



Raising the Standards

Capturing the views of young people who use residential care home services

Researchers

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About The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care was set up in 2000. The aim of the Institute is to ensure that residential child care staff throughout Scotland have access to the skills and knowledge they require to meet the needs of children and young people in their care. Central to this aim, SIRCC works to ensure that children`s needs, rights and views are at the heart of our service. The services provided by the Institute include training, education, consultancy and research.

About Who Cares ? Scotland

Who Cares? Scotland was set up in 1978. The aims of the organisation are to provide advocacy and information to children and young people who are looked after and accommodated, to enable those children and young people to come together to identify their key issues, and to ensure that their voices are heard in all matters which affect their lives. Over the years, Who Cares? Scotland has established itself as the main voice for children and young people in care.

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Introduction

The research upon which this report is based, was commissioned by the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care, who wished to capture the views of young people who use residential care home services on their experience of being looked after. The aim of the research was to provide a “snap shot” picture of the views of young people living in care homes. This was to be done using qualitative methods to obtain meaningful data of young people`s satisfaction with care services. The National Care Standards were used as a contextual framework in gaining their views.

The views of young people are central to this report, and it is hoped that this will provide an opportunity for professionals to hear their views and experiences in their own words. As such, many quotes from young people will be used throughout the report. We hope that the report allows professionals to learn from what young people have to tell us about their care experience, gives some clues as to how we can build upon the good aspects, and points professionals in the direction they need to go, to develop and improve the services available to them.

Methodology

In conducting this research, the contextual base was the National Care Standards : Care Homes for Children and Young People (2002). By using the National Care Standards, the relevance of the information contained in the final report was assured. The research took place between January and March, 2004.

The main research strategy for obtaining information about the views of young people living in care homes was focus groups. Robson (2002) defined a focus group as “A group interview on a specific topic; which is guided by the researcher, typically extending over at least an hour.” (p. 285), Wilson (1997) in her use of focus groups to examine lifestyle choices of adults felt that the method was helpful. She felt that its defining criteria was to “encourage and *utilise group interactions.*” (p. 211). Focus groups have a range of advantages and disadvantages. Robinson (1999), in her interesting article on the use of focus group methodology in examining sexual health, outlined these. The main advantages centre around the fact that focus groups generate a large amount of data in a relatively inexpensive and cost effective way by collecting from several people at the same time. It has the additional advantage of being quite an enjoyable experience for the group members and can be empowering by encouraging all participants to give their views. The disadvantages centre around the ability of the facilitator to manage the process so as to enable the best quality of information and interaction to emerge. For this reason, it was decided that two facilitators would be involved in each focus group. Also, because of the nature of focus groups, questions have to be limited. Hence a set of questions was devised and a range of activities were planned around these questions to yield as much data as possible. It was decided to run each focus group twice. The first focus group meeting involved questions pertaining to the principles behind the National Care Standards. The second focus group meeting involved questions which elicited views on the individual standards.

Wilson (1997) described the common elements of focus groups. They usually have 4 –12 people, and the facilitator plays a key role. The group meets for 1-2 hours to discuss the focus topic. The idea is to “explore the participants` attitudes, feelings and

ideas.” (p. 211) These common elements fit with the practical components of this research.

Two other tools were used in the course of this research. These were questionnaires and interviews. Oppenheim (1992) discussed both of these tools, and outlined the advantages and disadvantages of each. Questionnaires have been used ubiquitously by researchers. They have advantages in that they are reliable, by virtue of the fact that the same questions are put to all participants. They can be produced and administered in a cost effective way. In terms of analysis, the use of closed questions in some questionnaires means that the data is pre-coded and can be easier to process and analyse. However, a good questionnaire can be difficult to produce. Questions may not be clear, or categories for questions may not be mutually exclusive. Much of the data that could be collected is missed. For the purposes of this proposed study, the use of a questionnaire was agreed in order to generate the data around the specific areas in relation to the principles behind the National Care Standards, and the actual Standards themselves. The researchers used as a model on which to base the questions in the form of the questionnaire *How Happy Are You With Your Care Service?* (2003). This helped greatly in the design of the questionnaires which were used with the young people in this consultation.

It was also recognised that it may be helpful to include data from interviews.

Interviewing is one of the most popular tools used by researchers. As Burns (2000) described, interviews come in three main forms. These are:

- Unstructured interviews, which are completely open ended. An example of this might be an oral history
- Semi-structured interviews, which usually have an interview guide. The guide indicates which areas should be explored using closed questioning and which areas should be left more open ended
- Structured interviews, where the interviewer uses a schedule of questions which the interviewee is required to answer

The various types of interview all have particular advantages. Unstructured interviews can yield a rich variety of subjective experience and elicit information about areas that

the researcher had not anticipated. However, they can be very time consuming, both in terms of administration and data analysis. Also, they do not take place in the ethnographic context, which means that the researcher has to rely on what the interviewee says. They cannot check this with reality. The semi-structured interview adds in a degree of structure, and can therefore make the interview more relevant to the research issues. However, some of the interviewee's perspective is still going to be lost, as some of the questions are structured. The structured interview is high in terms of reliability as all participants are asked the same questions. However, they can feel quite artificial in their administration, and leave no scope to find out some of the more phenomenological aspects of the interviewee's experience, as the communication is closed. For the purposes of this study, a semi structured interview process, based on the questionnaire was used.

The next step for the study was to consider the sample to be used. As Robson (2002) notes, "a sample is a selection from the population." (p. 260). In this instance, our population would be all of the residential child care units in Scotland. According to the SIRCC database (2004) there are 14 separate categories of residential child care establishment. In statistical analyses, much emphasis is put on the need to generate a representative sample, and any generalisation of results is linked to this. However, there are other sampling schemes, which still allow researchers to draw some inferences from studies. The type of sampling used in the study was non-probability sampling, as opposed to representative or probability sampling. This is because the research was driven by who would be available and willing to take part in the research, given the time scale, and the small size of sample. However, this does not take anything away from the relevance of the research. Indeed, as Bryman and Cramer (1997) point out, many empirical studies published in journals use convenience samples, and not probability samples. In this study, therefore the sample was generated from the most numerous of the 14 categories. This is mainstream residential child care units with no educational provision on site. It was decided to try to aim for an even gender balance. The age range selected was 15 –19 years. The researchers also sought a geographical spread within the sample. It was decided to contact units in the North (Dundee), the South (Dumfries and Galloway), the East (Lothian and Borders) and the West (Glasgow and East Ayrshire)

The researchers were present at the focus group settings. The researchers took turns at facilitating parts of the focus groups and writing field notes. One of the researchers also used audio tape to record the one-to-one interviews with young people. The audio and the field notes, and the responses to the questionnaires, yielded the data for this study.

Implementation

Each of the four focus groups met twice, for approximately two hours each time, throughout February and early March, 2004. The first focus group had as its main objective, the completion of the questionnaire. The second focus group had, as its main objective, the generation of qualitative information in relation to questions about specific standards. This would allow the completed report to have a good representation of the voice of young people as per recent reports such as *Let`s Face It!* (2003). The material was analysed through data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verifying, as indicated by Miles and Huberman (1994).

