**Teacher training leaves behind children in care**

A significant training gap is leaving teachers unprepared to support looked after children in their schools, according to a new research report from leading charities Become and Voices from Care Cymru. *Teachers Who Care*reveals that 75 percent of teachers who qualified after 2010 had no pre-qualification training in how to support children in care.

The report surveyed 447 teachers across England and Wales to gather their experiences of training, working with children’s services, and how often they hear negative stereotypes about children in care from colleagues.

**Key findings from the report include:**

* 87% of respondents received no training about looked after children before they qualified as a teacher.
* 75% of teachers who qualified post-2010 received no training pre-qualification.
* 26% of respondents received no training about looked after children before or after they qualified.
* 87% of respondents had heard at least one colleague express a negative generalisation about children in care, and 31% of respondents had heard such views often.

The report makes nine recommendations to schools, training providers, Government and local authorities, including calling for the introduction of mandatory training on working with children in care in all schools for all teachers, both before and after they qualify.

A teacher who responded to the survey said: “Education for looked after children feels like an add-on. When I suddenly found myself fully responsible for the care of these very vulnerable children, I had to start from scratch, independently researching and finding out what I should/could/might do. I think it needs to be more prominently embedded in all training.”

It is also recommended that steps are taken to improve dialogue between schools and local authorities, and to challenge negative attitudes towards children in care amongst students and staff through whole-school assemblies.

Natasha Finlayson, Chief Executive of Become, said: “There are around 79,000 children in care in England and Wales, so it’s very likely that a teacher will have a care experienced child in their classroom.

“We were shocked to discover such a stark gap in the training of new teachers on working with some of society’s most vulnerable children. Many care experienced children have additional needs that can make integrating into a mainstream school challenging, even though with the right support it’s often the best place for them to be.

“More training and joined-up working between schools and children’s services is required if we are to improve outcomes for looked after children and challenge the stigma found in schools across the country.”

You can download the full report, Teachers who Care, from the Become website.