

A National Voice Activity Pack

Content Page

Introduction:	3
Getting Started:	7
Icebreakers:	10
Session 1 Missions (Suitable for younger children):	14
Session 1 Missions (Suitable for older children and young people):	17
Session 2 Strong and Loving Relationships (Suitable for younger children):	22
Session 2 Strong and Loving Relationships (Suitable for older children and young people):	27
Session 3 Corporate Parenting Principles (Suitable for older children and young people):	33
Appendix:	39

A National Voice Activity Pack

A National Voice have created this activity pack to support children in care, care leavers and participation groups to have your voice heard by the Department of Education's (DfE) plans for children's social care in 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'

We have designed activities for you to share your thoughts and feelings with us so we can ensure the DfE hears from as many children and young people as possible on their vision for reforming children's social care.

This activity pack includes activities for you to talk about the Government's missions for children in care and care leavers, strong and loving relationships for every care experienced child and young person and extending corporate parenting principles to other public bodies and organisations. These activities will enable you to feed into the DfE plans but we hope that they will be useful to your own services.

We will be sharing everything collected directly with the DfE but will also be creating our own report so you can see exactly what children and young people from all across England have had to say and what the key messages for the Government are.

We will also be providing more activity packs for participation groups, holding online sessions to explore some topics in depth and running online polls and surveys.

What is Stable Homes, Built on Love?

'Stable Homes, Built on Love' strategy is the Government's plan for how to make children's social care work better. The strategy was published on 2nd February 2023 and sets out plans to:

- Address urgent issues facing children and young people
- Lay the foundations for whole system reforms
- Set national direction for change

Read '[Stable Homes, Built on Love](#)' here.

Inside this activity pack

This activity pack will focus on three plans which are part of 'Stable Homes, Built on Love', missions for children in care and care leavers, strong and loving relationships and extending corporate parenting principles.

All activities come with an objective, a step-by-step guide, plus useful tips and information to help facilitators get the most out of them.

When you're done please send us your completed activities, alongside any pictures, notes or recordings, to ANV@coramvoice.org.uk by Friday 29 September.

Please complete a monitoring form so we can keep track of how many children and young people have participated.

All feedback will be anonymised and not linked back to specific children, young people or local authorities.

Each session can open with a short icebreaker. We have provided a range of icebreakers for you to choose from. You can also use them to finish a session or provide a change of pace part way through to help maintain concentration and interest levels. Most activities will take around 15-30 minutes to facilitate but could be extended to last longer if appropriate.

It's important to recognise that care can be an emotive topic, especially for those children and young people who are in care or leaving care. Before starting any of the activities, agree on a group contract or ground rules with the children and young people.

Example ground rules:

- Respect and celebrate diversity
- Listen to other people without interrupting
- Ask questions to help learning
- Recognise that we all have opinions and not to judge others
- Keep personal information confidential (within the boundaries discussed)
- Be clear that whilst information about personal circumstance will be respected, if there are concerns about a young person's safety or that of others, these will be treated in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

Note: Please remember to consider different learning styles and levels of ability to ensure that all young people can participate in a meaningful way.

We recommend that before you deliver any sessions that you read 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' or the children and young people's version or watch our summary here <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M>. We have added the timings from this summary in each session for you to show children and young people as part of the introduction to the topic.

ANV have produced some reports on what children and young people said about the Independent Care Review.

- [Full report](#)
- [Summary report](#)
- [Video summary](#)

ANV have also produced a report on what they thought about Stable Homes, Built on Love

- [A National Voice Initial thoughts on the Stable Homes Built on Love strategy](#)

Getting started

Parking lot

Before your session, create a space on the wall where participants can post their thoughts and ideas. You can provide sticky notes, pieces of paper, cards, etc. depending on your needs. You can divide the wall into different categories (e.g. 'questions'; 'ideas'; 'improvements').

There might be questions, thoughts or ideas that are generated by your discussions and we ask that you record them.

Showcasing ideas

We would like it if you shared with us any resources, reports or discussion that you have relating to different topics discussed in 'Stable Home, Built on Love'; this might be questions that young people have developed to recruit foster carers, a film that is included in social worker training or a policy to ensure that accommodation is suitable for care leavers.

We would love to share this with DfE and ensure that they know this idea came from your local authority and group.

