

Anne Longfield
Children's Commissioner for England

About the Children's Commissioner

- Post recommended by the Victoria Climbié Inquiry in 2000 and promoted in international UN guidance
- Established under the 2004 Children Act and strengthened through the Children and Families Act 2014
- Primary duty to promote and protect children's rights in England including representing their views and interests



Responsibility for wider groups of children on non-devolved issues



Special responsibility for children in or leaving care, living away from home or receiving social care services



Supported by a small team of staff

Ambitious for Children

- Childhood
- Children in care
- Protecting Children from Harm
- Changing the Odds

Golden threads

- Children and young people at the centre
- Early and timely interventions
- There for children – trusted relationships
- Workforce
- Multi agency working

Participation and engagement of children

- Advisory and expert groups
- Digital platforms
- Growing up in England – a day in the life
Participation models – cascaded through schools
Participation networks including children in care

Priorities for the coming months/next year

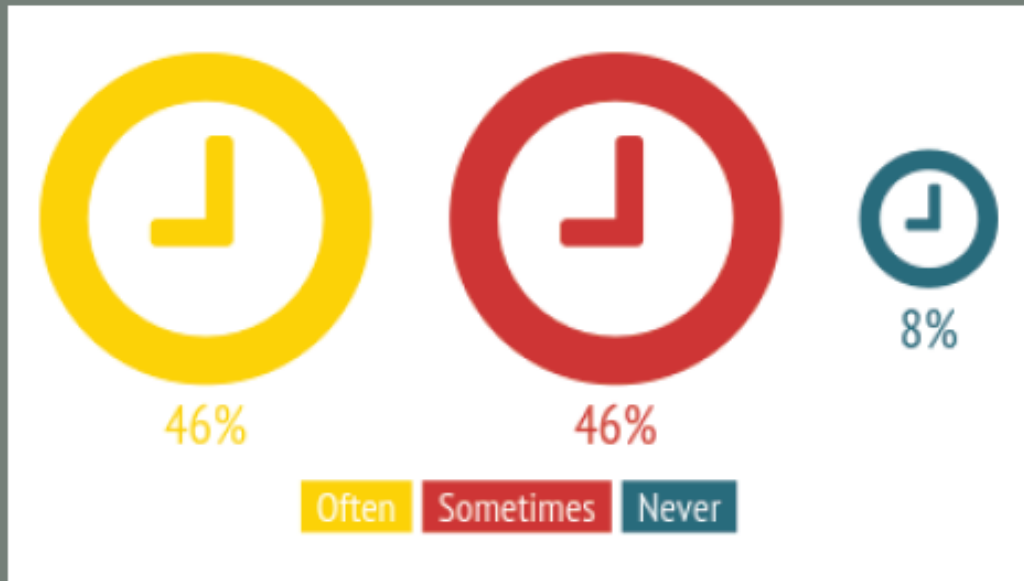
- Growing up digital
- Recovery from trauma
- Care Leavers
- Inquiry into child sexual abuse in the family network
- Changing the odds and reducing poverty in the early years

State of the Nation: messages from children

- Many positive messages about care
- Over half did not understand why they were in care
- Importance of feeling part of a family, feeling safe, getting help you need.
- Less than half knew how to get an advocate
- A third felt they did not leave care at right time

The future

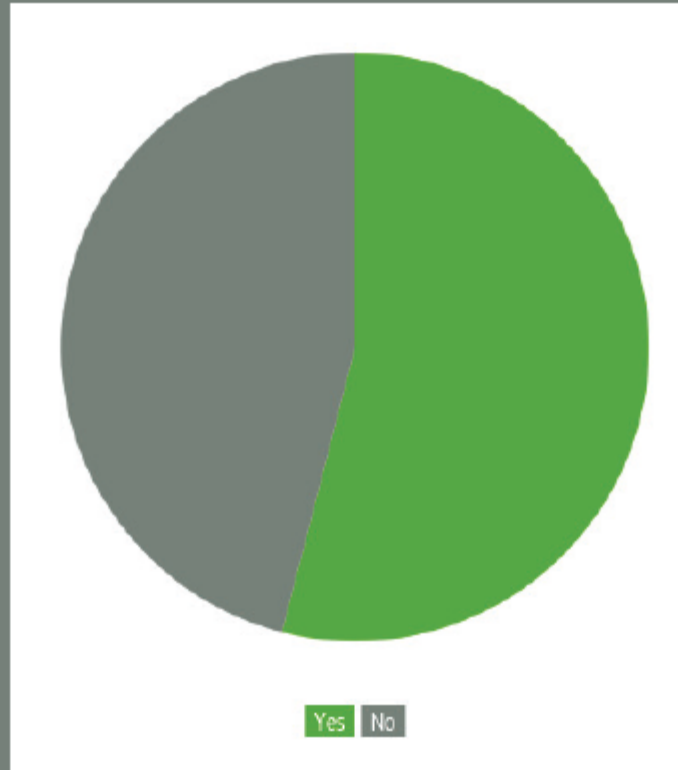
How often do you feel good about the future?



n: 1675

Leaving care

Did you leave care
at the right time?



n: 2667

Making care better

"Not being
moved around
so much...."

"For them to
have a voice..."

State of the Nation proposals

- Children's views influence decisions
- Support for all care leavers to 25
- Continuing relationships into adulthood
- Keep their social worker for longer
- Access to help to recover from the past and to build resilience

Care leavers

- Importance of continuing support- particularly for those over 21 and NEET
- Help to learn and to earn
- From Care Monitor: not leaving care at the right time was often about too rapid a transition and lack of preparation
- Semi-independence: lack of good, safe choices in local area
- Loneliness, isolation and no safety net for many
- Young people leaving residential care want a form of 'staying put'

Recovery as key aim of the care system

- Importance of ensuring emotional wellbeing of all children and measuring progress in this.
- Children should get help to recover from and make sense of the past while they are in care:
- Children need good and timely help to address mental health issues
- Foster carers and residential staff need support to help them
- Work is needed with extended birth family where relationships can

Children's Commissioner

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 **Children's
Commissioner**
Promoting and protecting children's rights