

## Members' Library Service Request Form

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Document Title	Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian

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**REPORT TO:** Members' Library Service

**MEETING DATE:**

**BY:** Executive Director of Place

**SUBJECT:** Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To note the completion of the strategic review, *Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian* by Amy Owens, Research and Link Worker, Who Cares? Scotland in partnership with East Lothian Council, funded by *The Life Changes Trust*.
- 1.2 To note the proposed implementation plan to adopt the recommendations presented in the Review in accordance with updated existing East Lothian Council strategies, policies and procedures.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the completion of *Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian*, (hereby referred to as 'the Review') funded by the Life Changes Trust as part of £307,000 towards the implementation of the 'My Place' project.
- 2.2 Members are asked to note that the Review will sit with the Corporate Parenting Board which will monitor the implementation of recommendations.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 East Lothian Council was awarded £307,000 by The Life Changes Trust, as part of the 'Home and Belonging' funding which was designed to provide 'an inspiring opportunity to re-imagine what a fulfilling future can

look like for a care experienced young person, based on a safe, welcoming and personal space –their home’. The specific aims of the fund were to;

- Encourage the design of new, innovative models of living for care experienced young people beyond their placements; and
- Encourage the design of service approaches that transform the path to adulthood for care experienced young people

3.2 The funding was allocated to two East Lothian Council projects; My Place (a shared-living model for care experienced young people) and the creation of a Research and Link Worker role to sit alongside the Housing Strategy & Development Team and 15+ Team in Children’s Services.

3.3 The creation of the role reflected East Lothian Council’s ongoing commitment as a corporate parent. Ensuring that care experienced young people are given the opportunity to develop employable skills to equip them for future employment. The role also recognised the expertise of lived experience in shaping and informing services.

3.4 The Research and Link Worker’s role was to;

3.4.1 Undertake a strategic review of care experienced young people’s (CEYP) associations of home and belonging in East Lothian.

3.4.2 Provide quantitative and qualitative evidence on the difficulties faced by CEYP in feeling a sense of home and belonging and the impacts of this.

3.4.3 Prepare and submit a strategic review of CEYPs associations of home and belonging in East Lothian with recommendations for action to influence the current and future policy direction.

3.5 Completed in March 2021, the Review was the first of its kind in East Lothian. Over a period of 18 months Housing, Children’s Services in East Lothian Council and a dedicated Research and Link Worker from Who Cares? Scotland worked together to gather the views and ideas of children and young people with experience of the care system from East Lothian.

3.6 The Review takes into account the national legislative and policy context - such as The Promise and the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, and sets out a series of recommendations to ensure that all children and young people in East Lothian have a place they can call home where they feel that they belong.

3.7 The Review has four priority outcomes

**Priority Outcome 1:** All Looked After children and young people from East Lothian live in a stable home where they feel like they belong, with strong relationships based on love and trust.

**Priority Outcome 2:** Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, and all Care Leavers from East Lothian experience planned transitions to homes where they feel safe and secure. Where homelessness cannot be

prevented, good quality, rapid access emergency accommodation will ensure efficient and effective support.

**Priority Outcome 3:** All Care Experienced Young People from East Lothian are supported to access and exceed in education, training and employment, which is tailored around their needs, skills and interests.

**Priority Outcome 4:** Mental wellbeing is prioritised at all stages of care experienced children and young people's lives, and access to support for mental ill health is timely and appropriate.

- 3.8 While the Review was co-produced by Who Cares? Scotland and East Lothian Council, the recommendations are not restricted to either of these organisations. Instead, it is recognised that all public bodies have a duty to care experienced children and young people.
- 3.9 The existing structures of the East Lothian Corporate Parenting Board is the best vehicle to take forward the series of high-level recommendations presented at the end of the Review. The Corporate Parenting Steering Group already has representation across local authority services, Third Sector organisations, Health and Social Care Partnership as well as College and Universities, will report on progress towards recommendations and outcomes to the Corporate Parenting Board, which is chaired by East Lothian Council's Chief Executive.
- 3.10 It is recognised that the policy context over the last two years has been fast paced and subject to continuous change and improvement. Despite the Review being completed as recently as March 2021, it is essential that the Corporate Steering Group undertake a thorough review of the recommendations set out. This should include;
- 3.10.1 Rapid review of strategic, policy and procedural updates undertaken since March 2021 which might affect the recommendations.
  - 3.10.2 Ensure the recommendations align with existing local authority structures.
  - 3.10.3 Provide suggested revisions to the Corporate Parenting Board on any recommendations which require to be updated, with a summary of the reason for the proposed revision.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no immediate policy implications.

## **5 INTERGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – none.
- 6.2 Personnel – Staff time will be required to; review and update the recommendations, implement and monitor the recommendations.
- 6.3 Other – none.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian
- 7.2 Recommendations.

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Douglas Proudfoot Judith Tait
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Executive Director of Place Chief Social Worker and Head of Children's Services
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	Rebecca Pringle Team Manager – Housing Strategy
<b>DATE</b>	06/09/2021

# HOME & BELONGING

## BEING CARE EXPERIENCED IN EAST LoTHIAN

By Amy Owens & Rebecca Pringle



Supported By



A LIFETIME OF  
EQUALITY,  
RESPECT  
AND  
**LOVE**



FOR CARE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE

This Review is for all care experienced children and young people from East Lothian. The term 'Care Experienced' used in this document reflects the definition used by **Who Cares? Scotland** and **The Promise\***;

*Anyone who has been or is currently in care. This care may have been provided in many different settings such as;*

- Looked After At Home**- with the support and supervision of social work*
- Kinship Care** – living with a relative who is not the young person's mum or dad*
- Foster Care** – living with foster carers*
- Residential Care** – living in a residential house or school*
- Secure Care** – living in a secure unit*
- Adoption** – living with adoptive parents*

The term also includes many people who do not fit the legal definitions<sup>1</sup> of 'looked after' to qualify for aftercare support. It recognises that being looked after for any period of time has a significant impact on a young person. To be 'care experienced' means that an individual will have been 'looked after' at some point in their lives.

This Review will go beyond the legal definitions and advocate for policy and practise which is needs-led rather than systems led.

\*[www.thepromise.scot](http://www.thepromise.scot)

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<sup>1</sup> To qualify for aftercare support young people must meet 2 criteria

- They must be looked after on their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday or thereafter
- They must have been looked after for 13 weeks or more since their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Under Section 29(1) there is a duty to advise, guide and assist those under 19 unless the local authority is satisfied that the young person's welfare does not require it.

Under Section 29(2) there is a power to provide advice, guidance and assistance to young people between 19 and 21 who apply to the local authority, unless the authority is satisfied that the young person's welfare does not require it. The 2014 Act extended this eligibility to 26 years old.

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# Foreword

Hello,

## **Welcome to East Lothian's first Review of Home and Belonging for Care Experienced Young People.**

I have had the pleasure to work alongside East Lothian Council and Who Cares? Scotland in researching and documenting the experiences of Care Experienced Young People in East Lothian. My journey over the last 18 months has been a real eye opener into the barriers Care Experienced Young People in East Lothian face. Listening to experiences first-hand and



seeing the strength of character in every young person who has shared their experiences has really given me a drive to want to push for change and create better opportunities for vulnerable young people.

Speaking with both young people and professionals, there is a lot for us to reflect on. A sense of home and belonging comes from different factors in a young person's life; experiences in the care system, housing, education, wellbeing and most importantly relationships. Although there are many asks for East Lothian Council as a whole and individual services, I am hopeful that we can recognise the importance of each recommendation being put forward and have a collective feeling that change is possible.

I don't doubt that this Review will have the same effect on others that it had on myself. The influence from our young people themselves is powerful and I hope that we can use this to improve not only the experiences Care Experienced Young People face whilst they are looked after but also help them thrive in the future. A feeling of home and belonging is not temporary, it follows us through our life journeys. All Care Experienced Young People have ambitions and we must support them to reach these ambitions, I hope that anyone reading this can acknowledge that and commit to making a change.

There are a few people I would like to thank for their contributions over the last year and a half.

I would like to say a massive thank you to the care experienced members of the East Lothian Champions Board who have shared their voices and experiences, helping to influence this review and push for more opportunities for Care Experienced Young People in East Lothian. I have no doubts that all those who have contributed will thrive in the future and continue to help improve the lives of Care Experienced Young People.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to Rebecca Pringle. Rebecca has been my main drive and support throughout my time of writing this, her contributions to this Review are immense and she has shown huge determination for wanting to push for positive change in East Lothian. Rebecca's mentoring is greatly appreciated and I believe that when my contract ends, she will continue to invest time into this document and help bring the recommendations to light.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to those who have contributed to this research from a professional side, including those from East Lothian Council Services and other external organisations.

**Amy Owens** - Who Cares? Scotland

We are pleased to present *Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian* alongside *Who Cares? Scotland*. The Review is the first of its kind in East Lothian, curated and developed through a creative partnership between East Lothian Council's Housing Services, Children's Services and Who Cares? Scotland. It provides a framework for all East Lothian Council staff and stakeholders to improve the outcomes and life chances for some of the County's most vulnerable children and young people.

Finalised in the midst of a national lockdown due to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), the context for the Review is significant; home has never been more important. Home should be a place of sanctuary, a haven where children and young people feel safe to grow up, explore the world and be loved and cared for. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. The effects of poverty, generational trauma and structural barriers within our society means that some of our most vulnerable families require extra support and care. Whilst we are still unclear about the extent and reach of the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on children, young people, their families and communities, the immediate effects on income, relationships, family stress, prospects for attainment and mental health are stark.

This Review provides many positive examples of how we support for children and young people in East Lothian. However, as we strive to achieve continuous improvement, we acknowledge we can do more and we can do better by working together more effectively. The scale of the challenge we face is considerable, and recognised by the Council's commitment to a radical, whole system approach to designing and redesigning services in order to prevent vulnerability by providing effective early help and support. The Home and Belonging Review provides an important contribution to this work.

Undoubtedly, success is founded on partnership. Over a period of 18 months, we have been delighted to work alongside Amy Owens and Who Cares? Scotland to examine how we currently meet our Corporate Parenting duties, and how we can continue to strive for better outcomes and futures for children in our care. East Lothian Council faces a number of challenges in providing for its population, including a limited housing stock, significant pockets of deprivation and an ageing but growing population, all in the context of reduced public spending. Ultimately though, our ambitions and work remains the same – we are committed to changing lives, and supporting children and young people with care experience to achieve their full potential. We welcome the bold ambitions set out within this Review and look forward to examining them in more detail within the context of our current structures.

**Douglas Proudfoot** – Executive Director of Place, East Lothian Council

**Judith Tait** – Chief Social Work Officer & Head of Children's Services, East Lothian Council

A sense of home and belonging is something most of us take for granted. At Who Cares? Scotland we know from our members that they also desire to have a stable and loving home and to experience those feelings of belonging. We are also aware, however, of the challenges and hurdles which they can face in their day to day lives which directly impact on the realisation of feeling that they belong. The COVID-19 pandemic has only served to exacerbate this situation, but this review feels a timely and positive reminder of what can be done to address and remove these hurdles. I am particularly pleased that this review is based on the views and experiences of young people and that it has been co-authored by our own Amy Owens, who has also been supported superbly by East Lothian Council. I very much welcome this review, its recommendations, and the commitment of partners in East Lothian to deliver on the identified priority areas. I am confident that, in partnership, we can achieve a lifetime of equality, respect and love for Care Experienced People.

**Louise Hunter** - Chief Executive, Who Cares? Scotland

# Executive Summary

This Review is the first of its kind in East Lothian, enabled through funding from The Life Changes Trust. Over a period of 18 months Housing, Children's Services in East Lothian Council and a dedicated Research and Link Worker from Who Cares? Scotland worked together to gather the views and ideas of children and young people with experience of the care system from East Lothian. Taking into account the current national legislative and policy context - such as The Promise and the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, this Review sets out a series of recommendations to ensure that all children and young people in East Lothian have a place they can call home where they feel that they belong.

Key points from the research are as follows:

## Home and Belonging

Feeling a sense of 'home' or 'belonging' is often taken for granted by those of us who have not experienced adverse or traumatic events in our lives. There is a tendency to presume in wider society that these terms will evoke positive memories and feelings. We often fail to recognise that for some people 'home' can also be a place of instability or fear and has not been a place of sanctuary and safety. Similarly, the importance of what it means to truly 'belong' to a place, group or family and the consequences of belonging to a group or structure which society does not view as

positive, is grossly under considered within the policy context. Individuals who have been care experienced at some stage in their life are less likely to take for granted what it means to 'belong' or be part of a 'home'. They are also more likely to feel conflicted as to where or what home or belonging truly means for them.

## Services for Children

It is tempting to reserve matters concerning children and young people to Children's Services or Education. However, as corporate parents, all public bodies have a duty to prevent children from becoming looked after and to care for them whilst they are looked after. This means recognising the links between poverty, trauma and neglect. Prevention starts with supporting adults in families, with almost 30% of households in East Lothian containing one or more children. Universal services must realise that services for adults are just as critical as services for children to preserve the wellbeing and safety of children and young people.

## Transitions in Care

There are a range of different options for children and young people who are looked after in East Lothian, including: being looked after at home, kinship care, foster care, residential care and secure care. Each of these care settings can directly affect children and young people's outcomes

both whilst they are in care and when they leave care.

Children and young people who are looked after at home in East Lothian have the lowest expected outcomes in education across the looked after groups.

Children and young people who live in residential and secure care are less likely to gain skills in cooking and other life skills associated with home.

Children and young people who experience multiple breakdowns in care settings, residential and/or secure care settings are less likely to have support networks they can rely on both during and after care.

## **Transitions from Care to Home**

East Lothian Council has increased the range of housing options available to care experienced young people when they leave care. However, East Lothian's housing system is constrained, with a lack of affordable housing throughout the County. When a young person experiences unsuitable and insecure housing, the negative effects are seen across all areas of their life. This impacts their opportunities to engage in education and employment, and their ability to maintain positive relationships and good mental health.

There has been commitment across East Lothian Council's housing services to change the way it works with care experienced young people. The My Place project is just one of these examples. To ensure care experienced young people do not experience the trauma of homelessness, a series of prevention and response pathways will be developed from April 2021. Scottish Government

legislation such as The Prevention Duty will be key to implementing this change. The provision of suitable emergency accommodation must also be addressed as a priority.

## **Education and Employment**

Care experienced children and young people can find it hard to engage in education and employment when life at home is difficult. However, education can also be a sanctuary where structure, routine and caring adults can provide a sense of purpose and belonging.

There is a significant gap in the outcomes between care experienced children and young people and their non-care experienced peers. Initiatives such as the Virtual Head Teacher have opened up new opportunities for care experienced young people, with Council Services willing to explore innovative ways to support young people.

A range of opportunities are currently being developed for care experienced children and young people, to engage with tailored education and employment support run by East Lothian Works.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Support for maintaining good mental wellbeing and accessing timely support for mental ill health is a high priority for Care Experienced Young People in East Lothian. Strong and trusting relationships are highlighted as a key resource in maintaining good mental wellbeing throughout a young person's life. There are a range of experiences unique to care experienced young people which can

negatively affect their mental health (and their sense of belonging), in addition to trauma they may have experienced prior to becoming looked after. These include but are not limited to: experiencing the Children's Hearing System, limited opportunities to see brothers and sisters where they have not been placed together, and feeling conflicted between their carers and birth family.

## Recommendations

While this Review was co-produced by Who Cares? Scotland and East Lothian Council, the recommendations are not restricted to either of these organisations. Instead, it is recognised that all public bodies have a duty to care experienced children and young people. East Lothian Council is best placed to take forward the series of high-level recommendations presented at the end of this Review. The existing structures of the Corporate Parenting Board, which already has representation across local authority services, Third Sector organisations, Health and Social Care Partnership as well as College and Universities, is the perfect vehicle to ensure the following Key Priority Outcomes are met.

### Priority Outcome 1 All Looked After

children and young people from East Lothian live in a stable home where they feel like they belong, with strong relationships based on love and trust.

**Priority Outcome 2** Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, and all Care Leavers from East Lothian experience planned transitions to homes where they feel safe and secure. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, good quality, rapid access emergency accommodation will ensure efficient and effective support.

**Priority Outcome 3** All Care Experienced Young People from East Lothian are supported to access and exceed in education, training and employment, which is tailored around their needs, skills and interests.

**Priority Outcome 4** Mental wellbeing is prioritised at all stages of care experienced children and young people's lives, and access to support for mental ill health is timely and appropriate.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Purpose of the Review of Home and Belonging

The Review of Home and Belonging (hereby referred to as ‘the Review’) is intended to act as a catalyst for improved outcomes for care experienced children and young people from East Lothian. The main body of this report is to provide context and meaning to the voices of care experienced children and young people which were collected over a 14-month period. It is hoped that the recommendations put forward in this Review will be integrated into wider Council structures and services and that the Corporate Parenting Board will drive forward these shared ambitions for Care Experienced Young People across East Lothian.

This Review sits within a range of existing statutory and non-statutory local authority plans, all of which give recognition to care experienced young people as a distinct group. The graphic below presents the strategic context of the Review.



## Aims of the Review

The main aims of the Review are:

To undertake a strategic review of the experiences of children and young people in East Lothian whilst they are ‘looked after’, and to assess how their experiences affects associations with ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ as they grow up and leave the care system.



Provide quantitative and qualitative evidence in the form of a strategic review to provide recommendations for future investment and policy direction for the Corporate Parenting Board.

## Vision and Outcomes

The vision was developed through analysis of the changing national legislative and policy context, key issues, the local context and the aspirations of care experienced children and young people, as well as the adults who support them.

***All children and young people with experience of care from East Lothian have a home that is safe, warm and where they feel like they belong***

Four priority outcomes are identified to inform this vision:

**Priority Outcome 1:** All Looked After children and young people from East Lothian live in a stable home where they feel like they belong, with strong relationships based on love and trust.

**Priority Outcome 2:** Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, and all Care Leavers from East Lothian experience planned transitions to homes where they feel safe and secure. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, good quality, rapid access emergency accommodation will ensure efficient and effective support.

**Priority Outcome 3:** All Care Experienced Young People from East Lothian are supported to access and exceed in education, training and employment, which is tailored around their needs, skills and interests-

**Priority Outcome 4:** Mental wellbeing is prioritised at all stages of care experienced children and young people's lives, and access to support for mental ill health is timely and appropriate.

## Background

In 2017, to inform the Local Housing Strategy, the housing strategy team, in partnership with the children's services 15+ team, developed a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Care Leavers and Housing. At the same time, the need for change was highlighted by the East Lothian Champions Board, who shared their own experiences of barriers to housing and highlighted that housing was a priority area that needed to be focused on. This was followed shortly afterwards with a commitment from Community Housing to train all staff in Corporate Parenting. Facilitated by Who Cares? Scotland and the East Lothian Champions Board, the training went on to influence a series of local policy changes. The Champions Board undertook a focused piece of work, producing a report on the effectiveness of the working relationship between the Housing department and the 15+ Team. This report highlighted areas that needed improvement and provided the dialogue and will for change. It led to better communication from the Housing Team with young people during their tenancies and created

a shared understanding that all parties involved want young people to succeed when living in their own tenancy.

