



**DEAR SOCIAL  
SERVICES  
2022**

# DEAR SOCIAL SERVICES

*With thanks to the Young Company who invested their time, experience and hope; who inspire and teach us every day.*

*With thanks to Kiln Theatre for their expertise and unwavering commitment to youth voice and influence.*

*With thanks to the William Brake Foundation whose generosity funded this project.*

*With thanks to Brent Local Authority for their partnership.*

## ABOUT BRENT CARE JOURNEYS

Brent Care Journeys is pioneering strategic alliance between Barnardo's and the local authority of Brent. It is unusual for the statutory and voluntary sector to come together in this way, but we need to work innovatively to support some of the unacceptably entrenched, and simultaneously unprecedented challenges faced by young people today.

Barnardo's are making this investment to enable partnership working with young people who have grown up in the care system. We know that our services across the UK make a huge impact to the lives of children and families every day, but what we want to learn more about is how to address the need for systemic change, by giving more power and agency to the people who have true lived expertise of the issues at hand.

We achieve this incrementally through a fundamental belief that empowering relationships can be a pivotal place of change. We design, test and implement together; we employ young people who have grown up in care to be the change that they want to see; we learn reciprocally and with mutual respect; we listen, and we give centre stage to the least heard.

Outcomes for young people who have grown up in care are unacceptably poor and we exist to reverse that.

## ABOUT THE WORK IN THIS BOOKLET

This work has been developed over five months by a newly formed Young Company of care experienced young people in collaboration with Brent Care Journeys and Kiln Theatre.

They came together to experiment with a range of expressive art forms and to find meaningful ways to speak to the people around them. This booklet contains their poetry, but wider opportunities included film, monologue, movement, sound and visual art. The programme was open to all care experienced young people accommodated in the borough.

The purpose of the programme was to promote a better understanding of life in and leaving care. We want to live in a society where all children are cared for and where communities are strong places of hope and support. Services for young people are facing unprecedented demand with limited resource, all at a time when the needs of children and young people are more complex than ever before. The numbers of children in and leaving care are increasing. We can only do more if we work together to create safe, positive places to live and grow.

Our young people tell us that they feel “second rate” and like they are “hiding in plain sight”. We all need to do something about that.

## Dear Social Services,

Thanks but no thanks.

Why am I thanking you for things you should be doing anyways.

It's like telling me well done for doing things that I should be doing.

If you live for a compliment you will die by an insult.

So no thanks.

Anonymous

## Dear Social Services,

What did you really do that you had to go out of your way to do?

I'm the strong one checking on everyone, when do you ever check on me?

If I hardly call, why do you give me a hard time when I do?

Anonymous

## Dear Social Services,

Social services treat younger children better than older children because the younger ones need more care. It doesn't feel fair because the older ones need it too.

by Steven

## Dear Social Services,

Why do you think you can try and use me for work but can not give me a job? Where is the support you said you were gonna give me?

by Jerome



**I feel like letting go of it growing up.**

Let me tell you what you did.

Let me tell you so I can let go.

Let me let you know how I was feeling so no other feels  
what I felt.

How was I supposed to know?

My anger was a reflection of what I was feeling.

What would patience look like if you showed me it?

How was I supposed to let go?

I'm ready to let you know.

By Sabrin

**You can't tell me who I am.**

Your perception is your opinion.

I am who I am.

Provoked or unprovoked.

I am who I am.

If your words meant something I would try to make an effort to change.

My life, my choice.

When I die you don't continue to live my life for me.

Anonymous

**We are building a**

World of sunshine and joy

**Peaceful place**

A place of infinite adventure and opportunity

**A place where we feel free.**

By Conor





# DEAR BABY I WILL LOVE FOREVER

You will forever be adored for your cheeky smile.

## **Why was I judged for mine?**

You might occasionally forget to tidy up but mummy will do that for you.

## **Why was it always on me?**

You will have one home, one family.

## **Why was I tossed from home to home?**

You might sometimes feel sad but mummy will always wipe your tears and hold you.

## **Why did my tears have to be a secret?**

You may at times feel anxious but mummy will hold your hand and walk it with you.

## **Why was I expected to suck it up and move on?**

You will drive your career with your argumentative nature.

## **Why was it a reason not to invite me?**

You will have jaw dropping eyelashes. Just another one of your pretty features.

## **Why was it my only praise?**

You will feel sick but Mummy will care for you.

## **Why did no one care for me?**

You will never need to let your feelings be a secret, mummy will always understand.

## **Why did no one try to understand me?**

**You will know nothing but real love.**

**For me, your first breath will be my first touch of real love.**

By Kayla



Home  
Social work  
Care

Hate

Hiding

Scared

**Lonely**

School

Go Home

Happy

Sad

**Scared**

Leave Me Alone

Don't Leave Me Alone

Help Me To Survive

Am I Home?

Why Am I Here?

When Did This Happen

Why Wasn't You There

Am I Wrong Or Is It You?

