

**Aftercare for Care Leavers:
Learning lessons from
across Europe**

Discover EU aftercare practices, identify gaps and find out how the EU can drive change. Learn how trauma-informed care is helping children and young people as they make the transition from care across Europe, especially during COVID19.

13 October 2020 - 10:00- 12:30; 14:00- 15:30 - Online

carepath

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“Aftercare for Care Leavers: Learning lessons from across Europe”

Online conference on how the EU can improve services for care leavers across Europe

25 September 2020

The transition to adulthood and independent living is a challenging time for many young people. Thankfully, most have their families to fall back on when life doesn’t go exactly to plan. Young people who have grown up in public care usually don’t have that luxury. And too often state support is removed, or cut back when a young person turns 18. The consequences can be devastating not only for the young people involved but for society as a whole.

The availability of ‘aftercare’ - state support for young people who have left care - varies between and within European countries in terms of availability and quality. The COVID-19 pandemic and its containment measures have only accentuated the challenges these young people face.

On 13 October, the international [CarePath Project](#) is convening an online conference to raise the issue of aftercare for children and young people on the EU agenda.

“This conference puts the spotlight on young people all over Europe who are transitioning out of public care. Many have experienced childhood trauma and are especially vulnerable during this period. The systems of after-care support are very different between and within countries. By bringing together the voices of academics, practitioners and ‘care-experienced’ young people, the conference will explore what the EU can do to encourage countries to improve their after-care policies and practices.” – Jana Hainsworth, Secretary General, Eurochild.

The conference aims to raise the crucial need for reform of Europe’s child protection systems so the approximate 1 million children growing up in care in Europe ([Eurochild, 2010](#)) have access to aftercare.

Furthermore, measures need to be put in place to ensure that aftercare, where it is available, is not disrupted by containment measures introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Policy and practice examples from different European countries demonstrate how they can make an important contribution to promoting the resilience of young people from care to adulthood - by achieving stability and continuity in foster, residential care and kinship care; by having a strong legal framework; in involving young people in both individual and policy decisions; and by providing a range of leaving care services to support young people on their pathways to adulthood.” – Mike Stein, Professor Emeritus, University of York

The voice of care leavers must be central to the development of aftercare policies. Attendees will also hear from care-experienced advocates who will share their lived experiences of growing up in state care to encourage countries to improve their aftercare policies and practices.

“In the child protection system we can see some changes, but they are not sufficient down here at the grassroots level. We face a lot of problems and challenges such as unemployment due to the lack of good quality education, housing and health benefits aftercare. We are not prepared for the independent living and as such we face a lot of uncertainty, we are vulnerable and some of us end up in prostitution or child pornography. This has to STOP, NOW!” – Andreaas Novacovici, Care-experienced advocate from SOS Children’s Villages International and President of the Institutionalised Council of Youth Romania

This conference takes place at an important crossroad in EU legislature, as the EU prepares to roll out its new Budget for 2021-2027, including the upcoming European Child Guarantee initiative, the European Social Fund+ and the Next Generation EU recovery fund. These instruments must be focused on enhancing the protection of all vulnerable children and young people, including those who age out of the care system during these times.

[For more information and to register for the CarePath conference](#)

For more information:

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About the CarePath project

The CarePath project is an international partnership of 7 organisations across Europe working together to promote a trauma-informed care approach for children and young people ageing out of care. The project is funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Commission (2014-2020).

www.carepath-project.eu