At the end of 2018, the Life Changes Trust opened a funding stream called 'Home and Belonging'. The East Lothian Housing Strategy and Children's Services teams submitted a joint application and received match funding of £307,000 to create:

My Place - a peer flatmate scheme, which aims to house 2 care experienced young people alongside a peer flatmate, all of whom receive training and support from the Rock Trust. At the time of writing, a total of 9 properties had been purchased on the open market and 7 of which were currently in use, 3 were being brought up to standard and a further flat was to be purchased between March and May 2021. In total, the project will provide shared accommodation for up to 20 care experienced young people.

A Research and Link Worker post, recruited by Who Cares? Scotland<sup>2</sup> and based within East Lothian Council, was created to support the My Place project. The Research and Link Worker was to be care experienced, under the age of 26, and would receive training to help conduct evaluations, hold focus groups, and promote the needs of care experienced young people. The Worker would also co-produce 'Home and Belonging: Being Care Experienced in East Lothian', a Review for Care Experienced Young People alongside staff at East Lothian Council.

This Review was written over a period of 18 months and is the product of a collective effort to put East Lothian Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities at the heart of the service. The Research and Link Worker worked in collaboration with the Housing Strategy & Development, Community Housing and Children's Services teams to set out the challenges, good practice, and ambitions of East Lothian Council in supporting their Care Experienced Young People.

Feelings of 'home' and 'belonging' are developed across an individual's lifetime and the responsibility to ensure this happens for care experienced young people (CEYP) does not sit neatly within one department of East Lothian Council. Putting CEYPs voices at the centre of recommendations, this Review recognises how integral joined up services are in shaping children and young people's lives, and that:

*'there is no 'home' without the 'house', its contents and immediate context'.<sup>3</sup>*

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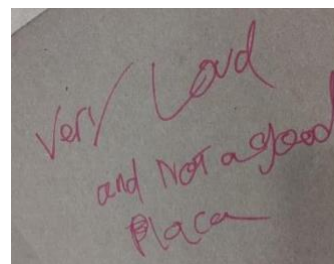
<sup>2</sup> More information on the role of Who Cares? Scotland nationally can be found in Appendix F.

<sup>3</sup> Soaita & Mckee (2020) *Researching Home's Tangible and Intangible Materiality's by Photo-Elicitation*, Housing Studies

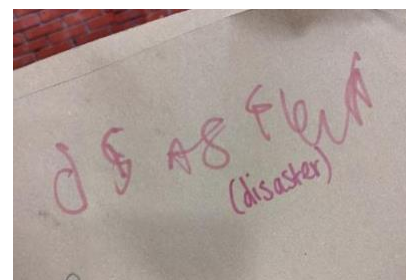
## Making sense of 'Home' and 'Belonging'<sup>4</sup>

### What does 'home' mean?

Until recently, the focus of research and evidence was on a 'bricks and mortar' idea of housing rather than the concept of 'home' as a feeling. There is now a growing body of evidence which examines the relationship we have with the house we live in and the expectations public bodies place on those who live in temporary housing. Emotional and practical support as well as financial stability and community are now seen as essential pillars to maintain housing stability.



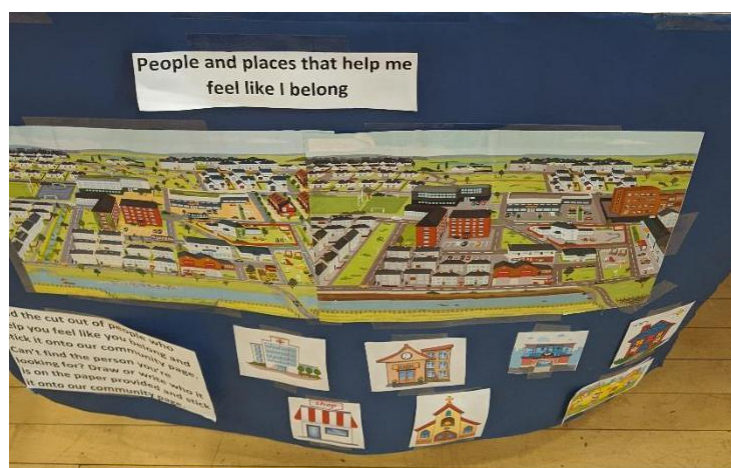
'Home' is often associated with aspirational ideas; these are positive visions of how we would like home to be or what it should look like. For example, it might be a place where we feel security, familiarity, have a strong emotional attachment, or have memories where we have developed our identity and sense of self. However, 'home' is also a lived reality, people experience 'home' every day, and this is



not always positive. Homes can be a place where people are harmed, trapped or traumatised. When home is insecure, it can be associated as a place of stress and frustration. Importantly, the feeling of 'home' is not universal, and it is experienced differently depending on a person's housing, social and financial circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

### What does it mean to 'belong'?

Belonging happens through feeling connected to people and places. It connects the individual with wider society, it is both how the individual sees themselves fitting in with the world around them, and how the world around them sees the individual. Young people can 'belong' to multiple different places and groups. Most often young people connect



<sup>4</sup> The photos included in this chapter are from a consultation event in February 2020 where children and young people with experience of care were asked to write what they thought about the home they lived in 'before' care.

<sup>5</sup> Hoolachan J (2020) *Making Home? Permitted and prohibited place-making in youth homeless accommodation*, Housing Studies

through shared understandings or identities in relationships, spaces, people, places, animals and material things. For example,

Belonging to a football team

Belonging with grandparents or those they feel closest to

Belonging with brothers or sisters who they have shared an experience with

Depending on the experiences we have in life, they will impact on how we form our identity. They will influence how we see the world and how we view ourselves. We are social beings, and crucial to our survival is our need to feel like we fit in, that we belong with other people or are part of something bigger than just us.

Importantly, belonging is not always warm or positive. It is simply an emotional attachment. For children and young people who have experience of the care system, it is unsurprising that they might find themselves struggling with their identity or feeling like they do not belong. For children who live with carers who are from different religious, ethnic or cultural backgrounds, or for children with strong ties to their birth family, it can be hard to feel like they belong within that setting. And, if a child does not feel like they belong, it is unlikely that they will feel 'at home' in the house they live. However, where children and young people have positive relationships and feel that they belong in places outside of the home, this can provide a lifeline in giving the young person a sense of stability and security.

Central to 'home' and 'belonging' are relationships developed within and outside of the home. Both of which are crucial as we strive to ensure that all children and young people have a place to call home which is safe, secure and warm, and in which they feel like they belong.

## **Developing the Home and Belonging Review: Engagement and Consultation**

The initial 6 months of the Research and Link Worker post involved attending local authority meetings, scoping up-to-date research and evidence, and preparing focus groups and interviews to take place during the second 6 months of the post. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic limited the scope and reach of the interviews and visits that could take place. A full list of all the people and organisations who contributed to this Review are set out in Appendix A.

### ***Interviews***

Taking into account the ethical concerns of conducting 1-1 interviews with CEYP over Zoom during a time of stress and isolation, a total of 5 care experienced young people were interviewed. Each participant opted in to taking part in the interview and was given a pre-interview brief, which the Research and Link Worker explained to the young person before asking for their consent to take part. The young people were also given the option to have another staff member from Who Cares? Scotland to sit in during the interview or be available in a separate 'room' should they need support at any time.



## ***East Lothian Champions Board***

In February 2020, East Lothian Champions Board organised a Corporate Parenting Consultation Event at the Brunton Hall. The purpose of the event was to gather evidence for the 2020 East Lothian Council Corporate Parenting Plan. It was a fun and interactive event which involved CEYP, their social workers, family members, grandparents and carers. In total there were 60 CEYP of all ages in attendance. A joint consultation took place between the Housing Strategy team and the Research and Link Worker, which had four areas:

1. 'Build a Housing Officer',
2. 'My home is/was/will be',
3. 'People and Places that make me feel like I belong', and
4. 'When I talk to council workers I want them to remember that...'

The findings from this event are used throughout the Home and Belonging Review, and the full report can be found in Appendix C.

The Research and Link Worker also attended between 40 and 50 East Lothian Champion Board Meetings, which are attended by up to 10 CEYP each week. One session was held on Mental Health and during this session two managers from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services came to hear the young people's thoughts and experiences. Feedback given at this session has been anonymised so that the key points from the session could be included in the Review (see Chapter 6.) The East Lothian Champions Board key priorities are: education, mental health, housing and keeping loved ones together, all of which feature heavily within the Review. The Champions Board logo can be found where a key priority is mentioned.

### ***Key Stakeholder Consultation***

A total of 9 organisations (not including East Lothian Council) were consulted. These included housing support agencies, supported accommodation settings (where the discussion took place prior to March 2020, physical visits were also carried out), and employment support organisations.

As part of the research for the Review, the Research and Link Worker also had the opportunity to sit on a number of ELC Working Groups. These included but are not limited to: 15+ Housing and Support Panel, My Place – Strategic Working Group, My Place Operational Working Group, and the Corporate Parenting Steering Group. Attendance at these meetings have informed the work detailed in the Review.

Whilst writing the Home and Belonging Review, the 6 young people who were tenants in the 'My Place' project completed evaluations of how the project had helped contribute to feelings of 'home' and 'belonging'. Information from these evaluations has been anonymised and used within the Review.

Any names given within the Review have been changed to protect the anonymity of those involved in the research.

## **Consultation**

A high-level consultation took place between December 2020 and February 2021. This included one session with the East Lothian Champions Board where they had the opportunity to review the recommendations which they had previously shaped and created further opportunity for the young people to set out any changes they wanted to see.

Consultation with the Who Cares? Scotland Policy Team, East Lothian Council's Children's Services, Community Housing and Homelessness, and Housing Strategy and Development teams also took place between December 2020 and February 2021.

## **Limitations of Research**

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the scope and reach of this Review. For example, physical visits would have taken place with a number of different organisations throughout Scotland and interviews would have been conducted face to face. Despite the limits, this Review is comprehensive and meaningful.

The Review does not intend to list all the work currently contributing to corporate parenting in East Lothian nor does it claim to be representative of all CEYP in East Lothian. The following areas highlight gaps in the research underpinning the Review:

The number of young people consulted was lower than originally planned due to the impact of Covid-19 and the decision that it would be unethical to carry out interviews with young people currently in secure and residential care where we could not guarantee sufficient aftercare.

This Review will not cover: Children's Hearings & the Justice System, Advocacy and the Legal System, Adoption, or the work carried out by the Children's Disability Team in East Lothian.

## **Language**

In line with The Promise, we recognise that words used by local authorities to describe the lives of care experienced children and young people differ significantly to the language used by non-care experienced peers. This can increase the stigma that children and young people in the care system face. The term 'placement' has been replaced with the phrase 'care setting' (a home which a child/young person live in when they are looked after). However, the term 'contact' (time with the child/young person's biological family) will be used within contents of this Review. We recognise that this term is clinical, systems-led and does not promote feelings of safety, security and love. Replacing this term with another systems-generated word would not be appropriate. Instead, questioning the use of language must be at the heart of the work local authorities do with children and young people, tailoring the terms we use to their needs and wants. Examples of this will be highlighted throughout the Review.

Local Authority policy documents are typically filled with acronyms. To ensure this Review is as accessible as possible only two acronyms will used. These are:

ELC	East Lothian Council	CEYP	Care Experienced Young People
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## Chapter 2: National & Local Context

*It is clear that Scotland must not aim to fix a broken system but set a higher collective ambition that enables loving, supportive and nurturing relationships as a basis on which to thrive.*

### The Promise

This chapter will set out the national legislative and policy context and the local policy context. Bringing together a range of key documents which have informed this Review.

## **National Legislative and Policy Context**

Resources detailing changes in housing legislation, best practice guidance and links between severe and multiple deprivation, poverty, homelessness and trauma are not hard to come by. To ensure that this document speaks fully and effectively to the voice of young people, the decision has been made not to summarise well known and easily accessible policy documents of which professionals are more than aware. As an alternative and in the interest of further reading or where clarification is needed, Appendix D provides links to a range of important policy and legislative documents which helped inform this Review. We have, however, highlighted seven key areas of legislation and national policies which provide essential context for this Review.

### Getting it Right for Every Child

[Getting it Right for Every Child](#), commonly referred to as GIRFEC, supports families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. Developed from 2006 onwards, the aim of GIRFEC is to help children/young people to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential. It recognises that while most children and young people get all the help and support they need from their parent(s), wider family and community, sometimes some will need a bit of extra help. The Getting it Right for Every Child principles, values and resources provide a way for families to work in partnership with people who can support them, such as teachers, doctors, nurses, and social work. There are four core principles to the Getting it Right for Every Child approach:

1. Child-focused – it ensures the child or young person – and their family – is at the centre of decision making and the support available to them.
2. Based on an understanding of the [wellbeing](#) of a child in their current situation – it takes into consideration the wider influences on a child or young person and their developmental needs when thinking about their wellbeing so that the right support can be offered.
3. Based on tackling needs early – it aims to ensure needs are identified as early as possible to avoid bigger concerns or problems developing.
4. Joined-up working – it is about children, young people, parents and the services they need working together in a coordinated way to meet the specific needs and improve their wellbeing.

### Corporate Parenting Duties

In April 2015, the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) brought the concept and policy of ‘corporate parenting’ into a statutory basis in Scotland. It established a framework of duties and responsibilities for local authorities requiring them to be proactive in their efforts to meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers. Part 9 of the Act also



introduced new reporting and accountability structures, with national progress on improving outcomes reported to the Scottish Parliament every year.<sup>6</sup>

*Corporate parenting refers to an organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and secure the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which their physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted, from infancy through to adulthood. In other words, corporate parenting is about certain organisations listening to the needs, fears and wishes of children and young people, and being proactive and determined in their collective efforts to meet them.<sup>7</sup>*

## Throughcare and Aftercare Legislation

The [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) strengthened Scotland's approach to throughcare and aftercare by putting into law the policy aspirations set out in [These are our Bairns](#) and [Staying Put Scotland](#). The legislation was intended to prevent young people from leaving their care settings prematurely.

The [Continuing Care](#) provision allows for a young person born after 1 April 1999 who is currently looked after in foster, kinship or residential care to remain in their current care setting until they are 21. Where a young person ceases to be looked after on or after they turn 16, they can also request Continuing Care. While they will no longer be defined as 'looked after', they can continue to receive the same support.

The [Extension of Aftercare](#) brought in the provision that from April 2015, any young person ceasing to be looked after on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, and is less than 26 years of age, is eligible (between the ages of 16 and 19) or potentially eligible (from the age of 19 up to 26) for aftercare. This applies to all care leavers regardless of the placement type while looked after.

## The Independent Care Review

In October 2016, the First Minister commissioned the Independent Care Review. The work culminated in February 2020 with the publication of seven reports;

1. [The Promise](#) and a [Pinky Promise](#) for younger readers reflected what over 5,500 care experienced children and adults, families and the paid and unpaid workforce told the Care Review in the hope that Scotland was listening. It told Scotland what it must do to make sure its most vulnerable children feel loved and have the childhood they deserve.
2. [The Plan](#) explains how this change must happen.
3. [The Money](#) and [Follow the Money](#) explain how Scotland can invest better in its children and families

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<sup>6</sup>CELCIS (2017) The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2015: Briefing, [https://www.celcis.org/files/3114/8542/6899/Inform\\_Briefing\\_Part\\_9\\_2017updated.pdf](https://www.celcis.org/files/3114/8542/6899/Inform_Briefing_Part_9_2017updated.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>Scottish Government (2015) *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Part 9 (Corporate Parenting)*, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/enacted>

4. [The Rules](#) demonstrate the current legislative framework and how it must change to achieve The Promise.
5. [Thank you](#) – to those who contributed to the Care Review.

On reading *The Promise* it became clear that the following quote provides the most concise and relevant context in which to read this Review from:

*‘Poverty is a mediating factor among various factors that increase the risk of child abuse and neglect. **When a family lacks financial resources, when they face sub-standard service provision, when the streets they walk are less safe than in other parts of town, when homes are cramped and when keeping food on the table is a struggle, meeting all the needs of a child can be challenging.** It is thus hardly surprising that some families, without supportive resources to turn to, are simply unable to be the parents they want to be and that their children deserve.’*

### Incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law

In April 2019, the First Minister committed to incorporating the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into law in Scotland](#) (hereby referred to as the ‘Convention’).

This new law will make it against the law for public authorities to act in a way which is incompatible with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). It will mean that public authorities will have duties to pro-actively ensure that everything they do complies with children’s rights. In cases where rights infringements occur, children, young people and their representatives will be able to use the courts in Scotland to enforce their rights and seek redress. It will also allow the Children and Young People’s Commissioner in Scotland to take cases to court about breaches of children’s rights, as well as requiring Scottish Government to publish a Children’s Rights Scheme for public bodies to report on how they comply with children’s rights.

Of the 54 Articles, 1 to 42 contain the substantive rights and obligations which public bodies must uphold. These include the right to life, survival and development; the right to protection from violence, abuse or neglect, the right to be raised by, or have a relationship with, their parents and the right to express their opinions and be listened to. Articles 43 to 52 concern procedural arrangements. . Of particular importance, is Article 20<sup>8</sup> – *I have the right to special protection and help if I can’t live with my family*. There are an additional four articles known as the ‘General Principles’, which are;

Article 2 – non-discrimination

Article 3 – best interest of the child

Article 6 – right to life, survival and

development Article 12 – right to be heard

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<sup>8</sup>For more information - <https://cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/articles/article-20/>

## Housing to 2040

In the Scottish Government's 2018-19 Programme for Government, a commitment was made to plan together with stakeholders for how homes in Scotland should look and feel by 2040, considering the whole housing system. Since then, draft visions and principles for '[Housing to 2040](#)' have been developed. Central to this Review is the commitment that everyone has a right to an adequate home which includes: legal security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, labiality, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy. This reflects the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically Article 27.<sup>9</sup>

## Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group

In 2017, the [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group](#) was established to identify recommendations to tackle rough sleeping, reduce the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness in Scotland. Recommendations were provided in 2018 and then again in 2020 as a response to COVID-19 pandemic. The Action Group recommended that a [Prevention Review Group](#) be established to "*develop recommendations to the Scottish Government for a legal duty or duties on Scottish local authorities and wider public bodies to prevent homelessness.*"<sup>10</sup> The Review Group recommendations were published on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Accompanying legislation is expected within the next parliamentary term. It is expected that the Prevention Duty will:

- Extend the duty to prevent homelessness and integrate it within the main statutory framework to ensure it is not solely the responsibility of Housing-related services but covers all public bodies.
- Prescribe a range of reasonable steps to be used to prevent or alleviate homelessness, which will include a personalised and tailored housing plan that maximises applicants' choice and control.
- Ensure the service meets the needs of specific groups at risk of homelessness including those experiencing domestic abuse, those leaving prison, care and other institutions.

It will be vital that recommendations within this Review align closely with the Prevention Review Group recommendations. This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

## **Local Context**

### Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023

The [Local Housing Strategy](#) is the sole strategic document for housing in East Lothian, bringing together a wide range of housing related priorities into one place and enabling a co-ordinated response in terms of action. The current Local Housing Strategy was informed by a Need and Demand Assessment for Specialist Provision, including a needs assessment for care experienced young people in 2017. This has since been updated. However, it only covers care

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<sup>9</sup>For more information - <https://cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc/articles/article-27/>

<sup>10</sup> Scottish Government (2018) Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan

leavers and those moving into their own homes. The Local Housing Strategy also takes account of East Lothian's [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#) which sets out how East Lothian will redress the local balance of temporary and settled housing options to align with the Scottish Government's vision that:

A settled, mainstream and sustainable housing outcome is available as quickly as possible  
Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is reduced to a minimum, the fewer transitions the better  
When temporary accommodation is needed, the preferable option is mainstream, furnished and within a community  
Housing First should be the first response for people with severe and multiple disadvantages  
Where mainstream housing and Housing First are not preferable or possible, highly specialist provision which is small, shared, supported and trauma-informed<sup>11</sup> should be offered.

