

Experts by experience group: expression of interest

Please note this expression of interest has now closed and this document is published on our website as a record.

Have you or your family ever had a child and family social worker? We're looking for people with experience of children's social care to join the Experts by experience group.

As part of the independent review of children's social care we are forming an Experts by experience group. The group will provide an opportunity for children, young people, adults and families with lived experience of the care system to have their say and help shape the future of children's social care.

If you want to be one of those voices, then just fill out our application form to let us know that you're interested.

Background

On 15 January 2021, the Education Secretary announced the launch of an independent review of children's social care. The review, led by Josh MacAlister, will identify how the system can be changed and reformed to improve children and young people's lives at the earliest opportunity. Every child, no matter their background or the circumstances in which they grow up, must have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

To deliver on this ambition we know the review must put the needs, experiences, and opinions of the children and families it supports at the heart of its scope and findings. We know that people with lived experience of the care system understand it best.

The Experts by experience group is one of the ways we'll be giving anyone who has had a social worker (either themselves or a child in their care) the opportunity to share their understanding and views on the care system and play a part in improving children's social care.

What are the joining criteria?

We will be appointing a small number of individuals that:

1. Have lived experienced of the children's social care system, whether current or previous, through:
 - interaction with a social worker as a child
 - personal experience in care
 - the family of a child who has interacted with a social worker
 - the family of a child who has been placed in care
2. Are comfortable contributing respectfully alongside people who may have had very different experiences to your own.

3. Have the ability to communicate views about children's social care clearly and concisely, and also the views of others with experience of children's social care.

To ensure the Experts by experience group represents as broad a range of voices from care as possible we will be actively seeking to make sure the group is diverse and representative. We encourage applications from people with the widest possible range of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences. We particularly welcome applications from those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and applicants with disabilities.

What exactly will the Experts by Experience Group do?

All Experts by experience group members will have the opportunity to play a central role in the review. For instance, you will be able to:

- share your opinions, ideas and experiences with Josh and the review team, including around how the review should engage with other care experienced people and families
- participate in discussions, workshops and focus groups to comment on and guide the review's recommendations

Time commitment

We expect that you will need to be able to commit to spending up to half a day per month to the role (for approximately 12 months).

Group members will be compensated if participation is not funded by their employer, or you are unable to work whilst participating and would otherwise be left out of pocket. In addition, group members may be paid to complete discrete pieces of work or projects throughout the review, and all members of the group will be entitled to claim any reasonable expenses incurred as part of the role, in line with guidelines that will be issued to you upon appointment

Location

The group will meet virtually; however, where physical attendance at a meeting or event is necessary group members will be reimbursed reasonable travel and subsistence costs incurred.

Are there other ways to share my views?

The Experts by experience group will not be the only way the review hears the views of children, young people, care experienced adults and families with lived experience of the children's social care system - there will be many other opportunities. Anyone who applies to join this group will also have the opportunity to sign-up to an engagement list so we can get in touch with you when there are future opportunities to participate in the review.

We are anticipating a high volume of applications for a limited number of positions. However, if you aren't appointed to the group then there will still be many opportunities for

you to directly contribute to this important review. Details of these opportunities will be shared in the coming weeks.

Application process

To apply to join the Experts by experience group, please complete the application form by 5pm on Friday 5 February 2021. Josh MacAlister will lead the selection panel to choose members of the group and has selected Jenny Molloy (Care Leaver and Author) and Shazia Hussain (Head of the Independent Review Team) to support him.

Before making appointments to the group the review selection panel, which will include those with experience of children's social care, will arrange an informal conversation with shortlisted applicants to understand more about your motivations for applying for the role. We will also request a reference at this stage. You will not be asked about your personal experience of children's social care at any point in the process.

