

CELCIS

Our process

Our focus:
Views and voices of
children young
people and carers



Reflections

Messages from children, young people
and those who care for them

What do these groups tell us about their experiences and suggestions for change, related to the developmental orientation?

With recognition that they are unlikely to describe it this way; that is for us to recognise and identify

This was a tricky one for us...



I don't like people looking down on me
and I don't like people looking up at
me like I'm an adult.

I like people talking to me for my age.

Children's Commissioner
(England) 2011
Child Protection System

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Our starting point...



Called on some partners to help us talk and think about this



Academic literature overview



Overview of other literature

Our key areas of focus...

Our initial scoping led to:

- relationships
- stigma
- behaviour as communication

But we were alert to other big themes we may identify as we plan



Kids aren't as naive as you think.

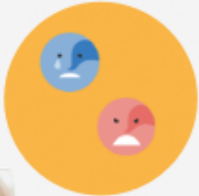
I think the reason that people don't listen to kids is that they're kids.

Children's Commissioner
(England) 2011
Child Protection System

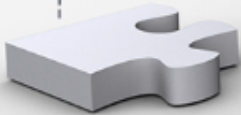
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Hold someone in mind...



Behaviour as communication

For all humans, behaviour is communication - this is not unique

There are times you behave in one way and mean something else - you're all probably working hard to convince me you're paying attention today and smiling a lot; ignoring the early signs of hunger, you may even be thinking 'will I manage to avoid the cake at lunchtime?' or 'lunch, did she say lunch?'

On a more serious note, we know that children and their carers can demonstrate their complex needs in a range of ways.

This needs some special attention.

'I've learned that if you make a scene you get dealt with. But if I phone my social worker politely and say **'hi there, can you sort this out?'**, nothing happens.

But, if I phone her and say **'oi you, this is what needs to happen right now or I'm going to come down to the office and bring hell!'**, then I get a call back!

'That's why we used to play up, so that we could get some attention for us.

I was a past master at getting attention - I used to throw tantrums. I felt like they (other children) were getting attention and why wasn't I?'

Behaviour as communication

Running away

I have run away because



- 1** I don't feel safe, I'm frightened
- 2** I don't want my pals to be police-checked

Behaviour as communication

Children run away when they don't feel safe, have been frightened, need a break, etc., not just to be naughty and spend time with friends.

One young person said that they went missing to avoid having his friends and family being police-checked.

When he felt that he had not been listened to, he started running away and misbehaving.

He became labelled as badly behaved and disturbed - a label which he began to accept and found hard to change.

Foster carer

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Behaviour as communication

Responses

Younger children also felt that information about their past and events in their lives was commonly withheld.

Rather than protecting them, lack of information caused confusion and self-blame.



Some carers are not being supported with difficult children, and then these poor children get moved, and moved, and moved.

It's not good enough.

Foster carers

We were first time carers and struggled through for over **five years** before the stress got too much. We are left feeling bad about giving up, **bereft** at losing the child we have grown to **love**, and **inadequate** as foster carers.

We did our best but this was beyond us and there was **no** professional help with this.

It would also prepare our reactions to any trauma suffered and put us in a better position to manage any behaviours we encounter from the placement.

Foster carer

68 out of 75 kinship carers admitted to having some difficulties in managing the 'challenging behaviour' of their child, with problems including bed-wetting, not eating, stealing food, aggression, destruction and communication problems.

But only a tiny fraction had accessed information or training to help them cope with complex behavioural needs, and many were completely unaware of attachment disorders.

I've one that's quite disturbed. It's an attachment disorder and he takes it out on me. I just thought he was an angry wee boy; I just thought 'terrible twos'.

See, we're from a generation that just didn't know. So I didn't take to him for a long time.

Kinship carer

A minority of carers were 'coping' with their child(ren)'s behaviour.

Diane, Falkirk, attended a parenting workshop that enabled her to better respond to her grandson's communication difficulties.

'Parents do things differently now' she told us. 'You have to be aware of that'.

In North Ayrshire, Caroline took an online parenting course to help manage her granddaughters 'anger issues'; and Karen, Aberdeenshire, learnt how to do life story work with her niece.

