

"The Refuse Collection"- a Fashion Show with a difference!!

Most of us take it for granted that if we are moving or going on holiday then we pack our clothes and belongings in suitcases. But if you are a young person in care or leaving care then the odds are that you will have all your belongings put into black refuse bags – ‘being bin bagged’ as young people in care call it – a message that surely implies that they and their belongings are synonymous with rubbish.

‘This is not a suitcase’, a campaign run by A National Voice for the last two years, seeks to end this practice and to encourage local authorities to sign their Charter agreeing to provide suitcases for young people in care: ‘It’s a basic and simple idea- but it’s about respect’ said Sam Block, vice chair of A National Voice management Committee, ‘Last year Safeways donated almost 400 suitcases to us and we passed them on to Local Authorities, they were all snapped up in a short time’.

The ‘Refuse Collection’ – organized by A National Voice, really is a fashion show with a difference. The outfits are all made from bin bags, designed by professional and noted designers, including Frank Usher and Abigail Fallis and will be modeled by young care leavers, chief executives of large charities, some TV celebs and some local authority social services directors. London College of Fashion are also helping to make the show a success.

The event is being hosted by Tate Britain, Barnardos and the Social Care Institute of Excellence and will be attended by Maria Eagle, Minister in the DfES, Lord Laming and Gavin Turk among others.

‘This campaign was created by young people from care and over 50 local authorities, several national charities and independent providers, as well as the Children’s Rights Director have already signed up to the ‘No Bin Bag’ charter’, said Maxine Wrigley, ex Care Leaver and Coordinator of A National Voice, ‘but the fashion show is designed to further promote the charter and encourage all care providers to adopt this as an official policy’

Notes for editors

- A National Voice is an organization run by and for care experienced young people. To get a copy of the ‘No Bin Bag’ Charter or for more information about the organization, please contact info@anationalvoice.org or visit www.anationalvoice.org
- The ‘Refuse Collection’ will be held at Tate Britain on 27th October starting at 6.30pm
- Other celebrity models include Anjula Mutanda, Ingrid Tarrant, Louise Brady, Andrea Lamb and Sissy Rooney (from Big Brother 4).
- Spokespeople from the partner organizations are available for interview – please contact Maxine Wrigley (info@anationalvoice.org 07736 501230)