



Context for Theatre piece

Wooden Hill has been working in partnership with Looked after Children in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Buckinghamshire for the past six years. We train young people up to come out and deliver work alongside us on communication, participation and as service users, how to make the service better for everyone involved. All our work uses drama & theatre as a tool to help people express themselves, have fun and make sure their voice gets heard.

Verbatim Theatre simply means using actual words by real people spoken through actors. The words can be delivered with theatrical effect, or just as talking heads however, the intent remains the same; to convey the thoughts, opinions and experiences of a particular group of people on a particular subject. How an audience reacts to those words cannot be planned.... it depends on how they are listening

The words you will hear today were all spoken by looked after children & young people from all over the Eastern Region, the only thing that has been changed is some names of people or of actual residential units where some of the young people live.

Also what you are hearing is answers to the question “if social services were going to make a pledge what would you want them to promise?” so of course they talk about their social workers a lot because they are the ones that they see and know about, the fact that social workers have to work within the system isn’t something that most young people know about they are just trying to get through life the best they can.....

So why use actors? Being able to express yourself confidently, eloquently and in front of a room full of strangers is quite a skill which needs to be nurtured and encouraged but sometimes needs some extra help.....

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- More support when you leave care coz I’m a care leaver but I don’t think I’m getting enough support with things. My situation at the moment is I don’t really get on with... at home and I don’t

really want to go into a hostel, but they're not helping me find anywhere but a hostel so it's kind of going round in a circle.

(How long before you have to be out?)

- Urm... it's not a case of how long of how long I've got, it's just I really can't... I don't wanna live there coz of how it is and etc and stuff. I mean they say that they're gonna help me, but, they give me options and the only option they give me is a hostel and they know I don't want to go in one, so...

(What would you like?)

- Just like a shared accommodation or something. Not like, kind of like a hostel, but not in a hostel situation. Coz my understanding of hostels I suppose is not very good and I'm scared about going into one, so... Yeah.

(Have you seen any?)

- Er, not yet. I think possibly in the process, you see my social worker's just come off leave, so I've got to get hold of her. So...
- I think there should be more communication between the social worker and the person, coz like if you've got a problem you can hardly, you can sometimes hardly get hold of the person, the social worker, and also like if she needs to speak to them about something important you don't want it to be like carried on. To like managers and that.
- If you need them to suddenly come out and like speak to you about the placement or something, like they should do that instead of leave it till they're able to do it, but like when you need them you want them to be there. Like she should make that arrangement and be there at the right time instead of a couple of days after.

(Unannounced visits?)

- Yeah I think they should, coz I think some foster carers act different when the social worker's there and they prepare themselves for when they come so I think that would be really good coz then they could see where the kids are coming from.

- I also think they should change the out of hour social workers coz in my opinion I don't think they're very good, I don't think... I mean they may say something to you, but it's not helping the situation. So like I'll give you an example. A long time ago I was homeless for a few days, I rang them and said I really need accommodation I've got nowhere else to go but they said they can't do anything coz it was a Friday night and obviously they don't work over the weekend or anything so they said I had to wait until Monday before... and then get hold of my social worker. I had to find somewhere, so I went to a friend's and that. I could of really done with some more help. So... Yeah.
- I think they need to erm set up some more things for when a child or young person goes into a foster placement. I mean like, I don't know if they do do `erm, but like a scrap book type with pictures and everything so like you know what to expect and everything and not just dump them there.
- And I think erm, what they need to do most is, I've heard a lot, when they place you into a foster placement, they say it's like temporary and everything, but then they change their mind and say "no there's nowhere else so you're gonna have to stay here permanently" and you don't get a choice. And I think they need to try and sort something out, like, do something about it. Yeah.
- Should actually hear something about someone who's actually been in foster care and actually knows what's happened and tell people other things. Like people already in care, should basically write a story or something so other people know what it's going to be like if they go in care. I'd say for advice to try to get along with, get along with who you're staying with. It would be much easier. As I found out.
- I don't know much about advice, because I can't really remember when I first went into care, it's different as you get older. But I'd definitely make sure they have all the contact details so they, so even if they can't get hold of someone there's always someone else they can get hold of. I think that's... they should do that.
- Well basically I just tell them to like try, if they like the placement, then like stay there as long as possible if it's like... but if it's like a short... coz like, with me, in my very first foster placement I lived there for nearly two years and I got moved

away from there coz I got so attached to the foster carer, which I thought was a bit strange, even though it was a short term placement, they still stayed me there for two years. And yet I got so attached and like I started treating 'em like *my* family, like basically that would be a good thing, but not like, say *they're* your family, but treat them as your family and treat them how you would want to be treated basically.