Staff need to understand that they're still children even if they've committed offences.

It's difficult cos, like I said, I hadn't done anything wrong and I was in with like people that had done really really heavy stuff - but then they're children first and offenders second.

Yes, but if you're 16 and you're still offending and you're violent and you've had help and chances, you should be in YOI, not in secure care.

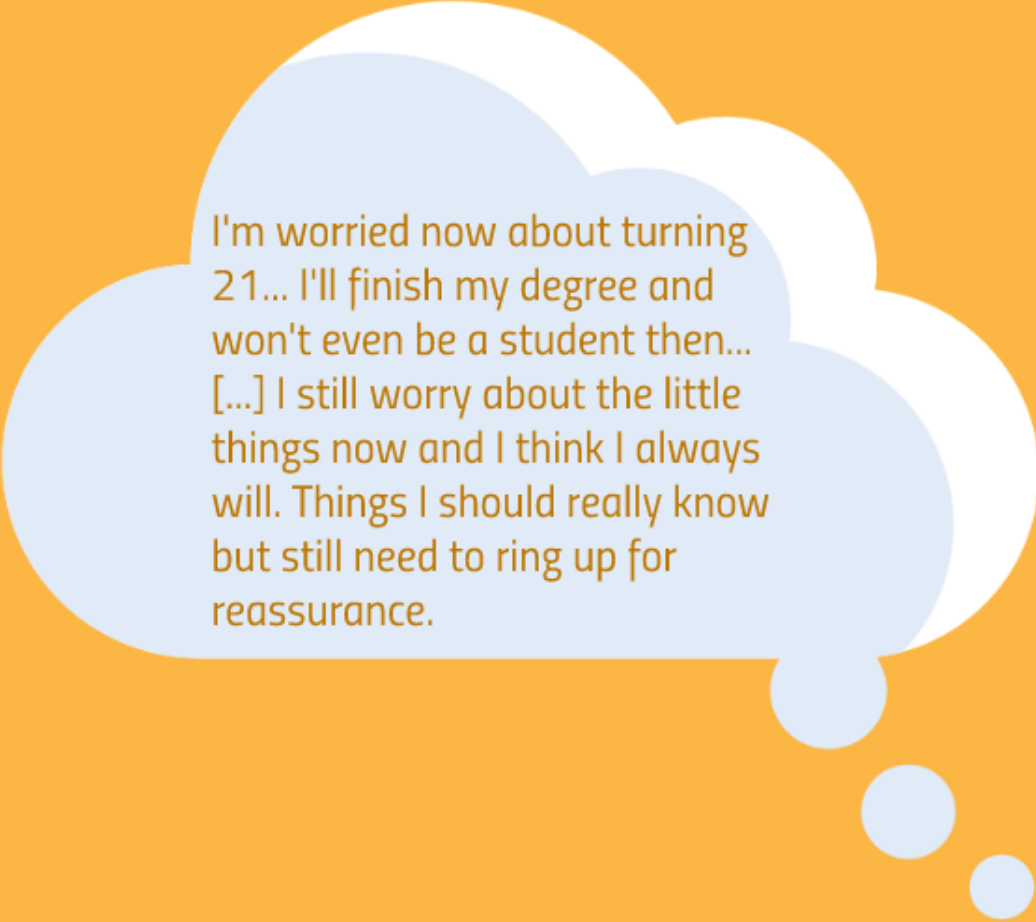
Changes

Foster carer says...

I am worried about his future, he has said he wants to leave but can he really know what living on his own can mean - he is 17 going on 13!

Young people feel the age they leave care shouldn't be important, it is about feeling ready.

Trusted, positive relationships help young people to know if they're ready and to get more ready.



