

HOME IS NOT A PLACEMENT CAMPAIGN PACK

Activities to support children in care
councils and participation groups in
your local authority.



BACKGROUND



WHO ARE A NATIONAL VOICE?

A National Voice (ANV) is the national children in care council of England. Our mission is to bring care experienced young people together to find their voice and use it to improve the lives of all children in care and care leavers. We work with others to amplify young people's voices to create an environment in which young people's views are valued, sought and acted upon.

A National Voice was established over two decades ago by care experienced young people, to make sure children in care and care leaver's voices were heard at a national level. In 2017, A National Voice joined Coram Voice and continues its work through national projects.

HOW THE CAMPAIGN WAS CHOSEN

The Home is Not a Placement campaign was chosen by exploring the Bright Spots Programme data completed by over 17,000 children and young people. Home jumped out and ANV identified issues such as stability, placement versus home, and feeling safe. The ANV ambassadors also identified barriers such as feeling settled at home, lack of honest communication, fear of moving again, decorating, being treated equally, and more.

ANV launched a social media campaign Home is Not a Placement in 2021, starting a conversation about what home is and is not. See page 4 for quotes from the social media hashtag #HomeisNotaPlacement.

ANV want to continue this conversation. We encourage you to share completed activities from this pack and other related activities from your children in care council and participation groups. You will find more information about how on page 5.

ANV want to hear your 'top 10 asks', about Home is Not a Placement. These can be asks to professionals, local authorities or other partners so that they can better meet the needs of children and young people. More information on this activity can be found at the back of the pack on pages 29 and 30.

BACKGROUND

BRIGHT SPOTS



The Bright Spots Programme is a collaboration between Coram Voice and the University of Oxford which supports local authorities across the country to systematically listen to their children in care and care leavers, to hear directly from them about the things that are important to them and what makes life good for them. By working with almost 60 local authorities and gathering over 17,000 responses from children in care and care leavers we have gained insight into the key question: 'What makes life good for children in care and care leavers?' Here are some of the findings from the Bright Spots Programme about how children in care and care leavers felt about where they lived.



"Being in care makes my life better by having a safe house and bedroom."
(8-11yrs)

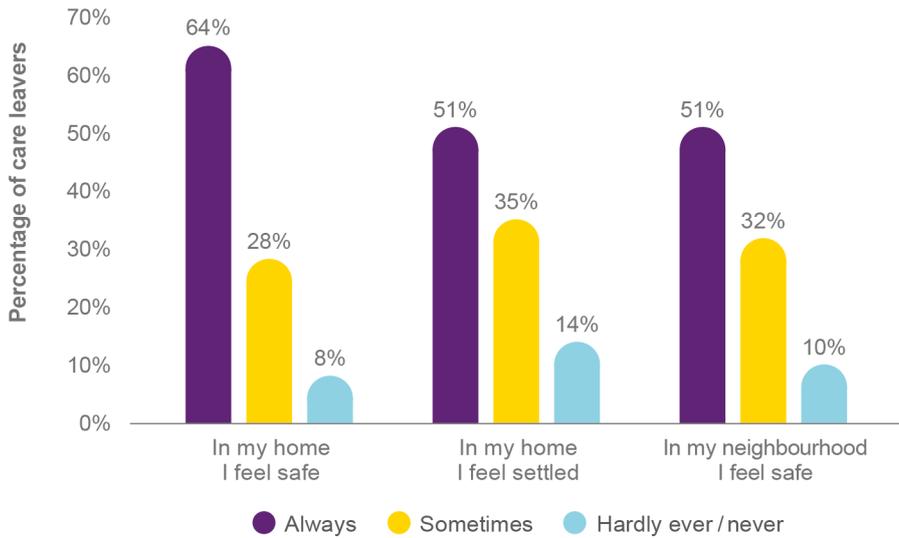


BACKGROUND

BRIGHT SPOTS



Figure 8: How care leavers felt about where they lived



Where I live is right for me. **68%** Care leavers

Base: 1,707-1,742

Care leavers (16-24 yrs) General population (16-24 yrs)

“I am feeling angry all the time because I don't like the house I live in.”
(Care leaver)

Not satisfied with housing
 32% **20%**

Not always feeling safe at home
 16% **9%**

The above findings show how feelings of safety and being settled in a home lessen the older a young person is, reinforcing the importance of exploring this topic with young people.

The above findings have been taken from the Bright Spots survey findings:
<https://coramvoice.org.uk/for-professionals/bright-spots/bright-spots-programme/>

MEDIA QUOTES

FROM CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND PROFESSIONALS

A HOME SHOULD BE A PLACE YOU FEEL SAFE, SECURE & LOVED.

"It is like a second family who loves you but that is only if you get a good foster carer."

