



Brief for an External Consultant
Policy Scoping and Strategy -
Estranged Young People

buttle

1. Background & Purpose

Having firmly established itself as a trusted organisation supporting families experiencing poverty and crisis, Buttle now aims to become a leading advocate for systemic change. Drawing on its unique insights from its grant making and the lived experiences of children and young people, the charity will seek to influence policy and practice, helping to address the root causes of poverty and crisis rather than simply responding to their consequences. This brief is central to achieving that strategic pivot.

Buttle is seeking to strengthen its role not only in responding to the effects of poverty and crisis through grantmaking, but in using the insight generated through our work, alongside the voices and experiences of children and young people, to influence the systems that shape their lives.

This commission is intended to identify an achievable advocacy priority for estranged young people. It will help us to understand how this could be a blueprint for wider ongoing work as we further develop our advocacy work. Buttle does not seek to duplicate the campaigning role of specialist organisations such as Stand Alone. Rather, it aims to bring its unique insights from supporting children and young people in crisis, including those who are estranged from family support, into policy discussions and system change.

We support estranged young people through our grant programmes to improve their engagement in education and wellbeing. In 2025-26, we provided 227 grants with a value of £293,160 to young people estranged from their families. We also have two co-produced research reports focused on estrangement: [Surviving Estrangement](#) and [No Easy Path](#).

This work will build upon the Beyond Estrangement research Buttle and peer researchers conducted that culminated in the No Easy Path report. Other organisations working with estranged young people and young people within the LGBTQ+ community also contributed to this research. The research identified some clear policy asks. Following the launch of this research in May we have been developing partnerships with a number of organisations in this space, specifically NNECL and the Unite Foundation who are both focused on the higher and further education sector.

The research has identified that estranged young people experience a range of challenges that are addressed by a range of departments. E.g. housing, health, education etc. Therefore, to have a focused impact, we need to identify where to start. It is our sense that cross cutting issues are much harder to influence around.

We are seeking an experienced policy consultant to lead a policy scoping exercise, with example delivery campaign plan, focused on improving outcomes for estranged young people. Because this cohort's needs span multiple government departments, we require a clear, evidence-backed engagement strategy to influence relevant policy ecosystems.

2. Scope of Work

We want to understand where the opportunities are, based on the recommendations from the No Easy Path report, develop a campaign narrative and identify how Buttle can make a distinctive, credible and achievable difference for estranged young people and what the route to influence is.

The consultant will be responsible for translating government department priorities into an actionable policy campaign. Key responsibilities include:

- **Define Primary Policy Focus:** Evaluate the policy landscape across Housing/Homelessness (MHCLG), Mental Health (DHSC/ICBs), Education (DfE) and Social Care (Section 17 duties) to identify relevant policy areas for estranged young people and the most promising entry point for intervention. Evaluate policies applicable to care leavers (incl. DfE and DWP) and present any opportunities or risks to replicate or draw parallels to this cohort.

- **Policy Lever Identification:** Define the specific changes required (e.g., regulation, guidance, or financial resources) and map them against live government reform opportunities, such as social care reforms or national homelessness initiatives, as well as any think tank proposals and ideas that might be relevant.
- **Influence Map across civil service and government:** Identify and map the specific civil servants and political figures leading on these policy areas within relevant departments or who have expressed interest in this area (or have opposed it) to understand political will and appetite. Highlight their target outcomes and upcoming policy windows where relevant to inform an engagement plan.
- **Draft Initial Framing:** Prepare an evidence-backed overview presenting practical solutions with clear advice on the viability of campaigning on this issue and the value add Buttle can bring to this.

3. Timeline & Key Deliverables

The project will run from **October** to **December** with final project completion expected by **December 15**.

Phase / Milestone	Description	Target Completion Date
Project Kick-Off	Contract execution, initial briefing with internal team, and commencement of policy scoping.	Mid October
Deliverable 1	Policy Focus & Entry Point Recommendation Paper: Strategic recommendation on primary policy area (Housing, Health, or Social Care), required levers, and overarching campaign hooks.	Late October / early November
Deliverable 2	Political Landscape Map & Initial Framing Briefing: Official map of relevant departmental leads, civil servants, politicians and other political vehicles such as APPGs alongside identifying their key priorities with an evidence based approach.	Late October / early November
Deliverable 3	Engagement & Campaign Plan: Practical roadmap covering key policy areas of relevance for the Estranged Young People campaign, civil servant relationship management and political engagement tactics, defining what mechanisms and levers will be most effective. Including identified opportunities coming up in the next 12-18 months.	December

Deliverable 4	Campaign narrative and key messages: that provides a response to the following question - What is the pithy articulation of the problem and solution that will gain traction and attention?	December
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4. Consultant Profile

- Significant expertise in UK children’s services, social care, housing, or youth policy ecosystems.
- Proven track record of civil service engagement and successful policy influence.
- Experience researching and compiling complex information into clear, actionable strategies

5. Application Process

To apply for this consultancy opportunity, please follow the application guidelines below:

- **Submission Requirements:** Interested candidates should submit a CV with a covering letter highlighting relevant expertise and experience, including expected number of days to complete this work and your daily rate.
- **How to Apply:** Email your application directly to **Lisa Oeder, Director of Fundraising and Communications by 9am, Monday 28 September** at the email below.
- **Interview Process:** Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend a short interview on **30th September**. Please let us know if you are able to meet in-person at Buttle’s London office or if you would prefer an online call.
- A final appointment decision shared week commencing 5th October.

6. Key Internal Contact

For all submission details, or any questions, please contact:

- **Name:** Lisa Oeder
- **Role:** Director of Fundraising and Communications
- **Email:** lisao@buttleuk.org

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