

# ***Your Life, Your Care***

***A survey of the views of looked  
after children and young  
people aged 4-17yrs.***

## ***Brent***

***July 2024***

***Dr. Sarah Meakings***

# About the Bright Spots Programme



The Bright Spots Programme is a research and service improvement project run by Coram Voice. The Programme was set up to understand what is important to children in care and care leavers and share learning about what makes life good for them.

Official statistics on care-experienced children and young people give only a partial picture of their lives. Data focuses on adult perspectives using objective outcomes measures – e.g. placement types and educational attainment. This information does not tell us about how children and young people feel: are they happy, safe and feel they are doing well?

The Bright Spots Programme takes a different approach by measuring subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is defined as feeling good and doing well at an individual and interpersonal level. Measuring subjective well-being enables us to understand children's experience of care by putting their voice at the centre.

Bright Spots helps local authorities (LAs) systematically listen to their children in care and care leavers about the things that are important to them. We work to ensure that the views and experiences of children are at the heart of decisions that are made about their lives.

# About the Your Life, Your Care survey

The Bright Spots Programme was developed in collaboration with Professor Julie Selwyn at the University of Oxford with funding from the Hadley Trust. As part of the development process, we created the *Bright Spots Well-Being Indicators* which put children's experiences and voice at the heart of how we measure subjective well-being.

The indicators are measured by the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey. The survey was developed from literature reviews, roundtable discussions with professionals and from focus groups and individual interviews with 140 looked after children and young people living in nine different local authorities.

The survey identifies the areas where children in care are doing well and where things could be improved, providing an evidence base of children and young people's experience and well-being to inform service improvements.



# Measuring subjective well-being

## Subjective well-being:

- Subjective well-being in this survey refers to children's own evaluations of how they feel about their lives.
- There are questions in the surveys about affect (e.g. how happy a child feels now), cognitive judgements (e.g. evaluations of relationships) and the inner world (e.g. life having meaning).
- In addition to questions that measure overarching well-being indicators (happiness, life satisfaction etc.) the survey covers four domains that are important to children and young people: Relationships, Resilience, Rights and Recovery.
- All these elements help us understand if children are flourishing in care.

## Bright Spots well-being indicators



# About this report

- This report outlines the findings from the ‘Your Life, Your Care’ surveys for children in care in Brents aged 4-17yrs.

On some pages of this report, you will see a ‘**Bright Spots**’ icon (top right of page), and a yellow text box. This indicates a ‘good news’ story – a positive aspect of practice in your LA. This is where children and young people are doing significantly better than children in care in other LAs or report the same as or higher well-being than their peers in the general population.

We also highlight with a grey text box where young people are doing significantly less well compared to children in care in other LAs, or where results are markedly less favourable than in the general population. This may be an area to focus on in service development.

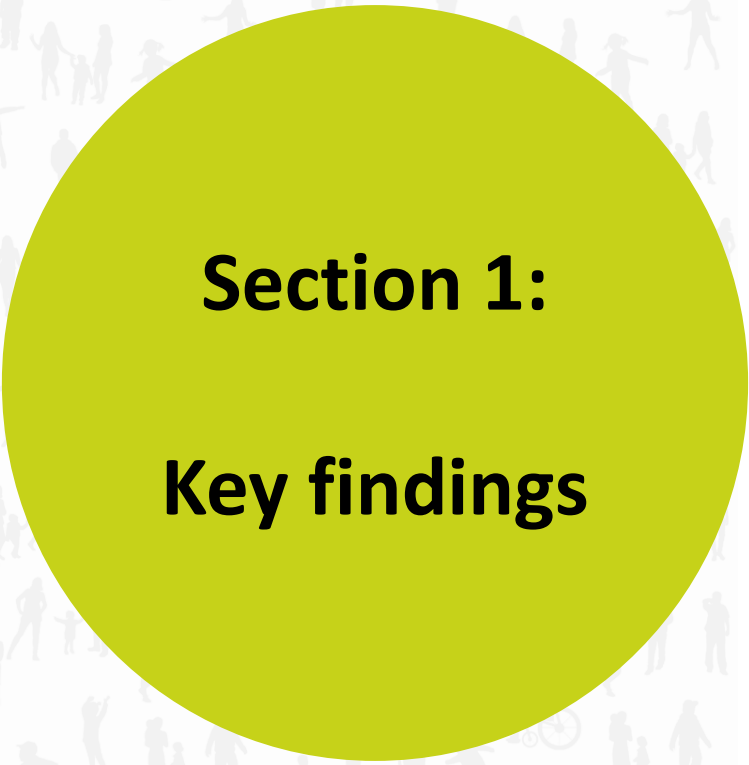
If we have not highlighted a difference the findings are in line with the results in other LAs.

Light yellow text boxes showcase comparative data from similar surveys and give context and background information about what children and young people told us about their lives in the development phase of the survey.



# Contents

Section	Pages
Section 1: Summary: Key findings	7
Section 2: Methodology	17
Section 3: Survey results	21
1. Demographics	22
2. Relationships	28
3. Resilience	40
4. Rights	51
5. Recovery	59
6. Well-being	69
Section 4: Children and young people's comments	80
Section 5: References	85

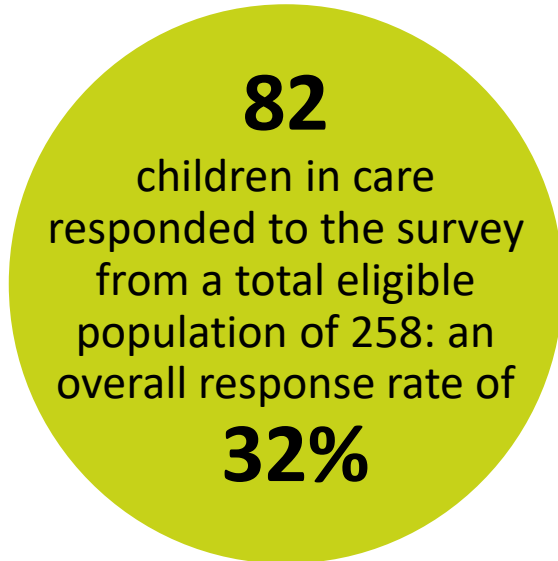


**Section 1:  
Key findings**

# Your Life, Your Care 2023-24

*The views of children in care aged 4-17 in Brent on their well-being*

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**Between 1 March and 30 April 2023 and again between 11 October 2023 and 29 March 2024, all children in care aged 4-17yrs were asked to take part in an online survey to find out how they felt about their lives. This is a summary of the findings.**

- More girls (53%) than boys (46%) responded to the survey. One (1%) chose the 'let me tell you' option.
- The most common ethnicity was Black (35%), followed by Mixed Ethnicity (21%).
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) were in foster care, about one-fifth (21%) were in family and friends care. Others lived in residential care, with parents, or 'somewhere else' – most often in semi-independent accommodation.
- Most often (41%), the children and young people had been in care for between 1-3 years.

Age group	Number of responses	Response rate
4-7yrs	12	30%
8-11yrs	16	50%
11-17yrs	54	29%



# What is working well?



## Placement continuity

- Young people (11-17yrs) in Brent were statistically more likely than young people in other LAs to have **stayed in the same placement since going into care** (55% vs. 34%)\*.



## Feeling safe in placement

- Overall, 93% of children and young people (4-17yrs) reported **'always' feeling safe where they lived**; a higher proportion compared to children (82%) in the general population\*.
- All (100%;  $n=12$ ) of the youngest children (4-7yrs)\* **'always'** felt safe where they lived.



## Settled in placement (4-7yrs)

- All (100%,  $n=12$ ) children aged 4-7yrs reported **feeling settled at home**.



## Bedroom (4-7yrs)

- All (100%,  $n=12$ ) children aged 4-7yrs reported **liking their bedroom**\*.



## Sharing confidences

- Four fifths (80%) of young people (11-17yrs) **talked regularly with their carers/ parents about things that mattered to them**. The same is true for 66% of young people in the general population\*.



## Sensitive parenting (8-11yrs)

- All (100%,  $n=16$ ) children aged 8-11yrs thought their **carers noticed how they were feeling**\*.



## Adults you live with: Trust

- 100% of children (4-11yrs) **trusted the adults they lived with**\*.

\*Denotes a Bright Spot of practice

# What is working well? (2)



## Social worker: Identity

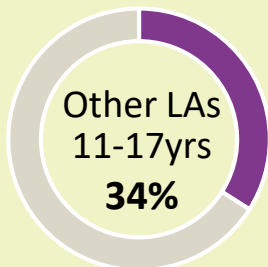
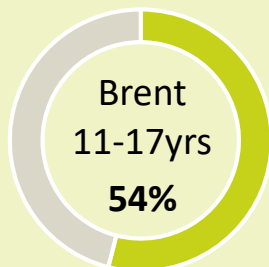
- Every child (100%,  $n=16$ ) aged 8-11yrs **knew who their social worker was\***.



## Social worker: Continuity

- Young people (11-17yrs) in Brent were statistically more likely than young people in other LAs to have **kept the same social worker in the previous 12 months\***.

One social worker in previous 12 months



## Social Worker: Trust

- The level of trust in social workers was high with 100% of the youngest children (4-7yrs) and 100% of children aged 8-11yrs **trusting their social worker\***.



## Understand reason for care

- In Brent, young people aged 11-17yrs were statistically more likely than young people in other LAs to report having had a **full explanation for why they were in care (96% vs. 78%)\***.



## Trusted adult (8-11yrs)

- All (100%) children aged 8-11yrs reported **having a trusted adult in their lives\***.

\*Denotes a Bright Spot of practice

# What is working well? (3)



## Liking school

- 83% of the 11-17yrs group **liked school or college 'a lot' or 'a bit'** – a larger proportion than is reported by the general population (70%)\*.

*I feel that in future I will be successful because of college.*  
11-17yrs



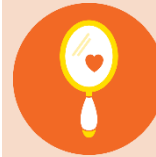
## Support for learning

- 91% ( $n=64$ ) of children and young people aged 8-17yrs reported that **the adults they lived with showed an interest in their education**. The same is true for 88% of children in the general population\*.



## Access to nature (11-17yrs)

- 96% ( $n=51$ ) of young people (11-17yrs) reported **having spent time outdoors** at least once in the previous week. The same is true for up to 85% of the general population\*.



## Appearance (11-17yrs)

- 87% of young people in Brent were **happy with how they looked**, compared to 86% in the general population\*.



## Positive about the future

- Compared to those in the general population, young people in Brent less often reported **low levels of positivity about their future** (12% vs. 9%)\*.

\*Denotes a Bright Spot of practice

# What could be improved?



## Family time (8-11yrs)

- Just over a quarter (27%) of children (8-11yrs) felt **the time they spent with their Mum was 'just right'** compared to 47% of children looked after nationally\*.



## Friends

- The proportion (9%) of children and young people (4-17yrs) in Brent who **did not have a good friend** was higher compared with their peers (3%) in the general population.



## Talking to your social worker (8-11yrs)

- A quarter (25%,  $n=4$ ) of the young people aged 8-11yrs did not know that they **could ask to speak to their social worker on their own**; lower compared with children (15%) in other local authorities.



## Settled in placement (8-11yrs)

- Only 56% of children aged 8-11 years reported **'always' feeling settled where they lived**. The same was true for 78% of children in other LAs.



## Pets

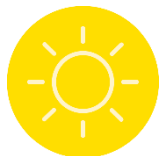
- Compared to those in other LAs, children and young people in Brent less often **had a pet** (72% vs. 31% for children aged 8-11yrs\* and 59% vs. 19% for young people aged 11-17yrs\*).



## Things in life are worthwhile

- Young people (11-17yrs) in Brent were statistically less likely than those in other LAs to score very highly in terms of **feeling the things they did in life were worthwhile** (22% vs. 38%)\*.

# Well-being



All of the youngest children (4-7yrs) reported being happy the previous day\*, as did 13 of the 16 (81%) children aged between 8-11yrs.

About a quarter (24%) of the young people (11-17yrs) appeared to be thriving, having scored very favourably in at least two of the four well-being measures. Overall:

- 26% reported being very positive about their future
- 22% reported a high sense of feeling that things done in life were worthwhile
- 22% reported very high levels of happiness the previous day and
- 26% reported very high levels of life satisfaction.

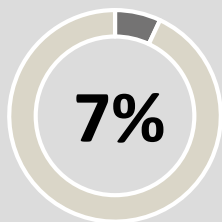


Others appeared to be struggling:

- 9% reported low levels of positivity about their future
- 7% reported a low sense of feeling that things done in life were worthwhile
- 9% reported low levels of happiness the previous day and
- 9% reported low levels of life satisfaction.



**Young people with low well-being**



**Young people (11-17yrs) with low overall well-being were statistically more likely to report:**

- Feeling unhappy with how they looked
- Feeling afraid to go to school because of bullying
- Feeling they did not have a say in decisions that social workers made about their life

# Brent changes over time (comparing 2020-21 with 2023-24)

bright spots

Six of the Bright Spots that were awarded in the 2020-21 survey were awarded again this year. These were: trusting your social worker, trusting the adults you live with, liking school, support for learning, feeling safe at home and happiness with appearance.

