

Your Shout!

**A Survey of the Views of 706 Children
and Young People in Public Care**

by Judith E. Timms and June Thoburn

**NSPCC Review of Legislation Relating
to Children in Family Proceedings**

Foreword

During the past year the NSPCC has undertaken a Review of Legislation Relating to Children in Family Proceedings. We felt that the time was ripe for an audit of the Children Act, just over 10 years on from its implementation. The purpose of the project has been to produce a report with recommendations for reform. We have drawn together a panel of experts to seek submissions/evidence from all those involved with child law and practice to identify problem areas and proposals for improvements. We have consulted with children and young people who have had first hand experience of the operation of the Children Act. It has been an extremely useful exercise which has produced valuable information from the point of view of both practice and the consumer.

This report represents the results of the vast consultation of children's and young people's views. Over 700 children and young people have responded to the *Your Shout!* questionnaire which was promoted with The Who Cares? Trust through the *Who Cares?* magazine to 30,000 children and young people in public care. This is the first time that children and young people have been asked for their opinions about the effect of the legislation and practice on their lives. Their statements are presented in full without analysis so that nothing has been allowed to obscure the moving messages that they reveal. The findings confirm that the Children Act is a good piece of legislation which needs some amendment but primarily needs to be more effectively implemented to realise its full potential.

It is of course vital to take this opportunity to listen to children and young people and hear what they have taken the time and trouble to tell us. We know that children are more likely to tell adults when they are at risk if they believe they will be listened to. We hope that lessons can be learned from this report to inform and improve professional training and practice and that children will be better protected as a result.

The Panel will be considering the implications of the findings in this Report and will include them in the recommendations of the Main Report which will be produced following the March 2003 conference.

Barbara Esam
Chair of Panel

March 2003

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Acknowledgements

Many people have helped to bring together the information in this report. The Who Cares? Trust have promoted the questionnaire through their magazine to children and young people. The children and young people themselves have made the most significant contribution by taking the time to give us the benefit of their views and experiences in the more than 700 questionnaires which they completed for the project. We at the NSPCC would like to thank all those children and young people who have contributed. The Panel, Special Advisor and especially Judith E Timms, the Independent Consultant, have all given generously of their time and expertise and the NSPCC is enormously grateful to them. Lastly, thank you to Edward Maude for inputting the data.

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Note: Throughout the text, in the interests of brevity, the terms 'children' and 'young people' are used interchangeably to refer to minors up to the age of 18 years rather than the more correct 'children and young people'.

Introduction

Your Shout! is a questionnaire for children and young people in public care. It was designed to be considered as part of the NSPCC review of legislation relating to children in family proceedings, carried out between May and December 2002. As well as consulting professional opinion via an adult questionnaire, it was felt to be essential that consultation should be carried out with young people who have first hand experience of legislation which affects their lives.

The questionnaire was designed to explore how far services have incorporated the key principles of the Children Act 1989. In addition, we wanted to examine the extent to which the government's 'Quality Protects' programme has in fact transformed children's services¹. The 'Quality Protects' programme was set up in England in 1998 and the 'Children First' programme in Wales in 1999. The programmes were developed further in 'The Government's Objectives for Children's Social Services' that set out eleven key objectives for improving practice². One of the key objectives was the involvement of children and young people in decision-making, a requirement of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states:

'States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the view of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.'

'For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law'

It therefore seemed appropriate that the questionnaire had, as a key theme, the young people's experience of decision-making in court and their participation in their own care plans. The second major theme was on contact issues and whether young people were seeing enough of the people they cared about and who formed the infrastructure of the lives to which the majority would eventually return. Post Children Act practice and research has stressed the need to promote contact as the means to successful reunification of families³. This is particularly pertinent at a time when there is considerable discussion of contact issues in both private and public law proceedings and when the question of contact in adoption is also under review in the context of implementation of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A third key theme was

¹Department of Health (1998), *Quality Protects Circular: Transforming Children's Services*, Local Authority Circular (LAC(98)28); and Welsh Office (1999), *The Children First Programme in Wales: Transforming Children's Services*, Circular 20/99, Cardiff: Welsh Office.

²Department of Health (1999), *The Government's Objectives for Children's Social Services*, London: Department of Health.

³See Department of Health (2001), *The Children Act Now: Messages from Research, Studies in Evaluating the Children Act 1989*, London: The Stationery Office, p. 134.

safety – both feeling safe and being free from violence and abuse. The rationale was that, given that the overriding aim of the legislation is to keep children safe and to protect them from harm, then it was appropriate to find out how safe young people felt in public care.

Finally, we asked the young people what they would have liked to be different in the past and what their hopes were for the future. As so often happens when young people are given a real opportunity to participate, the quality and quantity of the response overwhelmed us. We had hoped for a sample of 200, to parallel that of the adult professional respondents. In the event more than 700 children and young people filled in the questionnaire, in the hope of making an impact on the people who make decisions about children. Their contributions have been set down in the Children's and Young People's Statements section. Names of people or places have been removed to preserve the confidentiality of the young people concerned. With this exception the statements have been reproduced exactly as they were written. It is now up to us to listen, to seek ways of incorporating their views and to ensure that their voices inform policy and practice for the next decade.

Survey design

The questionnaires were distributed through the Who Cares? Trust, who print and publish *Who Cares?*, the national magazine for young people in public care. The magazine is commissioned by care authorities in England and Wales, and in Scotland and Northern Ireland where the legislation is different. The circulation is 30,000 and includes children and young people in residential care, in foster care, in care but living with their parents, in secure accommodation and in young offenders' institutions. The questionnaires were circulated in the July 2002 edition of the magazine.

There is no way of knowing how many young people actually received the questionnaire via the magazine and thus there is no "response rate". Nor is there any way of knowing how representative are the respondents. The 725 returned questionnaires were from a group of children and young people who were not "pre-selected" by those administering the questionnaire. They were all self-selected and had chosen to give their views and opinions and to share their experiences of public care. Nine of the questions could be completed by ticking boxes, the last two questions left space for the young people's own unstructured replies (the children also had the opportunity to add their comments in some of the earlier questions). Respondents were asked not to fill in their names and addresses, so that the answers would be strictly private and confidential. The questionnaire stressed that spelling and handwriting were not important - it was what the respondent had to say that mattered. Once the questionnaire had been filled in, the young people were asked to put it in the freepost envelope provided and to post it by the 1 September 2002 to the 'Your Shout!' Freepost number in London.

The response was immediate and prolonged. Completed questionnaires started arriving in August and were still arriving in January 2003. All responses received by 9 January 2003 have been included in this survey. 19 were received after that date and, in fairness to the young people who took the trouble to respond, their views have been included in the children's statements, but not in the statistical analysis. This analysis is therefore based on the results of 706 questionnaires. A copy of the questionnaire the young people received is reproduced in Appendix 1.

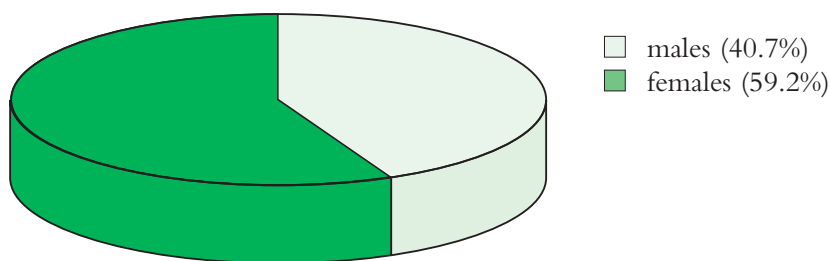
Throughout the text and tables, percentages are generally expressed as a percentage of those responding to the particular question, rounded to the nearest whole number. Decimal points are included when this provides a more accurate indication of the order of magnitude of smaller percentages. Charts show the percentage of all respondents, including those who did not answer particular questions.

The findings

1. Profile of the respondents

1.1 Sample by sex

418 of the respondents (59%) were girls/young women and 287 (41%) were boys/young men (one child did not specify his/her gender). Thus young women are over-represented among respondents, since the proportion of girls in the looked-after population in England in 2002 was 45%.



1.2 Sample by ethnic origin

All except 8 respondents gave information on their ethnic origin. Of those who did, 601 (86%) ticked the “white British” box and 97 (14%) indicated that they were of minority ethnic origin. This is a slightly lower proportion than for the population of children of minority ethnic origin looked after in England generally, which was 18% in 2002. Fewer of those in the 12–15 age group (10%) recorded that they were of minority ethnic origin than in the youngest group (18%) and the 16+ group (21%) ($p < .01$). Table 1 gives the detailed responses.

Table 1: Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnic Origin	Response	%
White British	601	86.0
Black Caribbean	19	3.0
Black British	15	2.0
Black African	11	1.5
Pakistani	6	1.0
Indian	3	0.5
British Asian	2	0.3
Bangladeshi	2	0.3
Chinese	0	0.0
Other	39	6.0
Total	698	100.0
(Left blank = 8)		

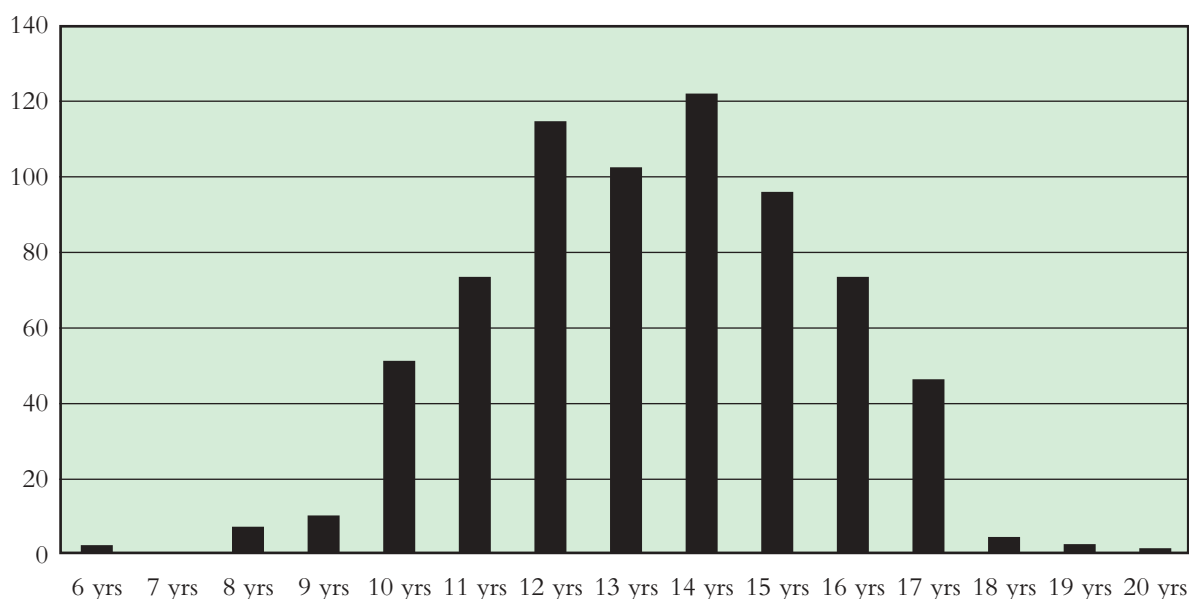
1.3 Sample by age

The youngest respondent was aged 6 and the oldest was 20. One child did not specify her age. The mean age was 13, with the majority of respondents being in the 13-15 age group. Slightly more of the boys than the girls were in the lower age groups. The boys' average age was 13.3 compared with 13.5 for the girls. 71% of male respondents and 66% of female respondents were in the 6 to 14 age group. The distribution of ages among the sample is shown in the graph below.

Table 2: Age and sex of respondents

Age	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
6-11	62	22.0	79	19.0	141	20.0
12-14	142	49.0	197	47.0	339	48.0
15-16	63	22.0	107	26.0	170	24.0
17-20	20	7.0	34	8.0	54	8.0
Total (left blank = 2)	287	100.0	417	100.0	704	100.0

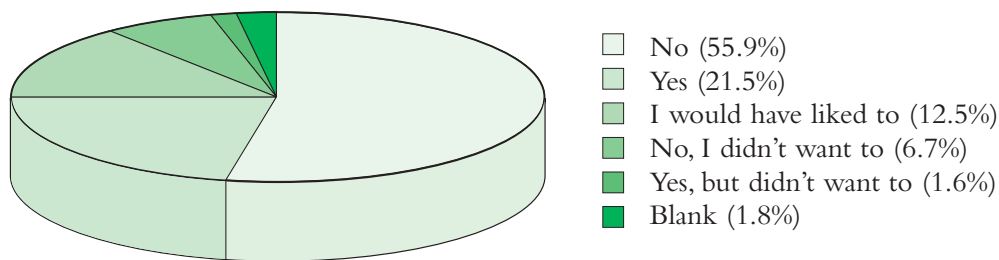
Distribution of ages amongst the questionnaire sample



1.4 Health problems among the sample

81 (12%) of the young people stated that they had a disability or long-term health problem that affected daily life. More boys than girls reported that they had a disability or health condition - 15% of the boys and 9% of the girls, statistically a significant difference ($p < .05$). A higher proportion of the children of minority ethnic origin recorded that they had a disability but the numbers are small (15 children of minority ethnic origin in this group and 65 white British children). Children who said they had disabilities were evenly spread across the age groups.

2. Young people's experience of court



2.1 The majority of the 706 children and young people in this survey would have been the subject of a range of different court proceedings, although some will have been accommodated at the request of the parents or themselves. Since the usual position is for a solicitor and the children's Guardian to present the child's wishes and feelings to the court and advocate for them, it is somewhat surprising that 163 respondents (23%) said that they had been to court when asked "Have you ever been to Court when decisions were being made about you?" Although when we framed the question we had in mind public law care proceedings, the sample included young people in youth offenders' institutions and secure accommodation. Some respondents, therefore, may have responded in respect of criminal proceedings. It is also possible that a small number would have responded in the context of "their case" having been decided in court rather than actually attending themselves.

Table 3: Court attendance as recorded by young people

	Response	%
I have not attended court	395	57.0
I have attended	152	22.0
I would have liked to	88	13.0
No, I didn't want to	47	7.0
Yes, but I didn't want to	11	1.5
Total (left blank = 13)	693	100.0

Table 3 (shown above) gives the responses as to whether the young person had "ever been to court when decisions were being made about you". A higher proportion of those aged 16 or over (38%) had been to court compared with children of a younger age. This suggests that, since 16 year olds are more likely to be involved in criminal activity than other age groups, the figure relating to those who attended court is, to some extent, inflated by those attending youth court. However, the age profile did not indicate that criminal proceedings would account for a majority of those who answered "yes", in that girls were equally represented amongst those who went to court, whilst young men are more likely than young women to attend court because of criminal justice matters. Some may have attended court to give evidence against an alleged perpetrator of abuse. Girls were twice as likely as boys to say that they did not go to court but would have liked to do so. These data are shown in Table 4 (see next page).

Table 4: Court attendance by sex

Category	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
Went	68	24.0	95	23.0	163	24.0
No-wanted to No-didn't want to	23	8.0	65	16.0	88	13.0
No	23	8.0	24	6.0	47	7.0
Total	169	60.0	225	55.0	394	57.0
(left blank = 14)	283	100.0	409	100.0	692	100.0

It was notable that the responses indicated that, in general, the children did not perceive the court proceedings as an avenue of communication for them to be involved in decision making. Comments about the plans made for them were invariably associated with social services departments rather than the judiciary and the courts.

Only 13 (9%) of those in the 6 to 11 age group indicated that they went to court (one 6 year old, two nine year olds, one aged 10 and nine aged 11) compared with 68 (21%) of those aged 12-14, 66 (39%) of those aged 15-16 and 16 (21%) of those aged 17-20 ($p < .001$). The lower proportion in the 17-20 age group is probably explained by the fact that more of these will have started to be looked after some years ago, since it is those who have had long and fairly stable placements who remain 'looked after' in their long term foster families until the age of 18.

There was a numerical tendency, which did not reach statistical significance, for those saying they had a disability or health problem to be more likely than those who did not to attend court (32% compared with 23%: ($p = 0.077$)). There was a similar tendency ($p = 0.084$) for those of minority ethnic origin to record that they had been to court (33% compared with 22% of those who recorded their ethnicity as white British.)

2.2 The child's experience of court proceedings

To examine the information about help received in respect of court attendance those 163 children who actually went to court are analysed as a separate group (hereafter, the "court sample"). Table 5 (please see next page) presents the findings about the help children received during court proceedings, both for the whole sample as well as the court sample.

2.3 Question 6(B) 3: "Who was helpful?"

The range of people who were helpful to children attending court was wide and interdisciplinary with social workers heading a list that included teachers, the Samaritans and therapists. In terms of practical help, not having enough money and not getting enough help generally featured relatively strongly. This question elicited 16 categories of people. The five most popular categories were social workers, a named person, solicitors, carers and family members. The detailed findings are shown in Table 6 (please see page 10).

(Note. Not all the children who answered this question would have had access to all of the people in Table 6, e.g. therapists.)

Table 5: Help received during court proceedings

Category	Whole Sample	% of those who responded	Court Sample	% of those who responded
I got enough help at court	134	41.0	110	70.0
I didn't get enough help at court	154	47.0	33	21.0
I didn't get any help at court	39	12.0	14	9.0
Total responding (left blank = 379 for whole sample and 6 for court sample)	327	100.0	157	100.0
I had someone helpful to talk to	264	66.0	121	78.0
No I didn't	136	34.0	34	22.0
Total responding (left blank = 306 for whole sample and 8 for court sample)	400	100.0	155	100.0
I got enough practical help	210	50.0	74	49.0
I didn't get enough practical help	182	43.0	65	42.0
I got no help	27	7.0	15	10.0
Total responding (left blank = 287 for whole sample and 9 for court sample)	419	100.0	154	100.0
Someone explained what was happening	282	63.0	130	84.0
No one explained	166	37.0	25	16.0
Total (left blank = 258 for whole sample and 8 for court sample)	448	100.0	155	100.0
I had a chance to speak to the judge	45	11.0	39	27.0
I did not get the chance	218	55.0	55	38.0
I would have liked the chance	83	21.0	28	19.0
I didn't want to speak to the judge	50	13.0	24	16.0
Total responding (left blank = 310 for whole sample and 17 for court sample)	396	100.0	146	100.0
I was listened to	183	42.0	73	47.0
I was not listened to	138	31.0	39	25.0
I don't know	120	27.0	44	28.0
Total responding (left blank = 265 for whole sample and 7 for court sample)	441	100.0	156	100.0

Table 6: People who were helpful to children during court proceedings.

Category	Whole Sample	% of replies where mentioned	Court Sample	% of replies where mentioned
Social worker	71	30.0	31	28.0
A person listed by name	65	27.0	20	18.0
Solicitor	34	14.0	29	26.0
Foster carers	26	11.0	8	7.0
Family member	25	10.0	13	12.0
Children's guardian	16	7.0	7	6.0
Friend	6	3.0	3	3.0
Everyone	3	1.0	1	1.0
Staff	3	1.0	3	3.0
Teacher	3	1.0	1	1.0
NSPCC	2	1.0	1	1.0
Leaving care worker	2	1.0	1	1.0
Police	1	0.5	1	1.0
Drugs worker	1	0.5	1	1.0
Samaritans	1	0.5	1	1.0
Therapist	1		0	0.5
Total responding (left blank = 466 for whole sample and 53 for court sample)	240		110	

2.4 Question 6(C)2 (practical help during court proceedings): “Any other comments?”

A low proportion of children chose to add further comments about the practical help they received during court proceedings (12% of the whole sample; see Appendix 2). Those who did gave a varied and polarised range of responses. These are shown in Table 7 (please see page 11).

2.5 Question 6(D)2 (explaining to the child what was happening in court): “Any other comments?”

As with the “Any other comments?” part of 6(C), this question drew a low response (9%). The answers, which are shown in Table 8 (please see page 12), were varied and polarised. The two most popular responses, for example, were that the child did, and did not, receive enough information. This indicates that practice is still variable, but that some areas are succeeding in getting relevant information to children.

2.6 Question 6(E): “Did you have the chance to speak to the judge?”

For the court sample, over half of those who responded (57%) said they did not have the chance to speak to the judge (including 19% of the court sample who said they wished they had had the chance to speak to the judge). 16% said they would not have wanted to. Out of the 88 children who did not go to court but would have liked to, a higher proportion, 34, (39%) said they would have liked the chance to speak to the judge whilst only 3 said they would not have

Table 7: Other comments about practical help during court proceedings

Category	Whole Sample	% of those who responded	Court Sample	% of those who responded
I didn't get enough money	11	13.0	2	5.0
I got enough help	9	10.0	5	13.0
I didn't go to court	5	6.0	1	3.0
I didn't/don't want to go to court	5	6.0	5	13.0
I didn't get enough help	5	6.0	0	0.0
I would have liked to go to court	4	5.0	1	3.0
Negative about social worker	4	5.0	3	8.0
Positive about carer	3	3.0	0	0.0
Positive about social worker	2	2.0	1	3.0
People didn't listen to me enough	2	2.0	1	3.0
Negative about care	2	2.0	2	5.0
I didn't get enough information	2	2.0	0	0.0
Positive about staff	2	2.0	2	5.0
I was too young to attend	2	2.0	1	3.0
Negative about carer	1	0.5	0	0.0
I would like to stay in care	1	0.5	1	3.0
Positive about Guardian	1	0.5	0	0.0
I was moved around too much	1	0.5	1	3.0
Other comment	25	29.0	12	32.0
Total responding (left blank = 619 for whole sample and 125 for court sample)	87		38	

wanted to do so. Just over a quarter of those in the court sample responding to this question (27%) said that were able to speak to the judge.