WE WORK WITH CHILDREN, NOT CASES. CHILDREN LIVE IN HOMES, NOT PLACEMENTS.

HOME FOR ME HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNDER MY COVERS WITH A GOOD BOOK...HOME IS NOT MOVING IN WITH THOSE BOOKS IN BIN LINERS.

"A home is where you feel safe, it's homely, comfortable, and decorated nice, you feel part of the family, you're listened to and you have your own space."

"If we want to stay with a friend then do the checks and allow us to have some fun and be normal."

NO PLACEMENT WILL NEVER BE HOME...HOME IS SOMEWHERE SAFE AND STABLE. IT'S SOMEWHERE YOU COULD ALWAYS GO BACK TO, A SAFETY NET. A PLACEMENT ISN'T.

HOME IS SOMEWHERE I FEEL SAFE, SETTLED AND WITH MY DOG.

GET INVOLVED

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

#HOMEISNOTAPLACEMENT

We want to continue the conversation online by sharing completed activities and more.

Using the hashtag: **#HomeisNotaPlacement**, A National Voice are challenging you to share completed activities from this pack, as well as tools or resources of your own which you use as an organisation, children in care council and other groups, around the concept of home, which could be useful for others to also use.



**ANV want to hear
from you**



Share using the #

CONTENT PAGE

GROUNDING EXERCISES 8-10

Within this section of the pack you will find a range of activities to choose from. The aim of these activities is to conceptualise what it is really like for children coming into care who experience things such as multiple moves, emergency moves, difficulty forming relationships and more. This includes activities which can be used in training or group sessions to show what it's like to be in someone else's shoes

A NATIONAL VOICE ACTIVITIES:

BUILD YOUR PERFECT HOME 11-14

Complete here the 'Home is/not this' activity from the initial launch of the #HomeisNotaPlacement social media campaign. As well as a building block activity using a house template, focused on what makes a home safe.

JOURNEYS 15-18

Identify what makes a change, journey or transition as smooth and easy as possible. Also what contributes to a home being forever.

HOME PROFILE 19-24

Use the home template to fill in details of a home such as others living there, routine, rules, to give to young people.

ACTIVITY PLANNING 25-26

The activities here are useful to help create actions and plans going forward.

LANGUAGE 27-28

The importance of language, suggestions of alternative language and tips going forward.

NEXT STEPS:

TOP 10 ASKS 29-30

Complete your own set of top 10 asks to share using our hashtag and get conversation going.

ONLINE PARTICIPATION TOOLS 31

If unable to complete the activities within this booklet in person, in this section of the pack are tips and recommendations for online tools which could be used to facilitate some of the activities.

THANK YOU 32

GINGERBREAD MAN

GROUNDING EXERCISE



AIM: York's young people developed this activity which aims to get professionals involved in order to understand what coming into care, and moving homes looks and feels like.

RESOURCES: Gingerbread men cut-outs (see next page for template) for each participant.

TIME: Depending on the session length, between 1 and 4 hours.

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the gingerbread man template, participants should write all over the cut-out what is most important to them. E.g. a pet, favourite food, hobby, or friend.

Next, ask the participants to rip the cut-out in half and scrunch up one half and throw it away.

