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**JUST FOR KIDS  
LAW / CRAE'S  
SUBMISSION  
TO**

**THE CARE  
REVIEW'S CASE  
FOR CHANGE  
AUGUST 2021**

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# THIS SUBMISSION

OUR RESPONSE TO THE CASE FOR CHANGE FOCUSES ON AREAS OF LEAVING CARE, HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS WHICH WE FEEL WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY EXAMINED - OR OMITTED ENTIRELY - BY THE CASE FOR CHANGE.

# WHAT IS IT BASED ON

This submission is based on what we have seen through decades of advocacy and legal case work, policy expertise, as well as consultations with our staff and some of the young people we work with

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# KEY MESSAGES

Below are the 8 key messages made in the Just for Kids Law/CRAE's Submission to the Care Review's Case for Change submission

## **CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S (CYP) RIGHTS AND VOICES ARE NOT AT THE HEART OF THE CARE SYSTEM.**

A child rights approach should be used in all policy-making, including during the Care Review, to draft subsequent legislation, in creating all policies and practices at central and local levels and to ensure CYP's voices are at the heart of the system in line with article 12 of the CRC.

## **ACCESS TO GOOD-QUALITY, INDEPENDENT YOUTH ADVOCACY IS ALSO KEY TO CENTRING CYP'S VOICES AND IMPROVING THEIR OUTCOMES. .**

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WE BUILD A SYSTEM WHICH IS MORE FLEXIBLE AND FOCUSED ON FULFILLING CYP'S NEEDS HOLISTICALLY, INSTEAD OF SILOED WORKING. A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION MUST BE BUILT WITHIN LOCAL AUTHORITIES' SERVICES AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VOLUNTARY SERVICES

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**THE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM  
REQUIRES DEDICATED FUNDING AFTER  
HUGE CUTS TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVER  
THE PAST DECADE, AS WELL AS REFORMS.**

THE IMPACT OF AUSTERITY HAS BEEN DEEPLY FELT BY COMMUNITIES AND CUTS TO BENEFITS, LOCAL SERVICES, IN PARTICULAR EARLY INTERVENTION, AND THE LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SOCIAL HOUSING HAVE HAD A KNOCK-ON EFFECT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES NEEDING FURTHER AND MORE COMPLEX INTERVENTIONS FROM CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE.

**CHILDREN WHO ARE REMANDED TO  
CUSTODY MUST RETAIN LOOKED-AFTER  
CHILD STATUS.**

CYP COMING INTO CONTACT WITH THE POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM ARE SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR SOCIETY AND OFTEN HAVE THE MOST COMPLEX NEEDS, HAVING ALSO HAD PREVIOUS CONTACT WITH THE SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM, AND REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ACCESS TO STATUTORY SERVICES.

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## **THE SYSTEM IS NOT BUILT AND DOES NOT WORK FOR OLDER TEENAGERS.**

WE SEE MORE AND MORE THE EFFECT OF THE ADULTIFICATION OF OLDER TEENAGERS WHO FIND THEMSELVES ON THE EDGE OF CARE BUT END UP LEFT WITHOUT ANY SUPPORT. EVERY YEAR, THOUSANDS OF 16- AND 17-YEAR-OLDS FACED WITH HOMELESSNESS ARE HOUSED UNDER PROVISIONS WHICH DO NOT ENTITLE THEM TO ANY SUPPORT FROM CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND END UP HOMELESS AGAIN ONCE THEY TURN 18. MORE THAN HALF ARE HOUSED IN UNREGULATED SETTINGS BUT THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANNED REFORMS WILL NOT APPLY TO THIS GROUP OF CHILDREN, PUTTING THEM AT RISK OF BEING FURTHER MARGINALISED.

## **CHILDREN WHO ARE CRIMINALLY EXPLOITED (MOSTLY OLDER TEENAGERS) CONTINUE TO BE SEEN AS OFFENDERS RATHER THAN VICTIMS,**

WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO AN INCONSISTENT SAFEGUARDING RESPONSE, AND THEREFORE A LACK OF ADEQUATE JOINED UP SUPPORT FROM STATUTORY SERVICES.

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**CYP ARE FACED WITH FREQUENT CLIFF EDGES DURING THEIR JOURNEY THROUGH THE CARE SYSTEM – AT 18, 21 AND AGAIN AT 25.**

BETTER TRANSITION PLANNING AND A GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF APPROACH MUST BE PUT IN PLACE TO APPROPRIATELY SUPPORT THESE CYP INTO YOUNG ADULthood, ACCESS THE APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND LATER INDEPENDENCE, INSTEAD OF MAKING THEM VULNERABLE TO ISSUES WITH THEIR HOUSING, MENTAL HEALTH, ETC.

**CARE-EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OVER-REPRESENTED IN THE HOMELESS POPULATION;**

ONCE THEY END UP IN THE HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM, THEY ARE FACED WITH TOO MANY BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SUPPORT. THESE BARRIERS ARE NOT ADEQUATELY EXAMINED IN THE CASE FOR CHANGE.

**This submission was sent JfKL/CRAE submission on the Care Review's Case for Change – August 2021**

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