An impressive additional 12 Bright Spots have been awarded this year. These are:

- Happiness yesterday (4-7yrs)
- Liking your bedroom (4-7yrs)
- Feeling settled at home (4-7yrs)
- Having a trusted adult (8-11yrs)
- Knowing identity of social worker (8-11yrs)
- Sensitive parenting (8-11yrs)
- Placement continuity (11-17yrs)
- Social worker continuity (11-17yrs)
- Access to nature (11-17yrs)
- Reason for care explained (11-17yrs)
- Sharing confidences (11-17yrs)
- Positivity about the future (11-17yrs)

# Brent changes over time (cont'd)

## (comparing 2020-21 with 2023-24)

Although not attracting a Bright Spot, the 2023-24 survey also showed other notable improvements since 2020-21:

### 4-7yrs:

- Knowing the identity of your social worker (73% → 83%)
- Having an explanation from an adult for why you are in care (18% → 42%)

### 8-11yrs:

- Feeling that life is getting better (72% → 94%)
- Not feeling afraid to go to school because of bullying (69% → 81%)
- Happiness yesterday (75% → 81%)

### 11-17yrs:

- Feeling that family time is 'just right': Mum (25% → 36%); Dad (13% → 19%); brothers and sisters (30% → 38%)
- Spending time outdoors in nature (86% → 96%)
- Having an explanation from an adult for why you are in care (72% → 96%)
- Feeling the adults you live with notice your feelings (83% → 91%)

# Brent changes over time (cont'd)

## (comparing 2020-21 with 2023-24)

However, less favourable findings were found in several domains, including:

### 4-7yrs:

- Having a really good friend (100% → 92%); Liking school (91% → 83%); Having fun at the weekends (100% → 91%)

### 8-11yrs:

- Feeling that family time is 'just right': Mum (46% → 27%); brothers and sisters (58% → 44%); Having a pet at home (41% → 31%); Trusting the adults you live with (96% → 88%); Feeling the adults you live with take an interest in what you do at school (100% → 88%); 'Always' feeling settled where you live (74% → 56%); Worrying about your feelings or behaviour (52% → 69%)

### 11-17yrs:

- Having a pet at home (31% → 19%); Feeling that life is getting better (88% → 74%); Getting chances to show you can be trusted (96% → 87%); Practising life skills (90% → 81%); Feeling afraid to go to school because of bullying (14% → 22%); Liking your bedroom (95% → 89%); Feeling happy yesterday – moderate-high (76% → 61%); Feeling satisfied with your life as a whole – moderate-high (74% → 62%); Feeling the things you do in life are worthwhile – moderate-high (79% → 61%).





**Section 2:**  
**Methodology**

# Methodology

- Three online surveys were used to capture looked after children and young people's views on their own well-being. The three versions were for:
  - a) children aged 4-7yrs (19 questions);
  - b) children aged 8-11yrs in primary school (35 questions); and
  - c) young people of secondary school age 11-17yrs (50 questions).
- There was a common set of 16 core questions.
- Paper surveys were also available and used in cases where no Internet was available, or when the young person preferred this method.
- In Brent at the time of the survey 258 children and young people aged 4-17yrs were looked after and able to complete the survey.
- Children and young people completed the survey anonymously: individual identifiers such as name, school etc. were not collected in order to allow responses without fear of consequences.
- If children recorded names or any identifying information on the survey these were removed by the researchers.

# Methodology (2)

- Children and young people were first asked to complete the online survey in March and April 2023. As response rates stayed low, a decision was taken to close the survey and re-launch in October 2023. The survey stayed open until the end of March 2024.
- Surveys were generally completed with a trusted adult. Trusted adults presented the survey to children and young people, told them what it was about and gave them the support they needed to complete the survey.
- A range of colleagues from across the service were asked to act as trusted adults when meeting with children, including participation workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and teachers.
- Trusted adults were given guidance on how to support children and young people with the survey, including avoiding drawing attention to a child's care status by e.g. pulling them out of class as children had told us they found this embarrassing and upsetting.
- Team managers were asked to include the survey on regular team meeting agendas to report on and promote completion.
- Social care staff, including foster carers and social workers, were asked to encourage children and young people to complete the survey. However, foster carers and social workers did not support children and young people directly as there are questions about them in the survey.

# Analysis

- Where possible, local authority (LA) data are compared to data on children and young people in the general population, and to the average responses from 42 local authorities who participated in Your Life, Your Care survey in 2015-20.
- Data were weighted and tests run for significant difference between LAs. If something is statistically significant it means that it is unlikely to have occurred by chance.
- Brent previously ran the survey in 2020-21 so we have also highlighted how this year's findings compared to that survey.

## Section 3:

# Survey results

## 3.1 Demographics

- + Sample size and response rate
- + Age and sex
- + Ethnicity
- + Placements
- + Number of years in care



# Sample size and response rate

Whilst Bright Spots surveys achieve good engagement compared to other national surveys (for example, *The State of Nation: Children in Care 2015* survey, had a response rate of 3%), findings are from a proportion of your children/ young people so it is important to offer other ways to listen and respond to their views.

- 82 children and young people responded to the surveys from an eligible looked after population of 258.
- The overall response rate was 32%.

Age range	Care population <i>n</i>	Responses <i>n</i>	Response rate %
4-7yrs	40	12	30%
8-11yrs	32	16	50%
11-17yrs	186	54	29%

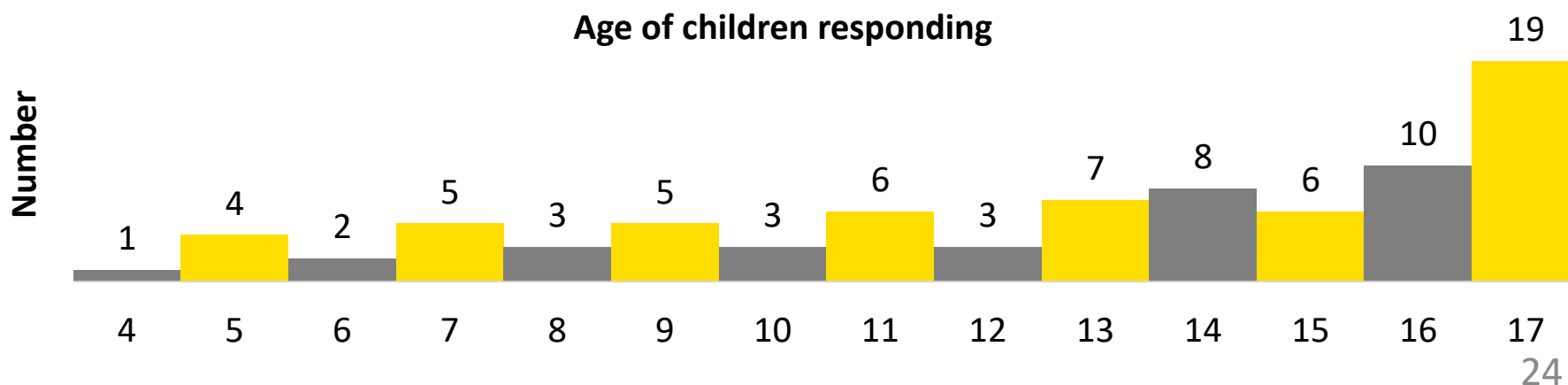
# Age and sex

- In Brent, 62% of looked after children and young people were boys (DfE, 2022). This compares with 46% in our sample. Boys are therefore under-represented in this survey.

Age group	Girls <i>n</i>	Boys <i>n</i>	Let me tell you <i>n</i>	Total
4-7yrs	8	4	0	12 (15%)
8-11yrs*	8	7	0	15 (19%)
11-17yrs**	25	25	1	51 (66%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41 (53%)</b>	<b>36 (46%)</b>	<b>1 (1%)</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>

\*Don't want to say  $n=1$

\*\*Don't want to say  $n=3$ .



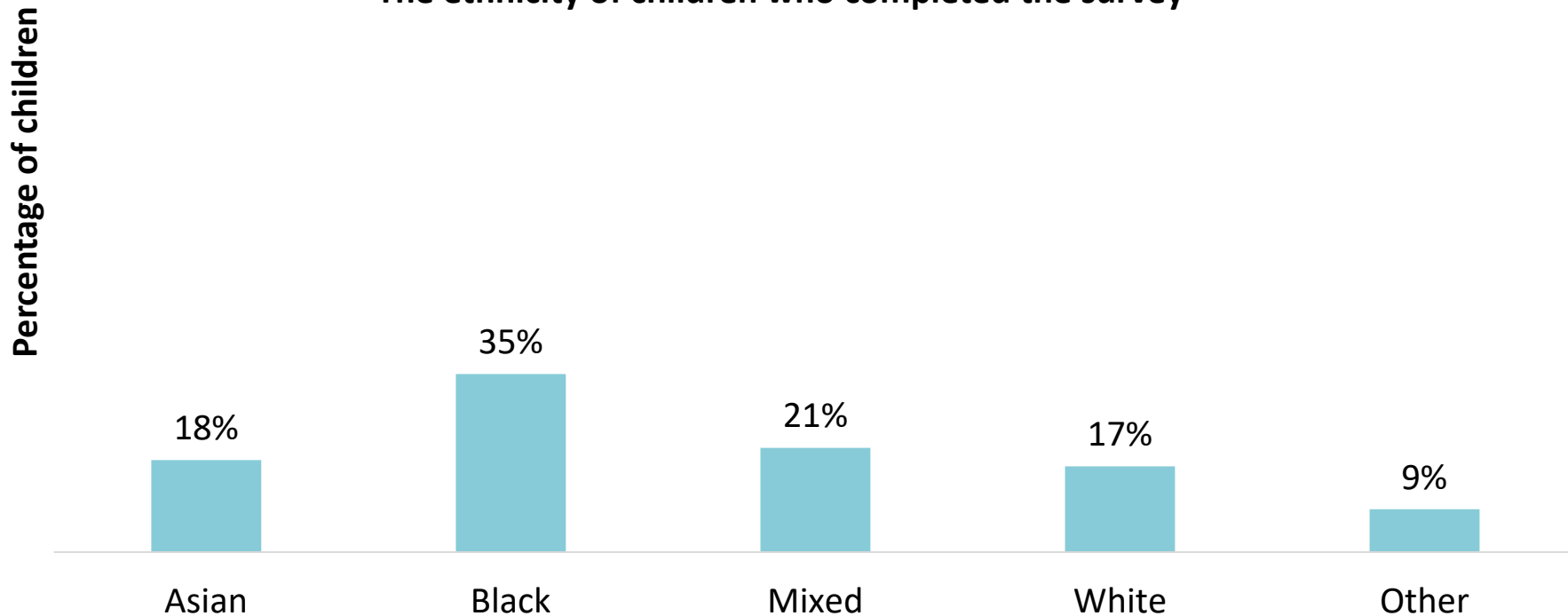


# Ethnicity

Broadly, children of Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnicities appear proportionately represented in the survey. In Brent’s official DfE statistics, these ethnic groups represented 80% of their care population (DfE, 2022). In this survey, 84% of responses came from these groups.

- Just over one third (35%) of the children and young people who completed the survey were Black.
- One fifth (21%) were of Mixed ethnicity.

The ethnicity of children who completed the survey



# Placement type

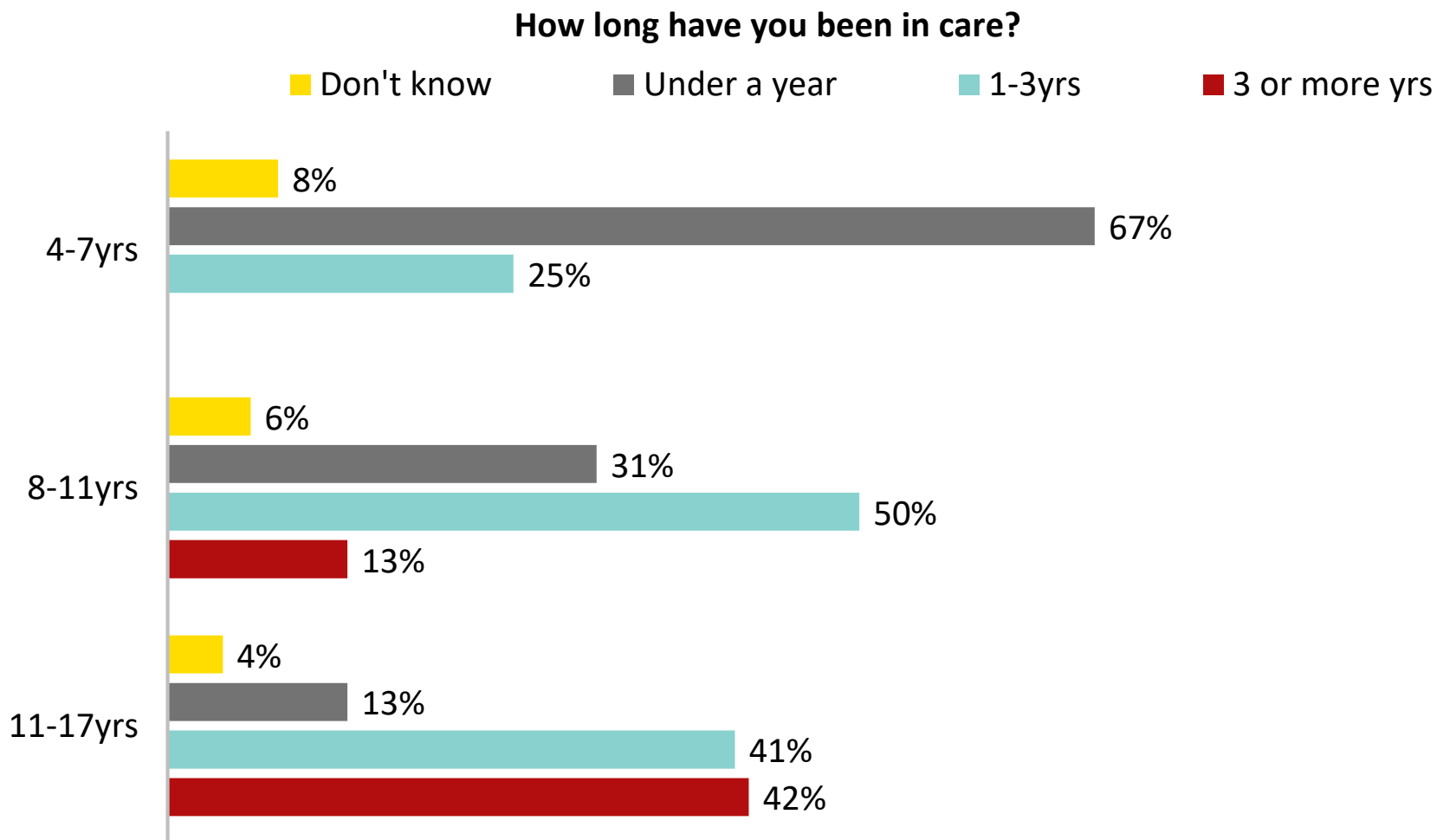
In Brent, 60% of looked after children were in foster care (DfE, 2022). Survey responses were fairly close in reflecting this proportion, with 65% in foster care. There was an over-representation of residential care: 7% in the survey sample compared to 2% in the published statistics (DfE, 2022).