None of the children referred directly to the role of judges in their statements. This may say something about how children view their role in the decision making process or it may be more indicative of a lack of opportunity to attend and speak directly to the person making the decisions. The responses suggest that there are children involved in family proceedings who would like to be able to attend court and to speak to the judge and who did not have the opportunity to do so. Some were philosophical about the lack of opportunity to be consulted:

"I would have liked to have had a say about being put in care and who I was with. I was probably to young though."

2.7 Question 6(G): "What would have made things easier?"

Of the total sample, 144 (20%) answered "nothing" to this question, 138 (20%) wanted more support, 124 (18%) wanted more information while 47 (7%) wanted more practical help. 321 young people left this answer blank. Of the court sample, 39 (24%) said that nothing would have made things easier, 55 (34%) wanted more support, 55 (34%) wanted more information and 19 (12 %) wanted more practical help. 26 left the answer blank. In this question, some children cited more than one factor.

Table 8: Other comments about the child’s understanding of the court process

Category	Whole Sample	% of those who responded	Court Sample	% of those who responded
I got enough information	15	23.0	8	24.0
I didn’t get enough information	14	22.0	9	27.0
Positive about social workers	6	9.0	2	6.0
Positive about Guardian	3	5.0	0	0.0
Positive about solicitors	3	5.0	3	9.0
I would have liked to go to court	2	3.0	2	6.0
I got enough help	2	3.0	0	0.0
I wasn’t listened to enough	2	3.0	1	3.0
Negative about social workers	1	1.5	0	0.0
I didn’t get enough help	1	1.5	1	3.0
I would like to see friends more	1	1.5	0	0.0
I was too young to attend	1	1.5	1	3.0
I want to change my behaviour	1	1.5	0	0.0
Negative about staff and s.w.	1	1.5	1	3.0
Court process was too complex	1	1.5	1	3.0
Other comment	11	17.0	4	12.0
Total responding (left blank = 641 for whole sample and 130 for court sample)	65		33	

2.8 Question 6(G)2: “Anything else?”

In common with similar questions in the previous part of the questionnaire, there was a low response rate for this question (8%). Again, some children cited more than one factor in their responses.

3. Children’s participation in decision making and children’s rights

The relevant question for this section is Question 6(F): “Were you listened to and your rights respected?” The responses are included in Table 5.

The comparatively low response rate for this question (63%) is probably accounted for by the fact that some of the children thought that this question only applied to them if they had attended court. For those who responded from the sample as a whole (597), 43% considered that they were listened to and 27% replied that they did not know. Further analysis indicated that:

- 40% of the girls and 44% of the boys who answered this question said that they thought that they had been listened to ($p < .01$).
- Those aged 11 or under were more likely to consider that they were listened to (55% responded ‘yes’) than those aged 12–15 (37%) or those aged 16+ (41%) ($p < .05$).
- 76% of those who said that they felt safe when looked after, compared with 57% who said

Table 9: Any other comments about court proceedings

Category	Whole Sample	% of those who responded	Court Sample	% of those who responded
People didn't listen to me enough	10	17.0	5	19.0
I didn't get enough information	9	15.0	3	12.0
I didn't get enough help	8	14.0	2	8.0
I would like to leave care	7	12.0	4	15.0
Negative about social worker	7	12.0	2	8.0
I got enough help	6	10.0	5	19.0
I wish my family was present	2	3.0	1	4.0
I wish my family behaved better	2	3.0	1	4.0
Court process was too complex	2	3.0	1	4.0
Positive about Guardian	2	3.0	1	4.0
Positive about carer	2	3.0	1	4.0
Positive about social worker	2	3.0	1	4.0
I got enough information	2	3.0	2	8.0
I wanted justice	2	3.0	0	0.0
I wish I had behaved better	2	3.0	2	8.0
I would have liked to go to court	1	2.0	0	0.0
I was too young to attend	1	2.0	0	0.0
I helped myself	1	2.0	1	4.0
I want more family contact	1	2.0	1	4.0
I was listened to enough	1	2.0	0	0.0
Negative about Guardian	1	2.0	0	0.0
Total responding	58		26	
(left blank = 648 for whole sample and 137 for court sample)				

they did not feel safe when looked after, considered that their rights were respected ($p < .001$).

- There was no significant difference in respect of disability.
- Numerically, more of those of minority ethnic origin considered that they were listened to and their rights respected than was the case with the white British children (48% compared with 40%) although this did not reach statistical significance.

This issue came up in responses to several other questions in the questionnaire.

"I would have wanted my opinion to be listened to rather than just my carers, But the social workers should have been listening to me instead of just the opinion of the carer."

"I would have liked to have had more info and would of liked to have more say in the matter"

"having a say in thing will make me a lot Pleased"

It is clear from the responses that not being listened to is a problem for some whilst in care and that this is exacerbated by lack of knowledge about the way in which young people can influence the decisions taken about them.

4. Knowledge of the care authority

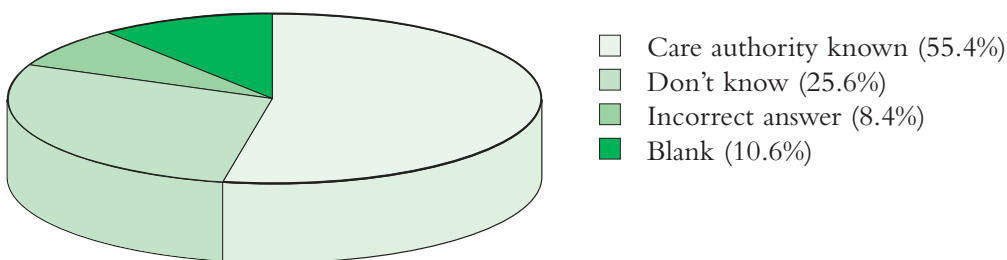


Table 10 shows that nearly half (45%) did not name their care authority. (Since the respondents were careful in completing the 'tick box' parts of the questionnaire, it seems reasonable, here, to include those who left this question blank amongst those who did not know).

Table 10: Response to the question "Who is your care authority?"

Category	Response	%
Care authority known	391	55.0
Don't know	181	26.0
Incorrect answer given	59	8.0
Blank (included in analysis as indicates child did not know)	75	11.0
Total	706	100.0

Boys were more likely than girls to give an appropriate/correct response (60% compared with 52%) ($p < .001$). Overall, 315 respondents were not able to name their care authority. i.e. nearly half the sample. Incorrect answers were, for example, the name of a carer or residential home. There was a numerical tendency (that did not reach statistical significance) towards the under 12s being more likely than those in the other two age groups to name a care authority (60% compared with 55% and 53% for those in the older age groups). It is possible that more of those in the older age groups started to be looked after before the Children Act guidance on consultation of children and more systematic reviews and care plans started to have an impact. This may explain why the younger children were more aware of the role of the care authority. There was also a tendency towards those who described themselves as 'white British' to be more likely to name their care authority than those of other ethnic origin (58% compared with 46%). There was a tendency towards more of those with a disability or health condition naming their care authority (60% did so) than those with no health problems (55%).

The question on whether the child could name the care authority was designed to look at the young people's perception of who is looking after them as well as making decisions about them. This is not just a one-dimensional matter of knowing or not knowing. It is a more complex question of who young people think is looking after them. Some young people felt they were being cared for by strangers:

"because if you think about it youre living with complete strangers"

"Being in care made me feel uncumfertable, insacur and made me feel like I wasn't there

like I didn't exist."

"[No I don't feel safe] Because you're always around strange people you dont know About."

Local authority management structures are complex and difficult for adults to negotiate. It was, therefore, not surprising that some children became distressed:

"I didn't feel safe or enjoy being in care 'cos I was suddenly out of place with a group of strangers. I couldn't relax and I cried all the time. I had a very bad reaction to it."

This can lead to children feeling trapped in an unknown situation. One young man wrote:

"I feel that children in care feel trapped because they dont know the people around them as much as they would like to."

5. The corporate parent and the role of social workers

5.1 From their responses to questions about looking back and looking forward it was clear that many of the young people had been well looked after by their local authorities and the carers with whom they had been placed and were positive about the future.

"I don't want anything to be different because I am happy with everything that I have."

Another 16 year old had come to recognise that the care authority did have her best interests at heart and was wanting to maintain the stability she had achieved:

"Nothing, although from the age 12, I was reluctant to what S.S. wanted for my near future, I thought somethings they done were to harsh like put on a secure order for a Long period, and not trusting me on my own in society, and being unable to stay at friends over night, Lack of trust resulted in me running away from numerous care homes and putting my self in Severe Danger around drugs + prostitution. History repeated itself for 3 1/2 years, Id be in and out of Secure going back to my past [illegible] I am 16 now and Semi-independent. And I am So So grateful for Social Servises Support and Looking back they only wanted what was best for me and what would keep me safe. If it wasn't for their correct Judgement, Id be dead, ive been on harsh drugs and been through a lot of pooh! but im now writing a novel of my traumatic history."

5.2 Permeating the responses of some of the young people were questions around who is in charge of their day-to-day welfare and to whom can they appeal if things go wrong. What seemed to be clear from the findings was that many young people cannot see further than their immediate care-giver, whether that is a foster carer or the duty social worker. This is not surprising given the chain of local authority accountability. If one also takes into consideration the extent to which they are apparently missing and/or losing contacts with extended family and friends, then one has a picture of some young people with no immediate frame of reference in terms of a circle of people to test out thoughts, fears, feelings and aspirations.

"it makes me feel difficult and scared some time's know one talks to me so I am puzzled."

To that extent it is an alien world to the young people in which they may not even be clear about the faces of the people who are taking the decisions about their day-to-day welfare and indeed about the rest of their lives. Some children are worried by this:

"[yes I feel safe] It does but it can be a bit too over protected now I'm getting older I want to sleep around my friends houses without having a police check because it just puts you aside to your other friends and makes you feel and think that you are different from anyone else."

Many young people have had to deal with the distressing knowledge that their parents can no longer exercise their parental responsibility in a way that is acceptable to the rest of society. The question which receives rather less attention, however, is how the child perceives and experiences the corporate parenting by care authorities which take its place.

For some of the young people who responded, the local authority had provided a sense of security and then taken it away again by sending the child home. One ten year old felt unable to say that she did not want to go back to live with her parents. Her brother had been old enough to 'take the law into his own hands' by running away, but it is disturbing to realise that exposing himself to danger by running away was the only way he could find to make his views known

"I would have like to stay in care because I feel much safer there with my brother now I'm living with my perants and my bro. dosen't live with me no more, when we knew we only had 3 days left in care so my bro got so upset that he ran away: they found him and hes in care again."

The opposite was the case for this 15 year old:

"I would like my little bro to come home 'cos I can't stand the thought of him going through every single day - It was a stupid decision to let me come home and not my brother 'cos now he feels like he's done something wrong and we don't want him to come back. but we do desperately once Joe's home the social worker can come and visit us if they really have to, but my family would like to get our stuff together and move to [place] where we can hopefully start again + put all this mess behind us."

The lack of easy accessibility to social workers who could make decisions about them was clearly also a source of frustration and sometimes anger to the young people who felt that their problems were pressing.

Several respondents wanted the 'corporate parenting' to be exercised by greater delegation to their foster parents or the relatives they were living with:

"I would like socil workers to be a bit more alert and to here what foster cares have to say and when the put a time down to come and see you the must try to make the effert and come."

Although some regretted that their parents did not have more of a say in the care planning, others were uneasy that their parents still did have a say in the detail of their lives:

"If you have no contact with parents, I don't think that they should still be able to tell you what you can and can't do in certain circumstances. But.....the place I'm in now is brilliant"

However, some wanted to see more of their social workers away from their carers:

“Having a younger social worker to talk to and to be able to talk to my social worker without my foster parents there! Social workers usually ask if it’s alright for the foster parent to stay while you talk and when your with them you can’t really say you would mind because then you might hurt there feelings mostly when there like your parents!”

“get more support and be informed of things happening to do with myself. to get hold of my social worker more easier.”

“I have been in foster care for 3 years and in that time I have had 9 social workers I would like to have a social worker which stays longer can you help”

“The way no one seems to have time ‘Can I ring you back theres a crisis’ ‘Let me Just finish these Reports’”

This young woman was one of those who found that being in care carried a stigma made worse by the sense that key decisions in her life had to be taken by someone who was paid to care about her.

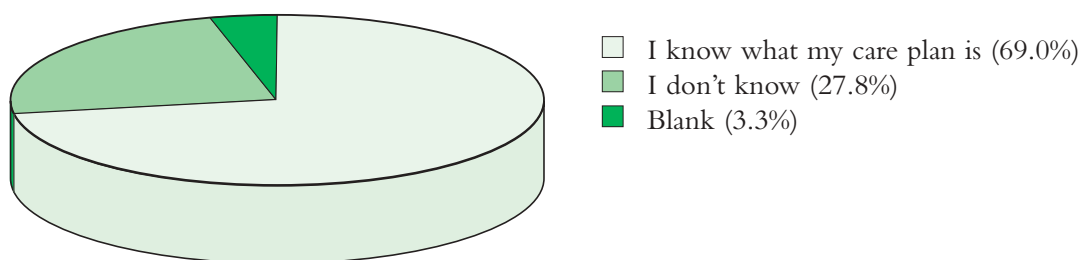
I wish it wasnt so obvious I was in care. I would like other young people to have a nice placement when they come into care so they dont have to keep moving around. I wish that social workers etc cared when they leave work as well as when their at work. To them its just a job but to us its not. We depend on them 24/7 not just 9-5 five days a week.”

“for social workers to get out of my life I was fine in the start thay have fucked my life up totally and I hate them all they Just do it for the money. Write back from [name]”

This is reflected in the words of this 17 year old Bangladeshi young man:

“More money more resonserbitty to carear than sociall worker cos he or she does not look after you see you ever 3 weeks to see what happening because when they see you they pretend they know what going on when they don’t From [name]”

Further information on the way in which the local authority is fulfilling its ‘corporate parenting’ role was gained from the question on whether the young people knew about their care plans and had been involved in writing them.



5.3 417 children (65%) did not contribute to the writing of their care plan. This is disappointing given the current emphasis in children's participation in care planning. Moreover, experience tells us that plans have a much better chance of succeeding where the children themselves have been involved in their preparation. It is encouraging that over half of the children (56%) (and 81% if only those who answered either 'yes' or 'no' are included) indicated that they were happy with their plan, especially given the high percentage of young people who did not help with writing it. However, a quarter of the sample did not know whether they were happy with the plan or not, which again is disappointing and perhaps indicates a low level of involvement in the discussions. 454 (77% of those who responded to this question and 64% of the whole sample) ticked that they did not want to change their plan. The comparatively high level of agreement with the care plans – despite the low level of involvement in the writing and the fact that more than a quarter of the sample did not know what was in their care plan, are aspects of the findings which would bear closer investigation. Further analysis pointed to differences within the group.

- Girls were more likely than boys to know what their care plan was (73% compared with 70%: $p < .001$).
- There was a tendency that did not reach statistical significance for those in the 11–15 age group to be more likely to know what their care plan was than those in the younger or older age groups.
- Those who reported that they did not feel safe in care were less likely to say that they knew what their care plan was (57% compared with 76%: $p < .001$).
- There was no difference in response in respect of those who had a disability or health problem.
- There was a tendency towards fewer of those of minority ethnic origin reporting that they knew what their care plan was, but this difference (66% compared with 72% of the white British children) was not statistically significant.

Table 11: About the respondent's care plan

Question	Yes	% of those who replied	No/Don't know	% of those who replied	Number responding 'yes' or 'no'
Do you know what your care plan is?	487	71.0	196	29.0	683
Did you help write it?	228	35.0	417	65.0	645
Are you happy with it? (no includes 'don't know' and left blank)	392	56.0	314	44.0	706
Is there anything you would like to change?	139	23.0	454	77.0	593

5.4 The children were invited to add their own extra comments about their care plan. Their responses are categorised in Table 12:

It was significant that many young people took every opportunity to reiterate that they missed their families, would like more contact with family and friends and would like to return home eventually. Only one young person said that he/she would like less family contact. Some of the difficulties in organising supervised contact, including the importance of arranging safe, comfortable contact, were brought out by the findings of the adult review. It would have been interesting to know the reasons for the lack of contact among the respondents. The question of contact is discussed in more detail in Section 7.

Table 12: Other comments about the care plan

	Whole sample	% of those responding
I want to leave care	27	19.0
I don't know if I have a plan	22	16.0
I'd like more family contact	20	14.0
I'm happy with my plan	11	8.0
I'm not happy with my plan	10	7.0
I'm not listened to enough	8	6.0
I'd like to stay in care	7	5.0
I don't have a plan	6	4.0
Positive about carer	4	3.0
Negative about social worker	4	3.0
I'd like more money	4	3.0
I need more help	4	3.0
I'm happy	3	2.0
Negative about care	2	2.0
I want my family to behave better	2	1.0
I want to behave better	2	1.0
Positive about care	1	0.7
Negative about carer	1	0.7
Positive about social worker	1	0.7
I'd like more contact with a named person	1	0.7
I'd like more contact with my boyfriend	1	0.7
I'd like less family contact	1	0.7
I need more information	1	0.7
Other comments	8	6.0
Total responding	141	
left blank = 565		

6. Delay, placement change and choice

Associated with the children's experiences of court and the local authority processes for reviewing care plans is the question of the impact on the children of inappropriate delay in reaching decisions about their future.

From the responses of the family justice professionals to our survey, it is clear that delay is endemic within the court and care systems. In some respects, most notably in relation to the importance of services being provided to support families so that children can remain with parents or return to them and on the importance of the extended family and siblings to

children in public care, the statements of the children are very close to the responses of the professionals. In one respect, however, there is a marked contrast. Whilst almost invariably the family justice professionals referred to the problems of 'delay', the actual word appeared only twice in the children's responses, and in both cases it was to apologise for the delay in returning the 'Your Shout' questionnaire. We scrutinised their written answers and found that, generously interpreted, the concepts and implications of avoidable delay were present in around 30 of the 909 separate comments. (We include in this total of responses the answer 'no' or 'nothing' to the question as to whether the young person would have wished that things had been done differently or would like to make changes in the future, since this appears to be a positive statement of satisfaction). Comments on delay in achieving a sense of permanence and stability, including returning home if that is what they wanted, are included, even though the actual word 'delay' was not mentioned.

Looking first at delay in court proceedings, for the majority who did not attend court there was the additional anxiety of waiting to hear what had happened. One 14 year old girl wished she had been to court herself instead of not being told about her fate *for weeks*. From the children's perspective, therefore, the problems of delay are not so much in relation to the proceedings, but in relation to the delay in hearing what decisions have been made. This provides a pointer towards good practice in the future, as theoretically it should be possible to do rather more about informing children about the outcome of court proceedings promptly than it is currently possible to do in avoiding the delay in listing proceedings:

"I think sisters and Brothers should not be split up and you could see your mum and dad as much as you could. And when you tell people your not happy in your placement to move you. And to find out want is the matter is. And to go to Court and heard it for your self in stead of not beening told for a weeks."

The two comments to specifically refer to unnecessary delay in the process were:

"People to hurry up and deal with my future"

"decisions To been made about me when I First come in To care noT 10 years after."

Some of those who never wished to leave home commented in the delay in proceedings delaying their return:

"[I would like to be] coming home soona"

"I would like to been seen something done so that we can go home. And if were going to be in care for quite some time yet I would like to see my friends"

Closely linked were comments about the distress caused by multiple moves, some of which will have been caused by delays in the court and care planning system. Two young people linked moves within care to the care system not making them feel safe – an important reminder that a child who has been harmed, especially in a previous placement, will always fear that he or she may be emotionally if not physically or sexually harmed in the next one.

"I don't feel safe when I change placements as I don't know where I'am going"

“Sometimes coz i hated been moved about not knowing where i was going next and who these people where so sometimes it was quite scary and upsetting as I could never settle down and was always playing up at school and at home”

In contrast, this quote expresses the relief that some felt when told they would not be returning home and could settle in to their foster families and be safe:

“yes [I feel safe] because I know now my Mum can not come and take me because I am long term.”

The plea to become settled is reflected in these comments:

“To be settled and happy and have a horse.”

“Staying in one foster placement.”

“To have a stable home”

Some who now expressed happiness in their present placement regretted that this could not have happened sooner:

“I would have liked to have lived with (name) and (name) in the first place.”

“To come to my present foster carers first, without going to all those other foster parents.”

“Where I am in care now I wish that I came here first because it is cool where I live now.”

“I would have liked the foster carer to be different when I was 6. Now I’m in a foster carers house and sometimes I really wish that I didn’t come to live here. But being honest I don’t mind being where I am because there really loving + caring.”

This 13 year old was still hoping to find stability:

“Go to foster care and the foster care to be safe”

Others regretted the many moves but linked them with the need for help throughout the process, including help to understand what was happening to them and why:

“being moved around so much this unsettled me a lot, obviously when I woz in my younger years I didn’t have a clue or understand anything that woz going on in my Life.”

The statements of the largest proportion of children pointed to their desire for a sense of stability through returning safely to birth families or being allowed to remain with or go to live with their relatives.

“[I wish I’d] stayed with my Dad.”

Others wished to remain with the foster parents or (less frequently) at the Children’s Home where they felt settled and safe. Some wished to go back to places where they had been settled:

“to stay at my old children home (named)”

Several children indicated that they had found stability or a ‘sense of permanence’ with their foster families or relatives and expressly said they did not want to be moved, but these two young people were fearful that they may be ‘moved on’ at 18, instead of being allowed to move out of their foster family and into ‘independence’ when the time was right for them.

“Not live on my own at 18.”