The Local Housing Strategy is updated yearly to take into account new evidence. This Review will directly inform the 2021 Local Housing Strategy Update.

### East Lothian's Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan 2019-22

The [Integrated Joint Board](#)'s service planning includes adult social care services, adult primary and community health care services, and elements of adult hospital care. East Lothian Integrated Joint Board also manage justice social work. Until 2019, Children's Services were part of the Integrated Joint Board. In early 2019, the decision was taken for Children's Services to become part of Education. The East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership continues to have responsibility over community nursing including children's community health services, district nursing, health visiting and school nursing. While East Lothian's Health and Social Care Partnership largely only covers adults, this Review recognises that individuals who are care experienced are more likely to come back into contact with adult services later in their life. The Health and Social Care Partnership can also play a key role in preventing children from needing to become looked after and providing essential interventions for parents, carers and adults around a child.

### East Lothian's Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-23

Corporate Parenting in East Lothian is led by East Lothian's Corporate Parenting Board and implemented by the Corporate Parenting Steering Group. The Corporate Parenting Plan 2021-23 is currently in production and will focus on how all partners come together to achieve the aspirations we have for our children and young people. It is co-produced with care experienced young people and children.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on trauma informed practice and training in Scotland, please see <https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/>

## Children’s Strategic Partnership

The East Lothian Children’s Strategic Partnership (CSP) brings together key organisations involved in supporting children, young people and families in East Lothian, providing leadership and direction for services and ensuring a multi-agency approach. They have produced their Plan for 2020-2023, detailing their priorities over this time. The Plan for 2020-23 highlighted 3 key priority outcomes

We will improve children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing

We will support parents, carers and families to be more resilient.

We will reduce inequalities for our children and young people within and between our communities.

The plan highlights that East Lothian is a growing and thriving community, but there are large disparities within these communities and growing issues that partners have committed to addressing. A key to ensuring good outcomes is listening to the voice of children and young people and using this to shape and inform service delivery.

## Who Cares? Scotland in East Lothian

Who Cares? Scotland are commissioned by East Lothian Council to deliver independent advocacy for care experienced children and young people. The advocacy service is provided on a flexible basis and is tailored to meet the needs of the children and young people they work with. Advocacy workers operate on an outreach basis and proactively visit the child or young person wherever they are placed: this includes but is not limited to the following: local residential homes, external placements, secure care, foster care and care experienced young people with a disability.

In 2019, a total of 48 children and young people in East Lothian received independent advocacy from Who Cares? Scotland. This number decreased to 33 in 2020, due to the impact of COVID-19. Table 1 displays the number of advocacy tasks carried out by area of concern. The number of tasks are likely to always be higher than the total number of young people receiving advocacy services, as it’s common for the young person to have multiple areas they would like advocacy for. The most common issues across the two years have been ‘Contact’ which made up 29% of all advocacy tasks, ‘placements moves’ accounting for 20% and Finance, accounting for 14%. These are key themes which will be discussed through-out this Review.

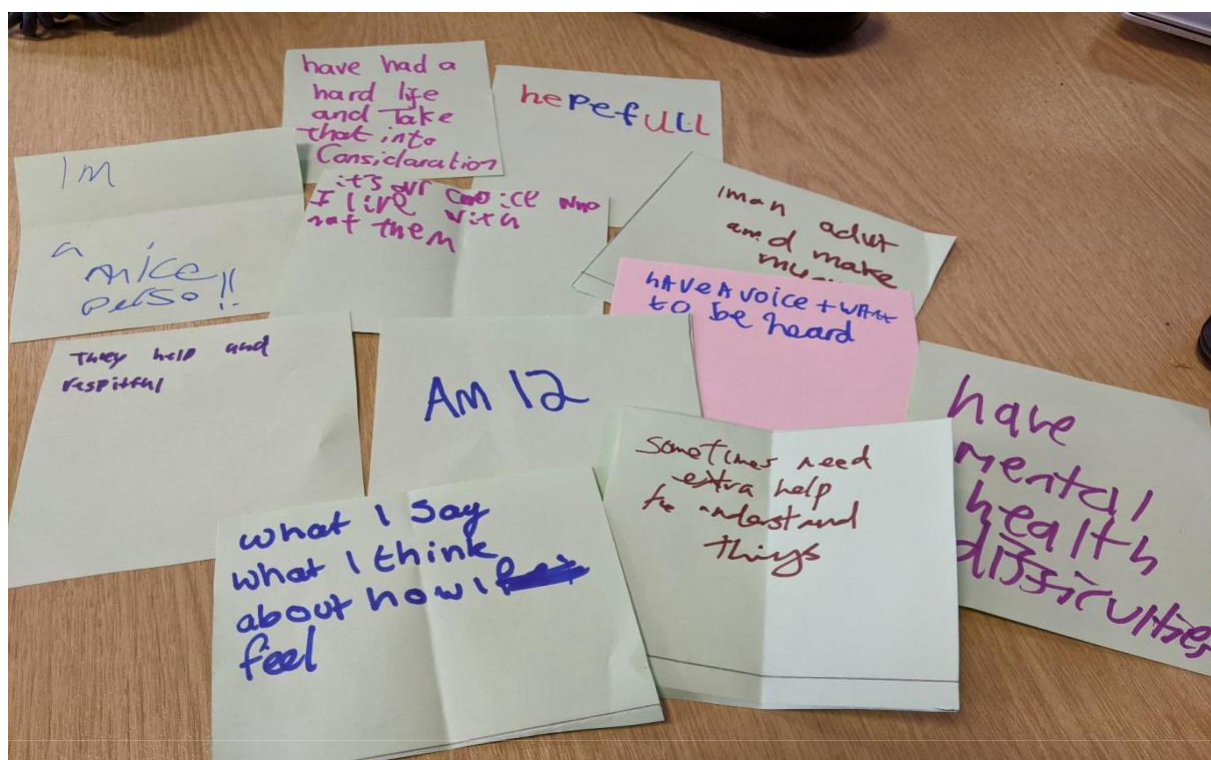
<b>Table 1: Number of Advocacy Tasks by area of concern, East Lothian</b>		
<b>Area of concern</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Contact	51	37
Bullying	0	1
Dissatisfaction with service	8	4
Education and Training	8	10
Finance	16	27
Housing	10	7
Legal Representation	14	11

Placement	12	8
Placement Moves	34	25
Opportunities and Interest	8	6
Wellbeing	8	4

Source: Who Cares? Scotland

Who Cares? Scotland also works in partnership with East Lothian Council through the East Lothian Champions Board Project. Set up in 2015, it provides a platform for care experienced young people to talk directly to local authority staff, elected members and service providers to ensure that decisions which affect their lives are informed by their own experiences.

The Champion's Board have built a thriving community of young people with care experience, meeting for weekly Champions Board meetings, and runs participation events and residential programmes. Highlights have included young people participating in the redesign of the Children's Hearing Centre, producing a film covering housing and educational priorities and delivering awareness workshops for teachers and support staff from East Lothian high schools.



Source: East Lothian Council, 2020: Children and Young People with experience of care were asked to write down one thing they would like Council workers to remember when they are working with them.

# Chapter 3: Transitions Through Care

*All care givers, wherever children live, must know that their primary purpose is to develop nurturing, patient, kind, compassionate, trusting, and respectful relationships so that children in their care feel loved and safe.*

## **The Promise**

This chapter will look at the ways in which different care settings are experienced by Care Experienced Young People and how they impact a young person's ability to maintain and succeed in their own tenancy. All views and perspectives discussed are based on what both young people living in East Lothian and professionals working in East Lothian have told us.

## **Connecting Poverty, Adverse Childhood Experiences and being 'Looked After'**

Adverse Childhood Experiences are stressful events that occur in childhood which can have a lifelong impact on health and behaviour. These events can include: domestic abuse, a parent with a mental health condition, being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional), being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional), having a member of the household in prison, and growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems. Those who experience 4 or more of these events in childhood are more likely to have poor physical and mental health and to engage in health-harming behaviours such as drinking, smoking or taking drugs. They are more likely to experience severe poverty and destitution. However, research has shown that having a relationship with one trusted adult during childhood can mitigate the negative impacts of these experiences.<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that the majority of children living in poverty are not affected by multiple adverse childhood experiences – and that these experiences can occur in better-off families. The difference is that higher income families often have the sufficient material resources and social, emotional or practical support to counter the negative effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences. It is important to note that poverty is not an Adverse Childhood Experience, as poverty is a structural issue governed mainly by political and economic factors.<sup>13</sup> However, where a child lives with Adverse Childhood Experiences, and also lives in poverty, long-lasting trauma can be devastating and impact not only childhood but continue into adulthood. Families experiencing both, are more likely to come to the attention of statutory services and children more likely to become 'looked after' by a local authority.

By understanding that poverty is a critical factor in determining a family's ability to cope, mainstream adult services such as housing, employment and welfare benefit teams can play a key role in preventing children from becoming looked after. Although this Review focuses on children and young people, it is clear we cannot improve the lives of children and young people in East Lothian without also improving the lives of the adults and caregivers. It is vital that universal services throughout East Lothian recognise and consider the children of the adults they are working with – and realise that services for adults are just as critical, as Children's Services are to preserve the wellbeing of children and young people.

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12 Trainer, Morag (2017) <https://www.children1st.org.uk/who-we-are/news/blog/poverty-and-adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>

13 Trainer, Morag (2017) <https://www.children1st.org.uk/who-we-are/news/blog/poverty-and-adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/>



## The East Lothian Context

The population of East Lothian is growing and changing. With a population in 2018 of 105,790 and significant growth is projected across all age groups, particularly amongst children aged 0-16.<sup>14</sup> The county is considered generally affluent compared with the rest of Scotland. However, the desirability of East Lothian as a place to live and a rapidly growing population places increasing demands on social services, social care, housing, and infrastructure. Significant inequalities exist across East Lothian, with two-thirds of data zones in East Lothian reporting an increase in relative deprivation in 2020.<sup>15</sup>

### Looked After and Accommodated Children

Since 2017/18 referrals to Children's Services have been increasing, with 2,865 referrals in 2017/18 rising to 3,621 in 2019/20. Despite this, the number of looked after and accommodated children has remained relatively stable over the same period.

<b>Table 2: Number of Looked After and Accommodated Children by Age</b>			
	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Referrals to Children's Services	2865	3210	3621
0-4	87	77	72
5-11	130	133	135
12-15	86	88	92
16+	13	12	13
Total	316	310	312

Source: Children's Services, East Lothian Council, 2020

### Care settings

In 2017/18, the majority of looked after children were looked after at home. Since then, the numbers have gradually reduced and now the majority of children who are looked after are with foster carers. East Lothian experienced a substantially higher decrease in children being looked after at home than comparator authorities and Scotland as a whole for the same period.<sup>16</sup> The use of residential accommodation (with and without school) has seen a modest rise over the same period.

<b>Table 3: Number of Looked After and Accommodated Children by Care Settings</b>			
	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Foster Care	99	103	103
External Foster Care	12	12	13
Residential	21	21	27
Residential School	6	7	11
Secure	1	7	4
Kinship Care	59	52	57
Looked After at home	116	106	97

<sup>14</sup> National Records for Scotland (2020) Small Area Population Projections, 2018-based.

<sup>15</sup> Scottish Government (2020) Scottish Index of Severe and Multiple Deprivation

<sup>16</sup> Scottish Government (2020) Looked After Children Statistics

Mother and baby	2	2	0
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Source: Children's Services, East Lothian Council, 2020

## Care settings: Moves

In 2019, 6% of children looked after in East Lothian had 3 or more care setting moves during the previous year, an increase of 4.1%-points over the previous years. This compared with a decrease of 1.4%-points for comparator authorities (Stirling, Midlothian, Fife Aberdeenshire and South Lanarkshire), and an increase of 0.3%-points for Scotland as a whole.

The percentage of children with more than 3 moves has traditionally been lower for comparator authorities and Scotland as a whole since 2016. However, this has seen a sharp increase, and as other authorities see numbers decreasing, East Lothian is now presenting similar overall percentage (6%) to that of comparative authorities and Scotland (both an average of 5%).<sup>17</sup>

**Table 4: Total number of children looked after at 31 July 2013-2019 with 3 or more care settings moves in the last year**

Local Authority	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
East Lothian	13	5%	5	2%	15	6%
Aberdeenshire	21	5%	20	5%	29	7%
Fife	74	8%	64	2%	50	5%
Midlothian	19	7%	13	6%	8	4%
South Lanarkshire	23	4%	37	6%	16	11%
Stirling	11	4%	12	5%	11	5%

Source: Looked After Children Statistics, Scottish Government, 2020

## Continuing Care and Aftercare

At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, there were 7 young people receiving continuing care in East Lothian. Of these, the majority were in foster care and the remaining in kinship care.<sup>18</sup> The numbers of young people receiving continuing care is small through-out Scotland. In 2018/19 only 281 young people were in continuing care placements.<sup>19</sup> For aftercare services there were 47 young receiving aftercare services in East Lothian, with an additional 52 young people who were receiving information, advice and support through a duty service.

## Care Settings in East Lothian

When a child becomes the subject of a supervision requirement through the Children's Hearing System, there is legal responsibility for the council to provide that young person with the support and care they need. This will help them either thrive in their current home or move to a different home either temporarily or permanently which will nurture and care for them. The priority is to try keep a child in their family home where it is safe to do so, where

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/looked-after-children-statistics-2019-local-authority-benchmarking-tool/>

<sup>18</sup> Due to the small numbers of young people receiving continuing care it is not appropriate to give exact statistics on placements to ensure anonymity.

<sup>19</sup> Scottish Government (2018/19) [Children's Social Work Statistics](#)

this is not possible other options are considered. In the first instance, family-like environments are considered first, for example informal and formal kinship care and then foster care. Where a child is not able to be placed in any of these options, other care settings will be explored and considered for the young person.

Different types of care settings offer different levels of support. Like all children, the experiences gained in their home environment will impact their housing experiences later in life. Evidence has shown that those who have been brought up in stable foster care placements have improved housing stability in the future, compared to those who have experienced multiple care settings breakdowns, residential care or secure care.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is vital that we ensure equity of experience throughout a young person's time in care, to better ensure their life chances after they leave care.

## Looked After at Home

### Early intervention



East Lothian aim to provide a service where children who are looked after at home, are enabled to do so through early intervention and intensive family support. This prevents a young person being moved into care and potentially being moved away

from their brothers and sisters. However, both local and national statistics show that those who are looked after at home tend to have the poorest outcomes compared to those who are looked after in other care settings. Intensive support for those who are looked after at home has been lacking in recent years. East Lothian Council has recently committed to improved support for families. Strengthening Parenting and Family Resilience is one of three priorities for the Children's Strategic Partnership 2020-23. Between December 2019 and 2021, scoping work is being carried out to:

- Identify gaps or duplication in service or resource provision

- Inform a co-ordinated approach which strengthens early intervention

  - Focus on prevention which recognising that time and money invested upstream to support parents and families will ultimately reduce the need for intensive support downstream

It is important to remember the struggles parents are facing whilst trying to give their child a nurturing upbringing. Parents who have been assessed as needing state intervention in their family life, which can lead to their child being removed, are often battling their own personal adverse experiences, affecting other elements of their lives such as mental ill health and risk of poverty.

As a local authority and corporate parents, we have a responsibility to support our looked after children to receive the highest level of care. This must also include the children's parents, providing a whole-systems approach. We must also remember that parents may be care experienced themselves and they are entitled to the same level of support. Where children are removed from their parents, all services must support both the birth parents and

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<sup>20</sup>Social Care Institute for Excellence (2004) Fostering Placement Stability, website information

children to ensure the children are returned home where it is safe to do so, as quickly as possible. While social work services are often the primary service, it is likely that education, housing, and financial inclusion services can all provide support and care to those who require it.



## Educational outcomes

Young people who are looked after at home are less likely to achieve their potential in school.<sup>21</sup> Although they are still living with parents, social work intervention suggests that there could be trauma or neglect at home. This makes it extremely difficult for children and young people to engage with education as their mind is more than likely to be somewhere else. However, in circumstances where home life may be chaotic, educational settings can provide a stable and supportive environment for children to feel safe, nurtured and loved. This must also extend to practical support with homework and extra tuition if needed.

## Impact on Independent living

Those who are living at home with parents are more likely to experience family breakdowns as they reach the age of 16. This may then lead to a desire to move out of the family home and seek their own home. For any individual, moving out at 16 feels very young to move out and become independent. This comes with many struggles including a potential lack skills for living on their own, having reduced finances or being unaware of who to go to for support. Unlike their counterparts who have lived in residential or supported accommodation, the transition to independent living will often be unplanned and unsupported making it more difficult for the individual to settle in and thrive within their new home.

## **Kinship Care (Informal and Formal)**

### Lack of Support for Kinship Carers and Care Experienced People

Young people who are living in kinship care both informal and formal are overlooked by current legislation, which does not afford them the same rights as children living with foster carers. The Scottish Government fund different organisations which aim to provide support services for kinship carers, these include: Citizens Advice Scotland, The Free Kinship Care Guide published by Mentor UK and on top of this Mentor UK have launched a website called the National Kinship Care website which provides kinship families with advice and information.

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<sup>21</sup>Hennessy A, Connelly G & Welch V (2014) *Improving Educational Outcomes for Children Looked After at Home: The Perspectives of Designated Managers for Looked After Children*, CELCIS

In terms of financial support, legislation for kinship carers' allowances do not apply to all kinship carers unless they meet a legal criteria and have certain formal arrangements in place.<sup>22</sup> This results in an unequal distribution of financial support. If a carer does not have the financial support they need, this can make it more difficult for them to support the young people they look after to achieve their full potential. Lack of financial support can cause huge stress for kinship carers who may also be supporting their own children in addition to their relatives.

The level and extent of support provided to kinship carers varies across Scotland and is dependent on the status of the arrangement. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these young people do not miss out on opportunities.

Although these young people can stay in a home where they have existing relationships with family members and

local connections, they may still have experienced a level of trauma at some point in their lives. Not only is it essential to remember this for the young people living in kinship care settings, but also for the carers and family members too who must also be supported.

Sarah and her husband have always been classed as 'informal' kinship carers due to their grandchildren not being placed on any type of order by social work. For the children to be looked after in a formal kinship care arrangement, Sarah was expected to pay and go through a solicitor to get the informal care arrangement changed to a formal one. The cost of this was estimated at around £3000 – due to this cost Sarah and her husband decided against it. This means she is now entitled to a lot less than other kinship carers in formal arrangements and compared to the financial support foster carers are receiving.

