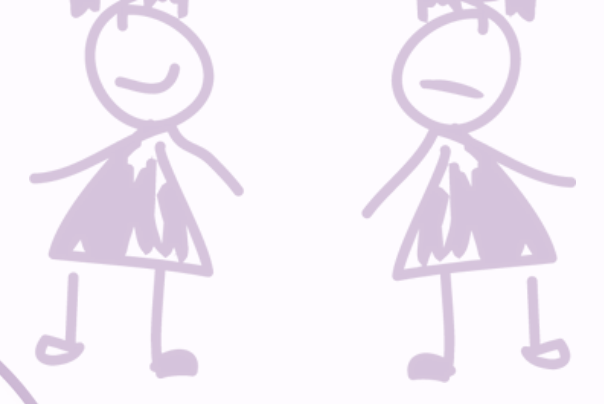


FRIENDS  
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FORMER CARER  
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# A NATIONAL VOICE

## The Independent Care Review

AGED FAMILY  
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RESPECTED  
GOOD QUALITY THINGS  
SPACE  
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CARES  
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NO ONE CARES  
HURT  
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RUBBISH  
BEDROOM  
DIRTY BEDDING  
HURT  
SCARY  
TEMPORARY  
BOMBARDMENT OF QUESTIONS  
NO TRUST  
LOUD NOISE  
UNHYGENIC  
MADE TO FEEL DIFFERENT  
JUST THE BASICS  
TREATED DIFFERENT  
HAVE TO ASK PERMISSION  
UNSAFE  
EXCLUDED  
FIGHTS  
RESTRICTIVE  
DISGUSTING HOME  
NO DAYS OUT  
BEING CHECKED ON  
ABUSE  
NO TRUST  
OWN THINGS  
LOUD NOISE  
ARGUMENTS  
BEING C

# Context

The Independent Care Review for Children's Social care was set up by Government to look at how the care system could improve. It published its final report in May 2022 and the Government is now looking at taking forward the recommendations.

In 2021 our A National Voice Ambassadors (a group of care experienced young people from across England) supported the review to give children in care and care leavers a voice in the review. They developed workshops and a survey for young people to have a say.

Over 300 children and young people took part and several important themes emerged including: a post code lottery, cliff edges in care, systems that don't work for children and young people and the importance of positive language.

#### Services designed for us

Develop services that work for you, that you can understand, rather than ones designed for and by adults.

#### Support us to grow

Good care is where you feel safe, supported and have fun.

#### The same support wherever we are

Provide a clearer and fairer system without a postcode lottery of care.

#### The best professionals for us

Good relationships with professionals is key to making your care experience good.

Read the [summary and full report](#) or watch on [YouTube](#)

Following the launch of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care Report in May 2022, we invited our A National Voice Ambassadors and A National Voice Network (children in care councils, care leaver forums and participations groups) to express their views on the report recommendations and discuss the implications for the future.

We held an online session with A National Voice Network and Ambassadors where we were joined by members of the Independent Care Review Team to answer questions and listen to views about the recommendations. We also held separate sessions with ANV Ambassadors to explore the recommendations.

In total we consulted 78 children and young people aged 11-25.

We asked, what children and young people **welcome, worry and wonder** about the recommendations. To find out what they said, take a look on the next page.

# I welcome: What sounds good and would help us



There is much that children and young people welcome about the review recommendations. We feel that it would be particularly important for the Government to make sure these are put in place.

- ANV welcome the focus on early help, help for families to stay together and making good use of family networks.
- ANV support better communication between the different services working with individual young people and protecting young people from stigma and discrimination.
- ANV are pleased that listening to the children's voices is highlighted throughout the review and that it recommends this should continue when implementing the review recommendations.
- ANV welcome that there is a focus on funding which would mean that there would be more opportunities to be able to help people, as no matter what you end up doing you will always require funding.
- ANV feel it is good that the review discusses how social workers will support children and young people in the future. It is good that there is a focus on how to support social workers and continuity of workers.
- ANV welcome that informal relationships were mentioned and the suggestion of more Independent Visitors.
- ANV support the opt-out system of advocates.
- ANV are pleased to see mental health and wellbeing within the recommendations and the proposal that Corporate Parenting responsibilities are extended and will include the NHS.
- ANV welcome Staying Put with foster carers for longer – we feel it is good that the age for this has been raised.

