, interview skills, group work and research skills. We spent time considering how CECs would introduce themselves and the programme and how to share your own story.
- CECs worked together to plan sessions for the launch event and introductory meetings with each local authority (LA).
- The CEC role focused on visiting LAs and working directly with care leavers.

# Covid - Changing role of CECs

- When lockdown started in March 2020, the work of CECs paused.
- The pandemic changed the dynamic of the CEC role as meetings went online and some CECs, like many other care leavers at the time, were not equipped for this. Following an application for further funding Coram Voice was able to provide computer equipment to CECs later in the year.
- Some CECs personal circumstances changed during this time and we had to recruit new CECs to the project. We could not do the same in depth induction with this new cohort.
- The role of the CECs changed to adapt to the new ways of working. As a result CECs were less prominent in New Belongings. We tried different models of working over the course of the programme, but did not regain the level of engagement that we had in the beginning.

# Lessons learned in working with CECs

- Losing in person meetings meant a loss of structure and less direct work with other young people.
- Other commitments (e.g. work/college) and the nature of sessional work posed challenges to making sure CECs were available for meetings.
- Continuity and continuous engagement was important so not to lose momentum.
- Personal circumstances and challenges could lead individuals to disengage.
- Continuous re-recruitment, training and team building costs needs to be built into any project.
- Need to resource online engagement – we managed to source equipment, but not sourced for the first crucial period when the UK entered lockdown because of Covid and some young people may not have had internet at home.



# The New Belongings process

## PHASE 1:

### Engagement & planning

VISIT 1: introduction to project

Raise awareness, sign up champions,  
identify related work

VISIT 2: plan data collection

Baseline data collection

VISIT 3: Review evidence & identify  
priorities & next steps

Initial action planning

VISIT 4: Review & finalise actions

Final action plan in place

ONGOING TELEPHONE & EMAIL  
SUPPORT & ADVICE FROM NB TEAM

## PHASE 2:

### Implementation & Review

Action plan implementation

VISIT 5: In depth focus group

Update & cont. implementation

VISIT 6: 6 month review

Update & cont. implementation

VISIT 7: review progress & plan data  
collection

Progress data collection

VISIT 8: Review evidence & develop new  
action plan

New revised action plan

# New Belongings launch events

- Around 50 people from the 8 participating local authorities came to the New Belongings launch in November 2019.
- Those attending shared what they were most proud of about what they were currently doing and their hopes for what they would achieve during the programme.
- Mark Riddell, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, DfE, shared his experience of how to make a strategic impact with participating officers, service directors and care leavers, getting the programme off to an inspiring start.
- The national event was followed by local launch events bringing together care leavers, leaving care services and partner agencies.





**Tia Henderson (S...** @T... · Nov 7, 2019 ...  
 Interesting and inspiring meeting for the **#newbelongings** project - developing services for care leavers in Oldham and strengthening young people's voices! Exciting things to come @cicc\_oldham #yww2019 #youthworkinaction #youthvoice



**jeanette war...** @Jean... · Nov 11, 2019 ...  
 Great day at the New Belongings launch today in London.. Great enthusiasm, passion and inspiration in the room @NewBelongings @The\_SK\_Family



**Trudi Dunn...** @Dunn... · Nov 11, 2019  
 The start of new beginnings. We are raring to go. #newbeginnings #Stockportlct #Stockportlct @karenbazell @Jeanettewarb  
 Show this thread



**Sherrie Mc...** @Sherrie... · Nov 11, 2019 ...  
 Interesting day at @CoramVoice launch event of **#newbelongings** programme. Looking forward to starting the work and implementing into Coventry @AnnMarieGuest1 @drclairebaker @CoramVoice @MattJClayton @coventryDCS



**matt clayto...** @MattJ... · Jan 13, 2020 ...  
 Great kick off meeting today for **#newbelongings** in Coventry @CoramVoice @drclairebaker @NStirling4 @AnnMarieGuest1 @imms\_jo @SherrieMcMaho14 @SheilaBates18 @VoicesOfCareCov @A1tchJH



**Claire Ba...** @drclaireb... · Dec 3, 2019 ...  
 Sunny day up in north Tyneside for our 1st **#newbelongings** meeting - really great energy n enthusiasm in the room - we r really looking forward to working together





# Adapting to Covid-19

- New Belongings started in late 2019 – we were able to hold some of our initial meetings in person, but like everyone we had to move to virtual meetings as the pandemic started.
- We adapted the programme and offered local authorities more frequent virtual contact than had been originally planned.
- We tried out different ways of engaging everyone (Jam boards, menti-meters, virtual break out rooms).
- Much of the New Belongings programme was delivered online with some face-to-face meetings when restrictions allowed this.



