

Report to Corporate Parenting Board

Date: Wednesday 12th September 2018

Report Title: Brightspots Survey of Children in Care and Care Leavers

Director Responsible: Helen Watson, Executive Director of Children's Services

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Bright Spots Programme, developed by Coram Voice with the University of Bristol, aims to improve the well-being of children and young people in care by identifying and promoting practices that have a positive influence on them.

It recognises that children in care want the same things as other children, but that their well-being is affected by experiences other children may not have, such as their relationships with carers and social workers.

Your Life, Your Care survey

The Your Life, Your Care survey is a tool for measuring the quality of looked-after children's care experience and their sense of well-being. The survey was developed with children and young people in recognition that they are experts on their own experience. Your Life, Your Care is based on two international literature reviews, a roundtable discussion with professionals across the children's services sector, and focus groups and interviews with 140 children and young people.

Your Life Beyond Care

The new Bright Spots survey, Your Life Beyond Care, focuses on the thoughts, feelings and experiences of care leavers. It has been developed using the same rigorous methodology as the Your Life, Your Care surveys for younger children, drawing on research and focus groups with care-experienced young people.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- **Designed by young people** – The survey has been developed based on what 140 young people in care told the researchers was important to looked after children, through focus groups and interviews around the country
- **Strongly evidence based** – The survey draws on two international literature reviews, conducted by the University of Bristol, of 'Children and young people's views of being in care' and 'Measuring well-being', which informed the focus groups with young people. We have also used survey development experts to simplify and test questions and make sure our findings can be compared to national data.

- **Captures the experience of younger children** – Through age appropriate questionnaires and a methodology using trusted adults it allows you to support children as young as four to share their experiences.
- **Quick and easy to complete** – We carefully tested and chose questions that are easy to understand and only take an average of 10 minutes to complete.
- **Confidential** – The data is aggregated and no one will be able to identify what individual children have said; this increases the likelihood of more honest feedback.
- **Brightspots ensures secure data handling** – The online survey is administered through Smart Survey, providing a high level of security and adherence to UK data protection legislation.
- **Brightspots enables good practice ideas to be shared between local authorities** – We will promote the positive practice ('Bright Spots') we identify and bring together participating local authorities to share learning and 'Bright Spots' through regular communications and peer learning seminars.

3.0 TIMESCALES

- Start date of Your Life, your care survey (age 4 to 18 - Children in care) will take place between **1 October 2018 – 21 October 2018**.
- Your life beyond care survey (care leaver) will take place from the 24th October – 31st October 2018.

The findings will be shared with the Children in Care Council who will develop a report and supporting action plan. This will be presented to the workforce in the Participation Conference taking place in January 2019 and to the Corporate Parenting Board meeting as soon as the slide deck is available.

4.0 COMMENTARY

This survey will provide a validated overview of the views of children and young people in Middlesbrough about their experiences of being in care. We will be able to develop and build upon the dataset. We will also have access to a wide network of other Local authorities across England using this approach to further develop best practice.