Interview with Informal Kinship Carer – East Lothian

## Foster Care

Unlike residential and secure care, foster care allows young people to be placed in a family environment where they can build trusted relationships with adults and learn basic life skills. In East Lothian, children who have grown up in a stable foster care home tend to achieve better outcomes in all elements of their lives; they are more likely to be supported with education which leads to more positive destinations. Foster care aims to have family relationships based on love and care and they are more likely to be able to cope well with any further adversity.<sup>23</sup>

### Support for Foster Carers

Foster carers in East Lothian are highly supported by the local authority both financially and emotionally, giving them an advantage to help young people feel nurtured and safe. The Scottish Government supports foster carers by funding organisations and services such as The Fostering Network who help recruit new foster carers and provide support for existing foster carers. Legislation also ensures that foster carers must be supported by their local authorities to be able to cover financial costs of the children living within their family. Legislation provided

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/looked-after-children/kinship-care/>

<sup>23</sup> Wilson K, Petrie, S & Sinclair I (2003) A Kind of Loving: A Model of Effective Foster Care, *British Journal of Social Work*, 33:

by the Scottish Government has also ensured that foster carers are supported so that they are emotionally prepared to support young people who have faced trauma. This is carried out through mandatory training as well as having a single point of contact such as a Social Worker to talk things over.

## Relationships

Looked after young people might find it difficult to integrate into a new family and build trusting relationships.

Relationships within foster care are the closest to a conventional family like environment that the care system can offer. That is why it is vital that foster carers and children in foster care have intensive support and training to prevent the relationship from breaking down. The impact of multiple 'family-like' settings breaking down has a significant impact on a young person, and especially on their ability to feel like they belong somewhere and to someone.

Some children might also find that their foster brother and sisters help them settle within their new home. Allowing young people to build relationships with their carer's children can be positive in providing a young person with a sense of belonging within that family. Sometimes it can be hard for Care Experienced Young People to initially build a relationship with their carers as they may feel uncertain, having other kids in the home can make this process easier. Complexities around this are discussed in Chapter 6.

## Respite

Although respite can be used as a positive short-term solution when young people need a break from their current care setting, it can also be an extremely isolating and lonely experience. If foster carers take their other children away on holiday and leave the young person in respite care, this can have a negative impact on making the young person feel like they are part of their family, it can also potentially impact a young person's feeling of belonging within that care settings. Options other than respite should be explored first, especially options such as staying with friends if possible. Where respite is needed, the young person should be placed with the same carers throughout a care journey so that relationships can be built between the young person and the respite carers.

*"I spent a lot of time comparing my new home to my old home, and how this was a more structured family and was more 'normal'. I feel like I've had the most successful placement (as well as my younger brother and sister who were adopted). I think for my older sister and brother it was quite difficult for them getting used to living in a normal family with new brothers and sisters and like a mum and a dad you know..."*

CEYP – East Lothian

*"It did help having Freya and Scott because they were young as well. I was not on my own and I always had distractions. Freya and I are a year apart and we were just like friends, now we are like sisters."*

CEYP – East Lothian

## Education



When living in a foster care placement, carers are responsible for ensuring the young person is engaging with education where possible. This is vital for making sure they are gaining qualifications and skills for employment. In 2018/19, 90% of young people in Scotland who were living with foster carers provided by the Local Authority were deemed to be in a positive destination 6 or 9 months after leaving school compared to those who were living in residential accommodation (68%).<sup>24</sup>

*“The whole of second year I was there for a total of like 30 days then I went into care, in January 2013, just at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> and by the time I went into 5<sup>th</sup> year my attendance was up at 96%”*

CEYP – East Lothian

## Breakdown of care settings

Evidence produced by the Scottish Care institute for Excellence (SCIE)<sup>25</sup> shows that any type of breakdown or unplanned moves are less likely to happen with younger children in care settings in comparison to teenage-aged children in care, which have a 50% chance of breaking down. Disruption in the care setting is much less likely if the child is aged under 10 years old. Multiple care settings breaking down can be just as damaging as birth family breakdowns and can often traumatise young people, as the environments within these spaces are very similar. If a young person has built up strong and stable relationships with their carers from a young age, they are less likely to experience breakdowns throughout their time of being looked after. For older young people who have already experienced being looked after by the care system, they will be more likely to find moving to other care settings unsettling and challenging. Breakdowns means that a young person will have to move home, school and build relationships up again which can be extremely detrimental.<sup>26</sup>

East Lothian Council have recognised that it is essential for foster carers to receive intensive support when required so that a young person can be supported to stay and avoid relationship breakdown. Training to help foster carers avoid breakdown, especially for older children, is viewed as essential.

## Impact on Independent Living

Those who are living in foster care are often being brought up in an environment where they are seeing life skills being carried out every day, such as being able to prepare and cook healthy meals, knowing how to keep a home clean and tidy, recognising the value of money and what bills adults are responsible for paying. We learn from the environment we are raised in, this is called learned behaviour. If a young person is raised in a home where they are not shown or expected to take part in household duties, then they are unlikely to know what to do when they have their own home.

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<sup>24</sup> Scottish Government (2018/19) *Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2018/19*, Children Education and Skills

<sup>25</sup> Social Care Institute for Excellence (2004) *Fostering Placement Stability*, website information

<sup>26</sup> Social Care Institute for Excellence (2004) *Fostering Placement Stability*, website information

## Through-care Homes in East Lothian

### Residential Children Homes in East Lothian

Lothian Villa provides 13 spaces as a residential home for CEYP in East Lothian, including a nearby flat. This is managed by East Lothian Council's Children's Services team and is suitable to accommodate one young person at a time with 24-hour support. The flat is only used for a short period of time when a young person is struggling in the main home, at times this can involve needing to split groups of young people up. The flat can be used for longer periods when either someone is returning from outwith East Lothian or group living is not suitable for them. The support provided in the flat tends to be 1:1 or 1:2 children to staff members, and staff will be chosen based around close relationships and particular skills.

Young people who move to a residential home have most likely transitioned from a breakdown in a foster care, kinship care or from being looked after at home. Evidence suggests that young people who are care experienced and have been living in residential care are more at risk of homelessness later in life.<sup>27</sup>

### Residential Environment

Residential homes can house several young people from as young as 14 all the way into adulthood. This means each young person will be at different stages of life, some still in high school, some in college or employment and some who are not engaging in any education or employment. For young people living in a residential setting, it can be difficult for them to prioritise their education. Residential care aims to provide a homely environment which supports young people to achieve. At times residential can be a chaotic atmosphere and influence behaviour of other young people. However, for some young people who have experienced relationship breakdown, residential care can provide a sanctuary away from intense family life, which can be hard to cope with.

### Education



Those who are attending school or education need to be in a settled environment where they can complete homework and prepare for exams. The potential impact of living with a wide variety of age groups in residential care has been recognised by East Lothian's social work team, who have put forward the need for an *After Care House* which could house up to 3 young people who are moving into adulthood.

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<sup>27</sup> Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (2019) *Homelessness and Care Experience: Beyond the Headlines*



## Cooking

Young people who have grown up in more institutional settings such as residential homes, may not have the life skills that other young people have who have grown up in a family environment. For example, there is rarely access to cooking facilities in residential homes, meaning that young people are less likely to gain confidence in cooking and other independent living skills. This could affect young people when they move

into their own house and may result in young people relying on takeaway meals.

*"I could only afford to buy cheap food, but she (residential staff member) expected me to prepare proper cooked meals."*

CEYP- East Lothian

## Relationships

Relationships between young people and residential care staff are extremely important to keep a young person happy and safe. It can be challenging for a young person to feel as though they belong somewhere if they do not have strong relationships with the adults and young people around them. In residential care, staff work shift patterns, coming in and out during

*"I went back to visit a couple of months ago before lockdown and that had been 10 years since I was there and I was welcomed through the door like I had never left, and I did feel like I was still a part of the family like even the staff and some of the young people that used to be there I keep in contact with."*

CEYP – East Lothian

the day making life seem institutional and less fluid than family life. Maintaining a trauma-informed approach when working with care experienced young people and managing relationships in institutional-like settings can be challenging. This includes maintaining relationships with young people once they move on from residential care, just as family would. This is important for staff to still be able to give that support or signpost when needed and to find out how a young person is getting on. This is also important for the young person as it gives them a sense of feeling as though they belonged within that space and that staff genuinely care about them. Many staff members expressed the importance of keeping in touch with

young people who move on, Lothian Villa has set up a Facebook page which allows individuals moving on to keep in touch with staff members and share what they have been doing. This has been highly valued by both staff members and young people and must be continued and mirrored by similar settings.

## **Secure Care**

In Scotland, there are 84 secure beds provided by five secure units: Kibble, Rossie, St Marys Kenmure, Howdenhall and The Good Shepherd Centre. Young people from East Lothian who are placed in a secure unit will be placed in one of these five named above. None of these units are situated within East Lothian, meaning a young person will be placed out of area when secure care is the only option.

Young people are placed in secure care to keep themselves and others safe from harm. Local authorities will place a young person in secure care as a very last resort and would exhaust all other possible options first. As a result, secure care is used in a crisis, meaning that there is rarely time for a transition period. This can be a distressing experience for a young person.

*It is for the small number of children who may be a significant risk to themselves, or others in the community. Their needs and risks can only be managed in secure care's controlled settings.<sup>28</sup>*

A young person's stay in secure care is most valuable to the young person where intense support and work is delivered to help them manage their moods, re-engage with education, repair relationships, and ensure they are safe from harm. In October 2020, the Scottish Government introduced new *Secure Care Standards* which aim to ensure the rights of young people living in secure care are respected and considered to improve the experiences and outcomes of secure care.

*The Pathway and Standards provide a framework for ensuring the rights of children and young people are respected and improving experiences and outcomes for children who are experiencing extreme vulnerabilities, needs and risks in their lives.<sup>29</sup>*

## Education



Young people are expected to engage with full-time education whether they were attending mainstream school or not. This is a good opportunity for young people who were not engaging with education before they entered secure care to receive intensive support and gain qualifications for their exit out of secure.

## Alternative Therapies

Some will offer different types of therapies to help CEYP understand why they may be behaving in a particular way. For example, trauma-informed massage and other types of holistic therapy are used to help connect mind and body. Where young people find this beneficial it is important that this is continued when the young person goes back into the community.

## Support from external organisations

Communication between staff within secure units and external support services can be poor. This has been heightened over the last year due to Covid-19 where face-to-face contact has not been able to take place. These relationships are not only vital for a young person's development, but they also provide young people with immediate mental health support.

## Relationships



It is vital that young people can stay in contact with family members at their own request. In such a controlled environment, where young people are not able to see family and friends, phone calls are the only way in which they can stay connected

<sup>28</sup> Scottish Government (2020) Youth Justice: Secure Care – website information

<sup>29</sup> Scottish Government (2020) Secure Care: Pathway Standards

with 'home'. This is especially important during Covid-19 where face to face contact is not able to take place. The young person should be supported to create a contact list of individuals who they have relationships with so that these relationships can continue throughout their stay in secure care.

### Returning to the Community

Secure care offers intensive support, which infringe on an individual's rights to liberty where there is cause. Legislative efforts to ensure young people are not kept in secure for longer than necessary have limited how well transitions from secure care settings can be. This was raised as a concern from social workers and education professionals within East Lothian Council. A young person should know exactly where they are going to be living once they leave secure, and know what supports will be put in place. In addition to this, education or employment teams in the local authority must also be part of a young person's aftercare plan. Suitable housing options for individuals in care or leaving care should allow for a young person to transition back into the community to a setting where they feel loved, safe and will help them desist from previous actions and behaviours which led to them being placed in secure care.

## Summary

All council services have a duty to prevent children from becoming looked after. This means recognising the links between poverty, trauma and neglect. Prevention starts with supporting adults in families, and East Lothian must continue to ensure that council services are accessible, reliable and free from stigma.

When children are taken into care, East Lothian must strive to provide the most homely settings possible, nurturing children to develop relationships based on trust.

Council services must recognise the adverse experiences young people may have faced in their lives and understand that their experiences may impact on their ability to feel a sense of 'home' and 'belonging' later in life. Where equity of support has not been provided from a young age, a whole-systems approach should be taken to provide young people and families with the resources that they require to thrive.

Children and young people who are looked after at home currently have the lowest expected outcomes across the looked after groups.

Children and young people who have experienced multiple foster care breakdowns, residential and/or secure placements, may have fewer opportunities to develop skills such as cooking, cleaning and budgeting. They are also potentially less likely to have support networks they can rely on.

Not all children and young people are entitled to the same level of throughcare and aftercare support due gaps in current legislation. However, all care experienced young people are entitled to access universal services the council offers, such as support with education, housing, and health. These statutory services the council provides are well placed to provide the support that children and families require.

Barriers in the local care system must be identified and rectified to ensure that they do not disadvantage children and young people who are already vulnerable. For example, lack of financial support for informal kinship carers, inability to fully plan exits from secure care placements and access to aftercare support services based on strict application of legal definitions and certain 'care status'.

# Chapter 4: Transitions From Care To Home\*

*There must be comprehensive thematic reviews on 'transition services' and all those with ongoing parental responsibility must be required to explain how they plan to deliver integrated services for care leavers to adulthood.*

## **The Promise**

\* We refer to this chapter as *'Transitions from care to home'* as the term 'independent living' did not seem appropriate due to the fact nobody lives fully independently and we all need some level of support and guidance when living alone. The term 'housing' also seems clinical and does not evoke a sense of ownership and warmth that a 'home' should provide.



This chapter will explore the different housing options that are available to Care Experienced Young People in East Lothian. It will discuss the high demand on affordable housing in East Lothian, and how this interacts with the availability of different housing models. We will also look at ways in which a

young person may find it difficult to feel at home. The contents and experiences shared here have come from interviews with Care Experienced Young People in East Lothian.

## The East Lothian Context

East Lothian has a growing population. In 2019, there were a total of 46,771 households in East Lothian. This is a 1.7% increase from 45,975 households in 2018. In comparison, the number of households in Scotland overall increased by 0.7%. The majority of housing in East Lothian is owner-occupied (68%), with a relatively small private rented sector (10%) and social rented sector (22%).<sup>30</sup>

There are around 11,000 social rented homes in East Lothian, comprising nearly 22% of the total housing stock. The Council owns the majority of social rented housing (8,649 homes) with Housing Associations owning the balance (2,215).<sup>31</sup> In recent years, alternative forms of affordable housing to social rent have been developed. This includes Mid-Market rent and low-cost home ownership.

There are significant demands on social rented homes in the County, with 3,200 households on the Council Housing List. With a private rented sector and an owner-occupied sector showing similar trends to Edinburgh, households on a low-income struggle to afford private sector housing in the County.

As a result of the limited housing stock, housing options for care experienced young people can be limited, particularly when supported accommodation is not an option and/or if they have multiple and complex needs. The majority of care experienced young people who are leaving care will go on to have a Council tenancy via the Starter Flat program.

Table 3.9 displays the number of homeless applicants who were previously looked after as a child. This represents those age 16-26 who do not qualify for throughcare support or those aged over 26. It does not represent those who experience homelessness who are currently looked after children. At present, there is no official mechanism in East Lothian which records this, as a result this population are 'hidden homeless'. There are no national channels to record these young people, instead policy and practice differs between local authorities in Scotland.

Between 2015/16 and 2018/19, there has been an increase in the number of homeless applicants who were previously looked after. In 2018/19, this figure equates to 3.9% of homeless applicants, compared to 7% nationally. Despite being small in number, it is of concern that nine homeless applicants were looked after less than five years ago during 2018/19, particularly in comparison with 2017/18.

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<sup>30</sup> National Records for Scotland (2020) Small Area Household Projections, 2018-based.

<sup>31</sup> East Lothian Council, Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023

<b>Table 5: Homeless Applicants – Previously Looked After as a Child by the Local Authority</b>				
	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Less than 5 years ago	7	6	1	9
5 or more years ago	18	23	34	22
Total	25	29	35	31
Not known / refused	1	2	1	3

Source: Scottish Government HL1 Statistics

## Housing Options in East Lothian

The range of Housing Options have increased for Care Experienced Young People in East Lothian over the period 2018 to 2019. These are set out below.

### Supported Accommodation

In Musselburgh, the 15+ Team have a 3-bedroom property with 24/7 support from Blue Triangle. The tenants have their own room and bathroom and share the kitchen and living space. In the same complex, Blue Triangle support four 1 bed flat/bedsits. These technically do not provide 24/7 support but are in such close proximity to the 3-bedroom property, support can be accessed at all times if required.

New Horizons in Haddington is managed by Action for Children and provides supported accommodation in a bedsit housing model to young people who are homeless. The 15+ Team have two allocated spaces within the accommodation. The accommodation has ten spaces, eight of which are in the main house and a further 2 in an adjacent flat. New Horizons has 24-hour staff cover.

### Housing with Support

For care experienced young people aged 16 or over, there are limited housing options. The 15+ Team have the use of 4 properties which are managed by Castle Rock Edinvar and supported by With You. All these properties are based in Edinburgh.

My Place is a new housing option which became available for Care Experienced Young People in 2019. This new project is funded by the Life Changes Trust and houses two Care Experienced Young People with one (student) Peer Flatmate. By 2021, My Place will house 20 Care Experienced Young People and 10 peer flatmates with housing support from the Rock Trust. There will be ten three - bed properties with furniture and Wi-Fi provided. The purchase of properties on the open market is funded through East Lothian Council's Open Market Acquisition Programme. The project uses elastic tolerance<sup>32</sup> and a number of principles from the Housing First model to ensure young people have a sense of home and belonging.

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<sup>32</sup>Elastic Tolerance is defined by Homeless Link in their 2015 *Psychologically Informed Environments: No One Left Out* publication as: the encouragement of creative and flexible approaches to dealing with issues which normally result in a warning or eviction. Staff behaviours, policies and procedures address negative behaviour without re-enforcing the client's sense of rejection or abandonment.

## Starter Flats & Flipping Tenancies

Young care leavers can also access a Council Starter Flat. These are managed by Community Housing Teams, after a recent handover period from the Housing Options Team. Once young people are settled, happy with their home and have the support they require the tenancy is converted into a permanent tenancy. At any one time there are around between 17-20 starter flats up and running in East Lothian.

## **Finding the right housing option**

In June 2019, Children's Services established the 15+ Housing and Support Panel alongside Community Housing, the Housing Options Team and local Housing Support Providers. This reflected the increase in the range of supported housing options for young people leaving care. The Panel look at a wide range of competing factors which may influence a young person's life, including health and wellbeing, learning and work, income, and supportive relationships. The Panel then use the information, which includes considerable input from the young person themselves, to allocate the most suitable housing option. The young person is always consulted on the decision and can request to go back to the panel if they are not happy with any recommendations. Through the creation of 15+ Housing and Support Panel and the increase in the number of housing options, joint working between Housing and Children's Services is resulting in better outcomes for young people who are able to access services which best meet their needs.

Since the increase in available housing options, care has been taken to place young people in the right home for them, rather than placing them in the only option available. Recognising that different options are best suited to different individuals. For example, supported accommodation can be incredibly expensive and limit young people from either attending college or getting a job. Young people can feel insecure and unable to make connections and 'put down roots' in temporary accommodation, affecting their ability to feel at home.

The Panel also allows for moves between housing options where one option is not working. While multiple moves should be avoided as much as possible, normalizing moving when something is not a good fit is positive and avoiding 'terminations' or 'evictions' is preferred. To avoid re-traumatising young people who have faced multiple moves, planned transitions must be upheld as best practice.

*"We were used to being dotted about all the time, we didn't know where we are going to end up."*

CEYP – East Lothian

This quote from a young person who has experienced multiple care settings explains the feeling of not knowing and anxiety when moving from one care setting to another.