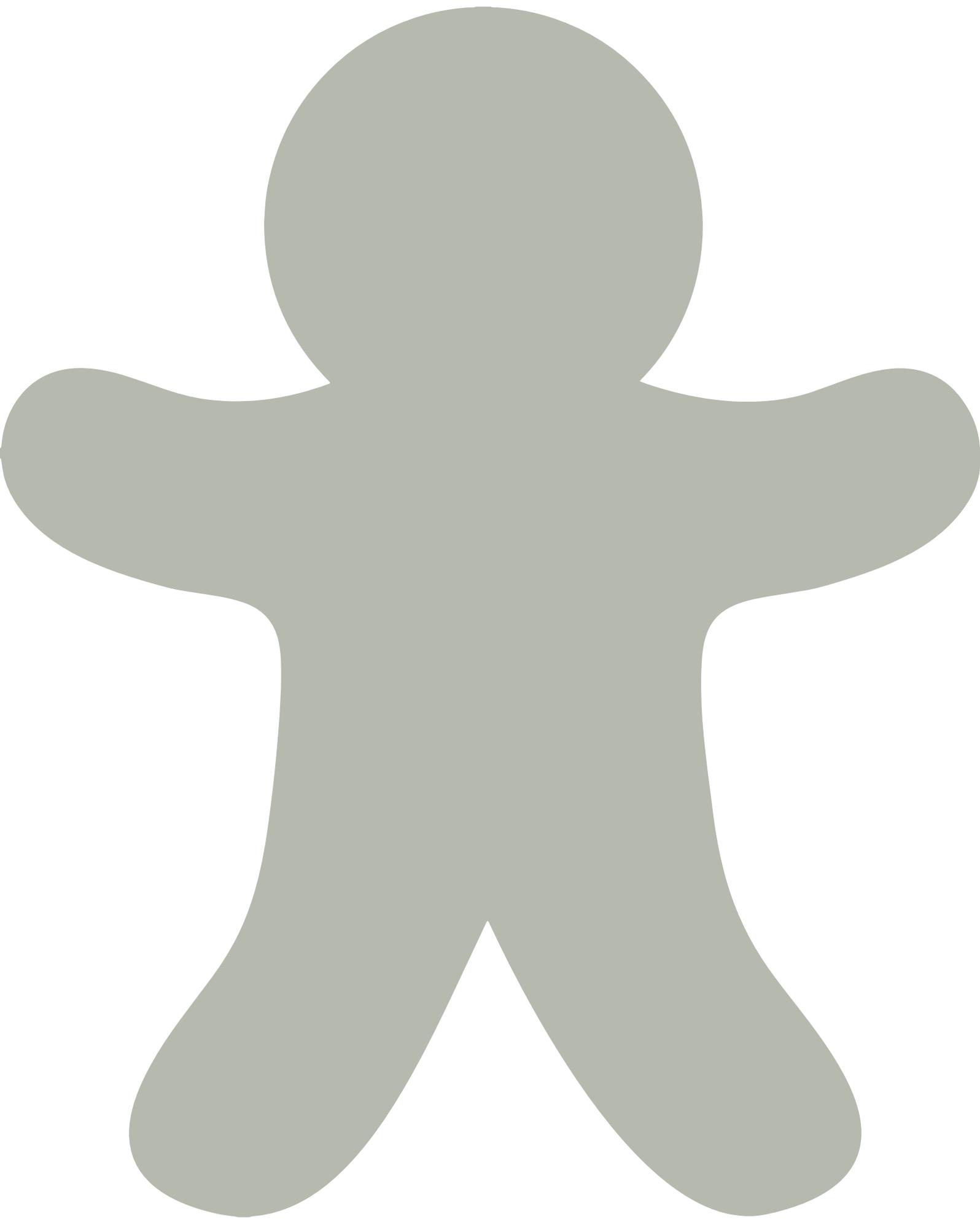
The message this conveys is often children and young people come into care and half of their lives are stripped away. Young people move schools often and leave behind friends, they may arrive at a home where the family doesn't eat their favourite meal, they may be placed somewhere that isn't near a place for their hobbies, such as horse-riding.

The participants can choose which side to throw away, however often young people don't have that control. Ask participants to feedback how they felt when 'getting rid' of half of their identity.

If as part of training or a longer meeting, participants could put the gingerbread man onto a makeshift washing line with clips and leave them there until a later stage. Putting the gingerbread men onto a washing line for everyone to see contextualises how young people in care feel their life is on show.



This exercise has been created by York's children in care council, Show Me That I Matter.



STONES IN OUR SHOES

GROUNDING EXERCISE



AIM: This activity aims to get participants to understand what it feels like for young people in care who may not have a trusted relationship or adult to talk to, and especially in times where something is upsetting them or bothering them.

RESOURCES: Enough envelopes for each participant, some of which filled with stones.

TIME: Flexible, depends on length of meeting.

INSTRUCTIONS: At the beginning of training or when hosting a meeting with participants, hand out the envelopes and ask those with stones inside to put them in their shoe.

Ask participants to keep these in their shoes for the duration of your meeting. Once the meeting has concluded they can remove the stones.

Once this is done, participants should discuss how they felt. This is the reality for a lot of children in care, relationships are really important and if a young person has had multiple moves or changes in social worker and foster carer, they often feel like they don't have someone to talk to about things that may be upsetting them.

