



You Said, We Did

April 2015

Introduction

This report is a summary of what has been done by Children's Services in the past 18 months as a result of the views of children, young people, and parents/carers that were gathered in 2013/14.

Sixteen services across Children's Services Department took part in annual service user feedback collection exercises in 2013/14. Since then, Children's Services has aimed to respond to these views, and make changes where appropriate.

'You Said'

2260 parents/carers, children and young people took part in a survey as part of service user feedback activity, of these:

- 94.5% said that their needs, feelings and wishes had been taken into consideration
- 93.5% felt that they had been treated with respect by staff
- 90.3% were generally happy with the services

The following were the key messages from children, young people and parents that emerged as part of service user feedback activity during 2013/14:

1. **Things have changed for the better as a result of contact with services**
2. **Communication and information needs to be clear and timely**
3. **Contact with services contributes to improved emotional wellbeing for young people**

4. **Young people and parents don't always know what services are available to them**
5. **The longer the service is involved with the family the greater the perceived outcome**
6. **Disabled children and families want to be more involved in activities in their community and need support with friendships**
7. **Families want access to earlier help**
8. **Families value a relationship-based approach**
9. **Some of the equipment Children's Services provides is not always good enough**
10. **Children involved with social care value being involved in decision making about things that concern them**
11. **Looked After Children will turn to a foster carer if they don't feel safe but they don't get a lot of help from them with school work.**
12. **Care Leavers feel they aren't prepared enough for independence**

The rest of the report looks at these key messages in more detail and what we have done in response to these messages i.e. the 'We Dids'.

April 2015 ● 15-16 058

1. Things have changed for the better as a result of contact with services

You said...	We did...
<p>67% (5) of the parent/carers, 80% (16) of young people over 16 and 77% (10) of young people under 16 who took part in the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Survey stated that they felt things had changed for the better as a result of the service provided.</p>	<p>The Youth Offending Team (YOT) are continuing to develop the way the service works to make sure it best meets the needs of the young people and families. They have also introduced an online questionnaire, Viewpoint, with young people accessing the service. Their views will be used to inform service development</p>
<p>77% (1740) of service users who gave us feedback said that ‘things have changed for the better as a result of contact with services’.</p> <p>88% (40) of parents/carers using the Children’s Disability Service said that things have changed for the better as a result of using the service.</p> <p>87% (95) of those using the SWIFT Specialist Family Services reported feeling things had changed for the better as a result of contact with the services. Many commented that they had learnt very positive, useful and effective skills which improved parenting and gave examples of how their lives have changed for the better: <i>“I would not know what I do without SWIFT nor would I be where I am. It made me stronger to leave that relationship and be a good mum. Has made me think about future career path as I would want to help people like me.”</i></p>	<p>Service user feedback is discussed as part of caseworker supervision within Targeted Youth Support. It is looked at on an individual client basis to ensure clients have been listened to and that a response to that feedback has been made.</p>

2. Communication and information needs to be clear and timely

Good quality communication is very important to our service users. There were some good examples of this, as well as some feedback from parent/carers and young people illustrating areas where improvements could be made

You Said...

LAC CFW service: 100% (29) of respondents said that the information they received at contact was helpful/very helpful and 96% (28) said they have been kept well informed by the service.

'The support I have received has been invaluable. I always know a phone call is going to be responded to quickly and have found X to be easy to communicate with and knows she will do her best to help.' **Children's Disability Service**

Special Educational Need, Disability and Inclusion Support Service: Feedback from parent/carer on their experience of the process of developing an Education, Health, Care (EHC) Plan shows they are less likely to feel that the roles of everyone involved are as clear as reported nationally. Less parents/carers in East Sussex felt that communication was clear and that everyone knew what they need to do.

You said...

Locality's focus groups with Children in Need and on Child Protection plans: No young people said their social worker was judgemental or dismissive and all children were able to say that they knew why their social worker was involved.

Locality Social Work Service users told us:

- Delays were caused when the handover between teams was not managed well
- Sometimes parents did not like the way in which they were communicated with.
- About a quarter of parents/carers report were not able to understand what was written about them in reports.

We did...

The process has changed in the way information is handed over between workers. Where possible a social worker picking up a case will do a joint visit with the previous worker, and chronologies (setting out the family's history) have been introduced so that the new social worker should have all necessary information on the case.

Further, **Locality** social workers have received 'motivational interviewing' training and have been working towards a more relationship-based approach to practice throughout the last year to improve the communication between parent and social worker.

Outcomes, i.e. what the family has got to achieve for the child to be safe, have been introduced into child plans in **Locality** and this has included an emphasis on making the language used in the reports more easy to understand.

