

	<p align="center">Corporate Parenting Committee 19 January 2022</p>
	<p align="center">Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services</p>
<p>Feedback from Care Leavers: Outcome of the Bright Spots 'Your life beyond care' survey 2021</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 purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the Bright Spots "Your life beyond care" survey 2021 and how the Council plans to respond.

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 am very happy here with my foster family and my pet [name]. I want to continue to live with them and after finishing my college to go to university to study art.

I love it [where I live]! I've painted the entire flat on my own and have assembled all of the furniture, so I've really left my mark on it.

3.0 Background to “Your life beyond care” survey 2021

- 3.1 “Your life beyond care” is a well-being survey for care leavers. It builds on a similar survey for children in care. The survey was developed with care leavers by Coram Voice and The University of Oxford in 2019. Brent first took part in the survey in 2019 and this is our second survey.
- 3.2 The aim of the survey is to hear from care leavers about their well-being, improve their care leaving experience and highlight the Bright Spots of practice that contribute to care leavers doing well. Brent has been working in partnership with Coram Voice to ensure care leavers are involved and benefit from this survey.
- 3.3 The areas of focus in the survey were:
- The people in your life
 - Being a care leaver
 - Housing
 - Living independently
 - Taking part in society
 - Feelings
 - Well-being

4.0 Summary of key messages from the “Your life beyond care” survey 2021

- 4.1 The survey completed via an online app with the support of the Quality Assurance and L&D Team. The survey took place between April and May 2021 and results were made available to Brent Council in August 2021. The eligible participation cohort of care leavers aged 16 to 25 years old was 411. Of that number, 132 care leavers responded to the survey which is a response rate of 32%.
- 4.2 51% of the respondents were aged between 21 and 25 years, most others (45%) were aged between 18 and 20 years. Four (3%) of respondents were aged 16-17 and one (1%) was age 26. 63% of respondents were male and 37% were female. The ethnicity of care leavers who completed the survey was 34% Black, 19% Asian, 16% White, 13% mixed and 18% other.
- 4.3 Before becoming a care leaver, nearly two thirds (65%) of the care leavers who responded had been in care for more than four years and just 3% had been in care for less than a year. Direct feedback from Care Leavers is included in quotations in this report

I am happy with my experience in social services so far.

The people in my life tend to be temporary and I cannot always trust them... I tend to rely on myself and my faith.

- 4.4 A sizeable minority of care leavers in Brent appeared to be thriving. Across the four well-being measures 30% reported very high levels of happiness, 26% reported very high life satisfaction, 35% reported feeling that things done in life were very worthwhile and 20% reported very low levels of anxiety.
- 4.5 24% of care leavers had overall low well-being which is a reduction from 31% in 2019. Care leavers with low well-being were more likely to report that they did not have someone they could trust; who believed in them; who listened to them and who praised their achievements. As well as the absence of key supportive relationships, other factors most strongly associated with low overall well-being were little or no involvement in pathway planning, unhappiness with appearance and feeling lonely 'always or often'.
- 4.6 Pathway planning involves a local authority and young person setting goals and outlining the support needed to reach those goals. Care leavers were asked, do you feel involved in your pathway planning? Three-fifths (61%) of care leavers felt wholly or mostly involved with their pathway planning and this is an increase from 56% in 2019. 15% felt 'hardly ever/ never' involved with their pathway planning, or didn't have a plan, or didn't know what one was.
- 4.7 What care leavers said has gone well:
- Care leavers in Brent were statistically more likely than care leavers in other LAs to report very high levels of life satisfaction (26% vs. 16%). Those who said they were highly satisfied or very highly satisfied with life as a whole increased from 38% in 2019 to 50% in 2021.
 - Care leavers in Brent were statistically more likely than care leavers in other LAs to score very highly on feeling the extent to which things they did were worthwhile (35% vs. 22%). Those that responded that things they did were moderately to very highly worthwhile increase from 75% in 2019 to 87% in 2021.
 - Care leavers in Brent were statistically more likely than care leavers in other LAs to report 'very high' levels of happiness the previous day (30% vs. 21%). Those who reported 'high' and 'very high' levels of happiness yesterday increased slightly from 50% to 51%.
 - Care leavers in Brent were statistically more likely than care leavers in other LAs to report very high levels of positivity about the future (46% vs. 27%). This is an increase from 35% in 2019.
 - Care leavers in Brent were statistically more likely than care leavers in other LAs to report very high levels of satisfaction with the way they looked (44% vs. 25%). This is an increase from 35% in 2019.