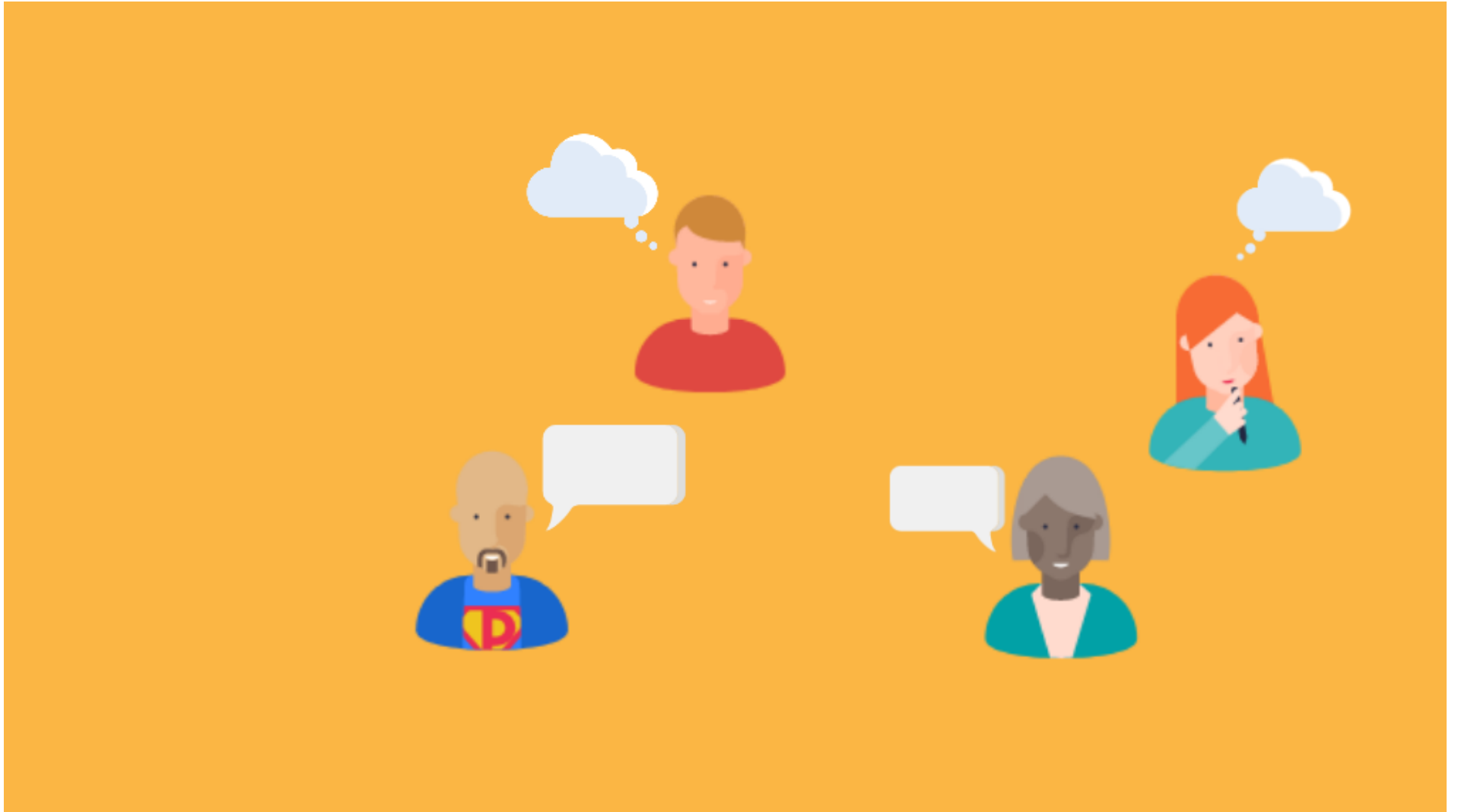
I'm worried now about turning 21... I'll finish my degree and won't even be a student then... [...] I still worry about the little things now and I think I always will. Things I should really know but still need to ring up for reassurance.

In your workplace, do you think behaviour is recognised as communication and responded to as such



Children, young people, foster carers, kinship carers all identified different ways in which the understanding that 'behaviour is communication' is not demonstrated.