2. Communication and information needs to be clear and timely (continued)

You said...	We did...
For Youth Offending Team (YOT) service users it seemed that it wasn't always clear what outcomes are being achieved with 16+.	All service users are now able to get involved in the development of their plans to agree what they need to achieve. A YOT Value Statement has also been developed to let service users know the services' top priorities and core beliefs, and reminds staff about its priorities and goals.
<i>'[...]on very rare occasions I did feel a little bit out of the loop - so including everyone in emails and maintaining communication is really key.'</i> Ex Youth Cabinet member	The Youth Cabinet are involved in the development of a new information, advice and guidance website for young people. Members have consulted young people, been involved in the commissioning process and will be working with designers on developing the new website.

2. Communication and information needs to be clear and timely (continued)

You said...

Safeguarding Unit: Parents feedback that they weren't always clear why people were concerned about their children or what needed to change for the child protection plan to end. The importance of timely communication was also highlighted – parents need to have enough time to read through reports before the meetings.

We did...

The **Safeguarding Unit** have been trialling a new approach to improve the child's plan and to strengthen Core Groups and Review Child Protection Conferences, that will help families participate more easily using language that is easily understood by all. An example child's plan (concerns/needs/strengths/dangers/goals) and core group report template have been drafted using language that is easier to understand. The review report and child's plan will also be 'owned' by the Core Group, and will be based on direct work that has been going on with the family, and seen as an ongoing piece of work rather than a one off event. This will help parents understand what needs to change and engage in the plan to be part of the solution. This new approach is likely to be rolled out in 2015. Further, partner agency reports can now be shared via secure email reducing the risk of families and agencies not being aware of what is being presented and proposed to that meeting.

The **Safeguarding Unit** have also produced a leaflet to send out to children and young people with the names and some details of the IROs, details of advocacy and the CICC, that will explain the differences of roles.

2. Communication and information needs to be clear and timely (continued)

You said...	We did...
<p>Complaints Team: Service users told us that it is important to have telephone calls returned and for services to be available to talk when necessary.</p>	<p>The Complaints Team are reviewing the way in which they can be contacted. A simpler website which leads the complainant through a clear process to gather their feedback is being developed. This will monitor information as well as explain the complaints process. Improvements will also be made to the online offer for young people and the team will work with the Children in Care Council as part of the service redesign.</p> <p>In the spirit of You Said We Did, the Complaints Team will work more closely with colleagues to ensure that all letters include a standard paragraph that details what has happened as a result of the complaint. The reason for this is that in some cases a complaint is not upheld, but the feedback is still valuable and we are keen to show how the feedback has made a difference.</p> <p>Information for Families (IFF) has developed different ways for families to access information, making the service easier to contact. Parent information contacts are now available in schools and the web information has been improved so that families are not relying solely on the telephone helpline.</p> <p>IFF are also developing online advice and guidance to help parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities manage planning meetings and disagreements more effectively.</p>

2. Communication and information needs to be clear and timely (continued)

You said...	We did...
<p>90% (47) of parents/carers using the online Schools Admissions Service told us that the information provided as part of the online admissions process was easy to understand; <i>'The online application is fantastic and I'm more than happy with it.'</i></p> <p>Parents/carers who had telephone enquiries for the School Admissions Team found it difficult to get through to the right person. Only just over half of the users felt that their enquiry was dealt with promptly.</p>	<p>We have worked on improving web information about Admissions.</p> <p>We have worked more closely with other teams so that there is appropriate support on the phone.</p>

3. Contact with services contributes to improved emotional wellbeing for young people

You said...	We did...
<p>Being part of the Youth Cabinet gives young people something to be proud of and the longer they are involved the more young people say this. 90% of the ex-Youth Cabinet reported that they had a lot to be proud of compared with 62% of young people who had just become members of the Youth Cabinet.</p>	<p>We have supported the Youth Cabinet to work with a wider group of young people who participate in different ways, such as local youth forums and specific groups such as the Children in Care Council. We organised a well-attended young people-led event where the Youth Cabinet and young people in local youth forums invited young people across the county, to inspire them to participate and become involved in their schools and local communities.</p>
<p>Having worked with Targeted Youth Support 79% of young people said they felt happier with life as a whole. 74% reported 'feeling a lot of things are good about me' since working with the service.</p> <p>Family Support Keywork Service: Parents reported that their children/ young people are more likely to feel good about themselves and less likely to feel unhappy, sad or depressed after working with the team.</p> <p><i>'X finds it easier to talk about things easier after working with SWIFT. She didn't feel judged.'</i> SWIFT Specialist Family Services.</p>	<p>We are continuing to provide support where there is greatest need, by targeting our work to young people and families who are most vulnerable.</p>

4. Young people and parents don't always know what services are available to them

You said...

