

# catch 22

# zine

## CONNECTION TO CHANGE

How partnerships create opportunity, belonging and pathways to a brighter future.

## DRAWING THE LINE

Coming together to challenge exploitation and create safer futures for young people.

## COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Where lived experience, creativity and advocacy help shape systems from within.





# catch 22 zine

**Catch22Zine** is an annual publication designed to give you a flavour of the depth and breadth of what we do across our organisation. It allows us to share the latest achievements and successes across our hubs, giving a deeper insight into how our work improves the livelihoods of individuals across the communities within the UK. With this people-focused zine we explore how our services and programmes have helped individuals build strong support networks, secure safe places to live and work, and find their purpose in life. We hope you enjoy and get to know Catch22 a little better.



A stylized handwritten signature in white ink.

**Prince-Oke Ugorji, Editor**  
DESIGN AND COMMUNICATIONS





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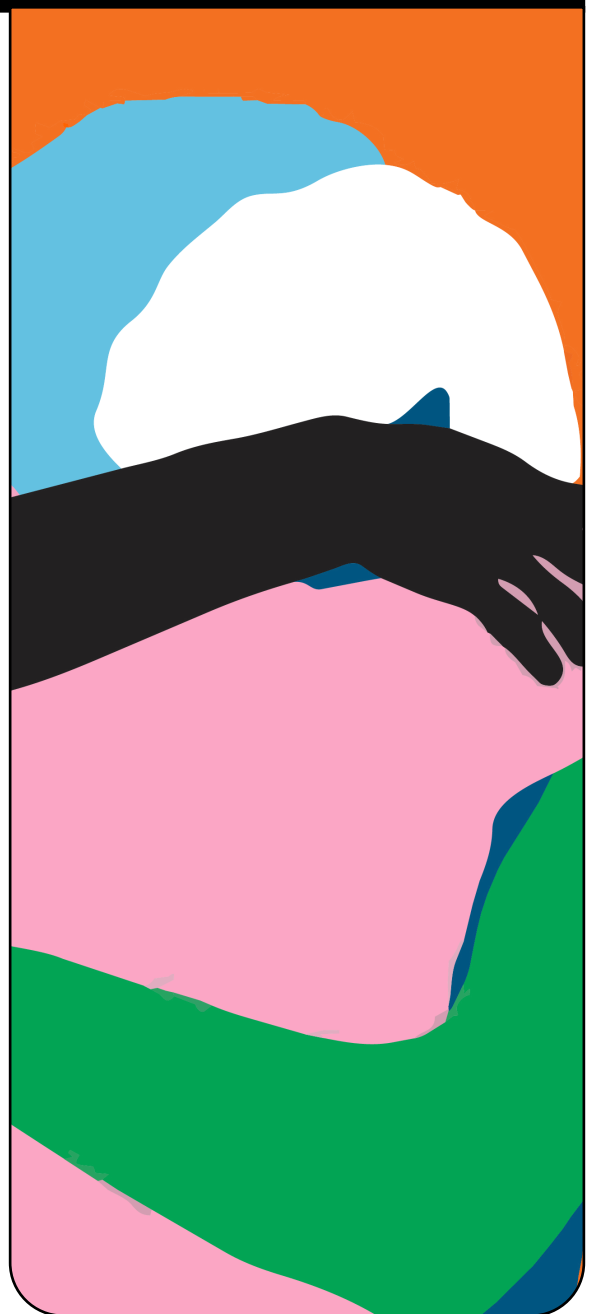
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# Impact in action

**This review captures the extraordinary progress we've made at Catch22 over the past year – real change, made possible by our people, our partners, and the communities we serve.**

**Naomi Hulston, CEO speaks.**

**T**he year thus far has been one of resilience and impact; we've secured new services, scaled effective programmes, and made meaningful strides in shaping policy to improve outcomes for the people we support. As ever, we're also looking ahead and investing in innovation through initiatives such as our GoodTech Ventures programme. Across the organisation, colleagues have supported thousands of people to get their lives back on track - whether that's through finding work, reintegrating into the community, or breaking the cycle of violence and exploitation. We continue to amplify the voices of young people and those with lived experience, and to deliver high-quality services that are being recognised by commissioners, inspectors, and

partners alike. We have seen first-hand the difference that trusted relationships, evidence-led practice, and local collaboration can make to people's lives.

