

## Reflections from Care Leavers

Now, as a 31 year old, I find myself quite the introvert. I like to think it's because I have found contentment within myself, but I'm sure that this is largely due to having a limited number of people in my life as a young person who would remain consistently without leaving, forcing me then to forge friendships with new people, just for them to end once again. You just become numb to people walking in and out of your life.

Friendships cannot be formed with other children if you never know which school you'll be attending by the end of the week. Children in care are often not very good at making friends if they are survivors of trauma and are often withdrawn to start with.

I attended maybe four primary schools and 3 high schools due to being moved around so regularly between one foster home to another, or a children's home at the opposite end of the county. This made it difficult still to make any decent, meaningful friendships and so I never used to try.

I was never allowed to sleep over at other people's houses, always being the one who had to leave the sleepover party because the parents of my friends weren't policy checked. It left me feeling angry with the social workers. They didn't see that making me leave the party, making me different, caused me actual harm. Other children's parents had pre-conceptions about me; they saw me as a bad influence on their own children when I wasn't.