Children's Disability Service parent/carers tell us that they don't always know about the other services and information that is available to them

Some parents who had worked with **SWIFT** said they had not been aware of the service beforehand and that it should be more widely advertised.

We did...

The **Children's Disability Service** are working with the Transition Service to help post 16 disabled young people and their families plan for adulthood.

The Children's Disability Duty Team provides information to parents of disabled children on a wide range of available services: Universal, Targeted and Specialist.

Families cannot self refer to this service and it is only available through a referral from children's social care or the Family Court. However, new service literature was produced for social work and legal professionals and open evenings convened for judiciary to encourage greater understanding of the service offer.

The **Youth Offending team** work with families to make sure that they are getting the most suitable intervention to meet their needs, either through Family Key Work, Parenting Work or Functional Family Therapy.

On transport issues **Youth Cabinet** Members have been promoting the 3i-D card scheme to young people and improving access to apply for a card, through promotional activities in schools and working with the East Sussex Library Service to enable young people to apply for 3i-D directly to their local library.

Targeted Youth Support Service (TYS) regularly invite guest speakers from other services to their team meetings so they are able to learn about services available and for other service providers to learn more about YYS. This helps ensure that service users remain updated about what is available to them via other services.

5. The longer the service is involved with the family the greater the perceived outcome

You said...

78% of parent/carers who attended **Children's Centres** weekly reported that 'things had changed for the better as a result of my contact with Children's Centres' compared with 55% of those who had attended for the first time.

The percentage of parents and carers who agree that things had got 'a little' or 'a lot better' since being involved with **Locality social work**, increased with the length of time they had been involved with the service. For those parents who had only been involved with the service for a number of weeks only 17% agreed this, for those that had been working with their social worker for months 49% said this and for those that had been involved with the service for longer than a year – 67% agreed this.

SWIFT: Some parents felt the support ended too soon.

We did...

In the light of reduced resources we are refocussing services to make sure we are working with the families that need it most for the right amount of time to bring about positive change. For example, TYS focus on building independence, and when involvement comes to an end they use clear exit strategies to help young people and families recognise achievements.

SWIFT support is intensive and holistic, focusing on the parent's and children's needs and some parents can find it difficult when this support ends. However families would still have a social worker and/or community treatment provider supporting them. Further, SWIFT service users are invited to participate in discharge meetings to discuss access to ongoing support.

6. Disabled children and families want to be more involved in activities in their community and need support with friendships

You said...

Parents/carers of disabled children and young people told us that they feel that their child/young person has access to services that benefit him/her and that the activities are enjoyable but they would like to be able to join in activities in the local community more often.

POET research: Feedback from parent/carers and practitioners on the initial stages of putting into practice the EHCPs. Compared with nationally ESCC parents/carers feel their child's EHCP is less likely to enable them to take part in school/learning, the local community and is less likely to support them to create relationships with friends. Parents/carers themselves reported that they felt less likely to be able to take part in the community than nationally.

We did...

The **Children's Disability Service** are reviewing how they can best support disabled children and young people to access universal services, for example, leisure centres and playgrounds; through the introduction of the I-go card we are working with providers to help improve access for disabled children and young people.

Information for Families knows that parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities have asked for more support at meetings. In response to this the service is developing partnerships with parent's groups and voluntary organisations, to support parents locally.

We have also developed a Local Offer, which brings together information on what services and support are available for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Information about the Local offer is available online or in other forms if requested.

The **Youth Offending Team** identify SEN needs and learning styles when they assess young people and this helps make sure the intervention is tailored to meet the young person's needs.

7. Families want access to earlier help

You said...

Children's Disability Service – some parents/carers reported the need for earlier help. Some said that they did not receive help until their families were in crisis. They talk of having to 'fight' to get specialist support and view CS as being reactive rather than proactive.

Locality Social Work – some parents mentioned that they could have done with earlier help or help from other agencies.

We did...

The **Children's Disability Service** has developed support services for families to help them address challenging behaviour and an Early Intervention Service to work with families who might not be immediately eligible for the specialist service.

Locality: A change programme emphasising the importance of access to early help, called Thrive' was introduced to children's services 3 years ago. A comprehensive early help offer now exists including family key workers across services such as police, schools, children's centres, Targeted Youth Support (TYS), providing targeted support across the continuum of need. People are now able to access the screening hub for advice on referrals, and as such more appropriate referrals are made to duty and assessment and families at a lower level of need are picked up by early help services.

More parents and young people are self referring to **TYS** which shows that awareness of the service is improving. TYS is actively promoted to parents and young people via Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), GPs, Social Care and schools helping service users to access earlier help if it is needed.

The **Youth Offending Team** now delivers targeted family work at an earlier stage.

Information for Families are improving the website so that families can access information and support more easily.