“To stay with the same family until I am 23”

The issue of inappropriate delay is often linked by professionals with the importance of getting children settled as quickly as possible with adoptive families. Our sample obviously precluded children who had been adopted. Had it not done so, it seems likely that some of them, as in the study by Thomas and Beckford⁴, ‘Adopted Children Speaking’ would have commented on the negative impact of delay on their lives. However, around 6 per cent of all children looked after are living with families prior to being adopted by them and it could be hypothesised that some in our sample would have wanted to be placed for adoption or be adopted by their foster parents. Also, recent research by Sinclair et al⁵ has indicated that growing numbers of children are starting to be looked after because of problems within their adoptive families. It might thus have been expected that some of our respondents would have views about whether delay had had an impact on adoption plans. However, aside from a reference to a ‘forever family’ which probably refers to an adoptive family, there were only three mentions of adoption. One was from a young person who said:

“I would like to have been adopted.”

It is not clear whether this young person is referring to an adoptive or a permanent foster family, but the importance of a sense of safety and stability is contained in this comment:

“I would Like my Forever family straight away instead of lots of short term family”

It is not clear what lies behind this plaintive comment from an eleven year old who includes her siblings in her response. One would like to think that strenuous efforts were still being made to find them a ‘loving and caring home’, but perhaps she had been told that the search for an adoptive family had been unsuccessful:

“We would have liked a loving caring home”

Two other children mentioned the word ‘adoption’. One wished she had not been adopted:

“I wished I knew I was gonna end up in care again cos then I wouldnt have had to be adopted and would be able to meet my birth parents now and not to have to wait till next year. And I wished that they had put me where I am now fist cos then I wouldn’t have had loadza placements.”

⁴Thomas C. and Beckford V. (DH 1999) ‘Adopted Children Speaking’ London: BAAF

⁵Sinclair, I., Gibbs, I. and Wilson, K. (2002). ‘Supporting Foster Placements’ York: Social Work Research and Development Unit.

The ‘wish for the future’ for this eight year old was not to be adopted – another reminder of the importance of ensuring that, whilst avoiding delay, undue haste can lead to a failure to listen to their wishes as well as fully assessing the needs of children:

“I don’t want to be adopted”

Reducing unnecessary delay will make an important contribution to reducing unnecessary moves, but alongside this must come resources for assessment and planning so that the appropriate placement is made when a child first leaves home and unnecessary emergency placements avoided. One young person made this perceptive comment specifically on this point, but many of the children who thought that more should have been done to help their families or to help them return safely to the family home would have echoed it:

“[I would have liked] to live in the area I was born in where all my natural family is. Have a planned admission when moving to a different home.”

The adverse consequences of delay, whether appropriate or inappropriate, will also be mitigated by the securing of enough high quality residential and foster placements so that children can feel safe and cared for in the same ‘assessment’ or ‘bridging’ placement to allow plans for the right care plan to be arrived at and the right placement found. Elsewhere in their statements, children wrote of the harm they suffered because of the wrong care plan or the wrong family or children’s home. Getting the balance between appropriate delay to ensure the right plan and placement and unnecessary delay will continue to be one of the ‘acid tests’ of whether the legislation is working in the interests of children’s long-term well-being.

7. Contact with family and friends

7.1 Linked with the question of the care plan, as was made clear by many of the written comments, was the question of continuing contact with birth family members, previous carers and friends. Question 8 was carefully framed to allow those who did not wish to have contact with a particular individual to leave it blank, since it asked the respondents to say if they “see enough of the people you care about and want to see”.

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations emphasis the importance of maintaining contact between a child and family members and other important people, unless this is clearly contrary to the child’s interests⁶. In view of this, the findings suggest that this is an area where practice appears to be poor. 60% of the children did not see enough of their fathers and over a third of the sample did not see enough of their mother or their siblings (39% and 37% respectively). A substantial proportion did not see enough of the friends they cared about and over half did not see enough of a previous carer. It appears that either the children’s opinions were not sought, or their views were over-ruled. Further analysis provided more details.

- Half of the children of minority ethnic origin reported that they did not see enough of their mothers – a statistically significant difference from the white British children (p<.05). There

⁶See Department of Health (1990), *The Care of Children: Principles and Practice in Regulations and Guidance*, London: HMSO.

Table 13: Insufficient contact between young people and family and friends.

Insufficient contact with	Number	%	Number repsonding
Mother	256	39%	(responses = 647)
Father	359	60%	(responses = 596)
Siblings	238	37%	(responses=644) (one person answered differently in respect of different siblings and from the comments this probably applied to others)
Other relatives	321	49%	(responses =656)
Friends	186	28%	(responses =663)
Former foster carers	347	57%	(responses =606)

was no difference in respect of sibling contact.

- 230 girls (55%) compared with 129 boys (45%) said that they did not see enough of their fathers.
- 160 girls (38%) compared with 96 boys (33%) said that they did not see enough of their mothers ($p < .001$). The same applied to sibling contact with 40% of the girls and 32% of the boys reporting that they did not have enough contact with siblings ($p < .001$).
- Children in the youngest age group were less likely to report that they did not see enough of their mother (33% compared with 39% for the group as a whole). There was a similar pattern in terms of sibling contact.
- There was a (non-significant) tendency towards those with a disability reporting that they did not see enough of their mothers (45% compared to 38%). However there was no difference in respect of sibling contact with 37% of those with a disability and 37% of those not reporting that they had a disability or health problem saying that they did not see enough of sibling(s).

7.2 The children were invited to identify people who had helped them in the context of contact. Their responses are given in Table 14 (see next page).

Contact and links with friends and family emerge from the written responses as the major preoccupation of young people looked after by local authorities, many of whom took every opportunity offered by the questionnaire to emphasise their wish to go home. If that were not possible, and many recognised that it wasn't, they wrote of their need to see more of family members, friends from their home areas and former carers. This is reflected in some of the children's comments about their parents:

"I wish I stayed with my Dad."

"[I would like] My mum to get a good Job so she could feed us and buy some cloths and other things. And my dad to stay with my mum to keep the family together."

"I would have loved every part of my life to be different because then I'd be able to see and live with my Mam."

The results of the adult questionnaire suggest that there is a high level of professional awareness

Table 14: Response to the question: “Has anyone else helped?”

Person who helped	Whole sample	% of those responding
Social worker	46	33.0
Family member	29	21.0
Carer	20	14.0
Friend	19	14.0
Named person	17	12.0
Staff	10	7.0
Teacher	7	5.0
Leaving care team	4	3.0
Boyfriend	3	2.0
Children’s Guardian	2	1.5
Myself	1	0.7
Police	1	0.7
Psychiatric counsellor	1	0.7
Drugs worker	1	0.7
YOT team	1	0.7
Total responding	139	
left blank = 567		

of the need to give a higher priority to contact between siblings and endorse the views of the young people expressed here. Some children were not seeing their siblings at all:

“if I had a choice I would of liked to had met the people who have looked after me but still be living with my mum step dad new sister and brother [name] because I can’t see [name] at all.”

“I wish I lived with my mum cos we get on now + I miss my baby brothers. I miss them that much that sometimes I want a baby myself.”

The sense of responsibility that siblings feel for each other appears to be underestimated and is a major factor in the children’s emotional wellbeing.

There is evidence that the chronic anxiety of separation being experienced by so many children may itself undermine their capacity to make new relationships or to settle in new places. It may also lead to their running away in order to reassure themselves about what is going on at home:

“Been able to see family more often. Because i missed them felt like running away. I ran away Twice. Then I couldn’t stop crying the first few nights.”

In their written statements in other parts of the questionnaire, some children made references to contact with friends – either their desire to have more or fewer. A small number wrote of their fear of being found and harmed by someone who had harmed them in the past and not wanting to see a parent.

“yes I would Have liked To be bought up differently And never bin betten up or sexuly abused. That is realy all but I never want to see my parants agian.”

However, most who commented about contact would have liked to return to live with parents, be reunited with siblings or have more general family contact:

“See my mother and farther more.”

Some were not asking for a lot of contact:

“See my real dad once a year as well.”

Others wanted help to arrive at an appropriate level of contact.

“I would have liked more with my mum and going to live with her. My Dad I would have liked things to be taken step by step and then eventually seeing him whenever I want to.”

“See my friends more (school friends) would have liked to see my family more as well.”

“I would like to of changed most of my past as I have been in and out of foster placements and childrens homes from when I was 4. I have only seen my mum once since I was 4 and I only found out I had 3 brothers when I was 10. I would of liked to of known my family before now but I cant change the past I’m still getting introduced to aunties, uncles and cousins I didn’t know about till this very day.”

“being with my nan more”

“I would have liked to see more of my family”

“Seeing my Mum and Grandparens more often”

“I wish I never left my real faimly. More contact with my Brother”

“longer time with dad ann mum and to see my previous fosterus”

Some referred to the detail of contact:

“I would like to see my mum more often. I would like to see her much longer in time because it used to be 8.00 till 9:30pm but now it’s 9:30am-5:30pm.”

Others would have liked it to take place in the family home.

“Seeing my family in the week not just at the week ends. I miss them lots. Sorry about my writing I got upset and angry with it. Why were you asking me and I brothers these qestions.”

“I would like to see my mum on weekends + sleep over + also on summer hols I would like to see my brother without a social worker thats it I gess”

This had the added advantage, for teenagers, of the possibility of seeing their friends.

“I want to see my friends.”

There were few explanations in the comments about why contact had not been as frequent as they had wished, except that they referred to themselves and “those that loved me” not being consulted. Distance was sometimes a problem and one young woman complained that she had not been given the fare to go to go abroad to see her family. In another case complexity got in the way:

“[I would like] to see my family more often But it’s hard for me becoz my Dad and his girlfriend and my Brother live some where else than me and my other Two Brothers live some where else as well”

From some comments it could be seen that the attitudes of carers towards birth parents had made contact difficult and children had divided loyalties.

“Me and my sisters Bean split up. And I wish they had moved me to a diffent foster Partents. I went in to care for a year and a half. it ws my first time in care and I didn’t have a good time. Because the foster Mum + Dad, did not like me or my mum. They was always calling her names, But it would put me in the middle. But now I live with my mum and two sisters, And I see my brother 2 times a year.”

Some were aware that contact was not as frequent as they would have liked because of the attitude or behaviour of parents:

“The way my family had taken it. (what I had done) which was being bad by running off. But I don’t see any of my brother and sisters. But sent them Christmas pressys But didn’t get no phone call off them to say thank you or nothing. But I would of liked to of been able to see my brothers and sisters. And to still be able to have contact.”

“nothing just right for me anyway but I wish my mum would make an effort to see me.”

It was not entirely clear why so many had lost contact with younger siblings. In some cases it was because siblings were still in the family home and the parents were refusing to let the siblings stay in touch with a child who wished to remain in care.

“Not to go back to my mother but to see [named]. And to stay in care.”

It was also clear from the context of other comments that some young people had lost contact with younger siblings placed elsewhere in care – possibly for adoption, judging from the sense of finality in their comments.

“Second [of things that should have been done differently] of all seperating us from our loved and cherished brothers.”

The comments about wishing to see fathers were made more poignant as it was clear that some of the young people had lost contact with the fathers they cared about long before they came into care, while some felt emotionally close to fathers they may never have known or lost touch with when they were infants. This young woman of mixed parentage wanted to get back in touch with her black father and relatives.

“I really wish that social services could find my Dad. I’ve never met him although my Mum

tells me he used to take me to the nursery. I really want to know him because he is apart of my Life. It's hard knowing that I have a father, but he's not there. I've got my Mum, uncles, Grandad and my foster carers and their family so I feel fine, I have two families, but I still worry and wonder about my Dad. He's not there to call me his special girl, to give me advice, to talk to me and sometimes it's really hard. I am mixed race and I want to know more about my background. Half of my history, culture and race is missing."

The level of anxiety which many young people expressed about the welfare of their family members and the extent to which they were clearly missing them was one of the most distressing aspects of the survey findings and one which has considerable implications for policy and practice in this area. Some children were feeling very distressed about what was happening at home and felt they needed to be there:

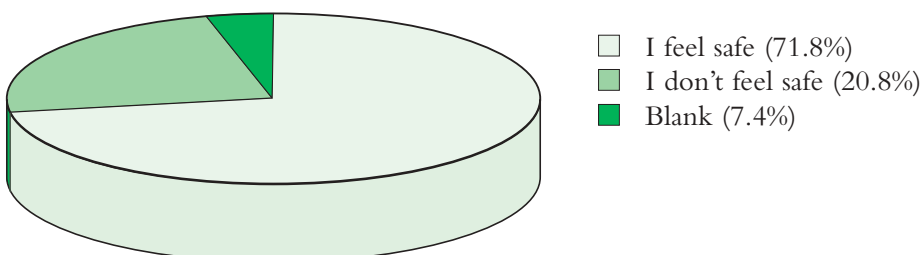
"I would like to be out of care before I am 11 years old If I am not I shall not be very pleased because I only get to see my mum 3 days a week and I am only allowed to see my dad every fortnight Friday and at the moment I have not seen For 6 Fridays and knowing that my dad has cancer and I worry a lot about my dad I always think that he is going to die."

"In the future I wud licke to go and look after miye mum wen I am 16 years."

In these days of high technology and high speed communications through mobile phones, text messaging and emailing, there are numerous low cost options available to enable contact. The question arises as to what extent it is necessary for children to be as isolated as some clearly are.

8. Safety in care and exposure to continuing harm

8.1 It was reassuring that the majority of children felt safe in care. However, the fact that over one in five did not feel safe in care is a reminder of the importance of ensuring that removing children from significantly harmful experiences in the family home is not the end of the story and that the 'balancing' required by the Act must play a constant part of the planning and review process. Whilst some of the responses made it clear that the children still felt at risk of harm from parents, the majority of written responses related to possible harm from other individuals, including current carers. Moreover, some children who now felt safe had been at risk from carer behaviour in the past. The analysis indicated that some groups of children were more likely to feel safe when in care than others.



- Children of minority ethnic origin were more likely than white British children to report that they did not consider that "care made them feel safe" (29% compared with 22% of the white British children: $p < .05$).

Table 15: Response to the question: “Does/did being in care make you feel safe?”

Sample	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Males	217	60.0	52	40.0	269	100.0
Females	289	75.0	95	25.0	384	100.0
Total responding (left blank = 53)	507	78.0	147	22.0	653	100.0

- Girls were more likely than boys to respond negatively to the question as to whether being in care made them feel safe (23% of girls compared with 18% of boys: $p < .01$).
- There was a tendency (that did not reach statistical significance in light of small numbers with a disability) for children with a disability to respond that care did not make them feel safe (31% compared with 21%: $p = .146$).
- Younger children were more likely than older children to report that being in care made them feel safe (87% of the 6–11 age group, 76% of those aged 12–14, 73% of those aged 15–16 and 70% of those aged 17 or over).

8.2 The children’s additional comments about the issue of safety in care are summarised on the next page. 30% were broadly positive, with a further 15% ‘sometimes feeling safe’. Around 20% of the responses were either negative about care or indicated that the young person did not feel safe in care. Around a quarter of the comments were not specifically related to safety, including those about wanting more contact and the ‘strangeness’ of being in care.

In their additional comments, some of the young people took the opportunity to reinforce the fact that they would rather be with their family or that they wanted more family contact.

Exposure to violence

While care made more people feel safe than unsafe, one of the striking findings of this survey was the extent to which the young people who responded refer to incidences of violence and experiences of abusive behaviour both before and after coming into care. 67 young people (9.5%) made specific reference to incidents or experiences of violence or abuse:

“When I was at home life was very hard for me I was all alone and my family hated me. I had a social worker but you would not think so, she never met up with me, it was always my parents, she never believed anything what I did and let her and I got called a spilit brat by her. When my sister tried to kill me, I told her and she said there was nothing she could do because it was or ready happened. When your in a place where you were not aloud to eat use the electricity been named”it” or”thing” been physically and amotionly abused. It is not what you need. I thought it ws dicrasfull, and people want you to trust social service, How can you when got treated like dirt by someone who is met to look out for you. Whe I ran away I phoned up EDT to get some support and advice from them and all I got was anougher night will not do you any harm, when before I said my Dad was beating me and said he was going to kill me!”

“When I was in care I did not feel safe. Until my last placement in my longest placement I was treated very badly. I was bitten by a dog lots of times and not allowed to go out to play. I was made to stand in the corner if I answered back. My last carer talked to me and believed me. She

Table 16: Other responses about safety in care.

Comment	Whole sample	% of those responding
Positive about care	64	30.0
I sometimes feel safe	32	15.0
I'd rather be with my family	24	11.0
Negative about care	21	10.0
Feelings of strangeness in care	19	9.0
There is less violence in care	12	6.0
Positive about carer	11	5.0
I've been hit or bullied in care	7	3.0
Negative about staff	5	2.0
I want more family contact	4	2.0
Negative about social worker	4	2.0
Critical of specific issues in care	4	2.0
There is a risk of violence in care	3	1.5
Positive about social worker	2	1.0
I want my family to behave better	2	1.0
I want to behave better	2	1.0
I was sexually abused in care	2	1.0
I was moved around too much in care	1	0.5
Other	28	13.0
Total responding (left blank = 496)	210	

told Social Workers and the Police what I was saying. It made me feel strong again. I also got excellent contact with my nan."

"At first it did until my foster dad raped and sexually abused me for nearly 1 year! so I think I would have been better off with my mum!"

"I never at any time felt unsafe prior to be taken into care"

"I hated it in [name] childrens home in [place] and all the staff hated me. they never listened to me they didn't keep none of my conferdential stuff conferdential. also other Yps Beat me up in the middle of the night and the staff wouldn't ancer the sleeping Room door even when I knocked very hard and shouted to them."

Safety and the family: the relevance of close attachments

Whilst some wrote of violent home lives and their relief at coming into care, for others the question of safety and key attachment was clearly linked. Understandably, some of the younger children associated safety with their mother's presence:

"Not really I don't need to feel safe i was safe at my mums before coming into care"

"I also used to feel safe at home as well. I felt a bit more safe at home because I was with Family."

“I would have felt alot more safer if I was living with my mum. Because I can garantee that my mum would protect me as any other mum would do. She’s my and of cause I would feel safer with her.”

“[no] because my mum makes me feel safe.”

Even when they were not with their mother, knowledge that she was there was comforting. The impact caused by the death of a parent can leave children feeling deeply exposed to threats from the outside world. The findings indicate that the experiences of bereavement, loss and separation suffered by all children and young people in public care are still underestimated. The young people’s testimonies forcefully illustrate the reality and isolation of living each day with that experience of loss, as a result of which some children and young people are locked into a chronic state of grief and mourning:

“I felt a lot more safer in care while my mum was alive. However after she passed away 12 wks ago I don’t feel as safe. cause more people know where I live e.g family members I don’t get on with.”

Even for those children who felt safe in care, many commented on the additional dimension of safety and emotional security provided by being with those who are familiar to you.

“In a way it makes me feel safe but being with your family that you know and trust it a lot safer.”

“I think I would also feel safe with my mum. I don’t mind being in care though. (I like my foster parents)”

Grandparents were particularly mentioned in this context:

“Yes because I live with my nan and grandad so when I move herE 4 years ago I new were I was going and I was very happy and still am safe and happy to live in my nan and grandads.”

Some children identified their lack of safety as the factor which led to their running away from care:

“I use to run away but now I stop”

“No because ive been wanting 2 do Summot Stupid”

Some children associated safety with feeling needed:

“I am not living with my family – being in care I cannot cope with the change. I need to help my family and go to the shops for my mum. So how can I feel safe and needed.”

Drink and drugs

The negative influences of drink and drugs were clearly associated with lack of safety:

“[I feel safe] except one time when my foster dad got drunk he scared me and so I ran away from him.”

“If I wasn’t put in care I would have starved to death long ago (7 years). You would never believe how drunk my mum would get back then”

Impact of past negative experience

For some, past experiences meant that they felt they would always have difficulties in feeling safe:

“[No] Because you’re always around strange people you dont know About.”

“I got raped when I was 13 - I’ll never feel safe around men I don’t know well.”

“No matter how secure you may feel, simple words or things keeps the fear of your past”

Environment

Some children associated safety with their immediate environment:

“Where I am, I’m away from the violence and drugs and dangers of the estate where my mum lives. And I now go to school to keep up my grades”

“but when I first moved into a childrens home I was Frightened cause I was away from [place]”

Physical care

Good physical care also emerged as a factor in feeling safe:

“I enjoy living with my auntie and uncle because they are very kind and give me what I need e.g food, clothes, money.”

“They look After me properly e.g Give me a nice Bed, nice Food, We Have nice Holidays, nice treats.”

“If I wasn’t put in care I would have starved to death long ago (7 years). You would never believe how drunk my mum would get back then”

Power of local authority to protect

Some young people clearly felt safer knowing that they had the power of the local authority behind them:

“Yeah cos nobody dares touch you cos your in care they know that your people will get the polive involved. But I dont feel safe when you fall out with another resident or their friends or when somone new comes in.”

Over-protection

The bureaucratic nature of residential care was clearly irksome to some children, who felt they could be too safe:

“Sometimes I feel too safe and as though I can’t do anything without someone watching me. Everything has to be planned out so much more and forms filled in. I hate having to Leave phone numbers wherever I go and before I stay anywhere the police having to check my friends house. I may feel safe but not happy.”

As one 16 year old pointed out, whether in or out of care, much depends on the quality of the carer:

“To feel safe is not just to be looked after, but to be looked after by the right kind of person. People can still be bullied (even more) when they are in care.”

Although researchers have looked at issues of violence and safety for children before and after coming into care, they have usually focused on the child’s status i.e. ‘at risk’, ‘the subject of proceedings’ or ‘looked after’ rather than looking at the child’s total experience of violence and feeling unsafe. What these findings illustrate is that safety has many facets, all of which contribute to the child’s sense of security and wellbeing.

