



Response to the 'Bright Spots' Survey September 2018



Children's Services very much welcomed the results and report of the 'Bright Spots' Survey. 255 looked after children and young people completed the survey.

Cardiff achieved a good representative sample by gender and by placement.

The positive comments were well received as an indication of the good practice that we know exists.

We accept the recommendations made.



Key Findings



- **77%** of children (8-11yrs) and young people (11-18yrs) felt their lives were improving
- **75%** of Young people (11-18yrs) liked school
- **0%** of boys felt that their carers didn't take an interest in their learning and only **12%** of girls did.
- **A Third** of young children (4-7yrs) felt that no-one had explained why they were in care. Children's understating increased with age but 29% of young people (11-18yrs) also wanted more information about why they were in care.



- **19%** of children (8-11yrs) and **24%** of young people (11-18yrs) had no face to face contact with either parent
- About **one in ten** young people (11-18yrs). Being friendless puts young people at greater risk of anxiety and depression
- None of the children aged 4-7 years had low well being but **2** children (8-11yrs) and **17** young people (11-18yrs) gave response that suggested low well-being



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Response

- It is our Best Hope that every looked after child will have Life Story work undertaken with them.
- We will identify a method of recording when, how and what a child is told about the reasons for becoming looked after.
- We will ensure that all carers and care providers are committed to children and young people having opportunities to explore their own lived experiences and history
- With effect from April 1st 2019 we will ensure that all children who become looked after will be provided with a Memory Box.



Recommendation 1

Regularly review contact arrangements and ensure children and young people understand why decisions have been made. Some children/young people felt they were having too much contact, and others not enough.



Response

- It is the view of the Looked After Children's Service that progress has been made in ensuring contact arrangements are regularly reviewed and the wishes and feelings of children and young people are heard.
- We are committed to the improved use of Care and Support plans as a means of capturing contact arrangements and the timetable for review.
- We will review our contract with our Contact Provider to ensure that we capture the voice of the child.
- We will use a Signs of Safety format for reviewing contact arrangements.
- We will work closely with the Court and CAFCASS in relation to the requirements they place upon the Local Authority to provide contact.



Recommendation 2

Improve support to looked after young people who are experiencing bullying.

Response

Specialist Services staff are actively involved in the on going work towards Cardiff attaining the status of being a Child Friendly City and have ensured that looked after children feature as the top priority in all aspects of work required.

This includes the development of services to ensure that children and young people feel safe and receive education and support relating to bullying

The Looked After Children's Service has recognised the issues faced by the secondary school which accommodates the highest proportion of looked after children in Cardiff.



Recommendation 3

Connect with the youngest children to make sure they feel included in decisions and understand why they are in care and actively plan opportunities for children and young people to be trusted and feel involved in decision making.

Response

We need to make greater efforts in communicating with our *younger* children, our involvement in the Children's Friendly City work should assist our development in this area.

Children's Services has a positive history of inviting children and young people to participate and consult on developments that affect them.



Recommendation 4

Be aware of gender differences when care planning and provide opportunities to improve young people's feelings about their appearance and body image.

Response

We are committed to ensuring that we pay due care and attention to ALL aspects of each child and young person's identity

We are committed to listening to the voice of the child and ensuring that we meet their hopes and fears and respond in a way that is safe and supportive.

We will ensure that carers pay due attention to the issues that concern the children in their care and that they inform themselves of topical issues, including the impact of social media upon the lives of young people.



Recommendation 5

Encourage carers to see the benefits of spending time with children and young people outdoors (e.g. beaches, woods).

Response

We intend to update the Care First Exemplar and the Foster Care Visit forms to ensure that social workers routinely discuss this with both carers and children and record their findings.

The training and supervision of staff and carers will include discussions around the importance of play and shared experiences.

When undertaking Statutory Visits to ALL placements, social workers will explore the level and nature of activities that children and young people are offered and seek feedback on their participation .



Recommendation 6

Talk to foster carers and young people to understand why some of young people were unable to access the Internet from their placements.

Response

- We feel we need to assert the position of the regular risk and negative impacts of having access to social media and the wider internet
- We already have a process in place where the needs of an individual child or young person is discussed in relation to internet access and the boundaries that are put in place are recorded and reviewed.



Additional Comments

plan to hold an event for children and young people in order to share the survey, its recommendations and our response.

felt the cohort of 11-18 year olds was quite broad and that there may have been more value in looking at the responses of those aged 16-18 and the issues that may pertain to them specifically

Children's Services staff will undertake mandatory training about the National Advocacy Approach
Safeguarding Service has appointed to a new Quality Assurance role which will give us far more scope to develop excellent practice.

The issue raised regarding children and young people knowing the name of their social worker is important to us, so we will be looking to devise a card that all children can be given which will ensure they have contact details.



bright spots