Quotes NOT notes and how we can do that!

These sessions are not designed to go back over what needs improving about the care system, but shaping what the Government is doing to make it better. Remember, if you want to encourage others to make changes, stories and testimonials are always helpful to make this real for them; so think about capturing quotes, not notes.

Please ensure you record discussions. This may include flipcharts, photos, voice notes, video recordings etc. Before you share any photos or recordings with us make sure you have the consent of the participants to do so.



Getting started

Danny Duck

To support conversations with younger children

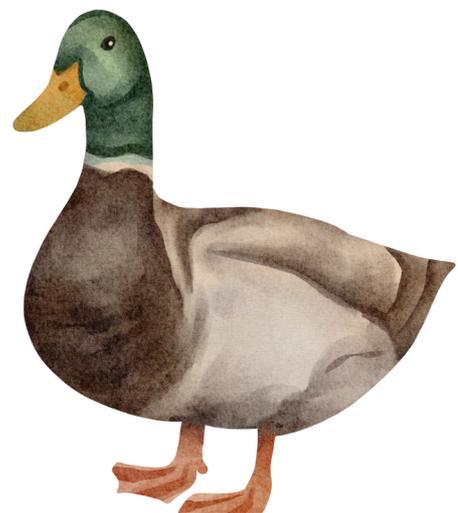
A National Voice would like to introduce Danny Duck.

Danny Duck is here to help you with some of the activities in this pack, as a way to draw attention away from children and young people's individual experiences so they can share something without putting themselves on the spot.

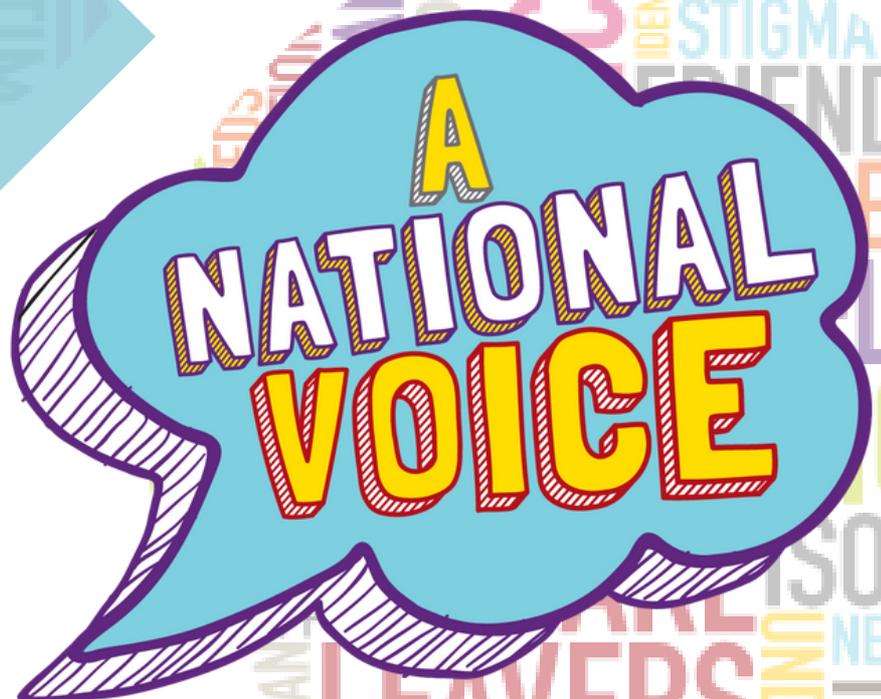
Danny Duck is happy for participants to use them as an example in stories or suggestions as it may help them tell their stories and express themselves.

We suggest that Danny might be helpful for younger children and we will share how Danny can help throughout this activity pack.

We have indicated which activities are suitable for younger children using the green sign above.



Icebreakers





Ice breakers

Active Icebreakers

Turning over a new leaf

Split the group into smaller groups of 6-8 participants. Have them all stand on similar size tarps or piece of cloth. Make sure the tarps are not so big that they make the game simple. The goal of this activity is to flip the tarp over without anyone breaking contact with it. The group that is able to do it quickest, wins!

