

Survey analysis: Care-experienced young people's views on Ofsted care-leaver ILACS consultation

About Become - Become is the national charity for children in care and young care leavers. Our vision is that care-experienced people have the same chances as everyone else to live happy, fulfilled lives. Our mission is to help children in care and young care leavers to believe in themselves and to heal, grow and unleash their potential. We work alongside them to make the care system the best it can be.

About the Survey

Between June and July 2022, [Ofsted held a public consultation](#) on its proposals to introduce a separate judgement about care leavers within the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS). Become promoted Ofsted's consultation through our participation and social media networks to encourage care leavers to share their views and respond directly to the online consultation.

At Become, we thought it was essential that Ofsted hear directly from care-leavers, so to further encourage care leavers to share their views and contribute to the consultation, we developed and promoted a short survey, which broke down the consultation questions to make it easier to respond to. This [survey](#) was a self-selecting survey and was open from Wednesday 13th to Friday 29th July inclusive. The survey was promoted through Become's social media and participation networks, as well as being promoted further by some other voluntary organisations and local authority participation leads.

Who responded to the survey

In total, 16 young people responded to the survey, all of whom were care-experienced.

- **Age** - one survey respondent was aged under 16 years old; four were aged between 16 and 17; nine were aged between 18 and 21; and two were aged between 22 and 25 years old.
- **Gender identity** - 13 of the respondents identified as female; one as male; one as non-binary; and one respondent preferred not to say. 14 of the respondents identified the same gender as registered at birth; whilst two respondents did not.
- **Disability**: ten respondents identified as disabled; 5 respondents identified as non-disabled; and one respondent preferred not to say.
- **Race / ethnicity**:
 - 14 respondents identified as 'White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, Irish';
 - One respondent identified as 'Asian or Asian: British Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese'; and
 - One respondent identified as 'Black, African, Caribbean, or Black British: African, Caribbean'.

- **Sexuality:** 12 respondents identified as heterosexual / straight; and four respondents identified as lesbian.
- **Care placement type:** We asked respondents which type of ‘placement’ have you spent the most time in while in care:
 - Ten respondents stated foster care;
 - Two respondents stated children’s homes;
 - Two respondents stated independent or semi-independent accommodation;
 - One respondent stated kinship care; and
 - One respondent stated secure care.

Support for the new separate judgement for care leavers

We asked survey respondents whether they agreed with Ofsted’s proposal to introduce a separate assessment on “the experiences and progress of care leavers” as part of their inspections of local authority children’s services. Overall 13 respondents stated yes (81.3%), one respondent said no (6.3%) and two stated they weren’t sure (12.5%).

Which factors are important for Ofsted to consider when assessing the progress and experiences of care leavers

We asked respondents the extent to which they agreed that a range of named factors were important for Ofsted to consider when assessing the progress and experiences of care leavers. In total there were 17 named factors and these are included in the appendix to this document, along with a breakdown of responses to this question.

The responses highlight that a range of factors were considered to be important by respondents. 50% or more of the respondents agreed that 12 of the 17 named factors were important, and at least 30% of respondents agreed that all of the factors were important.

We also asked respondents what they thought were the three most important factors for Ofsted to consider when assessing the experiences of care leavers. The most important factors highlighted by respondents were:

| Factor | Number of respondents (out of 16) |
|---|--|
| Care leavers are helped to understand their rights, entitlements and responsibilities, and any optional support provided by the local authority. | 12 |
| Care leavers are supported to move towards independence at a pace that is right for them. | 7 |
| Care leavers have secure and good quality accommodation that best meets their needs and helps them to develop their independence skills safely. | 6 |
| Care leavers receive appropriate practical, emotional and financial support. | 5 |
| Care leavers have effective and relevant pathway plans, which address all of their needs. Care leavers actively contribute to the development of these plans, which are reviewed regularly. | 5 |

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| Care leavers have good education and employment opportunities, including work experience and apprenticeships. | 5 |
| Care leavers are in good physical and mental health, or are being helped to improve their health. Their health needs are identified and met. | 5 |
| Care leavers are provided with all key documents they need to begin their lives as young adults, such as national insurance numbers, birth certificates and passports. | 5 |
| Care leavers experience stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work. | 4 |

We also asked respondents whether there were other important factors they thought that Ofsted should take into account when setting out what good looks like for care leavers. Respondents provided a range of comments related to other factors, which are summarised below:

