

Bright Spots programme findings

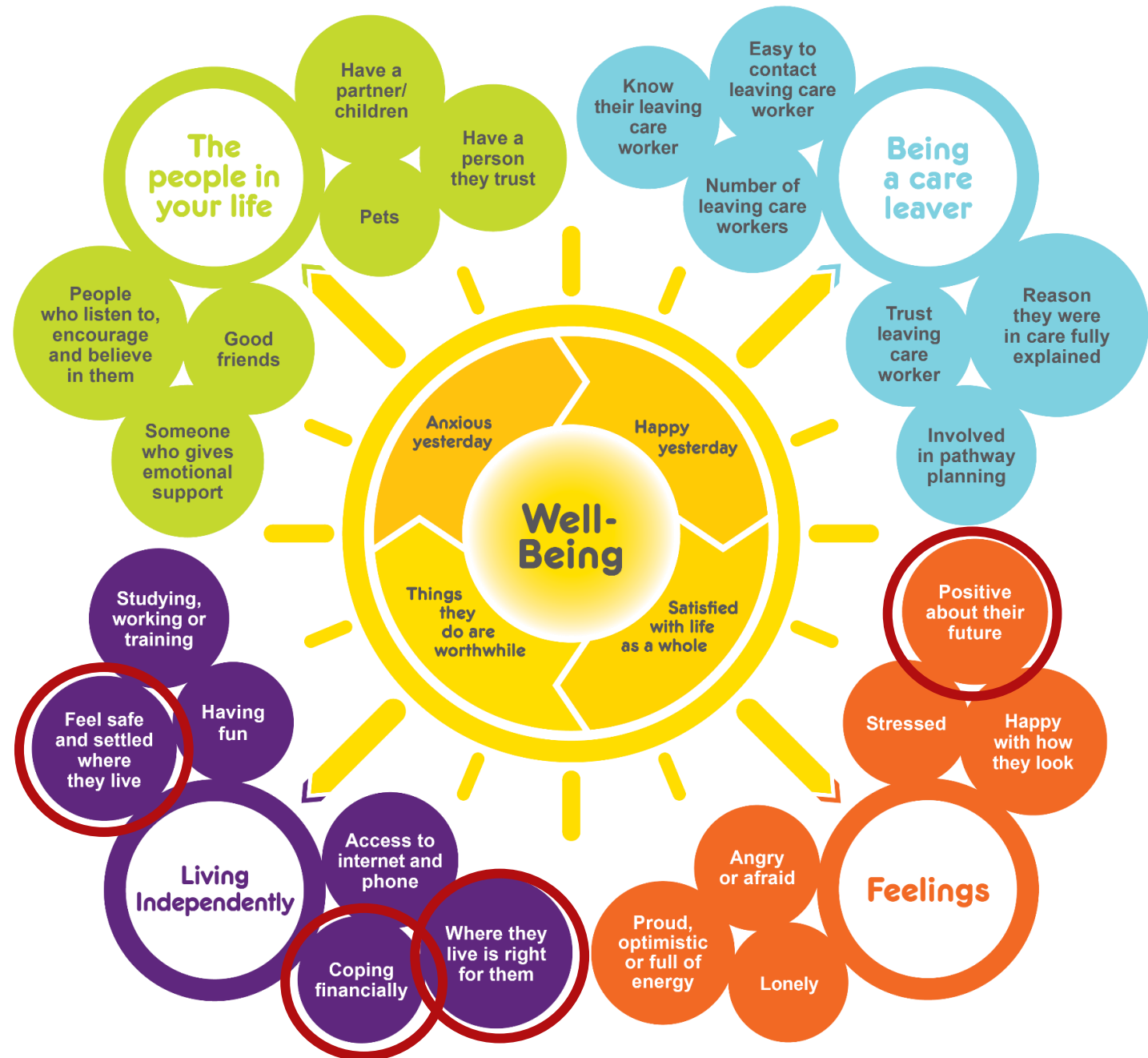
Place & Purpose: care leavers' views

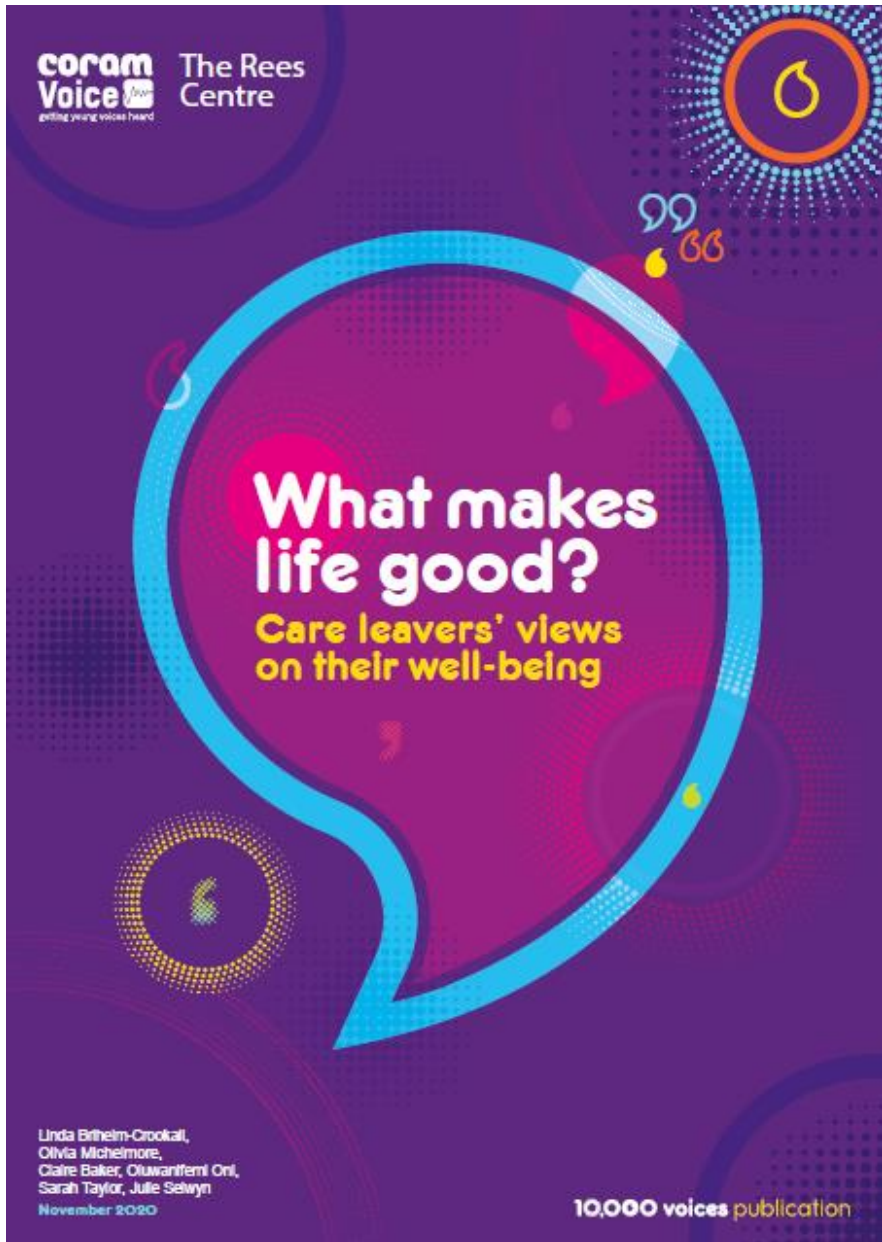
Dr. Claire Baker (July, 2022)