**matt clayton** @MattJClayton · 18m  
First @ThroughCareCov service development morning delivered virtually! Once I got hang of tech seemed to go well. Good to all advanced pracs present!  
[@AlexandraCapit8](#) [@Dannii\\_Ryan](#)  
[@jessicajade89](#) [@NStirling4](#)  
[@BeckGreenhouse](#) [@SherrieMcMaho14](#)  
[@LTPM2](#) [@coventryDCS](#) [@imms\\_jo](#)



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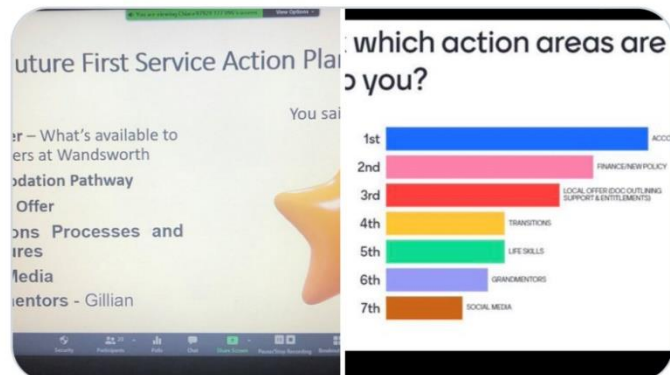
**matt clayton** @MattJClayton · 17m  
Lots of positivity about New belongings  
[@CoramVoice](#) [@drclairebaker](#) and how we support young people in this period as well

# Getting together online and in person



• CLIC... @clickwands... · Oct 8, 2021

An amazing [#newbelongings](#) deep dive last night on zoom with [@CoramVoice](#) with 17 care experienced young people. Lots of progress on the action plan 😊 Great feedback from the young people as always! Bring on the face to face deep dive next week! [#getclicked](#) [#youthvoice](#)



Coram Vo... @CoramV... · Jul 28, 2021

Some of our Voice's Improving Care team are out in the real world today, meeting with care leavers in [@northyorkscc](#) as part of our [#NewBelongings](#) program. Excited to be seeing people outside of a screen!



• CLIC... @clickwands... · Sep 9, 2021

Amazing Click Plus last night coming up with ideas for the [#newbelongings](#) deep dive and yof [@WBCYouthCouncil](#) big shout out to Alfie for helping out with the BBQ come rain or shine...[#youthvoice](#) [#getclicked](#) [#clickfam](#)





# Final local authority meetings

- By the end of the programme most local authorities had held their final dissemination meetings (a mix of online & in-person).
- These were a chance to look at the second Your Life Beyond Care survey findings & self-assessment and discuss with young people and partners what work still needed doing.



sholden  
@sholdenuk



What a week! Service day then Ian Coram and our care experienced Tonia telling leaders and partners highs and lows of leaving care in Dorset, provoking thought as to how we can respond  
[#newbelongings](#) [@drclairebaker](#)  
[@DCSTheresaLeavy](#)  
[@mattprosserceo](#) [@CoramVoice](#)  
[@louisedrury6](#)



Kaye Wright  
@KWYouthVoice



Thank you Antonia for amplifying the voice of [#Dorset](#) [#CareLeavers](#) today by reinforcing the [#NewBelongings](#) messages we've heard.

Lovely to meet you in person Ian ([@CoramVoice](#)), we hope you enjoyed sunny Dorset ☀️





# Sharing learning

- The New Belongings programme ended with an in-person celebration event in October 2022 and series of webinars to share learning. The sessions were an opportunity to reflect on the 'story of the programme' and hear each local authority share what they were most proud of. For the participating local authorities the celebration event was also an opportunity to reaffirm commitment to working alongside care leavers.
- Recordings of the webinars and videos of some of the work local authorities shared are available on the New Belongings webpage. <https://coramvoice.org.uk/for-professionals/newbelongings/>