- That's what I always get told
- I think – sorry – er, what was I gonna say? I think the thing to tell people is to be open minded coz they make you move quite far away from where you're used to and you don't think you're gonna meet anyone else like, new friends or anything, or like it up there, so I think definitely they should be more open minded about different areas.
- They like, they move you away, put you somewhere away from your family, just in case your family try to take you back or something
- I think honesty is the biggest one for a lot of young people – and for me definitely. Personal experience has just – shows me that they need to be honest with people. Even if it's hurtful in the short term / even if...
- / I was gonna say, they're trying to put it as if they're trying to help you, but in the long run you're gonna look at it and go "they lied to me" you're not gonna trust them again.
- Even if, you know, even if it does hurt a young person in the short term or it's something that's gonna affect them short term, long term if it's better for the young person then that's what's more important. Long term, honesty and planning and dealing with the future rather than what's happening now this minute.
- I think social workers promising that they'll do something. Coz I remember when I had er my... what are those things you have six monthly? Reviews, that's the one. And my social worker was on holiday and I had to have another person come and she said she'd get back to me the next day and she never did. So like she promised that she'd get back to me and she didn't. Which I think, yeah.

- Unless you're aware about contact with families they need to, when they say that they'll come and see you, sometimes once a year, they should not spend the money of teas and biscuits or any more desks where they sit, they should save the money up for more contact visits I think.
- I think it all links back to the whole... it's communication. They need to... you can't say every young person wants one thing unfortunately, so for me personally I think they need to be more... more decisive, more... assertive before they say, rather than saying "ooh but do you want this? Do you want that?" Then rather than... just say what's on offer, what's an option. Make clear, give clear options and clear... paths to choose and then the young person has got a choice rather than say "well, let's plan together, let's work together on that. Because a lot of young people don't want that. They want definite answers, and definite options.
- Don't even get me started on leaving care
- I... they need to certainly do a lot of work -in - a lot of work on young people staying on in care after 18. Because it's a huge, huge issue that's come up for me personally and for a lot of people I think and they've got no clue. At all. They've got no idea how to handle it. No idea what to do with it. So they definitely need to do a lot of work on that and they need to really... look at what, look at the sort of policy that - or lack of policy they've got now, coz it really is going to affect young people, especially if they plan to go on to university.
- It doesn't matter to me, coz my foster family *is* my family. They're my mum and dad, so, coz I see mum and as not like mum not giving birth to you, someone that brings you up. So they're my mum and dad and they said that money doesn't matter. As soon as they stop funding at 18 it's still my home, so... doesn't apply for me.
- Social workers staying for a little bit longer, not coming, then going six months later without giving you notice, they like say "I'm leaving" the week before and you get a new social worker - I've had four social workers over these last two years. It's ridiculous. I had my old social worker for about seven years and - she was lovely - and then she went on sick leave and didn't

come back. And I've had four social workers since then. They should stay a lot longer.

- I think the biggest thing for me has always been honesty. I'll say it again coz I think it really is important. And in any aspect, you know it's... Obviously they need to apply honesty to everything and use honesty, be honest with whatever age the young person is. Whether they're just coming into care whether they're leaving care or in the middle. You know they need, it's so, so important to young people not to be lied to – especially when they find out they've been lied to.
- Well, I found out last year, like when erm, they told me that my mum had died of an accidental erm heroin overdose but actually she did it deliberately but they told me it was an accident at my age coz I was nine coming up ten. But to find out now that she actually deliberately did it, that really hurt me, coz if I'd known then I would have got over it, whereas now I look back and think all them years I thought it was an accident and all that. It's just horrible. I can see where they were coming from, but... half of me thinks, yeah fair enough I was only nine, maybe I wouldn't have understood. But then that other half of me was, thought well maybe they should have sat down and explained it to me.
- I think that's a really good example of honesty there.

