

THE GRAPEVINE

CLA On The Road

This year, the CLA will be taking to the road to reach out to as many care leavers as possible and to let them know about their right to access their files from when they were in care.

This is all part of our access to records campaign: '[It's Our History, It's Our Right: Reclaiming Our Past](#)'. The campaign was launched in June last year and in 2007 we visited London and Manchester. This year we will be visiting six cities: Leeds, London, Bristol, Brighton, Newcastle and Glasgow. We will be kicking our road trip off at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds on Saturday 1st March. (See page 2 for a full list of dates)

In each city we will hold an event, which is free and open to all care leavers. The event will contain stories from people who have accessed their files, top tips on how to access files and one-to-one sessions to give people individual advice. The events are informal and friendly, but also really informative. We try to get someone along from a local authority at each meeting too, so that they can also give their advice.

In addition to these events around the UK, we have also surveyed over 180 local authorities, using the Freedom of Information Act, as part of the campaign. This survey queried the number of requests each authority had received over the last five years, how they had dealt with those requests and the kind of policies and practices each has in place to help care leavers access their files.

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Campaign Meeting, London, 2007

The information from our survey will be added to the website soon, so keep an eye out for that. You will be able to check how your authority is doing and maybe even write to them to encourage them to do better.

In May, we will be launching a kitemark for the best performing local authorities on access to records and we will also be launching a national Access to Records Week to raise awareness about the importance of this issue.

Come along to one of our meetings and find out more!

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GET IN TOUCH!

If you would like to comment on anything you have read in *The Grapevine*, or if you would like to submit a story or article yourself, then contact us:

By Post: Care Leavers' Association, St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester, M12 6FZ

By Email: grapevine@careleavers.com

General enquiries: 0161 275 9500 or email, info@careleavers.com



CLA Merchandise Now Available!
You can buy CLA mugs, fridge magnets and pin badges online now [here](#)



Recent Meetings

Executive Committee Strategy Meeting

February 2008

At the beginning of February, we held our annual strategy meeting in Shipley, West Yorkshire. This is where the national Development Worker and the new Executive Committee work on the CLA's annual strategic plan and discuss the key priorities and activities for the year ahead.

This year, Jim kindly hosted the meeting and we all made our way over to Shipley on the first Friday of the month.

The Friday afternoon and evening were spent working on fundraising bids, which we hope will bring in funds to allow us to employ a part time worker and begin to extend the work that we do further.

Saturday, we discussed a range of things, including fundraising, our governance structure, how to improve the websites and policy development. We also agreed our [Access to Records policy](#), which you can view on the website by clicking on the link above.

We had an early start on Sunday and spent the morning going over our strategic plan, making amendments and agreeing on our key priorities.

It was a really useful weekend, as well as getting a lot of work done and allowing us to set down a clear vision of the things we want to achieve this year, it allowed the new Exec to get to know one another better as a team.

Our next meeting will be an open meeting in Leeds and will be held at the West Yorkshire Playhouse on Saturday 1st March, 3pm-5pm.

It is open to all care leavers, so do come along and join us.

NEWS & UPDATES

Media Round-Up

(To read any story on full, click on its title)

14/02/2008 - [Cyber Bullying Reaches Children in Care](#) - Children and Young People Now report on the Children's rights Director's findings about bullying and young people in care.

30/01/2008 - [House of Lord's Judgement on Time Limits](#) - A judgement which allowed a rape victim to claim compensation from her attacker could give victims of childhood abuse more time to claim compensation.

30/01/2008 - [Boarding Schools Scheme for Kids in Care Fails to Take Off](#) - A pilot scheme to place young people from care in boarding schools has had little impact, Children & Young People Now reports.

As a charity, a lot of the CLA's work depends on the contributions and fundraising activities of its supporters. There are lots of ways you could help:

Coffee mornings
Sponsored events
Ebay for Charity

To find out more, click [here](#) or [Contact Us](#)

[NEW Children's Homes Photo Gallery Online](#)

Send your photos to info@careleavers.com

The CLA [website](#) received over 36,000 hits in November

Your top pages were:

1. [Forum](#)
2. [Home Page](#)
3. [Newsletter Extra](#)
4. [CLA Policies](#)

CareleaversReunited is growing all the time. We currently have 2787 users and 1139 homes.

Haven't logged on recently? Do so now!

www.careleaversreunited.org

2008 MEETING DATES

1st March - Leeds
5th April - Bristol
10th May - London
7th June - Glasgow

12th July - Brighton
4th October - Newcastle
1st November - Manchester (AGM)

Meetings will be held between 3-5pm. Keep an eye on the website home page for more information. If you would like venue details for any meeting please contact the office

0161 275 9500 info@careleavers.org

NEWS & UPDATES

NDW Comment

Victoria Hull, the CLA's National Development Worker gives us a quick run-down of what she's been up to in the last few months

Happy New Year everyone!

Welcome to the first 2008 issue of *The Grapevine*,

2008 started well for the CLA, as at the end of December we found out that one of our fundraising bids, to a major UK funder had been successful. This means that we have funding to cover our core costs until July 2011. There are still lots of other projects and activities that we need funding for though, so we will still be working hard on the fundraising front throughout the year.

