Twitter Thread by Sean Geoghegan



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In 1982 I wrote a Report, which I also presented to the House of Commons Parliamentary Committee on 'children in care'. The evidence was highly commended & included in the Children's Act 1989. The excerpts below are #cep history & legacy. And our contribution to the CA 1989.
1/20

The Introduction. (Excerpt only)
Talks about the CA 1980 and the "welfare principle" and how practise falls behind intention.

"The problem is that decision making still lies with the professional and doesn't include the child/young person".

Summary of memorandum submitted by the National Association of Young People in Care*

INTRODUCTION

Within the area of social work in general there is today a greater regard for the interests and wishes of the client. In some ways this reflects a trend towards consumer power in society but its beginnings lay in the ways in which social work has had to radically alter its practices as it has taken on new responsibilities. In child care as in other fields of social work the move has, since the late sixties, been towards community based care and away from the older isolated institutional care. Practices were altered to remove the stigma and the restrictions of institutional life on a child's development as part of the process of using community based resources, ie, small local children's homes or foster for young people.

As well as relying on new resources in the community, the new policies emphasised stronger links with family, school and the locality. Young people in care have been encouraged to become more independent as part of this philosophy and to play a greater role in the decisions relating to their lives. The natural progression of this has been reflected in changes in child care law. The 1980 Child Care Act includes the "welfare principle" under Section 18 (1) which also lays down the general legal responsibility of a local authority for young people in their care. This provision states:

> In reaching any decision relating to a child in their care, a local authority shall give first consideration to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child throughout his childhood; and shall so far as practicable ascertain the wishes and feelings of the child regarding the decision and give due consideration to them having regard to his age and understanding.

But the intention of the reformers and the spirit of the law has not been sufficiently reflected in child care practice. The stigma and the restrictions attached to being in care were seen as belonging to the old institutional practices, but many of these old practices have continued to exist and new and equally unpleasant institutional practices are also now with us.

The problem is that decision making in modern child care still lies within the realms of the professional and doesn't include the child/young person in care. We are still treated as victims or offenders despite the closing down of the distinctions between "the deprived and depraved". Our lives are often controlled entirely by the decisions made by social workers and they are generally in a worse position to determine the best for young people in care than the young people are themselves.

Policies.

The National Association of Young People In Care was the first organisation run for and by YP in or ex care. We started in 1979 in Bradford and London (I was in the London Office). These policies were based on NAYPIC members views at the time.

Specific issues that arise are often to do with the practices of field work and management as well as direct care. These issues are of great concern to all young people in care and NAYPIC has had a considerable amount of experience in listening and relating them. In the following pages we outline the major issues on which NAYPIC has formed policies and which we would like to draw to the Committee's attention as a matter of priority:

(i) Rules, punishments and discipline
(ii) Forms of Control
(iii) Privacy and Personal Freedom
(iv) Reviews and Case Conferences
(v) Files and Records
(vi) Fostering
(vii) Education
(viii) Clothing Order Book and Allowances
(ix) Race, Sex and Disablement
(x) Complaints.

1) Rules, punishments & discipline (excerpt only):

"Young People should have a say in how the home is run and what form of rues & punishment are alowed"

i. Rules, Punishments and Discipline

Punishment and discipline is a very important issue for young people in care. It is where young people's opinions are often most at odds with the adults who care for them. Incidents requiring discipline often happen between just two people and then it is the adult who is most likely to be listened to.

Many institutions have rules and regimes which are very strict and frustrating for the young people who have little or no say in making the rules. They can find themselves branded as troublemakers or disturbed just because they did not agree with the rules imposed upon them. Young people often feel that some staff can get a kick out of putting young people down.

Local Authorities have very varied rules and procedures about discipline and punishment in their areas. Some have bothered to look at their procedures and have banned corporal punishment and other extremes in their homes but other areas still leave a lot to the discretion of staff. Only establishments run by voluntary bodies such as Dr Barnardos are covered by the 1951 Regulations which state who shall give corporal punishment and to whom.

