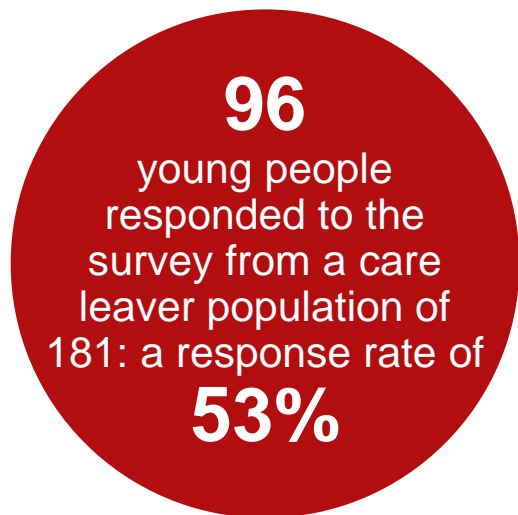


Your Life Beyond Care 2020-21

The views of care leavers in North Somerset on their well-being



In January and February 2021 all care leavers in North Somerset were asked to participate in an online survey to find out how they felt about their lives. This is a summary of the findings.

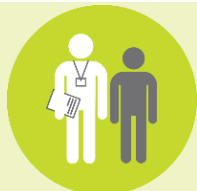
- Of the 96 care experienced young people who took the survey, 49 (52%) were female, 43 (45%) male; 2 identified as transgender, 1 as gender-fluid, and 1 did not answer.
- The majority of respondents (82%) answering the survey described their ethnicity as 'white'.
- 39% of care leavers reported having a disability/long term illness; a much larger proportion compared to care leavers (24%) in 21 other LAs and more than triple the rate in the general population (12%).

Age group	Total n* (%)
16-17yrs	0 (0%)
18-20yrs	53 (57%)
21-25yrs	40 (43%)
TOTAL	93 (100%)

*Missing: 3

What is working well?

bright spots



Leaving care support

- Most care-experienced young people (83%) knew who their worker was but 16 (17%) did not.
- A larger proportion of care leavers (92%) thought it was easy to contact their worker compared to 83% of young people in care.
- Care leavers were much less likely to have had 3 or more workers (11%) in the last year, than their younger (11-18yrs old) counterparts in care (19%).
- Only 2 (3%) of care leavers 'hardly ever' or 'never' trusted their leaving care worker.



Pets

Care experienced young people in North Somerset were more likely to have a pet than their counterparts nationally:

- 40% of care leavers in North Somerset had a pet. This is substantially higher than care leavers nationally (28%). **This is a Bright Spot.**
- 71% of those with a pet gained emotional support from them.
- Female (43%) care leavers were almost 3 times more likely to report gaining emotional support from pets compared to males (16%).
- 3% more care experienced young people in North Somerset had a pet in 2021 compared to in 2018 (37%).

What is working well?



Relationships:

- Care experienced young people in North Somerset were 5% more likely to report having a good friend than care leavers nationally (although this was not a statistically significant difference).
- 81% of care leavers with a partner gained emotional support from them.
- A higher proportion of care leavers in North Somerset having a trusted person (87%) in their lives than in 2018: 83%.

Having fun

Top 5: What care leavers enjoyed doing

1. Listening to/ playing music
2. Hanging out with people I like
3. Watching TV/films
4. Using social media
5. Shopping

Care leavers were asked, *What fun stuff do you wish you could do more of? Is there anything that stops you having fun?*

Lockdown. Other than that I enjoy swimming, any sports, gaming. I can honestly be interested in anything as long as people to do it with.

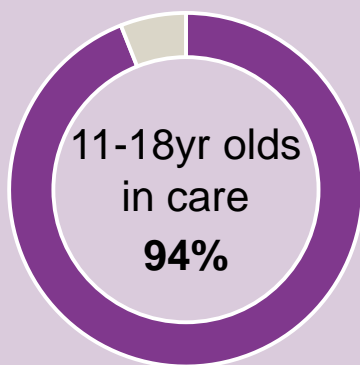
I wish I could go for days out and things but I can't afford it. I can't afford bus fare to see my friends either.

What's improved since last time?

	2018	2021	Improvement
Easy to contact leaving care worker	70%	92%	+22%
Can connect to the internet at home	71%	88%	+17%
Have a smartphone	82%	94%	+12%
Satisfied with life as a whole	28%	37%	+9%
Afford mobile phone bill	77%	85%	+8%
Always feel settled where they live	38%	46%	+8%
Always feel safe where they live	54%	60%	+6%

What could be better?

Do you have a really good friend?



- Most care leavers in North Somerset stated that they had at least one good friend, but 10 (10%) did not.
- The proportion of care leavers in North Somerset not having a really good friend is more than 3 times their peers in the general population.



Leaving care workers:

- A lower proportion of care experienced young people in North Somerset (83%) knew who their leaving care worker was than in 2018 (94%), and than care leavers nationally (93%).
- Similarly, 55% of care leavers in North Somerset have had 1 leaving care worker in last 12 months, compared to 68% in 2018, 60% nationally.



Understanding why you were in care

- A third (33%) of care experienced young people in North Somerset either wanted to know more about why they were in care or did not know why they had been in care, compared to 23% nationally.
- This is a deterioration in care leavers knowing why they are in care from 2018, when 22% knew why they were in care but wanted to know more, and where no care leavers didn't know why they were in care.