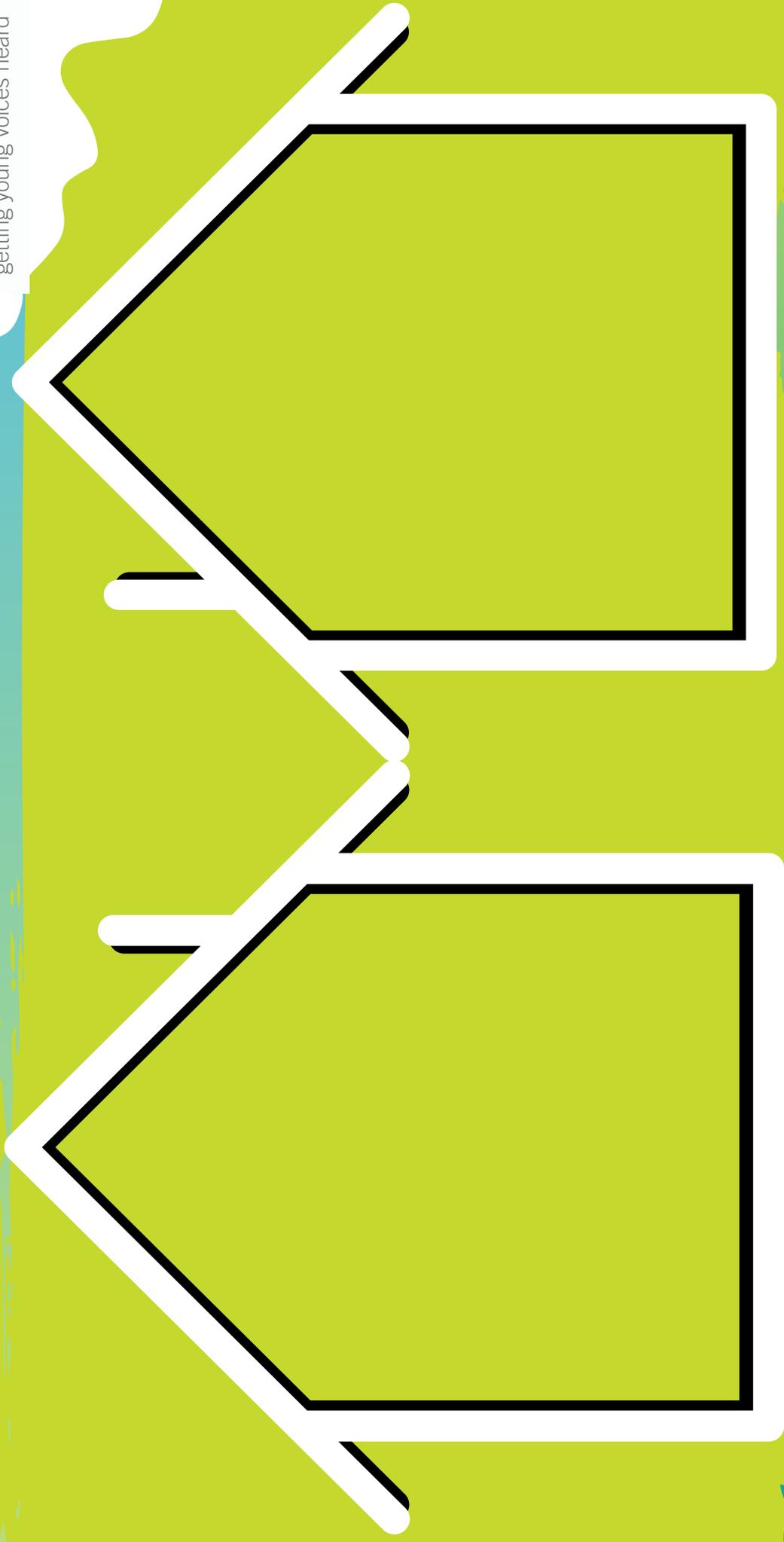
Did anyone feel the stone got more noticeable or less noticeable as time went on?

Again, an issue raised by a young person may have been small but because of lack of support this has become greater over time. Similarly, some try and brush off issues which become harder to talk about the more time goes on. The stones are supposed to convey this 'issue'.



This exercise has been created by York's children in care council, Show Me That I Matter.

HOME IS NOT A PLACEMENT



A HOME IS

NOT THIS

BUILD YOUR PERFECT HOME

WHAT MAKES HOME FEEL SAFE

AIM: The aim of this exercise is to identify with children and young people what makes them feel safe at home.

RESOURCES: The template this tool provides has 30 blocks within, however feel free to add or remove blocks. (see online tools at back of pack).

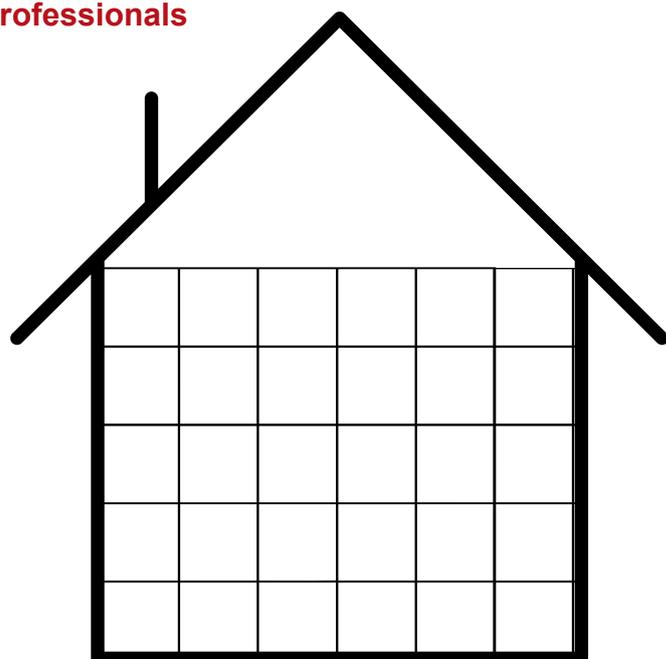
TIME: 1 hour.

