

BRIGHT SPOTS

**SURVEYS OF
THE VIEWS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
AGED 4 – 18 YEARS
IN
HAMPSHIRE**

Background

The BS partnership - between **'Coram voice'** and **University of Bristol**

- Aims to **improve the experience** of care
- Give **children a voice**
- Captures views 'unfiltered' via **anonymously completed** surveys
- **3 age appropriate surveys** (4 – 7 years; 8 – 11 years; secondary age children).

Methodology

- Hampshire: First survey. Completed over 5 months – focused on LAC reviews and managed through IROs.
- Reported in June 2017. Action plan developed and being implemented

Demographics

- Hampshire had very good response rates: 37%
- In every age group response rates were no lower than 36%
- Responses broadly reflected the gender and ethnic make up of the populations of LAC in Hampshire

Structure of Outcomes

- Detailed reports of over 90 pages covering:
 - Key Findings (IOW compares 2016 & 2017)
 - Methodology details
 - Whole survey findings
 - Children & young people's comments
 - Positive aspects and areas for improvement
 - References
- Summary or Key Findings – 1 or 2 pages

Headline Outcomes for HCC (1)

- Children and young people **felt well looked after** by their carers. They **trusted their carers** and their social workers
- The **majority liked school** and felt that their carers showed an interest in their education
- Many **wanted more contact and/or to understand** why contact was not occurring
- **Thirty percent of children (8-11yrs) were afraid to go to school because of bullying**

Headline Outcomes for HCC (2)

Wellbeing:

- 5% of children 4-7yrs, 7% of 8-11yrs and 18% of 11-18yrs had low well-being.
- Younger children, low well-being was associated with not understanding why they were in care, not knowing who their social worker was, feeling excluded from decision-making and being bullied at school.... more likely to lack a trusted adult in their lives - some did not have at least one good friend.
- •Older young people (11-18yrs) with low well-being were more likely to record they did not like their appearance, did not feel settled in their placements, did not feel safe, did not trust their social worker and were dissatisfied with their contact arrangements.

Headline Outcomes for HCC (3)

- Some of the negative comments were about being made to feel different because they were looked after, too many placement moves, not feeling settled and frequent changes of social worker. Some children did not have a good understanding of their care plans and/or permanence plans.
- However, the **majority of comments were positive about the experience of being in care**. Children and young people wrote that they **wanted to thank their carers and social workers, loved being in care and were given more opportunities. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in particular were very grateful** to their carers and the help they had received

Really Interesting!

So.....

WHO needs to do **WHAT**, **WHEN**?

The Plan!

Bullying at school

- We are talking to the people who run the schools, the Head Teachers and Governors. Because they need to know what children have said. They need to ensure everyone in their schools feel safe.
- We'll see if we can find a way to ask about this when the Personal Education Plans (PEPs) get agreed.
- Some children will have helped with another survey called 'What do I think?' at schools. We are looking at that too as that said most children think schools deal with bullying. So we need to really understand this better.
- The annual 'anti-bullying' conference (October) needs to better hear the voice of children in care.

Having a good friend

- The managers in charge of each district in Hampshire are setting up fun 'participation' events and sessions for all children in their districts who have a social worker. This will perhaps be a chance to meet a new friend.
- We are also talking to schools about how they welcome anyone new who is in care. Because they need to think about how they do that in a way that helps children find friendships without making a fuss about the fact that they are in care.

Made to feel 'different' because of being in care?

- We are reminding everyone who works with children in care to try to not do things that make them feel different. That might be how they talk, what they say to other people or when they arrange meetings.
- We also know Surrey University is looking at this issue. We want to know what they think might help. Because if someone else is doing work on this we need to learn from it too.

Knowing why you are in care and being involved in planning

- Social workers need to make sure children understand why they are in care and they need to involve children in planning and decision making. We are making sure Hampshire's social workers really get to grips with this and that it is reinforced when they go on courses and undertake training.

Too many moves?

- We know sometimes we move children more than is ideal. We can't promise 'no moves' but have said to children that we will try hard to make sure there are less moves and to explain clearly 'why' if you they do move. Children need to feel settled to get on with life, school and friends.