

## **Beyond Lockdown**

**A rapid response study funded by ARC KSS June – December 2020**

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# Research questions and aims

- What has been the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on care leavers' mental health and functioning?
- What support do care leavers want as lockdown ends?

We aimed to coproduce, with care leavers, messages for services to facilitate provision of timely, informed support, and for care leavers to guide them through the post-lockdown transition

# The process

National online survey (n=134): impact; key messages to services and peers. Three unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC) - 4 key questions



Two rounds of online workshops with care leavers in KSS region (n=10): review summary survey findings, draft two sets of messages – for professionals and other care leavers

## In brief, during lockdown ...

- \*Isolation
- \*Loneliness
- \*Loss of routine
- \*Loss of motivation
- \*Uncertainty
- \*Anxiety and depression
- \*Feeling unsafe in accommodation
- \*Struggling with essentials
- \*Deterioration of physical & mental health; disrupted sleep

**To services: don't abandon us; reach out; check in; be proactive; offer genuine, not tick-box care; PA relationship is key**

## KEY PRIORITIES FOR SERVICES

**Mental Health**

**Employment,  
Education and  
Training**

**Finances**

**Housing**

**Reconnecting with  
other people**

**Physical Health**

# KEY MESSAGES TO OTHER CARE LEAVERS

there's always someone  
let people know  
say it Access support  
don't be afraid If you feel lonely  
support staff value in others  
relieved Get help if you're struggling  
feel safe worthy Early keep in touch Voice Please talk  
lots of support  
ask for help  
If you need help there to help Ring  
Services PA  
People will not judge you Seek help talk  
Take care of yourself support worker  
If you're depressed Never be afraid look for support  
friends strength workers  
Don't struggle  
reach out  
other care leavers get it

WordItOut



Stay in contact

'See those you care about'. In person is best but if not text, video, Zoom.



Do things  
you enjoy

Spend time doing things that are good for you and benefit you



Routine and  
structure

Maintain or re-build a pre-lockdown routine or establish a new one



Small steps

Take small steps to reconnect, build routine, re-establish interests



Stay positive

Try and keep hopeful and optimistic about the future

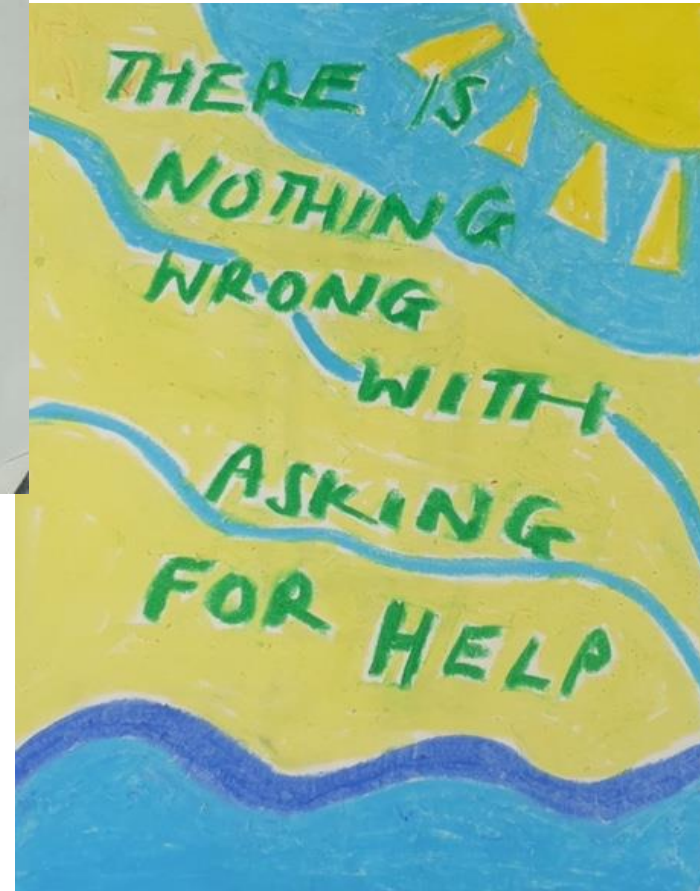
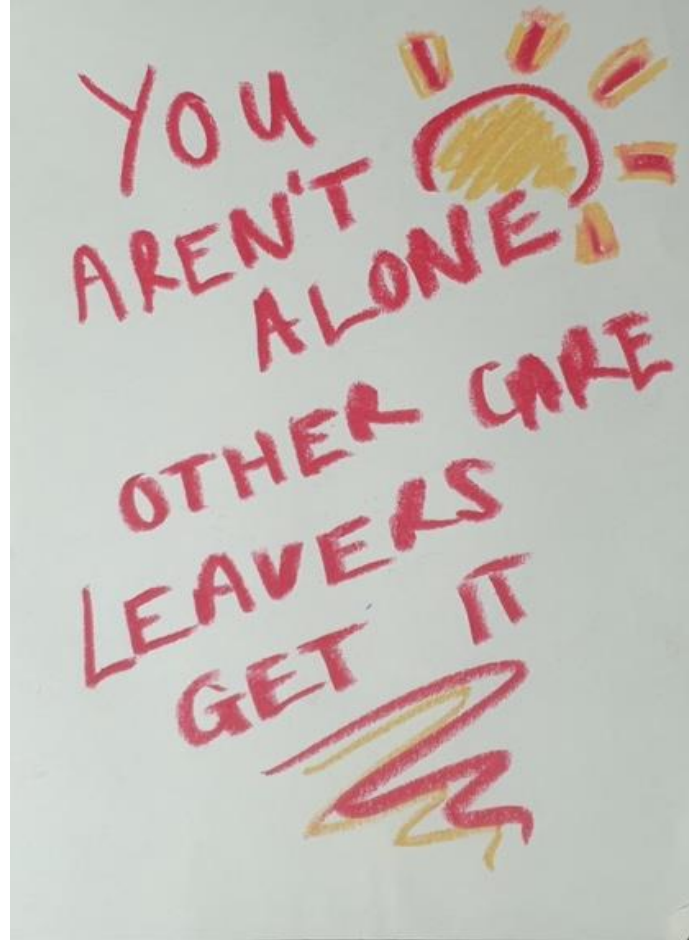