9. Looking back

The young people identified the following factors they would like to have been different in their lives.

Qualitative analysis

Some of the key issues such as care planning, stability, contact and safety have been referred to earlier. We draw out here some of the more general issues.

The most significant factor which young people would have liked to change was going into care. However, many were also realistic about the reasons for going into care and the limited options available:

“I would liked to have stayed as a family but I didn’t have much choice.”

“There is loads of things I would of like to change but theres no point drodging up the past. The futures more important!”

It was striking that many young people identified their parents’ separation or the ill health or death of one of their parents as the point where things started to go wrong in their lives:

“Not leaving my mum and dad. and my mum and dad not splitting up.”

“I wish my mum could get over her alchohol problem and I wish my dad would still be alive. He didn’t deserve to die and will never be the same without him.”

Over and over again the responses reflect the wish for ‘normality’:

“My life I would of liked it to be normal e.g mum + dad together and [names] (brothers) and [names] (me)”

Table 17: Response to the question: “Looking back, what would you have liked to be different?”

Comment	Whole sample	% of those responding
I wish I'd not gone into care	118	23.0
“Nothing”	82	16.0
I wish I'd had more family contact	60	11.0
I wish I'd behaved better	40	8.0
I wish my family had behaved better	37	7.0
I wish I'd lived in a proper family	31	6.0
More support	22	4.0
Everything	21	4.0
Negative about social workers	18	3.0
I wish I'd not moved around so much	18	3.0
Negative about carers	17	3.0
I wish I'd been listened to more	15	3.0
I am positive about the past	13	2.0
I wish I'd been treated better	12	2.0
I wish I hadn't been physically abused	12	2.0
I wish I'd had contact with friends	11	2.0
More freedom to play	9	2.0
More information	8	1.5
I wish I had stayed in care	7	1.5
Critical of court/legislation	5	1.0
Concentrate on education	5	1.0
Live with another family member	5	1.0
Gone into care more quickly	4	1.0
Better food	4	1.0
I wish I hadn't being bullied	4	1.0
I wish I hadn't been sexually abused	3	<1.0
I wish I'd had a room of my own	2	<1.0
Less family contact	1	<1.0
Other	45	<1.0
Total responding (left blank = 185)	521	

Many young people exhibited a high level of self awareness and understanding of how their own behaviour may have impacted on what had happened to them:

“I sould have been more diffrend I sould have changed my Behavior becouse I used to hiT my mum for nothing but I haved changed my behavior I am nerley 17 And cant wait till get out off care”

“I wouldn't have started taking heroin - thats the worse thing to have affected my life.”

It was encouraging that there were many positive comments about care:

“I think being in care is Brilliant & I wouldn't change anything”

“nothing, I have A good life And it coulnt be better in Any wAy.”

However, a sense of powerlessness came through in some responses:

“I’ve been in care for 6 years and I would like things to be diffrent by my mum and dad to stop argiuing and, so they didn’t split up. I wish I had a normal family and not going to meetings all the time andwaiting in for the social worker.”

Some children raised very practical points:

“Better times to stay out And also I think we should get I bit more pocket money. And more clothes money, every yeAr, because kid’s these day’s are into smart clothes like, Nike, Reebok and many more I Just think should get about £100-150 to spend on clothes. more eAch yeAr”

At a time when sport, gym and leisure pursuits are very highly valued by young people generally, perhaps more consideration could be given to enabling young people in public care to participate on equal terms with others – having the right equipment and clothes are part of youth culture.

10. Looking forward

The young people identified the following factors they would like to be different in the future. There was a very high response rate to this question and some gave several responses.

Qualitative analysis

In answering the question “Looking forward how would you like things to be different?” the most significant findings were the wish of the young people for more family contact or to live with their family. These two categories account for 30% of those who responded, once again establishing contact as a major preoccupation for those in public care. Indeed, for many it was the only thing they said they wanted to change, although some made it clear that wanting more contact did not necessarily mean that they were unhappy in their placement.

The findings indicate that the young people had very modest aspirations and hopes for the future. Some had ambitions to be pop stars, but the vast majority wanted a ‘normal’ family life, an education, job and happiness.

Some expressed a desire to work in the field of health and social care as part of a desire to ‘get it right for other children’.

Further education did not have a high profile. Only one young person specifically mentioned university, although a few referred to college. Many spoke of the need for education as a means to getting on in life:

“Things are different now. Ive applied for College next year. I have 2 jobs. I have support. I see a Counsellor to help me to get over my past. I have an effectionate caring, and Supporting

Table 18: Response to the question: “Looking forward, how would you like things to be different?”

Comment	Whole sample	% Responding
I'd like more family contact	85	13.0
I'd like to live with my family	70	10.0
“Nothing”	41	6.0
I want to get a job	38	6.0
I'm positive about my situation	29	4.0
I want to focus on my studies	27	4.0
I want to get a home	25	4.0
I want more contact with friends	23	3.0
I would like to stay in care	21	3.0
I want to behave better	21	3.0
I want to leave care	21	3.0
I wish I had a better social worker	21	3.0
I want to be happy	19	3.0
I want a new start	15	2.0
I would like to be listened to more	13	2.0
I want more support	13	2.0
Better relations with others	13	2.0
Live with other people	12	2.0
More fun and treats	12	2.0
I want to earn money	12	2.0
I want to be treated better	12	2.0
I hope my family will behave better	11	1.5
I would like a family of my own	10	1.5
I want to be normal	9	1.5
Everything	7	1.0
I'd like to help other people	6	1.0
I want a job as a carer or helping children	6	1.0
I want better personal space	6	1.0
A boyfriend	4	<1.0
No more family contact	4	<1.0
No more carer contact	3	<1.0
I want to live under different rules	3	<1.0
I want to feel more safe	2	<1.0
I don't want to be moved again	2	<1.0
Total	668	
(left blank = 38)		

boyfriend of 17. and This time next year ill have my own counsel flat. Im So Glad for all the support of all the carers who are out there.”

Some responses showed great insight into the need to put the past into perspective before moving on to the future. Some people felt they were being moved on too early. One 17 year old expressed a wish not to live “on my own” when she was 18. Family secrets and a lack of knowledge of ones own family can be important factors in the process of growth and maturation:

“I would really Like to be a T.V.journaliste on ITN. I would love to be rich and donate £2,000,000 to social services to help other children in care. I think that it is important for every young person to get what they deserve. I would love to get in contact with my Dad and find out about my history and my Mum. There are a lot of secrets in my family and no one is willing to share them with me. I want to know why my Mum is manic-depressive, I want to know why Nan and Grandad split up. I want to know why none of my uncles apart from two came to see me when I was younger. I want to prove to everyone who had stereotypical views about me to be put to shame and shown that foster children can get really far if they just believe in themselves. I want to live a wonderful life where all my dreams come true. I’m sick of the constant nightmares in my life and it’s about time that I woke up smiling instead of crying”

“Looking forward I would like to see things different by Behaving myself and stop hanging around with bad companies and not putting my self at Risk. I’ll also stop smoking and drinking because I’m only young and it’s not nice seeing a young girl smoking and drinking and also self harming.”

Permeating all the responses was a strong sense of honesty and realism. Even some of those who felt worst about public care showed a sense of resilience and purpose:

“Well I can Personally say that over all 7 years not much can get worse, so im going to forget everything move on and make a life of my own (MINE) and not under rules!! I want to work with the care become a strong person and help those that are in care and do right where ive seen social workers fail! I know what it is like and i can help them in a BiG way. Then i want to write true life stories and probably foster child and make their life a happier one and make them feel loved and cared like their meant to be!!!”

The children’s verdict on the Children Act 1989

There is much in the responses from the young people to indicate that the principles on which the Children Act is based are in line with what they want for themselves. The many comments about sadness at not being able to live with their parents or wanting to return to them indicate that the emphasis on supporting the family unit and providing services to help parents to meet the needs of their children is appropriate. From their comments, some clearly thought that little more could have been done to keep their families together, but a larger proportion of respondents made it clear that they thought that they and their families could still be living together if more help had been available.

Some would have liked more help for themselves as individuals within the family home, to avoid being singled out as the only family member in care.

“I would have liked to have proved I could have behaved”

The young people also gave strong support to the Act’s emphasis on consultation with themselves and those who were important to them. Overall, it was encouraging to see that roughly a quarter of the sample had been to court and that a quarter of these said they had spoken to the judge. Traditionally there has been resistance to the idea of involving children directly in care proceedings. This finding indicates that practice may be slowly changing and that judges are more prepared to give children who want to be involved the chance to attend

the court hearing and to speak to them.

There are mixed messages about children being enabled to express their views with the expectation that they will have an impact on decisions taken in court and in respect of their care planning. Overall, the evidence points to a 'could and indeed must do better' verdict. This applies especially to decisions about whether, how often, and where they have contact with family and friends. The neglect of fathers and previous foster carers as people with whom children want more contact should especially be taken on board. Above all, the distress caused by separation from, and inadequate contact with, much-loved siblings should increase the priority given to maintaining sibling contact. This appears to be an area where children's wishes are frequently being disregarded.

Another significant area in which children's feelings are being overlooked is in relation to the grief and anxiety many of them displayed in relation to their experiences of bereavement, loss and separation. The distress, which is an every day reality to them, may not be so clearly visible to those caring for them, yet, as the responses illustrate, it can be a major determinant of their behaviour and happiness in their placement. This remains a challenge for future practice.

Lack of information about what was going on and who was making the decisions that would so profoundly affect them exacerbated for many the stress caused by delays in the court processes and in identifying carers who could meet their needs.

We did not specifically ask about the type of placement in which the young people were living, but it was clear from the responses that some had returned home and that others were living with relatives. The children's comments indicate that the emphasis in the Act on supporting relatives in caring for those who cannot be with their birth parents also fits in with the wishes of young people.

"Like I said I live with my nan so it's not that easy to answer Qs about care, but I have been in care so some are not that bad. BUT Please keep sending these book things cos I like them a lot!! It gives me some thing to do!! the reason I put this in is cos I live with my nan not in care."

"I should not have been taken from my nan. My grandad was ill and he died soon after I was taken away. My grandad should have been the one to go not me. My nan tried to get me back I have lots of emotions about all of this. Sometimes it makes me worry that someone else may be going through the same things as I did because no-one is listening to them"

The emphasis in the Act on placing children with families of similar ethnic and cultural background was also supported by the young people, who gave evidence of racist attitudes and behaviour amongst some carers.

"Looking back it would of started when I was put and took away from my mum and into care, and from the minute I was put into care I was bullied/and my sister as well. The family was racist! 'Big Mistake'"

However, the parts of the Act that allow children to be accommodated in order to help them or their parents, or to protect them from harm, are also welcomed by those who completed the questionnaires. Almost four out of five responded positively to the question 'Does being in care make you feel safe?' and their written comments indicated that many of the young people

know that their needs cannot be adequately met or they cannot be kept safe in the family home. The prevalence of violence to which so many of our respondents had been subjected, first at home and then, for an important minority, whilst in care, is perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of their statements.

“I think the Best place is At home with my Family But in the circumstances it’s better to be in care until things are sorted out.”

For several of our respondents, being looked after has brought many positives. The statements of these children are an important antidote to the negative message often portrayed in the media and by politicians. The majority of the young people wrote of the hurt they still felt about having to be away from home, of the troubles they had had along the way, but also of their love for their carers, their sense of achievement and the strength the care experience had given them. A 12 year old girl was typical of the majority of respondents. She said her foster parents had helped her. She knew what her care plan was and was happy with it. She saw her mother and her siblings often enough, but did not see enough of her father and other relatives. She wrote ‘*I feel safe in care because I’ve got a big family around me*’. Looking back at what she would have liked to be different she wrote ‘*stayed at home*’, but looking forward at how she would like things to be different she said ‘*nothing*’.

One 17 year old girl ticked both ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to the question ‘does being in care make you feel safe?’:

Some of the foster carers I was with did not treat me well, or fairly, compared to their own children. I have been in care for 9 years am now old enough to fight back, so, no, sometimes with carers I did not feel safe. . Looking back I feel that being in care has made me the person I am. Happy and grateful to have a life. I am much wiser, I didn’t let people walk over me. And I know life is tough and things don’t always go your way. I loved and hated care. But now I live in shared accommodation. Looking forward Being in care has made me someone I wanted to be. I’ve had to grow up really fast and be responsible for my actions which in life some people don’t really learn till later life.”

The young people’s responses and statements have illuminated our understanding of how the Children Act 1989 works for children. In some areas the survey has been reassuring, but in others it has thrown up key challenges for practice in the next decade. The findings indicate that what is required is not so much amendment of the Act but a re-affirmation of some of its guiding principles.

Children's statements – young people's responses to questions 9, 10 and 11

In order to ensure confidentiality all place and proper names have been removed. Any illegible parts of their testimony are indicated by '[ill.]'. With these exceptions, the statements are reproduced exactly as the young people wrote them.

QUESTION 9: "Does/did being in care make you feel safe? Any other comments?"

8 YEARS OLD

"I don't feel safe because of my setsister."

9 YEARS OLD

"happy."

"it Dont make fill safe pepole come to my house Because strange"

10 YEARS OLD

"It made me a lot safer than I was befor."

"in childrens homes no. since living with [names] yes."

"I want to go home but I want to be safe."

"being in care makes me feel safe and diffrent"

"I go out side alone"

"I feel safe becuse they try to Protect me. dont they And I realy trust Them."

"a little bit."

"At night it is Scary but it's cool"

"Safer than what I did."

"I was put in danger in my first hom. I am home with my mum now"

"I also used to feel safe at home as well. I felt a bit more safe at home because I was with Family."

"Definitly Because no-one will be able to beat me up."

"I bo not feel safe because I am not with my mum."

“I want to see my friends.”

“I feel safe”

“I get upset when the fire goes off at night.”

“I have a good family and I get looked after well and I don’t smell and I have clean clothes”

“No. I Just wanted to say that my new Address is: [name and address] you sended me this to the wrong Address and my last foster carer sended here.”

11 YEARS OLD

“NO”

“No”

“No”

“[yes] because I have never been in care before and I knew I was going to be safe in foster care”

“[no] because my mum and dad would come here and break [name]’s arm.”

“It makes me feel safe because I am being looked after properly and treated nicely.”

“it makes me feel Really safe knowing these someone to Run to.”

“[yes] Because my carers give me nice clothing and they keep me safe.”

“Not realy I don’t need to feel safe i was safe at my mums before coming into care”

“I’m not really sure.”

“beaucse I feel safe in care.”

“I’m getting more help then I had”

“[no] because i am safe with my mummy”

“A bit. At first I did not know who some the people were being in foster care.”

“I like living with [name] and enjoy her company. [name]’s house is safe!”

“They look After me properly e.g Give me a nice Bed, nice Food, We Have nice Holidays, nice treats.”

“We Live in a small close so I can play in the close so it’s Pretty safe.”

“Yes I felt a little bit safer and more loved and know im a lot happier”

“Sorry not being rude but why are you asking these qeston and who are you.”

“yes”

“I feel safe a home”

“Because I know they will Look after me”

“Made me feel the same because some carers are nasty.”

12 YEARS OLD

“My carer looks after me well But I miss my family”

“It makes me feel normal because i’ve been in care since I was born, and my Mum + Dad would never lay a finger on me!”

“at the time”

“Sometimes.”

“yes sometimes it did but sometimes it didn’t but I can feel safe now.”

“I never at any time felt unsafe prior to be taken into care”

“I sort of file safe. But I don’t no”

“I didn’t feel safe because I didn’t even know the people who I lived with also it was pretty lonely because I had no-one to play with.”

“Like I said I live with my nan so it’s not that easy to anser Qs about care, but I have been in care so some are not that bad. BUT Please keep sending these book things cos I like them a lot!! It gives me some thing to do!! the reson Iv put this Is cos I liv with my nan not in care.”

“Frustrated.”

“I feel safe but I would like to live with my mum.”

“Being in care makes me feel safe and feeling different”

“Yes becouse I live with my nan and grandad so when I move herE 4 years ago I new were I was going and I was very happy and still am safe and happy to live in my nan and grandads.”

“no one could get you. look after by cares.”

“I find being in care a lot more safer because when I was at home I was very scared.”

“[no] why should it.”

“I feel secure and safe”

“No because I was perfectly safe with my mum + brother”

“Yes and No because I weren’t sure how long it would last and what it would be like”

“I am sick of haveing these things”

“The Foster Carers won’t let anything bad happen to me.”

“because if someone is picking on you you can run Home to see them. Then you can get it over with”

“it has made me feel a lot more certain and secure, about things expecially being at [name] ‘couse they’ve really helped me.”

“no different.”

“Where I am, I’m away from the violence and drugs and dangers of the estate where my mum lives. And I now go to school to keep up my grades”

“Sometimes.”

“fell The same”

“In a way it makes me feel safe but being with your family that you know and trust it a lot safer.”

“I think I would also feel safe with my mum. I don’t mind being in care though. (I like my foster parents)”

“I feel safe in care because I’ve got a big family around me.”

“Yes, because I can go out and know that I am going to meet friends but Inever knew I could meet friends”

“I am not in care.”

“being with my nan makes me safe”

13 YEARS OLD

“I enjoy living with my auntie and uncle because they are very kind and give me what I need e.g food, clothes, money.”

“I feel happy within myself. And I feel I can get on with my life with no problems.”

“I feel safer with my mum.”

“Being in care can be very difficult at times, as you become envious of friends of yours who live with their parents and lead a great life. But at the end of the day, your foster carers are there for you and no one else, and you have to accept that they're the next big thing.”

“I feel safe at school”

“I hated it in [name] childrens home in [place] and all the staff hated me. they never listened to me they didn't keep none of my confidential stuff confidential. also other Yps Beat me up in the middle of the night and the staff wouldn't answer the sleeping Room door even when I knocked very hard and shouted to them.”

“[yes] But I still want to go home”

“I now belong to a family where I feel safe and loved.”

“[yes] because I know my foster carers won't hurt me.”

“a Little bit”

“Sometimes coz i hated been moved about not knowing where i was going next and who these people were so sometimes it was quite scary and upsetting as I could never settle down and was always playing up at school and at home”

“[yes] Because Im more certain my Dad cant harm me.”

“I would have felt alot more safer if I was living with my mum. Because I can guarantee that my mum would protect me as any other mum would do. She's my and of cause I would feel safer with her.”

“in a way i don't know because i miss my family + friends and my school”

“[no] because I'm not at home with my family”

“I Feel safe because what happened to me when I was young when I was with my mum”

“but when I first moved into a childrens home I was Frightened cause I was away from [place]”

“what sort of a question is that”

“bollocks”

“They are just like being in a normaly family in a normal family you don't know them as well thouw.”

“Yes but not all the Time”

“I Don't like being in care because you Don't go on holladays and it is boring and being in

care is boring I want to come out of care soon as possible Please [name]"

"No"

"Kinda but then it didnt because I missed my famiely"

"Yes because my dad codont find me or [...]’s dad codont find us ever."

14 YEARS OLD

"I was fairly safe every day because I had some one that was loving me not beating me up."

"When I was in care I did not feel safe. Until my last placement in my longest placement I was treated very badly. I was bitten by a dog lots of times and not allowed to go out to play. I was made to stand in the corner if I ansvere back. My last carer talked to me and believed me. She told the Social Workers and the Police what I was saying. It made me feel strong again. I also got excellent contact with my nan."

"I Like living with my Grandparents."

"Sometimes, like this once when this lass who I live with threatened me with a knife and the staff done nothing. so that was quite horrible, and I felt really unsafe."

"Because I get bullied I don’t feel safe and I get treated unfairly by staff"

"why can we have more of this to do?"

"in care I feel safe because I am away from my problems but I feel scared when I step out into the Streets Just in case I spot a certain person."

"It is the same as being at home I think but in a way I feel safer in a differrent kind of way because theres more people about it feels more secure"

"I feel safe cos I know people are behind me to look out for me"

"[No] Because you did not know who they are."

"in Foster care with my Auntie [name] yes."

"no coz the person is coming after me he nos were i live what school i go to and every thing."

"No"

"Not really. I just really like and get on with the children at [name] childrens home."

"Being in the placement I am in now with [names] is the Best thing that has happened to me."

"yes because I know now my Mum can not come and take me because I am long term."

“At first it did But I didn’t get on with my foster Mum and Dad.”

“I felt the same as when I was At home its not any different”

“I do feel safe”

“because if you think about it youre living with complete strangers”

“yes I Like it in [name] house I feel safe and cared for”

“No Because i have got worse in care because i did not smoke ciggarettes or Drugs and i did not Drink Alchol. Because i Don’t Listen to the staff in my home in my home but i Listen to my Family.”

“[no] Because I should not have been taken away from mum + stepdad coz ive done nothing WRONG!”

“Sometimes I feel too safe and as though I can’t do anything without someone watching me. Everything has to be planned out so much more and forms filled in. I hate having to Leave phone numbers wherever I go and before I stay anywhere the police having to check my friends house. I may feel safe but not happy.”

“[no] I am now in my third secure unit because I kept running away, hurting other people and harming myself by cutting. Get the idea?”

“When being in care it makes me feel safe to think that I’m away from the trouble and hassel that I have been from.”

“It has made me feel V. Secure and safe and in good hands.”

“I enJoy being in care”

“Beingin care Doesn’t make feel safe because if I was injord our ill our somethink then they wouldn’t do much about it so that you go and that the truth O.K.!”

“[no] Because social services do not go into enough research about family life.”

