Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Courtney Shepherd, a postgraduate student at Manchester Metropolitan University studying Childhood Development and Well-being in Practice. I am writing to you to inform you of some new research that I am conducting and to see if your organisation would be interested in participating in the study.

The study is looking at Care Leavers transitions out of the UK foster system. We are interested in exploring the factors that impact the transition out of care including the type of accommodation they lived in during care and whether they received and support during their transition . Participants need to have had previous experience of being in foster care. This includes any care leaver that was in foster care, residential care or kinship care. The young person must have been in care since at least their 14th birthday and were in care on or after their 16th birthday. There will be a focus on capturing the voice of the care leaver as they transitioned from care to adulthood. Geographical locations will be restricted to the United Kingdom. Participants will be excluded if they have no previous personal experience of being in foster care and becoming a care leaver. Participants will be excluded if they were adopted as the study is researching care leavers experiences of the transition out of foster care as opposed to adoption. They will be asked to participate in a short semi structured interview lasting 30 minutes.

There is evidence now suggesting that, undoubtedly, the transition from foster home to independent living is not always smooth sailing (Care Leavers Association,2014). Many care leavers face difficulties during and after leaving care in terms of their mental health, education and employment, housing and facing the risk of homelessness. Enhancing our understanding of placement and support during the transition will enable us to be cognisant of the factors that impact a transition out of care to independent living, from the voices of care leavers themselves.

Your organisation has been supporting this group of people for many years. We would appreciate your cooperation and support by disseminating the participant information sheet to your members.

Please find attached all the relevant information for the study which will help you decide whether you would like to support our research. If you would like to find out more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

Courtney Shepherd

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