Youth Voices Improving the Foster Care System in the U.K.

What role can youth voices play in improving foster care outcomes? “A big one,” affirms Luke Rodgers, Founder of Foster Focus in the United Kingdom. The youth-led social enterprise trains former foster youth to advise teachers, social workers, policymakers, funders, business leaders, and others on how to improve the foster care system. The result? Youth gain advocacy and public speaking skills, while contributing to improvements in foster care placement, service delivery, education, employability, and policy-making.

Youth Voices

“Services need to be more integrated.”

“Youth in care want to belong.”

“Youth are often blamed for what are system failures.”

“The system breeds dependency among young people.”

“Negative expectations lead to bad behavior.”

“How a teacher responds sets the tone for the whole class.”

“There’s more than one side to every story.”

Too often we’re judged by a label.”

Inform the Whole System

Service provision and referral system reform

Elementary and high schools

Anti-bullying campaign; teachers trained in behavior management techniques

University systems

Training of social work students

Foster parent recruitment

Youth-led video campaign

Transition to independent living

Empowering youth to select their own transition guides

Youth employment

Sensitizing employers to needs of youth transitioning out of foster care system

Local policies

Advising local youth council policies/practices