



OUR LIVES BEYOND CARE

Care leavers' views on their well-being in 2018

Dr. Claire Baker, Linda Briheim-Crookall, Levana Magnus and Professor Julie Selwyn April 2019



Background

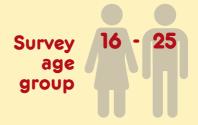
The Bright Spots Programme helps local authorities better understand the well-being of their children and young people in care (aged 4-18) and care leavers.

Currently official statistics provide only a partial picture of children in care and care leavers' lives. Data focuses on areas such as where children live, how many moves they have and how they are doing in terms of education and employment. None of this information tells us about the experience of care and leaving care from young people's own viewpoints: are they happy, safe and feel they are doing well?

The **Bright Spots programme**, developed by Coram Voice and the University of Bristol, directly addresses these gaps in our knowledge. Coram Voice (with funding from Coram-I) created a new set of care leaver well-being indicators to allow services to design their work around what young people say is important to them. The indicators are measured by the online survey **Your Life Beyond Care (YLBC)**. YLBC complements the existing survey for children in care **Your Life, Your Care (YLYC)**.

The survey tools are strongly evidence based. They were developed with children and young people and have been carefully tested and piloted. The design process involved workshops with 170 looked after children and care leavers, literature reviews and cognitive interviews. We also included the perspectives of professionals and policy-makers.

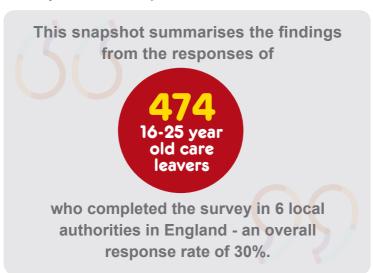
Understanding and responding to children and young people's voices and experiences are the foundation of high-quality services. But local authorities can struggle to engage a wide range of young people. Even where participation is strong, often only a minority of children and young people inform service development in their authority (e.g. through care leaver groups or ambassador roles). Our YLYC and YLBC surveys offer local authorities the opportunity to hear from their young people on a larger and more systematic level than ever before.



To date, the surveys have been used in **28 English** and **6 Welsh** local authorities.

Whilst the findings of the surveys are important for each individual authority taking part, by aggregating the results across local authorities we deepen our understanding of looked after childrens' and care leavers' well-being. We have already published two national reports detailing the findings from our children in care surveys in 2015/16 and 2016/17. Both *Our Lives, Our Care* reports are available from www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots.

We are particularly excited to be able to share here the first insights from our care leaver survey - *Your Life Beyond Care*.



Findings from the children in care survey, *Your Life, Your Care*, are published separately.



Bright Spots Snapshot 2018 OUR LIVES BEYOND CARE

This snapshot gives a much needed insight into how care leavers really feel about their lives. It is based on a large survey of care leavers' views on their well-being and pulls together what 474 care leavers from 6 English local authorities told us through the Your Life Beyond Care survey in 2017/18.

Findings for children in care are published in 'Bright Spots Snapshot 2018: Our Lives, Our Care'.

Our surveys are the only ones to capture 'subjective well-being' - how children in care and care leavers feel about their relationships, the support they receive and how things are going - based on research and what young people said was important.

Do you know how your care leavers are doing?

Taking part in the Bright Spots Programme is leading to change in local authorities, as they respond to what their young people say. We have worked with over 30 local authorities so far.

Join us now to get a unique insight into how your young people feel about their lives.

Get in touch with Coram Voice on brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk or go to www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots to find out more.

bright spots

makes a difference nationally and locally

Our vision is that the Your Life, Your Care and Your Life, Beyond Care surveys become the national subjective well-being indicators for children in care and care leavers. If all local authorities did the surveys, both local and national decision-makers would better understand and be able to act on the experiences of children in care and care leavers.

By everyone using the Bright Spots measures across the country we can build a full national picture and benchmark how children and young people feel about their lives in different local authorities and in comparison to the general population, addressing the enduring variation in support young people continue to report.

We urge the Government to continue to promote the Bright Spots surveys to all local authorities and encourage authorities themselves to get involved.