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TRACK 3

What would you like to see from the pledge?

-More family help before a child gets put into care. So if there is a chance for the child to stay with the family just put more support and help there so the child can actually stay there.

-More social workers that have actually like got experience of going through the system, because most social workers I've had said, oh I know what you are going through, I understand, no you don't, they have no idea what the system is, they don't know what you want, what you ...need, and by the time err i had like my 10th social workers they did that, till G..... and D..... came along, and then they were the two social workers I ever liked.

Like if they do get taken out from their parents, you know they could at least consider going living with an aunt or a Nan before just taking them totally out of the family.

Care leavers- any thoughts on after care?

- Er well I ain't seen my social worker in like 3 months at the moment, but err I used to have to go to town to get my money and that from ... in but then everything kicked off in so I couldn't go nowhere, so then I asked her to put it in my bank but for a month and a half I still had to go there to get it, and that, and I give her all my bank details and they were correct cos my mum told me. And err After a month and a half they were going in, but because they were going in via cheque or anything like that, it was 5 days late and I phoned up my social worker on Monday and said oh my money's not in, and she said, it is, it says it is, and I go nah it aint, so she told me to bring my bank statement to town, and I said well you know I can't and she's like, you know, well come, and I was like well fuck you then. Then on Thursday... on Thursdays, it gets paid in on Thursdays, Because I randomly checked on a Thursday, and I was like ok well its Thursday so let's check and I phoned up my social worker and said oh right, well my money's going in on but it's on a Thursday now, and she's like we still need your bank statement I go what's the point, you know it's going in now because I am telling you it's going in and yeh, she's just doing my head in. I asked for a travel warrant to down and see my cousins and a person called **Steve** who is my 16 plus got me the travel warrant because I asked him at total respect training to see where it was and then I went into town, got my travel warrant my money, and went in a day

Promise made promise kept?!

-it's always someone else, it's always someone else that ends up bringing it to you, that's why when my mum says, oh james has got a wedding in July like July, yeh I think it is, I said well you talk to **Kate**, I'll talk to auntie **Margret** we could go down there stay with her for a couple of days, she goes why? I go because **Kate's** pissing me off. **Aunt Margret** said yes, **Kate** would, I dunno my brothers coming down with me as well, so that should get sorted out.

-And with 16 plus they say there not a social worker, and erm their more there to help and advice you and things, but when like if you wanna like go down to your family and say for some reason you can't like there's may be like a risk, it's there, they don't - they say oh we're just here to advise you not to go, and if you say you still wanna go, then you know they've got, their meant to help, but in my situation I didn't get help. I just got, oh if you wanna go you can go then I decided to go and I ended up having to pay for it at that point. it doesn't seem that you know, they kind of let go more now you turn 16, especially for me coming up 18, their kind of letting go a little bit more.

-My mum doesn't see me really anymore, 2 months it's been, but she is coming down next week because taking me clothes shopping for the wedding.

Pledge, burning issues to resolve?

-They shouldn't put rules in, like after a year and a half of something, something happening. Cos that happened to me on babysitting, I was quite peeved off it was a big issue, I had been babysitting for my foster family, for about a year and then suddenly this rule came in and said I was no longer allowed to babysit for the family and it was quite, it was quite annoying cos then it meant that with my family, we had to get another family member from to come all the way to which is half an hour drive to come and babysit for about 2 hours and then have to go all the way back, so it wasn't like very good, so then my foster parents didn't really go out that much and you know they need their time as well as we need ours then you know with the babysitting rule It was just suddenly we need to not put these rules in if it's going to be a rule then, I mean I know they update the pack, the rules every so often but you know, we didn't know that it was wrong until a year maybe a year and a half after I was there and its suddenly oh wait. It's just a mix up when me and another person in the home had a bit of a disagreement because if she, cos it was like if she came back then she'd babysit but she wasn't so I was, and then she came back and then we had a bit of a disagreement of who was babysitting and then when we said there was a little bit of an argument they said 'well their not meant to be babysitting have you looked in your packs- says you're not allowed to babysit' and it was like, well we haven't been given the new pack so we'd only be given, only had the old one which said we are allowed to babysit if you know, it was ok with them.