- The provision of appropriate help and support for care leavers through to the age of 25.
- Appropriate placements and accommodation that consider care leavers holistic needs. For example, one respondent stated “A care leaver who is high risk for drug alcohol, mental health etc should not be placed in high risk accommodation such as YMCA”. Another respondent highlighted that care leavers are often “rushed to move accommodation which makes mental health worse”.
- Appropriate financial support, particularly recognising rises in the cost of living and the lack of financial support that is available to care leavers. One respondent suggested that Ofsted should consider whether “local authorities are topping up young people’s money to ensure they have enough to live comfortably, as they would if it was their own children.” Another respondent suggested “looking at making Care Leavers exempt from certain bills and providing more resources for Care Leavers especially with this financial crisis and recession that is going to hit.”
- Supporting care leavers to have and to meet their ambitions and aspirations. One respondent highlighted how important it is to “listen and promote the desires and ambitions of the Care leaver to ensure they maximise their potential and to help build their confidence”. Another suggested that “improving financial literacy, importance of life skills. Promoting higher education and apprenticeships” were all important.
- Ensuring that policies and systems are joined up for care leavers. One respondent highlighted that “Sometimes the benefits system undermines care leavers' best interests, it did mine. I would have been able to get temporary housing when I was made homeless if didn't work but couldn't because I had a job, which was low pay so I would have been better on benefits. The council didn't help. My PA is too busy, she has too many people to look after”.
- Ensuring that care leavers are able to develop trusting relationships with professionals, where they feel able to open up.

Factors that should affect the evaluation criteria for the impact of leaders

We asked respondents if they thought there are any factors relating to the experiences of care leavers that should impact on the way that leadership for local authority children’s services should be assessed. Respondents provided a range of factors and suggestions, including:

- Ensuring that care leavers views and experiences are actively taken into consideration by Ofsted when assessing the leadership of local authority children's services.
- Ensuring that care leavers are involved in decision-making at a local level about decisions that will affect their lives, and that they are paid for their time in doing so.
- The need for leaders of local authority children's services to have a strong understanding of the specific needs of care leavers, the challenges they face and the support they may need.
- Measuring outcomes for care leavers and benchmarking against outcomes for young people that have not had experience of the care system.
- Ensuring that care leavers are supported to understand their rights, entitlements and responsibilities, and any optional support provided by the local authority.
- Ensuring that the leaders of Care Leaver Teams and local authority children's services spend time with care leavers, so they can see the impact of their decisions. One respondent stated "as a care experienced young person who is now working for my LA, I am seeing how service managers reckless and unjustified decisions are affecting not only the young people, but the frontline PAs and SWs too."

Equality Impact Assessment

We asked whether there were young people leaving care who have particular needs or characteristics that should be taken into account as part of the proposals. The groups of young people with specific characteristics highlighted by respondents were: unaccompanied asylum seeking children and other migrant children; black young people; disabled young people, including those with a mental health condition, autism and or ADHD; and LGBTQ+ young people.

Appendix A: Which factors are important for Ofsted to consider when assessing the progress and experiences of care leavers:

We asked respondents: “to what extent do you agree that the following factors are important for Ofsted to consider when assessing the progress and experiences of care leavers”. The results are below:

| Factor | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Care leavers are helped to understand their rights, entitlements and responsibilities, and any optional support provided by the local authority. | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Care leavers have effective and relevant pathway plans, which address all of their needs. Care leavers actively contribute to the development of these plans, which are reviewed regularly. | 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Care leavers receive appropriate practical, emotional and financial support. | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Care leavers are supported to move towards independence at a pace that is right for them. | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Care leavers have good education and employment opportunities, including work experience and apprenticeships. | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Care leavers have secure and good quality accommodation that best meets their needs and helps them to develop their independence skills safely. | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Care leavers are provided with all key documents they need to begin their lives as young adults, such as national insurance numbers, birth certificates and passports. | 7 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Care leavers are in good physical and mental health, or are being helped to improve their health. Their health needs are identified and met. | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Care leavers have access to and understand their full health history. | 5 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Care leavers are safe and feel safe. They are helped to understand how they can keep themselves safe. | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| The local authority promotes high aspirations and seeks to secure the best outcomes for care leavers. The local authority celebrates the achievements of care leavers. | 5 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Care leavers are well represented by a Children in Care Council or similar body, which is regularly consulted on how to improve support for care leavers, as well as children in care. | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Care leavers are protected or helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour and other forms of discrimination. | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 7 |

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| Care leavers who live away from their 'home' local authority have access to education and health services that meet their needs as soon as they move outside of their 'home' area. | 3 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| Care leavers receive appropriate and personalised support from their Personal Adviser to plan for their futures, up to the age of 25. | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Care leavers have trusted relationships with carers and staff from the local authority and develop supportive relationships within the community, including with family and friends. | 4 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Care leavers experience stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work. | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 |