

Christmas Wish list presented to MSPs



Young care leavers Wish List calls on MSPs and Scotland to give them better this Christmas

Young care leavers are calling on MSPs to grant their wishes for a better Christmas this and every year as they presented their Christmas Wish List yesterday.

For the first time a group of care leavers made a plea to MSPs outside the Scottish Parliament asking politicians and the public to show they care by pledging their commitment to help change the futures of generations of care leavers to come.

Who Cares? Scotland, the leading charity for young people in care were joined by Young Scot and other youth organisations to ask MSPs to help get a fairer deal for youngsters as they enter Stage 2 of the Children and Young People Bill.

Ashley Cameron, a 23-year-old care leaver from Stirling, said:- “At this time of year it’s hard being away from your family. When you are in care at Christmas it can be really emotional especially if you know your friends are going to have a Christmas at home with their families. It makes you think about all the problems in your life and can leave you feeling like there is no hope. All we want at Christmas is to know that people really do care.”

Duncan Dunlop, Chief Executive of Who Cares Scotland said:- “We are asking MSPs to help grant their Christmas wish this year and every year – by delivering on their promise and the commitment they have shown to date, and help to make Scotland

the best place to grow up for all children and young people. And we want to see that for all of our looked after young people in Scotland too.”

“The young care leavers here today are excellent examples of success with many of them dedicating their careers and free time to helping create a brighter future for other generations of care leavers – as well as showing amazing resilience to overcome a range of issues in their young lives.”

On behalf of the 16,000 children in care in Scotland and the 1,300 care leavers each year, the young people will ask the politicians to grant their Christmas Wish List containing five top wishes.

- All care leavers in Scotland live long and happy lives, that they control with support where needed
- No care leaver in Scotland ever experiences homelessness
- All care leavers in Scotland are surrounded by stable, loving relationships and get a chance to fulfil their dreams
- Scotland continues to care for care leavers
- Scotland listens to the voice of young people with care experience

Figures consistently shows kids in care are more likely to suffer from mental ill health, more likely to be homeless, and more likely to suffer periods of unemployment.

Who Cares? Scotland is also asking for members of the public to support the young people’s Christmas wishes by pledging their commitment to its *It’s time to listen* campaign.

Mr Dunlop said: “These wishes are important to care leavers for many reasons. Given a chance, these young people can achieve their dreams and live a life full of success. What care leavers really want this Christmas is for the ordinary

Scot to play a more active part in helping and supporting young care leavers to live successfully in communities up and down Scotland.”

Tam Baillie, Scotland’s Commissioner for Children and Young People said: “Young people leaving care are like any other young people – full of hopes and dreams. Yet they leave care at a much younger age than those leaving home and they do not have the option of returning if things do not work out. We need to provide them with care for longer so that their transition into adulthood allows them to have the same life chances of other young people – and that they too can realise their aspirations of a safe, secure and healthy lifestyle that they have a right to expect. We should take the opportunity through the Children and Young People Bill to make progress in this endeavour.”

Already 2,500 people have shown their support. To pledge to listen to children in care, visit the [website](#).