## Rules and Restrictions

A common trend was identified for young people living in supported accommodation, that they struggled to feel at home or that they belonged. Supported accommodation has rules and is a controlled environment due to the number of individuals living there. Rules and regulations need to be balanced with an awareness of how young people are expected to behave versus the standards we as a local authority are holding them up to. Often services will begin to assess whether a young person is 'ready' for their own tenancy by looking at how they are living within their current environment. Yet, it is unlikely that their current environment will be mirrored when they move into their own tenancy. It is also vital that services manage their expectations of young people and use a trauma-informed approach in tackling behaviour which is deemed unacceptable. Staff from Community Housing and Homelessness have taken part in a small number of trauma-informed training sessions, and it is hoped that similar training will be rolled out as part of the National program.<sup>33</sup>

## When there is no Housing Option

*"More of a home than what I previously had. I feel it has gave me the fresh start that I was needing. I had to adhere to curfews, limited space and lack of privacy in temporary accommodation. I have the freedom and comfort of my own house now."*

CEYP - East Lothian

Both young people and those working with young people feel very strongly about the use of unregulated short stay accommodation, more commonly referred to as "B&B". Although more housing options have become available in recent years, there remains a gap in the provision of emergency accommodation in East Lothian. As a result, when there are no available housing options, Children's Services are forced to place a young person in short stay accommodation in the private sector. This might be a Travelodge, a B&B or a sub-let.

*"I was having to use electric heaters to heat the bedroom because of course there was no heating .... but it was just a nightmare because you could not have them on when you were asleep or anything in case they went on fire."*

CEYP – East Lothian.

*"I've got a lot better at cooking as I have my own space to do this. My experience in temporary accommodation did not allow me to work on this. I was not allowed to use the facilities onsite and this held me back in this area. I am motivated to look after myself and my living environment."*

CEYP – East Lothian

On occasions where there are no viable options, even in short stay accommodation, young people will be asked to find their own accommodation either with friends or family. There is an abundance of evidence on the mental and physical impacts of insecure and unregulated

33 For more information - <https://transformingpsychologicaltrauma.scot/>

housing, which can exacerbate existing mental ill health, trauma and lead to further isolation and distress.<sup>34</sup>

Short stay private accommodation rarely provides the amenities which a flat or property would offer. For example, washing machines and heating may come at an additional cost, and access to kitchen facilities and storing food will also be limited. This places a greater demand on Children’s Services to provide financial assistance and impacts the self-value of the individual living under those circumstances. In Appendix E, there is an anonymous case study setting out the human cost and the financial cost of B&B on one care experienced young person from East Lothian.

The immediate financial cost to a local authority for B&B provision is approximately £2,000 a month for one young person. It is not uncommon for young people to be placed in short stay accommodation for longer than a month. In one case, a young person aged just 18 was placed in B&B accommodation for 1 year. As the accommodation currently being sourced by Children’s Services does not provide an occupancy agreement, young people are unable to claim housing benefit. This means the housing cost is being picked up by Children’s Services.

<b>Table 6: B&amp;B Costs, East Lothian 2021</b>		
<b>Ongoing Costs</b>	<b>1 month</b>	<b>12 month</b>
Rent (B & B costs) costed at £50 per night. This can often be higher.	£1,521	£18,250
Laundry costs	£21.67	£260
Additional food costs	£43.33	£520
<i>Staff costs (charged at £20 per hour), 2 hours a week</i>	<i>£173.33</i>	<i>£2,080</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,759.33</b>	<b>£21,110</b>

Source: Children’s Services, 2021

## The Changing Policy Context

*“He couldn’t manage self-care in a B&B, he had so little self-respect. Washing and taking care of himself wasn’t a priority. This has totally turned around since he has been able to access long term secure housing. I thought we were going to lose him, a month before he moved into the tenancy, it could have gone either way.”*

15+ Social Worker

In 2021, the Scottish Government will extend the Unsuitable Accommodations Order which will limit all households in Scotland being placed in a B&B for no longer than 7 days. This legislation will only apply to individuals placed in B&B accommodation through the Housing Options/Homeless Team. At the time of writing, there is no protocol for care experienced young people facing homelessness in East Lothian. As such, those placed in a B&B by Children’s Services are not recorded via Homeless (HL1) Statistics. This means that the legislation will not cover young people placed in unregulated short stay accommodation by Children’s Services.

<sup>34</sup>Watts B & Blenkinsopp J (2021) Valuing Control over One’s Immediate Living Environment: How Homelessness Reponses Corrode Capabilities, *Housing, Theory and Society*

2021 will also see the introduction of Scottish Government legislation on a Prevention Duty<sup>35</sup> and publication of the Prevention Review Group's guidance, which will require all local authority departments to take steps to prevent individuals from becoming homeless. It is expected that the Review Group will bring assistance for young people aged 16-17 facing homelessness in Scotland in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. This will mean that they will be treated as children under the law with primary responsibility for assisting homelessness sitting with Children's Services. The new Prevention Duty will also introduce a mechanism for recording numbers of young people who require assistance and support from the local authority.

It is clear that existing protocols for care experienced young people who are living in unsuitable accommodation require to be reviewed and updated, given the changing national and local context. The urgent demand for high-quality short- and medium-term housing in East Lothian is not unique to care experienced young people, and as such should be reviewed within the wider context. The new Prevention Duty and Unsuitable Accommodations Order will provide a framework for Housing Strategy, Housing Options and Children's Services to work closely together to prevent homelessness for care experienced young people. This will involve the Council having protocols in place to clarify pathways in respect of homelessness prevention and housing options, statutory homeless assessments and access to appropriate accommodation.

In light of the changing context, it would be too premature at this stage to provide specific recommendations until the legislative and policy context is set out by the Scottish Government. To alleviate the urgent need for emergency accommodation for care experienced young people in East Lothian, the Rock Trust has opened its Nightstop Service to young people in East Lothian. They currently have a bid with the Scottish Government to expand their Nightstop Service across the Lothian's.

## **Skills for Living**

Young People in the general population tend to move out of their family home at an average age of 25, after going to college, university or finding a stable job.<sup>36</sup> For CEYP, the youngest an individual can leave their care settings and move into their own tenancy is 16 years old. CEYP also experience more unnatural ends to relationships and supports, often based on age rather than 'stage'. When CEYP do move away from foster carers, residential homes or secure units, the current pattern in East Lothian shows they are also much more likely to live on their own rather than sharing with friends or a partner.

Yet when referring to young people who require social work or other statutory services, public sector bodies often refer to 'independent living'. This term is associated with an individual moving into their own home, on their own, with no support from public or third sector services, seeking to avoid 'dependence' on statutory services.

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35 <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/scotland-prevention-review-group/>

<sup>36</sup> Scottish Government (2013) Housing Options Protocols for Care Leavers – Guidance for Corporate Parents: Improving Housing and Accommodation Outcomes for Scotland's Care Leavers

It is rare that a young people in the general population will move home without support from family or friends. This can range from helping to move furniture into a new property, being at the other end of the phone when their boiler breaks down, or even paying a percentage of a deposit for a house. Through family, friends and community networks, recommendations are given for the best electrician or joiner for the odd job. In this respect, no one lives completely independently. While someone might live on their own, more than often, an individual will have a range of people they can rely on for support and guidance. Rather than referring to 'independent living' the following recommendation from Scottish Government and CELCIS report seems more appropriate:

*The notion of independence is perhaps better expressed as 'interdependence' more accurately reflecting the day-to-day reality of an extended range of healthy inter-personal relationships, social supports and networks.*<sup>37</sup>

CEYP are less likely to have this network of support, especially those who have lived in residential homes, with multiple foster carers or out of their local area. This is why it is so important for young people to have continuous support from Housing Officers, Social Workers and other important adults in their life. It needs to be recognised that giving CEYP this support is not creating a culture of dependency, but a local authority filling the gap that a young person is facing in their life. With the right support in place, they will be able to feel at home and use that stability as a building block for other aspects of their lives, creating the meaningful relationships and local support networks, requiring less and less support from the local authority.

*"I have managed to get a job and stay out of trouble. My previous experience in temporary accommodation did not give me that security I needed to focus on these areas. I have focussed a lot on myself and have the security of my home to help in these areas."*

CEYP – East Lothian

### Scottish Tenancy Award

For young people who want to build up their skills for managing their own tenancy the Scottish Tenancy Award is run by both The Bridges and Skills Development Scotland in East Lothian. Social Workers should ensure that the Award is an option as part the Pathway Plan, undertaken *prior* to moving into their own tenancy. CEYP should not be expected to know how to do these things when they have never been shown.

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<sup>37</sup> Scottish Government & CELCIS (2019) Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway: Improving Care Leavers Housing Pathways

## Making my House a Home

### Moving In

Moving into a new house is often described as one of the most stressful life experiences for an adult, and it could be argued that this stress is significantly magnified if you are a young person with experience of care. Having a lack of control and being unaware of what to expect can be an extremely daunting experience, potentially stirring up anxiety and uncertainty.

*“Now seeing the difference to what my house is like now compared to that house, there’s a major difference to what I classed home as, and now I feel like this is where I belong and this is my home.”*

CEYP – East Lothian

Over the last couple of years Starter Flats provided by East Lothian Community Housing have adapted

their processes to give young people much more involvement in the process of choosing paint, furniture and carpets. Being part of the process allows CEYP to start to imagine what their life might be like when they move in. This has been highly valued by young people who have previously felt a lack of control over their situations, and many have said it has really enhanced how they felt towards their home.

*“The big book I got given...when I need to know something it really comes in hand. Making things like repair numbers and emergency gas and who I was to phone when I had troubles with rent and things like that.”*

CEYP – East Lothian

While discussing how the Council could mitigate any stress or anxiety when young people are moving into their tenancy, both social workers and young people agreed that a simple handbook would be beneficial. Once created, this along with a Moving-In Care Package would be given to the young person prior to moving home.

A *Moving-In Care Package* would include an information pack, photos and ‘top tips’ from other CEYP on what to expect before you move into your

own property. The Moving-In Care Package would be a useful tool for the Housing Officer and young person to establish a positive relationship over. This would include both a Social Worker and ideally a Housing Officer taking time to go through the Handbook with the young person while the property was being brought up to standard.

Another positive change Community Housing has made has been allowing young people to decorate their starter flats while still in the ‘temporary’ part of the tenancy. It was recognised

that young people were being judged on their ability to ‘be’ at home and live as society would expect them, without having the ability to make changes to their home. The ability to make changes to your home is a vital factor in feeling like it is your own space. For young people who have experienced multiple care setting moves as children, or who have spent time in

*“I know I belong here and I can call this my home. I have also been given the freedom to make small changes that will benefit everyone who stay here.”*

CEYP – East Lothian

institutional settings such as secure units, having the ability to make a home their own, feel safe and that they belong, is an essential factor that will contribute to sustaining and maintaining a tenancy.

### SPOTLIGHT ON IMPROVING PRACTICE

A good example of the elastic tolerance approach where support and housing providers have worked together collaboratively would be in the way that My Place responded to some anti-social behaviour involving one of the young men in the project. The incidents were fairly serious and involved large groups of young people congregating at the My Place flat and in the local community. This culminated in some violent clashes involving a number of local youths and resulted in a number of neighbour complaints. Typically, an incident of this nature would trigger the issuing of a formal written warning highlighting to the tenant that their tenancy is at risk and what the next steps would be if the housing provider chose to initiate eviction proceedings. This will often result in a young person feeling that they have no control over what happens next. My Place staff were able to work with housing officers to agree a collaborative less authoritarian response. They carried out a joint visit to discuss some of the positive progress that had been made since the young man moved in. They established that rather than issue a formal warning they were able to offer reassurances that they would do everything within their power to support the young man to keep his tenancy so long as there were no more serious issues at the flat. This moved the focus on to what could be done to support him to stay rather than offering the threat of further punitive action further down the line. The young man was able to remain in his tenancy and work through the issues.

### Managing Finances

One of the biggest challenges faced by young people is knowing how to manage finances. This can really affect whether a young person can maintain or sustain their home. There needs to be additional work done to ensure young people are aware of the cost of living and being able to eventually manage their own bills and rent. When Social Work are taking responsibility for paying for bills, young people should be made aware of what payments are being made for them and who to so they gather an awareness of what they will be paying when they are financially stable.

When speaking with young people, finance frequently came up as one of the main struggles which prevents them from feeling any sense of security and stability.

Children's Services carry out a Pathway Plan with any young person who are over school leaving age but are still looked after, these aim to ensure a young person is not entering adult life as a care leaver too early. This involves both the young person and their worker where the young person's financial, educational and wellbeing needs are discussed and identified<sup>38</sup>. In this case, if a young person evidently struggles to manage their finances then work should be done with the young person to ensure they have this skill for moving on. A basic living allowance for a young person is around £79.09 a week and this is expected to cover costs of

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<sup>38</sup>Scottish Government (2004) Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Scotland: Regulations and Guidance

food, clothes, heating, and transport costs. However, utility bills can be paid by the 15+ Team if need be, this allowance is given to those who are under the age of 18 and are out of education or employment.

As part of the Section 29 duty to provide Aftercare (Children (Scotland) Act 1995) all young people leaving care will be entitled to The Leaving Care Grant (up to £2000), this is available for any young person leaving care up to the age of 26 due to the Children and Young People Act 2014. The Leaving Care Grant allows any young person leaving care and going on to their own tenancy to receive a sum of money to cover starting costs and can be used to purchase furniture or pay bills.<sup>39</sup> The young person is supported and guided by their social worker to help them purchase furniture for their home. If a young person does not have all the basic furniture, they are being set up to fail.

*“I think the biggest negative is finance troubles while running your own home. When I was living in supported accommodation, I was on Housing Benefit because I was not working whereas now, I am working but, I think it’s harder when you are in your own tenancy.”*

CEYP – East Lothian

Young people expressed that they can find it embarrassing to speak up when they are experiencing money problems. Rather than seeking help from statutory services young people will use buy back services or loan sharks, unintentionally putting themselves into debt. Being in debt to someone or a company who are constantly asking for money can be distressing and potentially threatening to young people. All young people should have a trusted adult who they feel comfortable sharing information with without feeling stigmatised or ashamed.

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<sup>39</sup>Scottish Government (2020) Looked After Children – Policy, website access

## Summary

As care experienced young people transition out of care, East Lothian Council must ensure that there are housing options and housing support services in place to help that young person feel safe and secure in their home.

Despite efforts to increase the pool of housing options to care experienced young people in East Lothian, there is currently a lack of affordable housing for care experienced young people who need alternative housing. This is especially true for the provision of emergency accommodation.

In light of the impending changes to legislative and policy context in housing and homelessness, it is essential that a Prevention Group is established to take forward the necessary revisions to pathways for care experienced young people experiencing unsuitable accommodation.

It is imperative that services reflect on a care experienced young person's background, understanding that they may not have had the same life experiences or ability to learn how to manage and maintain a home. In recognising this, services should be able to provide the right support to allow a young person to succeed in their home. Community Housing and Homelessness in East Lothian are already adapting the way the work with young people which is resulting in positive experiences throughout the County.

Different housing options work for different young people depending on their past experiences and support needs. Where one type of housing does not meet the needs of the young person, moving should be normalized rather than stigmatised as a 'failure' to maintain a tenancy.

Young people value being able to make their house a home, and community housing must continue to champion their ability to do so.

Rules and restrictions within supported accommodation and unregulated short-term accommodation can be detrimental to young people's wellbeing.

When a young person feels safe and settled in a home, they are then able to find the headspace to look for employment or go to college.

Further work is required to reduce the anxiety of young people prior to moving into their home.

Finances continue to worry care experienced young people, impacting on all parts of their life.

The increase in the number of previously looked after young people accessing homelessness services, shows a lack of support in place for young people after the age of 26.

Affordable housing is limited and under considerable pressure in East Lothian.



# Chapter 5: Education & Employment

*Schools in Scotland must be ambitious for care experienced children and ensure they have all they need to thrive, recognising that they may experience difficulties associated with their life.*

## **The Promise**



This chapter will focus on the different opportunities offered to Care Experienced Young People through education and employment. It will discuss the different barriers and outcomes young people can experience when gaining qualifications

and looking for employment, these barriers can impact a young person’s engagement with both education and employment.

## The East Lothian Context

In primary schools, the gap between those who are care experienced and those who are not shows an overall reduction for reading, listening and talking, while writing and numeracy shows a slight increase. In secondary schools, the gap has reduced for Literacy and increased slightly for Numeracy.<sup>40</sup>

In 2019/20, there were 8,626 pupils in East Lothian Council’s 34 primary schools and 6,026 pupils in six secondary schools. Of these 1.4% of all pupils were recorded as being care experienced, in line with the previous year. This includes around 60 children and young people who live in East Lothian but are looked after by other local authorities.

School leavers who are care experienced typically have lower attainment compared to those who are not care experienced. Similar to SIMD trends, the attainment gap between school leavers who are care experienced and those that are not care experienced is wider at higher levels of qualifications. In 2018/19, 78% of looked after children had 1 or more SCQF level 3, and 61% had 1 or more qualification at SCQF Level 4 – including looked after children from East Lothian but in other local authority schools. In the same reporting year, 97.5% of non-care experienced school leavers gained 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 4. The gap between school leavers who are care experienced and those who are not has fluctuated over the five-year period due to the small numbers involved, only around 2% of the total school leavers’ cohort each year are care experienced.

**Table 6: Proportion of school leavers looked after for the full year by their highest level of attainment<sup>41</sup>**

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of Children	9	14	23
% with 1 or more SCQF Level 3	67%	79%	78%
% with 1 or more SCQF Level 4	56%	79%	61%

Source: Scottish Government, 2018/19

The attendance rate for pupils who are looked after is typically between 4 and 5 percentage points lower than pupils who are not care experienced. The gap in primary school attendance rates between those pupils who are looked after and not looked after has reduced since 2016/17 with the 2019/20 looked after attendance rate in line with the rate of those not

<sup>40</sup>East Lothian Council (2020/21) Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan

<sup>41</sup> Scottish Government, [Education Outcomes of Scotland’s Looked After Children](#) – This data includes children and young people from East Lothian who are looked after out of area. It does not include children and young people who are looked after in East Lothian but are from another local authority.

looked after. In secondary schools the gap has increased from 9.9 to 10.4 percentage points over that same period.<sup>42</sup>

Table 7 displays information collected on the destination of school leavers in the September after they leave school and again the following March. School leavers who are engaged in higher education, further education, training, voluntary work, employment or an activity agreement are classified as having a ‘positive destination’.

In 2018/19, 96% of East Lothian’s care experienced young people went into a positive destination in the September they left school. However, only 74% of these young people remained in a positive destination when consulted in the following March.

Historically, care experienced young people are less likely to report positive destinations than their non-care experienced peers. This is likely to be related to looked after young people leaving school at younger ages, as well as being more likely to have poor housing and poor emotional wellbeing all of which have an impact of education and employment. However, Table 7 does not report a starkly low % for positive destinations. Anecdotally, Social Workers within East Lothian Council believe the % of young people in positive destinations to be lower than the figure below. We believe that this is due to the fact that the survey isn’t repeated 1 year after a young person has left school. While care experienced young people might have a positive destination in the initial few months of leaving school, they are less likely to have stability in other aspects of their lives, as mentioned above, which might lead to dramatically lower % remaining in positive destinations, 1-2 years after school.

<b>Table 7: Post-school destinations of looked after children</b>			
	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Number of Children	9	14	23
% in positive destination (initial survey)	78%	86%	96%
% in positive destination (follow up)	89%	86%	74%

Source: Scottish Government, 2020<sup>43</sup>

## Primary & Secondary School

Like anyone, if other things are happening within your personal life it can be hard to motivate yourself to focus on things that may seem less important. For some young people school can feel like ‘too much’ when they have caring responsibilities or chaotic family homes. For others, school can be a sanctuary where structure, routine and caring adults can provide a sense of purpose and belonging.