What could be better?



Housing

- 44 (46%) of carer leavers provided comments about where they lived.
- 39% (17) of comments on housing were negative, with 5 expressing concerns about the safety of their neighbourhood, 4 reporting repair and maintenance issues, and 3 expressing feelings of isolation.

Having issues with repairs and would rather be in a place I am familiar with and that isn't so isolated.

I don't feel safe and I feel sad.

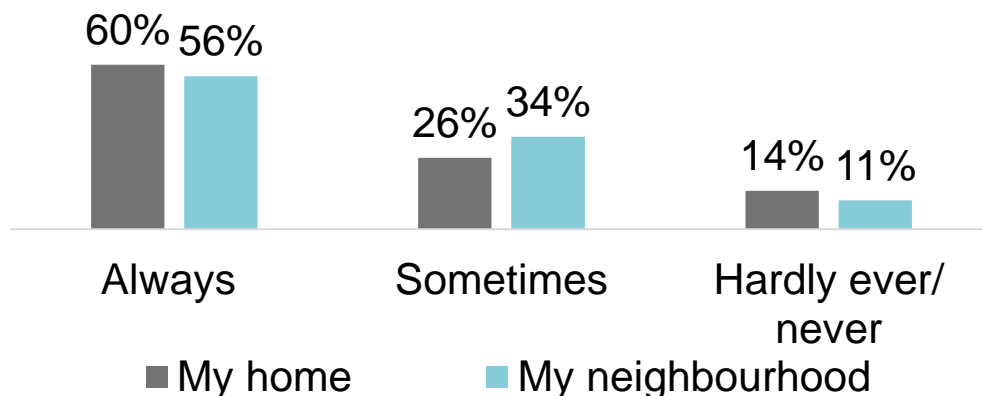


Feeling safe and settled

- Care experienced young people in North Somerset were drastically less likely to always feel safe where they lived (56%), than their younger (11-18yr olds) counterparts in care (92%). They were also less likely to always feel safe than care leavers nationally (64%).
- Similarly, when asked if they felt settled where they lived, only 46% of care leavers responded 'always', nearly half that of young people in care in North Somerset (88%).



I feel safe where I live

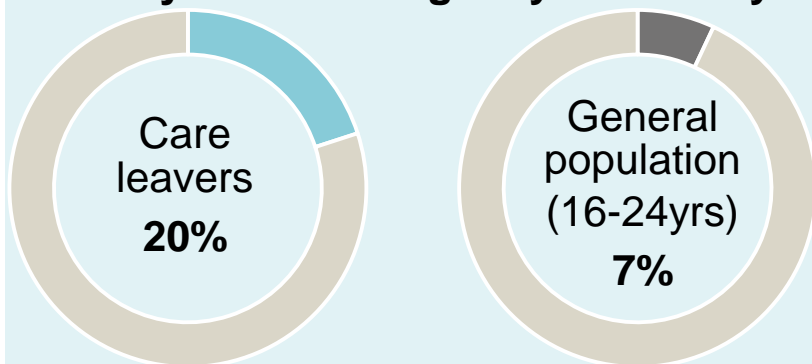


What could be better?

Finances:

- In comparison to young people in the general population, care leavers in North Somerset were almost three times more likely to report financial difficulties
- 37 (39%) care leavers wrote about how they were managing financially; 8 commented explicitly that they wish they were better at budgeting and had been given more guidance/taught how to.

Proportion finding it 'quite' or 'very' difficult to get by financially



Stress

- Only a fifth (21%) reported 'very often' being confident in their ability to handle personal problems, and a tenth (11%) that things were going their way (this is similar to the picture for care leavers nationally – 22% and 12% respectively).

Anxiety

- Care leavers in North Somerset were more than twice as likely (40%) to report high anxiety yesterday than of 16-24yr olds in the general population (34% of care leavers nationally reported high anxiety yesterday).

Could do with more [money] as everything is so expensive.

Could do better managing bills but doing much better than I used to. Never got taught how to budget in care. [...]

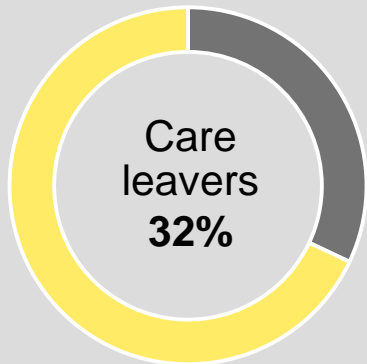
Well-being



- 40% of care leavers reported high or very high happiness the previous day compared to 76% of young people (16-24yrs) in the general population.
- Care leavers in North Somerset (19%) were three times less likely to be very positive about the future than their younger counterparts (11-18yrs) in care (57%).

I feel more anxious and nervous to leave the house lately because of Covid19

Young people with low well-being



Care experienced young people in North Somerset responding to this survey reported 'high' or 'very high' happiness yesterday (41%), an improvement on 2018 (36%).

A higher proportion of care leavers also reported have 'high' or 'very high' satisfaction with life overall (37%) than in in 2018 (28%).

Young people with low overall well-being were statistically more likely to report:

- Being unhappy with their appearance
- Not feeling safe or settled at home
- 'Always' being lonely
- Having financial difficulties



bright spots

For enquiries about the Bright Spots Programme see:

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/for-professionals/bright-spots-2/>

or contact:

brightspots@coramvoice.org.uk