Alongside this external impact, we have also taken important steps forward as an organisation. We have strengthened our commitment to inclusion, invested in developing and celebrating our people, improved collaboration through the launch of our new intranet, CatchConnect, and set a clear long-term direction for the organisation through the launch of our new strategy, Mission 2030.

None of these achievements would be possible without the unwavering support of our commissioners, funders, and partners, who continue to place their trust in us. Looking ahead, I am excited about the opportunities that our ambitious

new five-year strategy, Mission 2030, presents. Together, we will continue to innovate, collaborate, and advocate for change, ensuring that the people and communities we work with, and for, are heard, supported, and empowered.

*Scan the QR code below to learn more about Mission 2030.*





## **Having that security in your head that someone from Catch22 has got my best interests at heart.”**

WORDS FROM PERSON SUPPORTED BY A CATCH22 EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE

This year, across Catch22, thousands of people have taken steps forward—towards safety, stability, and new opportunities.

Across our community, custodial, and victim services, 59,643 people were supported—each with their own story, challenge, and path forward. Alongside this, our Finance, Benefit and Debt teams helped clear £1.9 million of debt, easing pressure and

creating space for people to rebuild.

For 3,566 people facing barriers to work, support meant more than just job applications—it meant progress. Through our programmes, 1,100 people secured work, turning potential into real, tangible outcomes.

In our colleges, 385 students were supported, with 84% recommending their experience and 63% moving into

positive destinations.

Across our Alternative Provision schools, 249 students were supported, with 89% progressing positively—a reflection of the power of the right support, at the right time.

Our teams worked alongside 12,942 young people and families, with 94% achieving a positive outcome. For 905 young victims of violence, support meant safety—74% reported feeling ‘very safe’ following intervention.

Beyond individual programmes, our work reached wider communities. More than 48,450 people engaged with our screening projects, while 1,400 Newham residents accessed vital advice on legal, debt, housing, and welfare support.

Behind every number are the people making it happen. This year, 1,272 colleagues joined our InspirEd conference, with over 360 attending in person across the UK.

# Creating lasting value

## What sits behind the numbers?

People, partnerships and purpose – the glue that creates opportunities, supports communities, and builds lasting change where it matters most.

**S**ocial value is about the real difference our work makes in people's everyday lives – supporting individuals to move forward, strengthening communities, and creating more sustainable futures.

Over the past 18 months, Catch22 has strengthened its approach, aligning with national frameworks while building on the impact already being delivered across our services. What sits behind this is the

work of our teams—responding to local needs, shaping meaningful commitments, and turning them into tangible outcomes.

Across the organisation, that impact is clear. Our newly re-commissioned service, Merton Risk and Resilience has embedded social value into its delivery, generating over £69,000 through skills development, education support, and collaboration with local organisations.

In Norfolk and Suffolk, the Victim Care Support Service has made strong early progress towards ambitious targets, creating additional value through community engagement, local recruitment, and awareness activity.

Employability support continues to play a central role. Through Skills Lab, more than 300 workshops reached over 1,100 attendances this year alone, generating over £138,000 in social value—before even accounting for participants moving into work.

This work is strengthened by wider initiatives that support both communities and colleagues. Employee volunteering is growing, with colleagues contributing their time and expertise to local causes, generating measurable impact while also strengthening wellbeing and connection. Supporting our workforce remains key, with a strong focus on wellbeing, development, and creating the conditions for people-centred services to thrive.

Sustainability is also becoming more embedded across Catch22. From training through our Sustainability Champion Network to creative engagement tools like Captain Peeps, we are building awareness and encouraging action—while taking practical steps to reduce our environmental impact.

Partnerships are a vital part of this picture. Collaborations with organisations such as BT, Marston/NSL and Deloitte are expanding access to digital skills, employability support, and essential resources, helping more people take meaningful steps towards work, learning, and long-term opportunity.



# Pathways to employment

What happens when partnership meets purpose, connecting people to employers, opportunity, and the confidence to step into meaningful work?

WORDS BY ISABEL JONES, PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

The world of work is changing fast. Digital skills are no longer optional, the green economy is reshaping industries, and for many - particularly those furthest from the labour market, access to opportunity remains uneven.