Chaos Throw

Test your memory by throwing the ball and saying the person's name. Choose one 'ball master' or 'leader' for the group and give them a ball. Explain that they must throw the ball to someone in the group and say that person's name. It is ok to ask for the person's name or read their name badge. The second person now throws to someone else who has not had the ball yet – and says their name. This carries on until everyone has caught the ball once and then the ball gets back to the ball master. (It is important that people don't just throw the ball to the person next to them, they should throw it across the circle to create a nice mixture.) Ask the group to throw the ball around the circle again. This time they must throw it in the exact same order. They must remember who they threw to, and say the name as they throw. Once they remember the order, give the ball master more balls. After they throw the first ball into the circle, they can introduce a new ball to the game. This means that a group may be throwing and catching 3-8 balls at once. When the groups seem energized you can stop the game.





Ice breakers

Active Icebreakers

Mazinga

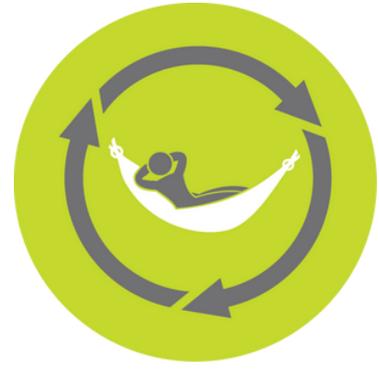
This is a very quick energizer to help build energy before starting or continuing with a session. Everyone stands in a circle. The leader leans into the circle with arms outstretched and sings MAAAA without stopping. This begins a chain reaction and one after the other people in the circle step one foot into the circle with arms outstretched and join in to sing MAAA. The group only end the note when the last person has joined in saying MAAA. Once the last person has joined the singing, in unison everyone steps back pulling their arms towards them shouting ZINGA.

Swap seats if you...

Make a circle of chairs, enough for all but one of the participants. The person without a chair (this can be the facilitator) stands in the middle and says swap seats if you...() Anyone that fits that category stands up and swaps seats as quickly as possible until the last person is left without a seat. This person now asks participants to 'swap seats if you...'. Continue until the group have learned a bit about the group.

Find your pair

Prepare word pairs, like salt and pepper, milk and honey, sail and wind etc on separate pieces of paper. Tape one to each person's back. People then have to walk around and ask closed questions (with a yes or no answer) to find out what their word is. Once they find out, they have to find their pair & by continuing to ask questions (these can be open or closed) they have to learn 3 new things about the other person.



Ice breakers

Chilled Icebreakers

Finish the sentence

Put a number of sentence starters in a hat. Get people to volunteer to pick a sentence and finish it (if the group isn't too big, get everyone else to then finish the same sentence). Repeat until all of the sentences have been completed.

Example sentences:

- I am...
- I have never...
- I love to...
- The best way for me to relax is...
- The most important decision I ever made in my life was...
- The most unbelievable thing...
- The thing that makes me laugh is...

Can you think of anymore?

Would you rather?

In a space where you are able to divide the room into two, get your group to start by standing in the middle. Then, assign a side for each other the following 'would you rather' listed below:

- Have 6 meter long arms or 6 meter long legs
- Did the chicken come first or did the egg come first
- Live in the extreme heat or live in the extreme cold
- Travel to the past or see into the future
- Have everyone have access to your thoughts or access to your internet history
- Pineapple does belong on pizza or pineapple doesn't belong on pizza
- Cats or dogs
- Cake or pizza

Can you think of anymore?



Missions Activity

Objective:

The Government have 6 missions they believe will improve life for children in care and care leavers. These missions can be found under Ambition 4: Make care better for children in care and care leavers in 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'.

This activity aims to help the group think about the 6 missions set out by the Government and if they will help children in care and care leavers.

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (2.44-3.30)

Running time: 20 minutes

Equipment:

- Scissors
- Flipchart
- Pens

What to do:

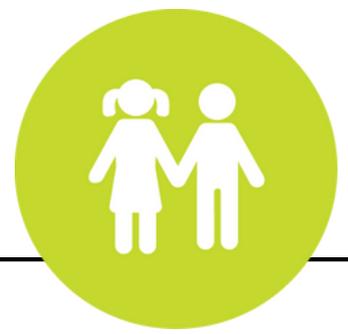
Split the group into smaller groups. Ask each group to cut out the 6 missions on page 16, ask then put them in an order:

- 1 being their most important mission.
- 6 being their least important mission.