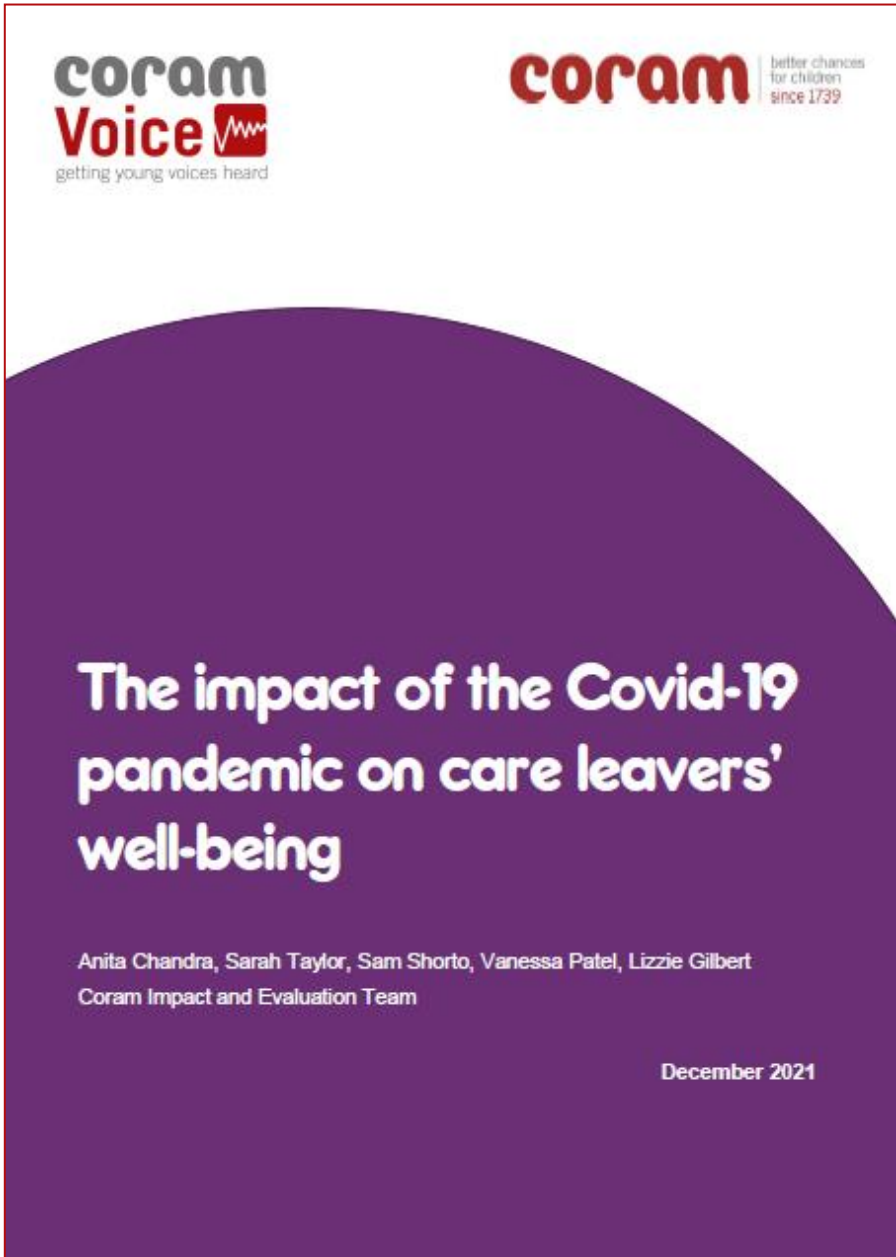
Bright Spots Well-being indicators

Addressing care leavers well-being must include a focus on the things that they themselves feel make their lives good





Over 7,000 responses from care leavers in 47 local authorities



Why is this important?