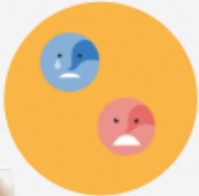
A strong theme all don't feel heard or understood



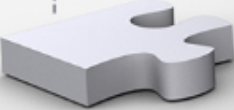
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Wordcloud

Text 'CELCIS' to 020 3322 5822

Relationships

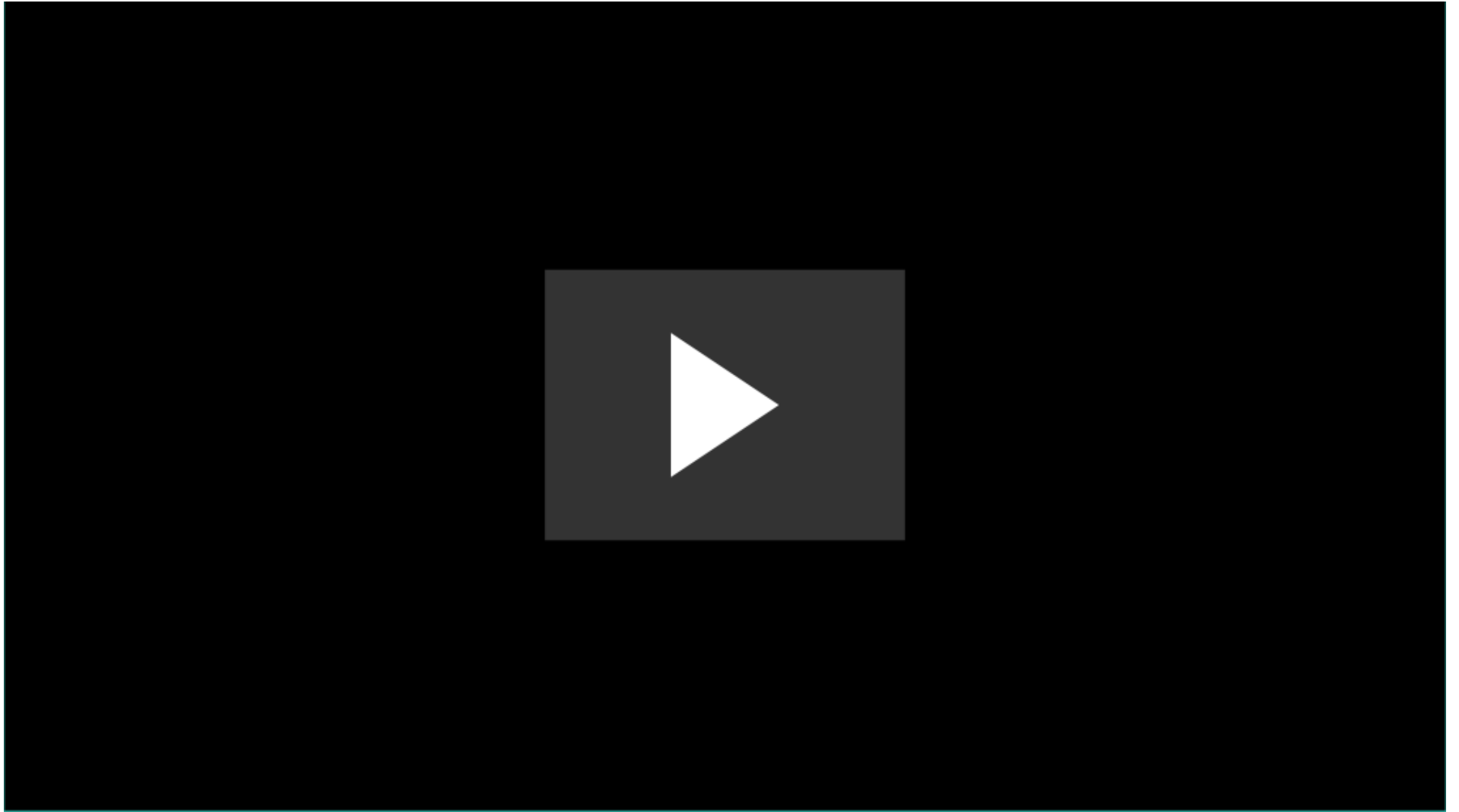
The storytellers have given consent for the following film to be used in almost any context. They haven't made them publicly available (i.e. on their website or YouTube channel) because, from experience, they need to be sensitively facilitated with audiences.

