

# Voice of the Child Report

## Keeping in touch with our Looked After Children and Care Leavers

This document is a summary report of way's children who are in our Care and our Care Leavers our telling us about their experiences and views, this includes our different approaches to seeking children's views, such as:

- Keeping in Touch Calls and Visits by Social Workers and Personal Advisors and Independent Reviewing Officers
- Mind of My Own
- Participation Groups for Looked After Children and Care Leavers



Worcestershire Children First have written a Visits to Children and Keeping in Touch Guide for staff during our Covid-19 response, this identifies how staff engage with children & young people through Keeping in Touch calls and visits.

A specific guide for Personal Advisors and Care Leavers has also been developed. These are centrally available to all staff on Practice Standards – Social Care.

### Keeping in Touch Calls by Social Workers and Personal Advisors

- Over 90% of Looked After Children & young people are having KIT calls to the KPI standard.
- 64.8% of Care Leavers have had a Keeping in Touch Calls
- Fostering & Kinship Social Workers have completed 2144 KIT calls to carers and children in their placements; during the period 16/03/2020-05/05/2020
- Examples of what children have said include *"she is doing ok and is enjoying doing quizzes and facetimeing with her sister"* and *"said he was good - gone back to school - enjoying school - did a maths test I think 90 out 100 - he is very pleased with himself, he said he did not need a reward because just being in school is enough"*

Evidence; WCF BMI DATA

### Visits to Children Looked After and Care Leavers

- 155 visits have been completed to children looked after by either their Social Worker or IRO.
- 141 visits have been completed to children looked after and Care Leavers who live in semi-independent or solo supported accommodation.
- Young People working with outreach service said in a recent feedback survey;
- 86% felt listened to by the service,
- 78% felt they had been helped by the service,
- 83% felt it was easy to talk to their Outreach Worker.

Evidence; WCF BMI DATA

## Independent Reviewing Officers

- Across April & May IROs have undertaken 115 direct calls to children and young people to ascertain their views as part of their Looked After Child Reviews.
- In this period 55% of young people attended their Looked after Reviews virtually to share their views as part of the care plan review; but this is a reduction to the usual levels of approx. 60% so we need to understand why this is reduced
- 95% of children and young people have participated in their reviews, sharing their views by their preferred means.
- Look after Reviews continue to be consistently held in timescales with an average of 97% in timescale across the Covid-19 response period
- 10 young people have given feedback in mid-way audits in this period, they ALL told us:
  - feel listened to
  - feel safe in their placement
  - are happy with how their CLA Review is chaired
  - understand the role of their IRO
  - understand what happened in their CLA Review

Evidence; SQA Dashboard

**Mind of My Own;** is a virtual tool to support children and young people to share their views and contact their Social Worker or IRO through a different route.

- In April and May 23 young people have used Mind of My Own to share their views of these "statements" have been to share good news with their Social Worker and the other 3 have been to prepare for their looked after review.
- Young People have said that they are "Calm, Hopeful & Enthusiastic", one young person reported that they were feeling "anxious" and they wanted to talk about this in their review – the Social Worker spoke with the young person the same day she sent this statement.
- One child reported to be "happy" and was looking forward to "telephone contact with his mum" and One Young Person said "My care plan - It's good that I will live with grandad" in response to what is good in their life.
- No children have said they are feeling unsafe in this time period.
- Young people said when asked what was going well; "Where I live - I'm safe. I'm being cared for. Nan and grandad has done a lot for me" and "Settled - I feel safe and settled here" (for a foster carer review).
- Statements evidenced that young people are happy with how their IROs chairs their Reviews.

Evidence; MOMO Service Dashboard

## What's Working Well?

- Children & Young People are receiving consistent Keeping in Touch Calls by their IRO's, Social Workers and PAs
- Children and Young People are "participating" in their reviews – sharing their wishes and feelings by their preferred means; this has remained a strength throughout our response to Covid-19
- Care Reviews remain consistently in timescale
- Some young people have shared their views via Mind of My Own and overall these have been positive
- Relationships with Children and Young People are being maintained

## What Are We Worried About?

- Virtual reviews have seen a decrease in "attendance" of children and young people
- Some Young People are worried about Covid-19 when "life" will return to normal
- Children and Young People are worried about School (especially GCSEs) and seeing their friends
- School and Contact with friends appear to be children's current biggest worries

## What Needs To Happen?

1. Continue to promote the use of Mind of My Own across the service as one way for young people to share their views
2. Audit of reduced "attendance" at virtual reviews
3. Continued Social Worker and PA focus on speaking and seeing children inline with our service delivery protocol
4. Workers/IROs to support carers in enabling children to have virtual contact with their friends where appropriate

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