- Nearly two thirds (65%) of the children and young people were living in foster care. About one fifth (21%) were in family or friends care.
- Most commonly, 'somewhere else' was semi-independent accommodation.

Age group	Foster care <i>n</i>	Family or friends care <i>n</i>	Residential care <i>n</i>	With parents <i>n</i>	Somewhere else <i>n</i>	Total
4-7yrs	10	1	1	0	0	<b>12 (15%)</b>
8-11yrs	13	2	1	0	0	<b>16 (19%)</b>
11-17yrs	30	14	4	1	5	<b>54 (66%)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53 (65%)</b>	<b>17 (21%)</b>	<b>6 (7%)</b>	<b>1 (1%)</b>	<b>5 (6%)</b>	<b>82 (100%)</b>

# Number of years in care

- Most often ( $n=33$ , 41%) the children and young people (4-17yrs) had been in care for between 1-3 years.
- 24 (30%) had been in care 3 years or more.



## 3.2 Relationships

+ Family time

+ Good friends

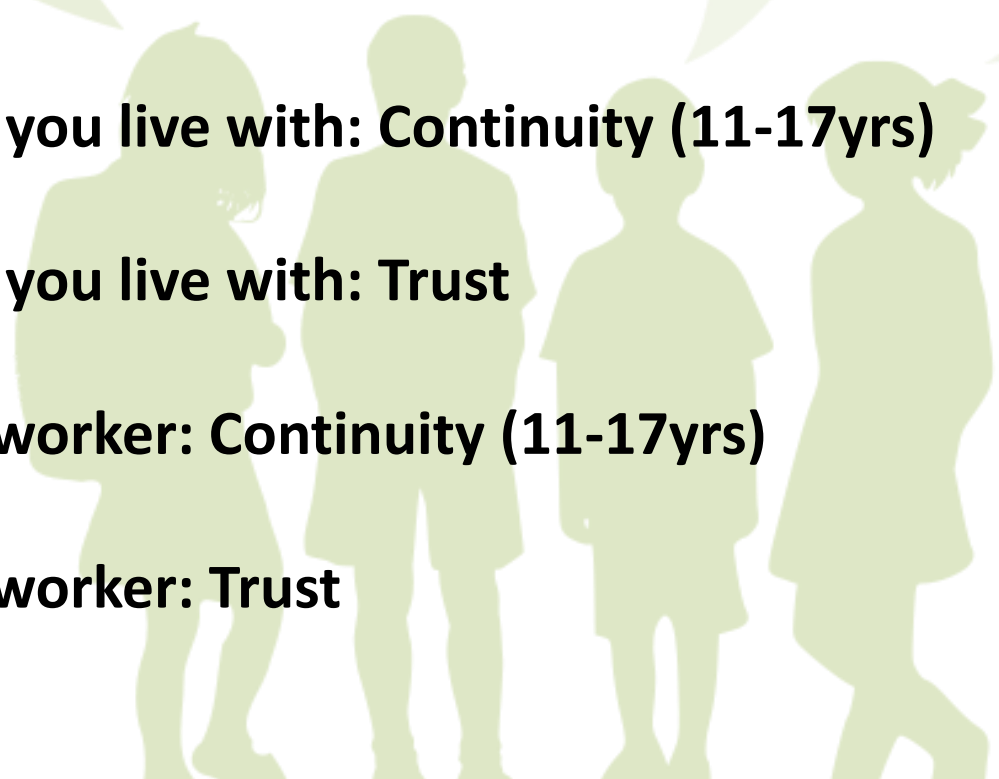
+ Pets

+ Adults you live with: Continuity (11-17yrs)

+ Adults you live with: Trust

+ Social worker: Continuity (11-17yrs)

+ Social worker: Trust



# Family time



The youngest children (4-7yrs) were not asked about family time, in case they found the questions upsetting.




Children and young people (8-17yrs) were asked if they *saw their Mum/ Dad/ brothers and sisters... 'too much', 'just the right amount', 'too little'*.

They were also given the answer options: *'I do not see her/ him/ them', 'Mum/ Dad has died', and 'I do not have brothers or sisters'*.

- Just over a quarter (27%) of children (8-11yrs) felt the time they spent with their Mum was 'just right' compared to 47% of children looked after nationally – a statistically significant difference.

- Three (19%) of the 16 children (8-11yrs) and as many as half (n=26; 49%) of the young people (11-17yrs) had no contact with either parent.
- More than half (53%) of children (8-11yrs) felt they saw their Mum 'too little', and about a quarter (n=4; 27%) felt they saw their Dad 'too little'.
- The proportion of children (8-11yrs) who felt the time they spent with their brothers and sisters was 'just right' had decreased notably since last time the survey was run, from 58% in 2020-21 to 44% in the current survey.
- Just over a third (36%) of 11-17yr olds felt that how often they saw their Mum was 'just right'. About one in five (19%) felt that way about contact with their Dad – a lower proportion compared to young people (26%) in other LAs; however, the difference did not reach statistical significance.
- 38% of young people (11-17yrs) felt the amount of contact they had with their siblings was 'just right'. This was lower compared to the young people (49%) in other LAs; however, the difference did not reach statistical significance.

# Family time (2)

Family member	Age group	Too much	Just right	Too little	I do not see them
 Mum	8-11yrs <i>n</i> =16	0 (0%)	4 (27%)	8 (53%)	3 (20%)
	11-17yrs <i>n</i> =53*	3 (6%)	17 (36%)	5 (11%)	22 (47%)
 Dad	8-11yrs <i>n</i> =16	0 (0%)	5 (33%)	4 (27%)	6 (40%)
	11-17yrs <i>n</i> =53*	1 (2%)	8 (19%)	4 (10%)	29 (69%)
 Siblings	8-11yrs <i>n</i> =16	1 (6%)	7 (44%)	6 (38%)	2 (12%)
	11-17yrs <i>n</i> =53*	9 (19%)	18 (38%)	3 (7%)	17 (36%)

\* Missing *n*=1

Parent died	Don't have any siblings
1	-----
6	-----
1	-----
11	-----
-----	0
-----	6

# Family time: 8-11yrs (comments)

Children and young people were also asked, *Is there anything you want to say about how much you see your family and important people in your life?*

- 10 children answered this question.
- 6 wanted to see more of family members (usually mothers) or wanted to know when they would be able to live with them again.
- One child simply reported missing their family, another appreciated living with siblings.
- Two children described their current family contact arrangements.

*I'd like to see them more often.*

*I want to see my mum a little bit more.*

*I would like to know when I am going to go home to my mum.*

*I would like to go back to my family some day.*

*It is pretty good and I like living with my brothers.*

*I miss them a lot.*

*I never see my birth Mum, I see my birth Dad sometimes.*

*I don't want to see my dad anymore. I want to go back to living with my mum.*

# Family time: 11-17yrs (comments)

Children and young people were also asked, *Is there anything you want to say about how much you see your family and important people in your life?*

22 young people answered this question.

- 5 wanted to see more of family members.
- 4 explained that they could not see their family as they did not live in the UK.
- Some described their contact arrangements, including who they did (and did not) see.
- Others wrote about how often they saw their family or how they felt about contact time.

*I would like to see my family more.*

*I chose not to speak to my family.*

*I have not seen them for three years; they are living in [other country].*

*I see them too little and miss being with them.*

*I see them enough on a weekly basis.*

*I only see my siblings. I don't see my parents.*

*I see my family members whenever I want to.*

*Am happy with the way it is.*

*Sometimes I visit my uncle.*

*I very rarely see my dad, and I message my mum every time something important happens like Christmas.*



# Good friends



Not having friends is associated with loneliness and anxiety. All children and young people were asked, *Do you have a really good friend?*

**General population:** *The Good Childhood Report* (2020) of young people aged 10-15yrs found that 3% of young people did not have a good friend.

- Overall, most (91%) of the children and young people reported having at least one good friend, but 7 (9%) did not.
- The proportion of children and young people in Brent without a friend was higher compared with their peers (3%) in the general population.

Age group	Yes, I have a really good friend <i>n</i> (%)	No, I don't have a really good friend <i>n</i> (%)
4-7yrs	11 (92%)	1 (8%)
8-11yrs	15 (94%)	1 (6%)
11-17yrs	49 (91%)	5 (9%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75 (91%)</b>	<b>7 (9%)</b>

# Pets



Pets were important to children in all the focus groups we ran.

Children and young people said that pets are non-judgmental – they love you no matter what and are always pleased to see you. They can also give children an opportunity to take responsibility.

Children and young people aged between 8-17yrs were asked, *Do you have a pet in the home you live in now?*

72% of families in the UK with children aged up to 7yrs owned a pet (Westgarth et al. 2010)

- 5 (31%) of the 8-11yrs children lived in a household with a pet.
- In the older (11-17yrs group), just 10 (19%) of young people had a pet where they lived.
- Compared to those in other LAs, children and young people in Brent less often had a pet (72% vs. 31% for children aged 8-11yrs and 59% vs. 19% for young people aged 11-17yrs).

# Adults you live with: Continuity

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## Placement moves



Young people (11-17yrs) were asked: *How many placements have you had?*

- Over half (55%,  $n=29$ ) of the young people (11-17yrs) had remained in the same placement since entering care. None reported having been in more than 7 placements.

- In Brent, young people (11-17yrs) were statistically more likely than young people in other LAs to have remained in the same placement since entering care (55% vs. 34%). **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

Number of placements	No.*	%
1 placement	29	55%
2-4 placements	19	36%
5-7 placements	4	7%
8-10 placements	0	0%
11+	0	0%
Don't know	1	2%

\* Missing  $n=1$

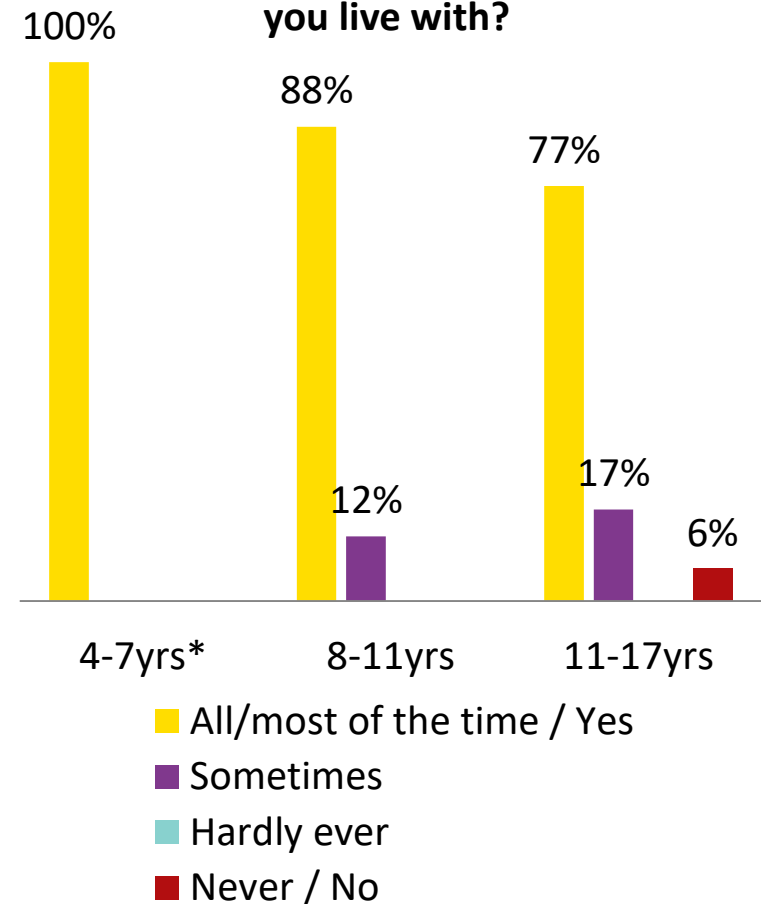
# Adults you live with: Trust



Children and young people were asked, *Do you trust the adults you live with?*

- 100% of the youngest children (4-7yrs) and 100% of children (8-11yrs) trusted the adults they lived with. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**
- 94% of young people (11-17yrs) trusted the adults they lived with.

## Do you trust the adults you live with?



\* 4-7 year olds had 'yes' and 'no' as answer options whereas the older age groups could indicate whether they 'all or most of the time', 'sometimes', 'hardly ever' or 'never' trusted the adults they lived with.