*“I felt like being at home was more important because it meant I could look after my mum.”*

CEYP – East Lothian

<sup>42</sup>East Lothian Council (2020/21) Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan

<sup>43</sup> Scottish Government, [Education Outcomes of Scotland’s Looked After Children](#) – This data includes children and young people from East Lothian who are looked after out of area. It does not include children and young people who are looked after in East Lothian but are from another local authority.

East Lothian Council recruited its first Virtual Head Teacher for Care Experienced Young People in 2019. The role is funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund for two years and gives direct support to CEYP in all primary and secondary schools in East Lothian. The Education Team's Progress and Improvement Plan aims to: *Close the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children.* The Plan recognises that CEYP are more at risk of not achieving their full potential in education and are more likely to leave school at the age of 16.

The way a child or young person is treated at school impacts massively on what they feel able to achieve. It is essential that Teachers, Social Workers and Support Staff have high expectations of all of our young people – regardless of their background. Lowering our expectations because a young person is care experienced, can be detrimental to their wellbeing and self-confidence.

It is important for professionals such as teachers to recognise past trauma in a young child's life which can affect their ability to stay motivated and build relationships with adults. Adults must also find the balance between supporting young people by recognising their current situation, whilst making sure they do not identify the young person as 'different' to their peers. The current stigma attached around being Care Experienced for Young People can mean young people are treated differently from their peers.

*"There was one teacher he was lovely and would always support me when I was taken out of class, it was really good and I enjoyed that, but I just could not manage a mainstream school. Like looking back I am glad I went to residential because I wouldn't have had any exam results."*

CEYP – East Lothian

*"Someone had said to me that they were shocked I was in school because I was such a good student. Well I was told in school that I was going to fail all my exams and I passed them all."*

CEYP – East Lothian

*"That was honestly the worst thing. Especially since it was not needed. They were LAC meetings and they were every 6 months. Imagine if they said something that really upset me and I had to go back but what if someone didn't show their emotions or it came to me later? And then you'd get all the questions and people are so nosy. And you'd say nothing but then I'd start thinking about it and get all embarrassed, you know. It makes you feel different, it like...you're just different to everyone else."*

CEYP – East Lothian

## Further Education and Employment

When speaking to those who support young people with finding employment and higher education, many professionals expressed the importance of ensuring that other core factors within that individual's life are stable before they can be fully engage with a job or education.

It was recognised that although young people want to engage with further and higher education, at times they have lacked the financial stability to do so. A significant gap was identified between young people starting college and receiving their Care Experienced Bursary. This meant that young people were not starting college with basic resources which would help them succeed. Through the Scottish Attainment Fund any CEYP can apply for up to £500 to purchase something which would benefit their education. This was granted to 40 young people in 2019, a high percentage of the money was spent on IT resources to help individuals with college work and school homework. This funding has been positive, especially during COVID as it has allowed people to stay engaged with education.

## **Education and Belonging**

Education is especially important for CEYP, to gain a sense of belonging with a friendship group, as well as building positive relationships with trusted adults. It can be difficult to maintain stability in education if there is instability in a child's care setting or home environment. This is where the Virtual Head Teacher role comes in.

A positive spend from East Lothian Council, which really helped a young person make positive connections and gave a sense of belonging within a group, was being able to put money into a biking course. A CEYP had faced multiple breakdowns in care which resulted in him disengaging with education and struggling to make friends. As a result of this, Education and Children's Services used their resources creatively, enrolling the young person in biking course with 5 other children in the local area. This allowed the young person to potentially avoid another care setting breakdown, build friendships with young people his age, and enjoy an activity. The hope is that by allowing him to continue his education at school, but also being able to support him to get involved in something positive outside of school, this will help him to build friendships based on mutual experiences and trust.

Another example of innovative use of money is the work with Heavy Sound, an organisation who run programmes for young people who have faced trauma and barriers to education. They run a range of different projects which allow young people to get involved in music, hairdressing and offer the opportunity to complete courses with the Open University. East Lothian Council hope to continue to work with Heavy Sound, helping their courses to achieve SQA accreditation.

It is important for those working with young people in an education setting to understand the right of the child to help them thrive and achieve. The Promise has highlighted how valuable it would be to have a mentor figure in a young person's life to help achieve this. GIRFEC supports families which helps young people achieve and reach their full potential by giving the right help at the right time, we must continue to our young people this support through other ways to ensure they feel supported to realise their own potential.<sup>44</sup> Evidence has shown that mentoring a young person who is care experienced can create a strong relationship between teachers and pupils and will enhance education attainment and engagement.

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<sup>44</sup>Scottish Government (2015) *Getting it Right for Every Child*

## Employment

East Lothian Works, in partnership with Skills Development Scotland, have a wide variety of services and opportunities that care experienced young people can access. Including working 1-1 with individuals to support them in finding employment and/or gaining the relevant experience and skills to support them in their steps to employment. East Lothian Works currently deliver a work-based learning qualification in the final years of High School, known as Foundation Apprenticeships at SCQF Level 6. This includes the chance for young people still within full time secondary education to embark on an apprenticeship as part of their school curriculum. It provides them with the opportunity to work with local employers, complete theoretical learning and gain direct experience of what it is like to work in industry. This builds a variety of transferable skills required to progress within the working world. The Foundation Apprenticeship further supports the bridge between education and employment over a 2 year academic period. This ensures young people are prepared to enter the world of work and are provided with the support they require to get them ready for future full-time employment or to progress into training, college or university.

East Lothian Work's *Steps 2 Employment* service is for people who are not yet ready or able to access the world of work. Using a person-centred approach, participants are offered 1-1 support where they are encouraged to develop skills around their interests and are given support to identify areas which make it difficult to move into work or training. Finding a meaningful package of activity which is tailor-made to help participants engage, enjoy and experience success, is key in building the confidence to work on more complex difficulties. This service is funded by the Scottish Government and guidelines suggest the support should be for 6 months, however, there is recognition that relationships and trust, which are key, can take longer. As a result, East Lothian Works offers an early intervention of 6 months as well as a further 6 months of aftercare. Each participant creates an action plan, with support.

## SPOTLIGHT ON: New Opportunities

In August 2021, East Lothian Works will be launching a new project in partnership with Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh Napier University and Santander. *Mission Ambition* is a project which aims to raise the aspiration and attainment of young people who may face barriers to accessing Higher Education and other opportunities. To be eligible to take part in the project, a young person must meet at least one of the following criteria:

*Has shown academic achievement based on standardised assessment tests,  
First generation in the family to go to University,*

*In receipt of free school  
meals, In care or spent time in  
care, Young carer, or*

*Have experience of other mitigating circumstances*

An initial pilot of the project will work with 15 pupils in P6 from the Prestonpans area. Using a holistic approach and working collaboratively with schools and college representatives, the students will be supported throughout their schooling in a comprehensive programme. The project will look to include parents/carers in the activities as it is vital they are able to support the young people.

Mission Ambition will support young people to reach a positive destination once they leave school, whether that be university, college, employment, further training, or apprenticeships.

## Summary

All Council Services have a duty to support CEYP through Education to help them achieve and attain qualifications for employment and a stable future.

It is vital for adults supporting CEYP through education to recognise that the child will have faced some level of trauma in their early life which they take with them into adulthood. This means at times they may find it difficult to stay motivated in education and employment, as well as struggling to building relationships with adults and peers.

It is important for all council services to know and fully understand the rights CEYP to support them correctly and help them thrive.

Children and young people who are looked after at home can find it more challenging to engage with Education/Employment.

CEYP can achieve and have a bright future with the right interventions. Having low expectations of what they can achieve can be extremely damaging to both their wellbeing and their ability to want to engage in education/employment.

Children and young people must also have stability in other elements of their life, such as good mental health and housing, for them to be successful in education and finding employment.

Children and young people want to engage with both education and employment, however financial instability is a barrier preventing them from doing so. Attainment Funds and Bursaries should continue to ensure young people are supported financially to help them achieve.

Those supporting young people into employment should use a person-centred approach and find out what it is the young person's interests and skills are.

There are a range of new funding opportunities from the UK Government to support young people into employment. As these come into place, it is imperative that Children's Services and East Lothian Works work in partnership to ensure that care experienced children and young people can access these programs.



# Chapter 6: Mental Health & Wellbeing

*Scotland must ensure that timely, trauma informed and thoughtful support therapies act as a cushion to all those that require it, regardless of diagnosis.*

## The Promise



This chapter will look at a range of aspects of CEYPs lives which may impact on their mental health and wellbeing. These have been identified through conversations with young people, and the Champions Board session on access to Mental Health Services. Care Experienced Young People are more at risk of being diagnosed with a mental illness such as depression or anxiety.

## Mental Health and Mental ill Health

*“... A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community.”<sup>45</sup>*

The same as having physical health, we all have mental health. Depending on life events, our mental health can go up and down. If we have poor mental health for a sustained period of time with little to no support, this may result in mental ill health. The current system for receiving mental health support depends largely on a system of medicalising experiences and receiving an official diagnosis. In this chapter we will seek to address the need for mental health support and intervention prior to the need for a diagnosis – where this is deemed appropriate.

Different experiences and people within our life contribute positively to our mental health. For example, stability and feelings of security. When an individual is experiencing a lack of stability and security this can cause feelings of stress and worry. If this individual is not supported early on their mental health will worsen over a short period of time and they may experience mental ill health.

Care experienced children and young people have consistently been found to have much higher rates of mental health difficulties than the general population, including a significant proportion who have more than one condition.<sup>46</sup> Evidence shows those experiencing poor health due to health inequality, also experience poorer outcomes across their life in other areas. For example, they are more likely to experience homelessness.<sup>47</sup>

Individuals who experience adverse childhood experiences such as physical, mental, or sexual abuse are more likely to experience poor mental health

*“I do not think I paid attention to how much it affected my mental health until I was older, and I could understand it a bit more.”*

CEYP – East Lothian

<sup>45</sup> World Health Organisation (2018) *Mental Health: Strengthening our Response*, website information

<sup>46</sup> Sanders, Robert (2020) *Care Experienced Children and Young People’s Mental Health*, IRISS

<sup>47</sup> Williams, Ethan (2020) *What are health inequalities?*, The Kings Fund

later in life.<sup>48</sup> Prior to being looked after by the Local Authority, young people can already be suffering from poor mental health and the transition from being looked after at home to then being placed into the care system can exacerbate poor mental health. When a young person's life needs intervention from Social Work, they should receive a full health assessment which looks to identify if they are experiencing poor mental health so that early intervention can support that young person throughout their transition and time spent in care.

## Early Intervention

We need to ensure that from a young age, care experienced young people are provided with a parental role who can show them love and care. When children are exposed to traumatic experiences, their brain adapts in a way which helps them to cope. For example, a child may lash out at an adult or other young person when they are stressed or frustrated and feel unable to understand or regulate their emotions or reactions. We should not wait until reactions such as this are present to work with young people but recognise that those who have experienced significant trauma in their life would benefit from low level intervention from the start, where an adult can then identify if the young person needs a higher level of support for mental health.

In recognition of the importance of Early Intervention in 2020, East Lothian Council was granted £300,000 by the Scottish Government, to produce and develop *an Education Service Plan for Mental Health and Wellbeing for Children's Services*. Three different priorities are identified in the Plan;

1. Early mental health intervention through Education Services. Working with both the parents and their children who have been flagged by the school, who seem to be struggling with their mental wellbeing and may find it difficult to engage with different services such as the GP due to fear that it may affect keeping their families together.
2. Workforce Development where staff will be supported to work with both children and families and can understand those in need. This will be done through offering different levels of training e.g. Trauma Informed Training to build a strong workforce with clear understanding provides high level of support needed for both children and their families.
3. Develop a Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework.

In early September 2020, six new Mental Health Youth Workers were recruited to work on a new project, *East Lothian Wellbeing Academy*. The East Lothian Wellbeing Academy will be a joint project delivered collaboratively between the East Lothian Educational Psychology Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service. The aim of the project is to improve school-based capacity to deliver evidence-based preventative supports and early intervention in relation to emotional health and

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<sup>48</sup>Institute of Health Equity (2015) *The impact of adverse experiences in the home on the health of children and young people, and inequalities in prevalence and effects*.

wellbeing. This is an exciting new project for our schools in hope that early intervention will prevent individuals from experiencing poor mental wellbeing and ill health.

## Accessing Support and Waiting Lists

We know that from speaking to both young people and professionals, being placed on a waiting list when a young person has been referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) can worsen young people's mental health. One young person who shared their experiences of the CAMHS service said they were put on the waiting list and not seen by a therapist for at least 6 months. Six months for a person who is suffering from poor mental health can be extremely detrimental. Often there is no support given in the gap between

assessment and receiving the service. Low level intervention and support must be offered to a young person and their family/carers while they are waiting to be seen by a CAMHS therapist.

Young people may find it difficult to consistently engage with support services due to a range of factors in their lives. Young people must not be rejected from receiving any more support or be placed back on a waiting list if they 'fail to engage'. Services must work collaboratively to deliver the mental health support in the most beneficial and engaging way for the young person.

There is a close link between poor mental health and substance misuse. If an individual is suffering from poor mental health and are struggling to manage, they may be more likely to turn to drugs and alcohol as a

coping mechanism. Young people in East Lothian can self-refer (or be referred by a trusted adult) to *Midlothian Young Peoples Advice Service (MYPAS)*. MYPAS can provide open-ended 1:1 and group work support. Importantly MYPAS welcome young people at all stages of their relationship with drugs and alcohol and "*it doesn't need to be out of control to receive support*". They also welcome the young person to talk about other aspects of their life which may be concerning them, not just drugs or alcohol. MYPAS also offer LGBT+ support either through a weekly social group and/or through 1:1 support.

## Age-led Support

There seems to be gap in mental health support for young people aged between 18 and 26. CAMHS has been made available for young people who are care experienced up until the age of 26, unlike those who are not care experienced who would usually be transferred to adult services once they turn 18. This means that Care Experienced Young People are potentially

*"Some young people struggled to attend meetings due to other priorities and their appointments would be rescheduled 6 weeks later, if this happened a few times, their referral would be rejected and they would have to go back on the waiting list if they wanted to see another therapist and receive support."*

Champions Board Session -  
2020

receiving therapy not suited for their age. This was made more evident when speaking to young people about their experiences of CAMHS, some emphasised the fact that the work that was being done with them was aimed at a younger age group, was standardised and not unique to the young person's experiences. It is essential that young people can exercise their rights to adequate and timely healthcare when they need it most.

## Maintaining Relationships

We must try to keep brothers and sisters together where it is possible and in their best interests. Legislation<sup>49</sup> states that brothers and sisters have the right to be placed together. For looked after young people, it can be extremely damaging to have to separate from not only their parents but also their brothers and sisters. The relationships young people have with their siblings is sometimes the only relationship where they feel safe, loved and like they belong. Where foster carers are unable to provide a home for more than one or two young people from one family, it should be considered vital that relationships are maintained.

For children and young people in foster care, living away from their biological brothers and sisters, a conflict might occur within the young person who may be trying to understand where they now sit within their 'new family' and how that affects their relationship with their birth family. In this respect, a young person

might feel conflicted as to where they *belong*. A young person must be supported to feel like they can belong in both settings, if that is what they want. They must be supported to minimise feelings of guilt, especially where different members of their family are experiencing care in different ways. Where young people have been informal carers for brothers/sisters or parents, services must recognise that young people may need increased support to settle and

*"We did have family contact every 6 weeks – which is a long time! It would be in a restaurant. Then they (social work) would forget to reschedule it or someone was busy so it didn't go ahead. It died down after a while, and it definitely wasn't out of choice, it died down because people just couldn't find dates and things like that. I missed them, but I still managed to see them. My foster mum made it happen."*

CEYP – East Lothian

*"I probably did feel like a weight lifted off my shoulders when I didn't need to care for them. It was quite stressful, the episodes I can remember for someone so young. I still like look at them as wee babies, even though they're 11 and 14. They're wee babies to me, they are so precious to me. And then... It was quite strange though because you were living with your own brothers and sisters, and then you've got your foster brother and sisters, and then you're still seeing your own family. I felt like I couldn't speak about my foster sister with my own sister."*

CEYP – East Lothian

<sup>49</sup> Children (Scotland) Act 2020: briefing, <https://cypcs.org.uk/positions/sibling-contact/>

not feel like they have a 'duty' to continue their caring role, especially when it is not in their best interests.

## Formal Meetings

Throughout a young person's time in care, reviews and hearings take place – all of which young people have the right to attend. Meetings where professionals are discussing personal information can feel incredibly daunting to a young person, especially where important decisions will be made. Discussions in these spaces tend to involve decisions around long term plans based around how a young person is coping at that time. A young person has the option of whether they would like to attend meetings such as LAAC reviews and hearings. They also receive information prior to the meetings. These meetings should be designed for and around the young person, ensuring at all times they are comfortable and that attending the meetings minimise stress and trauma as far as possible.

*"The life story reports ...they would come in the post a few days before a meeting. It was thick and filled with different orders and acronyms. All it had was negative experiences from my childhood. Looking back, this was not right to give a 13-year-old, such a traumatic report with no support. Every time it came through the stories were the same but it never got easier. I felt suffocated by these traumatic stories, that weren't even stories. They were my life."*

CEYP – East Lothian

Pre-meeting reports which are given to young people, can include extensive detail around a young person's pre-care life. It is important to assess whether a young person feels ready to hear about this and what potential supports can be put in place prior, during and after reading reports. The reports should also be presented in plain English.

We heard experiences from young people who have not attended important meetings because they feel as though as if they are going to be told off and humiliated in front of a number of people. This means that their voice is not represented at the meeting, and they are unable to speak up for themselves and influence decisions. It can be challenging for any

young person sitting in a meeting being the only young person surrounded by adults, these meetings should be person-centred and we should make sure difficult conversations around a young person's behaviour are not demeaning.

Young people should be offered independent advocacy in meetings. The Children's Hearings advocacy service has been a positive development for young people attending hearings to support them in meetings and to have a second voice representing them through difficult conversations<sup>50</sup>. Often meetings focus on the behaviour of the young person and the outcomes they are or are not meeting. It is vital that professionals and services are also held

50 <https://www.hearings-advocacy.com/about-advocacy/>

to account at these meetings too i.e. what supports have the services put in place and what systems barriers have held back any progress. We must also ensure that support is offered to all young people post-meeting, this should be their choice and they should decide who provides this.

East Lothian Council and the Children's Hearings System have been carrying out ongoing research with CEYP from the Champions Board to find out how to improve LAAC Reviews and Hearings. So far in East Lothian, the Champions Board have influenced change within the set-up of the Hearing Centre, this included the removal of the 'big table in the middle'. Now, when attending meetings, chairs are arranged in a circle. This minimises the power dynamics. Research is still ongoing and ELC and a few Champions will be interviewing new panel members for the Children's Hearing Panel. We also hope to see a shift in the language used in hearings and LAAC reviews. This would make a huge difference for young people who find it difficult to know what decisions are being made about their life, impacting on their ability to participate fully in discussions.