“not all the”

“in a way it does but I still would feel safe if I weren’t”

“[yes] Because their always their and making me Happy”

“[no] because I couldn’t see my mom”

“I want heLp with my Behaviour”

“I feel More safe living at home with my mum, But I’m not saying I wasn’t kept or try to be kept safe in care.”

“I feel that children in care feel trapped because they don't know the people around them as much as they would like to.”

“it's okay.”

“I still want to live at home”

“[yes] It does but it can be a bit too over protected now I'm getting older I want to sleep around my friends houses without having a police check because it just puts you aside to your other friends and makes you feel and think that you are different from anyone else.”

“Being in care made me feel uncomfortable, insecure and made me feel like I wasn't there like I didn't exist.”

“[Yes] Now I am living with my nan.”

“How can care make you feel safe, it only makes you dislike and hate especially if you dislike your social worker because they don't listen and take your foster mums side in everything. Put it this way some social workers say their out to help children but do they really make a good job of this!!! Are they really helping or making a hell of a life much harder than it seems?”

“[no] Because I am not with my mother who is in [place] with my brother and other family members from my mothers side.”

“I was bit scared at first. But then I got used to it.”

“I liked it better at home”

“I never got any fares to buy food or soap, or a toothbrush.”

15 YEARS OLD

“I didn't feel safe or enjoy being in care 'cos I was suddenly out of place with a group of strangers. I couldn't relax and I cried all the time. I had a very bad reaction to it.”

“When being in my care home I feel really safe because other care homes don't care as much as others. also this is not fair for the children.”

“I feel safe because No one can hurt me Now I'm in care.”

“I use to run away but now I stop”

“Because I was away from my family”

“It makes me feel special”

“Because I am in [name] I can only stay for 2 yrs and I want to stay for longer”

“[yes] But all I want in this world is to be with my mum. Because I love her Its horrible not

having my mum to tell my problems too”

“I am not living with my family – being in care I cannot cope with the change. I need to help my family and go to the shops for my mum. So how can I feel safe and needed.”

“It’s Just the same, but some people you meet make you feel unsafe, eg yang people.”

“except one time when my foster dad got drunk he scared me and so I ran away from him.”

“[no] because my mum makes me feel safe.”

“I feel better in care than I would of felt at home”

“[no] should it?”

“no, the same”

“it makes me feel difficult and scared some time’s know one talks to me so I am puzzled.”

“[no] Because I end up in hospital.”

“yes because always there for suport.”

“[yes] a way from my sept dad”

“Yes, because [names] Make me feel safe”

“I like living with my sister but I didnt like living in foster care”

“No because ive been wanting 2 do Summot Stupid”

“Just the same”

“[yes] because I wasn’t have when I was at home”

“its no different to being at home. you can still get menatally and phisically hurt.”

“If I wasn’t put in care I would have starved to death long ago (7 years).You would never believe how drunk my mum would get back then”

“Last but not least I want to say that care is the best solution for all over the world and especially for the people that they can help for fostering some people that they suffer from alot of staff in their own Life. And it’s good for the people that they need somebody to support them from their problems”

“Yes sume time she make me safe because I have a hart oparation so she has to make sure if I m not well she has to take back to the hospital and I have to make shower I been safe and she has to look afer me and by some clothe and food and she has to make shower”

“fine”

“But being in care its not easy you are more likely to be picked on by other kids and at school you are taken less serious because they think that people who are in care are different.”

“Childrens board make sure im safe and dont come to no harm.”

“Being in a secure unit made me feel much more safe because I use to always Run away from my children’s home and put my self at Risk.”

“Don’t know”

“If it wasn’t for social services, I don’t know where i’d be. Because of the support from social services and my foster carers, I have the confidence and pride to hold my head high and achieve the best that I can. I have been predicted 6 A’s, 2 B’s, 1 C in my GCSEs. I am hoping to go to college and get 4 A Levels in English Language, English Lit, Media and Drama. I am then hoping to go to Oxford University. I want to be a journalist. I am ambitious, because I have been given support, love and care.”

16 YEARS OLD

“Sometimes, depending on staff on shift and other residents.”

“In one way I know it was the best place for me but in another I feel I have been trapped for 8 yrs.”

“No matter how secure you may feel, simple words or things keeps the fear of your past”

“[yes] Because I’ve got nice family”

“because I get Help of the staff in care”

“because people was looking after me.”

“I Like it because they are really nice to me”

“I have learnt alot from being in care and have grown up alot.”

“I don’t feel safe when I change placements as I don’t know where I’am going”

“yes. Sometimes the Children at our unit can be nasty The used to Bully me 24.7 but now I get on fine. with Them They can be alRight When they want to be. but ather Time’s they Just Rip the Piss aLL The Time.”

“But the system is bogged down by bueracracy.”

“I got raped when I was 13 - I’ll never feel safe around men I don’t know well.”

“Sometimes. I feel safe sometime I don’t”

“I felt like a troubled kid I knew I wasn’t and social services can be wicked in ways but in other ways they can be dicks but they are only there to make sure you are O.K and don’t get hurt”

“I hate it but there aint anything I can do”

“To feel safe is not just to be looked after, but to be looked after by the right kind of person. People can still be bullied (even more) when they are in care.”

“Sometimes.”

“make loads of mates”

“It has been DIFFICULT. It Difficult to Live with peopLe I Don’t know very well. But they have tried to help me.”

“[No] Because you’re always around strange people you dont know About.”

“Well yeah and No Because you can’t seem to do anything around in care It’s just plain Boringness you can’t seem to do the things that you used to do when you were living with your parents you can’t have your own freedom anymore, It makes you feel Like Shit Really.”

“[no] Because it is shit being in care”

“Because I have foster care’s that Are Like my own parant’s and their Look at me as part of the family.”

“Just depreased”

“Mums BoyFriend Raped me.”

“I was betten up buy my Foster carer’s and bulled by school friends”

17 YEARS OLD

“I feel I get treat like a family”

“It is Right Placement”

“[Yes] but being at home did to”

“[yes] because when I was at home me and sisters allways argues befor bedtime now I live in care I feel that I dont argurs at all.”

“At first it did until my foster dad raped and sexualy abused me for nearly 1 year! so I think I would have been better off with my mum!”

“I felt a lot more safer in care while my mum was alive. However after she passed away 12 wks ago I don’t feel as safe. cause more people know where I live e.g family members I don’t get on with.”

“I had a very insecure life before I came here, but know I have less responsibility and feel much safer”

“Yeah cos nobody dares touch you cos your in care they know that your people will get the police involved. But I don't feel safe when you fall out with another resident or their friends or when someone new comes in.”

“I know that whatever happens I have someone to look out for me and help me to make decisions”

“[yes] Because I know someone looking after me and looking out for me, and supporting me.”

“I was put into a bad family who did bad things to me.”

“children's homes are the worst thing someone can do to a child!”

“Why should being in Care make you feel any safer, I mean I used to get bullied because I was in Care, My life would have been probably been easier if I was never taken into Care, when I was in Care social workers were supposed to be there to help but all they did was make things worse.”

“before I moved back into care I lived in [place] area and it's nothing but trouble and I hated it but the only reason why I stayed there is because that's where my mum and that was but I didn't like it because I've been raped quite a few times and Bensham is one of the most unsafe areas ever and I'm glad I got moved away I was also sick of people getting me into trouble.”

“I feel safe because I know I won't be thrown out of the streets, I'll have help to get a flat. & because I'll get the help & support that I need.”

18 YEARS OLD

“It really depends on what aspect of being safe you mean. But basically yes.”

19 YEARS OLD

“Social worker made me feel safe. better than my Parents who gave me away.”

QUESTION 10: “Looking back, what would you have liked to have been different?”

6 YEARS OLD

“Evereything”

8 YEARS OLD

“nothing nothing”

“not behing In Childrens home”

“I would like to live with my mum.”

“mum and her Boyfriend to of stopped fighting. for mum to be careful.”

“to see my Rell mum”

9 YEARS OLD

“I would Like my Forever family straight away insteadof lots of short term family.”

“my mum dieing and seeing her in hospital.”

“having food, clothes”

“gowinog bak to my mum Foster”

“noThing”

“I would thigs to Be differt like this. I would like to have a Patrol scooter”

10 YEARS OLD

“I woouLd have Liked to live with nan [name]”

“Dont know”

“the Foster Care”

“To not come into care and to not be hit.”

“my mum not to be like she is and like girls and boys. And have family around her like her mum and sisters.”

“I would have liked to have lived with [names] in the first place”

“don’t know”

“My whole life because i played the second parent Role.”

“going home”

“yes my mum getting better”

“I would like to live with my dad and I would like to change the past. Even to make my mum still be Alive. xx [name]”

“yes I’d love to.”

“I don’t have nothing to say”

“nothing”

“My very first home I liked it but I would like to change a few things. I wished I had the same thing as [name] she got sweets and stuff and I didn’t it wasn’t fair.”

“There is loads of things I would of like to change but theres no point drodging up the past. The futures more important!”

“not answering”

“nothing”

“a better home at the start and to off stayed with my mum!!”

“Sister coming back to Live with me”

“I would of liked my Dad and his partner to of not of been arguing and figHting.”

“longer time with dad ann mum and to see my previous fosterus”

“nothing”

“Doug not moving in the first place”

“A bigger house. No late school. Ready on time for school.”

“Not leaving my mum and dad. and my mum and dad not splitting up.”

“Being in care”

“Nothing.”

“Me not to leeft my mum.”

“all ok”

“I would like to been seen something done so that we can go home. And if were going to be in care for quite some time yet I would like to see my friends”

“to not be in care.”

“My house, no abusement.”

“Nothing”

“I wish things were normal in are Family and we all Lived to gether”

“Can we have more staff so staff can stay behind if someone is naughty and the good children can go out.”

“Being looked after Being taked out”

“I would of liked to see my mum brother more”

“bieng nice to my friends wish I was with my family.”

“I wish I wasn’t in [names].”

“I would have like to stay in care because I feel much safer there with my brother now I’m living with my perants and my bro. dosen’t live with me no more, when we knew we only had 3 days left in care so my bro got so upset that he ran away: they found him and hes in care again.”

11 YEARS OLD

“My carer be nice sometines”

“My mum and dad to be kind to me.”

“nothing much”

“Not stealing an beening so naughty.”

“Staying at home to not run away and smoke and drink from home.”

“nothing”

“noting”

“To come to my present foster carers first, without going to all those other foster parents ([names])”

“Nothink”

“We would have liked a loving careing home”

“Im happy now”

“Nothing really everything is/was perfect”

“Not from my Mum and Dad not to beat my sister and me”

“I would liked to have stayed as a family but I didn’t have much choice.”

“Nothing”

“my life, my family.”

“My mum to change her way and Attiude.”

“I would of liked my mum to not to poorly.”

“Nothing really”

“not a thing”

“to make my mum and Dad be together again”

“To not be in care.”

“Someone younger”

“nothing!”

“live with mum”

“My whole family being in the same place.”

“Me + [name] living together with Nan + Grandad.”

“me to stay with my mum a sister and me to stay there for as Long as I could.”

“Nothing”

“staying in one foster plaseemet”

“being Looked After being took out”

“See my real dad once a year as well”

“my mam seing me more and contact with brother but that is sorted.”

“For Social Services to have found a permancey quicker”

“No, not really.”

“I would like to have been adopted.”

“I don’t want to move any more.”

“Don’t no”

“been able to stay with my own family.”

“I’d rather go back home”

“Nothing”

“To have different parents. To live in a different House”

“not being in foster care”

“to sday at my old cllcdran home [place]”

“for my mum not to be on drugs and all to be happy and for her to look after us.”

“Dont know”

“See my Mum.”

“nothing really”

“I liked not going to barding School and go back to day School and be in a new school this year 2002 in year 7 and go to [place].”

“Nothing”

“Nothing much”

“Staying in one foster placement.”

“go back to mum.”

“I wish that I had not told Social Servises About my mum + dad Taking drugs. And I wish that My Mum + dad did Not take drugs.”

“Being Back with my Parents Sooner”

“no”

“Nothing.”

“visted england first”

“My Mom not having a drinking problem”

“My carers who look after me I would like them to be there children”

“I have seen more of london and sun, and more of school”

12 YEARS OLD

“STAYED aT Home”

“My foster home with Mary, she was a right old cow!!”

“they hadn’t accused me”

“nothing”

“I would’ve liked to have been able to live with my dad.”

“if my mum [ill.] be nice I [ill.] to live with her.”

“having more pocket money.”

“Nothing!”

“I hate swaping all the time”

“not being belted. not being hit off the sink. being able to have a choice of food. being able to go to Girl Guides. not having cold showers. having toy’s to play with.”

“nicer to the people I liked”

“I would have liked to been asked what I wanted i.e. staying with my brothers and sister”

“no fiting”

“I would have liked to have proved I could have behaved”

“I have been in foster care for 3 years and in that time I have had 9 social workers I would like to have a social worker which stays longer can you help”

“No fights/rows. Not moving in with [name] (stepdad). Not coming back from Torque”

“I would have liked to be different if I could live with my mum and to not to go to court, it was scary with loads of people. And not live with foster parents.”

“going home with my propper family and getting on with my life.”

“yes I would Have liked To be bought up differently And never bin betten up or sexuly abused. That is realy all but I never want to see my parants agian.”

“Seeing my mum at least once in the 2 weeks and 2 day’s I was in care for.”

“NOT TO HAVE COME INTO CARE.”

“My step DAD NOT BeeTING up my mom, me, SISTEr, brother. Just To be in Home with Just my mom + sisters + brother.”

“Nout”

“I would of NOT WaNTed TO geT ARResTed all The Time.”

“yes my mum getting Better”

“I don’t think there is anything”

“Chris stop being naught to me”

“for me to have lived in my nans since I have been born with my sisters as well together with my nan and grandad.”

“My hole childhood”

“living with my DAD + MUM + fAMiLY my Dad died when I WAS five years old.”

“I’ve been in care for 6 years and I would like things to be diffrent by my mum and dad to stop argiuing and, so they didn’t split up. I wish I had a normal family and not going to meetings all the time andwaiting in for the social worker.”

“go back on holorday go Back To mum and sisters”

“My home + family life!”

“seeing my family more. less in care!”

“I would have liked more infomation”

“Go on Holiday”

“I’d like to go back home and live with my mom + Dad a be afamily again”

“My Mum”

“Nothing”

“,”

“me and my mum not to be getting into big arguments and me + my brother not getting into fights every day. I want to see everything change so I can have a happy life with me and my mum.”

“to see more of family and Friends”

“the cort orders.”

“more Behaved”

“fuck all”

“That my mum stoped Drinking and that I could stay at home but things diDent work that way.”

“I would have liked the foster carer to be different when I was 6. Now I’m in a foster carers house and sometimes I really wish that I didn’t come to live here. But being honest I don’t mind being where I am because there really loving + caring.”

“I would liked to stop at one school instead of half a duzen schools.”

“Looking back I wish nothing went wrong.”

“My life I would of liked it to be normal e.g mum + dad together and [names] (brothers) and [names] (me)”

“me staying with my mun”

“I would have liked to have had more info and would of liked to have more say in the matter”

“everything that I am now.”

“Not running away because it made things worse. Lying gets you nowhere. Wetting the bed because its embarassing when I have to tell the foster carers when I have done it.”

“I would Like to have Lived with my mum and dad”

“Nothing”

“My Behaviour. My Brothers Behaviour. Mum Drinking. Mum + Dad Arguing. Social Services being involved”

“I would have Like to be with Mam and dad and brother and sister”

“nothing”

“dont know!”

“my dad no dieing. and them not to take drugs.”

“LIFE”

“if I had a choice I would of liked to had met the people who have looked after me but still be living with my mum step dad new sister and brother [name] because I can’t see [name] at all.”

“nowt (nothing)”

“before court, I could see my mum anytime but after the care case it has had to be arranged (it is every 6 weeks at the moment)”

“for me to have seen more of my other family when I was 4 and just came in 2 foster care!”

“Me to live with my Parents.”

“I would have Nothing changed because i am happy with evrything”

“Been able to see family more often. Because i missed them felt like running away. I ran away Twice. Then I couldn't stop crying the first few nights.”

“To see all of my family More and not less.”

“I have 2 cars and a Pignhouse”

“I would Like to go Home”

“Stay AT my mums”

“I was sad to leave [names].”

“I would have liked to not be in care.”

“MY DAD NOT DYING”

“having a say in thing will make me a lot Pleased”

“To have More freedom!!”

“Seeing my sister”

“I would have liked to have had a say about being put in care and who I was with. I was probably to young though.”

“I would still like to live with my mam at home were I belong because I don't belong in foster care and neither does my brothers and sisters they don't deserve it being in a care home.”

“I do not know really I think that I would/should have seen my sisters more often because seeing them 3 times a year makes me feel as if i am never seeing them!!!!!!”

“stayed at home”

“NOTHING.”

“being with my nan more”

“If I didn't do This one Thing I wouldn't of been In care at all”

“Everything! I think SO!”

“Just to be in a family!”

“I would like to go and see my DaD”

“I would have liked my mum and dad to stay together and then we could be one big family”

“More support from the social worker”

“nothing just right for me anyway but I wish my mum would make an effort to see me.”

13 YEARS OLD

“Beter social worker”

“nothing. I am very happy.”

“Nothing”

“To let children Live with there parents because people willll bulling you if they find out”

“Being took of My Mother and that My Dad didn’t leave Me when I was young”

“life”

“To live with my mum.”

“I wish my mum could get over her alchohol problem and I wish my dad would still be alive. He didn’t deserve to die and will never be the same without him.”

“I would like my parents to be together or live with my mum or dad when I am older.”

“I would have liked to have seen my family more because I really miss them.”

“I wish I never left my real fainly. More contact with my Brother”

“we would like to have loving careing home.”

“me living with my mum + sisters”

“I would like to see ALL of my famly”

“Nothing”

“For my mum to have kept in contact. For me not to have run-away, to have stayed in [place].”

“Nothing”

“stay up later to see my dad. who I have never met.”

“staying with dad or see our mum or any of our other family”

“Not haven’t to go go into care”

“Nothing”

“me staying with dad.”

“my brothers living with me”

“noting”

“Nothing. I am completely happy with any decisions”

“Nothing”

“staying at home with mum.”

“maybe staying with my mum and then I might be able to see her more might even know my dad. I’d be able to see my sister more. But I wouldn’t know my friends my foster cousins and mostly I wouldn’t be able to see or meet my foster parents.”

“get my pocket money when I was supposed to have it”

“Yes I would Like to see my mum twice a month. because we only see our mum every 3 months.”

“no”

“To See brother’s More often”

“the way My Mum looked after us”

“My Foster homes to have been better”

“Not been taken from my mum + not been moved about as much”

“go back home for good”

“my Friends from school to come over for 3/4 h a week. bat Im not alwod.”

“I would of liked there to be no arguments with my mum and Dad that would of been good at least me and my Brothers wouldnt of had to go to court and we wouldnt of had to go into care when we little.”

“Nothing”

“not a lot so get stuffed.”

“My mum to get a good Job so she could feed us and buy some cloths and other things. And my dad to stay with my mum to keep the family together.”

“I would have liked more with my mum and going to live with her. My Dad I would have liked things to be taken step by step and then eventually seeing him whenever I want to.”

“for my familey to be like other famileys and on no care orders just to live happy. Please could u right back I need someone to talk to at this moment my address is [address]. please right back, thank you”

“for foster cares to not be such wankers”

“Nothing really”

“not being in car”

“being at home with my mum and my brothers and sisters and being a proper family”

“Me being back with my father and see my father.”

“Nothing”

“I would liked to have stayed at home with both my parents.”

“Be at home with my Mom and dad”

“Nothing.”

“for social services to stop moving me but now I am settled in a long termed Placement that I like”

“Not been in foster care the Person Im with know I wish she was my Real mum”

“To have a better child hood”

“I would have liked to continue going to day school.”

“Dunno”

“[name] not having sex with me.”

“2 stay at home! with family!”

“4 me to c my sister”

“Never moved away from my old foster family or school.”

“everything”

“I would like my sister [name] to stay with me, but I would never have been as happy as I am now with [name]”

“I miss my mother and father very much.”

“Being out of care. But that is a fat chance.”

“going home with my mum and sister”

“Nothing”

“the house”

“I would like my mum to have found an husband and we could have lived together.”

“To have a normal childhood”

“I would have liked to see my family more”

“nothing I am not sure”

“Seeing my Mum and Grandparents more often”

“being in a long term Foster home.”

“Living happily with right Family”

“being with my mum on my own. and to see my Antey on my own. and my nanny and granddad”

14 YEARS OLD

“Me and my mum being like a proper family”

“NONE”

“I SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM MY NAN. MY GRANDDAD WAS ILL AND HE DIED SOON AFTER I WAS TAKEN AWAY. MY GRANDDAD SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE ONE TO GO NOT ME. MY NAN TRIED TO GET ME BACK I HAVE LOTS OF EMOTIONS ABOUT ALL OF THIS. SOMETIMES IT MAKES ME WORRY THAT SOMEONE ELSE MAY BE GOING THROUGH THE SAME THINGS AS I DID BECAUSE NO-ONE LISTENED TO THEM”

“Everything”

“My mum not to have ran away when my step dad asked for a devorce. then I would still live with my mum.”

“Nothing.”

“my mam Looking after me probley have a happy life”

“Not to be in care. Not to self harm. Not to get bullied. Not to get arrested. to be treated normally”

“to not been hurt when you are upset”

“No I am happy here”

“To try and make things work and be treated more different.”

“I would like to of changed most of my past as I have been in and out of foster placements and childrens homes from when I was 4. I have only seen my mum once since I was 4 and I only found out I had 3 brothers when I was 10. I would of liked to of known my family before now but I cant change the past I’m still getting introduced to aunties, uncles and cousins I didn’t know about till this very day.”

