

DRAFT
SPEAK OUT REPORT – 24TH AUGUST 2011

Age range:

This Speak Out event was for young people aged **11 – 16**. The previous Speak Out, held in April 2011, was for primary-school age children and the next event will be for young people aged 16+. Our approach is to link the events to the academic cycle.

Venue & Date:

The Speak Out was held at Connah's Quay Civic Hall on the 24th August 2011. The event was publicised via a letter and flyer sent to the child's parents / foster carers.

Aims of the Event:

- Explore young people's experiences of contacting Social Services.
- Seek young people's views on the idea of a 'privilege card.'
- Review the LAC Welcome packs for those aged 11+.
- Identify the personal qualities of the 'Best Social Worker in the World' and what young people think of their current Social Worker.

There are parallels to the themes discussed at the Speak Out in April 2011; however, this event was seeking the views of young people in the 11-16 age bracket.

Incentive:

The aim is for young people to enjoy and benefit from taking part and for participation to be a positive experience. Hence, the reward activity was a trip to Chester Zoo.

Attendance:

8 young people attended. This number is lower than normal (average attendees approx 15). The recommendation is that at future events the event flyer is circulated to Team Managers, IROs and Social Work Teams with a request that they promote awareness as this will help to boost attendance.

- Age of attendees: 11, 12, 13 (x2), 14, 15, 16 (x2).
- Gender breakdown: 7 boys and 1 girl.

A positive development is that one of the attendees was a young person open to CIDS who had never attended a Speak Out before. He engaged in the workshops and enjoyed the event.

Ice breakers:

To get to know each other the young people got into teams and did a pop quiz. Afterwards they were encouraged to write down their ideas for making the day a success, including: “no bullying,” “no discrimination,” “have fun,” “be respectful” and “listen to each other.” All the young people then signed up to the groundrules.

Feedback about the Speak Out:

I enjoyed it. I'd come again. When's the next one?
It's been good and useful. Pleased to see my friends.
It was interesting but not as many people as normal.
Chester Zoo was a bit young for me.
It was alright. Fabulous.
It was good I'd come again.
More quizzes!
Good.

Work Group 1 – Social Services Privilege Card

What is a 'privilege card'?

An ID card for looked after children, care leavers and young carers which they can show at reception areas to speed up their access to a service. The young people wouldn't need to go into detail in a public reception area about why they need to see their Social Worker but could show their ID card.

Young people were initially asked about their experiences of contacting the Department.

Feedback includes...

- My social worker always rings me – I've got the best Social Worker.
- Been to see me a lot.
- Social worker visits me at home.
- Sometimes rings back but takes awhile.
- Sometimes have to call several times.
- Talks to my foster carer.
- Sometimes I call my old social worker.
- If he doesn't call back, explains why.
- Will drop in if you have good news.
- Will ring or pop in once they have the message.

The groups then discussed the types of I.D. cards young people already have:

- bus pass
- passport
- actif card

- Positive feedback received about the idea of a 'privilege card' with young people saying they would like one.

Work Group 2 – Reviewing the LAC Welcome Pack

The LAC welcome pack was the idea of young people at a previous Speak Out.

LAC packs are given to young people during their first few days in foster care and are age appropriate. The packs are for:

- Primary age children. Not gender specific (reviewed at event in April 2011).
- Girls aged 11+ (reviewed at this event)
- Boys aged 11+ (reviewed at this event)

Young People's Views / Suggestions include:

- The welcome pack was seen as being useful and helpful by the young people which mirrors the feedback from the younger group in April. Again, not everyone could remember receiving a welcome pack so the distribution process needs reviewing.
- Existing contents – e.g. shower gel, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste – viewed positively. The drawstring bag was seen as a good idea but some didn't want the Flintshire logo on the front. This could easily be replaced when more bags are ordered. Young people could design a logo?
- The boys pack currently contains Lynx hair and body wash as a combined product. Young people requested separate shampoo and body wash. Another suggestion is to update the flannel with a sponge.
- Ideas for additional contents: socks, cheap mobile phone, hair gel, £10 voucher for clothes, sweets such as haribo (nb: might struggle to include sweets due to food allergies and use by dates and other items would need to be costed out).
- In the primary age LAC pack a teddy bear is included. The young people thought this should be added to the older packs too.
- Young people suggested that razors and hair removal cream should be included in the packs. It was explained to the young people why these products can't be added.
- The information leaflets contained in the LAC packs were viewed as being good. A suggestion was to include a pen.

