

CELCIS REACH: Bruce Adamson | Happiness, love and understanding, the rights of all children

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Happiness, love and understanding are the rights of all care leavers and all children and young people in care in Scotland, and that cuts to the heart of what I'm talking about today. The legal rights that people have. Under article 20 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it says that those that can't live with their families are entitled to special care and assistance and that flows through all of their rights; rights to education, rights to health care, rights to an adequate standard of living and housing. We're failing on many of those things and this transformational change - the additional commitment made through the covenant is a real call to action and we've seen some fantastic progress, but we need to do much more. The statistics around the care leavers and their access to their rights - these fundamental rights - about things like their mental health, about things like the ability to access quality housing, about the access to education throughout life, are integral to their ability to access their rights. We all have to see ourselves as champions of care experienced young people and care leavers throughout their lives. We have to see ourselves as defenders of their human rights and we have to change the way that we think and the way that we do things. The views and experiences of care leavers is absolutely essential to that. And it does mean that we all have to challenge ourselves to include their views in the way that we work, but also to ensure that we're fully trained and we understand the rights framework within their sits and how that cuts across everything we do. We also have to reflect as decision-makers on the fact that we have to apply all available resources to ensuring that special care and assistance is provided to this group of young people and so we have to go to those that control budgets and discuss with them how they can make a difference to the lives of young people and care leavers throughout their lives as they transition into adulthood and as they grow old.

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