## Isolation

Feelings of isolation and loneliness can be common for young people, in all care settings but even more so when they are moving into own tenancy. Isolation can impact an individual's mental health massively where they may also find it difficult to reach out for help when they are struggling mentally. For young people who have moved back to East Lothian from an out of area care setting, they may not have the same supports and connections that other young people can rely on. It is vital that these young people are supported to develop trusted and meaningful relationships with others when they return.

Examples of ways to support this, can be through exercise or gym memberships or encouraging them to join groups where they share a common interest or hobbies. Often, taking part in these types of activities come at a financial cost. Supporting all young people to pursue their interests, make friends and feel part of their community should be seen as essential to their wellbeing. Importantly, there is a tendency to group care experienced young people together, as one homogenous group. CEYP must be supported to make connections, friendships and relationships with the wider community and not just with their CEYP peers. Not supporting a young person who is at risk of feeling isolated and lonely, may risk their ability to feel like they can cope in their own tenancy.

A young person who is living independently and is experiencing feelings of isolation and loneliness may be more likely to engage in problematic behaviour. Or they will be more likely to avoid staying in their home. This could result in them staying with friends or in unsuitable places, this also means that they would struggle to make their house a home if they are not staying there often.

*"I think the negatives were that I was quite scared of not having the support here."*

CEYP – East Lothian





## Summary

All council services and external mental health support services have a duty to identify whether children and young people moving into the care system are experiencing levels of poor mental health. Early mental health support must be timely, consistent and person-centred.

Council Services must recognise delays in support from those with low levels of poor mental wellbeing will be more likely to result in mental ill health, the council must also recognise the differences between poor mental wellbeing and mental ill health.

Children and Young People who suffer from poor mental health also face challenges in other elements of their life such as Education, Employment and Housing. There is a strong link between mental ill health, housing, and homelessness.

Young people are more than likely already experiencing poor mental wellbeing before social work involvement and moving into the care system. The stresses of being taken away from their family home and adapting to a new way of living can exacerbate a young person's mental ill health.

Placing a child or young person on a waiting list after recognising they are experiencing poor mental health is extremely distressing and must be avoided.

There is a lack of appropriate mental health support for Care Experienced adults who are aged between 18-26. For individuals with care experience, CAMHS has been made available for up to the age of 26, however this means support provided to older individuals is aimed more at younger people and is standardised.

Relationships with brothers and sisters enables those with care experience to feel safe, loved and like they belong. Brothers and sisters should not be separated unless there is a risk. Where this is not possible, and it is safe to do so maintaining these relationships should be considered a priority for a young person.

We must recognise care experienced young people may feel conflicted as to where they belong when living with a new family. Children and young people must be supported to help them understand they can belong within both families.

Meetings such as Looked After and Accommodated Children's (LAAC) reviews and Hearings can be extremely daunting for any young person who chooses to attend. Decisions which take place in these meetings must be influenced by the young person's voice, even when they are not in attendance.

All children and young people should be supported to access independent advocacy services if they want that form of support, to help them to participate in formal meetings and decision-making processes.

Pre-meeting reports which are sent out to young people before meetings can be complex and difficult to read. There is risk of re-traumatising the young person when sending out these reports. Children and young people who choose to read these reports should be supported whilst doing so and after.

Young adults who are living in their own tenancy may feel isolated at times. Isolation can lead to further and more complex mental health issues if they are not supported. Support for isolation may look like helping them access a gym membership or hobbies they have interest in.

# Recommendations

Below are a series of high-level recommendations. It is intended that these recommendations are considered by leads identified below through the East Lothian Corporate Parenting Board and the Transformation of Children’s Services Program. All ‘leads’ should align the recommendations with their own service and strategic plans, ensuring the recommendations are broken down so that they are outcome focused, achievable and actionable. The recommendations have been divided to reflect the four priority outcomes set out at the beginning of the Review.

<b>Priority Outcome 1: All Looked After children and young people from East Lothian live in a stable home where they feel like they belong, with strong relationships based on love and trust.</b>		
	<b>Action/Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1.1	Tackle the stigma around social work involvement. To ensure we have a system where families can access help and support without the fear that their children will be removed from the family home.	East Lothian Council
1.2	Support for both Kinship Carers and Foster Carers to prevent placement breakdown. This could be developed and supported through training for carers, respite and accessing conflict resolution and mediation services.	Children’s Services
1.3	Increased support for Kinship Carers, recognising that Carers may have also experienced a level of trauma and disturbance.	Children’s Services
1.4	Residential staff to feel more supported to build closer relationships with young people in their care. This should involve more 1:1 outings between staff and young people, so that trusted relationships can be built.	Children’s Services
1.5	Young People living in residential homes should be supported and guided by residential staff to meet outcomes to help build skills for living i.e. planning and cooking meals.	Children’s Services
1.6	Study spaces should be considered essential when planning future residential home settings.	Children’s Services Housing Strategy and Development

1.7	Consistency of opportunities and support when young people enter Secure Care and when they leave e.g. holistic therapy, tutoring, contact with trusted adult.	Children's Services Health and Social Care Partnership
1.8	Young people leaving Secure Care must have a clear Exit Plan, worked on from day 1 to ensure that they are not returning to the same environment they had left.	Children's Services
1.9	Accessible information for parents and families on ways that East Lothian Council can support them. E.g. Grants for school uniforms.	East Lothian Council
1.10	All children and young people are supported to access their rights and use their voice to maintain relationships with people and places that are important to them, through the continued provision of independent advocacy.	East Lothian Council

<b>Priority Outcome 2: Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, and all Care Leavers from East Lothian experience planned transitions to homes where they feel safe and secure. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, good quality, rapid access emergency accommodation will ensure efficient and effective support.</b>		
	<b>Action/Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead</b>
2.1	Develop homelessness prevention and homelessness response pathways / protocols aligned with the new Prevention Duty, providing clarity on homelessness prevention / housing options; statutory homeless assessments and access to appropriate accommodation.	Children's Services Housing Strategy and Development Housing Options Team Community Housing Service Development
2.2	All young people are supported to understand their rights and responsibilities in the access to good quality housing in East Lothian, through the provision of advice, information and independent advocacy.	East Lothian Council
2.3	Produce a long-term strategic plan for the provision of housing (including emergency) for care experienced young people which includes different models of housing to allow a	Children's Services Housing Strategy and Development Housing Options Team

	young person greater flexibility when transitioning between residential/secure care placements and their first home.	
2.4	All Care Experienced Young People should have a Personal Housing Plan. This will provide a meaningful tool in which the Housing Officer and young person can identify areas they'd like to gain skills in or identify potential risks to their tenancy i.e. financial management. This should be held between Social Work and Community Housing/Housing Options Team and reflect Pathway Plans.	Community Housing/Housing Options Children's Services
2.5	Continue to deliver affordable housing through-out the county and consider how care experienced young people can access other forms of affordable housing which give security of tenure.	Housing Strategy and Development
2.6	Agree remit of the newly named 'Home and Belonging' sub-group (previously My Place Strategic Working Group) of Corporate Parenting Steering Group to take forward the recommendations of this Strategy, specifically recommendation 2.1.	Children's Services Housing Strategy and Development
2.7	Explore opportunities available to co-produce a <i>Moving in Care Package</i> given to all young people prior to moving into their tenancy, this should include information about what they will need for moving in as well as general guidance such as knowing how to pay bills.	Champions Board Community Housing Service Development
2.8	Community Housing to investigate how to access alternative furniture for starter flats, specifically the couches which young people find institutional.	Community Housing Service Development
2.8	Mirror the new starter flat processes with other housing options. Including choice of decoration and help with providing young people with basic white goods and furniture.	Housing Strategy and Development Community Housing Service Development
2.10	All Council Services, Housing Support Providers and Housing Associations should take part in Trauma Informed Training Program delivered by NHS Education for Scotland, as a key priority.	Community Housing Service Development Housing Strategy and Development

2.11	Explore the possibility of funding to provide all care experienced young people (regardless of if it's their first tenancy or not) with household items to improve feelings of safety and warm i.e. carpet underlay and curtains.	Champions Board Housing Strategy and Development
2.12	Champions Board to continue developing a series of you tube videos on 'top tips' and 'what I wish I knew when moving into my new home'	Champions Board Community Housing Service Development
2.13	Explore the potential for the Champions Board to co-produce a Corporate Parenting Training Video specifically for staff in Housing, Property Maintenance, Safer Communities and Rent Teams. This will become part of the core training and teams should report yearly to the Corporate Parenting Steering Group the numbers of new staff completing the training video.	Champions Board Housing Strategy and Development Community Housing Service Development

<b>Priority Outcome 3: All Care Experienced Young People from East Lothian are supported to access and exceed in education, training and employment, which is tailored around their needs, skills and interests.</b>		
	<b>Action/Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead</b>
3.1	Develop child-centred assessments for children and young people who are looked after at home. This should focus on their home environment and ensure that they have a space where they can complete homework.	Children's Services Education Adults Wellbeing
3.2	Increase the educational support for children who are looked after at home.	Education Children's Services
3.3	Increase the support given to adults whose children are looked after at home. This might involve giving them the skills to engage with their children in literacy and numeracy.	Adults Wellbeing East Lothian Works

3.4	Investigate the roll out of a mentoring program to be offered to all care experienced young people at various stages of their life.	Children's Services East Lothian Champions Board
3.5	Work closely with East Lothian Works as they roll out a range of employment and education supports across East Lothian to ensure that Care Experienced Young People can access opportunities.	Children's Services East Lothian Works
3.6	All employment opportunities advertised in East Lothian should have an option for CEYP to access support and guidance on; how to write a job application and prepare for interviews. Aftercare support should also be provided where young people can receive feedback in a supportive environment.	East Lothian Works East Lothian Champions Board
3.7	Ensure that education plans are in place when a young person enters and leaves Secure Care.	Children's Services Education
3.8	Report on positive destinations of Care Experienced Young People 1-2 years after they leave school.	Children's Services Education
3.9	All children and young people are supported to access their right to education in a nurturing environment which is safe and free from bullying, where they are encouraged to use their voices through the provision of independent advocacy.	East Lothian Council

**Priority Outcome 4: Mental wellbeing is prioritised at all stages of care experienced children and young people's lives, and access to support for mental ill health is timely and appropriate.**

	<b>Action/Recommendation</b>	<b>Lead</b>
4.1	Create a low level intervention for open ended mental health support for all care experienced young people who need it.	Health and Social Care Partnership Children's Services
4.2	Ensure care experienced young people and their family/carers can access mental health support while waiting on more intensive mental health support, where needed.	Health and Social Care Partnership Children's Services

4.3	Ensure that access to mental health support and services is needs-led rather than age-led.	Health and Social Care Partnership Children's Services
4.4	Develop a resource which care experience young people can access easily to help them find the language to speak about mental health, gain confidence in accessing help and improve awareness of the services in East Lothian	Health and Social Care Partnership Children's Services
4.5	Training for Foster Carers to ensure they can support children and young people in their care to maintain good relationships with their biological family if this is their choice.	Children's Services
4.6	All children and young people who have a mental health issue, learning disability or autism can exercise their legal right to independent advocacy within healthcare settings.	East Lothian Council Health and Social Care Partnership
4.7	All children and young people are encouraged to use their voice, with the help of independent advocacy where required, to ensure that their views and opinions are respected, valued and acted upon.	East Lothian Council

## **HOME & BELONGING**

# **BEING CARE EXPERIENCED IN EAST LoTHIAN** *By Amy Owens*

## **APPENDICES**

### **A-F**



## APPENDIX A: CONTRIBUTIONS

Name	Job Title	Organisation/Department
<b>Who Cares? Scotland</b>		
Lucy Hughes	Policy Officer	Who Cares? Scotland Policy Team
Jordan Croan	South East Manager	Who Cares? Scotland Line Manager South East Team
Kari- Ann	Development Officer: Community Development and EL Champions Board	Who Cares? Scotland Influencing and Development Officer
Sophie	Advocacy & Participation Worker	Who Cares? Scotland Advocacy Worker South East Team
Brian	Director of Localities, HR & Workforce Development	Who Cares? Scotland SMT
Leah Hay	Participation Assistant	Who Cares? Scotland Participation
Chloe Scott	Participation Assistant	Who Cares? Scotland Participation
<b>East Lothian Council</b>		
Sheila Laing	Virtual Head Teacher for CEYP (ELC)	Education
Lynne Binnie	Lead Educational Psychologist	Education
Emma Clater	Service Manager – Children and Young People Community Resources	Children’s Services
Gerry Chapman	Team Leader - 15+ Team	Children’s Services
Colin McCondichie	Senior Practitioner- 15+ Team	Children’s Services
Louise Mackie	Senior Practitioner - 15+ Team	Children’s Services
Sinead Watson	Social Worker – 15+ Team	Children’s Services
Anne Landsburgh	Family Support Worker	Children’s Services
Richard Campbell	Service Improvement Manager	Children’s Services
Ann Hume	Co-ordinator	Children’s Services
Alison Hood	Education and Employment Manager	East Lothian Works
Katie Higgins	Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce Co-Ordinator	East Lothian Works
Keri Johnston	Employability Intervention Officer	East Lothian Works
Alison Keith	Accommodation Officer	Housing Options Team
Wendy McGuire	Service Manager - Strategy and Development	Housing Strategy and Development
Rebecca Pringle	Senior Strategy Officer	Housing Strategy and Development
James Coutts	Service Manager – Community Housing and Homelessness	Community Housing
Steph Irvine	Team Manager - Service Development & Support	Community Housing
Nicky Sandford	Team Manager – Housing Options	Community Housing
<b>Anonymous Contributions</b>		
T	Kinship Carer	
L	Care Experienced Young Person	
C	Care Experienced Young Person	

A	Care Experienced Young People	
J	Care Experienced Young Person	
L	Care Experienced Young Person	

<b>Third Sector and Housing Providers</b>		
Margo Irvine	East Lothian Manager	Blue Triangle – North High Street
Claire Bauld	Project Manager	Blue Triangle - Millhill
Robert Inglis	Locality Service Manager	New Horizon, Action for Children
Emma Scott	Work Coach	Skills Development Scotland
Greg Hiddleston	National Team Leader	Skills Development Scotland
Emma Scarcliffe	CEO	The Bridges Project
Louise Morrison	Head of Education	The Good Shepherd Centre
Alison Gough	Director	
Robert Clark	Head of Care	

## APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Introduction

1. How long have you been living in your flat/house for?
2. How do you feel about living on your own?
  - Do you feel having someone else to live with would have made things easier or more challenging? Why?
  - What has been the positives and negatives of having your own home?
3. What makes your house a home?
  - Does your house feel like home to you? If so who or what has been done to make it feel like a home?
  - What do you feel is important to make a house feel like a home?
4. How did you feel when moving into your house?
  - Did it feel like home immediately? If so, why? What made it feel homely?

### Location & Connection

5. Was there ever a time where you felt like you did not have a home? - Where were you?
  - What sort of housing were you in?
  - What do you think made you feel like that?
6. Before you lived in your current home, how many houses have you stayed in? - Did you consider all of these a 'home'? Please explain
7. Have you always lived in the same town?
  - (Yes) Do you think that makes you feel more like you belong or that you agree at home more than if you had moved? Why?
  - (No) Do you think it matters that you have not always lived in the same town or county?
    - o Did each place to lived feel like home to you?
    - o Have you always felt like you belonged wherever you have

### lived? Family and Friends

8. No matter where you have lived, have you always had the opportunity to stay in contact with friends and family (where you have wanted to)?
  - a. Was this easy or hard? Can you explain?
9. Have you been placed in a home where you have had to separate from your siblings?
  - (Yes) Did this impact the feeling of home for you? If so, why?
  - Do you think that separating siblings is okay as long as contact is put in place by the authority?
10. Have you ever felt that you belonged within another family – other than the one you were living with?
  - (Yes) How did this make you feel?

- (Yes) Did this change over time? What contributed to that change?

### Education

11. Have you ever had to move school due to being placed out with the catchment area?
  - a. What was this like? How did it affect you?
  - b. Did you feel like you were part of the new school?
  - c. Friends are such an important of a young people's sense of belonging – was this affected at all?
12. Was there ever a time where you had to move to a new house/location and stay in the same school?
  - a. What was this like?
  - b. Did you identify as Care Experienced to your friends/peers?
  - (yes) did this make seeing friends difficult as you had to go through a different process in order to see them? (sleepovers were made difficult more than anything).
  - (no) why?
13. Did you ever have meetings with social workers etc in school?
  - Explain how this made you feel? Did it make you feel different to your peers and affect your feeling of belonging?
14. In terms of support, do you feel like the support from teachers was the right amount when transitioning to a new school or house?
  - (yes) what sort of things did the teacher or school do?
  - (No) Why do you think this? Can you give me any examples of a time where you felt like you lacked support from a teacher in school? How did this contribute to your feelings of belonging in that space?

### Mental Health

15. Moving houses, living away from family and trying to fit in with new families are all tough challenges for an adult never mind a child or young person.
  - a. How did this affect your mental health growing up?
  - b. Does it affect your mental health today?
  - c. How did it affect your physical health growing up (access to healthy food, access to exercise, use of drugs or alcohol, smoking, sex education)?
  - d. Does it affect your physical health today?
16. Have there been points in your life where your mental health has suffered more than others? What stages in your journey into independent living did you feel your mental health suffered most?
  - Why do you think this affected your mental wellbeing?
  - Do you think it was inevitable that your mental health would suffer, or could it have been prevented?

### Physical Health

17. Looking back at your previous homes, was there ever a time where you felt that the living conditions were extremely poor?
  - a. What were these poor conditions like?
  - b. Have you lived within a home where there are lots of people in such a small place?
  - c. During your time in these properties, how was your physical health?
  
18. Poor living conditions such as damp and mould can seriously affect an individual's physical health. If you have lived in poor conditions, did this affect your health in any way?
  
19. What was the support like throughout this time from the LA?
  - a. If you felt the support was not as it should be, does this now impact the way you engage and trust these services?
  
20. Do you think that experiencing living in a poor and run-down environment affects the way you motivate yourself to succeed in a tenancy?
  - a. What about other factors which may have been affected? Did this affect your pride and day to day motivation with other tasks?
  - b. What about for future homes? Does this negative experience affect your outlook on how your future homes will look and be treated?

### Conclusion

21. Do you have any advice on what can be done by services to improve the sense of home and belonging for other CEYP? What else can we learn from your personal experiences?
  
22. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we finish?

## APPENDIC C: FINDINGS FROM CORPORATE PARENTING EVENT

**Author: Amy Owens, Research and Link Worker – Who Cares? Scotland**

### Background

On Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020, East Lothian Champions Board organised a Corporate Parenting Consultation Event at the Brunton Hall. The purpose of this event was to gather evidence for the 2020 Corporate Parenting Plan. It was a fun and interactive event which involved Care Experienced Young People (CEYP), their social workers, family members, grandparents and foster carers. In total there were 60 CEYP in attendance.

Care Experienced Young People were invited to participate in an afternoon of activities designed to help get their views on certain areas which will feed into the Corporate Parenting Plan. It also allowed the young people to propose new focuses and push for change. Organisations who came along and ran a stall include:

- Enjoy Leisure
- Young Scot
- CAMHS
- Dads Work
- Skills Development Scotland
- In Control
- Police Scotland
- Move On
- Housing Strategy and Development (East Lothian Council)
- Education (East Lothian Council)
- East Lothian Champions Board

### Context

The Home and Belonging activity was organised and delivered by Rebecca Pringle (Housing Strategy Officer) and Amy Owens (Research and Link Worker, Who Cares? Scotland).