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the template of the home on the next page, or one drawn yourself, draw, label, or post-it, into each block what makes a home feel safe. This could be done with an individual young person, or as a group. You could take the words from the icebreaker 'home is this and not this'.

NEXT STEPS: You could follow this activity with some action planning (pages 25-27) to identify actions needed in your local authority to make young people feel more safe in their homes.

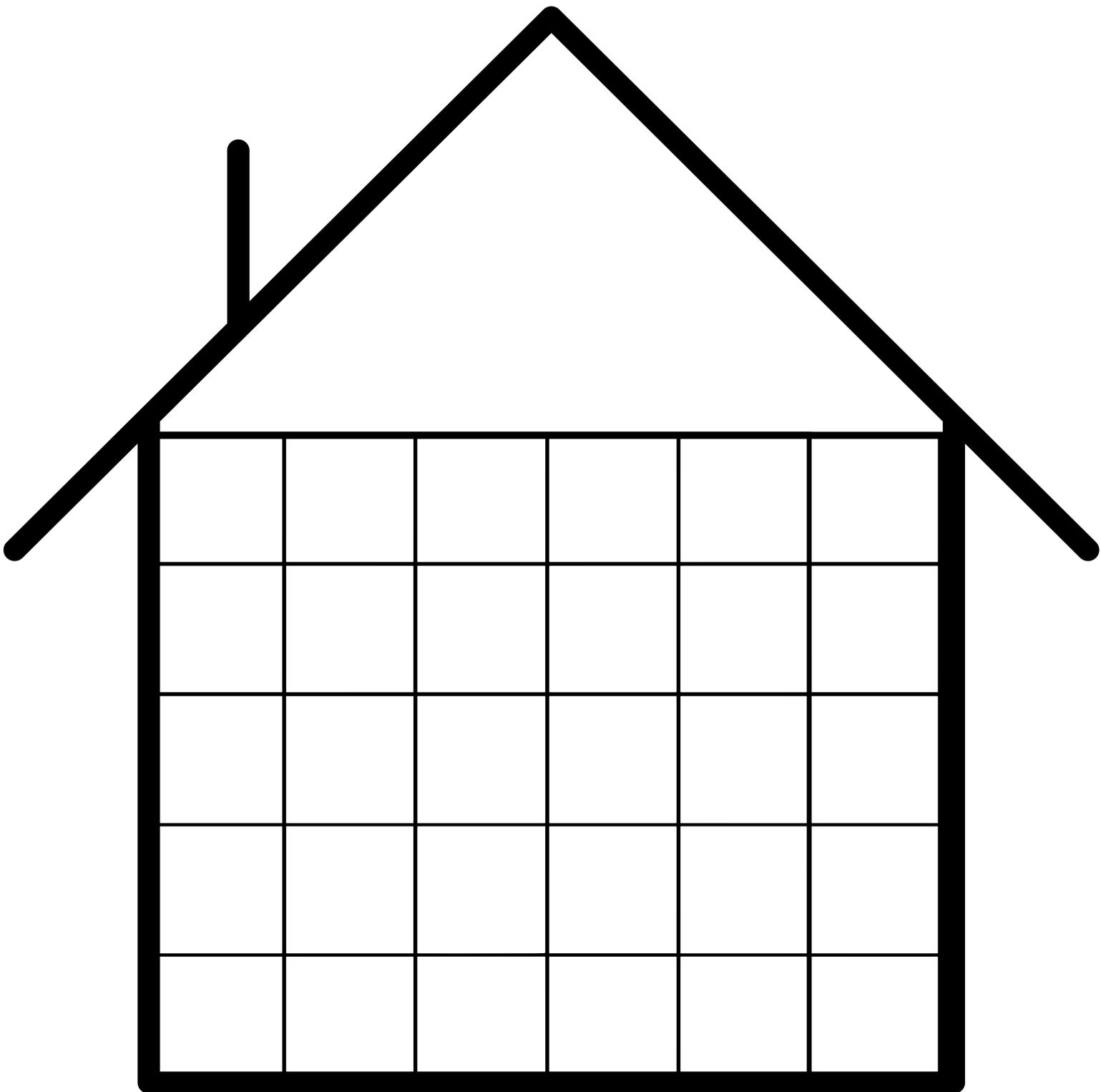
REMEMBER: It is not a young person's responsibility to make a home safe. However, this exercise can identify for professionals what they can do to make young people they are supporting feel safe.

EXAMPLE



BUILD YOUR PERFECT HOME

WHAT MAKES HOME FEEL SAFE



JOURNEYS

SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

AIM: The aim of this exercise is to identify with young people what makes a change, journey or transition as smooth and easy as possible.