“To be with real family”

“Rather be at home with my FAMILY”

“for my mum and dad to be alive and maybe I wouldn’t be in all this trouble that I have been in.”

“I would have liked to have proved I could have behaved”

“my mum”

“mum to be nicer to me.”

“For my mom not to of let Ian move in with us then i wouldnt have happend.”

“I think the Best place is At home with my Family But in the circumstances it’s better to be in care until things are sorted out.”

“To be treated a lot better in care such as food”

“See my mother and farther more.”

“My whole Life”

“Where I am in care now I wish that I came here first because it is cool where I live now”

“Nothing.”

“being moved around so much this unsettled me a lot, obviously when I woz in my younger years I didn’t have a clue or understand anything that woz going on in my Life.”

“Better times to stay out And also I think we should get I bit more pocket money. And more clothes money, every yeAr, because kid’s these day’s are into smart clothes like, Nike, Reebok and many more I Just think should get about £100-150 to spend on clothes. more eAch yeAr”

“I didn’t want to make the first move 2 stop my mum from drinking but in away I did cos I love wherer I am but in a way it was a waste of time because she is still drinking and I don’t c her.”

“see more of my family members.”

“Nothing”

“my family.”

“To live with me mum. or my boyfriend. To move alway from this place I’m liveing at. To change school. To come out of care.”

“I would like my little sister to be in care.”

“Me and my sisters Bean split up. And I wish they had moved me to a diffent foster Partents. I went in to care for a year and a half. it ws my first time in care and I didn’t have a good time. Because the foster Mum + Dad, did not like me or my mum. They was always calling her names, But it would put me in the middle. But now I live with my mum and two sisters, And I see my brother 2 times a year.”

“not coming back into care but I have met new freinds and other type of people.”

“to stop with my mum.”

“someone Just to be there and had a bit of time to care 4 me.”

“Stay with my Parents”

“too move back with my mother and stay safe myself. too move out of care.”

“everything, the court Procedings, were a very nasty time for me, all I could do was wate and hope. It would have been better if I had more support.”

“Me moved to a Posher family/richer family so I could have a motor bike”

“dont know”

“nothing”

“the way I reacted 2 cumin into care, bcos it turned out ok.”

“Nothing.”

“HAVING A HAPPY FAMILY LIFE”

“I would of Like to be with my brother at the time he got moved to a different care home.”

“my mum And dad not to have split up”

“decisions To been made about me when I First come in To care noT 10 years afTer.”

“to stay at home wif mum + stepdad + brothers + sisters”

“I would have liked things to be different with my parents so I didn’t have to move out. Although I get more freedom in my placement I know it’s not like that at every place”

“Not being gone into care.”

“To have not been so challaging to my family and maybe I would still be at home with my mum, step Dad, half brother and sister and the new baby arriving soon.”

“me staying with my Mum and dad”

“That when I moved into care I went directly to the carers that I am with now.”

“that i had got on well with ex-carers and mum And also that i hadn’t made allegations”

“not go into care”

“Sex!!”

“Nothing”

“I would like the foster carers not be their our to let me do and eat when and what I want to do. [ill.] for them not to be their.”

“To have a stable home”

“that I didnt go into care in the 1st Place!”

“Nothing.”

“Yes, I have grown up with lots of boys in my life which has made me into a tomboy and I really hate it, people call me geezerbird and Man things like and I really get annoyed.”

“Dont know!!!!!!!!!!”

“I would have loved every part of my life to be different because then I’d be able to see and live with my Mam.”

“nothing”

“What I did in cort.”

where they belong. also to of meeting mums new boy frend 12 years ago.”

“everything to do with my life/family”

“I wish that I could have stopped my mum from drinking.”

“my behaviouR”

“Not coming into care.”

“nothing”

‘to go and live with my uncle [name]’

“my mum to have left that man she is with”

“Looking back it would of started when I was put and took away from my mum and into care, and from the minuet I was put into care I was bullied/and my sister as well. The family was racist! ‘BIG MISTAKE’ Second of all seperating us from our loved and cherished brothers.”

“Nothing”

“I would have prepared to stay with my Mum in [place].”

“everything”

“not going in care or staying with my little sister”

“Nothing, everything is very good”

“[name]”

“To stay at home”

“The system.”

“stoping at 1 Place.”

15 YEARS OLD

“For me not to be moved back with my mother and stayed [in] foster care then I would not have put myself in a children’s home”

“Nothing.”

“I wish that people hadn’t of made such a fuss bout nothing and put me in care.”

“my hair”

“The way I BEHaved”

“No being in care”

“I would have liked to see more of my family”

“1) I would like 2 of lived with my mom 2) my mom and nan 2 get on. (that all)”

“staying with my mum”

“The offence not taking part”

“some of the carers I lived with”

“My mum to have kept in contact”

“to be more settled.”

“That I did not get moved around when I was happy where I was”

“Beeing with MUM AND DaD”

“I would like my whole life to be different, because I misbehaved to much.”

“to have not been taken away from home and to still be with mum (I was happy then)”

“Never did the things that I done!! listen to people opionen’s Take time Never Rush! Different Father”

“not Being in care.”

“I word of Liek to of had a Room of my own while in 5 months of asking for it.”

“nothing”

“BECAUSE OF MY DISABILITY SOME PEOPLE TREAT ME DIFFERENTLY AND I WANT THEM TO KNOW I AM JUST LIKE THEM BEING DISABLED SHOULD NOT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.”

“Family would of been closer.”

“been with My Family”

“i wouLd have Liked to Live at home with Mother and Stepdad sisters and brother and to see my friends a Little bit more.”

“I wish I never ran away and social services wasn’t involed with my family.”

“I would have liked to stay with my mum. I think that my mum should be given the chance to

correct her mistakes with me before its too late!!”

“I would like to stay with my mum”

“everything”

“Everything”

“to not go in care”

“To be in [place].”

“Nothing”

“I wish I stayed with my Dad.”

“Don’t know”

“see more of my family, friend.”

“To stay at home with my family and to Be Loved like everyone.”

“Me be more confedent and to say more things (shy). People to trust more.”

“we have a big garden.”

“If my social worker had been their for me more”

“my behaviour, and anger could have been better.”

“to Live with my Twin sister”

“NONE”

“not being born as a [name], being smarter about the way I am looked after. no running away.”

“Nothing”

“Never to have knew The [names]”

“I wouldn’t like to have moved schools and foster cares so much.”

“Nothing”

“i Sad Leaveing [names]”

“moRe contact with family + fRiends”

“pooL cLuB”

“staying with my mum”

“No.”

“going to school”

“I wouldn't have gone into foster care with my old foster carers as i got hurt there”

“I wouldn't have liked to be in care. I didn't want to keep moving house all the time. I wanted to stay in one home”

“Not to have changed carers so much”

“to still with my mum and dad.”

“back with family”

“Being the court. Saying I could live with my real mum”

“I would my Dad to be better”

“My mum is was on drugs but I dont no if she is off rely.”

“from my working back I would like stuff to be different like the care must give the person who was with them the things that he didn't take it from his/her birth family for example [ill.] the must Listen to his plan and to his stuff that he want it from this Life and to make him/her as their birth son or daughter”

“I Think is been so different since I was in hospital and now because I couldn't have to go [ill.] so when I have the operation I feel safe and good in my life and I see thank you for the god make me feel well and other people in hospital so is been so changed until now.”

“I would have liked not to be separated from my family in [place]”

“I wish my mum could have looked aftEr me”

“coming home late 10 clock at night and having boyfriend.”

“My cousin treating me differntly. then I would not have to be in care.”

“If I was to look back I would of liked to see it as me being a good girl and not putting my self at Risk”

“Don't know”

“me.”

“I really wish that social services could find my Dad. I've never met him although my Mum tells me he used to take me to the nursery. I really want to know him because he is apart of my

Life. It's hard knowing that I have a father, but he's not there. I've got my Mum, uncles, Grandad and my foster carers and their family so I feel fine, I have two families, but I still worry and wonder about my Dad. He's not there to call me his special girl, to give me advice, to talk to me and sometimes it's really hard. I am mixed race and I want to know more about my background. Half of my history, culture and race is missing."

16 YEARS OLD

"Nothing"

"NOTHING"

"I would off liked to still be at home with my parents because then everything would be different and would not be in care."

"living with my mum ([name])"

"NOT TO BE MOVED ROUND. NOT TO HAVE SO MUCH LEGISLATION, BECAUSE IT LEADS TO KIDS IN CARE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST."

"Live with My sister. But I was not aLLowed to."

"I would have wanted my opinion to be listened to rather than just my carers, But the social workers should have been listening to me instead of just the opinion of the carer."

"I would like the situation of relationships living together (or apart)! to be more fair. It has happened recently to me but even though we still live together we're scared to do anything incase one of us gets moved. Thanks social services!?"

"my mum stop from drinking my brother being a bit nicer to my mum. And seeing more off my dad. I wish my Gran was here today with me."

"Not going in to care at the first place."

"being at home with my Parents instead of being in care"

"I would like my mum to chocies so I can go back and live with them when I am 18 years old"

"To have my mum live nearer to me and get to stay with her for the weekend."

"Nothing I am happy where I am. There is only one thing I think children in foster care should be allowed to stay out at friends houses if it's OK with carers."

"To have had a normal family life! But I wouldn't be were I am now if I wasn't in care."

"To see my sister more and to have a horse"

"I would have prefered to have been told what was happening to me, and what had happened"

whilst my case was at court.”

“I sould have been more differe I sould have changed my Behavior because I used to hiT my mum for nothing but I havded changed my behavior I am nerley 17 And cant wait till get out off care”

“The way no one seems to have time ‘Can I ring you back theres a crisis’ ‘Let me Just finish these Reports’”

“I wouldn’t have started taking heroin - thats the worse thing to have affected my life.”

“nothin”

“ME TO BE MORE OPEN MINDED AND TRY TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR MYSELF. IM LESS VULNERABLE THEN I WAS 2 YRS AGO”

“Nothing really.”

“I would of wanted my two sisters to come and live with their family.”

“The part of social services having your friends and family police checked I would have liked them 2 not get to involved”

“nothing”

“Not gone into care”

“LOTS OF THINGS: TOO MANY TO WRITE DOWN.”

“When I was at home life was very hard for me I was all alone and my family hated me. I had a social worker but you would not think so, she never met up with me, it was always my parents, she never believed anything what I did and let her and I got called a spolit brat by her. When my sister tried to kill me, I told her and she said there was nothing she could do because it was or ready happened. When your in a place where you were not aloud to eat use the electricity been named”it” or”thing” been physically and amotionly abused. It is not what you need. I thought it ws dicrasfull, and people want you to trust social service, How can you when got treated like dirt by someone who is met to look out for you. Whe I ran away I phoned up EDT to get some support and advice from them and all I got was anougher night will not do you any harm, when before I said my Dad was beating me and said he was going to kill me!”

“Although I was very young when I went in care and to young to make any decissions in court or to give evidence of my past. I thought it would be better if people would ask us years later to give evidence or make our Decissions.”

“I’d love to see my brother + have him living with me.”

“I would have liked to have lived with my Mum or happy foster Carrers. I also wish I had not been raped or abused.”

“won’t of like my mum and stepdad together”

“I would have liked to have been in the courtroom but I wasn’t allowed.”

“well I would of befored to stay nere [place] as all my friend or Down there”

“I don’t really want anything to be different in the past because I was happy where I was”

“coming home soona”

“Nothing”

“making friends. having more freedom. to go out on my own. stop the bulling in the care homes and [ill.] when I was small.”

“I don’t really know!”

“I would of more of my father.”

“Stayed at my foster Parents in [place]”

“I think being in care is Brillant & I wouldn’t change anything”

“I would have liked To see my mum more than Just once a month.”

“The way my family had taken it. (what I had done) which was being bad by running off. But I don’t see any of my brother and sisters. But sent them Christmas pressys But didn’t get no phone call off them to say thank you or nothing. But I would of liked to of been able to see my brothers and sisters. And to still be able to have contact.”

“to have been able to fly over to [place] and see my mother and othe family”

“I think every thing is OK”

“Yes, more co-operative. (Telling people what I wanted)”

“Nothing, although from the age 12, I was relluctant to what S.S. wanted for my near future, I thought somethings they done were to harsh like put one on a secure order for a Long period, and not trusting me on my own in society, and being unable to stay at friends over night, Lack of trust resulted in me running away from numerous care homes and putting my self in Severe Danger around drugs + prostitution. History repeated itself for 3 1/2 years, Id be in and out of Secure going back to my past [ill.] I am 16 now and Semi-independent. And I am So So greatful for Social Servises Support and Looking back they only wanted what was best for me and what would keep me safe. If it wasn’t for their correct Judgement, Id be dead, ive been on harsh drugs and been through a lot of pooh! but im now writing a novel of my traumatic history.”

“yes Live with my brother or see more friends.”

“NoThing”

“I Don’t know about that one But If the Law was to say you can do what ever you want to do you can Leave care when ever you feel like it. Because surely right no-one wants to stay in care 4-eva. cause everyone has got their owN Lives to sort out Before then you know what I mean! I feel sorry for those people who are Being treated different Like aBusing them and all sorts of tings”

“Yes and NO”

“I would like to be at home”

“To have been given anotheR chance from social services But I neveR GOT that.”

“Nothing: Everything has worked out well for me.”

“less argument with my mum and listning to her.”

“Some moNey”

“Yes if I was in a nother foster carer”

17 YEARS OLD

“people to make me real safe and to help me”

“Nothing”

“less Moving aRound More help in Promblem’s”

“NOTHING”

“I dont look back I look forward”

“not leaving care and listened to the advice i was Being told. Rather Run away with B. Friend which turned violent!”

“Nothing”

“My Dad becous he all ways argurs with me and my mum and my sisters he mad my family very very upset. becouse of that I dont talk or see him at all.”

“I would have liked my behaviour to have been different and my attitude to life

“people in loving me in making Dession”

“Having a younger social worker to talk to and to be able to talk to my social worker without my foster parents there! Social workers usually ask if it’s alright for the foster parent to stay while you talk and when your with them you can’t really say you would mind because then

you might hurt there feelings mostly when there like your parents!”

“nothing”

“I would have probably Like more support from the odd social worker and have more contact with family members e.g mum.”

“Being with my mum and Dad and sisters Brothers”

“I wished I knew I was gonna end up in care again cos then I wouldnt have had to be adopted and would be able to meet my birth parents now and not to have have to wait till next year. And I wished that they had put me where I am now fist cos then I wouldn’t have had loadza placements.”

“MORE FINACIAL SUPPORT. SOCIAL WORKERS TO DO THEIR JOB PROPERLY!”

“I would have liked being together with my family and not being in care.”

“nothing”

“the fact that me and my mum have a gr8 relationship that I wish we had back then.”

“Living with a Family and not by myself because I think it to young to cope with thing.”

“Not being there in the first place I seem to have gone worse in care than what I was. I don’t trust them I far as I could throw them.”

“nothing, I have A good life And it coult be better in Any wAy.”

“I would of liked Social Services to listen more to my needs and listen to what I was saying but they didn’t And they didn’t believe me till it went to the Police Social Services done nothing good to help me.”

“My whole life”

“I wish I’d stayed at home and not said anything about what was happening to me.”

“ I would like to have gone to live with my mum instead of Going into Care (every family has there Problems)”

“I would of liked everything to be changed but there was no point in me saying anything as nothing was up to me.”

My dad not Locking me in a room and seting fire to the house.”

“nothing.”

“See my friends more (school friends) would have liked to see my family more as well. and I wish I had gone to school”

“there is no leisure support for people under care we are not paid for Gym and other sports.”

“I wish i never started smoking crack cocaine because it left me in prison I wish i never got put in care.”

“The money they Don't give your carear more money to give to the children who are 15 and over”

“not coming into care”

“I wish I was NoT in care I wish I was at home with my GranmoTher”

“Not playing around to get sent into care. for my social worker not to have put me in independance so early (15)”

“no I feel that being in care has made me the person I am. Happy and Grateful to have a life. I am much wiser. I don't let people walk over me. And I know life is tough and things don't always go you way. I loved and hated care But now I live in a share accomadation.”

18 YEARS OLD

“stayed at home.”

“to see my family more often But it's hard for me becoz my Dad and his girlfriend and my Brother live some where else than me and my other Two Brothers live some where else as well”

“Beeing at Home with my mum and the Rest of my familey Beaing at Home with my mum all to Gether with my mum”

19 YEARS OLD

“Things were fine in my foster placement but found it differcult seeing other children coming in and out of my care placement”

“Yes behave better to people and not be a Proper bastard in the future”

20 YEARS OLD

“Nothing.”

AGE NOT SPECIFIED

“for dad to be around mom to visit more often”

QUESTION 11: “Looking forward, how would you like things to be different?”**6 YEARS OLD**

“Very far. Everything?”

8 YEARS OLD

“I don’t want to be adopted”

“I am happy at the moment. I’ll thine About it the Time”

“Living with my mum and dad”

“Don’t know”

9 YEARS OLD

“I like to see more of my family.”

“not being in care and seeing my mum agian.”

“See Mum and dad More”

“to my goinog bak Foster mum [name]”

10 YEARS OLD

“everything to be decorated and doors on, and I had a bed on.”

“Not to go back to my mother but to see [names]. And to stay in care.”

“at the moment I am at a specil school and I would like to get back to a normal school soon”

“go home”

“to have contact 3 times a week and both brothers to contact nothing eles”

“more money to spend to see my frinds more”

“Love to Live with dad and family.”

“Going out for meal and going to [place] and relaxing in the beech. and I feel realy happy it was brilliant. [name]”

“same as number 10”

“To be with with parents again.”

“I like things How they are”

“nothing”

“I do not want anything to be different only to have more girls ‘cos I live with 4 boys I am the only girl where I live at the moment.”

“Having different parents might of help!”

“[name and address]”

“Have my own bedroom”

“Yes not to be taken away from my mum in the first place. I was looked after well and I did not get told what was going to happen to me and I went straight in to care I didnt know no did my mum or dad!!!!!! Thank you I am home safe with my mum”

“for twin to come back as I ame missing her”

“I wouLd like to go back Home with [name] my Dads partner and my dad, and I would like [name] to sort out her drinking problem and dad to sort out His problem and to not sHout or argue any more.”

“I wode Like to go home”

“my mum keeps on seeing me + my brother [name]”

“Doug not being there And me starting to become a singer like Anastasher”

“I would like to be out of care before I am 11 years old If I am not I shall not be very pleased because I only get to see my mum 3 days a week and I am only allowed to see my dad every fortnight Friday and at the moment I have not seen For 6 Fridays and knowing that my dad has cancer and I worry a lot about my dad I always think that he is going to die.”

“Nothing”

“In the future I wud licke to go and look after miye mum wen I am 16 years.”

“to see my mummy more often + my daddy”

“So things be different in the future We can never be Seeing our other parts of family again”

“seeing my brother + sister + Father”

“I Look forward for us to live happily to gether for ever.”

“More trips and I want to choose my supper. More game for Playstation 2.”

“I would to finish my sats and get a good Result and leave secondnery school when I am 16 and get a good passes in my GSE’s so I can get a better life.”

“Nothing”

“I would like to work hard in school and get a good Job and looked after my children right.”

11 YEARS OLD

“Stay with my family more.”

“Never to see my mum and dad again. To see my brother and Grandma again. To gain long term foster care.”

“I will Be more Safe And ThaTS All folks”

“comeing out of f.care and returning home.”

“nothing”

“well there is one thing get more of my brothers to sleep to have fun and meet again”

“nothing, except to be a Rock n Roll star”

“growing up and being happy around other’s”

“Nothing needs to be different”

“I don’t now”

“I would like to get a nice and good job and have a family again.”

“To Live with MY Mum”

“go to [place] then my mams. Live in a big house with my family”

“To go back and live with my mum but I don’t Really know any more.”

“always to be with my foster mum.”

“I would like my mother to leave me alone and let me get on with my life and stop causing trouble in the family and that applies to my sister.”

“for my mom once again for another time being as she has moved 200 miles away.”

“I can’t answer”

“To live with my mom and bother and [name].”

“More fun. By [name]”

“no”

“To be in care with my family”

“Dont know”

“me to be at my mums house”

“Nothing Nothing”

“I’d Like to see more of my half sister, [name] and brother, [name]. also I’d like social services to leave me alone for a bit as I don’t See a Point in all those reviews ect as I’m happy and settled. I also think that children should have more say in how to make things better with social services as they are the victims and social services Prioritys.”

“I would like to stay with [names] for as long as possible”

“Don’t know”

“Don’t know”

“family improvement”

“HAPPY AS I AM.”

“To stay with the same family until I am 23”

“To get a Job.To go to college and univercity get marry and have children”

“me at my mum’s home”

“To Sleep at my mum because i want To and she and my DaD want me To”

“Seeing my family in the week not just at the week ends. I miss them lots. Sorry about my writing I got upset and angry with it.Why were you asking me and I brothers these qestions.”

“Do not no”

“Yes, I would love to see my mum and brothers and sister.”

“I would like to go and live with my dad”

“go back to mum.”

“I would like a new house in [place]. I would like Things to go back to the way it was so we could all be together.”

“Just Normal”

“to be going out with my mum if we were still in care. Being back with my mum if not in care”

“I want to come out of care when I’m 12.”

12 YEARS OLD

“BEINg Together as a family again”

“I liked to see more of my family + friends!!”

“nothing”

“Living back with my brother [name] in care in the same home.”

“I [ill.] like to live with [names] and I wnat to see my sister”

“Im not sure what to write thankyou for sending the Booklet”

“Nothing.”

“dont know”

“to have more confidence in myself. to do well in school and getting a nice job. to go out and have a nice family and home. to be able to live without thinking being abused again. to be able to control my temper and aggression.”