The first focus group questionnaire makes reference to all 19 standards except 1,2,4,7,12 and 16. It was also felt that standard 6 needed to be explored in greater depth. Therefore the activities of the second focus group covered all of the standards, including those noted above.

The focus groups were designed to make them interesting and relevant to the young people involved. The programme and the consultations tools used for each of the focus groups are contained in Appendix One.

In the end, a total of 24 young people from all over Scotland contributed to the consultation. As each young person had experienced care in a number of units, this would represent around 35 units from a total of 270 in Scotland. This included a young man from an ethnic minority group, who was interviewed on a one-to-one basis by one of the researchers. The gender/age breakdown was as follows :

Table One : participants by age and gender

Age	Male	Female
15	5	2
16	5	2
17	4	2
18	1	1
19	1	1

Ethical approval for the study was granted by Strathclyde University Ethics Committee. All young people involved had the process explained to them, so that informed consent could be gained. Where young people were under 16 years old, consent was also obtained from their parents. A written explanation of the uses of the data, and the process was given to the young people and this was also explained again by one of the researchers at the start of the focus group meetings. Confidentiality was assured by using only gender, ages and first names in the report.

In terms of reporting, where there is a gender and an age in brackets at the end of a quote, this is the verbatim comment of a young person. Occasionally, several young people made similar comments to one another. In these cases, one verbatim comment will be given, and the number of respondents who also made a similar comment will be given in brackets after the quote.

The results of the research will be divided into three sections. The first will be the views of young people in relation to the broad principles which underpin the standards and which should form the foundation of their care. The second section will be their views in relation to each of the individual National Care Standards. The last section will be a discussion drawing out some of the salient points raised within the research.

Section One

The Views of young people about the six principles underpinning the standards

The National Care Standards are based on a set of principles that are the result of the wide ranging consultations which led to the drawing up of the standards. They recognise that services must be accessible and suitable for children and young people from diverse backgrounds. They reflect the commitment to the rights of children. The young people in the focus groups were asked to reflect upon the principles, to ensure that these were being met.

Dignity

This principle should ensure that children and young people are treated with dignity and respect at all times and that they enjoy the full range of social relationships.

Just over half of the young people felt they were always or usually treated respectfully. This meant that almost half of the group felt they were not treated with respect, either some of the time or all of the time.

*I was respected. The majority of staff were alright but some of them made you feel lower than s*** My keyworker was brilliant (Female, 17)*

Dignity could be better respected. I was on speed and I got addicted to it. Staff were in my face all the time and they don't understand. I felt like a down and out, a loser. When I came off it, they knew I wasn't on it ...they never gave me any credit, you know (Male, 15)

Dignity is respected. The way staff speak to you and that...they speak to you like an adult. But if you act like a baby, they treat you like that (Female, 15)

Similarly, while half of the young people thought that staff spoke of others in a respectful way, the other half of the group reported that staff did not speak respectfully about others.

My dignity was respected OK but sometimes you heard staff talking about somebody...that`s not respect. (Male, 15)

They speak about the other young people as bad (Female, 15)

Some of my staff were bitchy or backstabbers (Female, 17)

Generally staff referred to the young people by their preferred name. However, five young people reported that some staff did not do this, and it was a source of great annoyance to them

It gets me upset. Even when I ask for my name to be used, they shortened it (Male, 16)

They sometimes call me “Child!” (Female, 17)

Feedback from staff to young people about their appearance was generally given in an honest and constructive way. This was appreciated by the young people.

Privacy

This principle should ensure that the young person has the right to have their privacy and property respected and to be free from unnecessary intrusion.

As previously stated, substantive issues about privacy appeared to have been well respected. All young people had their own rooms and all but 3 had a lockable area in which to store private items. The majority felt they could talk to staff privately about personal issues although some were unsure about where that information may then go, or how it would be treated.

Privacy could be better respected by locking files away. I saw stuff lying out sometimes (Female, 18)

I thought my privacy was respected a lot. If you wanted to talk to members of staff when you were there, ken, they never spoke to anyone else. You discuss anything personal (Male, 19)

55% of the group were always or usually able to see family visitors in private, and around two thirds felt that their family could speak to the staff in private. The pressures of living in group care sometimes led to a feeling that privacy was difficult to achieve

Privacy is well respected by staff...never by young people. Staff should listen for anyone moving about (Male, 16)

Staff come up to my room when I'm not feeling great...there`s no space (Male, 15)

Choice

This principle should ensure that young people have the right to make informed choices, know about the range of choices and to get help to fully understand all of the options and choose the one that is right for them.

90% of young people felt that they had the ability to make choices across in areas such as activities, staff member to discuss things with, furniture and décor, and how to use their free time.

It could have been a wee bit better but it was pretty good (Female, 16)

My choices were supported all the time. I've seen M..(staff member) like, if I was under-dressed and she`d tell me how I looked...but it was still my choice (Female, 17)

They could have been a wee bit better. Certain staff don't listen...they should be trained to listen! (Male, 16)

One young person articulated how the largest choice for her, that is where to stay, was not available to her, and this made her upset.

I don't have a choice of where I stay...the young people are all too young and they (the staff) are always checking on youit's not fair (Female, 16)

Safety

This principle ensures the right for a young person to feel safe and secure in all aspects of life, to be secure in the knowledge that adults are responsible for their safety, to enjoy safety and not be over-protected, and to be free from exploitation and abuse.

50% of the young people in the research stated that they always felt safe.

I feel safe because I've got a lock on my door...the staff come and speak to you and that makes you feel safe and secure. It's good in there (Female, 15)

However, this means that 50% of the respondents did not feel safe. Of the group, 3 young people (14% of the total) reported that they never felt safe. Some of the issues of safety were related to other young people.

Safety is well supported by the staff but young people come in under the influence...then it's not safe (Male, 15)

This boy came on to me and I turned round and walloped him. I got restrained for it. He was a bigger lad than me and I was feart (scared). I told staff but they didn't believe me...when he got shipped out I felt safe (Male, 15)

They didn't have enough control over young people who were out of control...you're all a target...they need more staff (Female, 17)

2 young people talked about feeling unsafe because of staff. Although there were not many of these comments, it is still worrying to think that a source of feeling unsafe for any young person is the staff who are employed to keep you safe.

In one unit I was in, there was bullying by staff. I got assaulted by a member of staff and it never got dealt with...he never spoke to us...a member of staff can pick on a young person. I wrote a complaints form and went into the office two minutes later and it was in the bucket...I actually saw it in the bucket (Male, 19)

Realising Potential

This principle ensures that young people have the right to achieve all they can, to make full use of resources available to them and to make the most of their life. Three quarters of the young people in the group were encouraged to develop skills in looking after themselves. However, two young people were not encouraged in any way to have hobbies and interests. Generally young people reported that they were encouraged in terms of school, education or employment.

I was supported well to be an electrician (Male, 15)

I got really well supported doing my qualifications (Female, 19)

Some young people felt that staff were over protective and this was not helpful for them

Staff need to trust you but they don't...not enough anyway. When you are going out, for example...they don't let you learn from experience (Male, 16)

They should treat you as a human being not a project...they should treat you as your age (Male, 16)

Another young person felt that pressures on staff time hindered development opportunities.

