

Messages to the Children's Minister from the ANV Network of care experienced children and young people

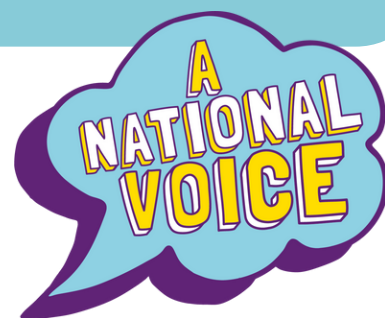
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Summary

- Following the election in the summer, A National Voice (ANV), the National Children in Care Council, pulled together the views of care experienced children and young people about what was most important for the new Children's Minister to focus on to make care better.
- ANV asked which areas children and young people thought the new Minister should focus on first, why these are important to them and if they wanted to tell the Minister anything else.
- **325** care experienced children and young people aged 4-26+ identified their priorities for Children's Social Care. They represent voices from **45** local authorities across England from Cumberland in the North to Kent in the South.

Top 3 priorities for children and young people

The issues that were chosen by most children and young people were:



1 Mental Health Support

Mental health support was the most important issue, chosen by more than 6 out of 10 care experienced children and young people

"Your mental health impacts everything; everyday life, education, just getting up in the morning"

2 Listening to young people in decisions about their lives

Listening to children & young people in decisions about their lives was the second most important issue, chosen by 45% care experienced children & young people

"The decisions made about our lives are often out of our control and without considering the people who know us best... us. It creates chaos and fear in young people which lasts a lifetime."

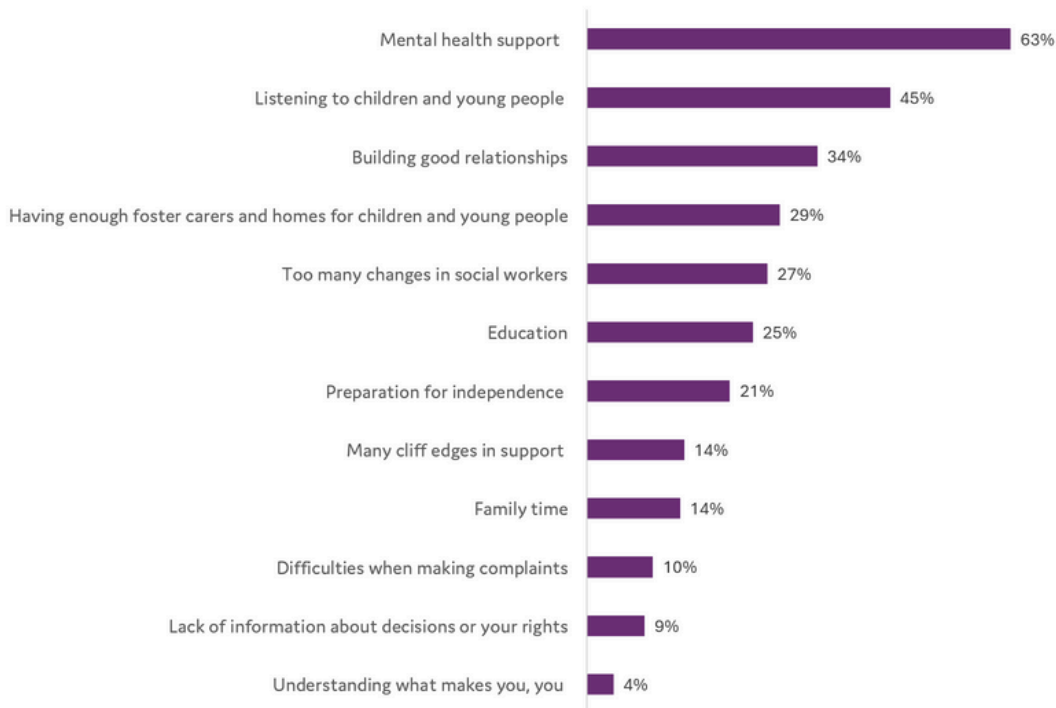
3 Building good relationships

Building good relationships was the third most important issue, chosen by over a third care experienced children and young people

"Because people come and go from (children in care's lives). We don't have the chance to build up a good relationship with them which is important to us...this is any professional, even foster carers."

The new minister should focus on

(Percentage of children and young people who chose issue)



In addition to the 12 categories, many children and young people also commented on stigma related to being care experienced.

How the Children's Minister should work with children and young people

"Children and young people must be key to your work so use them and use their voices. If you do this, then you will be able to excel in your position and in the eyes and hearts of every young person in care"

The children in care and care leavers who responded wanted the Children's Minister to:

- Take these considerations seriously
- See children and young people regularly
- Make sure young people are the driving force for change
- Let us know your updates and keep us informed
- Be honest and don't give misleading information
- Do what you say you are going to do and don't make false promises
- Commit to a long term vision and do your job well