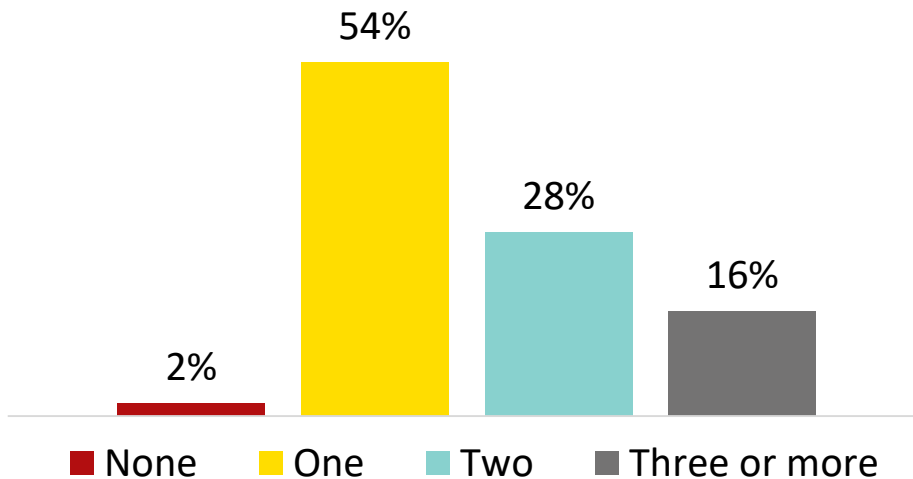
# Social worker: Continuity (11-17yrs)



11-17 year olds were asked: *How many social workers have you had in the last 12 months (since this time last year)?*

How many social workers have you had in the last 12 months?

- About one in six (16%) young people reported having had at least three social workers in the previous 12 months.
- In Brent, young people (11-17yrs) were statistically more likely than young people in other LAs to have kept the same social worker in the previous 12 months (54% vs. 34%). **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**



# Social worker: Trust

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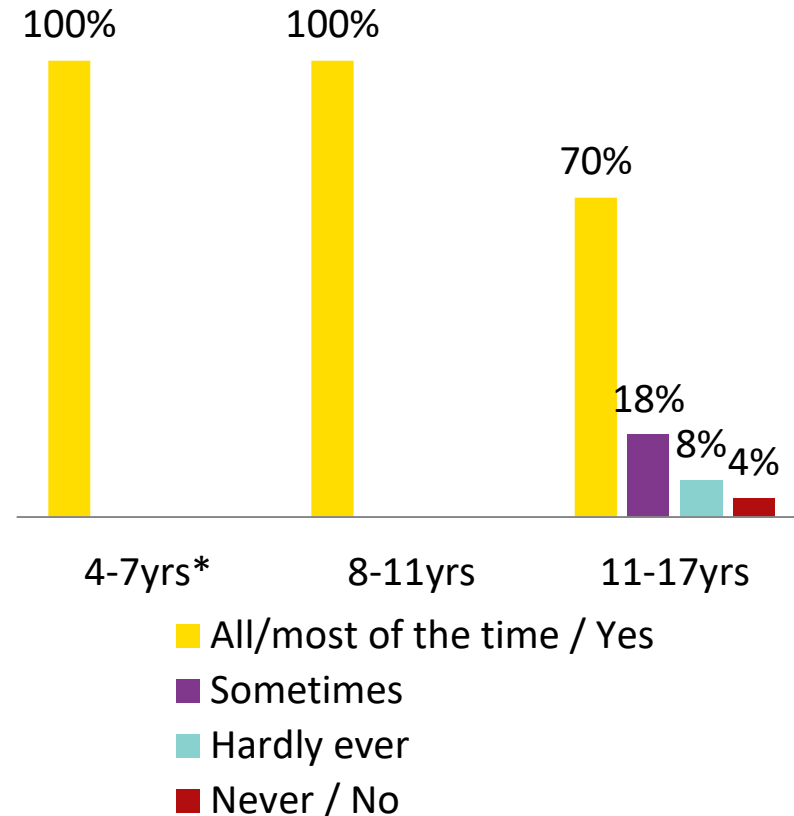
Children & young people (n=76) who knew who their social worker was were asked, *Do you trust the social worker you have now?*

- The level of trust in social workers was high with 100% of the youngest children (4-7yrs) and 100% of children aged 8-11yrs trusting their social worker. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**
- 88% of young people (11-17yrs) trusted their social worker.

*Being in care has not been easy but my social worker does her best for me.*  
11-17yrs

Nationally, 94% of 4-7yrs; 95% of 8-11yrs and 87% of 11-17yrs trust their social worker 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes' (Selwyn et al., 2021).

Do you trust your social worker?











\* 4-7 year olds had 'yes' and 'no' as answer options whereas the older age groups could indicate whether they 'all or most of the time', 'sometimes', 'hardly ever' or 'never' trusted their social worker.

# Changes since last survey

Better than last survey

Similar percentage

Worse than last survey

		4-7yrs		8-11yrs		11-17yrs	
		2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24
	Contact with mum just right	-	-	46%	<b>27%</b>	25%	<b>36%</b>
	Contact with dad just right	-	-	31%	<b>33%</b>	13%	<b>19%</b>
	Contact with siblings just right	-	-	58%	<b>44%</b>	30%	<b>38%</b>
	Have a good friend	100%	<b>92%</b>	96%	<b>94%</b>	93%	<b>91%</b>
	Have a pet	-	-	41%	<b>31%</b>	31%	<b>19%</b>
	Trust the adults they live with	100%	<b>100%</b>	96%	<b>88%</b>	95%	<b>94%</b>
	Trust social worker	100%	<b>100%</b>	96%	<b>100%</b>	89%	<b>88%</b>
	1 social worker in last 12 months	-	-	-	-	40%	<b>54%</b>

## 3.3 Resilience

- + Life is getting better
- + Trusted adult
- + Being trusted & helping out
- + Liking school/ college
- + Adults you live with: Support for learning
- + Having fun & hobbies
- + Access to nature
- + Life skills
- + Internet access where you live

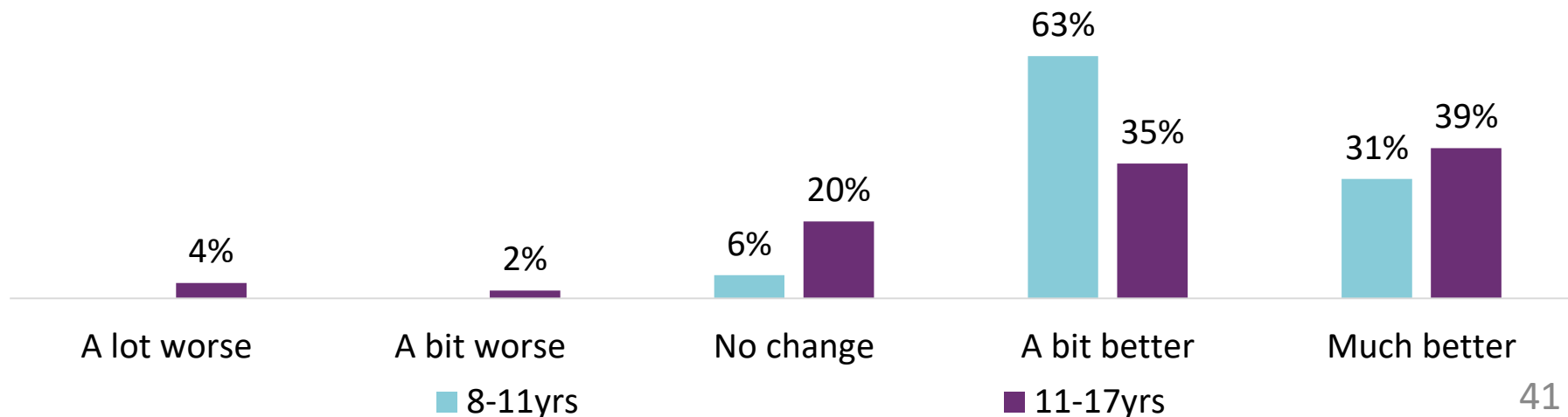


# Life is getting better

Children aged 8-17yrs were asked, *Is your life getting better?* and could choose from a five point scale ranging from *'A lot worse'* to *'Much better'*.

- 94% ( $n=15$ ) of children aged 8-11 years and three quarters (74%,  $n=40$ ) of young people aged 11-17 years felt that their lives were getting better.
- The proportion of children and young people in Brent who felt their lives were getting better differed from the national average with 8-11yrs doing better (94% vs. 85%) and 11-17yrs doing worse (74% vs. 83%) than their peers in other LAs.

## Is your life getting better?



# Trusted adult

Children and young people aged between 8-17yrs were asked: *Do you have an adult who you trust, who helps you and sticks by you no matter what?*



Having one key adult has been shown to be the turning point in many looked after young people's lives (Gilligan, 2009).

Having a trusted adult has been shown to be the main factor in helping children recover from traumatic events.

- All 16 (100%) children (8-11yrs) reported having a trusted adult in their lives. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**
- 47 (87%) of the young people aged 11-17yrs reported having a trusted adult in their lives. Seven (13%) young people had no such person.

# Being trusted & helping out

Children (8-11yrs) were asked, *How often do you get the chance to help the teacher?*

Children had said in the focus groups that they were never trusted to show visitors around school or deliver a message because they were looked after.

- Five (31%) children (8-11yrs) responded that 'all or most of the time' they were asked to help and nine (56%) answered 'sometimes'.
- Two children (13%) wrote 'hardly ever'.



We asked young people: *How often do you get the chance to show you can be trusted?*

Having trusting relationships and being trusted were key issues raised by the children in the focus groups underpinning the development of this survey.

- 64% of young people (11-17yrs) thought they were given opportunities 'all or most of the time' to show they could be trusted and 23% given them 'sometimes'.
- 11% responded 'hardly ever' and 2% 'never'.

# Liking school/ college



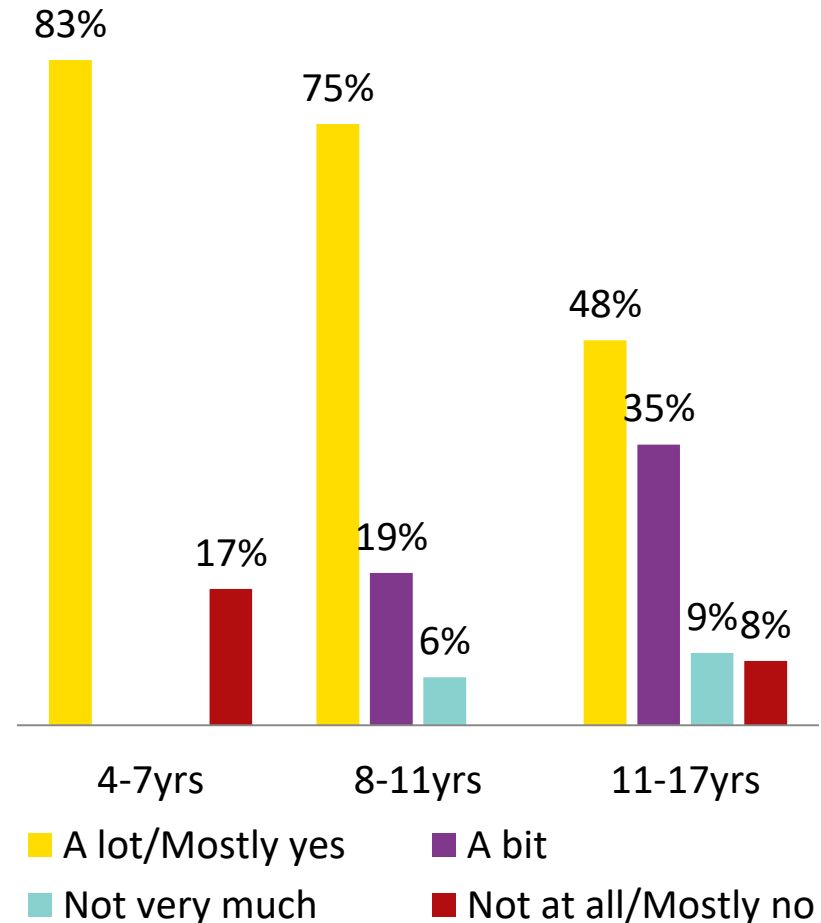
Children and young people aged 8-17yrs were asked, *How much do you like school/ college?* Children aged 4-7yrs were asked, *Do you like school?*

## General population: Liking school

The *Health Behaviour of School-Aged Children Survey* (2020) of 3,398 young people (11-15yrs) reported that 70% liked school 'a lot' or 'a bit' and 30% 'not very much' or 'not at all'. Liking school decreased with the child's age and girls were more likely to say they enjoyed school 'a lot' in comparison with boys.

- 89% of children aged 4-11yrs liked school.
- 83% of the 11-17yrs group liked school or college 'a lot' or 'a bit' – a larger proportion than reported by the general population (70%). **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

## Do you like school/ college?



# Adults you live with: Support for learning



Children aged 8-17yrs were asked, *Do the adults you live with show an interest in what you are doing at school/ college?*

## General population: Support for learning

The Health Behaviour of School-aged Children survey (2020) reported that 88% of children in England said their parents were interested in what happens to them at school.

- 88% ( $n=14$ ) of 8-11yrs and 93% ( $n=50$ ) of 11-17yrs reported that the adults they lived with showed an interest in their education ('all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'). The same is true for 88% of children in the general population: support for learning is therefore a **Bright Spot of practice**.
- 2 (4%) of young people aged 11-17yrs reported not being at school or college.

*Want free education to make me feel better as I am not in college. I think this will help me.*

11-17yrs

# Having fun & hobbies

Children aged 4-11yrs were asked, *At the weekends, do you get to have fun?*



The 11-17yrs survey asked young people, *Outside of school or college, do you get the chance to spend time on your own hobbies or activities?*

- The majority (88%) of children and young people had fun or took part in hobbies or activities outside of school at least sometimes.
- The proportion of young people (85%) who took part in hobbies or activities outside of school was lower compared with the average for young people (91%) in care in other local authorities; however, the difference was not statistically significant.