-Social workers are messers- yeh, because like they say- oh yeh, I've been waiting to get into school for 6 months and I'm still waiting now

and the papers aint all through or nothing and that like 6 months ago, and they said ah yeh, in 2 weeks time you'll be getting back into school, I'm still not into school and they don't keep promises.

-They say one thing, but it's like 'oh well it's going to be only a couple of weeks' it then turns out to be a couple of months down the line and your still waiting. If they know it's not going to take a couple of weeks they shouldn't say oh it's only going to be a couple of weeks they should say, if they don't know how long it's going to be then they should say 'not sure' if they can roughly guess say like a CBR check, they normally take 4/6 weeks, if it's like that then you know, if they know roughly, then maybe say 'we think it could' and not go 'yeh its defiantly going to be 4/6 weeks'

-It's just, my social worker, 16 plus worker give me my national insurance card you know number, 6 months it took me your supposed to have it 2 weeks before you turn 16. I got its at the time I was at, and if had had it when I was at I could have stayed there but after that I had like 5 applications in front of me but I didn't know my national insurance card so I was like, you what? And I phoned up, and phoned up and phoned up and the day I left she was like, here you go- and I go you taking the piss sort of thing, because I showed her all the applications yeh, I filled them all out perfectly except from that one event.

END OF INTERVIEW TRACK 4

What would you like to see on the pledge?

-It was like, because before where I came to where I am now, foster carer... well adoptive parents weren't very nice they would do mean stuff to me and what I think they should do is like, test them out, see, give them a fake child and see what they do see if they whack them round the head or nothing. Make them like walk like a robot thingy,

Better background checks for foster carers then?

-yeh.

-and I think that if they say if you have permanency, and they say, you're there forever act like a normal family then they shouldn't have things that stop them acting like a normal family like say if they've got a school trip and they need like err legal whatever, care I think- permission, to let the foster carers do it, not have to like get permission from like the head boss.

-and don't change social workers every year because that's quite annoying, I've had loads.

-basically I want people to be honest with me from the start, like us lot, to be honest with us like if they say something, like if they're going to put you in a placement if they should tell you before hand not be last minute thing. And I want them to be more open with it, I was in a situation where I was in foster care and I got put in there I thought it was long term and I got told no different and then basically about 6 months later I got told I was moving on, so I want these big changes sorted out first, like up front- straight away, beforehand.

-yeh cos social workers, not against anybody who I know but some of them aren't exactly 100% honest are they?

-some of them don't know that they are doing it some people thing they are telling the truth but everyone knows that they're not, when your like, that's not true because I already know, they think they know best all the time, and it gets so annoying after a while because they think they know best, but they don't always know best, they don't always listen to our point of views they need to learn to do that and stop..

- Mine did

-...and stop sodding off because every time we, like right, we only have 1 decent social worker once in a lifetime then before you know it you get changed and I get fed up with people like that

-well so far I haven't had any problems with them because all the social workers I've had have been like truthful and everything and really nice and they've been telling the truth.

-same for me but the only problem is I have a really stroppy, stroppy madam,

-I don't really have trouble with social workers its just the fact that, the fact that you get used to them and as soon as you get used to them they get another job or they have, they get, they're cases get rearranged and you're not with that person that you got used to and some families have so much change that that's the reason why there in care, it just doesn't help when the cases get rearranges.

-and its hard to get used to, me personally, especially if you're in a situation you've been in care for say short term and your social worker walks out and on and says sorry I've got to go and do another job or something, I'm gonna make my way out of here.

-most of our social workers have come and seen me took me to McDonalds and said, yeh we're leaving, and then that's the last time I've seen them.

-I had this friend she wasn't in care but she had a social worker, it was weird I didn't understand why but err, basically the social worker was there every day telling her what it was like to be in care cos I think that it was something to do with her parents, but they treated her well and for some weird reason she had to go been in care, but she didn't want to, but luckily she didn't, she didn't get put in

16 plus...do you have any experience of it?