For instance, one activity we have planned is a sponsored cycle ride through the North West and South East, visiting old children's homes and meeting up with other care leavers along the way. At the moment, myself Will and Stephen will be taking part. Watch out for more details coming soon.

During January and February I have been busy working on a lot of internal, organisational activities. We will be moving office at the end of March, so I have been organising that. Also we held our annual strategic planning weekend at the beginning of February. That is where I and the exec get together to discuss our plans for

the year, set out priorities and agree on key activities to focus on. This year, we'll be focusing on carrying the [access to records campaign](#) forward, developing our [training and](#)

[Consultancy services](#) and revamping both

of our websites, so that they are easier to use and more interactive.

Next month, we'll be holding our first campaign meeting of the year, in Leeds. It's open to all care leavers, so do come along if you're interested. We are a very friendly group! Hopefully this year we will get to meet many more of you as we'll be visiting a lot of cities that we have never visited before.

Remember, if you have stories or articles for The Grapevine, send them to grapevine@careleavers.com

Victoria Hull, National Development Worker



Children & Young Person's Bill

The Children & Young Person's Bill, which is an outcome of the 2007 White Paper, Care Matters, is currently being discussed in the House of Lords. Amendments to the bill are being proposed and discussed. The bill will then be passed to the House of Commons for discussion there before it can become an Act.

The CLA has submitted its [views on the Bill](#) and where it could be amended.

You can track the progress of the Bill online:

[Children & Young Person's Bill](#)

How did you feel when you found [CareleaversReunited](#) for the first time?
Have you met up with people from your old home through the website?
If you have a story, [send](#) it in. We would love to hear it!

Get Involved!

We know that all people have different interests and want to be involved in CLA in different ways. Some people are more interested in newsletters than meetings, some people want to help fundraise and others might want to share their stories.

Fill in this short form, send it back to us and let us know what your interests are!

Name:

Town:

Contact details:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to be a local contact
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to volunteer for the CLA
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to give out leaflets
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to write for the newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/>	I can help to organise a fundraising event
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have skills to offer a small campaigning organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to come to meetings
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to make a donation (please see below for details)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to take part in a 'history of care' project

.....
If you simply don't have the time to get actively involved in the CLA, but you still want to support our work, you could think about making a donation.

All donations will go towards helping the CLA to keep going and to running our projects and campaigns. Here are some of the ways your donation could help:

- £5** Will pay for one info pack for schools and colleges
- £10** Will keep our little printer going for 1 month
- £20** Will keep the telephone line going for a month
- £50** Will hire a room for a local meeting
- £100** Will buy 1000 campaign leaflets
- £400** Will enable us to send an Access to Records Guide to every Social Services department in the country, to help towards building good practice in this area.

There are lots of ways that you can make a donation:

- Standing Order (see page 9 for details)
- Online through our [Justgiving](#) page,
- Through the post

Whatever you choose to donate, whether £2 or £200, will be a great help and will go towards providing services for care leavers, running our projects and working for change to the current system.

Why Not Become a Member?

Any care leaver, over the age of 18, can be a member of the CLA. Non-care leavers and organisations can also join as supporters. It's simple, just fill in the form below and return it to us.

Your Personal Details:	Telephone:
Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other:.....	Email:
Forename:	Profession:
Surname:	Where did you hear about us?
Address:
..... Postcode:	Date of Birth:
<input type="checkbox"/> The CLA will keep in touch with you with new newsletters & other information about our work. Please tick if you do NOT want to receive this.	

Annual Membership (please tick the category that applies to you):
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Member (care leaver waged/unwaged): £5/£2
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Supporter: £25 (someone who supports our work but is not a care leaver)
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Supporter: £50
<input type="checkbox"/> I am a care leaver. I can't afford the membership fee, but still want to join the CLA
I wish to make an additional donation of £
Total payment enclosed £

The CLA keeps membership fees for care leavers low on purpose, to make it easy for any care leaver to join. However, as a charity, we do need funds to keep running. If you do feel that you can pay for membership, that's great. If you would like to make a further donation, whatever you feel you can give will be a great help.

If you want to set up a standing order so that your membership fee is paid automatically each year, or if you want to set up a standing order donation, you can use the form below.

Standing Order Membership
Donating to the CLA by standing order is a great way to give regular support. It helps us to budget more effectively and cuts down on our administrative costs. This gives us more time to devote to our projects, services and campaigns. Just a small amount per month can make a real difference.
I would like to make a monthly/quarterly/annual gift of £.....
Please provide your bank details below:
To the manager of Bank,
Bank Address
..... Sort code A/c No
Please pay the above amount to: Care Leavers' Association, A/c No 65095940, at The Co-operative bank Plc (08-92-99), Kings Valley, Yew Street, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2JU
Start date: Signed: Date:

Gift Aid Declaration
Please tick the box above if you would like the CLA to reclaim the tax that you have paid on your donations to us since 30th November 2005 and on any future donations.
NB: You must have paid an amount of income and/or capital gains tax (in the UK) equal to the tax that will be claimed (currently 28p for every £1 you give)

Thank you for your support.

Please return this form to: Care Leavers' Association, St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester, M12 6FZ.