RESOURCES: Pens, paper, flipchart, whiteboard, (see online tools at back of pack).

TIME: 1 hour.

INSTRUCTIONS: This task can be done with individual young people or as a group. Draw a path to symbolise a start and finish. Along this path, put down post-its, card, or if on a white board label in different parts of the journey what would be helpful in order to make this journey as smooth as possible.

NEXT STEPS: You could talk to your corporate parenting panels, attend a managers' meeting, meet with potential foster carers, or any other action which you or young people would find beneficial, to showcase current issues and possible solutions.

NOTE: This exercise works well for anticipated moves, for emergency moves this may not be possible. It is important to communicate this with your young people that this is the case; honesty and transparency are key.

EXAMPLE



**TRANSITIONS MAY ALSO INCLUDE:
PATHWAY PLANNING,
COMING INTO CARE,
LEAVING CARE, ETC.**



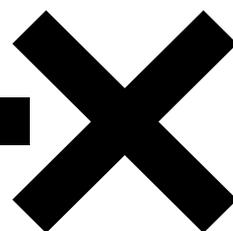
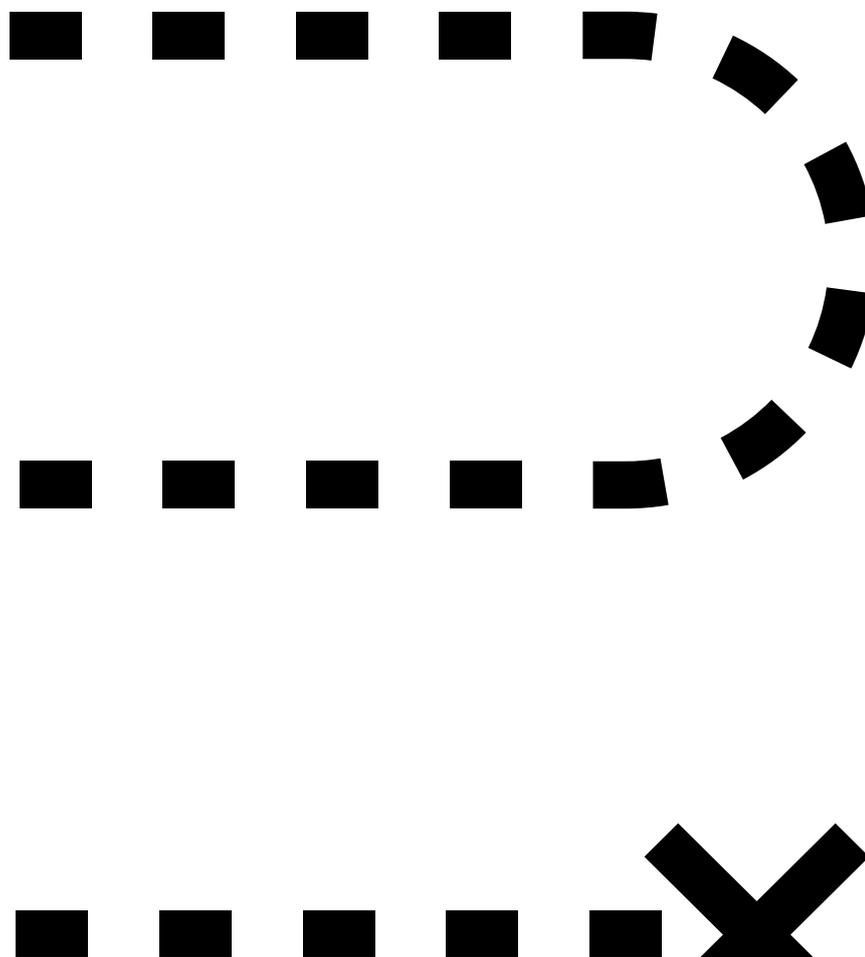
At the start I am given notice and an explanation as to why I am moving homes

JOURNEYS

SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

There may be other journeys you could explore:

- Coming into care
- Moving homes
- Pathway planning
- Leaving care
- Staying put



**YOU COULD USE A PATH LIKE THIS FOR
THE JOURNEY ACTIVITIES**

JOURNEYS

FOREVER HOME

AIM: Stability for children in care is a difficulty as children and young people often face multiple moves. A National Voice wanted to highlight the importance of children and young people being involved in the decisions which affect them, including how their carers can support them in order for the home that they live in to be long term and forever.

This includes being trusted within the home, able to do the same things as the other people living there, being invited to family outings, meals and holidays, and generally made to feel part of the family.

It is not uncommon for children coming into care and moving homes to feel isolated and segregated within the home. Negative experiences such as locks on food cupboard doors, different branded food, little privacy within their home and more.