In this shifting landscape, employability support must evolve. It needs to reflect individual circumstances while building the skills, confidence and connections required for the jobs of the future. That's where Catch22's corporate partnerships play a vital role. At their best, they bring together funding, insight and lived experience to create support that reflects what's really happening in communities and workplaces. Increasingly, these partnerships are not transactional—they are collaborative, long-term and designed to keep pace with a changing labour market.

A growing trend across our work is partnerships shaped by place and purpose. Collaborations with Grosvenor Property Services, the DHL UK Foundation and the Banyan Software Foundation highlight what this looks like in practice. In Westminster, Grosvenor is helping expand support for care-experienced young people, combining tailored coaching with employer connections to open up longer-term pathways. In the East Midlands, the Connect programme, co-designed with DHL, blends skills development with real insight into logistics roles, helping young people understand not just what jobs exist, but how to access them. In the West Midlands, Ignite, supported by Banyan, offers flexible, adult-focused provision that reflects the complexity of people's lives as they prepare for work.

For care-experienced young people, employability is about more than CVs and interviews. Confidence, belonging and access to networks are just as critical.

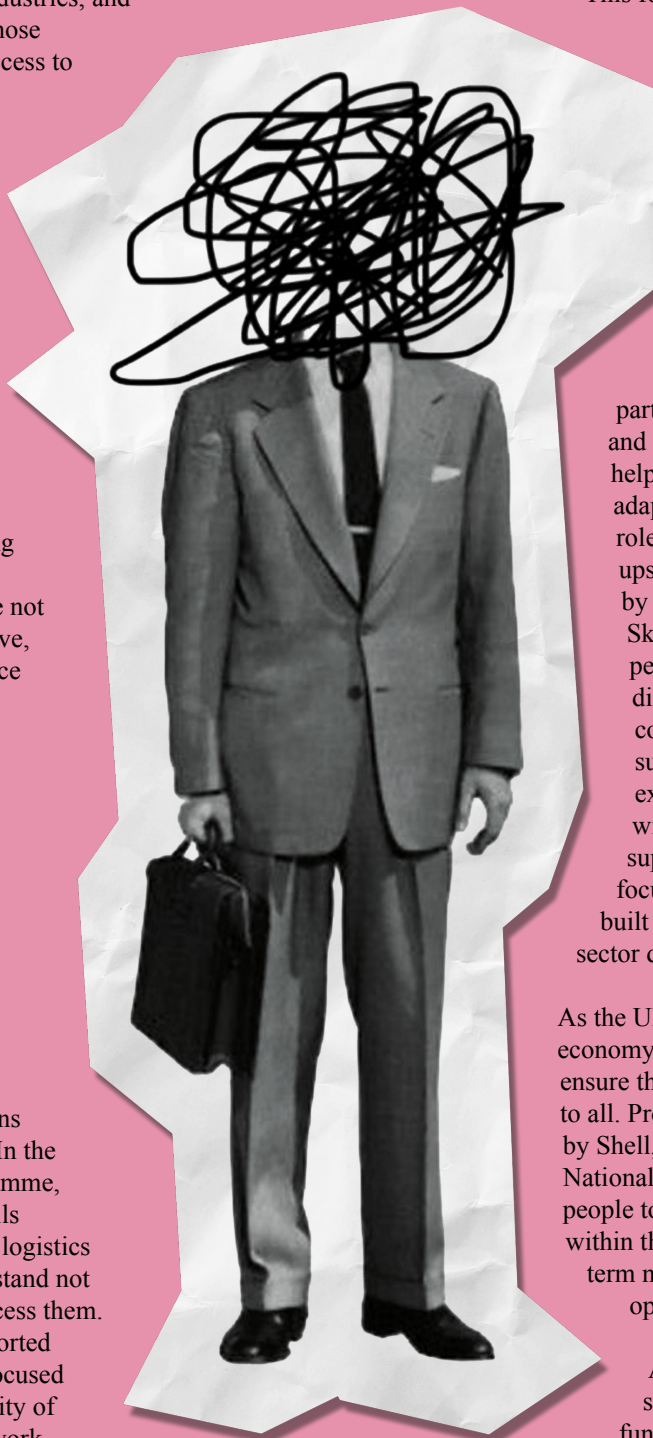
Now in its third year, Care Leavers Into Careers (CLIC), supported by Barclays LifeSkills, continues to demonstrate the impact of sustained employer engagement. More than 300 young people have taken part, with over 100 moving into jobs or apprenticeships. Barclays colleagues play an active role – delivering workshops, mentoring participants and offering insight into workplace culture. For many, this visibility is transformative. As one participant shared, “I didn't think people like me worked in places like Barclays... I felt like I actually belonged.”