- Ask the groups to share their order and why they they put them in that order.
- Ask the group if they think these 6 missions will make a difference to children and young people ?

Facilitator notes

As a facilitator, please take notes of any discussion or any drawings and work that young people complete. Photo evidence is welcome!



Missions Activity

Mission 1

Seeing who you love and matters most

In future social workers make sure children and young people see who love and matter most to them.

Mission 2

More services to care for you

In future more people from police, doctors, school, will understand your experience and support you more.

Mission 3

Where you live is right

In future there are enough good foster and residential homes for children to live in.

Mission 4

You do well in school and get good jobs

In future there are more opportunities and support for you in school, college and employment.

Mission 5

Care leavers live in safe homes

In future care leavers live in good safe homes, or stay living with foster families if they want to.

Mission 6

Adults support you with physical and mental health needs

In future staff are better trained and support is easier to get.

Objective:

The Government have 6 missions they believe will improve life for children in care and care leavers. These missions can be found under Ambition 4: Make care better for children in care and care leavers in 'Stable Homes, Built on Love.' This activity aims to help the group think about the 6 missions set out by the Government and if they will help children in care and care leavers.

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (2.44-3.30)

Running time: 30 minutes

Equipment

- The grid below (if you want to transfer it onto larger paper please do)
- Pens

What to do:

Explain to the group that 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' has 6 missions to make care better for children in care and care leavers.

Ask the group to look at the 6 missions and discuss:

- What is good about this?
- What are you worried won't work about this?
- Any questions that you have for the Government about their plans?



If you like please give any further feedback you have. This can be about any of the missions. You might want to consider what else the Government can do to help children in care and care leavers.

Missions for children in care and care leavers

	Welcome What is good about this?	Worried What are you worried won't work about this?	Wonder What questions do you have for the Government?
Social workers and other practitioners make sure children and young people can see and spend time with the people who love and matter most to them.			
We want to have more people and organisations act like, or be, corporate parents.			
<p>We want to make sure there are enough good foster homes and children's homes for children to live in. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the number of foster homes across the whole country, so that children can stay nearer to their friends and family when they come into care • building more children's homes in areas where there aren't enough, so children do not need to move so far from home 			

	<p>Welcome What is good about this?</p>	<p>Worried What are you worried won't work about this?</p>	<p>Wonder What questions do you have for the Government?</p>
<p>We want to make sure children in care are supported to do well in school or get good jobs, including older children aged 16 to 19 years old. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating more training and jobs for care leavers • increasing how much money we give to care leavers who do an apprenticeship • working with universities to support care leavers to go to university and to succeed and do well when they are at university • offering more support in school and colleges such as working with a tutor • giving more money to the Care Leaver Covenant which supports care leavers aged 16 to 25 with job 			
<p>We will make sure more care leavers live in safe homes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping young people who leave care to stay living with their foster family or give help and support as they start to live on their own • increasing the amount of money young people get when they leave care 			
<p>We want to make sure adults working with children in care and care leavers know how to support them with their physical and mental health needs.</p>			
<p>We will make sure children in care and care leavers can see doctors or nurses more easily.</p>			

Group Discussion: Missions

Objective:

To help the group think about the 6 missions set out by the Government to make the lives of children in care and care leavers better.

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (2.44-3.30)

Running time: 20 minutes

Equipment:

- Flipchart
- Pens

What to do:

Ask the group to think about the 6 missions and what change this will make to the lives of children in care and care leavers. If the group is large, split them into smaller groups. Record the discussion on flipchart or with a note taker.

- Do you think the missions for children in care and care leavers are the right things to focus on?

