



We asked you some questions about what life is like for you. We asked lots of children in care the same questions. This is what you all told us and what we want to do.

## YOU SAID

### What was good?

- Most of you were happy.
- All of you felt settled and safe where you live.
- All of you trusted your carers.
- All of you liked your bedroom.
- Almost all of you liked school.
- Almost all of you had fun at the weekends.
- Almost all of you had a really good friend.

### What was bad?

- Some of you didn't know why you were in care and wanted to know more about the reasons why.
- A few of you didn't trust your social worker.

# YOU SAID

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

*[I would like]  
more friends to  
play with.*

*I do miss my family  
but I love living  
here.*

*I like the food.*

# WE WILL

Start collecting memories of your life at an earlier point so you understand why you are in care.

Spend a bit more time getting to know you, so you can get to know us.

Try to have more fun with you.

If your contact is limited we will help you understand the reasons why.

 bright spots

The survey was created together with children in care to ask about the things that were important to them. Coram Voice and University of Bristol have done the same survey in other local authorities and will bring together your responses to show what care is like for children across the country. If you want to find out more email: [brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk)

# Your Life, Your Care: 8-11 year olds survey findings



We asked you some questions about what life is like for you. We asked lots of children in care the same questions. This is what you all told us and what we want to do.

## YOU SAID

### What was good?

- Most of you thought your life was getting better.
- Almost all of you knew an adult you trusted.
- All of you trusted your carers and most of you felt they noticed how you were feeling.
- Most of you thought your carers were interested in what you were doing at school.
- Most of you liked your bedroom.
- Almost all of you felt settled at home.
- Almost all of you trusted your social worker.
- Almost all of you had fun at the weekend and played outdoors.

### What was bad?

- Some of you wanted to see your birth family more.
- A few of you didn't always feel safe where you live.
- Some of you didn't know why you were in care or wanted to know a bit more about it.
- You didn't all know who your social worker was.
- Some of you didn't know that you could speak to your social worker on your own.
- Some of you thought social workers made decisions without telling you or explaining why.
- Some of you did not like school and some of you were afraid of bullying.
- Half of you wanted a pet but didn't have one.

# YOU SAID

*[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.*

*[I have] nothing to say; I am happy with how things are.*

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

# WE WILL

Talk with you about your family and your life story and help you to understand the reasons why you came into care.

Talk with you about school and how we can help you succeed there.

Check you have activities to do that you enjoy.

Talk with your carers about whether it is possible for you to have a pet and think about other ways you can have more contact with animals.

Ask you what you want and explain decisions to you properly.

 bright spots

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# Your Life, Your Care: 11-18 year olds survey findings



In January and February 2018 we asked you some questions about what life is like for you to understand how we can make it better. We asked lots of young people in care the same questions. This is what you all told us and what we want to do because of what you said.

## YOU SAID

### What was good?

- Almost all of you trusted your carers.
- Almost all of you trusted your social worker.
- Most of you felt settled where you live.
- Most of you liked school and almost all of you felt that your carers were interested in what you do at school or college.
- Almost all of you spent time on hobbies and interests outside of school.
- Almost all of you liked your bedroom in the home you live in now.
- Most of you liked the way you look.
- Over half of you felt 'very positive' about your future.
- Most of you had at least one good friend.

### What was bad?

- Some of you wanted more contact with your family.
- A few of you felt that life was getting worse.
- A few of you didn't always feel safe where you were living.
- Some of you didn't have an adult you felt you could trust in your lives.
- Some of you didn't know who your social worker was.
- Some of you wanted to know more about why you were in care.
- Lots of you wanted a pet but did not have one.

# YOU SAID

*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.*

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

*I would like more regular checks at school to see how you are doing emotionally...*

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

*I feel part of the family. I don't feel worried about anything.*



# WE WILL

Keep reviewing your contact plan and keep it live, including reviewing whether it needs to be supervised and whether we can help you use social media to communicate with friends and family. For older children we will also consider extending the duration of contact.

Make sure you have the duty phone number and details of who you can contact if you can't get through to your social worker.

Make sure you have an accurate and up-to-date holistic picture of your life.

Check you have activities to do that you enjoy.

**bright spots**

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# Your Life Beyond 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.*

## 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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getting young voices heard

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**BRISTOL**

## 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.

# YOU SAID

*No ones helping sort things out with [...] accommodation, really cold, heating doesn't work. Mould.*

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

*I'm very well at managing money but certain circumstance like rent tax bills leaves it difficult to get by now I don't have a contract phone no Internet no extra bills than liveable ones*

*[My worker] doesn't offer me the help I'm actually entitled to*

*[My worker] treats me like an adult and supports me. •*



# WE WILL

1. Publicise that you don't need to pay Council Tax until you are 25. Ensure correct Benefits are in place. Make a budgeting plan with you, which highlights support you might need with managing your finances.
2. Work with you to create and review your Pathway Plan.
3. Support you to say "no" if you are given accommodation that isn't clean or is not in a good state of repair or if services (hot water etc.) aren't working. We will support you to remain somewhere that is suitable until good clean accommodation is available.
4. Provide information about your entitlements, about universal services and the local offer for care leavers. Help you identify supports within your own networks. Help PAs to provide encouragement to help you achieve your goals and communicate with you in ways that best suit you.
5. Create / promote a video to help raise awareness of university programmes. Talk with care leavers who have been to university to find out what worked well for them. Begin talking about university during your secondary education. Provide financial, practical and accommodation support to help you succeed at university.

**bright spots**

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