

APPENDIX 1

Your Life, Your Care:

A survey of the views of looked after children and young people aged 4-18yrs in Southwark

In January/February 2018 all children in care in Southwark were asked to participate in an online survey, mainly through their schools and colleges. This is a summary of the findings.

172 children and young people responded to the survey: a response rate of 38%

What is working well?



Almost every child and young person trusted their carers



Children and young people in care in Southwark were more likely to feel safe where they were living than their peers in the general population.



Every child aged 4-7yrs felt settled in their current placement. Young people (11-18yrs) in Southwark were also statistically more likely to report this than their peers in other authorities.



The majority of children and young people in Southwark felt that their lives were getting better.

*... foster parents understand you the most [when you] are feeling scared...
11-18yrs*

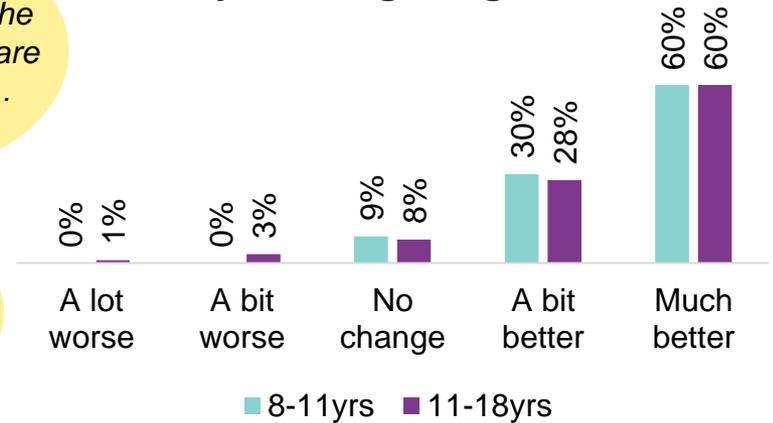
*I feel part of the family. I don't feel worried about anything.
11-18yrs*

*Being in care is not normal and it's hard but my carer makes it so much easier.
11-18yrs*

*I do miss my family but I love living here.
4-7yrs*



Is your life getting better?



Large proportions of young people (11-18yrs) in Southwark reported high levels of well-being. They were statistically more likely to report 'very high' life satisfaction and to be 'very positive' about their future compared to those in care in other local authorities.

School and college



Young people (11-18yrs) in care in Southwark were more likely than young people in the general population to record that they liked school.



They were also more likely than the general population to feel that their carers supported their learning.

However, boys aged 11-18yrs were significantly more likely than girls to say that they did not like school and did not have a good friend

I would like more regular checks at school to see how you are doing emotionally...
11-18yrs



Compared to other participating local authorities, significantly lower proportions of young people in Southwark reported bullying.

With one exception all children and young people who were afraid of bullying were receiving support from an adult.



Children in care aged 8-11yrs in Southwark were significantly less likely to worry about their feelings and behaviour than their peers in other local authorities.



Young people (11-18yrs) in Southwark were more likely than their peers in other LAs to be given opportunities to show that they could be trusted, but one in five 8-11 year olds didn't feel they had chances to help out in school.

I like being in care now as I have learnt to ride my bike, learnt to swim, & love all the clubs & activities my carers take me to.

11-18yrs

[I want to go] to more fun places when I want.

4-7yrs



Children and young people in care in Southwark had opportunities to explore the outdoors as often as their peers in the general population.



Compared to other LAs, much lower proportions of children and young people in Southwark had a pet.



Almost all young people (96%) **trusted their social worker** compared to 89% of young people elsewhere. All young people (11-18yrs) knew they could ask to **speak to their social worker on their own.**

The majority of children and young people **knew their social worker.** 93% of children aged 4-7yrs in Southwark knew their social worker compared to 80% in other LAs.

Low well-being



- 2 children aged 8-11yrs and 7 young people (11-18yrs) were identified as having low well-being.
- No children in the youngest age group (4-7yrs) gave answers suggesting low well-being.



- Not liking your appearance and not being able to pursue hobbies were factors most closely associated with low well-being among young people (11-18yrs) .
- All young people (11-18yrs) with low well-being in care in Southwark were girls.

What would make care better?

*[I would like]
more friends to
play with.
4-7yrs*

*[I want to be]
treated as everyone
else and get a
smartphone.
11-18yrs*

*I want more contact with
my siblings. They are
being moved [and] I am
afraid we will lose any
closeness we have
11-18yrs*

*I would like to do trips with
other children in care to
the beach, museums,
activity centres (rock
climbing) and swimming.
8-11yrs*

*[I want to] see my social worker
more and not have to go so far to
London for contact. To not have to
go to other carers if my carer is
going out because I don't like their
daughter. To be able to go to
places of my choice more.
8-11yrs*

What could be improved?

- **Review family contact arrangements, particularly sibling contact.** Around half of children and young people were unhappy with their current level of sibling contact. Ensure that children and young people understand why decisions about contact are made and that they are continually offered opportunities to ask questions.
- **Ensure all young people and children know why they are in care:** 43% of children aged 4-7yrs, 23% of those aged 8-11yrs and 13% of young people (11-18yrs) had not had an explanation or wanted to know more.
- **Consider the influence of gender when discussing issues with young people.** All young people (11-18yrs) with low well-being were girls. Boys in this age group were less likely than girls to like school and to have at least one good friend.
- **Work with young people to boost their self-esteem and address issues of poor self-image.** Not liking your appearance was shown to be the factor most strongly associated with low well-being.
- **Encourage carers to allow young people in their care to practise hobbies.** Low well-being was closely associated with not being able to pursue their interests.
- **Support children to have contact with animals.** Compared to elsewhere, much lower proportions of children and young people in Southwark had a pet. If pets are impractical, encourage contact through other means such as visiting city farms or neighbours' pets or dog walking.
- **Work with the youngest age group to build trusting and supportive relationships with their social workers and ensure social workers are accessible.** Lower proportions of 4-7yr olds trusted their social worker than in other LAs, and 12% of young people (11-18yrs) could 'hardly ever' or 'never' get in touch with their social worker.



bright spots

This survey was developed by Coram Voice and University of Bristol together with 140 children and young people in and from care as part of the national **Bright Spots** programme,

It asked children in care about their life, based on the things that are important to them.

To find out more go to:

www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots

Or email
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getting young voices heard

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