Ask for help

Reach out; find the right person to talk to; you're not alone

# Messages

Care leavers in Kent created audio messages for care leavers and professionals and worked with a young local artist to represent some of the messages visually



<https://kssahsn.net/beyond-lockdown-impact-of-covid-19-on-care-leavers/>

# The process

Two Communities of Practice bringing together care leavers, practitioners, policy makers and researchers - > PLEDGES (Nov 2020), revisited re implementation (March 2021)



Further dissemination (and implementation?) through National Care Leaver Benchmarking Forums – led by care leavers



# Pledges

*To be proactive with our young people about difficult conversations regarding loneliness and who is supporting them/who they want to support them over the holidays especially. I also want to discuss with managers how we will recognise co-production in our Local Offer, especially how we feedback to our young people.*

West Sussex County  
Council

*To explore setting up a Peer Advocacy project for Care leavers in Kent and Medway.*

The Young Lives  
Foundation Advocacy  
Service, Kent

# Pledges

*Run a buddy initiative where young people can be paired with other young people to encourage social networks (peer mentoring)*

*Identify parent care leavers/pregnant care leavers to identify extra support.*

East Sussex County Council

*Follow up findings from research with care leavers studying at University of Kent.*

University of Kent

*To share some pointers with key Royal College of Nursing members and suggesting coverage in one of our broader Royal College of Nursing bulletins.*

Royal College of Nursing

# Issues raised at Community of Practice

## Limitations:

- \*We didn't reach more marginalised care leavers
- \*'Survey fatigue'
- \*Preliminary: not peer reviewed or published yet

## Challenges?

- \*The messages are a great beginning - development?
- \*How to give care leavers the personal contact they want?  
PA relationship is key. Peer support – bridge?
- \*Care leavers wish to be independent. Support? Enable?



## BEYOND THE RESEARCH PROJECT..



### DISCUSSION



What has your PA or local authority done for you to support you during the pandemic?



What now should be Services' key priorities to support Care Leavers as lockdown restrictions ease?



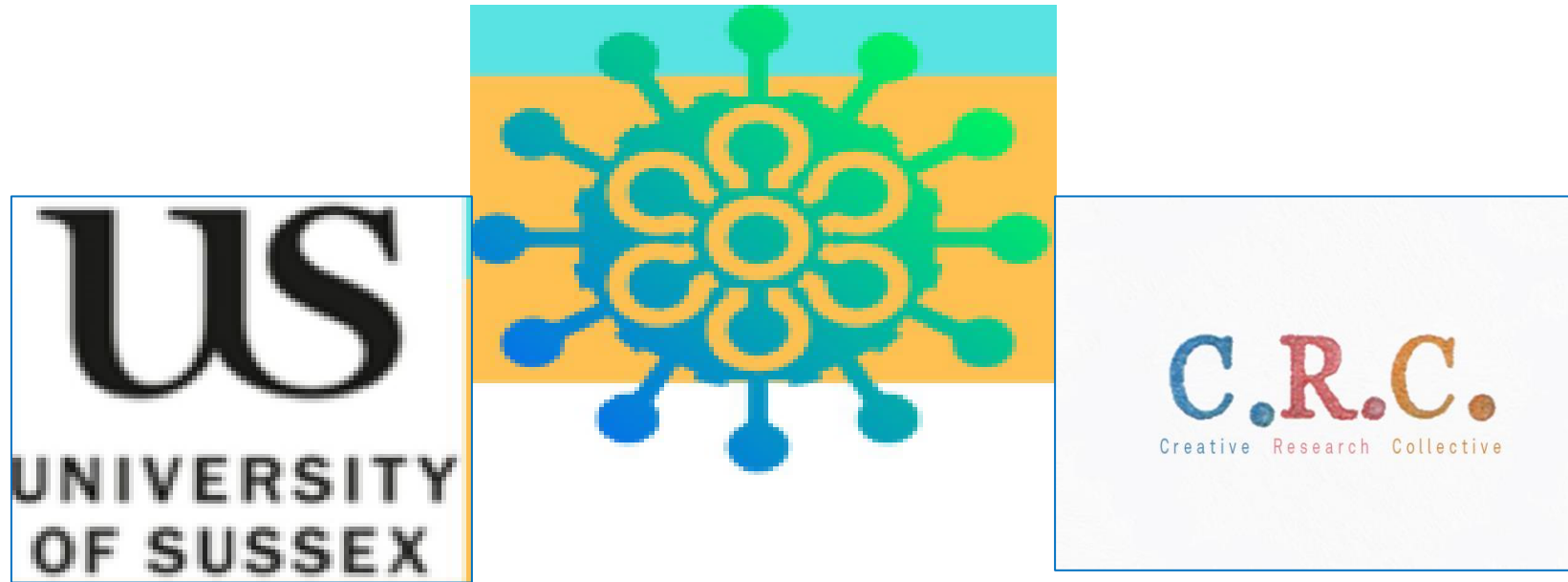
What are your key messages to Services?



What are your key messages to other Care Leavers?

\* Kent care leavers have shared the research nationally – disseminating and *developing* the messages, stimulating conversations

\* **Key question – how do we measure implementation beyond the research project?**



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**<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/cress/research/current/beyond-lockdown>**