

**Social Care Institute for Excellence**

**Interview Summary Sheet**

**Title Page**

**Ref no:** C1597/16

**Collection title:** Care Leavers' Stories

**Interviewee's surname:** Appleby

**Title:** Mr

**Interviewee's  
forename:** Chris

**Sex:** Male

**Occupation:** Postgraduate student

**Date of birth:** 1990

**Dates of recording:** 01.08.13

**Location of interview:** Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London, SW1Y 5BH

**Name of interviewer:** Khatija Hafesji

**Type of recorder:** Canon XF 305

**Recording format :** .mxf

**Total no. of tracks:** 3

**Mono or stereo:**

Stereo

**Total Duration:** 2:54:37

**Additional material:**

**Copyright/Clearance:** Full clearance

**Interviewer's  
comments:**

## **C1597/16 Chris Appleby**

Track one [01:00:12] [Session: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013] [00:00:00] Chris Appleby [CA], 23 years old, living in Somerset. Studying for a Masters degree in Social Work. Undergraduate degree in public services, wanted to join the military but did not agree with invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Worked as a Special Constable in Avon and Somerset Police. Decided to pursue Social Work [SW], got experience as a Support Worker and sat on an Independent Fostering Panel before commencing degree. Describes Support Worker and fostering panel work in further detail. Obtained an NHS bursary to do the SW Masters. Discusses the nature of the course, too academic and CA does not understand the benefits of learning philosophy for SW. [00:09:15] CA felt that more time should have been spent on the legal aspects. CA is awaiting results and will go on a long placement next year. Describes placement at Action for Children in Devon one year ago. [00:11:50] CA is unsure whether he would like to be a SW, has become increasingly interested in politics. Feels the average person is not represented in government. Criticises leaving care arrangements as designed for financial considerations rather than best interests. Discusses leaving care provisions and policies. [00:17:37] CA born in Barnstaple, Devon. Dad in the RAF. Dad left home when CA was five, Mum died when CA was eleven. CA and his brother [B] went to live with their Nan, then with their uncle and aunt, and were eventually taken into care when they turned fifteen and had one successful placement in which they stayed until they left care. [00:20:31]

Track 1 [cont. from 00:20:31] Mentions difficulty accepting the label of care because of the negative stigma. [00:20:51] CA mentions and B are twins [non-identical] [00:22:24] CA describes his Dad and his relationship with him. Dad has a separate family, made contact with CA and B when they were eighteen. CA describes Dad's character. Describes Dad's work as a steward in the RAF, flight service for members of the Royal Family where he met CA's mum [M]. M worked as a personal dresser for Princess Diana who attended CA and B's christening. CA reflects on this. M got cancer and stopped working, briefly describes M's relationship with Diana. [00:31:15] Describes Primary School and relationship with B, discusses his relationship with maths, his GCSE results. [00:35:56] CA describes house in Taunton with M and B. A housing association property with a garage, they did not have a car, shared a room with B, M briefly worked in a nursing home, must have received welfare benefits. [00:37:00] CA reflects on leaving care policies, Parliamentary expenses scandal. [00:40:29] CA describes his attachment to M. There was not much money around, describes experience of travelling abroad. [00:43:30] CA discusses his mother's health at this time. M had previously suffered from throat cancer, recalls being told by M that she had cancer again at the dinner table. [00:44:46]

Track 1 [cont from 00:44:46] Grandmother, aunt, and uncle would come over to help. CA considers his understanding of cancer at the time, and reflects on his reaction to M's death. Children at school made comments occasionally; CA was not interested in counselling when it was offered at school. CA has always had a plan, considers his independent lifestyle. [00:50:25] CA discusses his relationship with his Dad's family, which is good. Describes the

military background from the maternal side of the family. [00:52:35] Describes childhood ambitions, and the impact of M's death on these. Details the negative impact of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars on his ambition to join the army, the Daily Mail, MP expenses and second homes. [01:00:17] [ten-minute comfort break]