Young people believe that institutions need guidelines which make sure that rules are geared towards education and learning. Institutions should be run for the young people in them, not for the convenience of the staff, and young people should have a say in how the home is run and what form of rules and punishments are allowed.

2) Forms of Control (excerpt):

"Young People should learn their responsibilities and self control by having a greater involvement in the running of their own home and in their own lives. Residential Care workers are indespensible in this".

ii. FORMS OF CONTROL

For many young people in care, child care is seen merely as control and punishment is the method of achieving control. This is done by the restriction of freedom and often by resorting to depriving young people of their basic needs and rights. Control becomes an instrument exercised when social workers feel that they have to enforce their authority. There are incidents when this has been taken to such extremes that violence has been used by staff on young people this is of the greatest concern to us but we do not underestimate the more subtle uses of control using restraint and deprivation that occur far too regularly, by staff on young people.

The most damaging forms of control for "difficult" young people are:

1. The use of drugs - the "liquid cosh". We also mention this under Punishment, because drugs which are not used for medical reasons we regard as punishment—physically, psychologically and emotionally—and their use in this way should be banned.

2. Transfer, to other more isolating and disciplinary homes (eg CHE's, the old approved schools) and to secure accommodation. Though we welcome changes in law making admittance to secure accommodation less discretionary and giving young people the right of appeal, we do not think that secure accommodation should exist. Why should young people in care be locked up, when those not in care can only be locked up if they commit a serious criminal offence or are so mentally ill they have to be "sectioned" for compulsory medical treatment?

   Generally we think that transfer of young people to other placements is a way of letting residential and social workers duck out of their responsibilities and not tackle the reasons *why* the young people are "misbehaving".

3. We also know of cases where the young people are simply thrown out of homes to fend for themselves for periods of time.This is obviously an unacceptable form of control. If parents did this they would get into trouble with social services and the courts.

Care and control are often conceived as the same by social workers who believe that the administration of enforced control is essential to their job, many use it to make their job easier. We in NAYPIC believe that young people should learn their responsibilities and self control by having a greater involvement in the rules and running of their home and in their own lives. The co-operation and support of residential social workers is indispensible to this aim.

NAYPIC Policy

1. "Control" should be on the basis of mutual co-operation and respect between residential workers and young people.
2. The use or threatened use of drugs, transfer and suspension should be banned.

3) Privacy & personal Freedom (excerpt):

"Everybody, despite their race, sex or outside appearance, should be treated equally".

Staff must learn that young people have a viewpoint of their own to express and it would be better if they could encourage this rather than treat young people as if being in care meant that there was something wrong with them.

Many young people are restricted in what clothes they can wear because of an inadequate system for purchasing clothes.

If you want to follow a certain fashion then it should not be discouraged. Likewise if they wish to pursue some personal hobby or interest we feel that this should be developed and the resources provided. Many homes have too many young people in them. This can prevent some teenagers from studying, as they cannot be afforded adequate privacy nor can they work with the noise of other youngsters, who may have little or nothing to do.

NAYPIC Policy

1. Everybody, despite their race, sex or outside appearance, should be treated equally.
2. "Problem youngsters" or those whose personal history dictates such, need the same respect as those who have not had this labelling. There should be no distinctions between deprived and depraved.
3. The right to information, with the support of a social worker, on who we are and what can happen to us.
4. The need for a personal record and memorabilia and belongings, etc . . .
5. The right of privacy and the respect which that accords.
6. The right of freedom of expression, and for any criticisms or suggestions to be taken constructively.
7. Confidences of a personal nature should be confined to whomever it was told.
8. The right to be involved in any decisions that are made about our lives.

4) Files.

"All young people should have the right to read information kept on them."

v. Files and Records

All young people in care will have files kept about them containing details of their family life before coming into care. These will include reports from doctors, psychiatrists and social workers on the young person's progress and behaviour whilst in care.

Young people do not have the right to read their own files though some do with the permission of their social worker and others find out by "borrowing" the key to the filing cabinet.

