

# Care Leavers Conference



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London Borough of Hillingdon are Corporate Parents to 346 Children in care and 436 Care leavers = 782.

The population of children in care and care leavers is diverse with 58% of our looked after children from a non-white background.

Unaccompanied Asylum seeking young people that the service work with are estranged from their families and often isolated in the local community.

A significant number will have experienced childhood trauma and have lived in areas of conflict.



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As part of the council's response to listening to the views of children and young people, the Children in Care Council enables young people in care and leaving care, to come together to discuss their views and make suggestions to make services better and get involved in making changes.

“Stepping out” the Children in Care Council group for young people aged 16+ is predominately attended by Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Minors. During conversations they identified that although their cultural needs were being met, they are unaware of many British customs like Pancake Day and unaware of the cultures of other young people. This evidenced a disparity in the sharing of culture in this diverse population.



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‘Stepping Out’ plan and run the annual Care Leavers Conference and decided that this was a good forum for sharing cultural customs, ideologies and food.

The theme of this year’s event was:

‘Unity from Diversity: coming together through our differences’

The event was attended by 56 young people, and presented by young people, in their own native language and English.

The young people reflected on their own identities and shared this with others decorating a "identity heart" as part of this activity.



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They then set up ‘country tables’ and shared interesting facts (calendars, funeral and marriage customs, family meal times, etc) and favourite foods from those countries. Each table was visited in turn and the young people filled out a cultural bingo sheet and ate local delicacies.

Through this fun activity, the event enabled staff and young people in a safe environment to learn about the customs and traditions of other cultures.

92.3% of the 56 young people who attended said that they found the event useful and that they learned a lot.

One young person said it was “Enjoyable and beneficial. The highlight for me was the identity heart. I liked that it was very cultural.”



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