The storytellers are really keen for them to be used as widely as possible. For further information, contact:

Hot Chocolate Trust
www.hotchocolate.org.uk

Unrelenting





Wordcloud

We thought there were some clear messages here about a developmental orientation.

What word or short phrase did the video bring to mind through this 'lens'?

If you are texting a short phrase, link the words using underscore, for example: another_royal_wedding

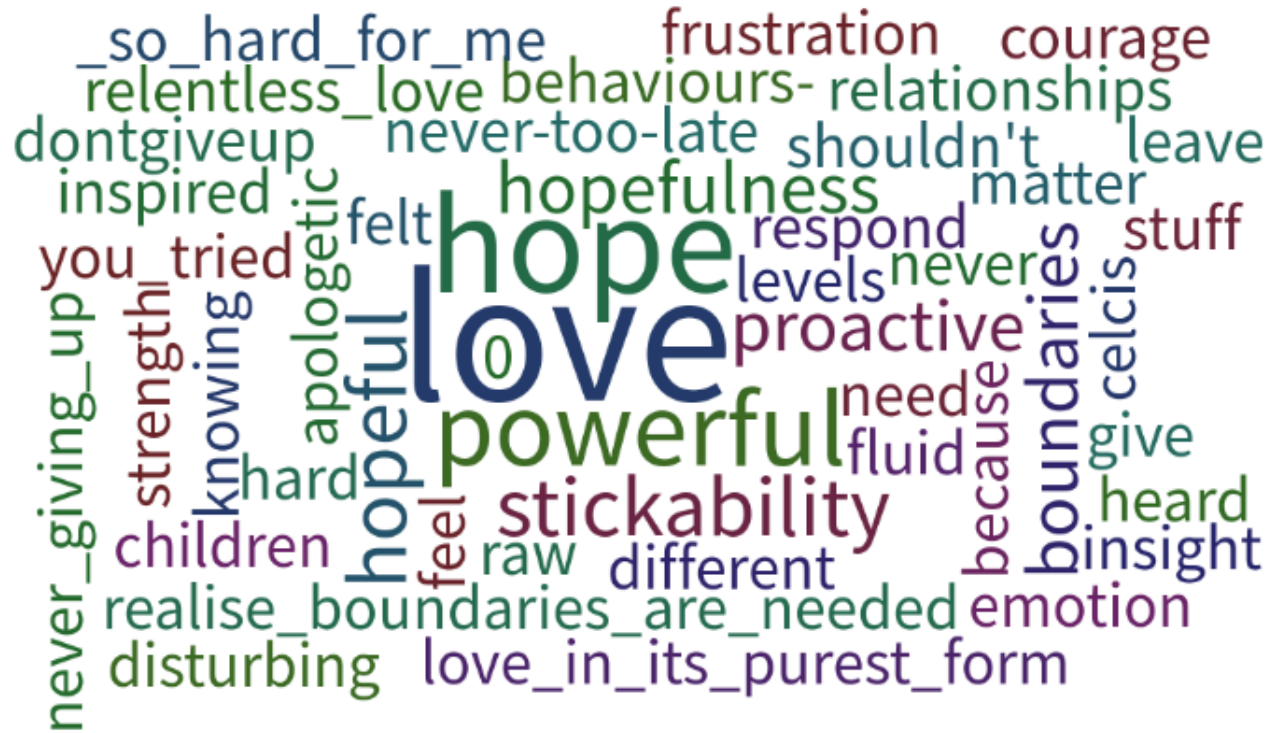
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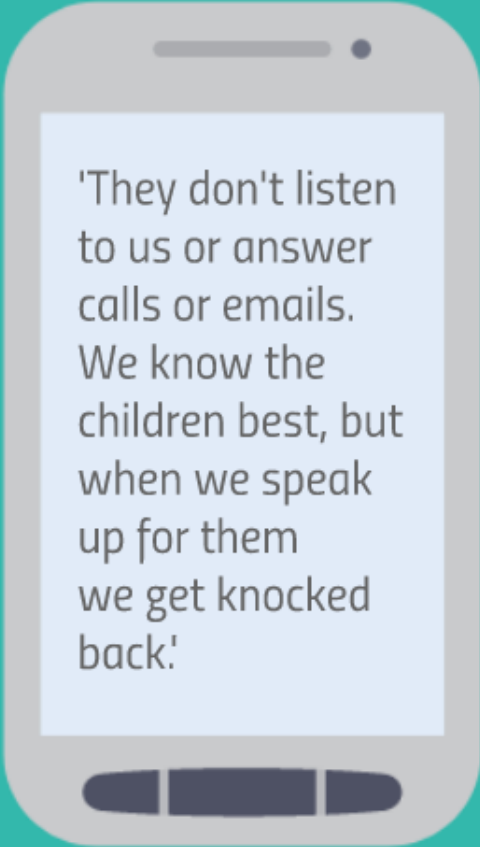