Many young people feel that too many other people are able to read their files even if they cannot. They believe that much of what is kept in these files can be very much one person's opinion of what is happening. The file does not usually include their views. Particular events can be seen as important years after they have happened and if they are left on file young people in care often feel unfairly weighed down by past reputations. Even people with criminal records have a chance by law to start again so why can't they. They believe that there should be a regular "spring-cleaning" system for records of children in care.

NAYPIC Policy

1. All young people should have the right to read information kept on them. If that information is painful they should be given support to cope with it
2. Young people should have a right to add their own comments and opinions to the file.
3. More control should be kept of who has the chance to read young people's files.
4. Local Authorities should set up a system to "spring-clean" files at regular intervals and preferably in consultation with the young person concerned.
5. The system of keeping information and the reasons for doing so should be explained to any young person coming into care.

5) Fostering (policy only here):

"Local Authorities should not put young people with Foster Parents, siimply because it is cheaper than keeping them in a residential home."

Fostering was replacing children's homes at the time and many enthusiastic LA's closed them all down.

NAYPIC Policy

1. Fostering should be encouraged as an option. Young people in care should be able to be fostered if the circumstances are all right.
2. Local Authorities should not put young people with foster parents, simply because it is cheaper than keeping them in a residential home or school.
3. Not all young people when trying to find foster parents will want to be advertised in shop windows, local papers and magazines, etc. Local authorities should always consult young people before placing any advertisements in such things, if the child is old enough to understand. Young people who do wish to be advertised should be encouraged to write their own piece for advertising.
4. More training of potential foster-parents about care of children and young people is needed.
5. Once fostered contact between the young person and social worker remains very important. Young people should be told where they can contact their social worker.
6. Young people should be allowed to leave their foster-parents if they so wish.
7. Young people should have some say in who they want to be fostered with. To do this, they should be able to visit a few possible foster parents before being offered a short or long term placement.

6) Education. (Excerpt, policy only):

"Social Services have the responsibility, regardless of age or status, of maintaing the young person through further education".

NAYPIC Policy

1. That young people should have every encouragement, support and help in the home, especially those with difficulties in learning, as they would get from "good parents".
2. That all attempts should be made to decrease the institutional stigmas attached to young people in care at school.
3. Teachers should not have access to information that young people themselves are unaware of. Young people should have a right to control how much information about themselves teachers have and who it is passed on to.
4. Social Services should accept that they have the responsibility, regardless of age or status, of maintaining the support of young people through further education.

7) Race, Sex and Disablement:

These are the very first Officially documented views raised by the care experienced from within the membership about racism, sexism & disabled issues within fostering/children's homes settings. We raised these as serious issues before any one else.

ix. Race, Sex and Disablement

Discrimination on the grounds of race or sex is against the law. It has also become more widely appreciated in society that the differences in people's cultural background should be respected and it should be recognised that they need support and encouragement so that they might build their confidence in themselves. Girls, and young people of a minority race or culture can have a difficult time in care. Generally they are expected to adjust their way of thinking to white, male, middle class or christian view. The reality of their background or surrounding environment (school, youth clubs, etc) can be in direct conflict with this.

Greater understanding of their cultural history and information on rights should be provided and, where education occurs within the institution, it should include study on culture.

Cultural and racial differences should be recognised and where there are different values and beliefs these should not be looked upon as the young person having an identity problem, of being "disturbed", or any such label. We feel that there is a need to be more aware and understanding about the development and behaviour of young people who may identify with their own ethnic group and who may require knowledge about that culture.

Again we stress that if homes were to run open meetings of their own then an atmosphere of equality and democracy might help in advancing young people's confidence and understanding in themselves and each other. However, where personal problems or issues are concerned separate meetings or confidential discussions may be necessary with those who have a greater understanding.

