

# *Children in Care Council*

# Report

## Looked After Children's Reviews

### **Who are the Children in Care Council?**

The Children in Care Council are a group of young people aged between 13 and 21 who are in care or care leavers.

The group meet once a week, create their own governance and agenda which they work from for the full year.

The Children in Care Council have focused this year on the review process for looked after children.

### **Why are the Children in Care Council doing this?**

The Children in Care Council are wanting to:

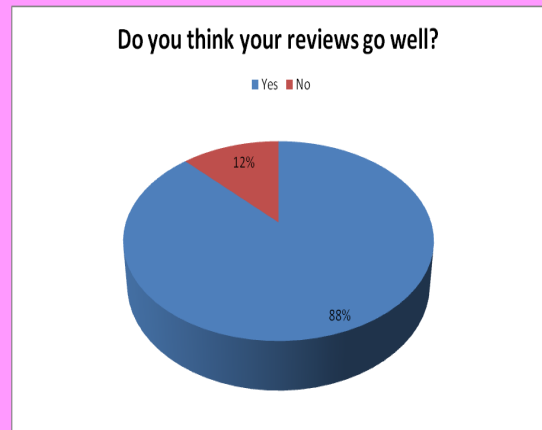
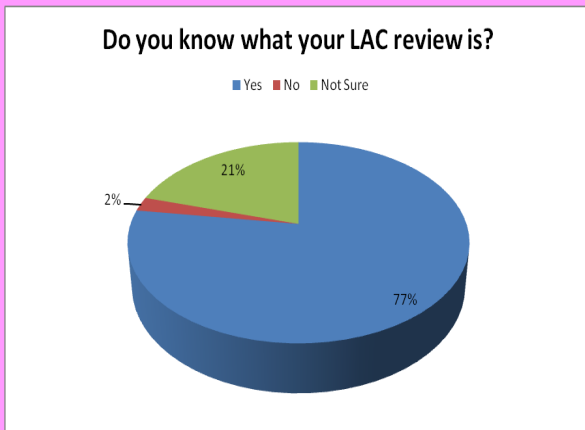
- Raise awareness of what a review is for looked after children
- Make the reviews more person centred
- Improve the experience of young people who attend their review
- Make any changes that may help young people have a better experience or start attending their reviews
- Find out what people think of their reviews, what works well and what could be improved.

### **What did the report involve?**

The Children in Care Council carried out the following tasks:

- Created a survey to give out to young people who are in care or leaving care to find out their opinions on the review process.
- The survey includes questions that will find out what children and young people think about their reviews, what works well and how things could be improved. It also look at the paperwork that is given to the child or young person before the review takes place.
- The surveys were given out to foster carers, and social workers and asked for them to speak with young people to find out their views on their reviews.
- The surveys were asked face to face between members of the Children in Care Council and the children and young people.
- Telephone interviews with young people have been carried out.
- The surveys were discussed and given out at events that the Children in Care Council have organised.
- A variety of methods were used to give out the survey including face to face, telephone, post and email.

# Feedback



## Do your reviews go well? YES

'I get what I ask for usually'

'They listen to what is said'

'Because it gives everyone ideas to look into and find more details about me'

'I am given the opportunity to say what I think and find out what is planned for me'

'I get to outline my point'

'Hardly anything negative'

'I have the opportunity to say what I think and I can listen to what is planned for me'

'Because no one says bad things'

'They listen to me'

'They listen'

'Everyone is there so I can speak to everyone about what I want'

'Because I am still with foster carers who I like'

'They benefit me well'

'Yes because most of the time I get my point across and get successful things said about me'

'We get listened to and able to put our point across'

'I am listened to'

'It feels easier as I get older because I feel more confident about talking in front of people'

'My social worker tells me about my review'

'I normally get good news'

'Because they talk about you'

'My views are listened to'

## Do your reviews go well? NO

'Boring, just sit there'

'Don't go because they are boring'