8. Families value a relationship-based approach

You said...

Locality Social Work – over 90% of parent/carers say they have a positive relationship with their social worker and 87% say their child has a positive relationship too. Many parents/carers gave positive comments on the positive relationships they had built with their social worker.

“Very pleased with the social worker I was allocated and built up a very trusting relationship”.

Locality’s focus groups with Children in Need and on Child

Protection: All identified strongly with their social worker and talked about how their worker provided them a voice within their family and a clear positive example of how social workers have made a difference.

Children’s Disability Service – parents/carers tell us they value having a named social worker for their family: *‘Very pleased with the social worker I was allocated and built up a very trusting relationship.’*

Locality Social Work: One third of families still feel they have to repeat their story when they start working with a new social worker.

Children and young people involved with Locality expressed frustration at having many professionals involved in their lives which meant that they had to repeat their story to social workers and to others.

We did...

We have continued to improve on a good relationship-based approach by developing guidance for our staff to ensure the views of children and families are included in their plans.

Locality Social Work are continuing to strengthen good practice around the relationship-based approach by supporting the development of their social workers skills to communicate with children and young people through the production of a participation toolkit, and the introduction of a communicating with children training course.

8. Families value a relationship-based approach (continued)

You said...	We did...
<p>SWIFT: some families felt there were too many professionals working with them.</p> <p><i>'I do feel that there was too many people in this case, it would have been better if we only had 1 or 2 people.'</i></p>	<p>Further as mentioned above, Locality have reviewed hand over arrangements from the Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) to longer term teams so joint visits and chronologies have been introduced so that the new worker does not have to ask the family to repeat their story. Also, the numbers of people involved with the family is being looked at on a case by case basis, to decide who is the best person to lead the work and deliver all the necessary interventions.</p> <p>All SWIFT families have a lead worker to focus on parental needs and children in the family will have a social worker too. Other SWIFT workers may get involved when a special skill is required e.g. psychology or psychiatry or to deliver all the support needed. Sometimes the court will instruct another person to be involved in the case such as a Doctor or Guardian. SWIFT are continually seeking to restrict the number of workers actively involved in seeing the family where the case is with them.</p>

9. Some of the equipment Children's Services provides is not always good enough

LAC CFW service: 40% of respondents stated they had contact at somewhere other than a contact centre or children's centre and 19% said they weren't happy with the toys or play activities available.

We did...

LAC CFW service: Dunbar Drive has been refurbished and now has age appropriate toys and play equipment.



10. Children involved with social care value being involved in decision making about things that concern them

You said...

Children's rights Director's Monitoring Survey and Junior Action day feedback: LAC have heard of the Children in Care Council and feel it makes a difference to what happens to children in care.

You said...	We did...
<p>Children's Rights Director's Monitoring Survey 2013: LAC tell us they aren't always asked about things that matter to them or that their opinions make a difference to decisions that are made about their life. Compared to national figures improvements could be made in how many young people know about their care plan.</p> <p>Children's Rights Directors Monitoring Survey and CiCC SUSS IT sessions: LAC want more say over contact.</p> <p>Locality's focus groups with Children in Need and on Child Protection plans: A significant minority of children and young people did not know that they had a child's plan; most did not know its contents and only one had helped the social worker to write it.</p>	<p>LAC: We have improved the way that LAC are involved in their care plans. We have developed outcome focused LAC care plans which involve the child. The new data information system prompts staff to identify the views of the child. The LAC review outcome document that Independent Reviewing Officer's (IROs) complete after the review has also been amended to include more details on how many children have participated in the review, and the key issues they are raising.</p> <p>Locality: We are developing a more effective child's plan and making sure social workers are skilled in involving the child in its development.</p>

11. Looked After Children will turn to a foster carer if they don't feel safe but they don't get a lot of help from them with school work.

Children's Rights Director's Monitoring Survey 2013: Almost 3 quarters of LAC said they would go to their Foster carer for help if they didn't feel safe.

You said...	We did...
Children's Rights Director's Monitoring Survey 2013: Fewer East Sussex LAC said they get a lot of help with school work from their carers than nationally.	LAC: We have produced and promoted training for foster carers to help them support LAC with school work. Further, homework is discussed via the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) homework. If a concern about school work is raised, the Virtual School works with the school, carer and child to resolve the issue, which could include supporting an afterschool homework club, or providing a tutor or mentor from the University of Brighton or Sussex.

12. Care Leavers feel they aren't prepared enough for independence

You said...	We did...
Care Leavers Residential Focus groups: Care leavers felt they weren't ready for independence and needed more help with cooking and budgeting. There was an individual comment in the snap shot survey also reiterating this.	LAC: Care Leavers' team practitioners will receive training from 'Next Steps' on helping care leavers develop independence.