Track 2 [01:00:03] Describes life at the age of nine living in council housing in Taunton, details lack of ethnic diversity, areas of wealth juxtaposed with council estates, relates anecdotes where police have been involved in criminal incidents in CA's area. [06:14] CA considers how M instilled boundaries. Christened and raised with traditional Christian values, reflects on relationship with religion and science. Relates an anecdote of playing Knock Knock Ginger, friends throwing eggs at a bus. [09:30] CA recalls the day his mother died, he did not cry and it did not seem real. Mentions her funeral and reaction at school. Considers impact on relationship with B. Details living arrangements after his mother died. Discusses living with Nan and relationship with Nan, and relationship between Nan and B. [17:28] CA unclear on social service's involvement. Describes living with aunt and uncle, their financial difficulties, lack of financial support from Local Authority [LA]. Recalls leaving aunt and uncle and coming into care age fifteen. [23:13] Describes initial meeting with foster carer, a single male who was a home based carer and provided supported lodgings. CA recalls his first day at the foster placement. Describes the other young people sharing the home, including a person with schizophrenia, and another involved with the youth offending team. CA states the placement did not feel like home. CA felt life was never normal, had to obtain permission to visit friends, discusses social worker's rotas and hours, and occasional respite care. [33:16]

Track 2 [cont. from 33:16] Mentions the stigma around the care, the reasons for going into care, the shortage of foster carers, and the need to value the input of people at the bottom in decision making processes. [36:21] CA details the stigma around the care system and his own response to it whilst being in care. Considers the insecurity which accompanies the care system, the need for financial security. Details financial provisions, and CA's own financial circumstances upon leaving care and going to University. Tuition fees, maintenance grants, part-time work, LA assistance. [44:18] Discusses leaving care. CA's response to leaving care and LA support made available. CA moved into a flat and started University. [49:11] CA details B's decision to study Media Studies at the University of West England. Met his partner and went travelling. CA considers the lack of opportunities usually available to children in care, particularly with regards to gap years and travelling. [52:25] CA considers his focus during secondary education after M passed away. CA also considers his own strong work ethic. [56:18] CA reflects on his support network. Relates an anecdote where his Nan put on a home video of CA's childhood with M, CA was surprised that he cried in response to this. CA does not remember M often. Briefly considers Christmas and Birthdays. [1:00:04] [ten-minute comfort break]

Track 3 [54:22] CA considers his coping strategies. Describes learning about Somerset County Council's financial policy and fighting for his entitlements. Relates an anecdote about receiving backdated travel expense payments. Describes currently fighting for support

for his postgraduate degree. [07:10] CA discusses relationship with foster carer now. It is a trusting relationship, foster carer is a bit like an uncle. [09:25] CA describes his relationship with his social worker who CA rarely saw. CA did not see and sign his pathway plan until he was twenty one. CA mentions his relationship with the leaving care team at his council now. CA mentions his relationship with friends, who tend to approach him for advice. Mentions that he meets his own emotional needs. [12:58] CA describes his competitive relationship with B. CA reflects on why his friends come to talk to him, relates an anecdote about assisting a friend to secure a full-time contract at Sainsbury's. [16:52] CA mentions his relationship with his grandparents and their characters. CA describes Christmas as a child after M died, and Christmases with his foster carer. CA describes Birthdays in care. Recalls having to work on birthdays, now takes birthdays off. [24:00] CA describes role of special constable and his time as a special constable. [29:45] CA describes his thought process in choosing social work. Considers the impact studying social work has had on him as a care leaver, CA more analytical of his own and others' behaviour. [32:54] CA considers his future in ten years' time. CA would like security and the ability to enjoy life more. [34:52] CA considers the impact of his need for financial security on his pursuit of creative interests. CA did gymnasts at secondary school, was obsessed with Michael Jackson's Thriller video, performed in school plays, and is still open minded to dramatic pursuits. [37:48] CA discusses the possibility of accessing his care records. CA considers his reasons for being interviewed. Mentions that sharing knowledge is a positive thing, and that the process may help others. [39:26] CA describes his hopes for improvements in leaving care services, the need for long-term thinking in services, and a more individual approach. [43:25] CA reflects on his overall experience of care which he describes as okay. The stability of one foster placement was good, however improvements were needed. Describes provision for care leavers at University. Relates an anecdote about the lack of support made available at Plymouth University despite their receiving the Buttle UK Quality Mark. Relates anecdote about not being aware of Somerset County Council's fostering pledge to all children in foster care. [47:05] Relates an anecdote about council housing maintenance which angers CA. [52:11] CA considers whether care has been a formative experience for him, he is a different person for having been in care. Mentions how the experience of policing increasing CA's confidence.