The only reason I do independent living myself is because staff wouldn't do it...staff are too busy to do programmes (Male, 17)

Equality and Diversity

This principle should ensure that young people are valued for whoever they are, treated equally and cared for in an environment which aims to be free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. 88% of young people who took part in the research felt that they had their personal beliefs respected. They also felt they were well supported in the lifestyle choices they made. One young person from an ethnic minority group felt that he was assisted to settle in and given help to make connections with other young muslims. It was important for some young people that their unit did not look like a children's home.

Naebody kens it's a children's home...it's ideal (Male, 19)

They didn't treat it like residential, they treated me like family, basically...there was one worker who treated me like a daughter...it was more like a family home than residential (Female, 17)

The above quotes seem to suggest that some providers are adhering to national guidance around creating an environment that is seen as 'homely.'

The main issue with young people was consistency of treatment between staff, and being treated fairly with other young people. For many of them, this did not happen.

I wasnae treated like the rest. There was one rule for me and another for the rest. I didn't have a clue what it was about....they did turn round and tell me it was because I was older. (Female, 16)

I felt people who didn't get up to go to school, who behaved badly, got better treated. They got taken to camps. But I behaved myself and all I got to do was more study!
(Female, 17)

It could be better...some people get treated better than others and some get treated worse than others. I wanted my pals round and staff wouldn't let them into my room but other people got their pals in (Male, 16)

One young person related an instance when a staff member belittled her for wanting to go to college

A staff told me "You'll never amount to nothing." A staff came into my room and said this when I started college (Female, 17)

It is worrying to think that staff may display these attitudes to young people who may be discriminated against outside of the unit.

A Final Note

At the end of the first focus group questionnaire, young people were asked how happy they were with the quality of care they receive or did receive when they were in a residential unit. Only 4 of the respondents reported being very happy, and a further 3 reported being quite happy. In other words, two thirds of the young people involved in the research were unhappy at some level with the service they received. At one level this jars with some of the responses in the report. It was felt that perhaps the question could have been framed in a more specific way, as many young people simply do not want to be in care and may be unhappy at this.

Nonetheless, these feelings could be interpreted as a sad indictment of the service provided and must encourage providers to look at the reasons why.

Section Two

The Views of Young People about the National Care Standards

Standard One ; Arriving for the First Time

This standard states that young people should be welcomed into their unit and they should know what to expect during their stay. Most of the young people in the study felt that were made to feel welcome at their unit, when they first arrived.

I was given a warm welcome and met by friendly people (Male, 16)

I was introduced to staff and encouraged to do what I liked to my room (Female, 18)

Transitions and changes can be uncomfortable and professionals working with young people should keep this in mind. One young person recalled;

I can't remember much but I remember I was nervous (Female, 16)

I was nervous when I first went in but I was fine after a while (Male, 15)

Standard Two : First Meetings

This standard states that staff should help young people to settle in. It also states that the unit should have a friendly environment and that the young person should be able to get help and support if they need it. In general, young people felt that they were helped to settle in.

It was good because staff and residents made me feel really welcome and they checked to make sure I had everything (Female, 19)

The staff made it as homely as possible.(Female, 18)

Some of the young people pointed to issues which made their first few weeks uncomfortable. The importance of having a pre-visit, and the considerations needed in terms of group dynamics appear to be important.

It was more friendly up here than down in England...It made me settle...It would have helped if I had met them before (Female, 16)

It was great till another young person came into the unit (Male, 16)

It was other residents who made me uncomfortable but the staff made up for it (Female, 18)

I was lucky I knew another young person before I went in so she helped me out (Female, 17)

Standard Three : Keeping in touch with people who are important to you

This standard states that a young person should be helped to keep in touch with family and friends and to have a good understanding of their family history. There were mixed responses to this area. Some young people felt well supported in keeping in touch but this was not the experience of the majority. 64% of the group reported experiencing some difficulty.

I get to see my Mum and family all the time (Male, 17)

This didn't happen....I had to phone my Mum myself...they never encouraged me to do it. (Male, 16)

They never helped me keep in touch with my family....I done a photo album of my life story and have kept it (Female, 17)

Yes, the staff were really good if they had the time (Male, 15)

Other comments made during the open discussion and during the first focus group session suggested that staff were often too busy to facilitate family meetings and that there could be difficulties in physically accommodating visitors. It also became clear that in some cases, visits were restricted because young people were at risk from family members.

It was limited who I phoned in my family for my safety (Female, 17)

Standard Four : Support Arrangements

This standard discusses the importance of good care planning and the right to be involved in planning and reviews. The majority of young people felt involved in their care planning and reviews. In particular, they felt that attention was paid to what they said.

I got to type up my care plans and papers I need for my reviews and I got sheets encouraging me to talk about things (Female, 18)

I had lots of meetings and one to ones with my key worker discussing the main issues of my review (Male, 16)

However, some young people raised questions about the process

At the end of the day the panel will decide these decisions, regardless of what you have said (Male, 15)

I have left care now and I don't feel I had enough say in my care plan nearer the end of my stay (Male, 19)

The overall impression was that young people valued time spent with their key worker and also valued being consulted about their future.

Standard Five : Your Environment

This standard assures young people that their unit should be a pleasant and comfortable place to live. There were mixed responses from the group. Some felt that their living conditions were very pleasant, while others felt that their living environment was unacceptable.

It was really nice. The place was spotless and everybody was well looked after. (Female, 19)

People were nice....the building was nice...it could have been better because the rooms were plain (Female, 17)

It wisnae nice...The floorboards were squeaky. It was old beds that smelt of p...(urine)So I slept on the floor most of the time. The wallpaper was flaking off and the carpets were stinking (Male, 17)

88% of young people had somewhere to lock their belongings, but 2 of these young people reported that they had items stolen in spite of this. Some of the young people reported that damage was done to the furniture by other residents and that this could take a long time to be replaced

Furniture was spoiled by other residents...vandalised, you know (Male,15)

It was vandalised when I first went in...Enjoyed doing the decorating though! (Female, 17)

Sometimes it was a mess...it just takes a long time to get new stuff (Male, 15)

It depends....maybe not in your room if you break things...you have to wait months to get it refurbished or you get fined and get it fixed straight away (Male, 19)

Two of the young people shared a room with someone else. In one case, this was because it was the wish of the young person. No information was available for the other young person

You could share a room if you requested it (Male, 16)

Heating within young people`s rooms was largely controlled centrally by staff. On occasion, this could create difficulties

Sometimes it was too hot and sometimes it was too cold (Female, 16)

Environment was an important issue for young people. Where there were problems with this, they felt strongly that this should be rectified.

Standard Six : Feeling safe and secure

This standard states that a young person should feel safe and secure in every way in their unit. It goes on to say that there should always be enough staff on to help young people if they need it. Around half of the young people said they always felt safe and secure. In particular, one young person who was an asylum seeker from an ethnic minority group commented on how safe and welcomed he felt within the unit. However, as mentioned before, 50% of the respondents did not always feel safe, and 3 reported that they never felt safe.