- Housing is more than just a physical space - it is a home and a place where we can feel safe and comfortable, a space to unwind, keep our possessions safe, and it's where we spend lots of our time.
- In our research review of care leavers' views young people emphasised the importance of feeling safe in their homes & neighbourhoods and having good quality housing (Baker, 2017)



- There is a great deal of evidence that how we feel about where we live is associated with our overall well-being and mental and physical health (What Works for Wellbeing, 2017)
- Research with care leavers has shown that housing is a key contributor to well-being during transition from care. Young people who were living in suitable housing felt they were more able to cope and had a positive sense of mental well-being (Dixon, 2004)

Why is this important?



- Research has found that engaging in fulfilling activities (e.g. education, training, volunteering or work) is important to quality of life. Being unemployed has a negative impact on subjective well-being, diminishing young people's sense of purpose and reducing social connections (ONS, 2017)



- In our research review care leavers emphasised their goals and aspirations. Education or employment could provide a source of income and stability but also an alternative identity. Care leavers' participation in education or work was promoted by: a personal drive to succeed, being motivated by others, having the right information and support, and access to a opportunities to experience work or college (Baker, 2017).

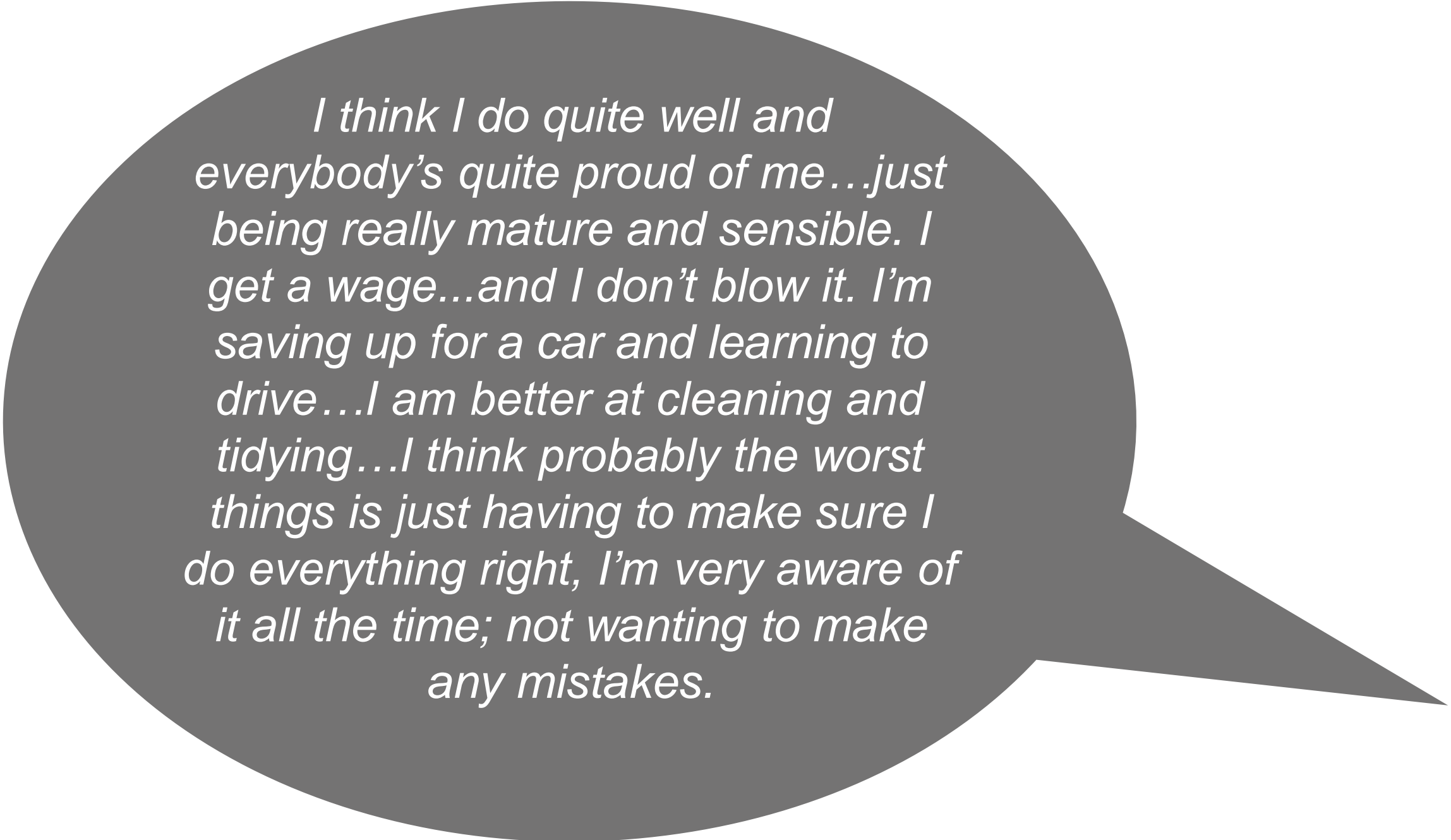
Why is this important?