“my behaviour”

“I would like my brothers and sister to come and live with me at my nans and they asked for this. I would like to see family members more often e.g. everyone. I would like social servesis to get out of my life”

“For every one to Be Firend’s”

“Go and live back with mum and brothers. No arguements. respect others”

“Get a good education. Get a good job. Get a good amount of money.”

“To live with mum and my sisters.”

“by havving my own bed Room and not sharing and allso stop arguing.”

“never to Be born OR Had different parents I hate my real parants and I Always will!”

“Be with my mum but with brothers and sisters at Home. From [name]”

“Iive with Faimly. No bad Nasty stuf ect”

“I would Like to be in the army”

“I want to geT my educaTion Then leave school And go TO college And GeT my own fLaT

TheN I caN geT DRUNK all I like.”

“happy Fu”

“Living Back AT home with my mum To have contact 3 times a week”

“I can’t think of anything.”

“Stay at Grandma and see Dad + my uncle Terry and My uncle [name]”

“by me still to be living with my nan and grandad and to have seen my dad.”

“I would like to be out of care”

“To see my family more to live with my family or to live in A foster family my DAD to be alive to get out of my children’s home”

“TO GET OUT OF CARE QUICKER.”

“I can’t wait till I am 18 because then I can just have a normal life then and not haveing to deel with social workers. In the future I want to be a hairdresser so I hope I get it.”

“go Back home.”

“go live with my Dad!”

“seeing my family more. and nan. and cousions”

“I would like socil workers to be a bit more alert and to here what foster cares have to say and when the put a time down to come and see you the must try to make the effert and come.”

“Nothing”

“I don’t no”

“a motor cross bike”

“To see my father”

“I don’t really know Somethink different I hope.”

“well I don’t want to get in fights with my brother all the time and I don’t want to get in big arguements with my mum all the time!”

“To see More of family and friends”

“no”

“to Live with my mum!”

“fuck all fuck all”

“nothing at all because im happy the way I am.”

“I would like to see my mum more often. I would like to see her much longer in time because it used to be 8.00 till 9:30pm but now it's 9:30am-5:30pm. I would also like my foster parents to let me go places like [places] on my own with my mates because I am 12 and I can look after myself. I would also like to change the way they Buy stuff for me. They ask me what I want for eg: Easter/birthdays. Its usually tracksuits - I say can I have a pair of Nike trainers but she says “Oh you'd suit addidas trainers. Or if I say I don't want a pair of shoes that I don't like she says. “You only don't want these cause they haven't got a name on them. It really gets on my nerves Thank you.”

“HAVE MORE Time WITH MUM. HAVE MORE PLACES to go to in the six WEEKS holidays.”

“seeing family more often.”

“Be Rich”

“I would like to see my mum on weekends + sleep over + also on summer hols I would like to see my brother without a social worker thats it I gess”

“I would like to have more contact with family and friends from my old school and house. I would like to have more say in matters concerning me.”

“Continuing to have dry beds. contact continuing with my mum. more contact with my brothers and sisters. To do well at school and improve my bad tempers and not let anybody wind me up as much as in the past.”

“I would like to live with my family”

“Nothing.”

“Me + Brothers going home. Behaviour of me and Brothers Better”

“To see more of my freands”

“dont know. Thank you”

“nothing because every thing is Right.”

“LIFE”

“I would like to be allowed to sleep at my mums for how long I will be allowed and see how it goes. I would like to see more of my family if I could. I would like to go somewhere like blackpool with my family (brothers and sisters, mum).”

“I'm happy with my life at the moment.”

“To see more of my other family and go out with my friends more often. And when I am a bit older to see my parents more often by travelling down to their house by myself”

“No be cause I am Happy”

“Be able to go home with my mum. And to be able to afford school uniform. But couldn't cose social services where taking to long to sort money out. For social services let you see family more.”

“I Like to go home”

“mum to change”

“I need to change so I have more friends I need them stayed and play and I need to stop drinking to much. due from home sorry for the delay of this form by [name and date].”

“I would like it very much”

“MY SCHOOL PLACEMENT - MY SCHOOL PLACEMENTS IZ UNDER THREET. DIDNT RECEIVE THIS UNTILL THE THIRD OFF OCTOBER 2002”

“I will like to start having contact with my dad. also I will like to go to school where I can get on with the important bit of your life.”

“Going to sleepovers, seeing my mum, finding out more about my family. Basicly doing what any other kid does.”

“To Be abel to see my mum more and Do more things at school without haveing to phone people up. and to get on with my life without people caling me names.”

“I would like to see my mum more often. I think that are friends mums shouldn't have to have police checks before we go and stay at there house. I don't see why it should be different because you don't live with your mum and dad.”

“I would like every foster child to see their family more often ESPECIALLY ME!! I think the Question about the court should have been shorter I fell asleep reading that. Have a nice time reading. Sorry it's so late but I only got it on the 23rd of October. Bye”

“Nothing”

“I would like to go home to family and see friends a lot because I have loads but I would like for me to go and hang out.”

“Nothing.”

“my nan not until i am older. see my sister more.”

“to go back home with my mum and famile. by [name]”

“I want or I would like To see my father for once and see what he looks like.”

“have a phone, go out with my Friends and have Friends I mean more I only got about 8 or 20 Friends But my Friends got 50. and I want A phone Badly Even my 9 and 8 year old got a phone and I keep lying to them”

“I would like to live with the same foster carers that im with know then move on from then”

“I would like to take Lambeth to court! [name and address]”

13 YEARS OLD

“I WANT TO BE LISTENED TO”

“I am very happy and my auntie and uncle are helping me with my school work so I am hoping to have good results.”

“Nothin. everything is perfect the way it is. My foster carer is fantastic and shes there for me if I need her.”

“More fun”

“like to move to a care home nr my mums and then home”

“To be back with my Faimily”

“I wish I would be allowed to come home.”

“I’d like to be able to communicate with my foster mum more and I want her to understand that I can’t always be what she wants me to be. I can’t help being moody and lock myself away in my bedroom. I’m mixed up with my past and my hormones are beginning to kick in pretty hard.”

“Living with my Nanny and [name] (Granny and Granda) to I am older like 19 or 20, then live with Dad maybe.”

“To see my family more. I want to see my mum, Dad, [names].”

“Eventaly get to see my Real Family”

“to grow up and be happy around other”

“I never want to go into care again.”

“to be home”

“have a flat”

“To move in with my dad.”

“do not know”

“get a good Job. Pass GCSE. Live with my FamiLy. come up to [place] to see my foster mum To be a footbaler or a singer.”

“If I have a much better relationship with my mums side of the family cause I No every one in my dads side”

“I would like to see my family a llot more than I do”

“I would like it to be so me and mum get on better I can steel continue seeing my dad and some otherz I got to know in care”

“me staying with my nan”

“That they would come and live with me and my mum”

“noting”

“My mother to get in touch and stop lieing about stuff!”

“Go home!”

“staying at home with mum!!!!!!OK! Its not fair!”

“I wouldn’t want anything to be different it’s fine as it is.”

“Just the way they are because Ive now moved in with my aunt and I’m happy again”

“I would Like to see my brothers because I haven’t seen them for a long time but I’m seeing them in a couple of weeks. I would Like to see my relatives.”

“[Name and address]”

“Nothing”

“see my Mum alot more than once a month”

“I would like my care plan to change in the futer for example. I would like to see my uncle and Aunties more.”

“nothing except not to be moved coz i love it where i am now and am very settled and i never play up no more i am really good at school and hope 2 get good grades on my G.C.S.ES then when i leave school i wanna go to colage and get a part time Job at Macdonalds at the same time then when i am 18 i am going into the army i go to army cadets at the minuete and love it.”

“Nothing”

“to help others in many whys to look after others I be kind.”

"I wouldn't like to be in care all my life I would like to go and live with my Mum, at least I know I wouldn't be in any harm, plus all my friends are there, the only thing is I wouldn't want to start a new school, because I have just settled back in to my school after leaving then coming back. So if I was to go and live with my mum I would have to get the train to school everyday but because my mum is disabled she may not be able to afford it, so that's the only problem."

"no no"

"not going back to me DAD (noway)."

"I wouldn't want anything to be different because they're fine as they are."

"I would love to be able to live with my mum and be given the chance to do things what a happy and normal family would do. I want to feel really good about myself and feel free to do things which a real family would do and feel as if I can do whatever other families do when I lived with my mum before. I want to see my Dad whenever I want. I want to see my Dad as often as possible and do what sons, Daughters, mums and Dads would normally do. I want to have my family and my life before back and do happy family stuff. My Mum is well and can cope and my behaviour is really good and I wouldn't ever hurt my mum again as I did before. I want it."

"to live a normal life"

"I don't want anything else different because I am happy as I am"

"Don't know"

"me being with my father."

"Nothing"

"I would like to see my mom more than twice a year."

"Be at home with my Mom and Dad"

"I would like to go back to my dad's."

"Don't be acting cool and be happier."

"Nout Nout"

"gREAt + verry verry Happy"

"nothing everything's fine"

"Get a good job. P.S. I apologise for my poor handwriting, but have just had stitches in my finger!"

"Me having no flashbacks and moving just to foster homes and no children's homes. I hope"

this will happen soon”

“My mom to believe me”

“have a nice house! Lots of money! Good job! nice man”

“Don't send Who cares to me again”

“2 c my sister and dad more.”

“The social should let me see who I WANT. And I need a clothes pocket money once every 3 months about 30-60. My clothes cost a lot because I have to get them from shops which have my size 20-18.”

“I have no clue.”

“I am very disappointed and also very unhappy about the school that I am in.”

“I wouldn't because I'm happy as I am & happy with the day to day agreements”

“go to Foster care and the Foster care to be SaFe.”

“Just to be kept safe.”

“I would like to see my family more but it is being sorted out by the staff where I live”

“more nicer than they have been.”

“To be living with my Mum”

“being with foster home.”

“ending care plan”

“Yes to go and see my mum every 2 weeks”

14 YEARS OLD

“I would like to be happy and go back and live with my mum and brothers”

“STAY IN CARE”

“I WANT TO TRY TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND ME, GROW UP GET A GOOD JOB AND LOOK AFTER MY NAN. I HOPE THAT I WILL BE ABLE TO FORGET ALL OF THE HORRIBLE TIMES BUT IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO DO THIS”

“To live in the area I was born in where all my natural family is Have a planned admission when moving to a different home.”

“I would not like to change a thing.”

“Don’t know”

“I wish that I could live in care all my life and get some help”

“I would want to pass all my exams and get a job in teaching and retire when I am 40 and become a foster carer because I like to work with children, I would like to look after other children how my carer has looked after me for the last 2 1/2 Years. I would also like to see my mum get a nice job. and get a nice house.”

“More holidays in LAS Vegas”

“To live with my mum, to be treated the same as other people not differently because I am in care.”

“I would like my life to get back on track because it's a bit messy at the moment I want to get my head down and get back in to school so I can do my G.C.S.CS I want to work with children when I leave school but I need G.C.S.CS for that I would also like to try and build a relationship with my mum and I would like to start to see my younger brother again because I haven't seen him for about 8-9 months. my life in care isn't brilliant at the moment but I'm starting to realize I'm growing up and my childhood is slipping away and I want to make anything of myself I would like the confidence of a good childhood behind me! Thank you!
xxxx”

“Yes!”

“I just want to be somewhere I'm happy so I can make a fresh start”

“for my foster parents to hurry up so I can get on with my life. I also want to lose my criminal record so I can become a Police Officer. My name is [...]”

“I would like help for my behaviour”

“to hopefully be living with my mum again and with all my brothers and sister [name] that's all I would like”

“mum to be kind and nicer to me”

“I would like it to be total different to be back at home where I belong with my mum and family”

“See more of family”

“I would like more contact with my father and see him more and he ring me up more”

“I don't no.”

“Nothing really I just hope I get the future I want. Job: Nurse. good money, nice house,

husband. + my family to stick with me in everything I do.”

“get a job and have lots of Money”

“To lead my own life noone set me up with people, noone to tell me what to say at the Reviews, meetings, I would like myself to move on up to stop being stuck in the past stop all this guilt because everyone makes mistakes even though I made one that destroyed by family I no they are all fine my mums remarried and I am super happy as I am now an aunty for the first time. But with the care I am in I can't change nothink I am so happy with them I think the world of them and I hope they feel the same noone can change them they're perfect, I wouldn't change them for the world.”

“FLAT IF MY OWN. A JOB - POLICE MAN.”

“To be settled and see more of my sildings”

“to meet a nice boy. new friends. to meet someone like my foster carer [she is so nice]”

“don't know”

“Contact with my mum. move in with my boyfriend. more contact with friends + family.”

“I think sisters and Brothers should not be split up and you could see your mum and dad as much as you could. And when you tell people your not happy in your placement to move you. And to find out want is the matter is. And to go to Court and heard it for your self in stead of not beening told for a weeks.”

“to stay were I am I dont wont it to be any different.”

“I don't really know but I Just want someone to be there for me to trust me and love me and just have a laugh and a joke. I think you should see what the foster placement is like before you send a kid there see what kind of place it really like and see what the people are like and trust me Ive been sent evry where [places]. See what decishion the child wants to make before you jump to things think about what the child wants it could come out good in the longrun.”

“go out on my own more”

“Don't know. Don't mind.”

“I would like myself to have a future without any memory of my childhood. Whenever I think about it I feel low and deppressed, if only I was born into a family were life was good, where I had a good normal life, is that too much to ask, I haven't had a chance to have a good childhood, but im going to make a chance to have a good future.”

“Happy as I am.”

“nothing need to be different.”

“my life, 2 wot I had in the past.”

“Nothing.”

“I AM VERY HAPPY NOW”

“I would like to stay in the home that I am living in now.”

“to live with my family.”

“al I wnaT is sTAY wiTH my FORsTer mum [name]”

“go home as soon as possible”

“I would like to think that one day I could move home to my Parents. I do enjoy being in care but there are a lot of things I miss about being at home too. I hate being so isolated and feeling on my own, I would like to walk out the house knowing that Im not going to be coming home to a room full of smoke or a wardrobe with no clothes in it. I would like it if I was given the correct money to live on and that places were easier to get to too. (I have to go everywhere on my bike). I'd like it if my social worker pulled his head out his arse and got a watch so he could arrive on time to see me. I would like to get on better with my carer and be able to talk to her more and not feel as if im treading on egg shells all the time.”

“To live with my mum and step brother and sister and my other family.”

“I might learn to be less challenging less uncooperative more willing to improve the way I am in myself and to others. learn to have more confidence etc. Try and find a placement when I leave secure, that I can take advantage of in a positive way.”

“by being in Foster care or leaving foster care”

“I would like to leave school have a good career being a chef, and maybe get a family also to get a nice house and care and still see my family.”

“Nothing. PS If I hadn't of come into care I know I would not of gotten as far as i am now.”

“I do not no sorry”

“I don't know”

“well because my carers are nasty I would like them to change thait langwawg to me because well I can't rely say becus it makes me cry. I sorry bat by”

“Yes”

“Be happy”

“social services leaving me alone”

“I would not”

“I would like everyone in the world get on with each other, not having wars all the time. So many people are getting killed because of it.”

“Don’t know!!!!!!!!!!”

“The same reason as question 10”

“for me to lead a great life for god and help others. I really want to go with Jake 2geva 4eva.”

“nothing”

“I would like it to be me and my family or me in a childrens home near my family or me living with my mum.”

“No know.”

“I would like to try to Move back to [place] as I have lived in [place] for seven Months and haven’t seeN Much of my family and I know I could work with Social Services to get back on track with school and visits with my mum and sisters. Also S.S. have Moved me to far away from home and they shouldn’t do that to kids. My name is [...] My address is [...]”

“I ward like to be like and loved by famarly and not to be bolled at school.”

“I would like to things to be changed? 1. know more about carer who you with. 2. treat us like a ordinary kid e.g staying at friends houses 3. not Blocking children out of confersations about them.”

“meet somebody and by happy”

“A Job”

“Do more/some after school things/activities.”

“I would Like to manage living in a flat get good grades in my gcse’s And get a good Job.”

“Stay with my home For eveR They Love me And I Love them Thank you”

“I would like carry on with school get good grades and go on to be an accountant.”

“To be good at school.”

“I would like to have more contact to the people I care about. I would like to stay were I am.”

“Pretty much the same as question 10.”

“Im looking forward to My brother and sisters coming back home and my mums boy friend being my step dad.”

“I would like to see my best friend more often and other things.”

“move out of care”

“remain how I am”

“To live with my uncle, when I leave care.”

“To be allowed to live with my nan.”

“Nothing”

“Well I can Personally say that over all 7 years not much can get worse, so im going to forget everything move on and make a life of my own (MINE) and not under rules!! I want to work with the care become a strong person and help those that are in care and do right where ive seen social workers fail! I know what it is like and i can help them in a BiG way. Then i want to write true life stories and probably foster child and make their life a happier one and make them feel loved and cared like their meant to be!!!”

“well at the moment there’s nothing I would like to be different. Well there is something okay I need to say one thing that I have got a good voice and I really want to become a singer and I have made up a song and it’s really good its called = Girl I just want to tell you. If you people can do something then try to help me out with something, I have made my lyrics but where am I going to get the music. Please write back at [address]. This is my adress so please write back please”

“I would like to get my mother back to England and go to school and become a pilot. My name is [name and address]”

“I dont know”

“Not haveing the social services on my family’s back’s. life geting better”

“I would Like to go home with my mum and dad.”

“I whant to go to school and go out more and i’d like to get more money for clothes”

“I cant think about Anything.”

15 YEARS OLD

“Care order droped. get my own place. haveing a better live”

“to go home more.”

“I would like my little bro to come home ‘cos I can’t stand the thought of him going through every single day – It was a stupid decision to let me come home and not my brother ‘cos now he feels like he’s done something wrong and we don’t want him to come back. but we do desperately once Joe’s home the social worker can come and visit us if they really have to, but my family would like to get our stuff together and move to [place] where we can hopefully start again + put all this mess behind us.”

“I would like to be an actress that will be different”

“Get a Job and get Better help and advice”

“everything is O.K. for me.”

“Nothing really”

“I Don’t know. I would like to live with dad.”

“staying with my mum and dad when am 16 or going to Ireland”

“Nobody knowing about the offence”

“I am moving out in 3 months and social services are getting me a flat so I hope it goes well”

“to settle down.”

“Live at home”

“Better!”

“I would like things to be different in: living closer to my brothers, sister, stepdad + my grandparents (mums side).”

“I would like to be with all my family again because I miss them so much. I miss coming home from school and sitting around the table with my family and going on outings and parks ect. I have a 7 yr old sis to and she is very upset if I could make another wish it would be to make her happy like before”

“Never do the things that I done again. To be able to see My Mother, brother, sister. and Other Familys.”

“TO Go Back home with my FAMily or go to my own FLAT. and i would Like to go to college to IMProve my EDucation”

“I word liek to see more of my family members which i do not see. I word liek To Have more chance to see People which I don’t see that often.”

“nothing”

“I WANT TO BE HOME WITH My FAMILY”

“I’d Like to Live with a family instead of in a R’n’R centre, because it’s horrible. You don’t live like an ordinary family. I wish I could make things right between my family.”

“I have seen my DAD thank you”

“Just me and my baby and my family all reunited and I would like to be put into a mother and

baby unit (open) to find my real dad as well. My name and address is [...] I will look forward to hearing from you again.”

“I would like my mum to have me home before im 16!!! I would like a job with money so I can get new clothes and stuff that I like. from [name] Please help!”

“nothing”

“I would want me to get what I want in life!”

“Have nothing to do with social services.”

“To be in [place]”

“More help from social worker.”

“I would like my sister to Get Better and I would like to see my DaD again”

“Get more money than £4.85”

“for social workers to get out of my life I was fine in the start they have fucked my life up totally and I hate them all they Just do it for the money. Write back from [name]”

“To stop doing things that get me into trouble with the police.”

“People to see that I can coup on my own with a baby.”

“have some new children have a lapTop in the house. Thank you”

“I would like to see more of my friends and family”

“Be good.”

“to be came”

“being able to live with my family”

“To speed more time with my dad and Live with my twin sister [name].”

“NONE, because I am happy, because I got a home + a Job.”

“just to have a nice life”

“Just to stay out at a friends house.”

“Get on with my mum more. Be able to see my friends”

“going home moRe”

“No way”

“to see [names] more. due to the move from the home sorry For the delay with this form.”

“having moRe contact with fRiends + famiLy”

“mum”

“seeing my mum more often. seeing my brothers and sisters more often.”

“To be out of care when 16 not 18 and looking after myself. I didn’t get this till the 19th October sorry!”

“Id Like to go home to Live with my prober parents.”

“I want my mum to be sobre 24 Hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 Days a Year until the day she dies. Now that I have told you everything You now know what my life was living with my mum but “WHO CARES” I don’t, my mum is on the way to a good recovery. Thank you for wasting my time!!!!!!”

“To have my own Room and some privacy. to see less of my social worker (coz I don’t like Him) and to see more of my family. I would like to see my couzins more. + if I can 2 change social workers. But that is not as important as c-ing my family. Luv ya all”

“I would like to work like to Be a BrickLayer or with animals or car’s.”

“I would like Dads girl friend to move out. because me and her do not get on what so ever. The reason is because she dose my nut-case in as she has turned my brother agest me neally my Dad as well. well that what it felt a few week ago.”

“Just happily moving into independent living from Residential care.”