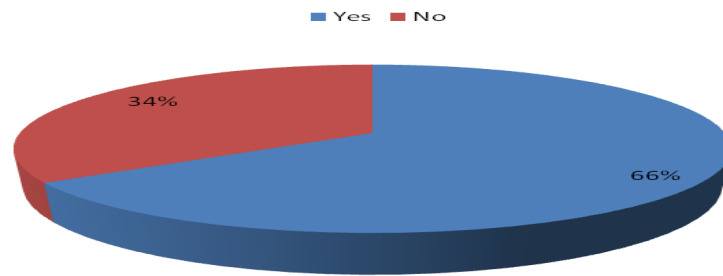
'I don't think they are very interesting'

'Because it is just the same things over and over again but now I think things will start to move forward'

'Could be improved by making sure that all people are in attendance and if not then make sure the meeting is rearranged to accommodate all people'

'They talk over me and about me when it is meant to be about me'

## Do you like going to your reviews?



### YES

'I know what is happening'

'Find out what others think of the situation'

'Find out what they are about and able to give my opinions'

'I can find out what is planned for me and what people say about me'

'I get to know about my education'

'Because I learn what I need to improve'

'I get to speak about what I want to happen'

'To see what changes have been made'

'I will be due to attend as I now feel I can fully contribute'

'I like to know what is going to be said about me and see what will happen'

'Shows me how much I have improved'

'People listen to you'

'All about me'      'Yes they talk about me'

'They are fun, you get to talk about friends at school, how you are doing at school, get to talk about me'

'Yes so I get to know what is happening'

'It is nice to know what happens and is nice to give your own opinion'

'Yes it is interesting'

'I like to know what is going on and what is being said about me'

'They talk about making changes that will help me in school'

### NO

'Boring' 'Boring' 'Boring' 'Boring' 'Boring'

'Don't like to be sat in one room too much attention on me and can be awkward when lots of questions are getting asked'

'Because you have to wait'

'No it is during school'

'No, I get stressed'

'Too many people'



# wish list



## What would you like to change/improve about your review?

- I would like to get more involved, the IRO could ask more about the paperwork that has been completed before the review to give young people more involvement.
- One person asking the questions, pass on any information through the reviewing officer.
- Change the times of the review.
- Make sure everyone attends
- Different location, better environment.
- Put things in place to make it more child friendly.
- Get to know your reviewing officer before going to the meetings
- For them not to just talk to the carer.
- For all people to be in attendance.
- Always end the meeting on a positive.
- Less people there.
- Ensure I am listened to.
- Change the room and put papers and pens in it.
- I would like to know what questions are going to be asked before the meeting.
- That they listen to me more and ask me more questions and not just talk about me.

# How does it make you feel when people are talking about your review?

'Depends what is being talked about'

'OK'

'I think it would bother me if I wasn't at the review'

'Not bothered'

'Quiet'

'If it is nice, it is fine'

'Fine'

'It feels good because it shows people care about me'

'It is makes me feel good and important because people care about me and what I need'

'Depends if good or bad'

'Annoyed'

'Tense'

'Happy if people are happy with me'

'I feel like I want to have a go at them but you do need to listen to what they have to say'

'Not happy because they might say something I do not want them to'

'They talk about you like you are not there'

'Angry'

'Special'

'Weird sometimes'

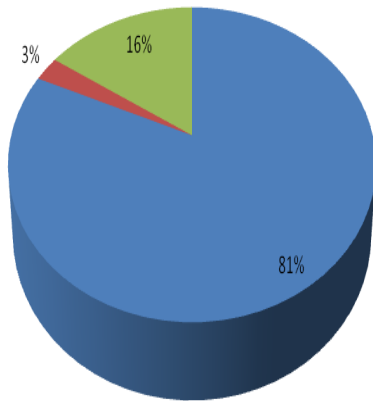
'Happy'

'Odd'

'Embarrassed because you don't know what they are going to say'