ACTION: All 3 LAC packs have now been reviewed with input from young people. After the SCC & CLSN have completed the drama activity, they could update the packs and re-launch them. The suggestions gathered at this event and the previous event in April should inform the review of the LAC packs. The mechanisms for distributing the packs should also be reviewed so that all young people entering care receive one.

Work Group 3 – The Best Social Worker in the World!

In each group we drew around one of the young people and this outline represented a Social Worker.

The young people were asked to share their ideas about what the BEST Social Worker in the world would be like...

- When out in a public place they don't wear a name badge. I don't want people to know I'm in foster care.
- There when you need them.
- Keeps in contact regularly
- Not embarrassing
- Tells you your rights
- Listens to you
- Chatty
- You can trust them
- Good communication
- Good eye contact
- Respectful to you and you respect them.
- If you had any problems they would sort it out asap
- Helps you look for your family
- They take you out to do things
- Sorts things out
- Helps with your problems
- Comes to help
- Supportive
- Greets you in a happy way at the door.
- Would watch me play rugby – they'd be young and very sporty!

- Looks out for you
- Smiley and not miserable
- Fair
- Understanding
- I'd feel comfortable talking to them about my views
- They'd do their job. Don't need them be your friend.
- Need two way conversation
- Be on time.
- Need someone who can read the situation
- Take feedback in a positive way
- Understand individuality
- Be themselves
- Wants the best for you and is thinking of your future

During the activity the young people were then asked if their Social Workers was like this.

Feedback from the young people about their Flintshire Social Worker...

- Always chatty
- Alright, sometimes has to talk to me about school. I feel okay talking to him. This young person said he was able to talk to his Mum and Social Worker about issues in school and they were helping to sort his issues out.
- He's funny
- Always turns up
- Interested
- Really chatty but I don't like that as I want to get to the point.
- Comes out to see me and always returns calls.

- One young person identified that his Social Worker “does care about me” but that she was the person who had removed him when he was younger so sometimes this makes him feel uncomfortable (IRO and other professionals aware of this fact).
- I'd like to have a young Social Worker.
- Listens
- Funny
- Respects me
- Sound
- Sticks up for me
- Really tries to help
- Can be quite loud
- Keeps promises
- Always gives reasons for what he is doing and why he doesn't do some things
- Honest
- Treats me as a young adult
- Understands me
- Keeps coming to my house
- Sometimes when they visit I can't play out with my friends.
- Sometimes says 'I don't know' to my questions. Young person found this frustrating.
- Sticks up for you. Sorted out my problems. Listens to me. Sorted out bullying.
- Some of the teenage boys thought it would be good to have a male Social Worker.

There are some very positive messages from this group of 7 boys and 1 girl about their social workers. This feedback will be shared with teams when the report is circulated. It will also be used as evidence in the ACRF.

Staff who have direct contact with young people may wish to note the comment about ID badges on display in a public place when with a young person as it identifies them as being involved with Social Services. Although ID badges are required this feedback highlights the perspective of one young person and this could be taken into account when in an open public place.

ACTIONS: Teams should be made aware of this positive feedback via the circulation of this report.

Staff and young people in the participation groups could explore how best to share these messages about what young people want / think from their social worker – it could be a screen saver, poster for the team rooms, letter, wallet sized card etc. If the feedback was transferred into a different format it would be a longer term reminder of what young people think / want from their Social Worker. As the feedback is positive it would also be a positive morale boost.

Recommendations – Summary

1. That SSCSMT receive this report and give consideration to the suggested actions. If agreed, the actions will be incorporated into a lessons learnt template.

- In advance of the event, the flyer to be circulated to Team Managers, IROs and Social Work Teams with a request that they promote awareness to help to boost attendance.
- The views and feedback of young people to be used to inform the development of the privilege card.
- All 3 LAC packs to be updated, using the ideas and feedback of young people, and re-launched.
- The mechanisms for distributing the LAC packs to be reviewed so that all young people entering care receive one.
- Staff and young people in the participation groups to explore mechanism to share the positive messages about what young people think / want from their social worker so the feedback can have a lasting impact (e.g. poster for the Social Work Team Rooms or a screen saver).

2. That this report is shared at Team Meetings to share the feedback and the relevant sections used as evidence for the ACRF.

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