NAYPIC Policy on Race

1. More social workers in both field and residential work should be recruited, from different ethnic origins.
2. A young person's religious/cultural background be maintained if he/she wishes, and should not be discouraged.
3. Where racial prejudice or discriminating behaviour is proved to cause harm or hurtful feelings, the persons involved should be severely disciplined or dismissed.
4. All guides for young people entering care should include a section for young people from ethnic minority groups outlining their rights and freedoms. They should be able to seek and have access to further advice if necessary from their local community relations council.

8) Sexual Abuse.

A decade before the world beacme aware that paedophile rings ran children's & foster homes the NAYPIC membership were speaking up about it. It was not easy to do so. The scale of the problem was far greater than we could imagine (and included boys as victims).

Sexual Abuse

Information on what people can do about sexual advances and abuse by staff and other young people should be made available.

These young people should also be made to feel that they will be safe if they want to inform the authority about sexual abuse.

NAYPIC Policy on Sex and Sexuality

1. All staff should be trained in how to deal with sexual problems. All young people should be able to express their feelings about sex without fear of recrimination from staff. Young people should not be regarded as deviants or given special treatment for their behaviour.
2. Contraception should be made available to those of age regardless of the viewpoints of staff.
3. Decent and non-segregated facilities should be available to girls in care with babies.
4. Girls should not be excluded from the democratic process in a home just because they are female.

9) Handicapped young people:

This was before we understood not to use that word. The NAYPIC members were acutely aware of the appalling lack of rights for people with health conditions or impairments in care. As well as non visual impairments.

HANDICAPPED YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

We feel that the social services do not do enough to help disabled young to become independent or to help them to have their own homes and to run them. Many young people end up in long stay hospitals, old people's homes, and other unsuitable institutions. Often the good work done for the handicapped when they are under 18 can be completely destroyed when they reach adulthood. The lack of interest and resources means that rather than independence they can only look forward to a life of further dependence.

Provision needs to be made available for the handicapped of all ages. However, they should never be excluded from the normal daily life of a home nor be treated any differently because of their handicap.

NAYPIC Policy on the Handicapped

Handicapped young people in care should have the right to:

1. As normal a life as possible, including integration into ordinary homes—both foster homes and community homes.
2. Opportunities in housing, leisure, education and employment to fulfil their individual potential and lessen the effect of their disabilities.
3. Opportunities for choice and participation in decision making (that includes the mentally handicapped).

None of these rights should be limited by financial considerations.

10) Complaints.

The one area that the Children's Act 1989 let us down in. A formal complaints system in 1989 would have ensured that many young people saw justice and their Abusers charged and prosecuted in the 1990s and beyond. A Complaints system is a vital safeguard.

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x. COMPLAINTS

Very few authorities have a known complaints procedure. Some that do publicise the fact and the procedure in guides or booklets but these are very few indeed. We welcome the individual effort of these authorities and feel that it should be adopted by all the other local authorities. It is important that an address be available in a booklet so that young people know that they can complain to their social services department rather than their home or field worker. This would be preferred by many because complaints given to social workers can get lost and recriminatory action could also follow by residential staff, without the knowledge of the social services department.

A complaints system should be generally available for every young person in care to have a fair hearing in any serious disciplinary situation. This should involve an outside independent person and the young person should have some support in putting their views across. However, a complaints procedure would be more effective if it could be open to any young person who feels that they have a grievance or who want to report some action or activity which they feel to be wrong, concerning their life or local authority care. There is an urgent need for an official complaints procedure known to every young person in care and it should involve a panel of people not employed or involved with the social services.

NAYPIC would support any proposals for a new and independent complaints procedure to be set up. However, this cannot be done in isolation, all through this report we have stressed the need for young people to be more involved in the running of their home and we feel that a complaints procedure should fit into an overall commitment to allowing young people to voice their feelings and opinions and for them to see that suggestions and complaints will be acted on.

A formal complaints system would not then be the only form of action for redress. And many smaller cases or incidents would not have to go through a lengthy and perhaps complicated procedure. If a complaints system is the only outlet it would also become a very busy one. The best way of dealing with both complaints and suggestions is for this to be taken up within house meetings with the knowledge that a higher authority exists, should this be inadequate.

