

	<p align="center">Corporate Parenting Committee 13 October 2021</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services</p>
<p>Feedback from Looked After Children: Outcome of the Bright Spots "Your life, your care" survey 2020</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The Bright Spots "Your life, your care" survey was carried out with looked after children and young people in November/December 2020. The results of the survey were made available in April 2021. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the survey and how the Council is responding to the results.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to review and comment on the contents of this report and our planned response.

I like the people who look after me but I would rather be at home with my brother and Mummy. I would like more toys to play with in my home and my room is too big – that's why I don't like it. I miss my Mummy a lot. (4-7 years cohort)

To be honest my carer has provided me with more than I need. (11-18 years cohort)

3.0 Background to “Your life, your care” survey 2020

3.1 “Your life, your care” is a well-being survey for looked after children. It builds on a similar survey completed in 2018. The survey was developed with looked after children by Coram Voice and The University of Oxford. Since 2016, a total of 56 local authorities have taken part in this survey, resulting in over 15,000 responses. This survey helps Brent Council have a deeper understanding of how Brent looked after children experience care. Where possible, Brent’s results have been compared with responses of children looked after by other local authorities and with data cited by Coram Voice regarding the wider, general population from other national and international published sources.

3.2 The aim of the survey is to hear from looked after children about their well-being, to improve their care experience and to highlight the ‘Bright Spots’ of practice that contribute to looked after children doing well. Brent has been working in partnership with Coram Voice to ensure looked after children are involved in and benefit from this survey.

3.3 The areas of focus in the survey were:

- Well-being
- Resilience
- Rights
- Relationships
- Recovery

4.0 Summary of key messages from the “Your life, your care” survey 2020

4.1 The survey was completed by looked after children online, coordinated by the Brent CYP Quality Assurance and Learning and Development Team. The survey took place in November and December 2020 and results were made available to Brent Council in April 2021. The eligible participation cohort of looked after children aged 4 to 18 years old was 261. Of that number, 95 children and young people responded to the survey, which is a response rate of 36%.

4.2 A total of 11 of the respondents were aged between 4 and 7 years (69% of their age cohort), 27 of the respondents were aged 8 to 11 (59% of their age cohort) and 57 of the respondents were aged 12 to 18 years (29% of their age cohort). 54% of respondents were male and 46% were female. The ethnic background of respondents was 34% Black, 21% White, 17% mixed, 13% Asian and 15% other. Direct feedback from children is included in this report.

I would like more opportunities to do different activities. (11-18 years cohort)

I wouldn't change anything because I'm happy with the way things are now.
(11-18 years cohort)

4.3.1 What children and young people said has gone well:

- Looked after children in Brent are more likely than children in the general population to report that they 'always' felt safe where they were living – 92% overall compared to 75% of children in the general population (data from the “Children’s Worlds Survey” cited by Coram Voice).
- Having a trusted adult has been shown to be the main factor in helping children recover from traumatic events. Nearly all Brent respondents aged 4-18 years trusted the adults they lived with. 100% of children aged 4-7 years, 96% of children aged 8-11 years and 95% of young people aged 11-18 years said they trusted their carers.
- Most Brent looked after children aged 8-18 years had a trusted adult in their lives. 96% of children aged 8-11 years and 91% of young people aged 11-18 said that they had a trusted adult in their lives.
- 94% of Brent looked after children aged 4-18 years knew who their social worker was compared to 91% of children looked after by other LAs. 100% of Brent children aged 4-7 years, 96% of Brent children aged 8-11 years and 89% of Brent young people aged 11-18 years said they trusted their social worker. 80% of Brent children aged 8-11 years and 100% of Brent young people aged 11-18 years knew they could speak to their social worker on their own.
- 40% of Brent young people aged 11-18 reported that they had one social worker in the past 12 months, compared to 16% reporting they had one social worker in the past 12 months in the last survey in 2018. 92% of Brent looked after children aged 4-18 reported that their social worker was easy to contact, compared to 80% in 2018.
- Of the cohort of Brent looked after children aged 11-18 years, 88% liked school or college 'a lot' or 'a bit'. This is higher than the response of children looked after by other LAs (78%) and data cited by Coram voice regarding the general population from the “Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey” 2015 (80%).

