



Experts by Experience (EBE) Young People's Reference Group

As part of the review of Children's Services in Northern Ireland VOYPIC is supporting the creation of an **Experts by Experience (EBE) Reference Group** for young people aged 14- 25 years old. The group will give young people with lived experience of these services and the care system the opportunity to have their say and help shape the future of Children's Services.

What are the joining criteria?

The group will be made up of 15 -20 people who:

- Have lived experienced of one or more children's service within the past 5 years.
This may include; family experience of gateway, family support services, looked after children services (including residential child care, fostering and kinship care), adoption services, services for children and young people with a disability, leaving and after care services.
- Can contribute respectfully alongside people who may have had very different experiences to yours and may hold different views.
- Are able to manage the responsibilities of the role alongside other personal commitments and attend all meetings of the group online or in person, as required. Meetings may be held on Saturdays to facilitate reference group members.
- Represent the views of others with experience of care and children's social care services.
- Are passionate about improving the quality of services and support for children and families in Northern Ireland.
- Are able to travel independently across Northern Ireland as required*

**Support with travel arrangements will be provided for young people with a disability and to those under 16 years of age where required.*

To ensure the EBE Reference Group represents as broad a range of voices with experience of Children's Services as possible we will be actively seeking to make sure the group is diverse and representative. We encourage applications from people with the widest possible range of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences.

What exactly will the EBE Reference Group do?

All group members will have the opportunity to play a central role in the Review.

For example, they will have the opportunity to:

- share opinions, ideas and experiences with the review team, including how the review should engage with other children, young people and families
- participate in discussions, and comment on and guide the review's recommendations

Time commitment: About half a day per month for approximately 12 months. Members will be expected to attend at least six half-day meetings of the EBE Reference Group, as well as attending a small number of meetings with the Review's Advisory Group on a rota basis. Preparation meetings will be held online in advance of each EBE Reference Group meeting.

Payment: Group members will be compensated for their participation. In addition, all members of the group will be able to claim any reasonable expenses incurred as part of the role. Certificates and acknowledgement of participation and contribution will be provided.

Location: The EBE Reference Group meetings will take place in person, subject to ongoing public health restrictions. Preparation meetings will take place virtually. Where physical attendance at a meeting is necessary, group members will be reimbursed reasonable travel and subsistence costs incurred.

Are there other ways to share my views? The EBE Reference Group just one way the Review will hear the views of children and young people with lived experience of Children's

Services. We expect lots of interest in the EBE Reference Group and it is likely not everyone who applies will get a place. For those that do not get a place on the group there will still be many opportunities to directly contribute to this important Review.

Details of these opportunities will be shared in the coming weeks and months, and anyone can sign-up to our mailing list to be kept informed about other opportunities and how to get involved.

Application process: VOYPIC will manage the selection process for the EBE Reference Group and will appoint a panel to choose members for the group based on the criteria listed above.

Throughout late January and February 2022, VOYPIC will write out to Children's Services teams in each Health and Social Care Trust, and to other key stakeholders in the voluntary and community sector, to promote the Reference Group and seek expressions of interest from young people. Details will also be promoted through the VOYPIC website and social media platforms.

VOYPIC will host two online information sessions during the recruitment period. These sessions will allow young people to hear more about the opportunity, and to ask questions about what it involves, before applying.

Anyone interested in joining the EBE Reference Group will be asked to complete an Expression of Interest form and provide a reference. If there is a higher number of applications than places in the EBE Reference Group, the final selection will ensure that the group is representative of:

- HSCT areas (Including rural and urban areas)
- Age range
- Gender
- Range of Children's Services Experience
- Cultural diversity

For further information please contact Lee Kane, Engagement Manager, at lee.kane@voypic.org