11) Leaving Care:

NAYPIC had many ex care people supporting, advocating for others. We were the first to run ex care groups (Care Leavers) and to support the needs for people after care. This, at a time when NO post care support was available.

NAYPIC Policy

1. Every Local Authority should have a policy which lays guidelines about how a young person should be prepared for leaving care and make sure establishments are organised to allow this.
2. All young people should have experience of doing their own washing, budgeting, cooking, etc.
3. There should be more half-way establishments which allow greater freedom but with some support; hostels, bedsits, etc.
4. Every Local Authority should provide some support and advice service for young people out of care as they learn to cope alone—this would include temporary accommodation, weekend stays, information and advice on education, welfare rights, accommodation, etc.
5. Every Local Authority should have a budget which would allow each young person leaving care to have a realistic grant towards setting up on their own, eg, furniture and household goods.
6. Social Workers should receive more adequate training in the issues which face young people leaving care.

!2) Leaving Care Policy:

I think one major POSITIVE change since those days is that today we can include every person - regardless of age - as a Care Leaver. The people who have the least data on them and in my view need special poicies & support would be the aged Care Leaver.

Leaving Care

Leaving care, particularly for those who came into care at a young age and who have lived in care ever since, can create very mixed feelings. Many do look forward to "getting out" of care and being in control of their own lives, but often shortly before they leave they start to become frightened and worried at the prospect. Most young people will be totally unprepared to manage on their own, especially after having everything done for them whilst in care. The last figures from the DHSS tell us there were 100,200 children and young people in care in England and Wales in March 1980. In one year 46,000 young people left care—the statistics tell us that over half left care because they became self-supporting or care was taken over by a parent, guardian, relative or friend. Some of these may not have needed help but it still leaves 19,300 young people who were discharged in other ways: any help they received from authorities was entirely discretionary; and for those who happen to have been in voluntary care the only duty of a local authority is to "advise and befriend them".

Alternatively, many young people are expected to leave their homes at 18 or in exceptional circumstances they can stay until the age of 21. We feel it is totally unrealistic for the social services to care for someone one day and then to expect them to fend for themselves the next. Many local authorities are failing in their duty as good parents to young people in their care. We can estimate that thousands of young people leave care totally unprepared after spending years in local authority children's homes and hostels, because they have reached the age of 18. Authorities are not under any duty towards them once they reach that age and they may be left to find accommodation for themselves in depressing bedsits or unsuitable hostels.

13) Support & Financial Assistance after Leaving Care:

"As a group NAYPIC is greatly concened about the awful things that happen to young people once they are out of care".

Support and Financial Assistance after leaving care

Whatever resources are made available, and we feel that young people leaving care should have as wide a choice as possible, it is not enough merely to get someone placed in some accommodation and expect them to get on with it. Life can be very different and difficult when you are on your own, when previous links have been cut there is a need for continued help and support. When young people first leave care they do need fairly major financial help, for example in furnishing a bedsit, buying linen, pots and pans, crockery and cutlery and clothes to wear for work and college or job interviews. Every local authority needs a clear duty to provide financial assistance. The present law under Section 27 of the Childrens Act 1980 is not sufficient in reminding local authorities of their real obligations. It seems like a concession for young people rather than a right. The law allows policies and practices to vary wildly, consequently many young people leaving care can get a very raw deal indeed.

The notion "sink or swim" that young people have to accept and which social workers use to measure their own involvement is appalling. Many young people are forced back into a social work system or into some other agency after their rejection by the social work system. Their confidence and capabilities reaching a low, they cope the best way that they can. This can lead them into a life of destitution, drug abuse, prostitution etc. As a group NAYPIC is greatly concerned about the awful things that can happen to young people once they are out of care. We feel that with continued support and use of resources many of these problems would hardly exist.