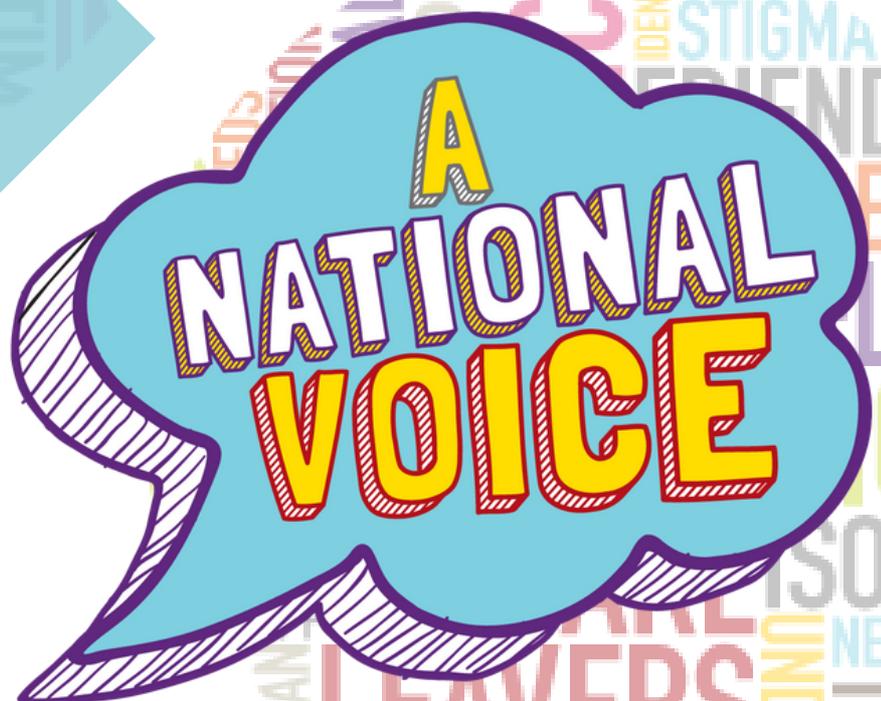
You can give any further feedback you have. This can be about any of the missions. You might want to consider what else the Government can do to help children in care and care leavers.





Session 2: Strong and Loving Relationships

Suitable for younger children





Strong and Loving Relationships

Introduction

The Government want every care-experienced child and young person to feel they have a strong, loving relationship. It says 'Mission 1: By 2027, every care-experienced child and young person will feel they have strong, loving relationships in place. By 2027, we want to see significant progress in children in care and care leavers having and maintaining loving relationships with people who are important to them.'

ANV asked children and young people what is important to them and Children and young people told ANV that:

- Being separated from your brothers and sisters is a common problem
- You wanted to see each other even when some of you were no longer in care (adopted or back with family)
- If you return home after going into care, you should be able to continue having contact with your siblings (who are still in care)
- You are excluded from social events when it comes to your family. Especially if your social worker doesn't get back in time with permission
- Try to keep siblings together where possible or in touch as much as possible. [You] need to be mindful [of the] trauma of separating us all.
- How easy they can separate siblings and lose contact with them all with no explanation

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (3.50-4.48)



Relationships

Relationship Activity

About Danny

This is Danny. Danny is in care and lives with their foster family Kate, Steve and foster brother George. Danny goes to school and has lots of friends. Danny visits their mum every month and sees their older sister sometimes.

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (3.50-4.48)

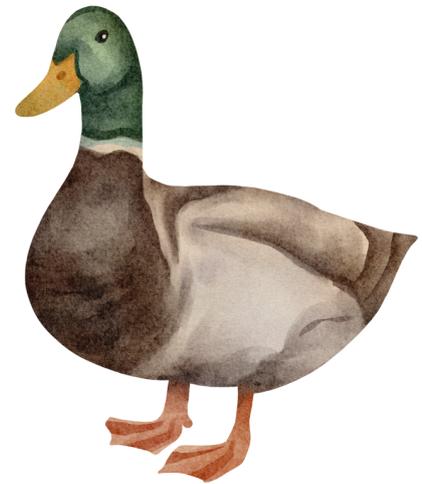
Objective:

For this activity we want you to help us identify who might be an important person in Danny's life. For example: Their foster family might be on the list.

Running time: 20mins

Equipment:

- Template on page 32
- Pens
- Paper



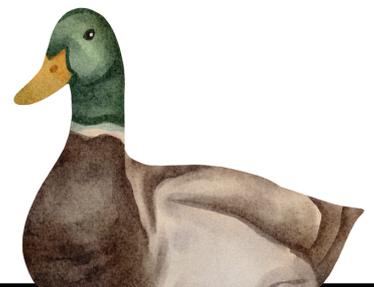
What to do?