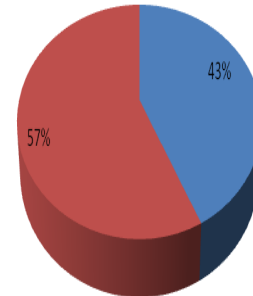
### Do you feel listened to?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Sometimes



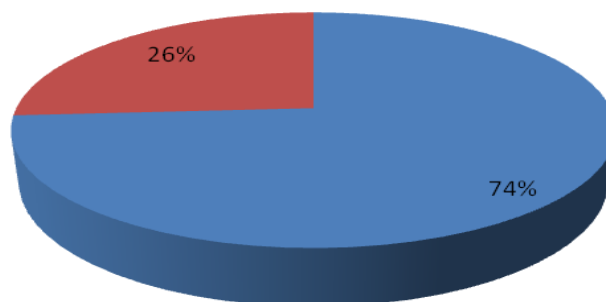
### Are you asked who you want at the meeting and where the meeting is going to take place?

■ No ■ Yes



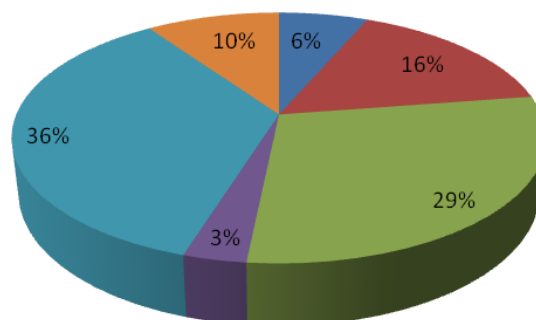
### Are you spoken to before the meeting? Do you feel prepared for the meeting?

■ Yes ■ No



### What way would you like to be informed about your review?

■ Text ■ Social Worker ■ Foster Carer ■ Staff ■ Letter ■ Visit



# Review Paperwork



## What do you think of the review paperwork? Could it be improved?

'Questions need changing, no explanation, have an opportunity to discuss the paperwork in the review so young people can get more involved.'

'Every sheet should be different in relation to different stages'

'Haven't been given papers'

'O.K.'

'Better than they were'

'Do not fill them in prefer to talk at meeting'

'Can be confusing, need to be more realistic'

'Cool'

'Make them different for different ages'

'Too wordy'

'Good because they allow me to express my opinions in different ways e.g drawings'

'I Need time to speak too at meeting'

'Never received them'



## How would you like your views, wishes and feelings to be gathered before your review?

One to one session before the meeting with support worker

Written down

Speak to staff

To complete with staff

Visited at home

Verbally

Fill in a form

Foster carer to talk to us

Don't think it is a good idea

Social Worker Visits



**If you could ask for one thing to be done at your review what would it be?**

'Less boring, more people to attend'

'When the review is written up it needs to be in clear and understandable language – a separate form for young people or the IRO to check young people understand what it means'

'To go and live with my dad'

'Less people, an opportunity to feed in beforehand if you didn't want to go'

'Reviews to be held on an annual basis if possible, need to check with Individual'

'Make contact with siblings, be in a centre where my mam is not there and have separate one with mam'

'Make them less boring'

'Talk individually'

'Own time to speak'

'Talk about my mam'

'More information about my past/family history'

'Space for time out if it gets too much'

'Everyone to tell me their name'

'To let me know who is coming and who is not rather than just saying they did not turn up. Do not change dates and times at last minute'

'People to be there who I trust'

'Young person to get opportunity to chair if getting older and feel more confident'

'Not to be in school'

'Better decisions made'

'Have a laptop in the corner'

'Time out space'

'Don't use big words and explain what it means'

'Like my review to be shorter maybe 30 minutes and decisions to be made there and then'



# Recommendations

**We would like to propose some changes to the LAC review process to include the following recommendations:**

- Young person to contribute to where the review is going to be held and who is going to attend the review meetings.
- Ensure the paperwork is sent out at the same time before each review is held.
  - Ensure offer of advocate before each review.
- Appointment to be made up to a week before with IRO to look at the above recommendations.