Age group	Yes, I have fun/ take part in activities <i>n</i> (%)	Sometimes I have fun/ take part in activities <i>n</i> (%)	No, I don't have fun or take part in activities <i>n</i> (%)
4-7yrs*	10 (91%)	-	1 (9%)
8-11yrs	8 (50%)	7 (44%)	1 (6%)
11-17yrs	19 (35%)	27 (50%)	8 (15%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37 (46%)</b>	<b>34 (42%)</b>	<b>10 (12%)</b>

\* Missing *n*=1

# Access to nature



Contact with nature can reduce stress and improve mental health (Play England, 2012). Some of the children in our focus groups said safeguarding fears limited their opportunities.

We asked children and young people (8-17yrs), *In the past week, how often have you spent time outdoors (e.g. going to the park, fields, woods or beach)?* Answer options were *'every day'*, *'more than once this week'*, *'once this week'* and *'not at all'*.

## General population:

81%-85% of children in England spent time outside in nature at least once per week (The People and Nature Survey for England, 2021).

- 96% ( $n=51$ ) of young people (11-17yrs) reported having spent time outdoors at least once in the week they completed the survey. The same is true for up to 85% of the general population. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**
- 75% ( $n=12$ ) of children (8-11yrs) reported having spent time outdoors at least once in the week they completed the survey. This compares with up to 85% of young children in the general population who did so.

# Life skills

We asked the young people in the 11-17yrs group, *How often do you get to practise life skills like cooking healthy food, washing clothes or using money?*



This question was asked as many young people in the focus groups thought that they didn't feel prepared for living independently.

- 81% (n=44) of the young people reported having been taught independence skills (at least sometimes).
- 10 young people (19%) reported this to 'hardly ever' be the case.
- The proportion of young people in Brent who had opportunities to practise life skills had decreased since last time the survey was run (90% in 2020-21 vs. 81% in this survey). The proportion was also lower compared with young people (89%) in care in other local authorities; however, the difference did not reach statistical significance.

**[What would you change to make being in care better for you?]**

*More opportunities to achieve more life skills.*

11-17yrs



# Internet access where you live (11-17yrs)



Young people 11-17yrs were asked, *Can you connect to the Internet where you are living now?*

## General population: Access to the Internet

- In the UK, 100% of households with children have an Internet connection (ONS, 2020).
- The *Millennium Cohort Study* of children aged 11yrs old found that children who never used the Internet outside school had a high probability of low well-being (The Children's Society, 2014).










- The vast majority (96%) of young people reported that they had access to the Internet where they lived.
- 2 (4%) young people did not have internet access.

# Changes since last survey

Better than last survey

Similar percentage

Worse than last survey

		4-7yrs		8-11yrs		11-17yrs	
		2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24
	Life is getting better	-	-	72%	94%	88%	74%
	Have a trusted adult	-	-	96%	100%	91%	87%
	Asked to help at school/ chance to be trusted	-	-	85%	87%	96%	87%
	Like school	91%	83%	92%	94%	88%	83%
	Adults interested in education	-	-	100%	88%	95%	93%
	Have fun/ do hobbies & activities	100%	91%	96%	94%	87%	85%
	Access to nature	-	-	74%	75%	86%	96%
	Practise life skills	-	-	-	-	90%	81%
	Internet access at home	-	-	-	-	95%	96%

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## 3.4 Rights

- + Having a say in decision-making
- + Stigma of being in care
- + Feeling safe in placement
- + Bullying
- + Knowing identity of social workers
- + Contact with social workers

# Having a say in decision-making

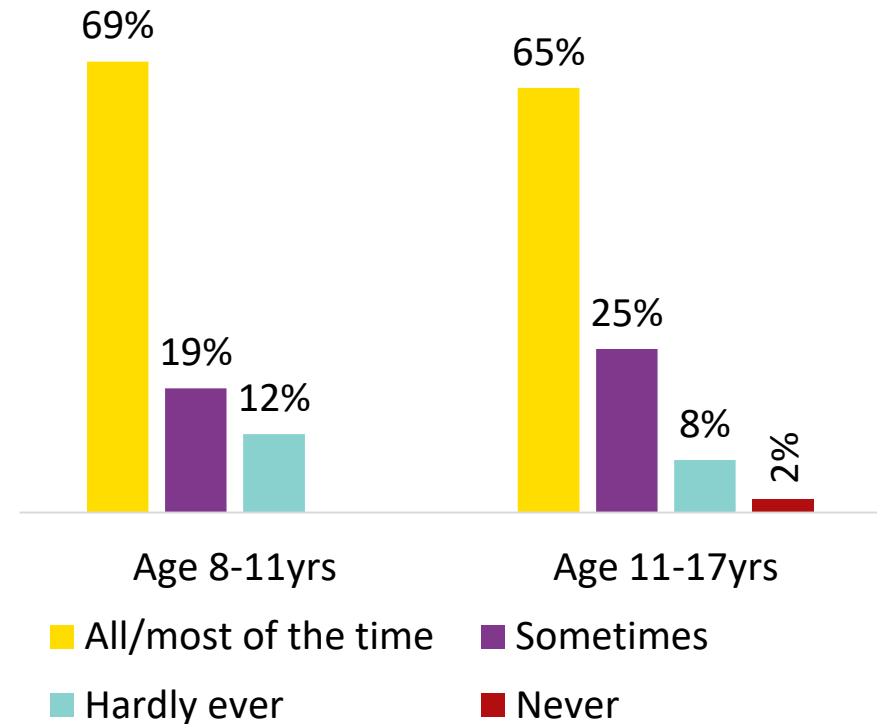


Children aged 8-17yrs were asked,  
*Do you have a say in the decisions  
that social workers make about  
your life?*

- 88% of 8-11 year-olds and 90% of 11-17 year olds felt they had a say in decisions made about their life at least 'sometimes'.

*I like being able to  
have a say in  
decisions about me.*  
11-17yrs

**Do you have a say in the decisions  
that social workers make about your  
life?**



# Stigma of being in care



The 11-17yrs age group were asked a question in the survey about feeling different:

*Do adults do things that make you feel embarrassed about being in care?*

Younger children were not asked these questions, as the focus groups suggested that being made to feel different was of much greater concern in adolescence.

- Four (8%) of the young people reported that adults did things that made them feel embarrassed about being in care.
- These young people all made further comments about what adults did to make them feel embarrassed.

*Having to constantly ask for you subsistence allowance. Having to ask for help with my driver's licence. Having your shoulder dislocated by the police. SW putting an unstable young person with me.*

*My teachers talk about my circumstance with no tact.*

*Not enough privacy.*

*Because all my friends are living with their family and I am living with foster carer.*

# Feeling safe in placement



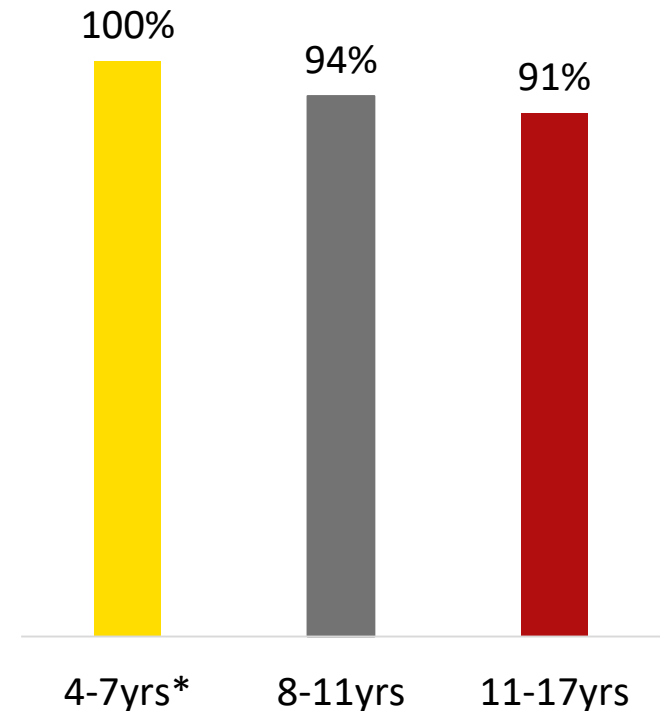
All children were asked, *Do you feel safe in the home you live in now?* It is difficult to know what children were thinking about when answering, but feeling secure is about how the world *feels*, not necessarily how it is.

- Overall, 93% of children and young people (4-17yrs) reported feeling safe in their placements.
- One (6%) child in the 8-11yrs group and 5 (9%) in the 11-17yrs group ticked the 'sometimes', 'hardly ever' or 'never' boxes.
- The proportion of children and young people (93%) aged 8-17yrs who 'always' felt safe at home was higher compared with children (82%) in the general population.
- 100% of children aged 4-7yrs reported feeling safe at home. **These are Bright Spots of practice.**

## General population:

*The Children's Worlds* survey found that 82% of children (10-11yrs) in the general population felt 'totally' safe at home (Rees *et al.*, 2020). Not feeling safe is associated with raised cortisol levels and difficulty in learning and concentration (Harvard University, 2012).

## I always feel safe in the home I live in



\* Percentage of 4-7year olds answering 'Yes, always' (4-7 year olds had 'yes, always' and 'no, not always' as response options whereas the older age groups could indicate whether they 'always', 'sometimes', 'hardly ever' or 'never' felt safe).

# Bullying



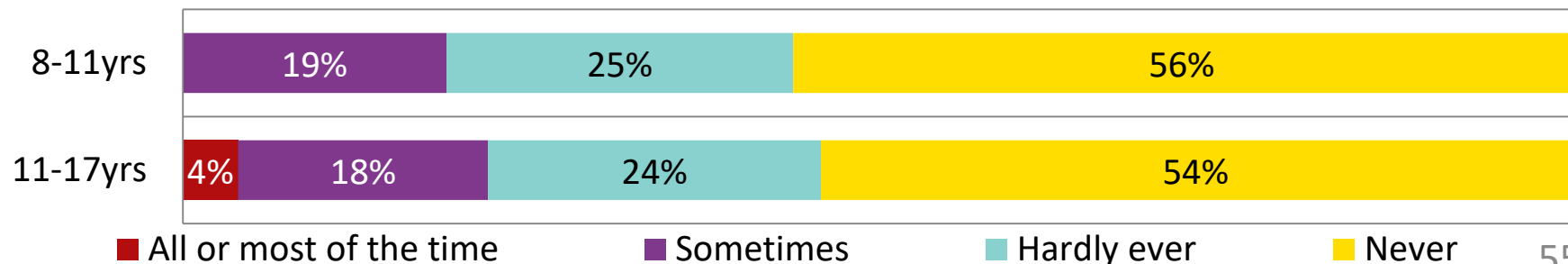
We asked, *Do you ever feel afraid of going to school because of bullying?* (For example being hit or called mean names, or nasty stories being spread about you.) and if yes, *Do you get help from an adult?*

## General population: Bullying

- Analysis of the *Children's Worlds* surveys in 22 countries has shown that being free from bullying is one of the most important factors in children's well-being (Rees *et al.*, 2010).
- About a third (36%) of children aged 11-15yrs in England say they have been bullied at school in the past couple of months (HBSC, 2020).

- Three children (19%) aged 8-11yrs reported being 'sometimes' afraid to go to school because of bullying. This was a lower percentage compared with children (29%) in care in other local authorities, but the difference did not reach statistical significance. All three felt they were getting help from an adult to cope with bullying.
- 22% (n=12) young people 11-17yrs reported being afraid to go to school because of bullying 'all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'. Ten of these 12 young people confirmed that they felt they were getting help from an adult for this.

## Do you ever feel afraid of going to school or college because of bullying?



# Knowing identity of social workers



All the children and young people were asked, *Do you know who your social worker is now?*

- Overall, 7% ( $n=6$ ) of children and young people did not know who their social worker was.
- However, every child (100%,  $n=16$ ) aged 8-11yrs did know the identity of their social worker. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

Age group	Know who social worker is $n$ (%)	Don't know who social worker is $n$ (%)
4-7yrs	10 (83%)	2 (17%)
8-11yrs	16 (100%)	0 (0%)
11-17yrs	50 (93%)	4 (7%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76 (93%)</b>	<b>6 (7%)</b>



# Contact with social workers



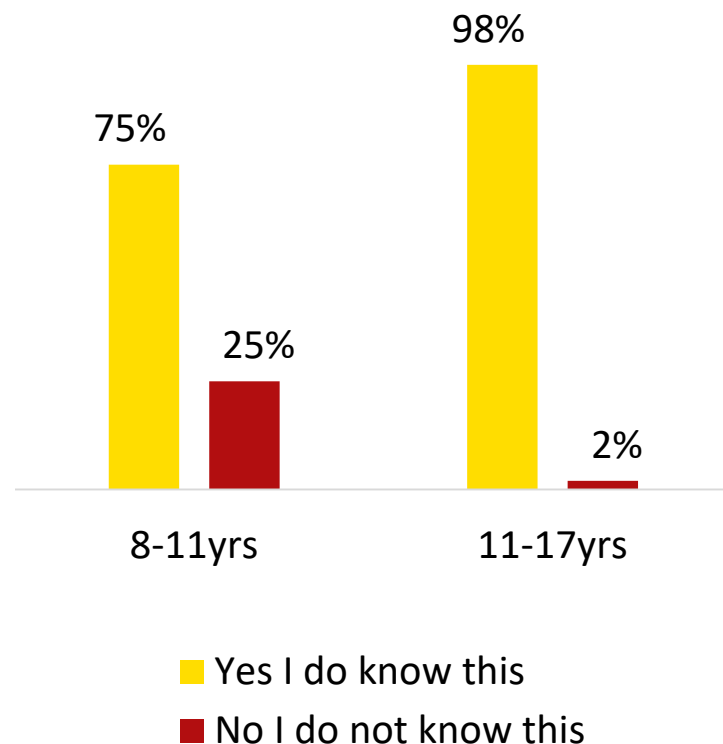
Young people aged 11-17yrs ( $n=50$ ) who knew who their social worker was were asked, *Is it easy to get in touch with your social worker?*



Children and young people (8-17yrs) were also asked, *Do you know that you can ask to speak to your social worker on your own?*

- A high proportion (92%) of young people (11-17yrs) reported being able to easily get in touch with their social worker ('all or most of the time' or 'sometimes'). Four young people (8%) reported not being able to do so.
- A quarter (25%,  $n=4$ ) of the children aged 8-11yrs did not know that they could ask to speak to a social worker on their own; a significantly higher proportion compared with children (15%) in care in other local authorities.