- A big theme in both our research review and the focus groups was the financial worries care leavers often experience

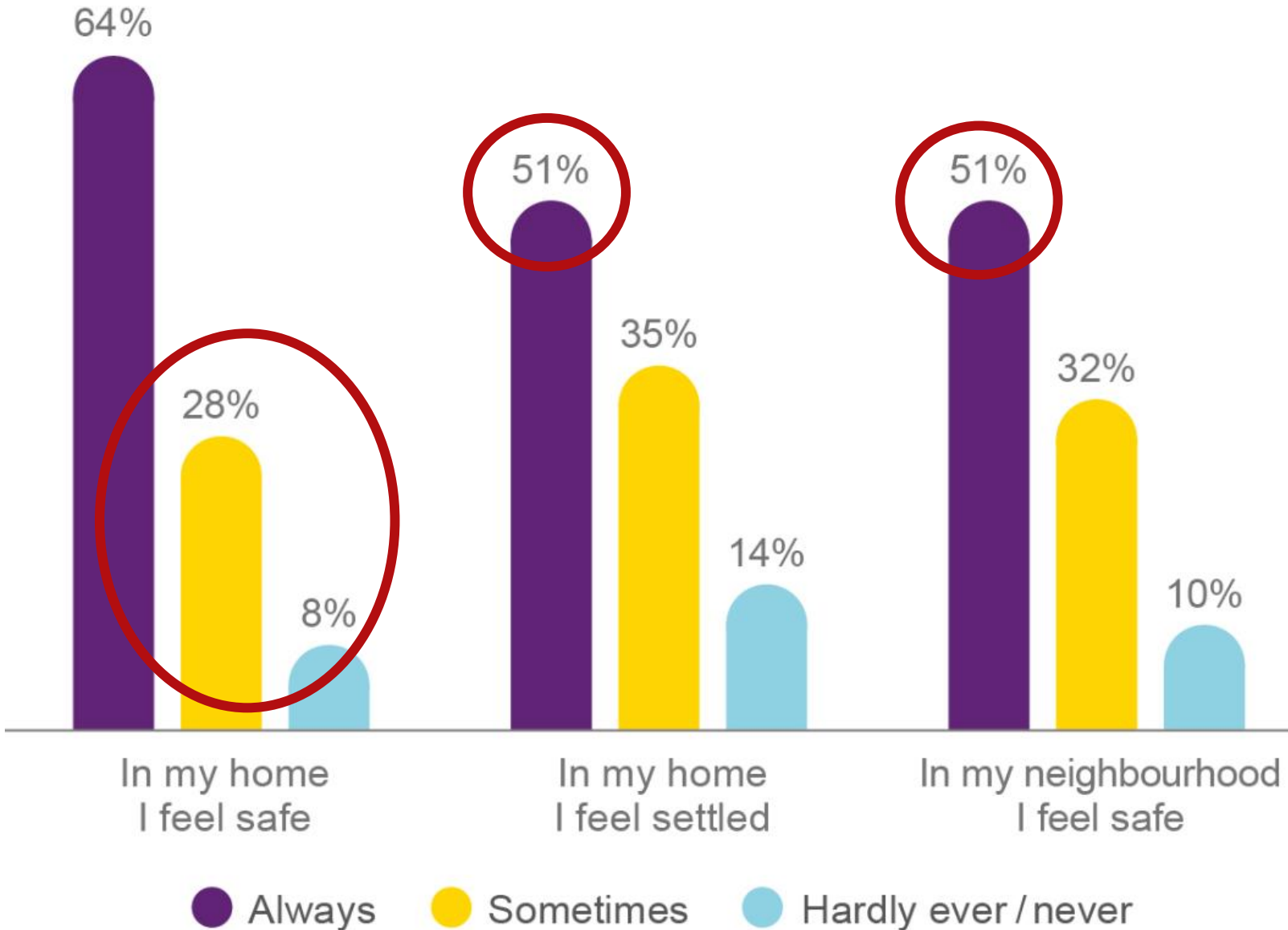


- Having a very low income or experiencing economic deprivation is associated with low well-being (Moore & Rees, 2017). In the general population, being in arrears with rent or mortgage payments is the top housing factor associated with lower life satisfaction and higher anxiety (What Works Centre for Wellbeing, 2017)



I think I do quite well and everybody's quite proud of me...just being really mature and sensible. I get a wage...and I don't blow it. I'm saving up for a car and learning to drive...I am better at cleaning and tidying...I think probably the worst things is just having to make sure I do everything right, I'm very aware of it all the time; not wanting to make any mistakes.


Care leavers: feeling safe & settled



“I have a right to enjoy where I live and feel safe.”
(Care leaver)


Care leavers' feelings about their home

- Feelings of safety in the home did not differ by the young person's gender or ethnicity but disabled young people more likely feel unsafe
- Young people wrote about feeling unsafe - the behaviour of others, quality of accommodation, living on own or issues relating to money were common reasons for not feeling safe (Ofsted, 2022)

A purple speech bubble containing a quote from a care leaver.

“[I want] to have 0 worries that I never become homeless.”

(Care leaver)

A purple speech bubble containing a quote from a care leaver.

“Because I don't feel safe in the area I find it difficult to get out and about after dark as I am worried about the area I live in.”

(Care leaver)

There was a steep decline in well-being when young people left care.

“The amount of support drops off massively from being in care and it’s overwhelming.”
(Care leaver)

We found that compared with children in care a higher percentage of care leavers felt unsafe and unsettled where they lived.

