

Ask Me What Matters: listening and responding at scale to care-experienced young people

Coram Voice

For more than a decade, the **Bright Spots Programme** has shown the power of asking children in care and care leavers directly about their daytoday lives – not just their satisfaction with services. Over 30,000 careexperienced children and young people have shared how they feel, helping us understand the **key drivers of wellbeing** (see image).

But because Bright Spots data is collected anonymously and at population level, it cannot support real time responses to individual children. This creates a gap: children’s voices are heard through surveys, yet not always embedded systematically in their everyday care.

Over the past two years, Coram Voice has been working with four local authorities to close that gap by integrating childled wellbeing questions into routine practice. Each area began by working with care experienced children and young people to identify what matters most to them, and to agree when, how, and with whom these conversations should take place – whether during care planning, pathway planning, or regular checkins with trusted adults.

Each local authority is at a different stage of co-design and development. In some areas, the agreed questions are already embedded into recording systems, and practitioners

are using these to guide everyday interactions and curious conversations. Other LAs are refining their processes, working with young people to shape guidance, tools, and agree the right moments for these conversations. LAs are making sure they get feedback on how the changes feel to both children and staff.

Young people have been central throughout. In **St Helens**, for example, children have recorded messages to their corporate parents explaining why they want the adults that work with them to use the *Ask Me What Matters* questions – and how acting on these conversations can make their care more responsive and meaningful (NB permission required to name the LA and include the film and use screenshot(s) from film and or visual of tool they created).

Across the four sites, this work is helping to build a culture where wellbeing is explored routinely rather than occasionally, and where young people’s perspectives actively shape the support they receive. As the learning partner, Coram Voice is capturing what is working well, the challenges encountered, and the insights emerging from implementation.

To follow the learning journey, sign up to Coram Voice’s newsletter.