This focus on belonging runs across other partner-supported work, including mentoring, advocacy and in-work support funded by the John Lewis Partnership Foundation and People's Partnership—ensuring young people are supported not just into work, but to stay and progress within it.

Digital capability is now central to employability. Through partnerships with Microsoft, Salesforce and the PA Foundation, Catch22 is helping people build the confidence and adaptability needed for tech-enabled roles. Digital Edge combines digital upskilling with career coaching shaped by local demand, while the Digital Skills Academy supports young people at risk of disengagement with digital literacy, AI awareness and coaching. Code4000, meanwhile, supports women with criminal justice experience into tech, blending coding with employability and resettlement support. Across all programmes, the focus is clear: digital inclusion must be built around people's realities, not just sector demand.

As the UK transitions to a low-carbon economy, partnerships are also helping ensure that green opportunities are accessible to all. Programmes like Energise, funded by Shell, and Pathways to Progress with National Grid are supporting thousands of people to develop skills and access roles within the energy sector – turning long-term net zero ambitions into practical opportunities.

Across all of this work, one message stands out: impact is greatest when funding, expertise and lived experience come together. Together with our partners, we are not only supporting people into work – we are helping to build fairer routes to opportunity, and futures that feel possible.



# Samir's story



## A case story from the Digital Edge programme

When he joined the programme in October 2025, things felt stuck. Despite holding a degree in Games Design and having customer service experience, job applications were going unanswered, and his confidence had taken a hit. After being matched with a new Career Coach in December, they worked together to reframe his approach—starting with his CV. By refining how he presented his skills and exploring roles that could act as stepping stones, like IT support and administration, things began to shift. With a stronger CV came renewed confidence. Applications started to get responses, and with encouragement, he kept going. In January, he secured an interview, prepared for it, and was offered the role. By February, he had started as a Fleet Support Administrator. Now receiving in-work support, he's settling in well—and, most importantly, enjoying being back in work.



# EXPERTS | BY | EXPERIENCE



Catch22's lived  
experience podcast

**Join us for our bi-weekly episodes as we hear from people who have been through the justice system, as well as professionals working to change it from the inside.**

Scan the QR code to listen to our episode on how music is transforming lives in prisons and in the community.

Available on



# MAKING WAVES?

For many people, music is more than entertainment. It is memory, identity, comfort and expression. During a recent episode of Experts by Experience, Catch22's Nic sat down with Katie, Executive Director of Finding Rhythms, and Tom, a producer on the charity's projects, to explore how music can become a catalyst for change.

Founded in 2013, *Finding Rhythms* delivers collaborative music-making programmes in prisons and community settings, supporting people at risk of offending to develop confidence, skills and new opportunities. What began as a series of projects around HMP Wormwood Scrubs has grown into a national programme working across more than 30 prisons and supporting over 1,000 participants through the universal language of music.

When asked why music sits at the heart of the organisation's approach, Katie explained that creativity offers something many traditional systems cannot.

*"Almost everybody connects with music in some way,"* she told Nic. *"For many people, it's their biggest passion. We use that passion in a constructive and positive way, particularly for people who may not often have access to positive opportunities."*

The impact can be profound.

Katie shared the story of one participant who took part in a project while serving a long prison sentence.

*Finding Rhythms* uses creativity to build confidence, connection and opportunity. In conversation with Catch22's Experts by Experience co-host **Nic**, Executive Director **Katie Weatherall** and Producer **Tom Ireland** reflect on the power of music to help people reimagine what's possible whilst in prison.



After working hard to overcome addiction, he was released before the programme had finished. Struggling with the transition back into the community and at risk of relapse, he later received a message from Finding Rhythms letting him know the album he had helped create was now available online. Listening back to the music became a powerful reminder of everything he had achieved.

*"It reminded me of everything I'd worked for and everything I'd achieved,"* Katie recalled. *"The music became a reminder of what he wanted from life."*

Tom has witnessed similar transformations through his work as a producer. He described how participants who may never have spoken to one another begin building trust through the creative process. In a space where vulnerability is encouraged, friendships emerge, confidence grows and people begin to see themselves differently.