- 100% of 8-11 year olds and 95% of 11-18 year olds reported that the adults they lived with showed an interest in their education. This was a comparable response to young people aged 11-18 years looked after by other local authorities (96%) and is higher than data cited by Coram Voice from the “Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Survey” 2015 regarding the general population of 11-15 year olds (90%).
- The percentage of Brent looked after children who reported being scared of bullying has decreased compared to the 2018 survey. Although a lower percentage of Brent young people aged 11-18 years (14%) reported that they were afraid to go to school because of bullying, bullying was still an issue for one in 10 Brent young people. The majority of these Brent young people (88%) reported that they felt they were getting support with bullying.
- Studies have shown that poor body image is associated with low self-esteem, depression and self-harm. 80% of Brent looked after children aged 11-18 years reported that they are happy with appearance compared to 51% of Brent looked after children who responded to the 2018 survey and 64% of children looked after by other LAs who responded to the current survey. 4% of Brent young people had a low score identifying unhappiness with their appearance. This was a lower percentage than reported by young people looked after by other LAs (15%) and children in the general population, (10%: data cited by Coram Voice from the Children’s Society 2019).
- 4% of Brent looked after children aged 11-18 years reported that they had been embarrassed by adults for being in care, compared to 7% of Brent looked after children in 2018 and 12% of children looked after by other LAs.
- When asked if children and young people were happy yesterday, 91% of Brent looked after children aged 4-7 said yes (compared to 83% of Brent looked after children in 2018), 74% of 8-11 year olds said yes (compared to 67% in 2018) and 76% of 11-18 year olds said yes (compared to 48% in 2018).



*My social worker
[name] is amazing!
(11-18 years
cohort)*



*It helps me with my
work. I am supported
with school and other
parts of my life.
(8-11 years cohort)*

4.4 What children and young people said needs to improve:

- 74% of Brent looked after children reported feeling settled all or most of the time. This is lower than children looked after by other LAs (96%).

The survey asks about pets as children and young people said they are important in focus groups. In Brent, 41% of 8-11 year olds and 31% of 11-18 year olds had a pet. This is lower than children looked after by other LAs (72% and 59%).

- For Brent 11 to 18 year olds, 60% spoke to adults they live with about things that mattered to them. This is lower than children looked after by other LAs (70%).
- A looked after child knowing their personal history and having an understanding of the reasons that led to them becoming looked after has been shown to help children recover from abuse and neglect. When asked if an adult had explained why they were in care, only 18% of Brent looked after children aged 4-7 said yes (compared to 83% in 2018 and 51% of children looked after by other LAs). 70% of Brent looked after children aged 8-11 said yes (compared to 83% in 2018 and 67% of children looked after by other LAs) and 72% of Brent looked after children aged 11-18 said yes (compared to 79% in 2018 and 82% of children looked after by other LAs).
- Overall, responses showed that Brent looked after children wanted more family time. For 8 to 18 year olds, 20% said they had too little contact with their mother. 50% of 8-11 year olds and 25% of 11-18 year olds said the contact with their mother was “just right”. 35% of 8-11 year olds and 60% of 11-18 year olds had no contact with their father.

They don't ask me much about going home. I want to know more about what is going on.
(11-18 years cohort)

I would like to see them more, particularly my brother. (8-11 years cohort)

I just want to go home. (11-18 years cohort)

5. Brent's planned response the 'Your life, your care' survey 2020

5.1 The detailed report from Coram Voice and The University of Oxford provides rich material to help us to continue to improve services for looked after children based on their lived experiences. Activity based on the findings of the survey include:

- **Junior Care in Action:** Junior Care in Action reviewed the findings of the Bright Spot Survey on 18 September 2021 to better understand the views of their peers. Most of the young people remembered doing the survey and had suggestions to get more people involved in the future. JCIA reflected that they wanted to explore the topic of bullying. They discussed that bullying is real and happens, and it takes place more and more on social media. JCIA suggested support groups for children and offering self-defence classes to improve confidence in dealing with bullying. JCIA said that they want social workers and foster carers to develop their skills in understanding bullying and talking to children about this.
- **Care in Acton (CIA):** The initial results of the survey were introduced to CIA at a residential trip in August and further explored on 14 September 2021. Care in Action members were interested in children and young people's views around feeling settled in placements and time with their family.
 - To feel settled in their placement, young people were interested in the idea of having a pet. Young people said that a pet provides support and comfort. They thought it would be a good idea for young people to have a pet that moved with them when they moved placement. They also thought hobbies are a good way for young people to feel settled and that these should be promoted.
 - Regarding time with families, CIA members said that Brent should advocate for family time without supervision. They suggested doing checks with family members so they could oversee contact. Some feedback was that they sometimes feel forced to have contact with family and that social workers should talk to them about what to do if they don't want to attend contact.
- **Local Partnership Meeting with Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers:** The results were considered at the Local Partnership Meeting with LAC and Care Leavers in June 2021. A follow up workshop across CYP services on 11 August 2021 was held to discuss the survey results, celebrate good practice and consider development areas. An action plan has been developed focussed on: 1) children understanding why they are in care 2) children feeling settled in placements and 3) time with birth families (contact arrangements).

The action plan incorporates views by JCIA and CIA and is owned and driven by the Local Partnership Meeting with LAC and Care Leavers, chaired by Onder Beter, Head of LAC and Permanency.

Report sign-off:

Gail Tolley

Strategic Director Children and Young People