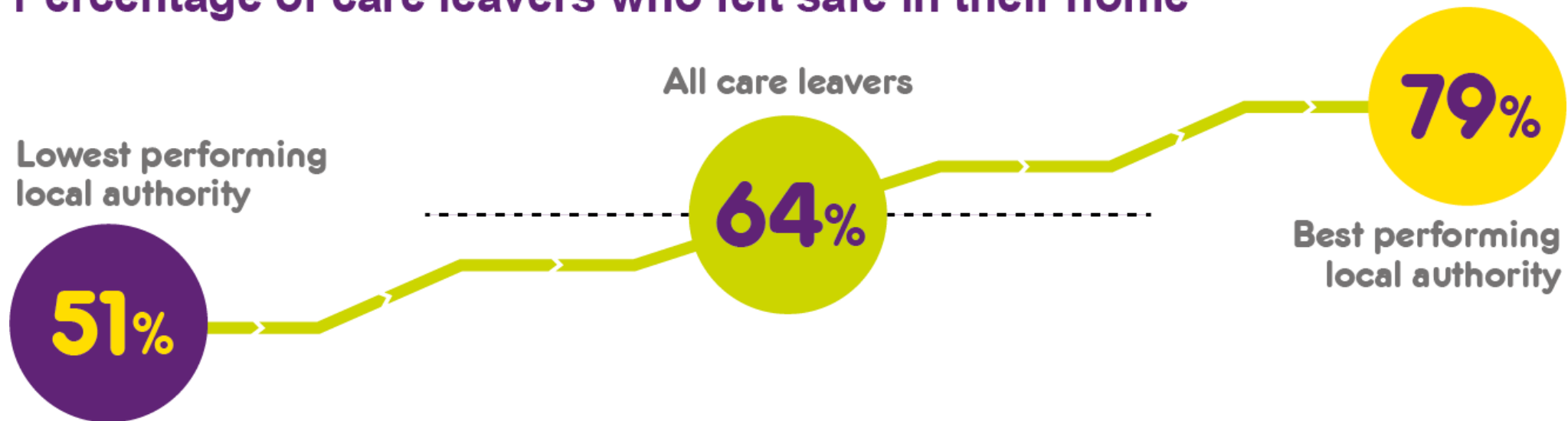


Suitability – says who?

- Your Life Beyond Care survey asks care leavers if where they live is right for them.
- Around two-thirds (**68%**) of care leavers (all ages) felt that their home was right for them
- But around a third (32%) did not
- Clear discrepancy between young people's and professional judgements about how suitable their accommodation is – government figures state **85%** of care leavers live in suitable accommodation

The care system can get it right. We found that care leavers do better in some local authorities than in others and we can learn from these positive experiences

Percentage of care leavers who felt safe in their home



Coping financially

- More young men than young women struggling
- Disabled young people more likely to be struggling financially

'I find it difficult to cope financially.'


20%
Care leavers



9.4%
General
Population
16-24yrs


Goals & Plans for the future

- Care leavers were asked if they had goals and plan for the future.
- The majority (**87%**) of care leavers did have goals
- Those who were parents were more likely to feel this
- Young people with a disability or long-term health problem were less likely to report having any goals or plans (20% did not)
- Also associated with not having goals were those who were unemployed or not in education, struggling with coping financially, and who 'always/often' felt lonely



“I want to train to be a mechanic, my social worker is helping me.”

(Care leaver)



“I have goals in my future, but feel like I do not have the money or time to do anything about getting a different job or a career.”

(Care leaver)

Our analysis identified the factors associated with high and low well-being.

Care leavers with very high well-being

Felt treated better/same as other young people
Felt proud and strong
Felt safe and settled at home
Did not feel lonely or afraid
Experienced low levels of stress
Bigger support networks, including partners
Felt optimistic about their future
Happy with how they looked

Struggled to cope financially
Hardly ever/never felt proud, excited or strong
Felt unsettled where they live
Felt lonely or afraid or angry
Experienced high levels of stress
Lacked trusting and supportive relationships and good friends
Pessimistic about the future
Unhappy with how they looked

Care leavers with low well-being

Overall, although a majority of care leavers had moderate to high well-being, 30% had low well-being.



Issues most strongly associated with high or low well-being



Film link

Shedding of Skin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isbcp2l4bFg>



Film link

Forced to Groove

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V15BXiMRIGo>



Bright Spots Practice Bank

 Emotional Health and Well-being	 Family, Friends and Supportive Relationships	 Accommodation, Placements and Carers
		
 Social Workers and Leaving Care PAs	 Rights and Voice	 Financial and Practical Resources
		
 Stigma and Being Treated Differently	 Education and Learning	 Free Time and Having Fun
		

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

Examples

Spotlight
on
practice

Bright
Spot of
practice

- **Isle of Wight** - involving care leavers in commissioning new supported living accommodation
- **Oldham** – removing intentionally homeless
- **Wandsworth** – focus on feeling safe
- **Stockport** – ring doorbell



