

# Support our Journey

## Mental Health & Wellbeing Campaign

In early 2022, A National Voice (ANV) asked children in care and care leavers to vote on which campaign they should focus on. 42% choose 'support our mental health & wellbeing. Children and young people should be offered mental health and wellbeing support and professionals to understand our needs.'

## Support our Journey

ANV have created an activity for young people to use with professionals and decision makers called 'Support our Journey'. ANV have worked to identify some of the 'problems' are in relation to children in care and care leavers mental health as well as the 'solutions'. ANV have put them into statements to support conversations with professionals to think about their role in the 'solutions'.

## How to use 'Support our Journey' statements

ANV want mental health, health and social work professionals and decision makers such as Councillors and Senior Leaders to reflect on the problems and ask themselves "What can I as a professional or decision maker do to address the problem and achieve the solution?". These could be big or small changes.

ANV have created statements based on the things that young people told them needs addressing, however each statement is up for interpretation depending on your local needs. For example:

'We have to wait too long for mental health support.'

This statement could both be about the waiting lists for mental health support, or alternately accessibility of support such as the hours it is offered, like weekends and evenings.

Please use these statements from ANV as discussion starters and explore the issue as closely and widely as possible.

# Support our Journey

## Before the 'Support our Journey' session

1. The children in care council should spend some time selecting which problem statements they would like to explore during a 'Support our Journey' session. This should take place before the 'Support our Journey' session. They might wish to create their own problem statement/s. They should also think about the 'solution' (in an ideal world what would support look or feel like).
2. The children in care council should think about who the most relevant professionals are to attend a 'Support our Journey' session. Professionals might include senior managers, health professionals, Children and Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS). We suggest 2 professionals to every 6 young people.

## 'Support our Journey' session

3. Create an agreement for the meeting that supports everyone to have their views heard, feel listened to and respected.
4. One person prepares and shares a short summary about 'support our journey' and something about the 'problem' statement/s they have chosen. You might like to include facts or children and young people's experiences.
5. The group should split into smaller groups. Each small group to be given the 'problem statement/s' with the accompanying 'solution statement/s'. Groups to discuss "What can I as a professional or decision maker do to address the problem and achieve the solution?".
6. If the children in care council have selected more than one problem statement, groups should spend time exploring the different 'problem statements' ensuring everyone spends time on each one.
7. Once the discussions are finished. Sum up by selecting 3 key points about the 'problem' and 3 actions to move towards a 'solution'. Noting who is going to do them and by when. Actions can be big or small.
8. Take a photo, agree actions, agree a timeline and when professionals are going to feed back to the children in care council.

# Support our Journey

## Problem Statement

We have to wait too long for mental health support.

We feel professionals are not sufficiently trained to help support and deal with our needs.

Telling our stories to professionals is hard - it can be triggering and we have to share very personal information with people we don't know.

We feel it is hard to get in contact with professionals.

## Solution Statement

We can access mental health support when we need it.

We feel understood, cared for, and supported by professionals.

Professionals understand what it is like for us to share our stories, that it can feel very personal and triggering and they take steps to make us feel comfortable.

When we ask for support professionals contact us in a timely manner, communicate with us, and let me know if they are busy or unavailable. They provide alternative contacts if we need.

What can you as a professional or decision maker do to address the problem and achieve the solution?

We live out of area and do not receive support from the local authority that we live in.

No matter where we live we are able to receive mental health and well-being support and access any support for children in care and care leavers locally.

We are anxious about the recent increase in the cost of living.

We feel we are well supported with the cost of living and that we can manage this.

We feel there is a lack of urgency regarding our mental health and wellbeing.

We feel our mental health and wellbeing needs are taken seriously.

What can you as a professional or decision maker do to address the problem and achieve the solution?

We feel that our experiences aren't accurately captured by professionals. Lots of personal information gets recorded in systems where we don't have control over what is written and who sees what we share.

We are involved in the system that captures our story. We feel that our voice is represented in our files, and records, and our thoughts and feelings feel championed.

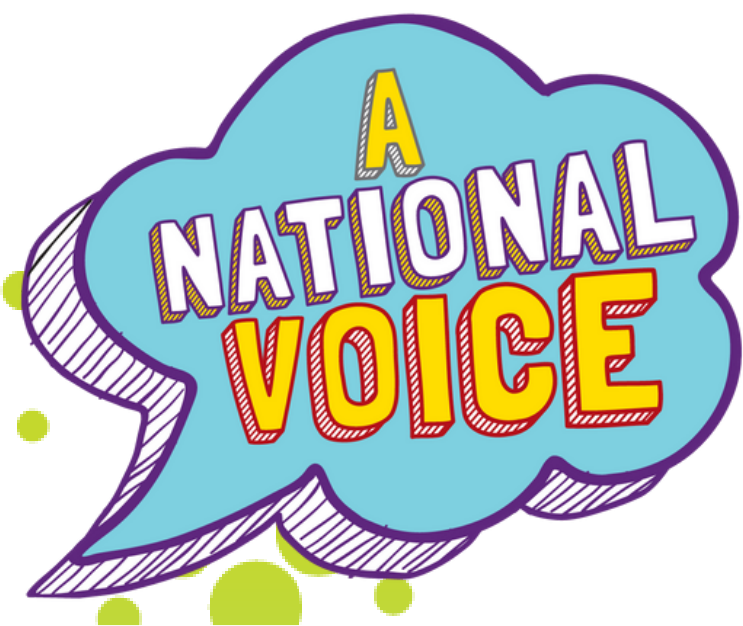
We feel the process of requesting and receiving our files is impersonal and impacts our mental health.

When requesting and receiving our files, we are offered mental health support and know who to talk to if we needed. The process is easy and dignified.

# Add your own problems and solutions



What can you as a professional or decision maker do to address the problem and achieve the solution?



## 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 sought, valued and acted upon.

ANV 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.

### Share your 'Support our Journey' thoughts

A National Voice would love to see your 'Support our Journey' discussions. This could be but is not limited to:

- Photos from meetings where the activity was discussed
- Photos of discussions as professionals and with young people
- Photo evidence of notes, reflections, suggestions and more
- Any written or typed up information relevant to the activity

You could either share this evidence via:



**Twitter and tag @CoramVoice**  
**Or hashtag -**

**#SupportOurJourney**



**Email us at:**

**ANV@coramvoice.org.uk**