



## **Young People's Report**

# **Options For Excellence**

**(Improving and developing social care)**



## **Children and Young People's consultations on their experience of social care**

**August 2006**

# Young People's Report

## Thank You!

I would like to thank all the young people who gave up their time either by taking part in one of the four consultation sessions or completing the online survey.

Also, a special thank-you to the foster carers who supported some of the young people in coming to the consultation sessions and took part in their own discussion group.

When the word we is used in this report it means:  
**National Children's Bureau (NCB)** and **Young NCB (YNCB)**

### Why did we ask for your views?

The **Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)** asked if we could help them to get children and young people who have first hand experience of social care to share their views and opinions about it.

These views and opinions are to help the **CWDC** with their Options for Excellence review, this review will look to develop a set of recommendations that will support the improvement and further development of social care staff and the quality, range of the services they provide.

### What did we do to make sure we spoke directly with young people and also have a wider number of responses?

We held four consultation sessions across England that allowed us to have direct discussions with children and young people on social care. Unfortunately one of the sessions had to be cancelled due to circumstances out of our control. The other three sessions were designed to be fun and engaging so children and young people who came would want to talk with us and share their views and opinions. A combined total of twenty-four young people came along to these three sessions and each one was a success due to the effort and contributions that those children and young people who attended

made.

We also designed an online survey that linked with the areas covered in the consultation sessions. We sent the survey out electronically and even though it was promoted widely and targeted those children and young people with relevant social care experience, only two young people completed it. This was a disappointing number, however both the responses have been included in the report and supported the findings from the consultation sessions held.

## What did we ask?

We asked children and young people in the sessions and by the online survey for their views and opinions on the following areas:

1. What makes a good Social Worker?
2. How should your social worker or care worker help and support you in your learning and personal development?
3. What training would social workers and care workers need to be able to help and support children and young people well?
4. How should you be involved in planning the care and support you need?
5. How should your family or carer be involved in planning the care and support you need?
6. Would it make a difference if children and young people who are helped by social workers, care workers and carers, got a job in social care when they are older?
7. How could technology make a difference to children's and young people's lives? (like computers, text messaging and so on)
8. How could you or other children and young people be involved in training people who work in social care (like your social worker, carer etc.) to help make sure you get the best possible service and support?

## What did young people tell us?

The messages that we passed onto the **CDWC** from what children and young people told us were:

Social Workers should have on going training and support around working with children and young people that can help them to perform well and provide a good level of service all the time.

Social Workers should have a set of minimum rules that they have to follow, which are designed and agreed with their children and young people. An example of this could include looking at communication (like when a child/young person phones them) and deciding on the minimum time they have to contact the child or young person back. It is about making social workers responsible for the little things that are of such importance to children and young people.

When putting care plans, pathway plans or any other plans together for a child or young person that these are done **with** the child or young person. Plans that fail are normally those where the child or young person has not been part of putting it together.

More training and support for social workers, foster carers and care workers to be able to advocate (support child or young persons rights) on a child or young persons behalf or providing access to an independent advocacy service that can do this. Advocacy should be advertised and easily available to children and young people to be able to take it up on their own.

Local authorities should think about how they can provide work opportunities for the children and young people in their care who are looking to or wish to build a career in the social care field.

Social workers caseloads should be reduced to free their time to deliver better services to their children and young people and build better relationships.

Local authorities need to invest more, use more and learn more about the benefits of technology and how it can improve the services and support it provides to children and young people.

Children and young people, who wish to, should be fully supported to

be able to help with the internal training of staff in how they work with children and young people.

Children and young people should be part of the recruitment of new staff. Children and young people offer views and opinions that greatly add value to the recruiting of new workers.

Children and young people as a group should have the opportunity to meet with social care staff to be able to discuss issues and concerns about service quality. Part of this would be putting together agreements to improve the service locally and that will only add credibility to the services children and young people receive.

Children and Young People see carers as the main providers of general support and practical skills. It would therefore be useful to have carers agree personal development opportunities with the child or young person they are caring for that will support them in their future independence.

### What did we do with what young people told us?

What young people told us at the consultation sessions and via the online survey was put together into a detailed report. This report has been passed to the **CWDC** and will support them in their Options for Excellence review.

### What Next?

The **CWDC** are going to use the detailed report on the consultation sessions and the online survey to support them in developing a set of recommendations to help improve social care.

Written by: David Curtis – Young NCB Coordinator