

Children and Young People's Survey

Corporate Parenting Team

November 2015-January 2016



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Introduction

This survey looks at the views of our looked after children and young people who are currently in local authority care and are open to the Corporate Parenting Team. The survey was undertaken between November 2015 and January 2016. The survey was sent via post and made available via survey monkey to a total of 260 children and young people who were aged between 5 and 18 years old. Social workers and IROs also distributed the survey during visits to children and young people.

The survey was conducted in response to changes to staffing within Corporate Parenting Team and concerns around the impact of this on our children and young people.

The purpose of this survey was to seek views from children and young people about the service provided, looking at: changes of social worker in the last year; how they felt if they had experienced a change; their view about the quality of their care; how they feel about the future; what could make life better in the future and finally over the past year whether they felt listened to.

Summary of findings

In total 25 (just under 10%) responses were received. The sample was too small to be fully representative of the views of children and young people in care and therefore to draw full conclusions about their views about the quality of the care they experienced, however it did present a picture of some of their views.

The survey responses were split across gender (male 62%, female 38%) and age range (8-20 years).

Main strengths

- 100% of children and young people felt that the care they had received within the last twelve months had 'stayed the same' or 'got better'.
- 96% of children and young people said that those who look after them had done everything they can for them.
- Over 95% of children and young people feel 'always' or 'sometimes' positive about the future.
- 92% of children and young people feel that those who look after them 'always' or 'sometimes' know when they're worried.

Areas for improvement

- 60% have had a change of social worker within the last twelve months.
- 38.5% said that they were not aware in advance of the change of social worker.
- 18% of children and young people said that they were 'never informed about changes that are made about my care' with a further 1 respondent saying 'don't know', despite only 9% feeling that they are never listened to.

Action plan

- Milton Keynes Council has a clear recruitment strategy that involves an ongoing rolling advert to secure permanent social workers across Children's Social Care. This is overseen by the recruitment team, who liaise with a named manager each month to organise weekly interviewing for vacancies as appropriate candidates come in. We have already seen an improvement in recruitment and currently have a substantially reduced vacancy rate.
- Introduction of a good practice initiative so that where there is to be a change of worker, the new and departing worker will meet together with the child or young person for introductions and a smooth transition.
- To ensure children and young people are informed and involved in any future changes in their lives and how they feel about this, we will: ensure that Social Workers communicate any proposed changes during statutory visits and monitor this through auditing and tracking; remind social workers via case supervision of the importance of planning and sharing information with children and young people; ensure child's voice is heard and they are aware of any proposed change through Care Planning and Child Care Reviews.
- Milton Keynes Council is currently exploring an app to gain the views of our children and young people across the service, to be used more generically and at any time.
- Consideration will be given to re-running the survey and looking at ways to improve the response from young people.

Appendix

1. In the last year have you had a change of:

	Yes	%	No	%
Social Worker	15	60%	10	40%
Placement	9	36%	16	64%
School*	15	60%	10	40%

*The survey was distributed after September 2015 and some children and young people would have moved school due to their age. At least 6 children and young people would have been in the age group which would have meant a routine change in school.

2(a) If yes for any of the above, were you informed of these changes?

Data from the number of respondents who answered yes to question 1

	Yes	%	No	%
Social Worker	8	61.5%	5	38.5%
Placement	5	83%	1	17%
School	10	83%	2	17%

2 (b) How do you feel about these changes?

Comments	Number of respondents
Fine	4
Good	4
"I was happy about the placement and school change but the social worker was a shock as I got on with my social worker"	1
"Sad sometimes keep moving about" "[my social worker] is leaving – I feel sad" "I don't like changes at all, and it make me sad"	3
"Worried and uncomfortable at first, and a bit unsettled. But happier and settled now"	1
"Disappointed about social worker "	1
"Didn't care"	1
"Social worker – I've had 5 in a year, which is upsetting, placement – a lot happier, school – a lot happier"	1
"Happy"	1

3. Over the last year my care has got?

Worse	Stayed the same	Got better
0	9	16
0%	36%	64%

1 respondent commented – “I have more independence“

4 (a) In the last year do you think that those who look after you have done everything they can for you?