*"It's a universal language,"* Tom explained. *"People start communicating better together and friendships are made."*

As Nic's conversation with Katie and Tom highlighted, meaningful change often begins with creating spaces where people feel heard, valued and able to participate on their own terms. This episode explores how lived experience and professional expertise can work together to create opportunity, strengthen connection, and support lasting change within the justice system.



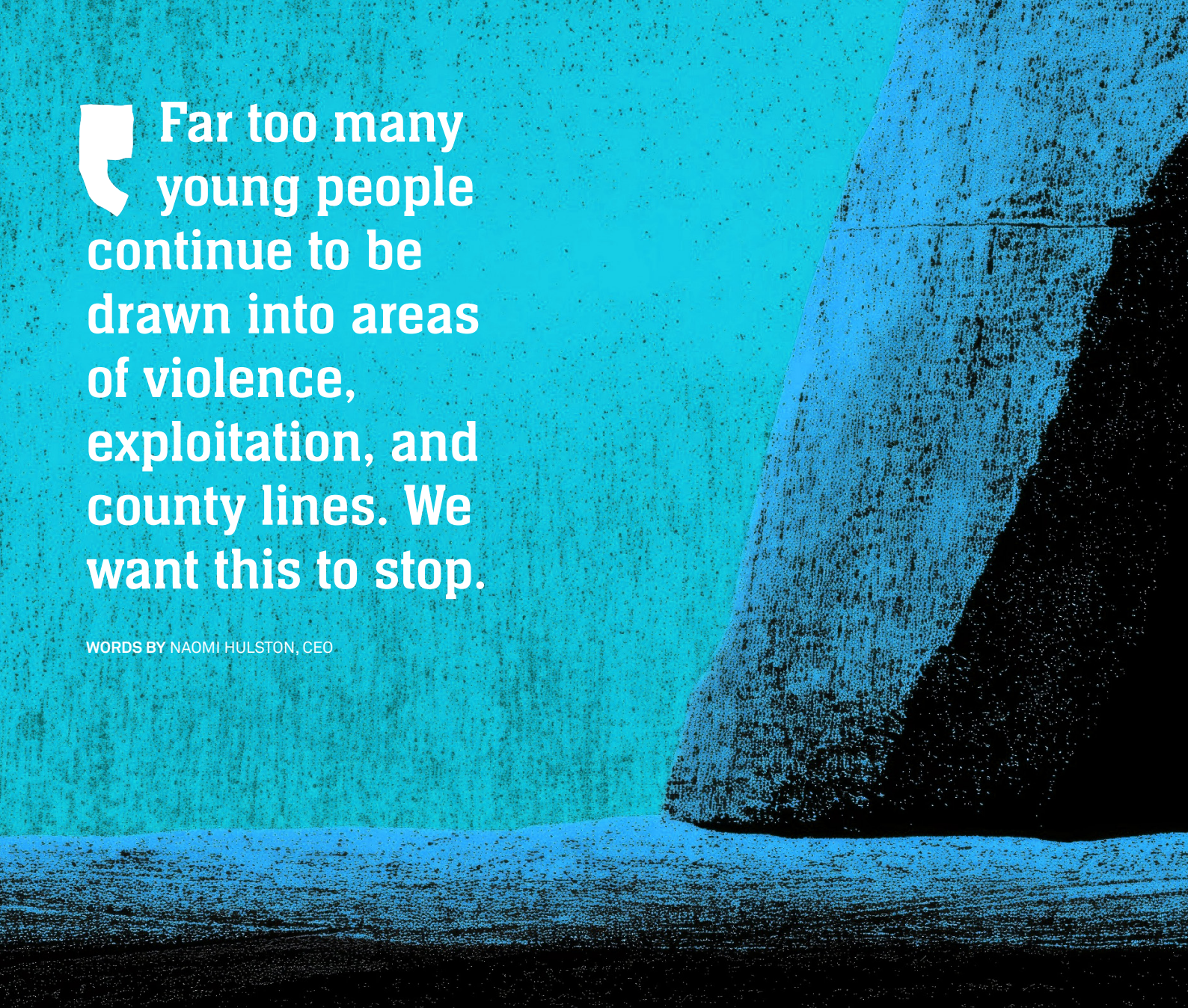
A high-contrast, black and white image of a hand holding a thin white string. The hand is positioned in the upper left corner, with the string extending downwards and then curving towards the bottom right. The background is solid black, making the white string and the textured skin of the hand stand out prominently.