RESOURCES: Pens, paper, flipchart, whiteboard, (see online tools at back of pack).

TIME: 1 hour.

INSTRUCTIONS: Begin by brain storming ideas on what foster carers could do to try and make home long term. This activity can be repeated for local authorities and what they can do to try and make home long term.

Feedback and discuss what each other has written, in order to identify similarities and differences.

Next, using the template on the next page or similar, add to the list in order of priority what contributes to the statement 'what can make home long term?'

NEXT STEPS: Once you have created your list with young people, you could create a resource for foster carers, or create asks for social Service Managers, Directors, your Chief Executives or Corporate Parenting Panel.

JOURNEYS

FOREVER HOME

What My Home Could Do

To try and make home long term, foster carers could do the following:

- Sit down and develop house rules with the young person.
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

What My Local Authority Could Do:

To try and make home long term, local authorities could do the following:

- Foster carer recruitment: Only recruit potential foster carers who want to provide long term homes.
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

HOME PROFILE

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MY HOME

AIM: This exercise aims for young people coming into care and moving homes to be given a completed home profile booklet detailing information about the home, such as who lives there, house rules, day to day activities and more. The template can be filled out with the young person as a relationship building exercise. The aim is to lessen a child or young persons anxieties' about moving somewhere new and not knowing anything about where they are going.

RESOURCES: On the next page is a home booklet template you could use. Print this and duplicate pages where necessary.

TIME: The time taken to complete could vary from a day to a few weeks, this could be an activity gradually worked on with the child or young person.

NEXT STEPS: If home profiles are used within your authority ask the council to review them and how well they are working. Could these profiles be presented to fostering teams or at foster carer training?

**HAVE YOU REVIEWED THE HOME
PROFILES IN YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY
AND WANT TO SHARE WHAT IT LOOKS
LIKE? EMAIL US OR USE:
#HomeisNotaPlacement
ANV@coramvoice.org.uk**

HOME PROFILE

LIVING HERE ALSO

NAME:

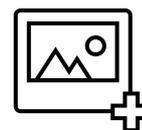
AGE:

HOBBIES:

LIKES:

DISLIKES:

INTERESTING FACT:



NAME:

AGE:

HOBBIES:

LIKES:

DISLIKES:

INTERESTING FACT:



HOME PROFILE

LIVING HERE ALSO

NAME:

AGE:

HOBBIES:

LIKES:

DISLIKES:

INTERESTING FACT:



NAME:

AGE:

HOBBIES:

LIKES:

DISLIKES:

INTERESTING FACT:



HOME PROFILE

RULES, ROUTINE, AND MORE

The current house rules are:



A typical week looks like:

MONDAY:



TUESDAY:



HOME PROFILE

RULES, ROUTINE, AND MORE

WEDNESDAY:

THURSDAY:

FRIDAY:

SATURDAY:

HOME PROFILE

RULES, ROUTINE, AND MORE

SUNDAY:

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT HOME:

There is a
snack
drawer!

The WIFI
password
is...

You're
allowed
small pets

ACTIVITY PLANNING

TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION



AIM: Use the chart to begin to create action plans.

RESOURCES: Pens, flip chart paper, (see online tools at back of pack).

TIME: 30mins plus.

INSTRUCTIONS: Identify a topic or area of work that you would like to work on or improve. This could be something covered in other activities within this pack e.g. home profiles.

Divide a flip chart into 6 sections (see below) and ask the group to think about these questions, writing their answers in the visual action plan. They can also think about when, where, why, and note down other ideas as they come up.

As ideas are generated, think about which ones are no cost (£0), low cost (£1000) and maximum cost ideas (£unlimited).

What needs to change?	How can it be changed?	What are the best examples we've seen?
Who needs to be involved and what is their role?		
£0	£1000	£Unlimited

ACTIVITY PLANNING

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION



AIM: To be able to share, discuss, and brainstorm ideas, and follow this by sharing to social media and other meetings to begin conversation.

RESOURCES: Sticky notes, pens, Jamboard (see online tools at back of pack).

TIME: 30mins - 1 hour.

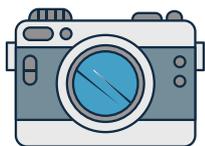
INSTRUCTIONS: Set a clear question or topic for the roundtable discussion. This could be something that has been identified through other activities in this pack. You can then invite the most relevant professionals to attend (we suggest 2 professionals to every 6 children/young people).

Create an agreement for the roundtable that supports everyone to have their views heard, feel listened to and respected.

One person prepares and shares a short summary about the topic being discussed, covering the main points or facts that will help the round table discussion get started.

Ask people to share their feelings or views from the short summary moving to a 45 minute discussion.

After 45 mins, create a visual reminder of the discussion with 3 key points, 3 key facts and 3 actions and who is going to do them that is then agreed by the group.