What word or short phrase did the video leave you with?

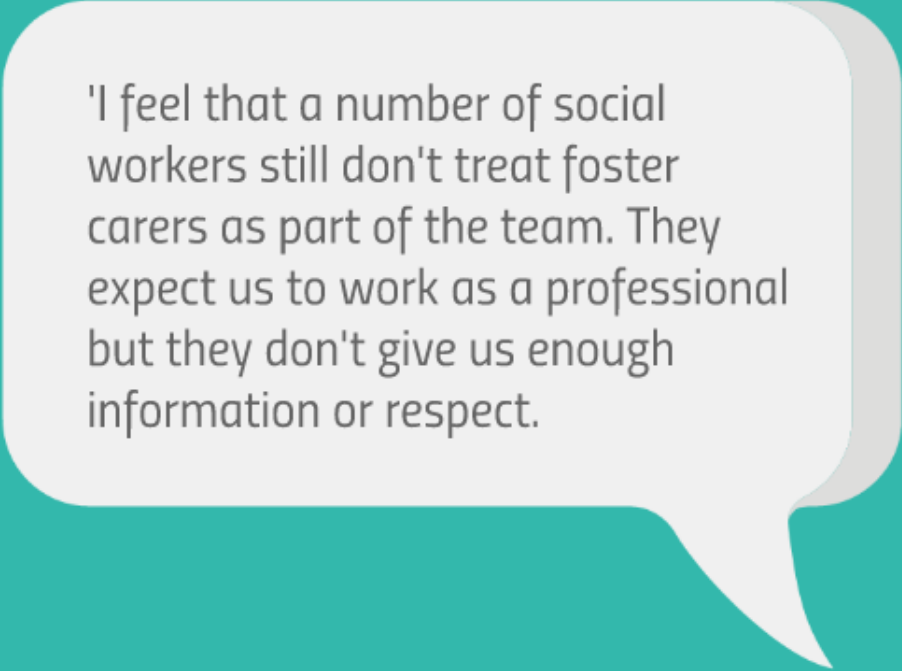
📺 When poll is active, respond at [Pollevo.com/celcis](https://www.pollevo.com/celcis)

📱 Text **CELCIS** to **020 3322 5822** once to join



A stylized grey smartphone icon with a light blue screen. The screen contains text.

'They don't listen to us or answer calls or emails. We know the children best, but when we speak up for them we get knocked back!'

A white speech bubble with a grey drop shadow and a tail pointing towards the bottom right.