# A Line Drawn

From raising over £7,000 to support young people, to influencing legislation through 20 Home Office meetings, Drawing the Line is turning awareness into action and building a growing movement against exploitation.

**K**eeping children and young people safe from violence and exploitation is not something any one organisation can do alone. It takes a community of partners, funders, policymakers, and frontline practitioners all working together with a shared purpose. That's the driving force behind

Drawing the Line, Catch22's integrated campaign to tackle child criminal exploitation, county lines, and violence. Since launching in September 2025, the campaign has brought together voices, expertise and influence from across sectors to push for change and to ensure young people's experiences are heard at every level.



**Far too many young people continue to be drawn into areas of violence, exploitation, and county lines. We want this to stop.**

WORDS BY NAOMI HULSTON, CEO

**F**rom the outset, Drawing the Line has been rooted in collective action. Collaboration with organisations including British Transport Police, Missing People and wider sector partners has strengthened the shared response to exploitation, while amplifying our voice in this space.

Corporate partnerships have helped unlock new opportunities, from pro bono legal support to national media platforms, amplifying both our influence and audience. Through Social Business Trust, for example, we secured advertising space in the Financial Times, while sector collaboration has strengthened our contribution to national policy discussions. Funders and supporters have also played a vital

role in turning awareness into action. So far, the campaign has raised over £7,300, alongside growing engagement across our community channels and the media.

#### **Showcasing what works**

A central part of Drawing the Line has been highlighting what effective support looks like in practice. Across Catch22 services, we see how early intervention, trusted relationships and joined-up working can prevent exploitation and support recovery.

Through the campaign, we've shared best practice from frontline delivery, including school-based group awareness sessions that help identify young people at risk, alongside tailored one-to-one support that builds resilience and safer pathways forward.

We've also shared practical tools, resources and training to help partners respond more effectively.

These models demonstrate the power of partnership in action: schools, practitioners and communities working together to spot risks earlier and intervene sooner. By embedding frontline insight into communications and policy work, the campaign ensures national conversations are grounded in what actually works.

#### **Putting young people's voices at the centre**

At the heart of the campaign is a commitment to amplifying the voices of children and young people. Through case studies, events and evidence-led insight, their lived experience has shaped both public



## Looking ahead

This summer, Drawing the Line will continue building awareness, sharing resources and growing a community committed to protecting young people. Because tackling exploitation takes all of us.

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Scan the QR code to support the next phase of Drawing the Line.

understanding and policy conversations.

This approach is already helping to drive impact. Catch22 has contributed to national policy discussions, influencing the direction of the Knife Crime Plan and the Crime and Policing Act, helping to shape statutory guidance, while strengthening recognition of the risks faced by girls and young women.

Our growing engagement with government, from ministerial visits to roundtables from our membership of the Prime Minister's Tackling Knife Crime Coalition to meetings with senior civil servants and MPs, reflects a more connected sector voice, bringing frontline expertise into decision-making spaces.

### A growing movement for change


What has been most powerful is how Drawing the Line has brought people together. Through joint campaigning, shared briefings and community engagement, the campaign has helped to build momentum across the sector.

Digital engagement and national media coverage have extended that reach further, helping keep exploitation firmly in the public conversation. Together, this collective effort is shifting both awareness and action, and building a stronger foundation for long-term change.

### Turning support into impact

As the campaign enters its next phase, donations will help turn momentum into tangible outcomes for young people such as:

- Innovative prevention tools, such as virtual reality resources to raise awareness of county lines risks.
- Expanded school partnerships to identify and support those at risk earlier.
- Funded training and progression opportunities for young people ready to move forward.
- Specialist workforce development to strengthen support for victims.
- Each builds on what we know works: consistent relationships, early identification, and coordinated local responses.



**“Treat people  
like people  
- not just a  
number or a  
case.”**

# Support is just the start

What does staying connected really mean? For care-experienced young people, it's about people who matter – and the support to stay connected. Leo, Young People's Benchmarking Forum Legend, shares his views.