You're A Blessing In Disguise

**I Survived**

Carry Me Home

by Sabrin

# LOVE

This is supposed to be a bad poem

But it is about love

Conor doesn't like it

But it is about love

How's life

Without love

A care system

Without care

This is supposed to be about love

But it is a bad poem

By Sabrin

## **I am not a fan of love**

Love to me is scraping the empty tub of butter to  
put on your toast

It's the soul crushing cold in the dying embers of  
a bonfire

I am not a fan of love

By Conor

# LOVE

The concept of love

Bleed my heart

Fuse me to foe

Feel romantic with a partner or self

I'm perplexed with emotion

Is this going to last a lifetime

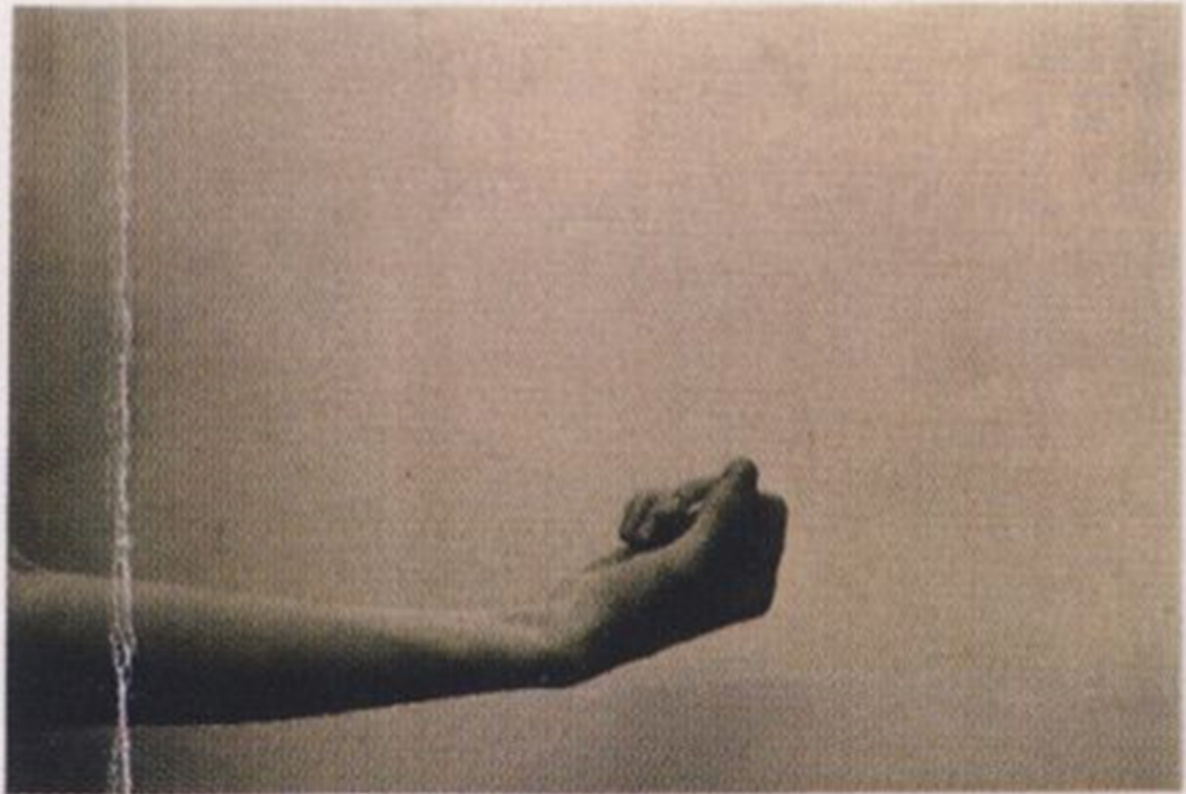
As I ponder the thought in my mind, a

World of peace

Love fills the space

Erases the empty void and fills that heart of  
mine.

By Jermaine



Dear Social Services was created by the Young Company including:

Charmaine  
Jermaine King-Kabali  
Kayla Marcella  
Noemi Dziatkowska  
Sabrin Jama  
Nassr Suleman  
Steven Fuller  
Steven Osubor

The original live exhibition was performed by: Basheba 'Bashiie' Baptiste, Fanta Barrie, Jonny Khan. Movement piece choreographed and performed by Hamza Ali and Laura Jane Romer-Ormiston (inspired by the Young Company).

Director: Gemma Orleans-Thompson  
Associate: Basheba 'Bashiie' Baptiste  
Assistant: Catherine Moriarty  
Designer: Pip Terry  
Stage Manager: Audrey Owusu  
Technical Events Manager: Dave Judd

With thanks to guest artists:

Conrad Murray  
Dhubheasa Lanipekun  
Tatenda Matsvai  
Temi Majekodunmi  
Vicky Moran

With thanks to the Brent Care Journeys team

Children's Services Manager: Anna Willow  
Lead Project Worker: Appia Douglas  
Senior Project Worker: Gifty Amofa

With thanks to the Creative Engagement department:

Head of Creative Engagement: Romana Fello  
Communities Manager: Maria Shury-Smith  
Youth & Pathways Manager: Kyron Greenwood