-I left care when I was about 17 and that was in, I left erm, a couple of weeks before the end of September without telling anybody, walked the streets for about 3 weeks so I left care without telling anyone, I just left. Pretty much yeh, haven't been back since then, now I live in supported living.

People I know that have had 16 plus, there a couple of them that have been pressured to leave the house that they live, and like, its like got into a big argument and they've actually left and then its just gone downhill. And I don't know what the situation there is but I don't think they should like, keep pressuring them to leave.

- it's like they should say like you have a choice whether you stay or you leave and then they can make the choice then if they wanna leave then they go back to whoever they have and say I'm ready to go and get packed their stuff and leave if they want to, but if they don't want to they can say I'm staying here I aint leaving this is my best place. They should give us a choice to stay somewhere they should give us more options in some of the services. They make a lot of decisions for you no matter what age you are than you actually make for yourself

-I think another thing is, is the leaving care grant, the fact that, the fact that if you don't leave care then you don't get that help cos like my sister isn't leaving care and she would want the money for her car and like, cos that was before the g2g stuff as well g2g card which is got to go card erm where you get money to do like activities, or you can have driving lessons or whatever, but because she didn't to start

with, she didn't have anything to help her pay for her car and stuff and I just think that even if you're not leaving care that you should get something to help with it cos she's nearly 18 and I.. dunno what she's doing...

- I think they should erm recap foster carers on the rules and stuff because I'm not allowed in my sisters car till she's 21 and erm, but and there's other, other children I know, who go, other kids in care who go in there brothers and sisters cars who are not 21 yet.

Anything else?

Some foster carers will treat someone fairly, they'll do that and next thing you know someone's got more then you and if it was fair... its like they've got Nintendo wiis and everything and all the games and then just like, you say can I have exactly that, like I'll walk up to my room and J..... got a new game yesterday and like, I get new clothes, which is not like games and everything but you need the same amount of stuff just not like every other week or, **J....** basically gets it everyday. He'll be like 'can I have it' and they'll be like 'no' - 'can I get it can I get it', and 'fine' then he gets it, the littluns go can we get it 'no', can we get it 'no'. They say we're going to treat them fairly; they treat their own children differently to how they treat you, yeah.

But erm it's like that with our house kind of. Because **S.....** gets all new toys and stuff but the way I think of it is just because I don't get the things that she does every day its different because I get money when I go out or if- I mean I'm going to **New York** next year and I'll get money for that and stuff like that and it, it does seem a bit unfair sometimes, but it evens out at the end of the day.

END OF INTERVIEW

Track 12

What promises do you want social services to make to you?

-keep the pledge basically, that's all I'd say, no I'd say more but I'd make sure they kept what they sign to. And then some sort of punishment was made if you didn't. there's no point having a pledge, keeping to it, saying you're going to keep to it and if they don't keep to it there not punished... and...

-they should have like, some sort of confidentiality thing

-like obviously there are some things that they can't keep confidential but they should do what Irene does, if we try and talk to Irene sometimes she'll say, now, what you're about to tell me think about it,

because if it's about to put you or someone else in danger then I've got to tell someone if it's just something you need to talk to someone about then I can talk to you about it, but she always makes it clear what she can keep confidential and what she can't and I think that sometimes social workers aren't clear about that. And like, its happened to me before I've spoken to someone about something and then it's all been reported back and I thought it was in confidence but obviously It weren't.

-and also yeh like the time thing, don't keep changing the date, if you make a date and something else comes up, don't just cancel it because you know there's something better to do, cos if we just cancelled everyday I'm sure they'd start to get pretty pissed off really. I have a lot better things to do then sit around waiting for a social worker you know what I mean? And at least ring up if they not gonna turn up, not turning up.

-erm be up front, because a lot of the time things they say like, oh we'll look into it, well they've already looked in to it found out but then cant, don't wanna tell us cos they don't want to give us bad news but they could just say it cos its annoying like, when you know they know the answer to something, they're just not telling ya.

