





Most care leavers (72%) trusted their leaving care worker. Those who reported more negative experiences noted how their workers could be hard to contact and did not always do what they said they would do.

Care leavers experienced fewer changes of worker compared to young people in care (11-18yrs) in Southwark.

*She tells me what I'm entitled to. Things that I was never given or told about with my previous workers. She encourages and pushes me to motivate me.*

*Sometimes it is hard to get the care worker on call or email*



Care leavers enjoyed a range of activities in their spare time. The top 5 were:

- playing/ listening to music
- watching TV/films
- hanging out with people
- using social media
- shopping.

Lack of money and health issues were the biggest barriers to having fun.

**[What fun stuff do you wish you could do more of?]**

*Going on holiday but money is a problem*

**[Is there anything that stops you having fun?]**  
*Depression. I can barely drag myself to work. It's hard to enjoy yourself when you're in debt and the flat is a nightmare.*



A greater proportion of care leavers (18%) recorded that they did **not** have a good friend compared to their peers (13%) in the general population.

*The friends I do have can't support me 100% because I can't explain the bad things I went through in care because it won't make sense.*



**Fewer** care leavers had a trusted person in their lives both compared to their peers in the general population and young people (11-18yrs) in care in Southwark.



Whilst many care leavers felt involved in pathway planning, 19% did not. They either did not know what a pathway plan was, did not have one or had rarely or never felt involved.



## Low well-being:

Across all measures of well-being care leavers had much lower scores compared to young people in the general population.

12 (21%) care leavers had low well-being.

Care leavers with low well-being were more likely to report that they:

- often felt lonely
- did not like their appearance
- did not always feel settled in their homes
- were not involved in pathway planning
- did not have a person who told them when they had done well.

*I only need support to achieve the best in life.*

*Stress, depression and discomfort generally. I have an expensive, stressful life that I didn't ask for and I can't lean on my parents like other families do.*

*Just want to achieve my goals in life and not give up.*

*Stressed with college and housing, money.*

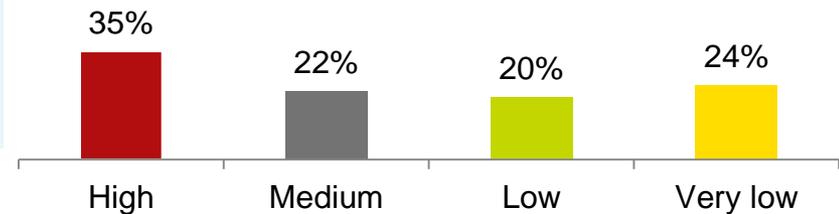


About a fifth (19%) of care leavers had felt lonely *all or most of the time* in the last few weeks.



35% of care leavers reported high levels of anxiety compared to 18% in the general population

How anxious did you feel yesterday?



**[Is there anything you want to tell us about your feelings?]**  
*I am lost.*

*I want to have my council flat, so that I can feel settled to finish my degree.*



Many young people chose to write additional comments on their experiences of leaving care....

*I am grateful for social services. I will like to continue receiving support to get the best out of my future.*

*Listen to us more*

*I'm really angry on how social services move and do not look into certain things the way they should.*

## Recommendations

- **Improve access to suitable accommodation.** A significant proportion of care leavers feel their accommodation is transient and not suitable for them. This seemed to be a particular issue for male care leavers.
- **Improve involvement in pathway planning.** Close to a fifth (19%) of care leavers rarely or never felt involved in pathway planning, did not have a pathway plan or didn't know what one was. Not feeling involved with pathway planning was associated with low well-being.
- **Help care leavers cope financially.** Care leavers in Southwark were more than three times as likely to report financial difficulties as young people in the general population.
- **Provide opportunities for care leavers to build positive social networks, make new friends and take part in society.** Not having the support of a trusted adult and feeling lonely were associated with low well-being. Care leavers in Southwark were less likely to have a good friend and an adult they could trust in their lives.
- **Explore partnerships in the local community (e.g. local gym memberships, activities for children) to give care leavers opportunities to do things they enjoy.** Young people named lack of money and health issues as being the biggest barriers to having fun.
- **Incorporate questions about well-being into regular reviews and explore what individual young people need to feel supported and like life is getting better.** Care leavers in Southwark were nearly twice as likely to report high levels of anxiety as young people in the general population.

bright spots

This survey was developed by Coram Voice and University of Bristol together with over 30 care leavers as part of the national **Bright Spots programme**,

It asks care leavers about their life, based on the things that are important to them.

To find out more go to:

[www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots)

Or email [brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk)

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