WORDS BY ABENA DADEY, DIGITAL MARKETING AND EVENTS OFFICER

**F**or Leo, connection starts with something simple: “still having contact with your friends and your family and being able to see them.” But maintaining those relationships isn't always straightforward. Before engaging with support services, connection felt limited - often confined to day-to-day interactions. That began to change through Barnardo's Care Journeys, where being encouraged

to attend events opened up new opportunities to meet people and build relationships. Catch22's National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum (NLCBF) has also played a key role. It offers a space where young people can speak openly and feel heard, while actively encouraging them to maintain and strengthen their connections.

These spaces don't just bring people together – they help build confidence. As Leo reflects, “The biggest thing? Dragging me out of my comfort zone.” Over time, what once felt difficult, such as speaking to others, navigating social situations – became more natural. “I wasn't confident before... but now I can have a full conversation with anyone.” Being part of a positive, nurturing environment helped reduce anxiety and created a space that felt safe, supportive and worth showing up for.

At the heart of this is how young people are treated. “Treat people like people – not just a number or a case.” When individuals feel valued and included, it changes how they engage. Even small opportunities to contribute can make a lasting difference: “You're not just there – you're a part of it.”

But barriers to connection remain. Cost of living, access to travel, and mental health challenges can all make it harder to stay connected. Sometimes, it's as simple as not having somewhere to go. Leo highlights how practical support—like bus passes or more youth spaces—could make a real difference, alongside organisations following through on ideas and creating consistent opportunities.

Connection and wellbeing are closely linked. “If your mental health isn't great, it's harder to connect. But being connected can also improve your mental health. It goes both ways.” For care-experienced young people, relationships often carry deeper meaning as Leo notes; “friends can become family.”

Ultimately, staying connected is about more than social interaction. It creates stability, builds confidence and opens up possibility. As Leo puts it, “It allows me to be my best self... knowing you've got somewhere to fall back.”

## Where community voices shape policy

When those closest to the challenges are part of the conversation, better decisions become possible.

**A**t Catch22, we don't just deliver services—we use our voice to strengthen the systems around us. That belief sits at the heart of our Mission2030 strategy and shapes how we approach policy and public affairs every day.

What makes that voice matter is where it comes from. Across the country, our teams work alongside people navigating some of society's most complex challenges; experiencing violence and exploitation, leaving prison without support, struggling to find work, or facing exclusion from education. Those experiences give us something invaluable to bring into policy conversations: insight grounded in reality.

At Catch22, influencing isn't abstract or theoretical. Our policy and public affairs work is directly connected to the services we deliver, ensuring the voices and experiences of the people we support are reflected in the decisions shaping public systems.

A recent contribution to The Independent Review into Young People and Work is one example of

this in practice. Drawing on evidence from our employability programmes, we highlighted the issue of 'hidden NEETs'—young people who are not in education, employment or training, but are also disconnected from formal support such as Jobcentre Plus. These are often young people experiencing poor mental health, financial insecurity and low confidence, making them less visible to traditional systems. It was a reminder that if support doesn't reach those furthest from services, opportunities to reverse rising NEET levels risk being missed altogether.

Alongside written evidence, our influencing also happens through direct engagement with policymakers, parliamentary groups and wider public sector partners. We continue to make the case that place-based approaches only work when they are meaningfully connected to the wider systems surrounding them.