Using the template and description of Danny, ask the group to think about who the important people are in Danny's life. You could use paper, flipchart and more, to write, draw or be as creative as you like!



Relationship Activity

Who is important in Danny's life?





What makes a good relationships?

Objective:

What makes the relationships with the people on the list good? What support is needed to ensure that Danny's relationships remain strong and loving?

Running time: 15 minutes

Resources:

- Flipchart
- Post it notes
- Pens

What to do?

Ask the group to look at who is important to Danny. Ask the group to pick 1 of the important people from the list and think about all the things that Danny would need in order for this relationship to be strong and loving?

E.g. Danny's foster parents invite their older sister for dinner and a games night so they can catch up and do something that they enjoy

The things that make a relationship strong and loving might include support from social workers and foster carers but it might also require things like money for activities, transport or life story work.

Strong and Loving Relationships

Introduction

Stable Homes, Built on Love 'Mission 1: By 2027, every care-experienced child and young person will feel they have strong, loving relationships in place. By 2027, we want to see significant progress in children in care and care leavers having and maintaining loving relationships with people who are important to them.'

Children and young people told ANV that:

- Being separated from your brothers and sisters is a common problem.
- You wanted to see each other even when some of you were no longer in care (adopted or back with family).
- If you return home after going into care, you should be able to continue having contact with your siblings (who are still in care).
- You are excluded from social events when it comes to your family. Especially if your social worker doesn't get back in time with permission
- Try to keep siblings together where possible or in touch as much as possible. [You] need to be mindful [of the] trauma of separating us all.
- How easy they can separate siblings and lose contact with them all with no explanation

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (3.50-4.48)



Think/ Pair/ Share

Objective:

To help the group think about mission 1 which sets out to ensure that every care-experienced child and young person will feel they have strong, loving relationships in place.

Running time: 10 minutes

Equipment: None

What to do:

1. Ask the group to individually think about 'what mission 1 means to you?' ask them to make notes if it's helpful or just think about the question.
2. Ask everyone to pair up with someone else in the group and ask them to share their responses.
3. Reconvene the group and ask pairs to report back on their conversations
4. Write up the common themes



Important relationships

Objective:

To explore who is important to children and young people in their lives and then exploring what is needed to help them to stay strong and loving.

Running time: 30 minutes

Equipment:

- A4-size paper
- Pens
- Flip chart paper

What to do:

Split the whole group into smaller groups. Ask the group to think about relationships with people who help them and they spend time with i.e. teacher, social worker etc.

Here are some ideas that you can give as examples, but groups can add more

- Teacher
- Doctor
- Foster carer
- Social Worker/ PA
- Friends
- Brother/sisters
- Mentor/ Independent Visitor/ Advocate
- Religious leader

After the group has come up with a list ask them:

- Who do you want to be in touch with in 5 years time?
- Who do you want to be in touch with in 10 years time?

They can write a separate list for each or can colour code their original list

Group Discussion: What makes strong and loving relationships?

Objective:

To help the group think about mission 1 which sets out to ensure that every care-experienced child and young person will feel they have strong, loving relationships in place

Running time: 20 minutes

Equipment:

- Flipchart
- Pens

What to do:

Ask the group to think about the mission and what change it will make to the lives of children in care and care leavers. If the group is large, split them into smaller groups. Record the discussion on flipchart or with a note taker.

1. What 3 things do professionals (i.e. social workers, IRO's, foster carers etc.) need to do differently to support relationships?
2. How can local authorities measure that you have strong, loving relationships when you leave care?
3. You said that you wanted better relationships with friends and siblings, what can professionals (i.e. social workers, IRO's, foster carers etc.) do to make sure you have good relationships with siblings and friends?



Heads/Hands/Heart

Objective:

To help the group think about mission 1 which sets out to ensure that every care-experienced child and young person will feel they have strong, loving relationships in place

Running time: 30 minutes

Equipment:

- Hands/hearts/head outlines (Appendix A)
- Flipchart
- Pens

What to do:

Split the group into smaller groups. Ask the group to think about social workers can facilitate strong, loving relationships. Ask them to consider:

- Heads – what can social workers think to make sure that every care experienced child and young person has strong, loving relationships e.g. talk to a child and young person about who is important to them
- Hands – what can social workers do to facilitate strong, loving relationships e.g. arrange transport, bring together brothers and sisters
- Hearts – what can social workers feel to make sure that every care experienced child and young person has strong, loving relationships e.g. that friends are really important

Ask the group to record all their thoughts into the outlines.