Take a photo, share it on social media / at other meetings and get people talking.

#HomeisNotaPlacement

LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE THAT CARES

ANV Ambassadors feel that language is really important. There have been various campaigns within different organisations, looking at the importance of wording, and how some are too professional.

Placement is a prime example, children and young people wish for it to simply be called

HOME

Contact to be called

SEEING FAMILY

And to not be known as a LAC, but

BY MY NAME

In 2019 TACT published a resource having worked with a number of children in care councils and organisations on a tool specifically around language, called: Language That Cares. This booklet breaks down many terms with helpful suggestions on alternative language.

https://www.tactcare.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/03/TACT-Language-that-cares-2019_online.pdf

Placement

We prefer: **Our home or home; My house or the house where I live**

"Placement sounds like you are being forced to live there." TACT Young Person

"I don't like when they say, 'you are a normal child living in someone else's home' or when they use the term 'child in care.'" Bristol Young Person

"This should be a word used more for a temporary placement, not when you see it as your home and have been there a long time." York Young Person

"A foster home might be somewhere where you're placed against your will, but that doesn't stop it from being a home." York Care Leavers Forum

"We should talk about 'foster homes' and not 'placements,' particularly when children themselves are referred to as placements." Foster Carer



LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE THAT CARES

AIM: To raise awareness on stigmatising language, to remove these and create alternatives.

RESOURCES: Sticky notes, pens, Jamboard (see online tools at back of pack).

TIME: 30mins - 1 hour.

INSTRUCTIONS: Using some of the examples on this page, brainstorm words that young people don't like, don't understand or feel are stigmatising. Then discuss alternative words. Finally, discuss how we can remove words and encourage alternative approaches.

NEXT STEPS: You could present ideas and suggestions to managers and other professionals with the ability to implement change. You could create posters, or a video, detailing language preference.

Respite

We prefer: **A break for children (not carers); Day out; Home away from home; Stay over/ Stay over family; Sleepover; Time off/Time off for us/Time off for our carers**

"This word does not make much sense. It is too formal and not a word we use everyday." York Young People

"It can be offensive as it means an escape or a break from something that is not enjoyable." York Young People

Foster carers

We prefer: **My family; Foster Mum; Foster Dad; People who care about me; My new family; The family that chose us; Aunt/Uncle; Their name**

"The use of language is at a very individual level, so a term used for one child may not be right for another. Children use different words in different contexts, they may call foster carer 'Mum or Dad' in one situation but not in another. Foster carers and the children they look after need to work this out between them." Foster Carer

10 ASKS

YOUR TOP 10 ASKS

Share your top 10 asks:
#ANationalVoice



AIM: Having done some of the activities within this pack, now create your own 'top 10 asks' with children and young people.

RESOURCES: Sticky notes, pens, Jamboard (see online tools at back of pack). A template is on the next page.

TIME: 1 hour.

INSTRUCTIONS: Using the template on the following page, discuss what their top 10 asks are focusing on Home is Not a Placement.

NEXT STEPS: Share your completed top 10 asks using the hashtag #HomeisNotaPlacement to start a conversation. Your 10 asks could be presented to managers, fostering panels, potential social workers and foster carers, and more.



10 ASKS

YOUR TOP 10 ASKS

Share your top 10 asks:
#ANationalVoice



1. CALL IT A 'HOME!', NOT A PLACEMENT!

2.

3.

4.

5.

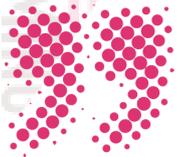
6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



ONLINE PARTICIPATION TOOLS

TURNING ACTIVITIES VIRTUAL

If you are unable to do the activities within this pack in person, then here are some recommendations for tools and recourses that can be used for online purposes:

Mentimeter

www.menti.com



An easy to use website which can create interactive presentations, interactive Polls, Quizzes, and Word Clouds which can create good participation opportunities online.

Google Jamboard

www.jamboard.com



Jamboard is a digital whiteboard that lets you collaborate in real time. It has lots of functions including using post-it notes and free hand drawing. You can create a link so all participants can add their own views or share your screen and use it as a flipchart.

Miro

www.miro.com



Miro is a digital whiteboard that makes it easy to collaborate with others. The software allows you to create notes and designs, move things around, and communicate through embedded video calls or online chats.

Dotstorming

www.dotstorming.com



Dotstorming is a collection of tools that enable collaborative brainstorming, planning and decision making.

Trello

www.trello.com



Trello is a collaboration tool that organises your projects into boards. In one glance, Trello tells you what's being worked on, who's working on what, and where something is in a process.

*all have free elements but you can pay for full packages

HOME IS NOT A PLACEMENT CAMPAIGN PACK

**A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL THE ANV AMBASSADORS
WHO SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PACK!**