-and like I like, like in moving placements, its got a lot better recently but like before like when I first went into care I had no choice about where I was gonna go, they don't listen, they think they know what's best when, actually you know, you're your own person, you know what you want, it may not be the right thing at the time but you know you need to find out by yourself, no one else can tell you what's wrong or right.

Communication...?

Well that like, with my social worker, I'll ring her and she'll be like, 'oh I was just about to ring you' every single time she says that, and it's like...yeh I bet you were.

Yeh and like you know my old social worker I could never ever get hold of her, she was always training and stuff I had a college interview, I had no idea where it was so I was trying to see if I could sort out transport and I missed it cos I couldn't get there, couldn't go up there and that was something quite important and stuff like that you know like, I had this other social worker which was only on for like 2 days a week.. Which was great if you wanted her on any of the other 3 days! You know, you can't run away on a Monday because there out

of the office!! You can't die on a Wednesday cos they won't be there... Ahh, yeh, so there you go, they should be there.

-I mean fair enough we've got to understand that they've got their own lives. But at the end of the day they are saying there going to be a corporate parent, so parents are there like 24/7 so if they are going to make that promise to be a parent they should be there 24/7 as well.

-I mean if they can't be there 24/7 make sure there's someone that can and we know who they are. It's like my social worker went on leave for like 3 months she went 'oh you did have a support social worker' I was like and they are? Who?? Because we just don't get told things like that.

-and also like, when they move, when social workers change departments whatever, you get a letter and I've had about 7 different social workers and every time I get sent the exact same letter saying how it's been a pleasure working with you and then they've written my name at the top and she hasn't even signed it, yeh 'keep in touch', social workers haven't even signed it they've just written their name in one of those fonts on the computer, you know they send it to everyone else. And I think they should do things, a bit more personal like, come out and say oh um, just so you know I've got to leave and even if they don't want to say why just come and say goodbye and then like introduce you to your new social worker

Yeh I think that like, having your old social worker to introduce you to your new one, I think it's quite good, they did that for me which umm, I had a social worker for like, I had a social worker for a really long time who introduced me to my leaving care social worker which was good but I saw that social worker once ever since I was 15 and a half, and I haven't actually got a social worker at the minute cos they can't provide me with one, she had too many cases so she didn't want me.

But um, like also It should be like, social workers, when they do their job and sign this pledge thing they should realise what their actually signing up to because I think some of them do it and training and everything but don't actually realise what their signing up to cos if you're in care like if you're a looked after person, obviously you going to be a bit fucked up in the head, because something must of happened to you to be put in to care, so they've got to know how to deal with that as well and certain social workers I think go in to it with their eyes closed and their a bit like I'm not saying names but my social worker she's a bit iffy in the head and she'll be like 'oh how are you today' and it's like she talks like she's a fairy! She does, she nearly cried when I got my nose, I mean my lip pierced she was like

'do you know how dangerous that is?' she was like, she panicked, like one of typical...it's like 'how do you feel about that?' and I was like, it feels like I'm going to fucking punch you in the face if you ask me that again.

-'And what make you feel that way' (***puts on funny voice, laughter from both girls***)

-Its patronising, she's really really patronising

-she is though, some of them like some social workers don't realise actually what they are going to have to deal with until they actually deal with it and they panic and don't know how to deal with it, and then they go on leave because of the stress or whatever it's a stressful job you need to be able to deal with stress and I know some cases are worse than others but like, compassionate leave? What the hell is that, do you know what I mean? It like you talk, I phoned social services about a year ago and said oh can I speak to my social worker and they were like 'oh she's on leave' – so for how long 'we're not sure if she'll be returning, right so have I got another social worker? No. so who do I talk to? Don't really know, its like oh great..!

-and also, like treat people as individuals cos obviously like, we've had very different pasts haven't we? Well actually, pretty much- we're in care for totally different reasons and then like some social workers don't look at you as a person they just look 'oh you're in care' blah de blah de blah...the don't actually go into that, they read your file- ah that pisses me off, yeh they're allowed to read your file and they'll go 'oh I've been reading your file and I can see that this happened' well I don't really remember that can you tell me a bit more about it, 'oh no not allowed', have to wait till your 18. They have like these massive files where they can read anything about you but you're not allowed to read it.