Yes	Don't Know	No
20	4	1
80%	16%	4%

4 (b) Please tell us why?

Comments	Number of respondents
“Coz there awesome - They are amazing“	2
“They help me when I am struggling with work. Also help me out when I am stressed“	1
“They support me with EVERYTHING“	1
“Because my mum carers. She did everything possible“	1
“They make me feel part of the family and push for contact“	1
“Because [don't know] it's halfway - Don't want to say“	1
“They teach me to care for myself“	1
“They explain what I done wrong [my foster carer] is the best. Makes the best chicken curry ever. She makes me happy“	1
“Carer has done everything – yes. No for social worker“	1
“Sometimes I don't think they have but it's not their fault – like they work in the council but have no power/influence over matters such as housing etc.“	1
“Because they got me to school from college and they treat me as a part of the family“	1
“I have lots of nice treats, food, and desert and help with anything“	1
“Because they act as they really care and take me lots of places“	1
“Try to keep me out of trouble and stuff “	1

5. How often do you feel good about the future?

Always	Sometimes	Never
12	12	1
48%	48%	4%

6. What do you think is the main thing that could make life better for you and other young people in care?

Comments	Number of respondents
"More things to do - more activities"	2
"Don't know"	3
"Nothing"	1
"Permanent social workers"	1
"Security and opportunity"	1
"Understand social issues"	1
"To find someone who can understand your feelings and emotions"	1
"Stop telling people off!"	1
"Don't run away and talk to people"	1
"Make more placements permanent, it save children being unsettled"	1
"Have my own den outside for some privacy"	1
"Have a lunch in the hall"	1
"Feeling happy and going to school"	1
"Education "	1
"Manage my temper"	1
"Not to go to their schools"	1
"Everything is okay"	1

7. What do you think is the main thing that could make life better for care leavers?

Comments	Number of respondents
“Staying in contact with carer, people I love and friends”	5
“Don’t know “	3
“Work harder”	1
“Good carers”	1
“I want to leave care at any age”	1
“I don’t want to think about this. It is making me sad”	1
“Have a party“	1
“The lottery”	1
“Get to know what is real life”	1
“Opportunity and security”	1
“Support for university”	1
“Making them feel happy“	1
“Get money“	1

8. Thinking about the last year, please rate the following

I am listened to:

Always	Sometimes	Never
15	10	0
60%	40%	0%

Those who look after me know when I am worried:

Always	Sometimes	Never
15	8	2
60%	32%	8%

My wishes and thoughts are taken into consideration when decisions are made about me:

Always	Sometimes	Never
17	6	2
68%	24%	8%

I am involved in the decisions about my care plan:

Always	Sometimes	Never
15	9	1
60%	36%	4%

1 respondent said - Sometimes/never depending on what it is

1 respondent said - Always/ sometimes depending on what it is

I am informed about changes that are made about my care:

Always	Sometimes	Never
15	6	4
60%	24%	16%

1 respondent said - Don't know

9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Comments	Number of respondents
"I do not want meetings at school"	1
"Nothing – I am happy always staying with my mum and siblings"	1
"When I talk to my social worker and we make plans about contact, life story, nothing seems to happen"	1
"Youth club rules!!!"	1
"I like ice cream"	1
"You need more social workers"	1
"I understand that social services are somewhat underfunded, under resourced and under staffed but it can be frustrating when the support isn't there"	1

10. Would you like information about getting involved in our children in care council, Today's Children, Tomorrow's Future (TCTF)?

Yes	No
11	14
44%	56%

Age of respondents

Age	Number of respondents
8	1
9	1
10	3
11	2
12	4
14	2
15	4
16	2
17	2
20	1

Gender of respondents

Male	Female
13	8
62%	38%



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