A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) was carried out by Housing Strategy and Development prior to the Consultation. The JSNA focused on the gaps in housing services and provision in East Lothian. To complement the JSNA, it was decided that we would focus on the concepts of 'home' and 'belonging'. This recognises that housing is more than bricks and mortar, and is impacted by a range of factors including friends, family and community.

The findings of the event will inform East Lothian's Corporate Parenting Plan and East Lothian's first Home and Belonging Review for Care Experience Young People. This will provide East Lothian Council and services with recommendations which will push for strategic, policy and protocol change within the care system. The children and young people were guided throughout each activity by Rebecca and Amy, and we worked closely with them to complete the tasks and expand on their input. As most



activities only provided brief context – It was important for Rebecca and Amy to ask questions for more context so we could have more of an understanding of the information they were giving.

### Build a Housing Officer

The aim of this activity was for children and young people to gain a basic awareness of what a Community Housing Officer does and to find out how council staff should interact with children, young people and their families. Words were printed for young people to pick from and to help guide young people. These included words such as caring, rude, friendly and going the extra mile. The children and young people also had the opportunity to draw their own housing officer using their own words or pictures which represented how they think a housing officer should be.



### Outcome

From this activity, we gathered a clear idea of how the young people would like to be treated by their Housing Officer. The young people used the words and wrote down their own words, these words included: Helpful, Time Efficient, Happy, Friendly, Understanding, Honest.

We heard stories from some of the young people about their links with Housing Officers and most of them had positive experiences which we were glad to hear. In order to keep these positive comments ongoing, we need to make sure that Housing Officers have a better understanding of Care Experience and the different complex needs they can have. 'Understanding of circumstances' was used by most of the young people which emphasises the importance of this.



## My Home is... My Home was.... My Home will be....

The next activity aimed to find out more around what Home and Belonging means to children and young people in different stages throughout their life whether they are living at home, in foster care, with grandparents or living independently. Young people were encouraged to graffiti each house with words they associated with each stage. There were three free standing house models which were labelled -



‘My Home was...’ We want all care experienced young people to feel like they belong, and that they are at home in

East Lothian. Lots of different things in our life affect how we feel, the house in which we live in is a big influence. Graffiti on the walls with words or pictures to describe how you felt living there.

‘My Home is...’ we know that some Care Experienced Young People live in lots of different houses. Think about how the house you live in now and the people you live with. What words or pictures can you use to describe what it is like and how you feel living there?

‘My Home will be...’ We want Care Experienced and Young People to think about their future house and home. Think about what you want for your future. What words or pictures can you use to describe what you want it to look and feel like?

### Outcome

This was our most popular activity and the one which gave us more of an insight into what impacts on children and young people having a sense of home and belonging.

Each house represented a different stage in a looked after child’s life.

The first ‘stage’ of the activity was based on ‘past home’ life for example children who were looked after at home and still living with parents as well as children who were previously looked after at home but now living in different accommodation for example, with foster carers, kinship carers or living in residential care. Some of the words we gathered from this included – ‘ok’, ‘confusing’, ‘disaster’, ‘broken furniture’, ‘noisy’ ‘crammed’, ‘unsafe’, ‘small’ and ‘messy’. Most of the feedback we received from this stage was negative and we could see ways in which these comments and words could affect the way a child may not feel as at home.

The second stage was focused on a child’s home life currently whether they were still living at home, living in foster care, in residential care or looked after by grandparents/aunts and uncles. Some of the words the young people wrote down were – ‘Happy house’, ‘new bed’, ‘tidy’, ‘busy and nice’, ‘I like my home it is safe’. We also gathered a few comments whereby young people still didn’t feel like their home was the best – ‘too far’, ‘don’t always want to be there’, ‘don’t get any space’, ‘not a house, a caravan’. The feedback we had received from this stage was a complete contrast from the first house and things that the young people said we could tell their home life was more positive and that the young people had more of a homely and loving feeling towards their home and the people they were living with.



We wanted to use the third stage as a way for our young people to think about the future and previous experiences of what they would like their future home to be like. This was a good way for the young people to be imaginative and allow us to get an idea of how to make these ideas a reality for these young people. Some of the words we came up with were 'comfortable', 'own space', 'more support', 'huge', 'place to learn music', 'big and warm', 'place where I get to make my own decisions', 'lots of pets', 'quiet'.

From the words and discussions that took place we gathered lots of information and got more of an idea of why a young person may not feel like their house is a home and ways in which council services and workers can help a young person feel more at home within their placement or house. A common theme which came up within why a young person feels like their house isn't a home is due to the size of the property. We know that if a family is living in a small house then this can affect multiple things within that child's life. For example, a young person stated that their previous house was small meaning that they had no privacy or space to have time to themselves. This links in with something another young person had said for what they would like their future home be a place to learn new music. Own space is extremely important for anyone and in particular young people when they want to just shut off for the night and listen to music or watch tv, in some cases when a house is cramped a young person may not have the chance to do things as simple as this as their house is too chaotic. Therefore, it is important for them to get that time to themselves and shut away from other things.

From the feedback given from the children and young people surrounding the size of the property, it is difficult to say whether the house was just small with multiple people living in it or if the house seemed small due to the chaotic environment.

If a young person is living in a property which is busy and chaotic then this can have an impact on education. For any child, a quiet and focused environment is vital for homework to be carried out and completed to their best ability. We know that Care Experienced Young People are more likely to struggle at school due to support levels at home and having other things on their mind. Therefore, if a child is living in a stressful and complex environment then this can impact educational attainment and opportunities. Similarly, if a child or young person is living in a house where it is deemed as busy and stressful then this can also impact mental and physical health which can create vulnerability and put them at a disadvantage.

Another common theme which was discussed within the 3 smaller activities was that young people felt like there were too many strict rules and at times this could be confusing and off putting. Comments made about strict rules within placements was mainly given by young adults who were living in supported accommodation. There are certain rules which young people care experienced or non-care experienced must have to keep themselves safe and prevent them from harm. Despite this, young people are allowed to fail, and, in most cases, they have a support network behind them to pick up these pieces and learn from these mistakes. Care Experienced Young People sometimes do not have that support behind them meaning these failures may lead to a worsening experience or barriers in moving forward. Rules within a placement can sometimes make the placement feel institutionalised and can worsen situations making the young person feel like they are restricted from doing normal life things.

## People and places that make me feel like I belong

In this activity, the children and young people were to think about what helps them feel like they belong. We printed out pictures of people such as parents, carers, pets, social workers and teachers, places such as school and home. These are places we felt that young people are encouraged to feel safe and loved. They also had the opportunity to draw their own people/places or even words which helps them feel happy and safe.



### Outcome

As this activity was very brief in its feedback, we made sure to follow up with questions on why the young person had chosen that specific person/place. The children and young people chose individuals such as grandparents, siblings, foster carers, friends and pets. There were also a few who explained that weekly groups and hobbies such as Scouts, Brownies, Champions Board and The Salvation Army made them feel like they belonged and gave them a sense of empowerment.

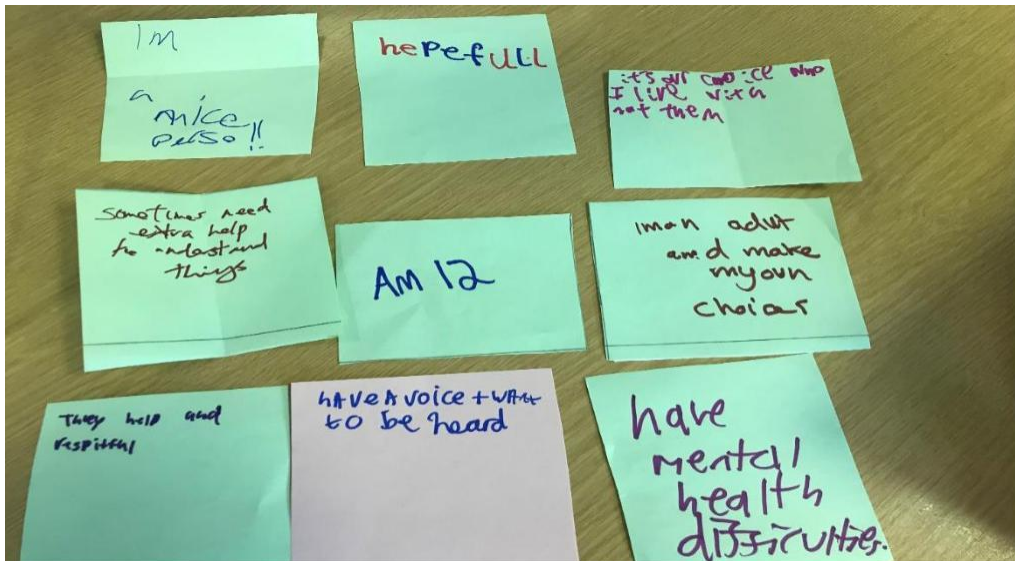
Having close contact with family especially grandparents can be extremely important for young people. In 2019, 45 of our looked after young people were living in Kinship Care. Siblings were another way in which young people felt like they belonged. We know that services try their best to keep family members together when possible, however we know there are many competing factors which can make it difficult to achieve. Many of the young people told us how they attended weekly groups such as Scouts, Champions Board, The Salvation Army. Hobbies are a way for young people to stay engaged with physical activity, a way to meet new people and gain experiences. Hobbies and activities give young people a sense of belonging as they can be empowered and gain confidence with other people and learn life skills like their non-care experienced young people. Pets are a part of the family and makes a house a home. For many of the young people, having a close relationship with their pets is just as important as having a close relationship with family members. Pets came up many of times in the 'My Home Will Be' activity whereby young people made it clear in the future their house would have pets. This relationship is important and makes our young people feel safe and at home as pets can give a sense of comfort to the young person by having that non-judgemental loving relationship. Pets can also be used in a therapeutic way by calming a person down in a bad situation.

### **Post Box – 'When I talk to council workers, I want them to remember that...'**

We placed a post box on the end of the journey which asked, 'When I talk to council workers, I want them to remember that...'. Children and young people were asked to finish the sentence. This was a free will activity for children and young people to use their past experiences of interactions with East Lothian Council.

Most of the comments above are linked to young people's voices being heard and more of a say over decisions. Voice is the most important way of engaging and our young people's voice matters, if their voices are not heard or taken seriously then young people will lose interest and trusted relationships will be broken down.

Being more supportive and helpful with the young people is also another comment which was made. Care Experienced Young People have complex needs and might need more intensive support compared to others.



The image above is comments from the young people which were put into the Post Box.

## APPENDIX D: LEGISLATION AND RESEARCH

Below are just some of the key national policy documents which informed this Review. These have been separated by Chapters, although many of the documents do not concentrate on a single theme. Where possible a hyperlink to the document is given.

### Legislation

Foster Children (Scotland) Act 1984

Housing (Scotland) Act 1987

Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003

Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

Homeless (Abolition of Priority Need Test) (Scotland) Order 2012

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020

### Chapter 3

Barnados, St Basils (2015) [Care Leavers Accommodation and Support Reporting Framework](#) Barnados.

Baker, C (2017) [Care Leavers view on their transition to adulthood](#), Coram Voice

CELCIS (2017) [The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2015: Briefing](#)

Comptroller (2015) [Care Leavers Transition to Adulthood](#), National Audit Office

Gill, A Daw, E (2017) *From Care to Where?* Centrepoint.

[Scottish Government, Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\), Scottish Government.](#)

Scottish Government (2014), [Guidance on Part 10 \(Aftercare\) of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014.](#)

[Scottish Government, Looked after children: Policy](#)

Scottish Government (2020) [Secure Care: Pathway and Standards](#) Scottish Government Publications

Scottish Government (2013) [Staying Put Scotland: Providing care leavers with connectedness and belonging](#)

Scottish Government (2004), [Supporting young people leaving care in Scotland: regulations and guidance](#), Scottish Government.

Sinclair, I, Wilson, K & Gibbs, I (2005) *Foster Placements: What happens to children in foster care?* London.

Social care institute for excellence (2004) *Placement Stability Key Findings* SCIE. Website information.

The Fostering Network (2015) *Teens moved too many times around care survey reveals* News archive Fostering Network.

Trainer, Morag (2017) [Poverty and Adverse Childhood Experiences](#), Children 1st

Wilson K, Petrie, S & Sinclair I (2003) A Kind of Loving: A Model of Effective Foster Care, *British Journal of Social Work*, 33:

## Chapter 4

Celsis (2015) [Housing Options and Care Leavers Improving Outcomes into Adulthood](#)

Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (2019) *Homelessness and Care Experience: Beyond the Headlines*

Communities and Local Government (2012) *Psychologically Informed Services for homeless people, Good Practice Guide*

East Lothian Council (2019) *Homelessness and Young People/Children Report* East Lothian Council.

East Lothian Council (2018) Local Housing Strategy

East Lothian Council (2017) and (2019 update) *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Care Leavers*

Fitzpatrick, S Mackie, P Wood, J (2019) *Homelessness Prevention in the UK, UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence*.

Halse (2018) Theories and Theorising of Belonging from C. Halse (Ed) *Interrogating Belonging for Young People in Schools*

Homeless Link (2012) *Reducing Evictions and Abandonment: A Guide to Developing a New Approach*

Scottish Government (2013) [Housing Options Protocols for Care Leavers](#) – Guidance for Corporate Parents: Improving housing and Accommodation Outcomes for Scotland's Care Leavers, Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2018) [Ending Homelessness Together: High Level Action Plan](#)

Scottish Government (2019) [Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway](#) Scottish Government.

Sutherland, M (2019) *Somewhere to call home Who Cares?* Scotland.

Stein. M (2012) *Young People Leaving Care – Supporting Pathways to adulthood*.

Watts B & Blenkinsopp J (2021) Valuing Control over One's Immediate Living Environment: How Homelessness Responses Corrode Capabilities, *Housing, Theory and Society*

Who Cares? Scotland (2017) *Young Radicals Homelessness Report* Who Cares? Scotland.

## Chapter 5

East Lothian Council (2020/21) *Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan*

Hennessy A, Connelly G & Welch V (2014) *Improving Educational Outcomes for Children Looked After at Home: The Perspectives of Designated Managers for Looked After Children*, CELCIS

Scottish Government, [Looked after Children Statistics \(2019\) Local Authority Benchmarking](#)

## Chapter 6

Bazalgette, L Rahilly, T and Trevelyan, G (2015) [Achieving emotional wellbeing for looked after children: A whole system approach](#), NSPCC

[East Lothian Integration Joint Board \(2019-22\) Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan](#)

Sanders, R (2020) [Care Experienced Children and Young People's Mental Health](#),

Furnivall, J and Grant, E (2014) [Trauma Sensitive Practice with Children in Care](#) Iriss

Kirkman, M (2019) [Care in Mind: Paper 1: Rejected Referrals: Looked After Children and Care Leavers Access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services](#), Barnados Scotland

Breedvelt, J.F (2016) *Psychologically Informed Environments: A Literature Review*. Mental Health Foundation

Millich, L and Goulder, S (2017) *Improving mental health support for our children and young people* Social care institute for excellence.

Sutherland, M (2019) *Somewhere to call home*, Who Cares? Scotland.

UCL Institute of Health Equity, [The impact of adverse experiences in the home on the young health of children and young people, and the inequalities in prevalence and effects](#).

UK Government (2017) *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper* Department of Health Department for Education.

Westminster City Council (2015) *Psychologically Informed Environments, No-one Left Out: Solutions*

World Health Organization (2018) [Mental Health: Strengthening our response](#), World Health Organization

## APPENDIX E: HUMAN AND FINANCIAL COST OF B&BS

Accommodation	Emotional	Employment/Education
Leaves Foster Care / continuing Care	Emotionally difficult placement breakdown. Foster carer de-registered.	Fired from job after didn't turn up for one shift
Moves into Supported Accommodation	Wants to engage but a new relationship is taking a lot of time and energy. Emotional health mostly okay, but dependant on status of relationship.	Starts work in a local café.
Spending most nights at girlfriends - abandonment notice served in Supported Accommodation	New relationship taking time and energy, drinking heavily.	Shift work at a local event hall
Staying unofficially with girlfriend at her mums.	Relationship is all-consuming, both drinking heavily and using cannabis. Girlfriend's mum not okay with stay or the way they fight. Relationship deteriorates significantly and ends very badly.	Shift work at a local event hall.
Staying with a family member on the sofa.	Self-care becomes very poor, showing explosive anger. Can no longer remain with family member.	No employment or education.
Placed in Emergency B&B Provision	Self-care declines further. He is feeling very frustrated and angry generally, also heartbroken by relationship breakup. Mental health and emotional health a worry.	No employment or education.
Asked to leave B&B due to non-payment/mix up by social work. Moved to another B&B.	Self-care, emotional and mental health declined rapidly. Coping with alcohol and 'venting' at social worker.	No education or employment.

Moved into My Place as restrictions due to covid-19 came into place.

Struggling severely. Happy to have a home of his own but is struggling to trust it. Emotional health is poor, still using alcohol to cope and not sleeping well the first few months after moving in. No education or employment

Still in My Place.

Very settled and calls it 'home'. Emotional and mental health significantly improves. Starting to see a future for himself again and notices himself the improvement in his coping skills and emotional resilience since moving into My Place.

In college since September and working part-time locally when Covid restrictions allow.

<b>FINANCIAL COST</b>	
<b>MAY 2019 - DECEMBER 2020</b>	
<b>REASON</b>	<b>COST</b>
Housing ID	£13.00
Gas & Electric	£80.00
Leaving Care Grant	£1,700.00
Basic Living Allowance (5 weeks while waiting on UC)	£289.50
Staying with girlfriends mum 26 weeks	£1,040.00
Basic Living Allowance - various payments	£300.00
B&B Costs - 75 nights	£4,500.00
Re-apply for UC	£289.50
Multiple £20 duty cash or Tesco voucher	£100.00
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>£8,512.00</b>



## **APPENDIX F: ABOUT WHO CARES? SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL WORK**

### **About Who Cares? Scotland**

Who Cares? Scotland is the national advocacy organisation for care experienced children and young people in Scotland. They work with children, young people, and adults with experience of care. Through their work they aim to support them to;

#### **Express and share their views through independent advocacy.**

Advocacy offers a non-judgemental, safe space for children and young people to discuss and explore what supports they believe would be best for them. Who Cares? Scotland provide Independent advocacy services in local authorities throughout Scotland, helping the individual understand their rights, raise their voice and feel at the centre of the decision making in their life. Independent advocacy is structurally, financially and psychologically separate from service providers and other services such as those providing the care for the young person.

#### **Inform and influence service redesign, ensuring it is shaped by their experiences and voice.**

They support children and young people with care experience to be active in positively influencing their personal, social and political world in Scotland and beyond. Through various campaigns led by the voice of our members, they have supported those with care experience to raise their collective voice and positively shape the culture and services around them.

#### **Connect through our membership and participation opportunities.**

Who Cares? Scotland also provides opportunities for children and young people with care experience to take part in our National Activities which include, Summer Camp, Time to Shine Festival, Care Experienced Week, Harvard Summer School, Care Day Celebrations and Christmas Dinner.

#### **Ensure that their qualities and successes are recognised across society.**

Through their vision of "A Lifetime of Equality, Respect, and Love for Care Experienced People" and their membership offer for children and young people with care experience, they champion the individual and collective power of the care experienced community. From national celebration events such as Care Day and Care Experienced Week, to Speak Out, a magazine exclusively for members, shine a light on the many successes and qualities of those with care experience.



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