**Do you know you can ask to speak to your social worker on your own?**










# Changes since last survey

Better than last survey

No significant change

Worse than last survey

		4-7yrs		8-11yrs		11-17yrs	
		2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24
	Have a say in decision-making	-	-	84%	<b>88%</b>	91%	<b>90%</b>
	Embarrassed by adults for being in care	-	-	-	-	4%	<b>8%</b>
	Always feel safe where they live	100%%	<b>100%</b>	88%	<b>94%</b>	93%	<b>91%</b>
	Afraid to go to school because of bullying	-	-	31%	<b>19%</b>	14%	<b>22%</b>
	Know who their social worker is	73%	<b>83%</b>	96%	<b>100%</b>	96%	<b>93%</b>
	Easy to contact social worker	-	-	-	-	92%	<b>92%</b>
	Know they can speak to social worker alone	-	-	80%	<b>75%</b>	100%	<b>98%</b>

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## 3.5 Recovery

- + Knowing reason for being in care
- + Feeling settled in placement
- + Liking bedrooms
- + Adults you live with: Sensitive parenting
- + Adults you live with: Sharing confidences (11-17yrs)
- + Help with worries
- + Parity with peers (11-17yrs)
- + Happiness with appearance (11-17yrs)

# Knowing reason for being in care

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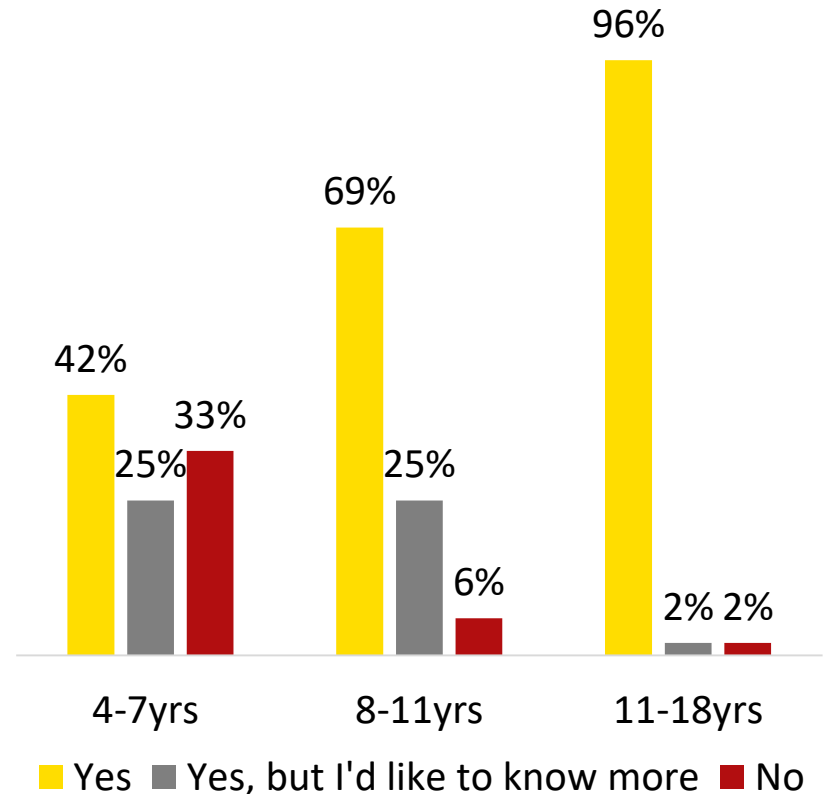
Having a coherent account of one's history and understanding the reasons that led to becoming looked after are important in the development of an integrated identity and in recovery from abuse and neglect (Adshead, 2012; Adler, 2012).



All the children and young people were asked, *Has an adult explained why you are in care?*

- In Brent, young people aged 11-17 years were statistically more likely than young people in other LAs to report having had a good enough explanation as to why they were in care (96% vs. 78%). **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

Has an adult explained why you are in care?



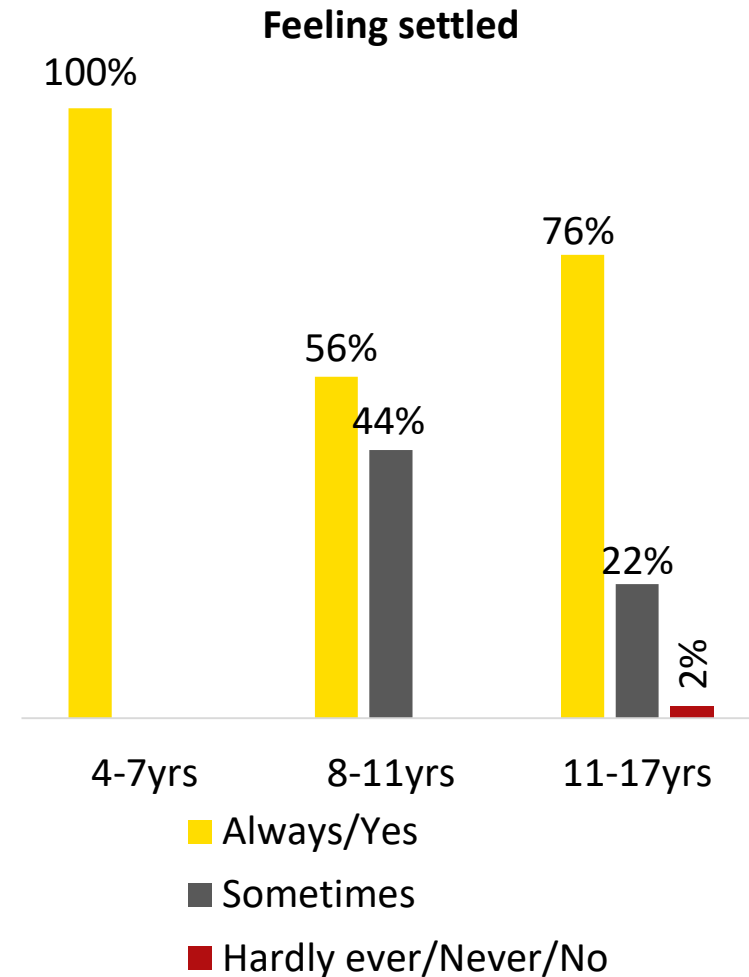
# Feeling settled in placement



We wanted to know if children felt a sense of belonging and felt at ease in their placements. Based on advice from our focus groups, children and young people were asked:

*Do you feel settled in the home you live in now? (Do you feel comfortable, accepted and at ease?)* The youngest children (4-7yrs) could answer 'yes' or 'no'. Children and young people (8-17yrs) could answer: 'always', 'sometimes', 'hardly ever', or 'never'.

- Every (100%) child aged 4-7 years reported feeling settled in the home they lived in. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**
- Notably only 56% of children aged 8-11 years reported 'always' feeling settled where they lived. The same was true for 78% of children in other LAs – a large difference, but did not reach statistical significance.



# Liking bedrooms

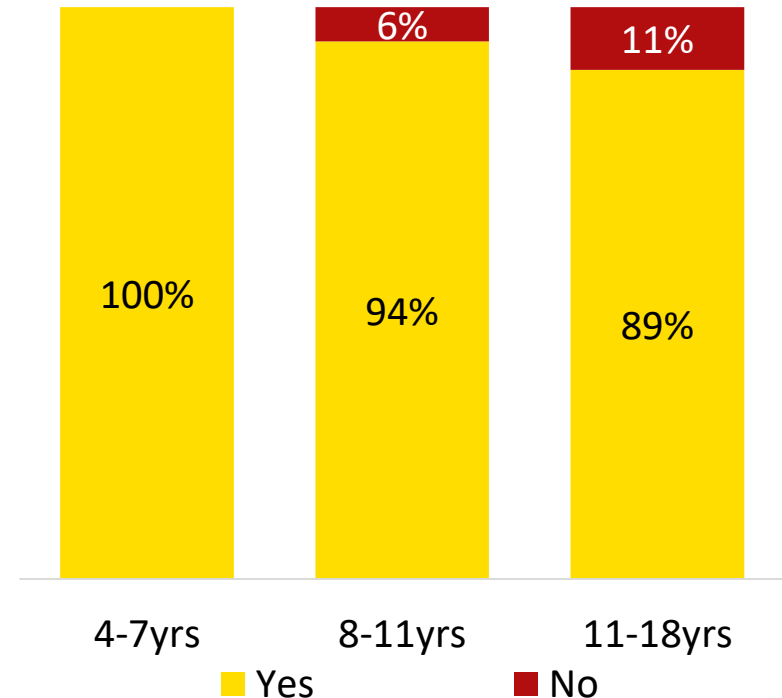


Liking your bedroom was an important feature for the focus groups we ran.

Young people reflected that their bedrooms were a place for being on your own in busy homes. It is linked to safety, sense of identity and feeling a sense of belonging.

- The majority of children and young people (4-17yrs) liked their bedrooms, including all (100%) of the very youngest children (4-7yrs). **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

## Do you like your bedroom?



# Adults you live with: Sensitive parenting



All children were asked, *Do the adults you live with notice how you are feeling?*

- 92%, (n=11) of children (4-7yrs) and 91% (n=49) of young people (11-17yrs) thought their carers noticed how they were feeling (at least 'sometimes').
- All (100%, n=16) children aged 8-11yrs thought their carers noticed how they were feeling. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

# Adults you live with: Sharing confidences (11-17yrs)

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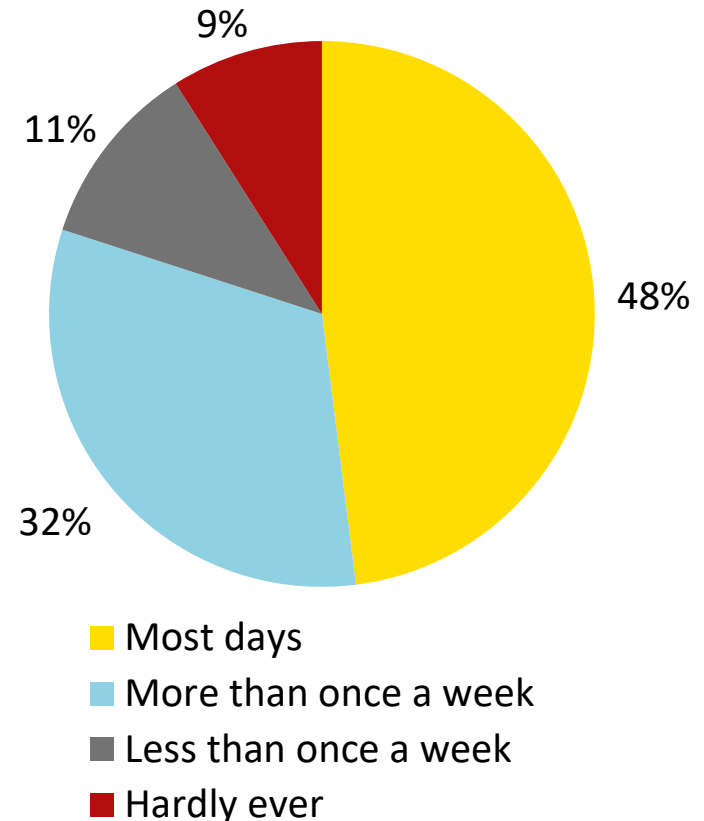
Young people (11-17yrs) were asked, *How often do you talk to the adults you live with about things that matter to you?*

## General population

The *Understanding Society* survey (2017) found that 66% of children (10-15yrs) talked regularly to a parent.

- 80% of young people talked regularly (more than once a week) with their carers/ parents about things that mattered to them. In the general population, 66% of children talked regularly to a parent. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

Speaking to adults about things that matter to you





# Support with worries



Children and young people (8-11yrs and 11-17yrs) were asked,

*Do you ever worry about your feelings or behaviour?* and, if they did worry, *Are you getting help from an adult?*



## General population & other comparative data: Mental health

- In England, 39% of looked after children aged 5-16yrs have concerning SDQ scores (DfE, 2019).
- Studies of looked after populations show that children's level of difficulties are much higher, ranging from about 45% of children in foster care to 75% of those in residential (Ford *et al.*, 2007).
- In the general population, 13.5% of children have SDQ scores that suggest they have a clinical level of mental health difficulties (ONS, 2016b).

- Three (19%) children (8-11yrs) worried 'all or most of the time' about their feelings and behaviour, whilst eight (50%) worried 'sometimes'. The proportion (69%) of children in Brent who worried about their feelings or behaviour was higher compared with children (58%) in other local authorities; however, the difference didn't reach statistical significance.
- Ten (91%) of the eleven children who worried reported getting help from an adult to cope with their worries.
- 13% of young people (11-17yrs) worried 'all or most of the time' whilst 46% worried 'sometimes'.
- 78% (n=25) of the 32 young people who worried reported getting help about this from an adult.

# Parity with peers (11-17yrs)



Young people (11-17yrs) were asked, *Outside of school or college, do you get the chance to do similar things to your friends?*

- 87% (n=46) of the young people reported that they did similar things to their friends at least 'sometimes'.
- 13% (n=7) of young people reported 'hardly ever' or 'never' doing similar things to their friends.