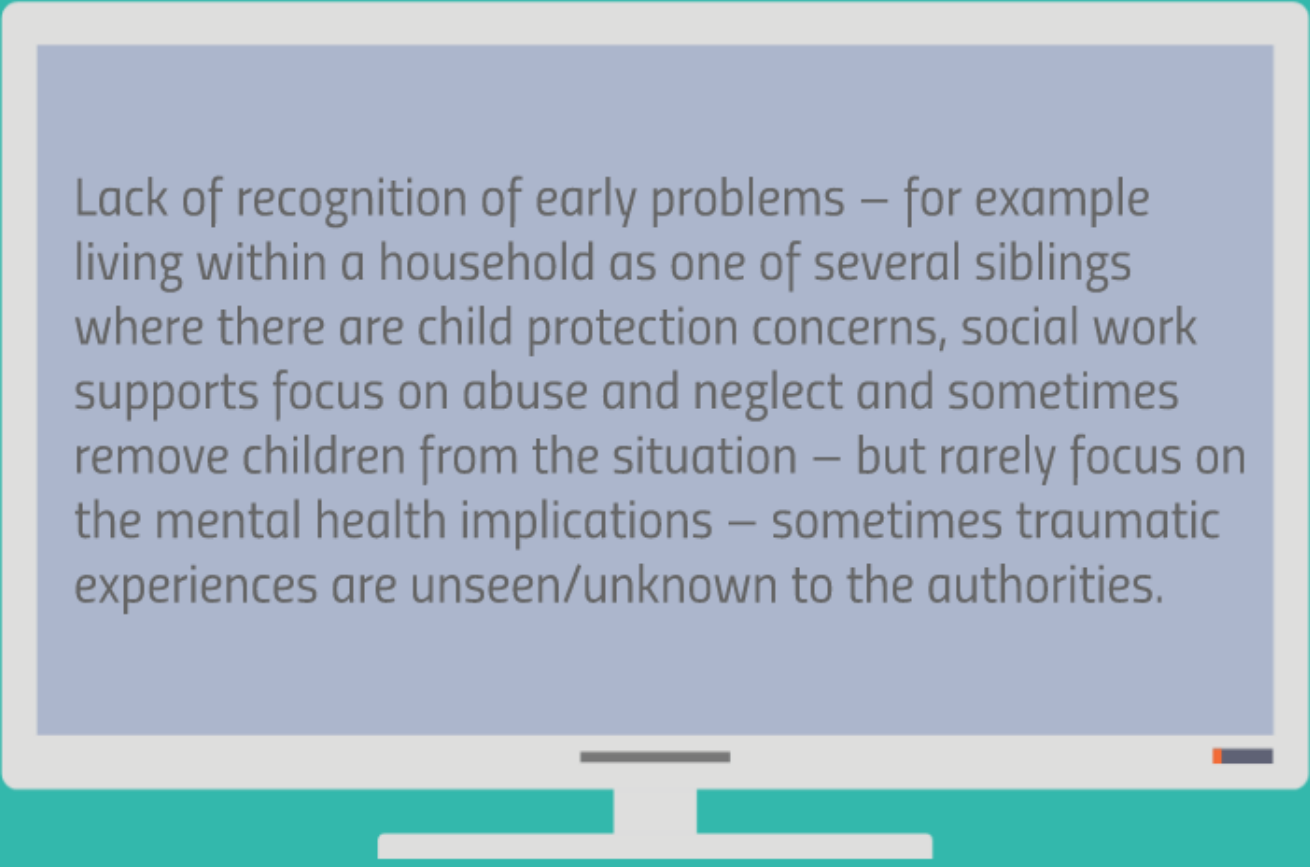
'I feel that a number of social workers still don't treat foster carers as part of the team. They expect us to work as a professional but they don't give us enough information or respect.'

People seem more comfortable talkin about basic needs than about how I felt.

The relationships I built with staff made a huge difference in the end. All care experienced young people should be given a chance to talk about and recover from the experiences that lead to us being there.

Services tend to focus on practicalities, not the emotional stuff... making sure you're ok in day-to-day life rather than the core of the issues.

That's what I found myself... I've had to deal with it my own way... and I think a lot of kids find that too and because they can't deal with it, it breaks them apart and they get into drugs and stuff or they have to sort it out their own way, or else you can't keep going.

A computer monitor with a light grey frame and a white base, set against a teal background. The monitor's screen is a light blue-grey color and contains the following text:

Lack of recognition of early problems – for example living within a household as one of several siblings where there are child protection concerns, social work supports focus on abuse and neglect and sometimes remove children from the situation – but rarely focus on the mental health implications – sometimes traumatic experiences are unseen/unknown to the authorities.

