What do children want from their care?

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- 150 years of history in Greater Manchester
- First home opened in 1870
- ‘Campaigning’ since 1878
- 24 hr night shelter opened opposite Strangeways Prison in 1879
- Formed the Manchester and Salford Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in 1884, investigated 522 cases of child cruelty within first year

Depiction of our first children’s home, 1870, from our archive

What is the purpose of the children’s social care system?

Need of children in care 2023

- Abuse or neglect - 65% (ONS, 2022)
- Family dysfunction - 13% (ONS, 2022)
- Absent parenting - 9%
- Child poverty - 8.1% (Bennett, 2021)

Homes:

- Foster care - 68% - decreased from 74% in 2015
- In secure units, children’s homes or semi-independent living accommodation - 17% - no direct comparison from 2015 possible

Key points:

- There are just over 8,000 children living in residential care
- There are 8,980 children living in semi-independent accommodation

What research says about the wishes and feelings of children in care

10,000 Voices, Bright Spots, Coram Voice and the University of Oxford (2022)

Important factors to older young people in care:

- Being involved in decision making and practising life skills.
- That they were happy with how they look.
- That they wanted to do the same things as their friends.
- That they had no worries about feelings or behaviours.
- That they trusted adults and had opportunities to be trusted.

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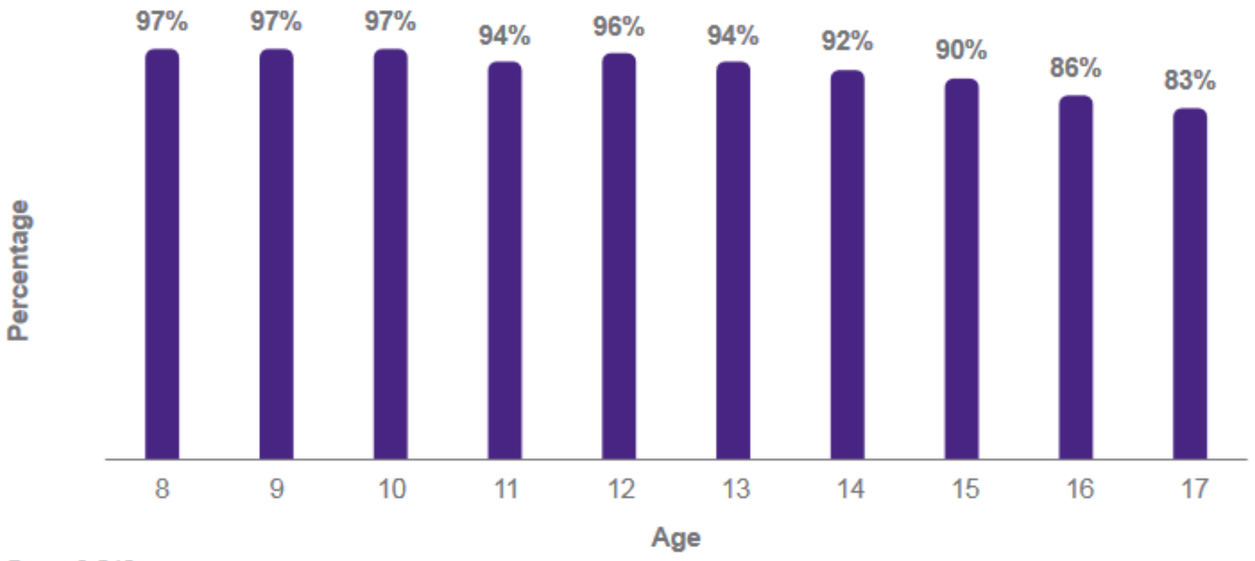
Observable trends:

- Trust of adults that they lived with decreased as they got older.
- Older young people in care were much more likely to say that they did not speak to their carers about the things that mattered to them.

Figure 7: Percentage of children who had a trusted adult by age



Base: 3,540

What research says about the wishes and feelings of children in care

What does care mean to you? Article 39 (2023)

- Survey for 16 and 17 year olds to establish what they want from their care (355 responses - 58 from children in care)

List of 19 factors for respondents to choose from, choice of “necessary” or “unnecessary”.

The most important factors for 16 and 17 year olds were:

- Having someone who is regularly around to chat and show an interest in you (97%)
- Having someone to show and tell you that you are loved (97%)
- Having someone to help you deal with emergencies i.e. electricity / water / break ins (97%)
- Having someone to protect you if you are ever in danger (96%)

Residential care

- Each setting inspected yearly by Ofsted
- One registered manager per setting
- DBS checks for workforce
- Children’s Homes Regulations 2015 has 9 quality standards that providers must meet

Semi-independent accommodation

- A sample of providers accommodation inspected every 3 years by Ofsted
- Licensed categories of accommodation:

Bedsits, shared accommodation with adults, caravans

- No limit to how many settings registered managers can oversee, no requirement for 24/7 staff
- Not specified within the guidelines whether DBS needed for adults in shared accommodation
- Semi-independent accommodation regulations have 5 standards (some of which are weaker)

Our recommendations

(Thank you for listening!)

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