At the moment the prevailing notion in some authorities seems to be that young people leaving care will either sink or swim: if they sink then they may be forced to rely on other social services and thus use up valuable resources. Lack of support can mean that young people get led into a life of destitution, drug abuse, prostitution, etc.

As a group NAYPIC is greatly concerned about this. We feel that with continued support many of the problems faced by young people leaving care would be lessened, that they would not be forced into relying on resources from other social services and that they might quickly become really independent and self-reliant.

What is needed is greater preparation whilst in care, resources made available when you are leaving and the continued help and support of someone who you know will be around and whom you can trust. The whole area of preparation needs to be given more emphasis in social work training and in-service training. They could invite members of a local NAYPIC group along to speak to social workers or social work students about the general problems which they face in care and their views on how they can be tackled more effectively. This could also be extended into the area of accommodation: in Bradford ex-care members of NAYPIC are involved in a housing venture which allows young people leaving care both the provision of a flat and the necessary support to go with it.

14) Conclusion. (Excerpt only):

"Any Child Care policies which are made must involve those who are affected by them".

Conclusion

There are in fact many issues and problems attached to being in care. We have tried to keep to the main ones within this Report. It is hoped that the Committee will have a chance to listen to the variety and vitality with which young people have shown their concern over their own welfare and the problems attached, at the 1983 London Conference and at the local NAYPIC meeting in Bradford, to which you will be invited. The main argument which runs all through the report is that young people should have a greater responsibility in the decisions relating to their lives. We feel that this extends into and beyond the particular type of care they have and are under. We would like young people to have more of a say in the day-to-day decision-making in homes, for their rights to be made clearer to them, and for a satisfactory structure to be provided so that the process can start operating effectively and efficiently. We feel that the government can help in its child care legislation by making the involvement of young people possible by law and by making existing law both clearer in its intention and wider in its application.

NAYPIC would like to add that in its view the move towards community based care is good social work policy and should be continued and extended. This means a wide availability of care within the community—we do not see fostering as an inevitable progression of this, it should be seen as part of the overall picture. It should not be seen as an obvious alternative nor as succeeding residential care as being somehow more "natural". This view is damaging both in implication and practice. The cutting back of residential care is of the greatest concern to us. Community homes are a valuable asset which should not be closed. The face of social work is pock-marked with the faults and failures of past fashions and trends. We need to keep options open for the future.

We would like more support from local authorities and residential workers so that NAYPIC groups might be encouraged to develop. This would give young people the chance to have an independent liaison group with social services. This is most important as many social services are now looking at some of the ideas for change that we've mentioned in our report.

Any child care policy changes which are made must involve those who will be affected by them. Young people in care will only accept social services policies for care if departments accept young people as those with the real knowledge of what being in care is about. Six years ago young people in care put together for the first time a charter of rights and a list of demands for changes. Six years later these have not yet been fulfilled.

Charter for Children's Rights:

The genesis for the growth of NAYPIC were a series of meetings held in the 1970s called WHO CARES. It was run by the @ncbtweets. This charter for the care experienced goes back to 1975 and was updated by us in 1981 - it is like our Magna Carta.

Charter of Rights for Young People in Care

1. The right to be accepted as an individual member of society. Also the right to be treated with the same respect given to any other valid member of the human race.
2. The right to know who we are. To know our parents and brothers and sisters. To have factual information about our family origins and background.
3. The right to be able to make our own decisions and to have real influence over these decisions we are sometimes considered too thick to participate in.
4. The right to privacy. We understand that in care it is not always possible to choose who we are going to live and share our lives with. But we are still human beings and are still entitled to the essential amount of privacy needed before cracking up.
5. The right to be given an insight into the use of money by handling it, using it and paying the consequences if we misuse it, eg being given the money in our hand to buy personal items.
6. The right to choose those who will represent us whether it be legally or otherwise, eg social workers. Also the right to choose those whom we wish to confide in.
7. The right to be as much a part of society as the next person and not to be labelled in any way.