“I not now”

“I would like the rules of the foster care to be different than the rules that they are given it now and I would like the social workers would be so friendly and helpful for the children that they are Faking them and about the money that they must give it to us like they must put a little bit of money for us because I saw a lot of children like me need some more money for their pocket money”

“I would like thing to be beater when I have my own education and i can do my own job so that could be different and I would like to look forward to my education and I will happy if I could get my education going good and beater and when I am older enough I can do my own job and look after myself. and I am very thankfull for the people help me because when I was ill in hospital so I couldnt eat sleep but now I feel safe and I am very happy for the people helped me and I would like to give them thankfull. That is the big changed from back to the front and the big differentes when I was hospital until now.”

“I dont know”

“I would like to see my mum more”

“Looking forward I would like to see things different by Behaving myself and stop hanging around with bad companies and not putting my self at Risk. I’ll also stop smoking and drinking because I’m only young and it’s not nice seeing a young girl smoking and drinking and also self harming.”

“Give me more money.”

“I would really Like to be a T.V. journaliste on ITN. I would love to be rich and donate £2,000,000 to social services to help other children in care. I think that it is important for every young person to get what they deserve. I would love to get in contact with my Dad and find out about my history and my Mum. There are a lot of secrets in my family and no one is willing to share them with me. I want to know why my Mum is manic-depressive, I want to know why Nan and Grandad split up. I want to know why none of my uncles apart from two came to see me when I was younger. I want to prove to everyone who had stereotypical views about me to be put to shame and shown that foster children can get really far if they just believe in themselves. I want to live a wonderful life where all my dreams come true. I’m sick of the constant nightmares in my life and it’s about time that I woke up smiling instead of crying”

16 YEARS OLD

“NOTHING”

“I would like my own flat and I would like to prove to everyone that I can live by myself.”

“NoThing”

“IF YOU HAVE NO CONTACT WITH PARENTS, I DON’T THINK THAT THEY SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO TELL YOU WHAT YOU CAN AND CAN’T DO IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. But..... THE PLACE I’M IN NOW IS BRILLIANT”

“for My Baby to have a happy Life with me and my Boyfriend.”

“Having more of a choice of where to move indepently. It’s either supported lodgings or houses, so why can’t we look in ALL areas so that wayne can be more sure of what we want.”

“Getting a good Job. Seeing my friend from Collage. Staying with my foster family. Thank you for your time. See you very soon. I’m writing a story about my life when the day I Left my mum. bye. Love [name] Thanks bye!”

“Me Not geting in to trouble Because I dont want to go back into a secure unit again.”

“being in home with my family”

“to see My non and My grandad and [ill.]”

“I would like to have a boyFriend who is older than me and stay in contack with [names]”

“I would like a lot of things to be different like have a bit less of people going in care because there running out of spaces everywhere (I was lucky to have my home now). If possible they could of put posters up telling them to become part of the team and help people, with family problems.”

“I would like social workers to get off my back I’m 16 and want to get on with my life.”

“To foster children and show them, there is life behind the clouds. I don’t see the point in bringing more children into the world when there is enough with-out homes.”

“To be settled and happy and have a horse.”

“Sometimes staff do not help you do eneyting. You ask For Food [ill.] And you get them 4 hours letter on that night if you want to go swimming The always need to Tack us the may Like beeing with us but they cant always’s bee with us we now that They Love us but nothing real cares This is my [ill.] and it is I dont think they do care about us. I wish I was never in care because They do not Love us They say They do”

“I’m not going back to drugs. I don’t want to re-offend. I want my own flat to start a fresh life.”

“nothin”

“PEOPLE TO HURRY UP AND DEAL WITH MY FUTURE”

“Learn how to do a larger variety of household tasks, Eg. cooking.”

“I would like every social worker to leave me and my family alone.”

“Police checks”

“More independance”

“FOR ME TO HAVE A BETTER LIFE AND TO BE HELPED PROPERLY TO INDEPENDANCY! TO MEET MORE PEOPLE LIKE ME (IN CARE/HOMES) AND TO HAVE OUTTINGS AND DISCUSS OUR LIVES WITH EACH OTHER/HOW IT HAS AFFECTED US.”

“TO Be Trusted anD treated like a 16 year oldD noT yunger anD not olDer. noT having to live up to fosTer Parunts stanDerDs all the time”

“get more support and be informed of things happening to do with myself. to get hold of my social worker more easier.”

“Just what i’ve already said”

“id like to be happy.”

“To be with foster carers, To have a cat and call her Milly. I would also like to look after children when I am older. From [name]”

“I would like to take over the world. I would like to be Crowed Queen. I would like to look like Britney Spears but my name is [...]. I would like to get out of this mental asyoum. I would like to be a cooker because its cold in the asyoum. I want to be cheese and nibbled by a mouse while plugged into my computer.”

“Seeing all my friend and staying over night go clubing and go colage have an house of my own and a car with a good job looking After children with disabilitaiys and mental helth.”

“I don’t want anything to be different because I am happy with everything that I have.”

“all family members together”

“I use heiron but I’m now on a MetherdoNe script and I’m oon a I.S.S.P order with Y.O.Y and I’m doing well on it”

“Might Like to Live with my mum or sister or brother to Live with them. training for a good Job. I like to have a Flat to share with friends.”

“better life, with people who care about me and would accept me for who i am!!”

“I Like see my mother on my birthday and Christmas.”

“to go back to my famerly”

“nothing”

“I am hoping I will be very independant when I leave care”

“I had 13 diffrent Foster cares untill I found this one now. I have been here nearly 5 years and I’m Happy where I am.”

“Well I would just like my parents to get to know me as I am And stop bringing the past up. Because I know that I have changed.”

“I don’t know”

“Things are different now. Ive applied for College next year. I have 2 jobs. I have support. I see a Counsellor to help me to get over my past. I have an effectionate caring, and Supporting boyfriend of 17. and This time next year ill have my own counsel flat. Im So Glad for all the support of all the carers who are out there.”

“Live with my Mum + Dad”

“I would of liked to have stayed with my Foster Mother”

“Well I Don’t know About me but I just wanna Leave care as soon as possible, cause like I live in a children’s home with four people Like there’s 3 girls and there’s one Boy that Lives in a children’s home, it’s a Bloody nightmare ahh! Someone save me pLease Before anything else happens to me if ya get me.....”

“fuck knows”

“I would like to be at home”

“MORE TIME WITH MY SON. [name and date]”

“Everything O.K.”

“I would like to get on with my life with my boyfriend and my baby and for me and mum to keep a good relationship.”

“Get money ever week. Get in to Part time college. No [place]. Part time job.”

“not get betten by my foster carer.”

17 YEARS OLD

“to go home with my mum and to be happy”

“keep in contact with present foster family seeing my sister and my brother sam. keep an decent job with a good pay which I enjoy moving out and getting a flat to share with love ones. watch my younger brother grow up. Have a kids of my own to love and care like my present parents have done to me!”

“NOT TO BE MoveD again. MORE support in Promblem's. [ill.] social working.”

“have a nice and Peaceful life”

“Being happy, own flat and a career. something i enjoy! By [name]”

“Living Independencely flat of my own”

“I would like to see my mum and sisters more. To see my Frinds is well. I like spend more time and stay over some night with mum and my sister. I love my mum and my sisters very much and I dont wont to see them get hurt or unwell.”

“I would like to keep out of trouble and settle down with a job”

“Nothing”

“I would like to get my head sorted out, forget the Past, see my little brother more because he blames me for my old foster dad, finish college and become a social worker! Then when all that is done I would like to foster!”

“Not live on my own at 18.”

“geting a Place BY MY Self. be near my mum and Brothers and sister”

“I wish I lived with my mum cos we get on now + I miss my baby brothers. I miss them that

much that sometimes I want a baby myself. And I wish I didnt have to move out when I'm 18. And I wish it wasnt so obvious I was in care. I would like other young people to have a nice placement when they come into care so they dont have to keep moving around. I wish that social workers etc cared when they leave work as well as when their at work. To them its just a job but to us its not. We depend on them 24/7 not just 9-5 five days a week."

"I AM HAPPY AT THE MOMENT."

"I would like social services to just leave me alone when I am 18!"

"no differant"

"knew what I want to accheive out of life."

"Nothing because I am where I am and got to get on with life. the way it is. can you give me more information what a care plan is. I would like one of these mag so could you send me one. [address] Thanks [name]"

"stay the same"

"EVERY THING STARTING with the RULES from [name] Please right back [address]"

"I need them to listen to what I want and need"

"I wanna get on with my life, I can't wait to get out of CAre!"

"My life is better now i'm out of Care there are some hard times but I Get trough them."

"I want to end up with my own house with my little Daughter and have a job with good pay and a new boy Friend who will respect me For what or who I am I've never had nobody like that in the past I want to start Feeling Good about myself and have more confidence about it."

"My Attitued My behavoure. I would like these to be diffrent because I am taking it out on my foster mum."

"I wouldn't, I MAKE the decsions for Looking foRwaRd I Get the guideness & help, support I need. It's thAnks to the suppoRt & guideness & help that I've Got A heAd on my shouldeRs"

"I like to have holiday packag at least once a year somewhere around the world or UK"

"me going into a rehab and getting help. [name and address]"

"More money more resonserbitty to carear than social worker cos he or she does not look after you see you ever 3 weeks to see what happening because when they see you they pretend they know what going on when they don't From [name]"

"Have my own flat and get on with my life"

"Finishing CoLLege having my own flat. Being financially independent and having a good life style."

“Social workers to investigate into children’s family properly and not to take children away for no apparent reason.”

“Well like I said, being in care has made me someone I wanted to be. I’ve had to go up really fast and ve responsible 4 my actions which in life some people don’t really learn till later life. I was a first very depressed and took an act of self harm. But looking forward I no that 17 year old should be old enough to take charge (other) of themselves and be respectful and responsible. [name]”

18 YEARS OLD

“More money!”

“I would like to have self confidence about my epilepsy becoz my family keep shouting at me saying stop being so stupid”

19 YEARS OLD

“I would like children all over the UK to have the same treatment in foster care that I did. And try to encourage more people to join in foster care sceme and stop children having to be move from one placement to another.”

“To my Parents to be better Parents and not to abandon any of their other children to SS Dept”

20 YEARS OLD

“Nothing”

AGE NOT SPECIFIED

“achieve a career in health + social care get married have children lot and lot of Them”

Summary of findings and recommendations

Key Findings ‘Your Shout!’

- Nearly half of the sample could not name their care authority.
- Almost a quarter of children had attended court, higher than expected. Only a quarter of these had a chance to speak to the judge.
- More than a quarter of the children did not know what their care plan was.
- Well over half of the respondents did not see enough of their father.
- More than a third of the sample did not see enough of their mother.
- A third did not see enough of their siblings.
- Nearly half did not see enough of other family members (including grandparents).
- Over half did not see enough of former foster carers who were important to them.
- A quarter did not see enough of their friends.
- One in five children responded that being in care did not make them feel safe.

Key themes

- The wish to leave care, although a good proportion did not wish to leave the carers with whom they were well settled.
- Children wanted more contact with significant people in their lives.
- Children’s goals were relatively modest.
- Many children displayed a strong sense of personal morality and family responsibility.
- Children displayed a desire to express themselves (perhaps skewed by self-selecting sample).
- The substantial number of written statements offer an opportunity for further thematic analysis.

The sample

725 children and young people have contributed to this survey. The ratio between girls and boys was 3:2 (59%: 41%). The great majority of respondents (85%) classified themselves as “white British”. The average age was 13.5 (slightly higher for girls). Over one in ten children (12%) said that they had a disability or long-term health-problem. The questionnaires were distributed through *Who Cares?*, a national magazine which has a circulation of 30,000 and is

produced by the Who Cares? Trust for young people in public care in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The sample is therefore, in a sense, self-selecting.

Knowledge of care authority

391 (55%) of respondents were able to name their care authority. 181 (26%) ticked the 'don't know' box, 59 (8%) gave an inappropriate response and 75 (11%) left the answer blank. Overall, 315 respondents, or nearly half the sample, were not able to name their care authority. Younger children (the under 12s) were more likely to know than the older age group. There was also a tendency for those with a disability or health condition as well as white British respondents to be more likely to name their care authority than those of other ethnic origins. Some young people were aware that they were being looked after by a system rather than a person and were critical of this:

"But the system is bogged down by bueracracy."

Others appreciated the perceived strength of an organisation:

"Childrens board make sure im safe and dont come to no harm."

Experience of court proceedings

163 young people (23%) said they had attended court when decisions were being made about them (the "Court sample"). 38% of those aged 16 or over had been to court, compared with 24% of the 12-15 year olds and 9% of those under 12. This is more than might have been anticipated, and the figures may be inflated by older respondents attending court in connection with criminal proceedings, and younger ones attending court to give evidence against alleged abusers. However it does give an encouraging indication that practice is moving on in this area, and that judges are becoming more willing to allow children the opportunity to attend court.

Sources of help

In relation to help received during court proceedings, the five most popular sources cited were social workers, a named person, solicitors, carers and family members.

Speaking to the Judge

For the Court sample, over half of those who responded (57%) said they did not have the chance to speak to the judge (including 19% of the Court sample who said they wished they had had the chance to speak to the judge). 16% said they would not have wanted to. Out of the 88 children who did not go to court but would have liked to, a higher proportion (34 or 39%) said they would have liked the chance to speak to the judge whilst only three said they would not have wanted to do so. Just over a quarter of those in the Court sample responding to this question (27%) said that they were able to speak to the judge.

Being listened to and treated with respect

40% of the girls and 44% of the boys who answered this question said they thought that they had been listened to and that their rights had been respected.

Those aged 11 and under were more likely to consider that they were listened to (55%) than those aged 12–15 (37%) or those aged 16+ (41%).

More of those of minority ethnic origin considered that they were listened to and their rights respected than was the case with the white British children (48% compared with 40%), but this difference was not statistically significant.

“I need them to listen to what I want and need”

“I don’t really know but I just want someone to be there for me to trust me and love me and just have a laugh and a joke. I think you should see what the foster placement is like before you send a kid there see what kind of place it really like and see what the people are like and trust me I’ve been sent evry where [places]. See what decision the child wants to make before you jump to things think about what the child wants it could come out good in the longrun.”

Care plans

487 (71%) of respondents said they knew what their care plan was, but 196 (29%), over a quarter of the sample, did not. Theoretically, in accordance with current guidance, all the children should have known about their care plan. They should also have been involved in writing it. 228 (35% of respondents) reported that they had, while the majority (417 or 65%) had not. Nevertheless, 392 children (56%) said they were happy with their plan, while 94 (13%) said that they were not and 220 (31%) said they did not know. 139 (23%) said that there was something they would like to change while 454 (77%) were broadly satisfied. There were clear indications that being given accurate information, being consulted and participating in planning was very important to the young people and contributed to their sense of worth and self-esteem.

“I would have liked to have had more info and would of liked to have more say in the matter”

“Adults listening to our points of views instedd of decideing for us. not have Police checks. go back to your parents when the child and the parent knows they are ready and probably have a regular social worker comeing around to see how things are getting on.”

Contact

256 children (39%) did not see enough of their mothers. An even higher proportion 359 (60%) of the sample did not see enough of their fathers. More than a third of the sample, 238 (37%) did not see enough of siblings, while 321 (49%) did not see enough of other family members. Although the questionnaire included grandparents in ‘other family members’ many children specified their wish to see grandmothers and grandfathers in their written comments.

186 children (28%) did not see enough of friends. Well over half of the sample (347 or 57%) to whom previous carers were important did not see enough of them. The results are strikingly at odds with the requirements of section 34 of the Children Act 1989 which contains an assumption of reasonable contact. If one takes this with the associated findings in the adult survey in relation to the lack of commitment to partnership with parents and support services for children and families, then there are clear indications not for substantial amendment but for a review of current practice. Even allowing for the fact that it may not be possible or safe for

some of these children to see these key people in their lives the results are highly significant. Some children were struggling with the difficulties of maintaining contact with key people and the choices that entailed:

“maybe staying with my mum and then I might be able to see her more might even know my dad. I’d be able to see my sister more. But I wouldn’t know my friends my foster cousins and mostly I wouldn’t be able to see or meet my foster parents.”

Safety in care

507 (78%) of those responding to the question said they felt safe in care. 147 (22%) said they did not. Girls were more likely to respond negatively to the question of safety than the boys (23% of the girls compared with 18% of the boys). Younger children were more likely to feel safe than older children (87% of the 6-11 age group, 73% of those aged 12-14, 73 % of those aged 15-16 and 70% of those aged 17 or over).

Children of minority ethnic origin were more likely than white British children to say that care did not make them feel safe (29% compared with 22% of the white British children).

Feeling safe is a major factor in facilitating the emotional well-being which would allow children to settle in new placements:

“Sometimes coz i hated been moved about not knowing where i was going next and who these people where so sometimes it was quite scary and upsetting as I could never settle down and was always playing up at school and at home”

Looking back

The key themes were:

- The wish for more contact with family and friends.
- The wish not to have gone into care.
- Regret about behaving badly.
- Regret that their family had behaved badly.
- The wish to live in a ‘proper’ family.
- The quest for ‘normality’ as defined by orthodox behaviour, i.e. not being moved around and not being abused.

Many of the responses demonstrated a high degree of self awareness and insight, eg. *I must improve my behaviour.*

Looking Forward

The key themes were:

- The desire for more family contact.
- The desire to live with the family.

- The wish to get a job.
- The need to focus on education.
- The wish to have a home.

The goals and ambitions were modest and reflect and the young people's overwhelming need to be just like everybody else. The majority did not want anything potentially unattainable or unrealistic.

Recommendations

- A comprehensive review of all contact arrangements – both direct and indirect – for children in public care.
- An amendment to section 34 of the Children Act 1989 establishing a statutory assumption of the right to contact between siblings.
- Additional resources to facilitate contact, family support and reunification.
- Increase resources to ensure high quality placements for looked after young people and reduce unnecessary moves in care.
- Funding of programmes to look at safety issues and the long-term impact of violence on children and young people.
- More attention to the dynamics and management of the impact of loss and separation on children in public care.
- Exploration of effective avenues of communication for children who are the subject of court proceedings with the aim of facilitating their participation in decisions made about their lives.

Overall, the survey findings reinforce the findings of the adult *Review of Legislation Relating to Children in Family Proceedings* (NSPCC 2003), in relation to the need for a reaffirmation of the principles of the Children Act 1989 rather than for substantial amendment.

Appendix 1: The questionnaire

This is a replication of the content and not the format it was produced in. The original format contained graphics and was more accessible for children and young people.

About you

- 1 How old are you? Write age in box:
- 2 Are you male or female:
 Male
 Female
- 3 Do you have a disability or long-term health problem which affects your daily life?
 Yes
 No
- 4 How would you describe your ethnic origin?
 black African
 black British
 Chinese
 Pakistani
 white British
 black Caribbean
 Bangladeshi
 Indian
 British Asian
 other
- 5 Who is your local care authority?

 don't know

You and the court

- 6a Have you ever been to Court when decisions were being made about you?
 yes
 no
 I didn't want to
 I would have liked to but never had the chance
- 6b If you have been to court, did you get enough help?
 yes

- no
- I didn't get any help

Did you have someone helpful to talk to?

- yes
- no

If yes, who was helpful?

6c Did you get practical help, e.g. money for fares or clothes?

- yes
- no
- I didn't get any help
- any other comments?

6d Did anyone explain what was happening to you and what might happen in Court?

- yes
- no
- any other comments?

6e Did you have the chance to speak to the Judge who made the decision about you?

- yes
- no
- I didn't want to
- I would have liked to but never had the chance

6f Do you think your social worker and/or the Court listened to you and respected your rights?

- yes
- no
- don't know

6g What would have made things easier?

- more support
- more practical help
- more information
- nothing
- anything else

Your care plan

7a Do you know what your care plan is?

- yes
- no

7b Did you help to write it?

- yes
- no

7c Are you happy with your plan?

- yes
- no
- don't know

7d Is there anything you would like to change in your care plan?

- yes
- no
- any other comments?

Contact with family and friends

8 Since coming into care, do you see enough of the people you care about and want to see?

mother

- yes
- no

father

- yes
- no

brother and sisters

- yes
- no

other family members

- yes
- no

friends

- yes
- no

foster carers who have looked after you in the past

- yes
- no

Has anyone else helped?

Finally

9 Does/did being in care make you feel safe?

- yes
- no
- any other comments?

10 Looking back, what would you have liked to have been different?

11 Looking forward, what would you have liked to have been different?

Appendix 2

Response to each question (by %)

	Whole Sample	Court Sample
Question 1	99.9	
Question 2	99.9	
Question 3	99.2	
Question 4	98.9	
Question 5	89.4	
Question 6(A)	98.2	
Question 6(B)	46.3	96.3
Question 6(B)2	56.7	95.1
Question 6(B)3	34.0	67.5
Question 6(C)	59.3	94.5
Question 6(C)2	12.3	23.3
Question 6(D)	63.5	95.1
Question 6(D)2	9.2	20.2
Question 6(E)	56.1	89.6
Question 6(F)	62.5	95.7
Question 6(G)	54.5	84.0
Question 6(G)2	8.2	16.0
Question 7(A)	96.7	
Question 7(B)	91.4	
Question 7(C)	93.9	
Question 7(D)	84.0	
Question 7(D)2	20.0	
Question 8(MOTHER)	91.6	
Question 8(FATHER)	84.7	
Question 8(SIBLINGS)	91.2	
Question 8(OTHER FAMILY)	92.9	
Question 8(FRIENDS)	93.9	
Question 8(FORMER CARERS)	85.8	
Question 8(OTHER HELP)	19.7	
Question 9	92.6	
Question 9(OTHER COMMENTS)	29.7	
Question 10	73.8	
Question 11	63.3	

The second column of figures relates to the percentage response of only those children who said they had attended Court (the “Court sample”).