If time allows, you can repeat the activity for other professionals (IRO, Teachers, Foster Carers etc.) and how they can support strong and loving relationships.

If you are unsure your group will be able to think from their own experience they could use Danny Ducks help!



Corporate Parenting Principles

Introduction

If you are in care your local authority is your 'corporate parent'. This means they should act like any loving parent would and provide you with the best possible support and care.

The Government are thinking that this should apply to other bodies and organisations outside your local authority. They state:

Mission 3: By 2027, we will strengthen and extend corporate parenting responsibilities towards children in care and care leavers across the public sector

The Care Review highlighted that, while local authorities play a crucial role in delivering services to children in care and care leavers, other organisations also have an important role to play. The Government know that children in care and care leavers experience worse outcomes than their peers across a range of areas including loving relationships, health, education, employment and housing.

The Government want to make sure corporate parenting responsibilities are helping children and young people achieve better outcomes across these areas. They want to increase awareness of the stigma and discrimination they can experience, setting high aspirations for them in all aspects of their lives.

The Government want to know:

- Who children and young people think should be corporate parents?
- How different organisations or individuals outside of the local authority can help children in care and care leavers?
- How can organisations raise awareness and understanding of care experience?

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (5.48-6.27)

Current corporate parenting principles

There are existing corporate parenting principles that local authorities should think about when delivering services and support to children in care and care leavers. These principles ensure that local authorities are acting in the best interests of the child or young person, in the way a birth parent would.

They require local authorities:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.



Corporate parenting in Scotland

The Scottish Government changed the law in 2014 to name 126 Scottish bodies and organisations as corporate parents, including colleges, universities, health boards and police, and other national bodies in Scotland. Regular reports are submitted by Scottish Ministers to Parliament every 3 years to highlight progress on actions to support care experienced children and young people.

Some examples include:

- Police officers in Edinburgh receiving training, advice and guidance on the importance of not criminalising young people for behaviours, which, if they happened in a child's family home, would not involve a parent calling the police, therefore reducing reoffending.
- The University of the Highlands and Islands College network, includes corporate parenting training for all new staff - an information session followed up by an online mandatory training module and online trauma training.
- Sports Scotland's collaboration with a range of partners to provide outdoor activities for care-experienced young people to reconnect through sport and outdoors activity.
- Health boards introducing bespoke corporate parenting training, awareness raising sessions, and e-learning for staff or board members, as well as introducing changes to induction materials to highlight corporate parenting responsibilities.
- Creative Scotland commissioning a series of events with artists and arts organisations interested in or already working with care-experienced young people.

The extension of corporate parenting responsibilities in Scotland has positive impacts for care experienced children and young people including:

- increased empowerment, so their voices are increasingly sought and heard
- enhanced support and opportunities
- improved awareness and understanding of care experience
- stronger relationships with senior staff

Corporate aunts and uncles

Objective:

There are 7 current corporate parenting principles for local authorities. The Government want to strengthen and extend corporate parenting principles. This session aims to identify the organisations or individuals that should help and support care experienced children and young people as a good extended family would, both when they are in care and as care leavers. This can include how they should work with, and treat, care experienced young people and other opportunities that they could offer.

To learn more please watch: <https://youtu.be/SQXp2B9h01M> (5.48-6.27)

Running time: 20 minutes

Equipment:

- Template on page 38
- Flipchart
- Pens

What to do:

Share with the group the corporate parenting principles and the Corporate Parenting Scottish example on page 36.

Ask the group to think about who, other than children's services (organisations or individuals), they think should support children in care as they grow up? You can write a list of these organisations or individuals.

After the group have written their list, ask them to think about the following things:

- How should these organisations or individuals treat children in care or care leavers?
- How can these organisations or individuals help children in care and care leavers?
- What can these organisations or individuals offer children and young people? i.e. job opportunities, reduced or free services

Corporate aunts and uncles

Individual or organization	How should they treat children in care or care leavers?	How can help children in care and care leavers?	What can they offer children and young people? i.e. job opportunities, reduced or free services