- And I think that erm, if you're going to be a social worker, if you're going to sign up to this thing it's going to take a lot of time to build a relationship with a young person cos I think some people expect it to just happen but it doesn't and if you are in care and you've been moved around a lot and you've been taken away from your family, you're not looking to trust someone who works for the people who took you away from your family so it's going to take a long time to work up to that, I think sometimes they don't realise that. I think that's quite important.

-and like, yeah, be understanding of young people. I mean we've got a girl with us she's called **A....** she's 13, she hates her social worker she won't even like talk to her or nothing and let's say the worker rang her to say she was going to take her out for a coffee, the foster mum wouldn't even tell her that because she knows she'll be out all day. You've got to understand that if, if they're not getting on with their social worker then, you know, try and fit them in with someone else do you know what I mean? And also if you're sitting there with your social worker and you've had a really shitty week you just want to talk about it, and they keep doing that, you're talking to them and there just nodding away and you think for fucks sake just go, they might as well anyway, so yeh it does take a lot of time as well like not just you have to spend time with the young person not just ring them now and again you actually have to get interes.. Find out what their interests are and things like that cos otherwise you're going to be a shit social worker and no one will want ya.

END OF INTERVIEW

Track 13

What do you want to be on the pledge?

Urrrr... young people getting you the promise of some permanent placement, somewhere to stay. Errr

Making sure they're treated like everyone else

Make sure that you don't get just pushed on from one place to another and get thrown out that school that they're in already

I think it happened to a few of us having one social worker and suddenly changing to a different social worker which kept happening to a few of us.

You get to know them and then they just leave or summit then you get a brand new one and you don't have a clue who they are. When I got my new social worker no one wanted to tell me about them or meet them or anything so I had a new social worker and didn't know the hell what was going on so... confused.

Is there anything from what other people have brought up that you agree with? (lists some topics)

-yeh like letting you know about new social workers, should be a definite one that they tell you about.

-they should warn you so you can say if you don't want to go to that placement say 'I don't want to go to that placement' give you a choice,

of what area you want to be in like wanna be in a city or countryside or summit. Yeh I was in one placement and then I was sitting there at lunch one day and they suddenly said, oh by the way your social worker said they are going to move you soon and I was like, I didn't know and they were like 'woah. Hang on where did this come from' so...

Leaving care?

-its going ok for me, cos apparently I am going to keep my social worker at leaving care and she's going to work for that team now, so I am going to keep the same social worker.

-we do conferences and consultations; we sort our website out, consultations and try and get as many people involved. Yeh you get all sorts of different people come to conferences like social workers and bosses and other children, all sorts, different groups and organisations. Its really good, we done acting last time- bit of a surprise for me last time because I met my brother there, nah, wasn't expecting it, just happened to walk in on him and he was doing an agricultural sort of thing just saw him there and I was like... wow...yeh.

-yeh cos they like, they sort of represent us, we represent ourselves at some of the conferences and show what we can do and stuff

-also err social workers there at conferences, they get to hear what we say and what we want to change and stuff like that so yeh its pretty cool. And they actually listen to us, cos there are loads of people there and they don't want to look like they're not listen to us so they actually listen when we're at the conferences.

We still weren't happy with that boss though, because he like, came in at the start and did all the quiz, we had an ice breaker to start with, and he joined in with that, then half way through went out and came back at the end and said it was really good and it was like you didn't even see half of it you walked out!

INTERVIEW ENDS

Track 14

What would you want on the pledge?

Honesty- what was that thing? The quality of children's homes and foster care look good, make sure it's all kept in one pattern instead of having everything different.

Is there a big difference between children's homes and foster care?

Yeh, like erm money wise and stuff really, more allowance they get and stuff see, that's about it

Tell us about the honesty thing

Like been trustworthy to the children and stuff cos they build up a relationship, it's all about trust really, as soon as a child can trust one they can go from there, but if a child don't trust them then they'd be no good. That's all I can think of.

How can we build trust?

Well like talking to them and find out the things like, that they're like interested in and stuff. And like try build a relationship really from there, get on from there.

END OF INTERVIEW