- 95% of care leavers in Brent knew the identity of their leaving care worker. In the 2019 survey this figure was 89%.
- 17% of care leavers reported difficulties in coping financially. This is down 9 percentage points from the 2019 survey. 20% could not afford their mobile phone bills compared to was 38 in 2019%.
- Although care leavers in Brent were statistically less likely than care leavers in other LAs to report owning a pet (14% vs. 28%), the proportion of Brent's care leavers who owned a pet rose from 4% to 14% between the 2019 and the 2021 survey.
- As in 2019, in Brent, care leavers continued to experience greater stability of worker than did young people (11-18yrs) in care.

I have a lot of childhood trauma ... I internalise a lot of what I'm feeling and it makes me emotionally volatile.

Feeling great. Today is a great day everything is positive.

4.8 What care leavers said needs to improve:

- Nearly one in five (19%) of the care leavers reported not having someone they trusted and who stuck by them. The same is true for just 2% of young people in the general population.
- Nine out of ten (90%) care leavers reported having at least one good friend (an increase from 87% in 2019), but 13 (10%) did not – a much greater proportion than is recorded by peers in the general population, where 3% report not having at least one good friend.
- Compared to care leavers in other LAs, care leavers in Brent were statistically less likely to report trusting their leaving care worker 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes' (89% vs. 96%). This is a decrease from 95% in 2019.
- 40% of the care leavers in Brent reported high levels of anxiety. The same was true for 18% of young people in the general population.
- 44% of the care leavers did not 'always' feel settled where they lived (a slight reduction from 46% in 2019).

- 41% did not 'always' feel safe in their neighbourhood (an increase from 30% in 2019).
- More than a third (36%) did not think that their current accommodation was right for them (an increase from 29% in 2019).
- Although a slight decrease from 19% in 2019, 17% of care leavers reported either not having been told or wanting to know more about the reasons for being in care.
- 17% of the care leavers were struggling financially (compared to 26% in 2019). However, the same is true for 7% of 16-24 year olds in the general population.

I feel like I need more support and information for YP moving out from foster carer to semi independent. The booklet is not enough to prepare.

Stop letting young people get attached to people that's going to leave them. It's not fair and it hurts.

5. Brent's response the 'Your life beyond care' survey 2021

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

- **Care Leavers in Action (CLIA):** The initial results were shared with CLIA. They want to continue to make changes to services based on the results of these. For example, following the 2019 survey, young people delivered a financial guide for care leavers that was well received by their peers. They are now developing ideas based on the 2021 survey.
- **Local Partnership Meeting with Looked After Children and Care Leavers:** The results led to a well-attended "Time to Act" sessions with key partners including Care Leavers in Action members, Council partners and health colleagues. All are contributing to the development of an action plan based on the learning from the "Your life beyond care" survey and the youth-led inspection.
- **Corporate Parenting Committee:** A further report will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee in April 2022 outlining the full "Time to Act" plan.
- **Feedback to care leavers:** Brent care leavers will be written to and thanked for their engagement and feedback. This will include their feedback that there has been an increase in care leavers who do not trust their leaving care worker. This is despite an increase of care

leavers reporting they know who their leaving care worker is. It is acknowledged that there have been staffing changes in the Leaving Care Teams and it takes time to build trust. In addition, this relationship-based work may have been impacted by Covid-19 and the restrictions on face to face working.

Feedback to Care Leavers will include other key messages about service improvement based on the findings of the survey, the “Time to Act” plan and how the survey results will be used to develop the revised Local Offer.

Report sign off:

Gail Tolley

Strategic Director Children and Young People