

'I am more than being in care'

A summary of key messages taken from Children's Parliament's consultation to inform the Independent Care Review

Children's Parliament
February 2020



A message from the children:

This work is important because it's sharing all of our thoughts and opinions about care and things we want to be different and better. We are the children who are experiencing it right now and we believe that things should change in Scotland for children with care experience.

We feel that this report is a reminder and something to prompt you to actually make these changes to make sure all children of all ages in care can feel happy.

Listen to our voices because we need this change.

- Ben, Member of Children's Parliament

For the full Children's Parliament report, please visit:
bit.ly/MoreThanBeingInCare

Who can make a difference for children with care experience in Scotland?



Key Messages

- Children want to be loved.
- Relationships are essential.
- Being in care does not define children.
- Children's privacy must be prioritised.
- There needs to be equality and equity in care so children can lead a 'normal' life.
- Respite is challenging for children.
- Language contributes to the stigma around care.
- Children want to be involved in making decisions about their lives.

Seen + Heard Fife is a Children's Parliament project supported by:



This report was commissioned by:



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Through Children's Parliament's Seen + Heard Fife project, children identified their experiences under five themes:

Relationships in care

- We need to know we are loved.
- Caring should be more than a job.
- Help us understand why we are in care.
- We should have a consistent social worker.
- No broken promises.
- We want to be able to trust adults.
- We need closure when relationships come to an end.

Keeping in touch with important people

- We want to see our families regularly - parents and siblings.
- We worry about how our families are doing.
- Sometimes we feel like we have to take sides.
- If we don't want to have contact with someone, we shouldn't have to see them.
- Family time should be in a comfortable space.
- Ask how we feel about our family time, especially when making decisions about it.

my social worker can see from my face if I'm sad because she knows me well

How decisions are made about us

- We want to feel more in control at meetings, like 'chairing' them.
- Use technology so we can contribute to meetings without having to be there.
- Our carers should be able to make day-to-day decisions without social work.
- Our privacy is really important – please respect it.
- Let us know we can ask questions.
- We shouldn't have to miss school or activities for meetings.
- Meetings shouldn't be held in formal spaces that make us feel small.

How we talk about care

- Believe in us for who we are and our dreams for the future.
- We don't want to feel different, unequal or left out.
- Social workers should remove badges when visiting us at school.
- Teachers should use inclusive language when talking about families and be discreet when they talk about our care experience.
- When we have a bad day, we may need extra support and understanding.
- Talk about 'family time' or 'seeing each other', instead of 'contact'.

Our sense of belonging

- We want to express our feelings and get lots of hugs and cuddles.
- Home should be a place where we want to be.
- We want to be treated the same as everyone else in the house.
- It hurts when we're sent on respite and our carers go on holiday.
- We need space and time to ourselves – in our own room, if possible.
- We should be able to play with our friends and take part in clubs and activities.
- Please respect children's human rights.

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