



# CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS



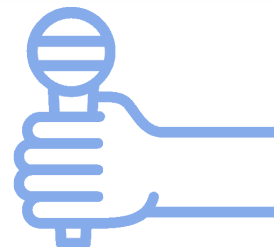
## Interpreting the Children and Young People Act 2014

### Summary Paper

November 2014

## What Young People Said

Who Cares? Scotland spoke to 87 young people across Scotland who have experience of growing up in care. We wanted to understand what living in care was like for them, what they hope for after leaving care and what kinds of support they would need to achieve this. This information is crucial in helping us understand how the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 can be fully realised and improve the lives of young people growing up in care.



All of the information within the report comes directly from care experienced young people and truly reflects their reality. We cannot thank them enough for being so open, honest and taking the time to participate in this research.

Many of the messages throughout our research mirror that of the research we conducted in 2012. This research can be viewed [here](#). Young people believe they should be **listened to** throughout their care journey and once they have left. They want to be **involved** in their care planning and they recognise how closely this links to feeling happy and engaged in decision making processes. They want a **care experience that works for them**; not one that they are made to fit into. One that is full of **positive, stable, loving** relationships that help them to **strengthen their wellbeing**. Leaving the place they consider home should be **no different** to the experience of their non-looked after peers, in their view. It should be a **supported and gradual transition**. It should provide **opportunities** for growth and development, but recognise the need for 'safety net' options and help, should life become difficult or not go as planned. **Recognition of these opinions** is integral to ensuring the provisions within the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) are fully realised. If corporate parents and looked-after young people fully and **equally** understand the promise within this Act, they can **work together** to ensure implementation is effective in practice.

This summary captures the thoughts, feelings, hopes and experiences of both looked-after young people and care leavers. While it depicts a concise overview, it is recommended that the full report is read to understand the depth of views of the young people involved and how this can help to interpret the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (hereafter referred to as the Act).

In this report, we explore the following themes through the lenses of **Relationships, Rights** and **Responsibilities**:



Care Planning



Aftercare & Throughcare



Wellbeing



Continuing Care



Housing & Homelessness



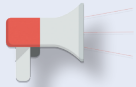
Education and Employment

## RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships remain an important factor to young people moving through care. They want safe, stable, loving relationships which are genuine and offer a sense of security.

### Care Planning

Young people recognise the importance of care planning and they want to lead this with help from someone that they have a good relationship with, without having to rely on extra formal meetings. By making sure this person has a genuine relationship with the young person, discussions are more likely to happen early and often, the Child's Plan will suit their needs.



**80% of young people who felt listened to in their care plans, also felt happy with how their plans were managed.**

### Wellbeing

Young people believe wellbeing will differ between each young person and can change over time. They want professionals to understand the evolving nature of their wellbeing and a positive relationship can ensure this.



**“(Wellbeing) means that I am happy in all areas of life and get the same chances as everyone else.”**

### Housing & Homelessness

Homelessness can unfortunately be a reality for young people both in care and after. Young people recognise the importance of stable, long term relationships in preventing homelessness and maintaining a home. Having support from a professional you trust provides an essential lifeline for both practical and emotional support.



**50% of young people who had experienced homelessness were able to seek help from a positive relationship.**

## Aftercare & Throughcare

Young people want whoever is important to them to be able to help them beyond care. These relationships should not simply help young people once they have left care, but should help those still in care to understand what they are entitled to.



**60% said they would ask for help from anyone that they trust; the rest identified a specific person that they have a relationship with.**

## Continuing Care

Good relationships established when growing up in care are essential to successful transitions. Young people believe being able to stay in their placements for longer is necessary, but more importantly they want this extra time to be meaningful and help them prepare for life after care.



**80% said that anyone they have a genuine relationship with can help them prepare for leaving care at the right time.**

## Education and Employment

Often for young people, the unsettled experience of being in care can hamper their education and employment prospects. Those who work hard to support young people must develop good relationships and use this to provide encouragement, source opportunities and help looked-after young people to reach their potential.



**63% of young people said they would need help to apply for and identify the right education or employment option for them.**

## RIGHTS

Rights are important to young people, especially when they understand what they mean and how to contest anything which threatens them.

### Care Planning

Knowledge of rights throughout a care journey can significantly improve the experience a young person has growing up. The strong link between knowledge of rights and engagement in care planning featured heavily in our research. The more young people in care understand their rights, the higher the chance of effective care planning.



**"It has helped me later in life – can't go through life fighting with fists."**

### Wellbeing

Young people in care must be helped to understand the importance of wellbeing and how they can improve their own.



**"It's about just being cared for and keeping yourself safe."**

### Housing & Homelessness

Young people who have experienced homelessness after care often lack knowledge of their rights. Young people want to be made aware of housing opportunities early and be helped to prepare for leaving care gradually.

**Young people said homelessness made them feel:**

**SAD**

**ANGRY**

**LONELY**

**FRUSTRATED**

## After care and throughcare

Young people want to be made aware of what support they are entitled to and they want to know early on in care. If a young person were to lose touch with aftercare services, they must know how to access it if they need to in the future. Access to aftercare support must be simple.



**50% of young people recognised the importance of social work in helping them to know their rights.**

## Continuing Care

Young people believe the Continuing Care law will improve the lives of many leaving care; the chance to stay in care until ready to leave and to prepare for the next stage. Young people must understand this new right and the benefits it can provide.



**Most young people said that help to understand when they are ready to leave care was important.**

## Education and Employment

Young people want to know what their education and training options are and how to access them. Many care experienced young people access further education later in their early adulthood. To support this, they must understand what funding and support options exist for them.



**50% of young people said they believe they would need financial help to reach further education.**

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Corporate parents must ensure that care experienced young people know who they are, what they can do for them and when they are likely to come across them.

### Care Planning

Professionals in the sector have a responsibility to ensure that care planning directly involves young people and is effective. We must listen to young people and encourage them to take ownership of their care journey; to understand their rights within care and to voice their hopes or concerns.



**75% believed they had been listened to and were engaged with their plan.**

### Wellbeing

Young people want to help corporate parents understand what wellbeing means to them. Full realisation of the importance of wellbeing will only happen through regular engagement with care experienced young people.



**“Food in your belly, roof over your head, bed to sleep and to not be abused in any way.”**

### Homelessness

Young people want to help their corporate parents develop strategies for improving housing and homelessness services. They also want corporate parents to understand what life can be like after care and how this can impact on their housing situation.



**Over 50% want to be meaningfully involved in planning how corporate parents will operate.**

## After care and throughcare

There must be a consistent understanding of what aftercare supports are on offer for young people leaving care and how long they can access them for. This shared knowledge will ensure all corporate parents can work together to best support young people at times of vulnerability.



**"It will help me when I move on from care."**

## Continuing Care

Corporate parents must help young people understand the benefits of staying in care for as long as possible and until they are ready to move. They must do this by working together and with young people to work out how best this new provision can be implemented.



**"It feels like there are less corporate parents for when we leave care"**

## Education and Employment

Corporate parents must help young people with care experience to break the barriers that can exist with education and employment. Whether it is providing support to access funding or employment opportunities, corporate parents must ensure they work closely with young people to better understand what these barriers are.



**"Young people in care should have the chance to access services like those who live at home."**

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