I felt safe and secure. Staff were friendly and helpful (Female, 16)

I have always felt safe because I stand up for myself (Male,17)

Some young people reported that they felt unsafe because of other residents

Saturday night feels dangerous because of other young people coming in drunk (Male, 16)

Some young people came in under the influence so I didn't always feel safe (Female, 17)

Worryingly, some feelings of a lack of safety came as a direct result of staff behaviour and use of restraint

There wasn't enough staff in the unit. It took 15 minutes to sort out a fight (Male, 15)

If you are getting restrained, you get a boot to the puss (face) as well (Male, 16)

You get threatened by staff (Male, 16)

Staff sometimes hit the boys (Male, 15)

It is interesting to note that all of these comments came from young men. The more positive comments about safety came from young women. Further examination of these differences is warranted. One of the few statements from a young woman feeling unsafe related to her personal situation

My home felt very safe. I was very insecure so I always thought that people were breaking in but staff didn't lose patience with me. They just showed me and convinced me I was safe. (Female, 18)

Given that research such as Berridge and Brodie (1998) and Gibbs and Sinclair (1999) show that many young people have come from early backgrounds where abuse and disrupted attachments are a feature, this is clearly an area for attention. When young people were asked to vote for their most important standard, standard six featured in joint first place along with standard three. (See appendix two)

Fire alarms were tested regularly, with two thirds of young people reporting that they were tested on a weekly basis.

Standard Seven : management and staffing

This standard states that young people should enjoy good quality care, provided by staff and managers whose training and expertise allows them to meet the needs of the children they care for. Each focus group of young people made comments about staff training and qualifications. The majority of the comments suggested that young people believe that training is currently inadequate and that much more attention needs to be paid to this area.

The staff and managers do not get proper training...young staff come in without proper training making them think they know what`s best (Male, 15)

In certain cases there were staff with no child care experience or qualifications, a couple coming from prisons, to manage children. Decent guys but crap residential workers (Male, 16)

Staff were good but training could have been better, I think (Female, 18)

A lot of staff are no qualified for nothing...They just get a police check and then they start (Female, 17)

One young person felt very strongly about training in the general discussion at the end of the focus group. What he said encapsulates the feelings of many young people in care.

If you could get the highest person in this room, proper training I`d tell them....they come from prisons and think they know about child care. Sometimes they dragged me round like a common criminal. What are they doing there without qualifications? They shouldn`t be allowed the chance....they need qualifications. They should say this is how you look after children before they start work. (Male, 17)

There were many more comments from young people which reflected their concern about staff training and qualifications. It was clearly an area about which they were acutely aware. This is particularly pertinent to the recent decision of the Scottish

Social Services Council which says that a residential child care worker can have “**any** other qualification which provides evidence satisfactory to the Council of ...a minimum of 96 academic credits.” (2004). Another interesting point was made about staffing structures. It was clear that effective managers and staff make a difference to how young people experience their care.

We get what we deserve and if we don't deserve it, we still get respected. This new manager is turning the unit upside down by changing things (Male, 16)

It's quality, not quantity of staff. If you have good staff you can spend time with them (Female, 17)

Young people were aware that staff had a lot of writing to do. However, they also spoke about how this sometimes had an impact on time spent with young people

You can talk to domestics more than staff...staff write down a lot...they have a lot of restrictions (Male, 17)

There should be a lot more staff and they shouldn't need to sit in the office (Female, 17)

It was interesting to note that when the young people were asked to vote for the standards most important to them, this standard featured in joint second place along with standard 14, which relates to the right for a private life.

Standard Eight : exercising your rights

Standard 8 talks about the importance of the rights and responsibilities of young people. It states that young people can make choices within limits that are suited to their age, and that staff should support them in making decisions.

The majority of young people felt supported in exercising their rights.

Yes, we got a lot of support (Male, 16)

This always happened (Female, 18)

If I want to do something, they try and make a way round so I can do it (Female, 16)

However, nearly a quarter of the young people felt that their rights were dependant on external factors, particularly staff availability, and therefore were not consistently applied. It is unacceptable that young people still tell us that some of their basic rights are denied.

It depends how busy staff are (3 respondents said this)

It depends on your behaviour (2 respondents said this)

They did when you first went in but not often after that....the longer you were there, the worse it got. (Male, 16)

If staff are treated well, they treat you respectfully (Female, 16)

Sometimes you do what other young people want to do (Male, 17)

The role of the young person`s worker was mentioned by one respondent in relation to exercising rights

My young person`s worker told me about my rights and if they were broken, how to make a complaint (Female, 17)

In the case of the young person who was a practising muslim, he particularly valued the fact that his young person`s worker shared his faith.

Standard Nine : making choices

This standard says that the young person should live in a place where everyone respects and supports their personal choices. Young people should be encouraged to make choices that are right for their age and understanding in all aspects of their life.

Over half of the young people felt that they were able to choose what they wanted to do but that this sometimes depended on which staff members were on duty. Two thirds of young people were involved in choosing décor for their unit, at some level.

I decided all the colours and helped to do the whole house (Female, 19)

I helped a staff member paint (Male, 15)

The responses from young people gave a sense that some degree of negotiation went on between them and their staff to ensure that safe and appropriate choices were being made.

If you are older you get to stay up and out later because you are able to take care of yourself. You get your own personal space whenever you want it (Female, 19)

It depended on what it was. For example, for dinner I was (given a choice) but for going out late, I wasn't. (Male, 15)

We had weekly meetings if there were any choices some staff didn't agree with, they would be taken to the meeting and I would have been given good reasons why. It was me who made the wrong choices for myself (Female, 18)

If I make choices they are my own, regardless of what staff say and if they support me, well I will support that (Male, 15)

When talking about having a faith supported, most young people said they did not have a faith. One young person was of the opinion that supporting your faith may

depend on transport. Another young person who was a practising Muslim was initially well supported to follow his faith

When I came here, they took me to the mosque and gave me a prayer mat and the Quran. (Male, 15)

However, later in this young man's experience, his main support came from his friends, although staff maintained an interest in his faith. In describing the situation, it sounded as if the young man took on the role of teacher to the staff in relation to his faith. While this perhaps could be interpreted as contributing to the young man's self esteem, it also indicates a lack of knowledge which was not being accounted for elsewhere, either at a person or an organisational level.

The overwhelming sense was that issues about spirituality and religion were not understood by young people and perhaps are not as well addressed as they might be by staff.

Standard Ten : eating well

This standard states that meals should be varied and healthy, they should reflect the young person's preferences and that they should cater for special diets. It also says that meals should be nicely presented when they are served. In focus group one, only 3 young people, that is 12% of the sample, reported that they had a good choice of food which reflected variety, good presentation and their involvement in menu planning. The overwhelming numbers of comments during focus group one were negative.

We never got to choose. The cook always chose. The food was very bad.(Male, 17)

We had no choice whatsoever.(Male, 16)

One choice and most of the time I don't like it (Male, 15)

However, the accompanying comments in focus group two showed a much more balanced picture

My dietary needs were catered for in K...with the kitchen staff doing their best to prepare vegetarian dishes every meal time (Male, 16)

It was half and half (Male, 15)

My staff asked me what I liked for dinner. We liked making fresh salad every day. There was always fruit available and we were allowed treats every so often. (Female, 18)

There was a choice and it was all healthy and good (Female, 16)

The staff make sure I get Halal food (Male, 15)

In terms of snacks and drinks, the majority of young people reported having access to these. However, 2 young people reported that they were never able to have snacks and drinks when they wanted. Most young people reported that there could be some problems with access to snacks and drinks.