To explain this we have come up with a flow chart which shows what we would like the process to look like. (following page)

## **Other recommendations include.....**

- Young person to have the opportunity and a time allocated at the beginning of the review to speak first if they want to or to use this timeslot to discuss the paperwork that has been completed before the review.
- Everybody who attends the review to give an introduction of who they are and why they have come to the review and this to happen at each review. If they have business cards to give them out at the meeting.
- For there to be activities within the room where the review is taking place such as colourings, paper, pens, refreshments so the young person has the opportunity to take some time out within the review if they need it. For the young person to be aware there are some activities and refreshments involved in the review.
- Always have a venue which has a 'time out' facility and for the IRO to tell you at the beginning of the meeting where this is so the young person is aware of where they can go if they need some time.
- Prioritise what the young person would like to discuss in case they do not want to stay for the full review.
- A separate form to be sent out with the minutes of the review which is more young person friendly which has the basic points of what had been discussed and basic actions.
- Always end the meeting on a positive note. For the IRO or all people who take part in the review to pick out something positive either discussed at the meeting or that has happened in between the reviews.
- For Hartlepool Borough Council to look into the app called 'Mind Of My Own' (MOMO) and come back to the Children in Care council and pass on this information of what the app is about and if it could support getting young people involved in the review process.
- To propose some new paperwork—My Review Planner to make one document for all ages.
- For Hartlepool Borough Council to look into if there is a chance an annual review could take place if young person is settled and all professionals do not have any concerns rather than a review every six months.

## **LAC Review Process**

### **One month before review**

Contact the young person to advise them when their review is going to be and ask them where they would like their review to be held. Double check the room has a time out facility.



Whilst speaking to the young person advise them who you are thinking of inviting to the review and ask if they have anybody they would like to be there or anybody specific from an agency such as school. Offer an advocate for the review.



Once you have spoken to the young person send them and the foster carer a letter to confirm the review details including venue, time, date and possible list of attendees. Send the review paperwork with the letter and advise you will make an appointment for a week before the review to visit the young person.

### **One week before review**

IRO to arrange to meet up with young person within the week before the review.



IRO to discuss paperwork (My Review Planner) with the young person to identify if they need any help completing the paperwork, what they would like to discuss at the review, if they would like to attend and chair the review and if not what part of the paperwork do they want the IRO to discuss. To prepare the young people for some questions that may be asked at the review.

### **After the review**

Send a young person friendly document alongside the minutes to explain the basic points and basic action.

## How and why?

The recommendations we have proposed come from the feedback of young people.

The young people wanted to be involved in where their review was held and who was going to attend.

They wanted to be well prepared for the meeting so all information to be discussed a month before the meeting and for them to meet with IRO up to a week. To have the opportunity if they feel comfortable to chair the meeting.

Young people wanted to know who the professionals were in attendance at the review and why they were there.

Some feedback from young people was that their reviews were boring. This is why the refreshments and activities are recommended and also to encourage young people to come at an earlier age and get familiar with the review process and could hopefully increase people that attend their review.

Young people felt sometimes their reviews were a bit too much for them or they needed some time and this is why the time out facility was recommended and for young people to be aware there is this facility to encourage them to come along.

Some of the feedback was that the minutes that the young people receive are too complicated and they do not read them so if there was a separate form for young people to outline the basic points and actions this would be an easier document for them to read.

Some young people felt the reviews went well depending on what was discussed and sometimes some of the information discussed was negative but needed addressing. The young people felt ending the meeting on a positive note would spare them to continue to do well or get back on track if they needed to.

The Children in Care Council have looked at the MOMO app and they believe there were some nice elements to it and would like the IRO team to look into this and share the information with them to see if it could be beneficial to gather young people's opinions and views.

The young people felt the paperwork was good however they would just prefer one document for all ages and it to be in a similar format with options, not much writing and the opportunity for information to be recorded in different ways.

As young people felt their reviews could be boring or not needed if they were settled, the recommendation if possible is for there to be an annual review rather than a six monthly review.