The Things we want Changed

1. Give us a chance to find a voice and to speak and mix with ordinary people so that public attitudes about care can be changed for the better. Set up NAYPIC groups throughout the country.
2. Give all young people in care a chance to attend their own six-monthly review. Give us a say in who attends, besides the social worker, his boss and the people we live with. Younger children need someone to speak for them. Learn how to talk with us and learn how to listen. Give all children in care a voice in their life.
3. Do away with the order book and special voucher system for buying our clothing. It will save money if we are allowed to shop in ordinary stores—not just the most expensive ones. Do away with special tokens for our school dinners.
4. Help residential workers and field social workers find ways of working more closely together than they do at present. They should stop pulling in opposite directions against the children.
5. Bring pocket money and clothing allowance into line nationally so that most children of the same age get roughly the same allowance. Children should know how much the allowance is and what it is expected to cover.
6. Help us to have a realistic approach to sex education and personal relationships. Enable us to learn how to look after ourselves –not suddenly at 18 expect us to know all the things we've never had a chance to learn.
7. Help us sort out our education while we're young. A lot of us have missed out on our schooling through being in care and moving from place to place.
8. Make sure every young person in care really understands his situation and why he cannot live with his family. Give us factual information—a booklet or leaflet—to explain care and the laws that affect us. When we leave care, make sure we know what help we can reasonably ask for and expect to get.
9. Ask local authorities to decide whether or not corporal punishment is allowed in their children's homes. Children in care should know what the ruling is and who they can turn to for help if they think they are being ill-treated. This is delicate but it can be done.
10. Find ways of letting us help children younger than ourselves. Give us something to work for while we are in care.

Participation:

NAYPIC proved highly influential within social work practise, in academia, LA adminstration & Government. Professonials looked to gauge our views as the bechmark for good practise and transformation. @BASW_UK agreed with our policies & Report conclusions.

The recent DHSS Report by the Social Work Service on residential care in the London region added support to these criticisms and some of its recommendations add weight to our own policies. In particular we support *recommendation (11) on Participation:*

(i) Children should be given the opportunity, as far as possible, to accept responsibility for making decisions about their own lives and futures and to share in decisions about everyday life in the home. (9.20 to 9.27 and 17.30).

(ii) Recognition should also be given to the need for young people to have the opportunity of sharing in, and contributing to, written records and reports of concern to them. (4.20, 4.21 and 17.11).

The last BASW conference for residential workers also took as its theme the negative aspects of living in an institution and discussed the need for client participation and how it could be achieved. The major conclusion was that it would be hard to achieve because of the poor attitude by Social Services Departments. The Barclay Report was also critical of the role of management and the whole career structure of the Social Services which works against the involvement of clients in any decision-making process. We endorse the criticisms made of a structure which blocks a client's access to management, access to files and which fails to observe the rules of natural justice when taking statutory action.

The Report emphasised the need for clients to "participate in the making of important decisions about himself or should be consulted before they are made; he must be made aware of his rights and how and where to go about obtaining them; he must be given an essential minimum of information, including information from records, as to what decisions have been taken about him, by whom and why; if he is aggrieved, he (or his representative) must have direct access to a person or body with the power to make redress; again if he is aggrieved he must have access either to an independent professional opinion, or to some other objective yardstick as to what constitutes acceptable practice". Other conclusions of the Report we would like to draw to the Committee's attention and with which we agree, are that:

> There should be no pre-supposition that care provided in a client's own home or in a foster home is necessarily better than or preferable to, care in a residential home,

and also that:

> A structured survey of clients' views should be considered either by the DHSS or by local authorities . . .

NAYPIC stood alone in a landscape that today sees many advocacy groups, outlets, pathways & opportunities for the #cep. It's power lay as a grassroots org with local groups & a national body to represent it; the views of the care experienced were filtered through one mechanism -

Many of the Organisations that exist today do so because of the efforts of NAYPIC and Who Cares. There is no better way to support the care community in my view, to reach those in care and raise them up than by allowing them to represent themselves, enable self determination.