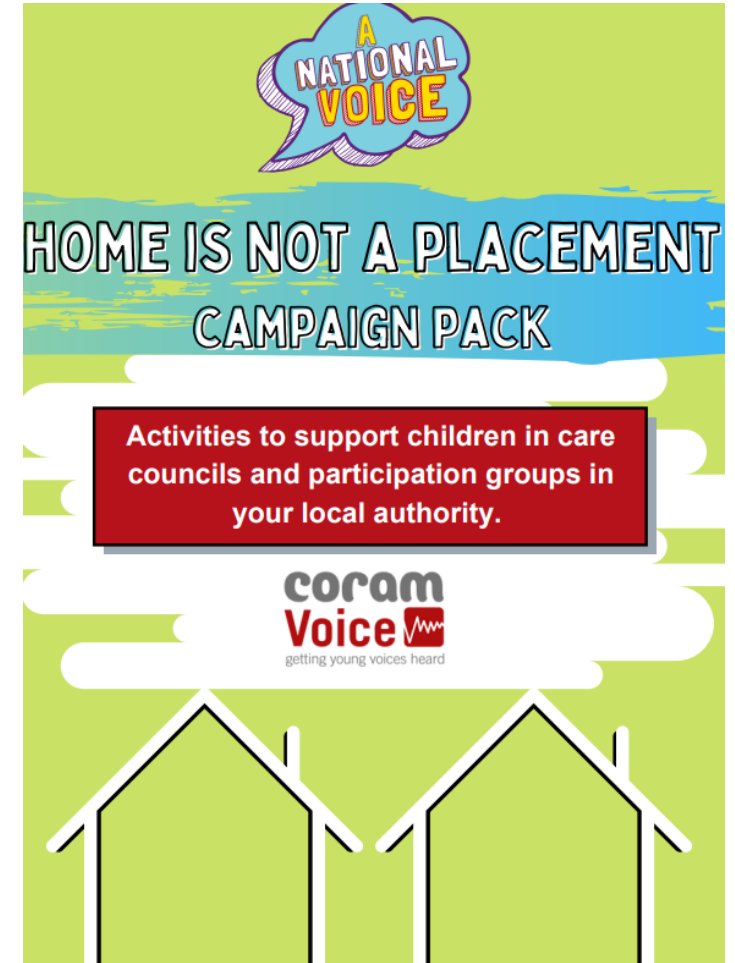


“A home is where you feel safe, it’s homely, comfortable, and decorated nice, you feel part of the family, you’re listened to and you have your own space.”

Home is not a placement – ANV

Campaign pack – range of activities for professionals & children and young people to think about what makes a good home and how to achieve this – can be used by children in care councils, participation groups, and with individuals

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Home-is-Not-a-Placement-Resource-Pack.pdf>



Place and Purpose reflection sheet

Notes from the film – your reflections / actions needed			
	Feel safe where they live	Feel settled where they live (inc. neighbourhoods)	Feel they are coping financially
What can I do to help care leavers...			
What can I do with others (in my team) to help care leavers...			
What must the local authority / partners do to help care leavers feel...			



References

- Baker, C. (2017) *Care leavers' views on their transition to adulthood: a rapid review of the evidence*, Coram Voice, London. <https://coramvoice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Care-Leaver-Rapid-Review-24.10.17-final-proof-2.pdf>
- Dixon, J., Wade, J., Byford, S., Weatherly, H., & Lee, J. (2004) *Young People Leaving Care: A Study of Costs and Outcomes – Report to the Department for Education and Skills* University of York
- Moore, L & Rees, G. (2017) *Understanding the links between children's mental health and socio-economic status*. What Works Centre for Well-being. <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/understanding-the-links-between-childrens-mental-health-and-socio-economic-status/>
- Ofsted, 2022, *Ready or not: care leavers' views of preparing to leave care*
- What Works Centre for Well-being (2017) *Housing and wellbeing: special focus*. <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/housing-and-wellbeing-special-focus/>

See: www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots for all Bright Spots publications

bright spots

Find out more about the Bright Spots programme and read the full research reports on our website.

www.coramvoice.org.uk/brightspots

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