Brothers and sisters

The best picture (photo) I have of us is when I was five-years old at the Wallace Monument and that's only because my social worker pre-arranged to take us out for the day. I think that's one of the longest times I've spent in my brother's company.

It has had a huge impact on how we've been able to bond. In terms of family relations, it has strained things quite a bit.




Brothers and sisters

'The thing I hold close to me is that he says he's proud of me.

For any child, more so for children in care, having someone to tell you that, words can't express how important that is!

With my mum and dad they used to hit me and because they loved me I used to count it as that's the reason why they were hitting me... and he (ex-boyfriend) knew that my mum and dad had been violent to me in the past and that I'd let them (boyfriends) get away with it (violence).

School



It was magical to hear how Miss Jones engages with David in the classroom to bring out the best in him.

There are so many amazing things that Miss Jones has achieved with David, too many to list, but I am especially grateful that Miss Jones has helped David to gain confidence, cope with making mistakes and getting things wrong, managing transitions and changes and just making him feel like a worthwhile person.

Wordcloud

What is key to demonstrating care in children's day-to-day relationships?

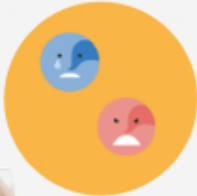
https://www.polleverywhere.com/free_text_polls/bVwJN0lifv3ik9t

'They should bottle "this service" and how things work here – every young person who gets secured should have the same kind of through care support to make sure they get help and support to move on and make something of their life – look at what we've all achieved despite everything we've been through – they should listen to young people who've been through it and step in our shoes'

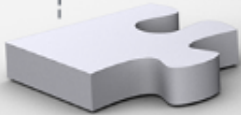
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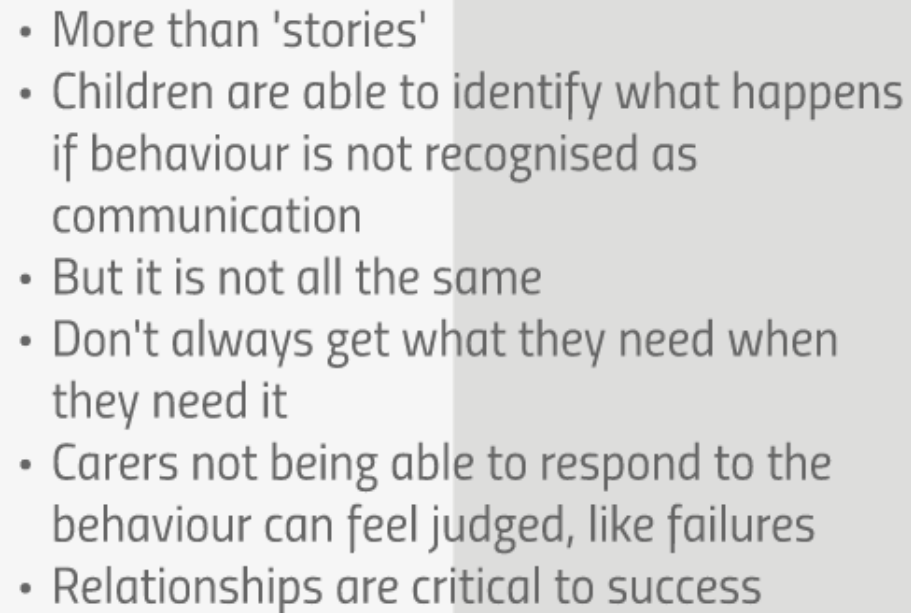
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- 
- More than 'stories'
 - Children are able to identify what happens if behaviour is not recognised as communication
 - But it is not all the same
 - Don't always get what they need when they need it
 - Carers not being able to respond to the behaviour can feel judged, like failures
 - Relationships are critical to success

Over to you...



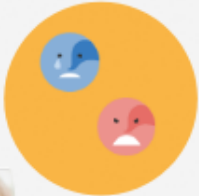
It's been a privilege!



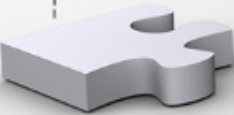
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