Get in touch with Coram Voice on brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk or go to www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots to find out more.

Bright Spots Well-Being Indicators: Your Life Beyond Care



OURLIVES BEYOND CARE

Care leavers' views on their well-being in 2018

Survey age group





He is amazing, I trust*my caring and so worker' easy to get along with and trust.



My care leaver worker is very easy to talk to and helps out when she can or is available best one out there.

Life as a care leaver



My worker is really nice and has helped reduce some of the anxiety I feel about leaving the care system and being left alone.

I don't know why I was in care or would like to know more.

things I like to do in my

Main things that

stop me having

fun is no money.

Hanging out with people I like

...I have asked why I was put into care, no one will tell me!!! I only have bad memories and therefore am left being very scared of my biological family and yet no one will/can help me...

spare time.

Watching TV/films

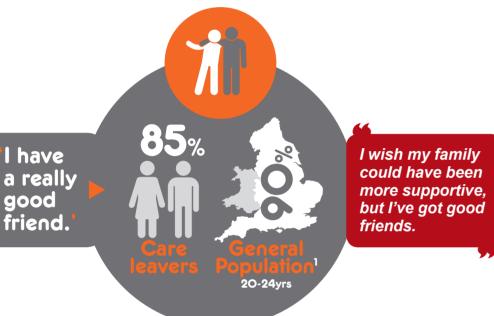
Shopping

Wish to do more

like camping.

adventures, things

Relationships



I have someone who...



Listens Tells me when i've done well. to me.



Believes I will be a success.

I have someone I can trust, who helps me and sticks by me no matter what.

[NAME] has helped me out so much with my confidence and I trust her a lot.



In last few weeks - I always/most of time feel lonely.

in 5 Care leavers (19%) Comparison data - 10% of 16-24yrs report being lonely often/always.3

It's mostly an alone feeling like I can't go anywhere or do anything because of the way I look and having nobody."



Dr. Claire Baker, Linda Briheim-Crookall, Levana Magnus and Professor Julie Selwyn **April 2019**

© Coram Voice, 2018

Get in touch with Coram Voice on brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk or go to www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots to find out more and take part.





I felt I was treated better as a care leaver. I felt my achievements were recognised more as a care leaver.

feel safe

find it difficult to

cope financially.

The financial part is difficult

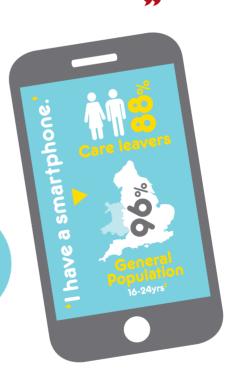
and there could be more

support at times.

My depression and anxiety [stops me having fun]. There seems to be no support unless you pay for it.



I want to move out of supported housing. It doesn't feel like a home. Too many rules.



Where I live

is right for me.

l cannot afford where I live, and it is too big

> Ihave access to the internet at home

Now I don't have a contract phone, no Internet.

Just want to achieve my goals in life and not give up.



16-24yrs



28

Very High

Things I do

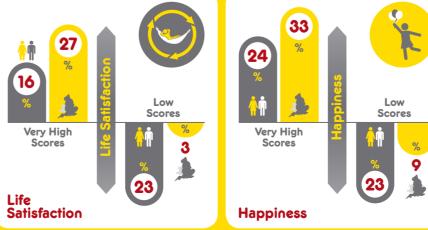
worthwhile

in life are

Well-Being

I think mental health is a huge factor for care leavers and I do not feel there is a lot of support around this and a lot of care leavers don't transition into adult services as well as they should be.





¹UK Data Services, 2015, Understanding Society: The UK Household Longitudinal Study Wave 5

²ONS, 2017, Young people's well-being measures 3 ONS, 2018, Loneliness - What characteristics and circumstances are associated with feeling lonely?

⁴ ONS, 2017, Young people's well-being measures ⁵ Statista, 2017, UK: smartphone ownership by age

to the general population? a much higher proportion of care leavers have low well-being.

⁶ ONS, 2018, Internet access - households and individuals, Great Britain

⁷ONS, 2017, Young people's well-being measures