The kitchen was sometimes locked (2 respondents said this)

You could have them if you bought them (Male, 19)

If there`s a shop close (Female, 17)

Eating can be a very important issue for young people and is a very concrete way of demonstrating care and attention. The mixed responses across the two focus group sessions indicates that while good practice exists, some young people are having poor experiences in this area. A locked kitchen does not reflect a normal caring home environment.

Standard Eleven ; your lifestyle

This standard says that the health needs of young people should be met. Staff should know about them and discuss them sensitively with the young person and their family, if that is appropriate. There was mixed response to questions in this area. Some young people felt that their health needs were met well.

The staff talk to us all the time (Male, 17)

Yes, staff encouraged me to go to the doctors if anything was wrong (Female, 18)

I get dentists and doctors appointments if needed (Male, 16)

However, some young people reported that their health needs were not as well attended to as they might have been

This never happened. I had depression..I was wanting help to speak to someone but the staff did nothing. They said I was just acting out (Male, 19)

I never had my health discussed with any family members or discussed with me by any members of staff. The only thing staff have done for me has been making appointments for me for the doctor but now I have to do this myself (Male, 15)

It appears that staff are making appointments for young people if they require health services but young people have a varied experience of being aware about how their health needs are being monitored

Standard Twelve ; medication

Standard 12 states that if a young person needs to take medication, staff should be aware of this and that arrangements should be in place to ensure that young people take their medication safely and properly. All of the young people who responded said that this happened as per the standard.

The staff helped me to take whatever medication I needed at the correct time (Male, 16)

The staff made sure I got my medication at the right times. If I needed any sort of medication, they made sure I got what I needed (Female, 17)

Yes. Today I got medication. The staff keep it locked up when I'm due it then they come and get it for me (Female, 17)

There did not appear to be any issues with this standard as far as the young people were concerned.

Standard Thirteen : learning

Standard 13 emphasises the importance of education and learning support. It states that staff should help young people to reach their potential at school and that staff should encourage young people in their education. It also says that the place where young people stay should be conducive to learning.

Three quarters of the young people felt they were supported in their education or training. Staff encouraged young people to go to school. Staff also helped to make the unit conducive to learning

They gave me help with writing (Male, 15)

Staff helped me with homework. They attended school meetings. I had space to do my school work (Female, 17)

They nipped at your head to make you go to school (Female, 19)

The young person who had been an asylum seeker was receiving good support at school and in the unit to learn English, which he found very helpful.

However, there was a suggestion that some of the young people did not want to go to school in spite of the efforts of staff.

They try and encourage you to go see, but I refused as I was too good to go to school (Male, 15)

I was encouraged but I dropped out anyway. I didn't want to travel everyday (Female, 17)

They are bams and sometimes use things like sanctions to make you go (Male, 15)

Three quarters of the young people reported that they had a quiet place to study which was often their bedroom. Only two young people reported that there was a specific study area. Worryingly, 4 young people reported that they had no quiet place to study, and often cited noise as being a factor which legislated against concentrating for study.

You had your room but you still got interruptions (3 respondents said this)

The quiet room got turned into an office (2 respondents said this)

Sometimes it's too noisy (Female, 15)

Staff attitude appears to have an impact on young people's views of school.

The staff attitude was great...I'm at college doing catering (female, 18)

It depended what staff were in...it depended what unit you were in...one unit I was in, they never got us up for school, like they never pushed me back to education. I went to another unit, they had education. They pushed you. The education was better. I think my last unit was a better unit (Male, 19)

Standard Fourteen : private life

This standard says that staff should respect the wishes of young people about private aspects of their lives, and their religious, cultural, political, social and sexual preferences. It also says that staff should give privacy and respect confidentiality.

This was one of the most important standards for young people, and although there appeared to be some good practice, young people found that this area could be problematical.

Two thirds of young people stated that they could have private phone calls but they also reported that there were often problems with this practice.

There was no privacy and no public phone (Female, 17)

We got 20p for the public phone but 20p isn't enough (Male, 16)

The phone was in the sitting room and young people were always around (Female, 18)

They would take away your phone calls as a sanction (Male, 15)

Many young people had issues with staff or others invading their privacy while they were in their bedrooms

They never looked after you right...they came into your room when you didn't want them to (Male, 16)

Staff open your door and then chap...staff speak to you when they want but if you want to speak to them you can't speak to them (Male, 17)

Young people have issues around trust, and some of the respondents were unsure about how information was being used

Staff write reports three times a day on young people so you can't talk to staff about private things because anything said has to be written in reports. This is no sign of respect, privacy or confidentiality (Male, 15)

As for my privacy, staff blabbed off to other staff (Male, 15)

If I'm not talking to him (a particular staff member whom the young person trusts) I'm not talking at all (Female, 16)

In terms of choosing staff to talk to, this was often constrained for young people

Usually you could speak to who you wanted to if they had the time, but you always had a choice (Female, 18)

It depends on how busy they are (3 respondents said this)

You got attention if you made a scene (Female, 17)

The majority of young people felt that staff gave them honest advice and helpful comments on lifestyle choices, like dress

They tell you if your appearance is going downhill(Male, 16)

If you look good they tell you (Female, 17)

They tell me the truth. Sometimes they say I look stupid and I do! (Female, 18)

Issues about private life are sensitive for young people and should be treated accordingly.

Standard Fifteen : daily life

This standard states that young people should be made to feel a part of their unit and community, and that they are supported to gain access and take part in a range of activities

Only one young person reported that they were never encouraged to have and maintain hobbies and interests. Staff were generally perceived as supportive in helping young people to take part in activities outside the unit

My staff always asked you if you would like to take part in any activities or if there was a group or club you'd like to join (Female, 19)

I was taken on activities like walking and swimming (Female, 17)

I was always allowed to take part in everything. There was cycling, swimming, ice skating and going to McDonalds (Male, 15)

They take me in the car to play snooker (Male, 15)

Staff themselves were not perceived to be a problem in this regard. However, sometimes staffing levels or budget could present issues.

Sometimes it depends on having enough staff and budget (Female, 17)

The staff's the ones with the money but sometimes they can't get access to the safe (Male, 17)

Activities are just out for a drive for 5 minutes (Male, 16)

Some young people were concerned about the reality of having a lot of money spent on activities. Others were concerned at the reasons why activities were encouraged

If you are bad, you get to go out, if you aren't bad you don't go out (Female, 18)

Sometimes money is everything...you do things that cost money all the time...that`s not real, is it? (Male, 16)

The staff from my residential unit encouraged me to take part in a range of activities for the purpose of having one less nuisance in their faces. That`s the general feeling I got (Male, 16)

Worryingly, only 7 young people responded that they always had special events like birthdays or other festivals celebrated. This was also something that could depend upon which staff were on duty. Given the significance of birthdays and other events in our society, this is an be an area which must be improved. It is not acceptable that 68% of young people felt that their special events were not celebrated.

