

In the **Seen + Heard Fife** programme, looked after children explore children's rights and what children in care need to be **healthy, happy and safe** – focusing on life at home, at school and with social work. This poster reflects the important messages from the **Seen + Heard** children.

Happy Healthy and Safe in care

To feel healthy, happy and safe, we need:

"I feel people care about my rights at school, I feel I matter and am important when my teacher listens and talks to me and I feel included because they make sure I have a group to work with."

- MCP, age 11

- To be loved
- Hugs and good cuddles
- To express our feelings
- Adults who care for us, play and spend time with us
- Enough healthy food at home and at school
- A clean home, fresh air and access to nature
- To have contact and time with our parents, siblings and friends
- To feel included – and not be bullied because we are in care
- For our social workers to do what they say they are going to do
- A social worker who works to keep us in a good home
- A social worker who keeps us informed about what's going on and when they are coming
- To trust our adults and for adults to trust us!
- Safe playgrounds and enough staff at school to look after us
- Some space and time to ourselves– in our own room if possible!
- Time and preparation when big changes happen
- Someone who knows where we are and makes sure we are safe
- To have the same social worker for as long as possible
- No abuse, no hitting and no shouting

"Some adults help me, they give me some strategies to support me and they know when I need to be distracted."

- MCP, age 11

The things that get in the way of us feeling healthy, happy and safe are when:

"Sometimes you try as hard as you can but others may not think it is enough."

- MCP, age 11

"If you don't trust, you don't speak"

- MCP, age 11

"I didn't even get to say goodbye to my mum when I went into care."

- MCP, age 10

- We feel different, unequal and left out
- We worry a lot about our family and what will happen
- We are forced to move home and school
- We don't get to see our parents, siblings and friends
- We have to lie or feel caught in the middle
- We can't go outside
- We don't have good food to eat
- Adults are too protective and won't let us take some risks
- Adults aren't good role models for us
- We can't sleep because it's too loud inside or outside our house
- We feel sick because we are worried and upset
- We are lonely and heartbroken
- We get assaulted or adults shout at us
- An adult blames us for something we haven't done
- We are compared with others
- We are ignored or aren't believed
- Someone talks behind our backs, is spreading rumours and making things up
- Adults keep secrets and we don't know what's going on
- We don't have a choice or a say

Top tips for adults from looked after children:

"It can be worrying when adults write information about you and share it with other people."

- MCP, age 11

- Let us know we can ask questions
- Teachers and other adults should use inclusive language
- Get to know us and our favourite things - caring is more than a job
- Keep your promises - don't say you are coming when you are not
- Social workers please introduce yourself to me and remember my name
- Help us feel part of the family and like we belong - just like any other children
- Social workers please tell us what you are going to do with our private information
- Contact with our families can feel hard when we are asked to choose sides
- Don't ask us the same questions over and over, sometimes it's hard to answer them
- Remember that being in care isn't the only thing about us and doesn't define who we are!
- Social workers please ask before visiting us at school - sometimes nobody knows that we are in care and we just want to be like everyone else
- Home should be a place we want to be - with people we can talk to and where we are nurtured, comfortable and relaxed
- Make social work offices clean and comfortable with spaces to relax and have family time
- Believe in us for who we are and our dreams for the future

"My teacher says go home and talk to your mum and dad, but I live with my gran and it makes me feel weird."

- MCP, age 11

"It's hard for me at big events and holidays because it reminds me that my dad isn't here."

- MCP, age 10

"Sometimes my social worker wants to take me somewhere away from my family to ask questions, they take me to my room and it feels weird and embarrassing."

- MCP, age 11