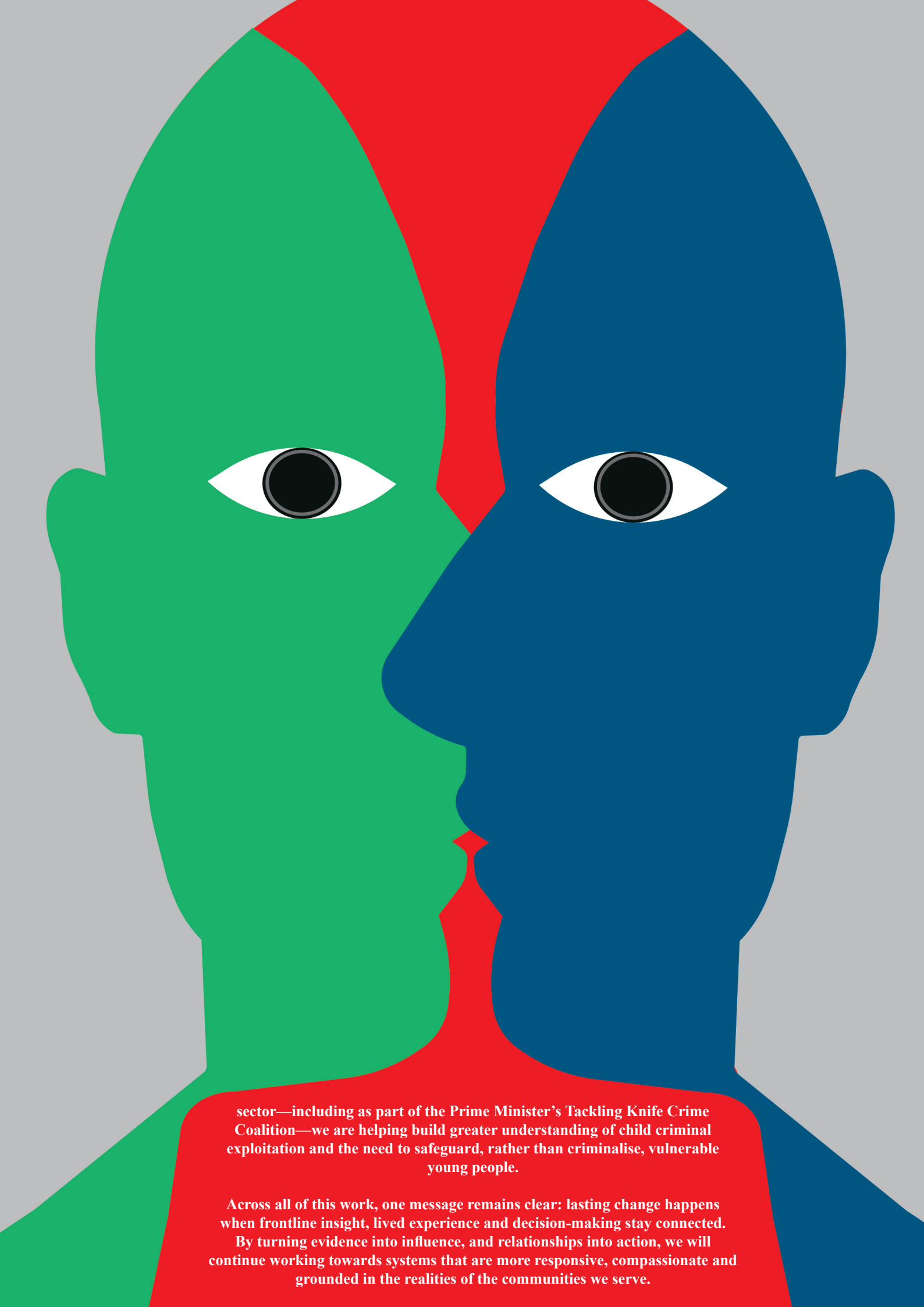
In discussions around the government's proposed Young Futures Hubs, we drew on our experience delivering The Hive in Camden—a community-based mental health and wellbeing hub supporting young people aged 16–24. Combining clinical support with social activities, The Hive helps young people transition into adult services

through trust, continuity and partnership working across the public and voluntary sectors. It's a model rooted in community, and one we believe offers valuable insight for future national approaches.

Creating space for lived experience within policy conversations also remains central to our work. Earlier this year, we welcomed the Victims' Minister and the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales to our Leicestershire Victim First service as part of the review of the Victims' Code of Practice. By bringing policymakers directly into conversations with practitioners and service users, we were able to highlight the importance of specialist, child-appropriate support for young victims of crime—ensuring policy is shaped not by assumptions, but by those closest to the realities behind it.

Our frontline insight also contributes directly to wider reform. Evidence gathered through our County Lines Support and Rescue Services played a key role in informing the Home Office's development of the newly recognised 'coerced internal concealment offence'—an important step in strengthening protections for young people affected by criminal exploitation.

Alongside this work, our campaigns continue to push for wider systemic change. This year's integrated campaign, Drawing the Line, focuses on ending violence, county lines activity and child criminal exploitation. Through partnerships, media engagement and collaboration across the



sector—including as part of the Prime Minister’s Tackling Knife Crime Coalition—we are helping build greater understanding of child criminal exploitation and the need to safeguard, rather than criminalise, vulnerable young people.

Across all of this work, one message remains clear: lasting change happens when frontline insight, lived experience and decision-making stay connected.

By turning evidence into influence, and relationships into action, we will continue working towards systems that are more responsive, compassionate and grounded in the realities of the communities we serve.

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