## I worry: what doesn't sound good and wouldn't help us



Despite the positives within the report, ANV worry about some aspects and feel that these recommendations need to be carefully considered and more discussions with children and young people need to take place before they happen:

- ANV worry that children and young people in residential care could lose out - for example how would delegated responsibility work in a children's home?
- ANV feel that there needs to be more planning when looking at staying put and that this planning should happen earlier.
- ANV feel that plans for the national recruitment of Foster carers needs more planning to ensure that they understand children's need and place them first.
- ANV worry that children and young people might not be consulted on whether it is right for them to stay with their parents. ANV feel that children and young people need the situation explained properly and to have the option to say how they feel.
- ANV feel that the suggestion to remove the IRO is a little concerning and want an explanation of the rationale behind this.
- ANV worry that children across the county are still not aware of their rights and entitlements and may not necessarily understand how reviews such as this will affect them. There is an assumption that we know our options and rights – this isn't the case. There needs to be more information available and options explained.
- ANV recognise that some recommendations require a shift in trust, this worries some young people because they feel what doesn't help is when the wrong people get trust and let down everyone else.

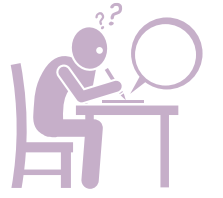
# I worry: what doesn't sound good and wouldn't help us



- ANV worry that funding could be wasted and feel it is important to make sure that all expenditure is essential.
- ANV worry about the lack of funding for children in care councils because they are so underrated but a real life line. They are our advocates.
- One of ANV's worries is that a lot of local authorities may identify with some of the suggestions made in the first few months but then the review will just get added to the list of unexecuted actions made by a local authority.
- ANV worry that the recommendations haven't spoken to the support for late entries into care – this will still happen for some, despite early intervention, and is a different experience. Generally most of the recommendations are focused on younger children and is missing the point when it comes to older. Children coming into care later can disrupt education and other key milestones. Older teenagers (late entry into care) need a different approach and support entering care, including consideration of the impact on education and key milestones
- Although free prescriptions are welcome by ANV, eye tests and dentists are also expensive and should be considered to be included in support.
- More pressing to ANV, there is nothing in the recommendations about the cost of living or care leavers living in poverty. This situation will get worse and action is needed. ANV worry that the suggested amount will not cover all the basics. (Inc. all white goods, carpet, council tax, phone/internet bills, water rates, gas/electricity)
- ANV are also concern that there is not much reference to seeing brothers and sisters and how this should happen, including when they are adopted.
- ANV worry that children and young people get the right mental health support? Will there also be a range of support to meet different needs, not just CAMHS?

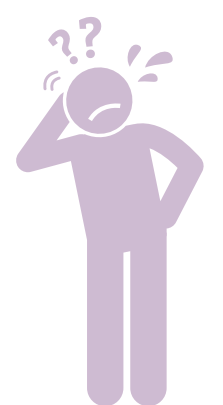


## I wonder: Things I am unsure about or would like to know more about?



ANV feel that there are more questions about how some of the recommendations will be achieved.

- ANV wonder, if we have known the problems in the care system why haven't we approached this before?
- What is ACTUALLY going to happen or will the recommendations get watered down?
- ANV wonder how we will make sure all local authorities will keep to the suggestions whilst keeping young peoples voices in mind? How will local authorities get involved and be accountable for making these changes? Why will it take two years to put these recommendations in place?
- ANV wonder how you will ensure children are able to opt in for an advocate. There is concern that young peoples voices will go under the radar at looked after children reviews without the IRO and they felt that it was unclear who would make sure that the young person had an advocate as the IRO often does this. Instead ANV wonder if the IRO role should be tweaked rather than removed for example by making them more independent. ANV also wondered what would happen if you opt out of advocacy and then change your mind?
- ANV would like more detail on how you will protect care experienced people from stigma and discrimination. How will stigma be challenged and also making sure goals are being met? One young person said why can't we just leave the term 'Children in Care' and just call ourselves regular children? Cause as a 'foster child' I find it offensive that I am part of a statistic when I could just be referred as a regular child.



## I wonder: Things I am unsure about or would like to know more about?



- ANV also wondered about how to investigate foster carers view points to get a better understanding is of what their standards to help support young children, educational wise and community.
- And which organisations will support care leavers moving on?
- The Life Long Guardianship scheme seems interesting – how will this work? Will this be legally binding forever or can young people opt out at any point?
- None of the recommendations focus on the benefits system, it's unfit to work with care leavers, but the review doesn't address this. How will this be addressed?
- There is also little in the recommendations about participation, children in care councils, voice in service and strategic plans, young people's voice in training carers and professionals seems to be lacking generally in the recommendations. What will be done to make sure they are covered in implementation plans?
- ANV feel pleased to see that jobs and more apprenticeships are to be developed but wonder what is considered to be 'well paid'?
- ANV wonder how can you ensure the 9,000 foster carers are the right ones being recruited? How will you monitor that they are here for the right reasons? How will you make sure that the foster carers are well trained? Will children in care and care experienced people be involved in foster carer training?



# Next Steps

ANV believe that children and young people should continue to be involved in the implementation of the recommendations, including involvement in developing local services through things like Children in Care Councils.

If you wish to get in contact with A National Voice you could:



**Email us at:**

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**Tweet and tag @CoramVoice  
on Twitter**