Overall, however, young people felt supported in this area of their daily lives.

Standard Sixteen : communication

This standard states that young people are prepared for events like reviews. Staff should make sure that they are able to understand what`s happening and support young people to give their views.

Most young people reported that this happened for them.

After meetings, staff would sit down with you and make sure you understood (Male, 17)

Staff told you what a review was. Asked you what you wanted before. But at the review you had to ask for things (Male, 16)

This always happened. Staff took you aside before the review and asked if there was anything you wanted to discuss. They told you what they were going to discuss (Female, 18)

Standard Seventeen : moving on

This standard says that young people should have every opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge needed to move on and live independently.

92% of young people reported that this did in fact happen for them. Their experiences were generally positive.

I was encouraged to get a place at a local college which I did. (Male, 16)

This happened because my staff encouraged me to apply for jobs and find out about jobs and courses and helped me to prepare for them (Female, 18)

I was encouraged to do my independent living skills and I can do them good now (Male, 16)

I haven't had help but I soon will (Male, 16)

Two young people had some comments for improvements

Do away with cooks and cleaners...how can you learn independent living skills? (Male, 16)

There's too much expectations on staff to go out all the time...young people are not getting taught about responsibility and how to control money (Male, 18)

Standard Eighteen : concerns, comments and complaints

This standard says that the unit should welcome the views of young people so that they can continuously improve their service. It says that staff should encourage the views of young people whether positive or negative.

One respondent reported that they did not know that there was a complaints procedure in their unit and one young person felt they could not make a complaint if they had to. Interestingly, none of the young people questioned knew that they could make a complaint directly to the Care Commission. It appears that there is still much to be done in raising awareness of the Care Commission and their role with young people.

They tell you about the complaints procedure as soon as you come in (Female, 19)

The majority of young people who commented felt that the complaints processes were flawed.

In (name of unit) you weren't really encouraged to express your views. If you had a complaint, it went no further than a member of staff from another unit judging and then delivering a verdict on the complaint. In nearly all cases, the complaint came to nothing (Male, 16)

If we had a complaint, we would write it down and it would get looked at but it never got sorted (Male, 16)

They sit down and listen to you for 5 minutes and then they get bored (Male, 16)

They would have forced you to say good things about them. You had to make a complaint when staff wasn't there, like to a social worker. But half the time they wouldn't do anything because they didn't know what it was like (Male, 19)

I don't think complaints are followed up (Female, 16)

The effectiveness of the complaints processes is an area which needs examination. When the young people became more aware of the standards and the role of the care commission during the research, they had some comments to make.

Inspections should be all unannounced and if they're not doing the job, then they should get fined (Male, 19)

(Copies of) the standards should be put in the home (Female, 17)

Different residential have different standards (Female, 17)

*If I knew the standards 100% when I was in residential, I would have kept saying
“This is the standards!!” (Female, 18)*

Standard Nineteen : advocacy

This standard says that young people should be supported to get in touch with agencies or services that can help them to speak out.

Only three young people felt that if they could not speak on their own behalf that staff would not help them to find someone who could. The majority of young people felt that they would be supported in this.

They let me phone agencies (Male, 15)

They put a wee board up to give us information (Female, 19)

Obviously, most of the young people knew about the role of Who Cares? Scotland and were in touch with their young person`s worker

My young person`s worker came to speak to us. The staff encouraged us to speak to her (Female, 17)

I never heard about the care commission till just before I left...I only knew about Who Cares? (Female, 17)

Yes, staff told me about children`s rights etc and how to get in touch (with the young person`s worker) (Male, 16)

Access to advocacy is important and underpins accountability. The fact that this group of young people were aware and able to have advocacy services augers well for services. However, it must be remembered that these young people were selected using the knowledge of young person`s workers, which may have biased this sample in relation to their knowledge in this area.

Section Three

Discussion

The young people involved in the research were keen that their opinions should be heard. This discussion reflects these opinions. The development of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care, and the National Care Standards are seen as real opportunities for improvements within the residential child care sector. However, in spite of these, the picture across Scotland continues to be inconsistent in terms of young people's care experience.

Many positive aspects came out of the research. There was evidence of young people experiencing good support, improving living environments and increased opportunities. There were many examples of good practice, with some staff working hard to ensure that their young people have positive experiences in their lives. Young people mentioned how important staff attitude was to their well being. In particular, a sense of being listened to, being cared about and being worthy of spending time with were all important features of good staff members. There were examples of this throughout the research.

While there were examples of good experiences, there were also examples of poorer experiences. If this report is to have an effect on improving services, it would be helpful to spend more time on how things can be improved.

One recurring theme was that staff often did not have enough time for the young people with whom they worked. Young people identified low staff ratios as a particular problem and this was reflected as having a negative impact on a number of the standards. Scotland continues to struggle with recruitment and retention for social work, in general, and residential child care, in particular. Larger organisational issues such as pay and conditions for residential child care workers, and the attitudes of other professionals to residential workers, need to be addressed. However, sometimes these issues are also to do with the dynamics of the group within the unit. Some of the young people commented about the mix of the group and how other young people could have an adverse impact. If greater attention were paid to placing young people

appropriately, then staff would not be in the position of “firefighting”, and would therefore have more quality time to spend with young people.

Another theme which recurred was poor staff training. It was surprising how aware the young people were about staff training. They were also of the view that good quality staff training would improve their care experience. With the advent of registration and the requirements for qualifications, it may be that this area will improve in the future. It is also an area which should assume even greater importance given the new criteria for qualification issued by the Scottish Social Services Council. However, it is clear that units should have strategies for training and that these strategies include areas which will enhance relationships with young people.

Issues about trust and privacy came up in various guises throughout the research. Young people who are in care due to adverse life experiences will struggle initially to form relationships with staff, which in turn lead to trust and a feeling of safety. The problems of achieving privacy within a group care environment present a challenge to any staff group. How to share information and space, while trying to engender trust is a major problem. Good communication systems between staff and individual young people are essential. Young people have a right to understand what information is being transmitted about them, and why this is happening.

Safety was also a recurring theme throughout the research. A large number of the young people who took part did not feel safe all of the time, with worrying numbers not feeling safe at any time. Threats to safety came from other young people, sometimes their families, and very occasionally from staff. In particular, issues with other young people were mentioned most often as contributing to a feeling of being unsafe. Bullying and intimidation within units is not acceptable and strategies must be in place for tackling this. It is important that staff are able to understand power dynamics, and how they can work to empower young people. An examination within units about how these aspects of safety can be addressed would be time well spent.

Young people spoke about the importance of being able to stay in contact with families. This was the standard most frequently rated as one of the most important standards for them. While some young people had staff who helped them to keep

contact, other young people were not given the assistance they required. The area of working in partnership with families and parents should be strongly addressed within units and young people should be assisted to maintain these important links.