*I have to always come home early and this makes feel sad, because I get bored at home and want to spend time with my friends.*

11-17yrs

# Happiness with appearance (11-17yrs)



Studies have shown that poor body image is associated with low self-esteem, depression and self-harm (Cash and Smolek, 2011).

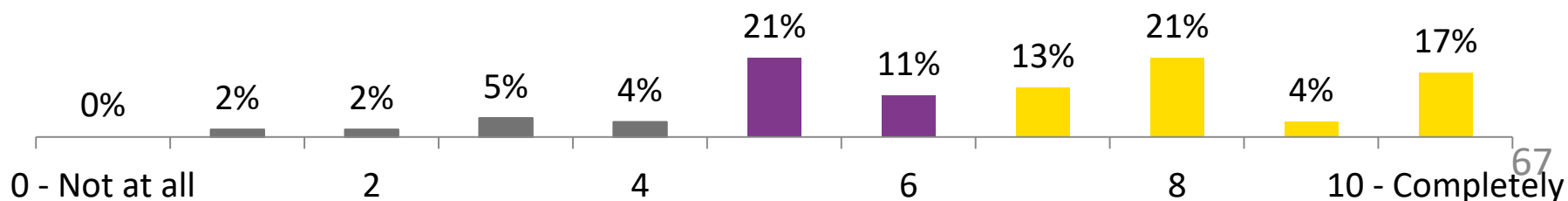
## General population:

14% of 10-17 year olds in the general population are unhappy with their appearance. Girls are more likely to have a lower opinion of their appearance than boys (Good Childhood Report, 2020).

- The majority (87%) of young people were at least moderately happy with how they looked.
- In Brent, proportionately more girls reported feeling unhappy with the way they looked, but findings were not statistically significant.

- 13% of the young people in Brent were unhappy with their appearance, compared to 14% in the general population. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

## How happy are you with the way you look?












# Changes since last survey

Better than last survey

Similar percentage

Worse than last survey

		4-7yrs		8-11yrs		11-17yrs	
		2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24	2020-21	2023-24
	Reason for care fully explained	18%	<b>42%</b>	70%	<b>69%</b>	72%	<b>96%</b>
	Feel settled where they live	73%	<b>100%</b>	74%	<b>56%</b>	75%	<b>76%</b>
	Like their bedrooms	91%	<b>100%</b>	85%	<b>84%</b>	95%	<b>89%</b>
	Adults they live with notice feelings	91%	<b>92%</b>	100%	<b>100%</b>	83%	<b>91%</b>
	Talk to adults about things that matter	-	-	-	-	60%	<b>80%</b>
	Worry about feelings/behaviour	-	-	52%	<b>69%</b>	46%	<b>59%</b>
	Get help with worries	-	-	86%	<b>91%</b>	77%	<b>78%</b>
	Same opportunities as friends	-	-	-	-	82%	<b>87%</b>
	High/very high happiness with appearance	-	-	-	-	80%	<b>55%</b>

## 3.6 Well-being

- + Happiness yesterday – affect
- + Life satisfaction – overall evaluation (11-17yrs)
- + Are the things you do worthwhile? – psychological/ eudaemonic well-being (11-17yrs)
- + Feeling positive about your future (11-17yrs)
- + Well-being scales – very high scores
- + Well-being scales – low scores
- + Gender differences: 11-17yrs
- + Low well-being

# Happiness yesterday



A decrease in happiness with age occurs in all surveys. Well-being decreases from school year 5 onwards with age 14-15yrs being the lowest point. It then starts to rise again (Rees *et al.*, 2010).

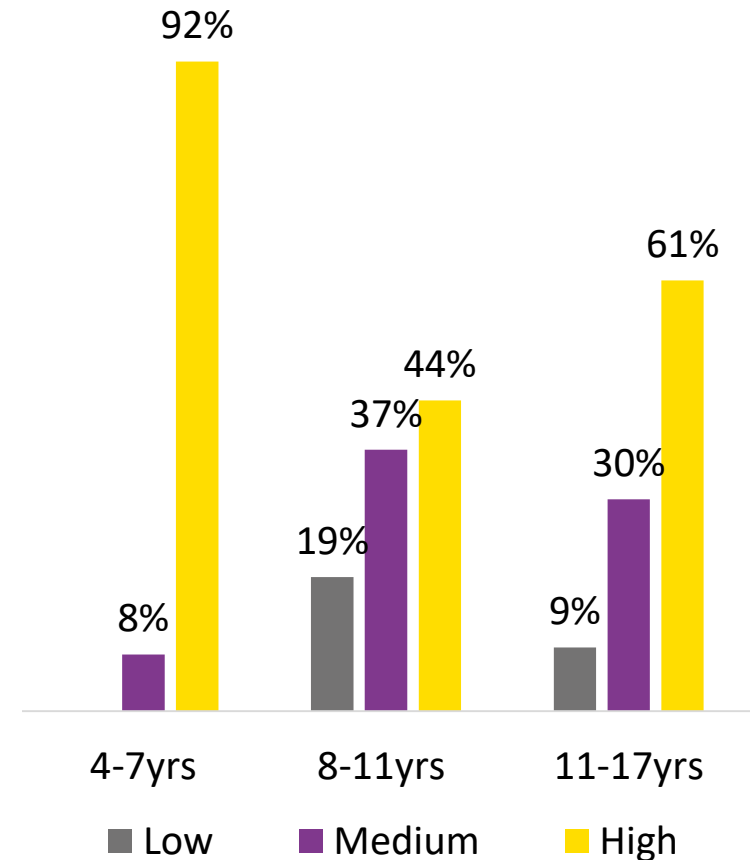
Children (4-7yrs & 8-11yrs) were asked to rate *how happy they were yesterday* on a five-point scale, from 'very unhappy' to 'very happy'.

Young people (11-17yrs) selected a point on a 0-10 scale with 0 being '*not at all happy*' and 10 '*completely happy*'.

- The majority of children and young people had been at least moderately happy the previous day.
- 3 (19%) children aged 8-11yrs, and 5 (9%) young people (11-17yrs) reported having been unhappy the previous day.

- None of the youngest children (4-7yrs) had been unhappy yesterday. **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

Happiness yesterday



# Life satisfaction (11-17yrs)

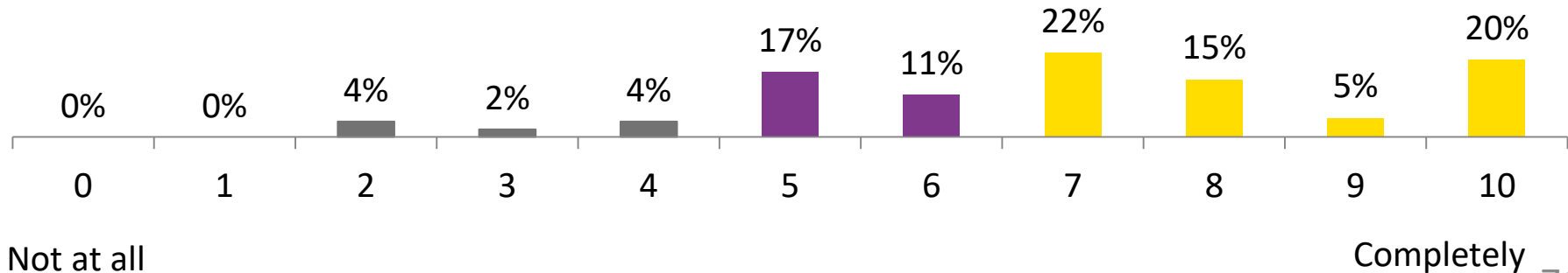


Young people (11-17yrs) were asked, *How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?* on a 0-10 scale.

This question exactly replicates The Children's Society survey question. A score of 7 or more is considered to be high life satisfaction.

- Like the general child population in England there was a positive correlation between high life satisfaction scores and being happy at school (Lewis et al., 2011).
- 62% of the young people were highly or very highly satisfied with their life as a whole.

How satisfied are you with your life?



Not at all

Completely

# Are the things you do worthwhile? (11-17yrs)

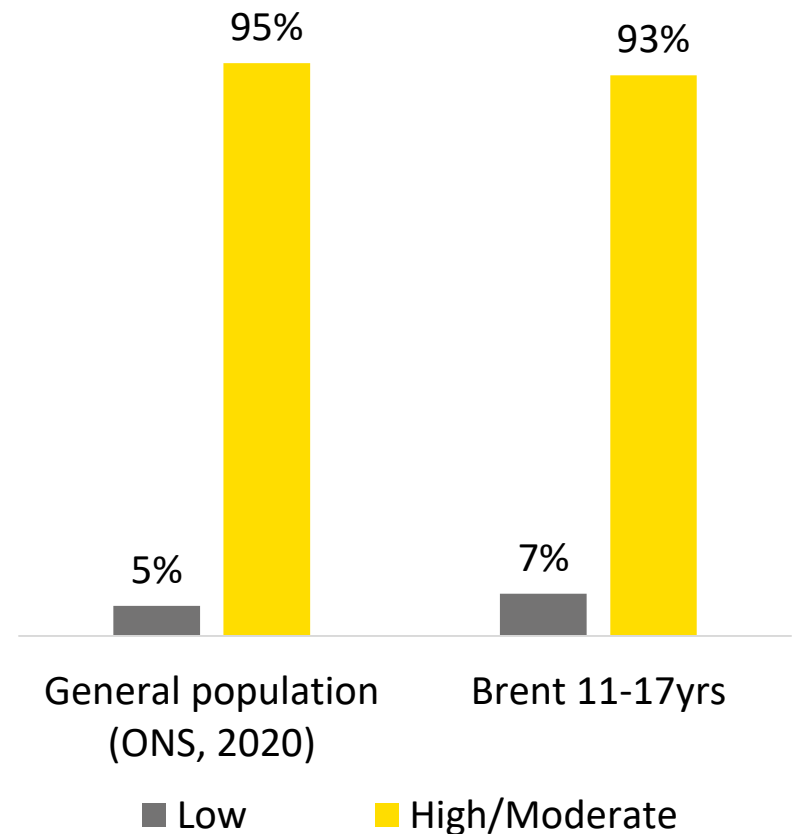


Having a meaning or a purpose to life is strongly associated with well-being (ONS, 2014).

Young people (11-17yrs) completed the same 0-10 scale as used by ONS (2020b) in their annual household survey.

- 22% young people scored very highly;
  - 39% highly
  - 32% moderately; and
  - 7% had low scores.
- Young people (11-17yrs) in Brent were statistically less likely than young people in other LAs to score very highly in terms of feeling the things they did in life were worthwhile (22% vs. 38%).

**Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?**





# Feeling positive about your future

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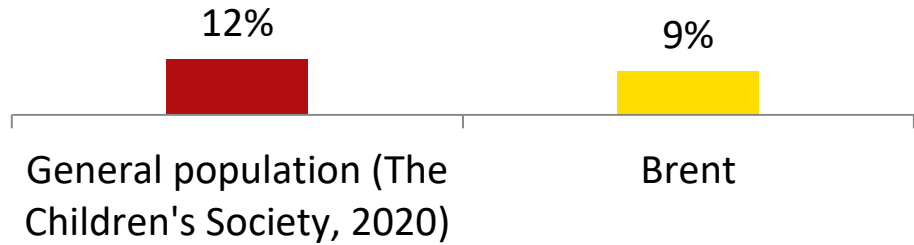
Optimism about the future is linked with happiness and resilience (Good Childhood Report, 2020).

Young people (11-17yrs) were asked on a scale of 0-10, *How positive are you about your future?*

- 31 (58%) were positive about their future.
  - 18 (33%) were moderately positive about their future.
  - 5 (9%) had low scores, suggesting low levels of positivity about their future.
- Compared to those in the general population, young people in Brent less often reported low levels of positivity about their future (12% vs. 9%). **This is a Bright Spot of practice.**

*Being in care I have had the opportunity to meet new people. I have been given a new perspective about the future of my life.*  
11-17yrs

