



# Bright Spots Survey

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# What is Bright Spots...

- The programme is a research project by Coram Voice
- Aim is to understand what is important to children in care and care leavers & share learning & actions from this
- It measures subjective well-being through their voice
- Survey was on children in care this time and took place Nov 22 to March 2023
- 119 children aged 4-17 took part 32% of cohort. 35% aged 4-7 (26) , 34% aged 8-11 (19), 31% aged 11-17(74)

# Bright Spots Survey - Strengths

- The vast majority reported trusting their carers. 92% stated they always felt safe where they were living.
- 97% of young people stated they had an adult in their life that they trusted.
- Our children between the ages of 8-17 spent lots of time outdoors in nature, this is higher than in the general population.
- Our children liked school 96% aged 4-7, 94% aged 8-11 and 74% of 11-17 they like school or college 'a lot' or 'a bit'.
- 90% of our children had a moderate to high positivity about their future which is higher than the general population.
- All the children knew who their social worker was, and all the younger children 4-7 years trusted their Social Worker.
- St Helens performed higher than the national average with how happy they were seeing their mum.



# Bright Spots Action Plan & next steps

- A Bright Spots action plan has been developed
- The work of the five workstream groups from Corporate Parenting Forum (CPF) will be informed by the Bright Spots findings
- Given the importance of relationships the focus on social work recruitment is core to this delivery
- The following slides will highlight the areas for action as reported by our children, through the Coram Voice report.
- The progress of actions in the plan will be monitored via CPF

| Areas identified for development  | What have we done?  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1.</b> Although only two children (4-11yrs) recorded feeling unhappy the day before the survey, the proportion who felt quite or very happy was lower compared to children in other Local Authorities in both ages.</p> | <p><b>1.</b> Mandatory training delivered for all SWs on voice of the child/lived experience. Focus on feelings and subsequent actions linked to this evident in their plan.</p> <p>Intense focus on recruitment of SWs to maintain consistent relationships. Updated procedure to improve effectiveness of handover, sickness absence and where change of social worker needing to take place. Audits will monitor progress.</p> <p>Plans to collate and share resources with carers to support children’s emotional health and wellbeing. Details of local support provision already shared with foster carers and providers.</p> |
| <p><b>2.</b> 8 (11%) Young people with low wellbeing – children with low wellbeing can be more likely to report not being able to practice life skills and feeling unhappy with how often they saw their family.</p>          | <p><b>2.</b> Care leavers and Futures team developed life skills resource tool for supporting children and young people in skill understanding and development.</p> <p>Toolbox on voice of the child/lived experience, element included on understanding/addressing emotions. Also review of practice to take place on how family time is explained to children.</p>  |
| <p><b>3.</b> Not all children we look after reported that they understood why they are in care.</p>   | <p><b>3.</b> Action in progress to establish a dedicated area on ICS to record why a child is in care and evidence direct work undertaken to explain and re-visit topic with child linked to child’s age and understanding.</p> <p>Review taking place of how Life Story Work supports children’s understanding.</p>  |

| Areas identified for development   | What have we done?  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>4.</b> 9% of 4–17-year-olds reported not having a good friend.</p>   | <p><b>4.</b> Undertaken research with children through VIBE/Reach. Workshops planned to be delivered as a result including this theme.</p>  |
| <p><b>5.</b> There was a drop in the percentage of children (8-11yrs) knowing that they can <u>ask</u> to speak to their social worker alone (90% in previous survey down to 83% in 2023.)</p> | <p><b>5.</b> All SW Teams notified of the need to have and use a pen portrait to introduce themselves to children. Guidance produced including that all SWs <u>must</u> state that children can ask to speak to their SW alone.</p> <p>Audit will monitor compliance of this.</p> |
| <p><b>6.</b> There was an increase from 2 to 8 % of 11-17 yr. olds felt embarrassed by adults for being in care.</p>   | <p><b>6.</b> Shared findings of survey with all key partners, foster carers and residential care staff to ensure this message is heard.</p> <p>Training to be delivered to all partners on language to be used and expectations of practice.</p>                                  |

# Additional actions taken to address what heard from our children in Bright Spots

- Relentless focus on recruitment of Social Workers
- Voice of the Child Champions/Be Heard Outcome Group presented findings of survey to identify actions for each team/service level.
- Practitioners Forum presented findings of survey to ensure the voice of our children influences the Getting to Outstanding Plan.
- Agreement made not to take on additional CSC project teams.
- Supported children and young people to interview for key roles in CSC. Questions asked of candidates in line with themes raised in survey. Issue of change of social workers enabled us to hear what was important in the role of SW.
- Analysis of Childrens' responses on IRO My views, identifying specific strengths and areas for development.
- Developing Padlets for children and young people that they can access electronically.
- CCR – Auditors encouraged to seek feedback from children, parents, and carers and to observe practice.
- Views of our service users and audit observations inform the planning of the Improvement Team and audit schedule.
- We have six Social Work Degree Apprentices currently, and two are due to graduate in January 2024, and will transition into ASYE Social Workers. Recently secured funding from the DfE with support from the Teaching Partnership to recruit more Social Work Degree Apprentices and we are the lead host with the Teaching Partnership for the Degree Apprenticeship programme.

# Aspirations - VIBE/Reach consultation

**32 consultation sessions held through Reach, 1058 pupils engaged, children shared their goals, aspirations identifying what stops them from achieving their goals and aspirations.**

- Sessions were completed with children and young people on overcoming barriers to achievements.
- Workshop on skills pool with YP to look at gaining experience, courses, and learning, learning from peers, study and reading, extracurricular activities and volunteering.
- Workshop on learning styles, informed by children's views who state that they would like to see more flexible ways of learning that suit every individual need.
- Workshop on education, what children wish was included such as help with finance, Voting and insurance etc.
- Workshop on peer pressure and how to overcome peer pressure, finances, self-handicapping to build self-esteem, health including mental health and physical health.
- Working with carers and social workers to increase their ambition and support for the educational outcomes of all our children and care leavers.