Encouraging young people to express their views and, more importantly, to take these seriously, enhances the care experience and leads to improvements in feelings of safety and trust. It was surprising to see how young people often felt that their views were not taken seriously. A consistent theme was a questioning of the effectiveness of complaints procedures. This almost echoes the findings of the report *Let's Face It* (2003) which said

“Open cultures encourage feedback even when that takes the form of complaints....Many young people currently do not know... to whom they should make the complaint, or are afraid to do so for fear of repercussions.”(p 101)

Article 20 of the UNCRC talks about children and young people in care having the right to “special protection.” This article recognises that children who need alternative care may be disadvantaged and therefore require additional measures, over and above those of other children, to ensure their welfare. The National Standards provide an opportunity to ensure that this special protection is forthcoming. They can do this in two ways. Firstly, they make standards of care explicit to staff and young people. In this way, staff and young people know what to expect, in outcome terms. Secondly, they highlight the role of the Care Commission, and their regulatory function. By listening to the views of young people, as articulated throughout this research, it is hoped that the National Standards will become an even stronger tool for providing the special protection they require by right.

The snapshot view, offered by the young people who use residential services, shows us that there is much work to be done. For many of the individual young people the standards are not being met. When we bring together the views of these young people it appears that nationally the picture is not much brighter. We must continue to raise the standards.

Appendix One

Programmes and tools used for the focus groups

Focus Group One

The questionnaire used in the first focus group meeting is reproduced on page 42. However, the administration of the questionnaire was designed to ensure that the young people involved engaged as much as possible with the process. The programme for the first focus group session was as follows :

- **Pick and Mix : (20 mins)** This was an introduction and icebreaker activity. Each person in the group (adults included) had a bag of sweets containing the same colour of confectionary. It was the task of each member of the group to end up with a bag of different coloured confectionary. To do this, they had to move around the group and ask three questions of each person.(What`s your name, where do you live, and something else about themselves e.g. favourite music.)
- **Setting the scene : (10 mins)** The research was briefly explained to the group, housekeeping clarified, ground rules set and consents checked so that everyone was clear about expectations
- **Who wants to be good at care?: (10 mins)** The two researchers role played a question and answer session as a way of imparting basic information about the national care standards to the young people. These was based on a game show format. The game show questions are reproduced on page 44.
- **Break:** The activities so far, including a 5 minute comfort break would have taken 45 minutes.
- **Pick and Stick : (60 mins)** The questions from the questionnaire were written onto sheets contained on four flipcharts. There was one flipchart at each corner of the room. The flipchart represented one of four answers (e.g. never, usually ,sometimes, always) The question was read out by one of the researchers, and the young person went to the corner which represents their

answer. Each young person had a set of stickers with their own colour and shape. This enabled the researchers to gather demographic information about who answered. An adult was stationed at each flipchart to help the young person or take a note on a scribe recording sheet, if the young person wanted to qualify any of their answers. The pick and stick activity took about an hour. The activity was broken up every 20 minutes by providing a short break or fun activity (e.g. choose a prize)

- **Pick in Pairs: (10 mins)** Once the questionnaire is finished, the young people were asked to pick a piece of paper from a box. The piece of paper had two sentences written on it which needed completion. The sentences were based on two of the 6 principles in the standards. The young person was then interviewed on a one-to-one basis and audio-taped during their discussion about completing the sentence. For example, the questions would say *Things could be better for my privacy if.....Things could be better for my safety if.....* During this activity, other young people would be making key rings.
- **Ending: (5 mins)** There was a short ending exercise to allow the young people to say something about the experience, thank them for their participation, and ask them to attend the next group.

Questionnaire for Focus Group One

PRIVACY

1. Some people like to share their rooms, others prefer to have their own room.
Do you share a room with anybody else? (No ; Yes with one other person ;
Yes with two other people ; Yes with more than two people) Standard 5.4
2. Do you have somewhere to lock your personal belongings? (No ; Yes, in a
cupboard, a drawer or my room ; Yes, in the office ; Yes, other) Standard 5.7
3. Are you able to have telephone calls in private if you want to? (Never;
Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 14.1
4. Do staff make sure they talk to you privately about personal things like health?
(Never ; Sometimes ; Usually; Always) Standard 11.4
5. Are you able to see family visitors in private? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ;
Always) Standard 3.3
6. Can family members speak to staff in private ? (Never; Sometimes ; Usually ;
Always) Standard 3.5
7. Do you have privacy when using bathing or showering facilities? (Never;
Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 5.11

DIGNITY

8. Do staff speak about everyone respectfully? (All responses in this section are
Never ; Sometimes ; Usually; Always) Standard 8.2
9. Do staff treat you respectfully ? Standard 8.2
10. Do staff always call you by the name you prefer? Standard 8.1
11. Do you feel staff give you advice about appearance in a way that makes you
feel good about yourself? Standard 14.5

CHOICE

12. Can you choose the member of staff with whom you want to discuss issues ?
(never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 14.6
13. What do you think of the choice of food available to you where you live ?
(Great, 2-3 choices at each meal and a variety of snacks, involvement in the
menu planning and buying of food, ; Quite good, 2 choices at some meals,
snacks available, involvement in menu planning and/or buying ; OK, 2 choices
at some meals, few snack, limited involvement in menu planning or buying, ;

- Not good, no choice at meals, no snack, no involvement in buying or menu planning) Standard 10.1
14. Do you choose what to do in your free time, within agreed limits and according to your age? 9 Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 8.5
 15. Are you able to have snacks and drinks when you want them? (Never ; Sometimes; Usually ; Always) Standard 10.2
 16. Do you get involved in choosing furniture and décor where you live ? (No ; Yes, bedroom only ; Yes, communal areas only,; Yes, bedroom and communal areas) Standard 9.2
 17. Are you supported to follow a faith of your choice? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 9.5

SAFETY

18. Do you feel safe and secure where you live? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 6.5
19. Do you feel your home is clean/ (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 5.1
20. Do they hold fire drills where you live ? (No,; Yes, once a week, ; Yes, once every few months ; Yes, once a year) Standard 6.7
21. How is your room heated ? (It`s not heated; A heater I can control ; A radiator I can control, ; the staff control the heating) Standard 5.6
22. Is the furniture in your home in good condition? (No, ; Yes, some ; Yes, most ; Yes, all) Standard 5.2

REALISING POTENTIAL

23. Are you encouraged to develop skills in looking after yourself e.g. cooking, budgeting ? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 17.2
24. Do staff encourage you to have and maintain hobbies and interests ? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 15.1
25. Are you supported and encouraged by staff in your schoolwork, training or employment ? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standards 13.1 and 17.5
26. Do staff help you to take part in things happening outside the home ? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 8.7
27. Is there a special quiet place where you live where you can work or study in peace ? (No ; Yes, in my bedroom ; Yes, there`s a study area ; Yes, there`s a study area but it is restricted) Standard 13.4

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

28. Do staff respect and value your personal beliefs? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 4.3
29. Do staff help you to celebrate birthdays or other events or festivals which are important to you ? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 15.3
30. Are you given information and are you supported in your lifestyle choices e.g image, sexual relationships, drugs and alcohol ? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) Standard 14.2

31. If you felt unable to speak on your own behalf, could staff help you find someone who could ? (Never ; Sometimes ; Usually ; Always) If so, who ?
Standard 19.1.and 2.