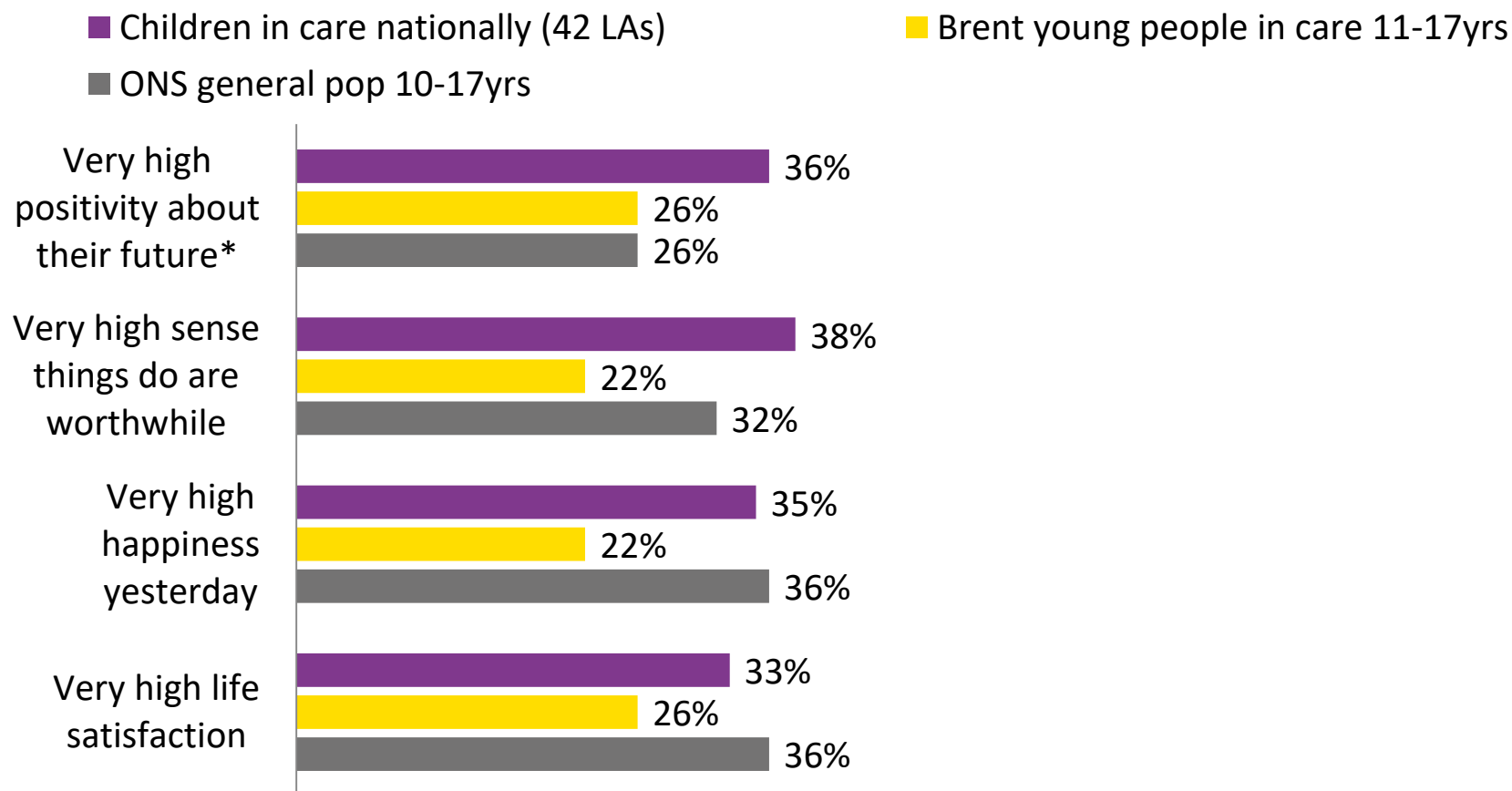
## Young people who were pessimistic about their future



# Well-being scales – very high scores



Proportion of young people (11-17yrs) with very high well-being scores – comparison with general population and the average for looked after young people nationally (ONS Young people's well-being measures 2020).

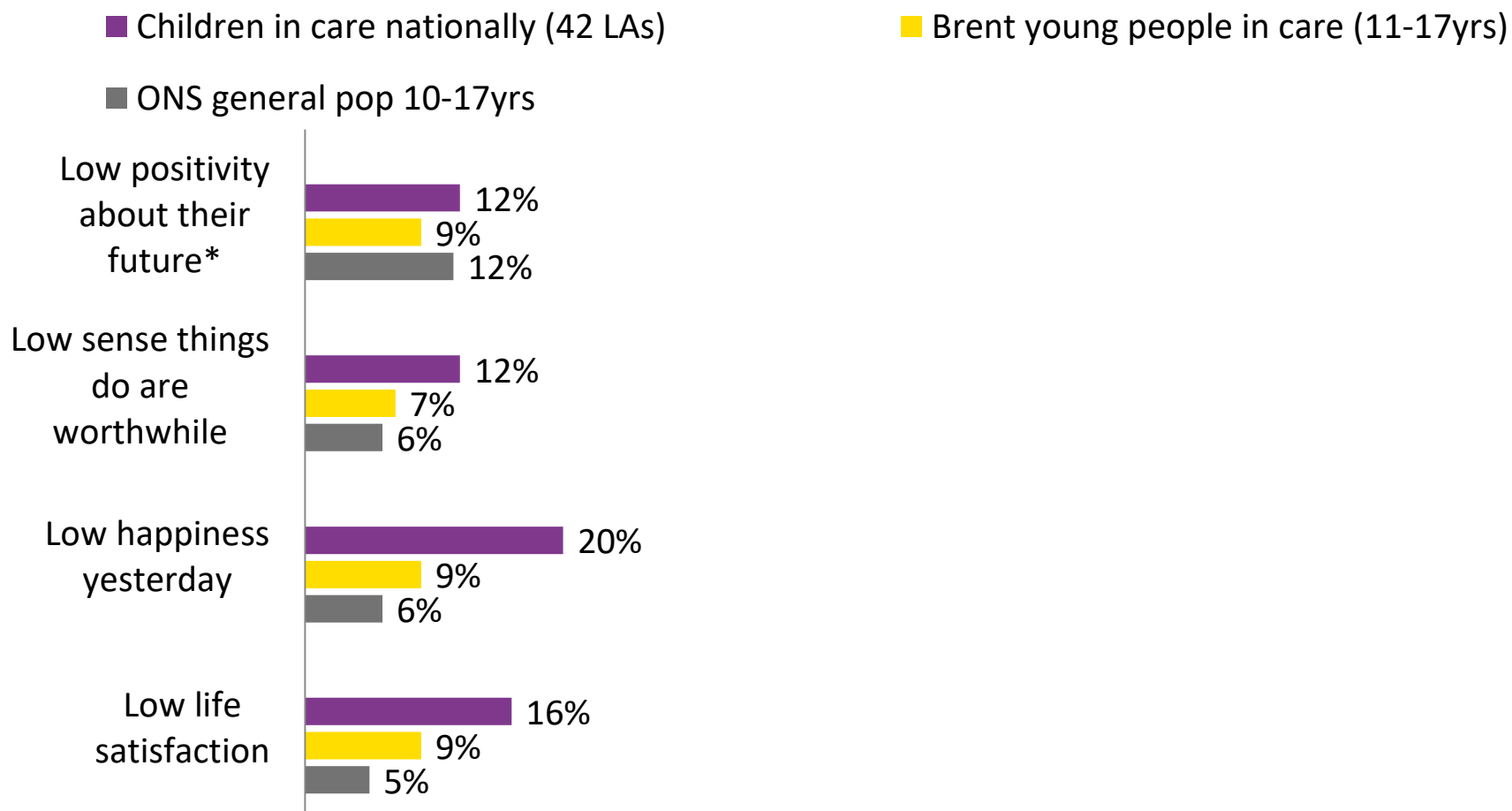


\*Data taken from Good Childhood Report 2017

# Well-being scales – low scores



Proportion of young people (11-17yrs) with low well-being scores – comparison with general population and the average for looked after young people nationally. (ONS Young people's well-being measures 2020)



\*Data taken from Good Childhood Report 2020.

# Differences by sex: 11-17yrs



The Children's Society (2017) reported that in the general

population one in seven (14%) girls (10-15yrs) were unhappy with their lives as a whole as were one in ten boys.

Examining gender differences in our surveys in 2017, we found no differences by sex in the surveys for 4-7yrs and 8-11yrs but girls aged 11-17yrs were more likely to report low well-being. Girls were four times more likely to be unhappy with their appearance and this contributed to differences in well-being depending on sex (Selwyn & Briheim-Crookall 2017).



- Gender was not associated with any of the following: life satisfaction, happiness, life being worthwhile, positivity about the future, low overall wellbeing.
- In Brent, girls were not statistically more likely to report unhappiness with their appearance.

## Low well-being: 4-7yrs



None of the children in the 4-7yrs group described themselves as *'quite unhappy'* or *'very unhappy'*.

## Low well-being: 8-11yrs



3 (19%) of the children the 8-11yrs group described themselves as *'quite unhappy'* or *'very unhappy'*.

- All were girls of Asian ethnicity and living in foster care.
- Either they did not see their mothers or felt that they saw 'too little' of her.
- All worried about their feelings or behaviour.
- Two did not 'always' feel settled where they lived, two did not know that they could ask to speak to their social worker on their own and two 'sometimes' felt afraid to go to school because of bullying.

# Low well-being: 11-17yrs



4 (7%) young people had low well-being (i.e. scored 4 or less on two or more of the 0-10 well-being scales).

Young people with low well-being were statistically more likely to report:

- Unhappiness with own appearance (75% of those with low well-being vs. 8% of those without).
- Feeling afraid to go to school because of bullying (100% of those with low well-being vs. 16% of those without).
- Feeling they didn't have a say in decisions social workers made about their life (50% of those with low well-being vs. 6% of those without).







# Changes since last survey

Better than last survey

Similar percentage

Worse than last survey

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		4-7yrs		8-11yrs		11-17yrs	
		YYYY-YY	2023-24	YYYY-YY	2023-24	YYYY-YY	2023-24
	'Quite' or 'very' happy yesterday	91%	<b>100%</b>	75%	<b>81%</b>	-	-
	High/very high happiness yesterday	-	-	-	-	76%	<b>61%</b>
	High/very high life satisfaction	-	-	-	-	74%	<b>62%</b>
	High/very high feeling things they do are worthwhile	-	-	-	-	79%	<b>61%</b>
	High/very high positivity about the future	-	-	-	-	76%	<b>58%</b>
	Low overall well-being	-	-	-	-	12%	<b>7%</b>

**Section 4:  
Children and  
young  
people's  
comments**

**Is there  
anything  
else you  
would like  
to tell us?**

**What would  
make being  
in care  
better for  
you?**



# Comments: 4-7yrs

- 3 (27%) children responded to the questions:  
***Do you want to say anything else about being in care? What would make being in care better for you?***

*If I could move to a school near foster carer as every day you are late arriving at school. [Children that live by the carer all go to the same school and are friends, so she feels left out].*

*Really Happy!!! There are no problems at the house.*

*For there to be a real rainbow when I look out of my bedroom window... for me to be able to jump on clouds.*

# Comments: 8-11yrs

- 13 (81%) children responded to the questions: ***Do you want to say anything else about being in care? What would make being in care better for you?***
- Five children reported wanting to see more of their parents (especially mothers) or siblings, or they wanted to return home.
- Three children thought that there was 'nothing' needed to make being in care better.
- Others wanted to do more activities.
- One child was struggling to talk to their carer about religion.

*Seeing my mummy and brothers and sisters.*

*I don't like being in care and I want to go back to staying with my mum.*

*Nothing really because I like everything now.*

*I would like to do more fun stuff like tennis.*

*A weekend abroad.*

*I find it hard to tell my foster carer that I don't want to follow their religion.*

# Comments: 11-17yrs

- 31 (57%) young people responded to the question: ***What would you change to make being in care better for you?***
- 11 reported that 'nothing' needed to change to make being in care better.
- 6 young people wanted more social events or fun activities.
- Others wanted to talk more to others, the opportunity to develop life skills, a more lenient curfew and immigration concerns resolved.
- Timely intervention was also wanted, as was the need to be listened to.

*More social events.*

*Nothing, I am happy with everything right now.*

*Nothing, am happy the way it is.*

*Nothing, I am happy with everything right now.*

*More adults I can speak to.*

*I want my immigration to be sorted as this makes me worried.*

*More opportunities to achieve more life skills.*

*Social workers actually listening and helping.*

*Not to be in care and be with parents.*

*More spaces for young people to chill and talk.*

*I would change how the care system works for example giving children more opportunities to do more. Fun things within Brent like going on more fun trips.*

# Comments: 11-17yrs (2)

- 19 (35%) young people responded to the question: ***What else do you want to say about being in care?***
- About two in five young people expressed only satisfaction with their care experience or praised their social workers.
- Others described both the challenges and benefits of their care experience.
- The need for more activities or opportunities whilst in care was identified, as was the need for careful placement matching and good introductions.

*Young people need more opportunities to do things that benefit us.*

*My social worker makes everything easy for me.*

*Depending on who you are with your day-to-day life in care can be either enjoyable or unenjoyable.*

*I enjoy my time in care right now. Hopefully things stay this way.*

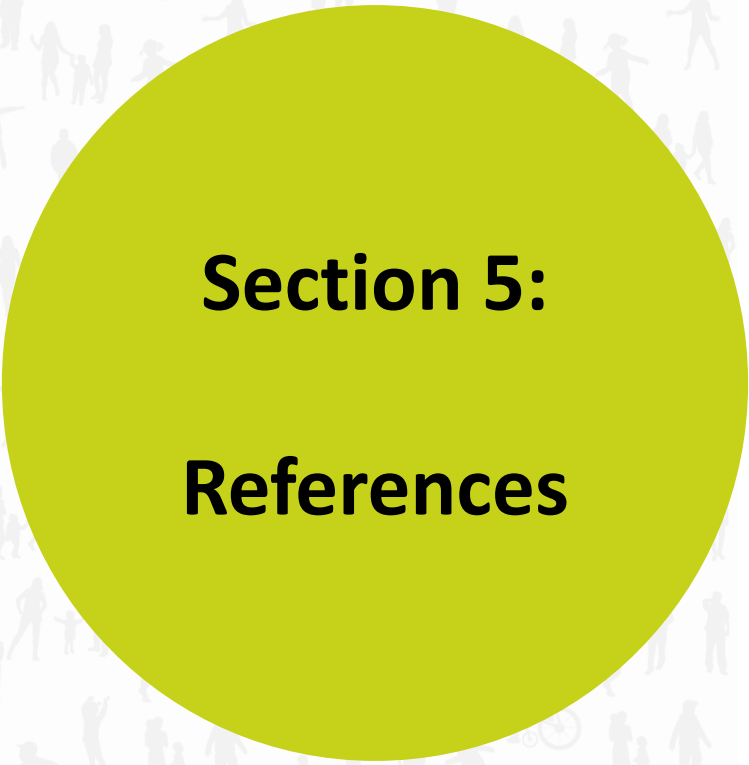
*Being in care has not been easy but my social worker does her best for me.*

*Everything is fine. No complaints.*

*Matching more carefully to avoid move. Should be more introduction process to get to know. More options of families available to care.*

*Young people need more activities to do.*

*Being in care I have had the opportunity to meet new people. I have been given a new perspective about the future of my life.*



**Section 5:**  
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