AND FINALLY

32. Do you know if there is a complaints procedure where you live ? (Yes ; No)
Standard 18.3
33. Could you make a complaint or raise a concern if you needed to ? (Yes ; No;
Don`t know ; Yes, with help) Standard 18.2
34. Overall, how happy are you with the quality of care you get where you live ?
(4 pictorials of smiley faces)

Game Show Questions (Choose one answer from a choice of four)

The book of National Care Standards for care homes for children & young people is

Blue, red , green, or yellow

How many principles are the standards based on?

3,4,0, or 6

3 of the principles are Equality & Diversity, Realising Potential & Safety, name the other 3...

Secrecy, simplicity and silence, hope, luck and charity, privacy, dignity and choice, or chance choice and silence

How many sections are there in the standards?

10, 24, 19, or 64

If there are 6 principles and 4 sections, how many standards are there?

6, 12, 19 or 24

Section 1 covers standards 1-7 & it is about...

How to win friends and influence people, the life and times of Harry Potter, The life of Bart Simpson, or Beginning your stay

How many standards are there in section 3 “Moving On”?

6, 10, 12, or 1

The final section covers standards 18 & 19, it is about....

How to become a residential worker, Expressing your views, How to become a social worker, or All of these

Why are there National Care Standards?

To help young people know what to expect, To help service providers know about the kind of service they need to provide, To help inspectors know what to look for, or All of these

Focus Group Two

Focus group two took place approximately two weeks after focus group one. It was hoped that this focus group would generate more qualitative data for analysis. The programme for the second focus group was as follows :

- **Icebreaker : (10 mins)** This was to re-introduce the group and to set out the ground rules, housekeeping arrangements and other activities.

- **Play Your Cards Right : (40 mins)** The questionnaire used for this focus group was redesigned into a card game. Young people were dealt a range of cards. Each card they were dealt out had a question about a specific standard. Each young person was given the opportunity to write something about the question on a postcard. An adult sat with each group in case any young person needed support to write their answers. The questions used on the cards are reproduced on page 46.
- **Break (5 mins)**
- **Have your say (5 mins)** Each of the young people were given a voting paper and asked to vote for their three most important standards in order of preference.
- **Open forum : (30 mins)** It was decided to have an open group discussion at the end of the second focus group. It was felt that this would allow the young people an opportunity to debrief, and also to give any other views they had about the consultation. The main points of discussion were recorded by one of the researchers.
- **Endings: (10mins)** A brief ending exercise was carried out, and the young people and adults were thanked for their help and assistance. Each of the young people was then given a gift token for their help in the exercises. Young people were also given a laminated set of cards with the standards printed on them to keep.

Questions on the cards for Focus Group Two

ARRIVING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Standard One : You are welcomed to your unit and know what to expect during your stay

- What happened when you first arrived at your current or most recent unit?
- Could anything have made this better

FIRST MEETINGS

Standard Two : Staff help you settle in . The unit has a friendly environment and you can get help and support if you need it

- What was it like settling in for the first few days in your current or most recent unit?
- Could anything have made this better

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU

Standard Three : You are helped to keep in touch with your family and friends and to have a good understanding of your family history

- Can you give an example of how this did or did not happen in your current or most recent unit

SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Standard Four : The support you get in the unit is based on your care plan. You should be involved in the planning of your care, and in reviews.

- Can you give some examples of how you were involved in your care planning and reviews

YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Standard Five : Your current or most recent home should have been a really nice place to stay.

- What is it like for you

FEELING SAFE AND SECURE

Standard Six : You feel safe and secure in every way in your unit. At any time, there is enough staff to help you if you need it

- Can you give some examples of how this did or didn't happen where you live or used to live

MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

Standard Seven : You experience good quality care, provided by staff and managers whose training and expertise allows them to meet your needs. Your care is in line with the laws and good practice

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen in your current or most recent unit

EXERCISING YOUR RIGHTS

Standard Eight : ur rights and responsibilities. You can make choices within limits that are suited to your age, and staff support you in making decisions

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen where you live or used to live

MAKING CHOICES

Standard Nine : You live in a place where everyone respects and supports your personal choices. You can make choices that are right for your age and understanding in all areas of your personal and social life

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen for you where you live or used to live

EATING WELL

Standard Ten : your meals are varied and healthy, are what you like, and cater for special diets. Meals look nice when they are served.

- Which of these happens in your current or most recent unit

KEEPING WELL : LIFESTYLE

Standard Eleven : Your health needs are met. Staff know about them and discuss them sensitively with you and your family (if appropriate) They make sure that you have access to appropriate health care.

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen where you live , or where you used to live

KEEPING WELL : MEDICATION

Standard Twelve : If you need to take medication, staff know this and there are arrangements in place to help you take your medication safely

- If you take medication, does this happen as above, where you live or used to live

LEARNING

Standard Thirteen : Staff support you to reach your potential at school and you are encouraged in your education. The place where you stay or used to stay helps you to study

- Can you give an example of how this did or didn't happen in your current or most recent unit

PRIVATE LIFE

Standard Fourteen : Staff respect your wishes about private aspects of your life and your religious, cultural, political, social and sexual preferences. They give you privacy and respect confidentiality.

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen where you live or where you used to live

DAILY LIFE

Standard Fifteen : You are made to feel a part of your care home and community, and you are supported gain access and take part in a range of activities

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen in your current or most recent unit

SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION

Standard Sixteen : You are prepared for events like reviews. Staff make sure you are able to understand what's happening and support you to give your views.

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen in your current or most recent unit

MOVING ON

Standard Seventeen : You have every opportunity to develop skills and knowledge you need to move on and live independently. You are helped to develop the employment, study and social skills you need for the next stage of your life

- If appropriate, can you give an example of how this did or did not happen for you in your current or most recent unit

CONCERNS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

Standard Eighteen : The unit welcomes your views so that they can continuously improve their service to you. Staff encourage you to give your views whether positive or negative

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen in your current or most recent unit

ADVOCACY

Standard Nineteen : You are supported to get in touch with other agencies or services that can help you to speak out

- Can you give an example of how this does or doesn't happen in your current or most recent unit

Appendix Two

Results of ballot on most important standards

The young people had an opportunity to vote for which standards they thought were the most important, as part of focus group two. Young people were asked to identify their three most important standards and rate them from first to third. 15 young people completed the voting forms. These were the results :

Standard Number	First	Second	Third	Totals
1 : ARRIVING FOR THE FIRST TIME	2			2
2 : FIRST MEETINGS	2	1	1	4
3 : KEEPING IN TOUCH	5		1	6
4 : SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS		2	1	3
5 : YOUR ENVIRONMENT			1	1
6 : FEELING SAFE AND SECURE	1	3	2	6
7 : MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING	1	2	2	5
8 : RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES				0
9 : MAKING CHOICES		1	1	2
10 : EATING WELL			1	1
11 : KEEPING WELL-LIFESTYLE	1	2		3
12 : KEEPING WELL-MEDICATION		1	1	2
13 : LEARNING			1	1
14 : PRIVATE LIFE	2	2	1	5
15 : DAILY LIFE	1	1		2
16 : SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION			2	2
17 : MOVING ON				0
18 : CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS				0
19 : ADVOCACY				0
Totals	15	15	15	45

The two most important standards were 3 and 6, and the second most important standards were 7 and 14.

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