

Young Inspectors REPORT 2011

Inspection of the educational support available for looked after children and care leavers in Camden

Who are the young inspectors?

Young Inspectors are service users of the Family Services and Social Work (FSSW) Looked After Children service, aged 16 - 19.

Every summer a team of Young Inspectors is selected by the Participation Officer in FSSW. This year the Young Inspectors were asked to inspect the educational support available for looked after children and care leavers.

Why are Young Inspectors doing the inspection?

The main reason for carrying out the inspection is to find out:

- what educational support is available to Camden looked after children and care leavers.
- what is working well.
- what needs to be changed to make the support better.

What did the inspection involve?

The work of the Young Inspectors involved the following tasks:

- Research to find out what the government says children should get and what support Virtual Academies (Looked After Children Education Academies) provide in other authorities.
- Prepare a list of the most important things that (in an ideal world) would make for an excellent education support service.
- Write questions for children, foster carers and social workers to find out what is good about the support offered at present and what should be changed.
- Write interview questions for senior managers of the LAC services and consultants of Camden's LAC Academy and interview those key people who make decisions about services.
- Consultation with children and care leavers, foster carers and social workers using questionnaires at the consultation event.
- Posting and e-mailing questionnaires and collecting views by phoning children and foster carers who could not attend the event.
- Make recommendations for change based on the feedback received in the interviews and consultation.
- Help write a report about the inspection findings for children, foster carers and managers.



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAID ABOUT WH

VIEWS OF CHILDREN AGED

8-16

1

Have you ever had any help from the LAC Academy?



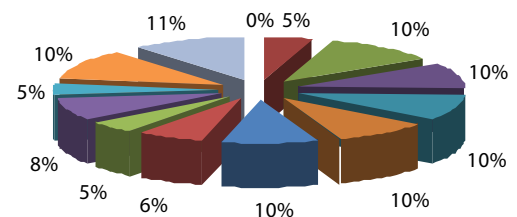
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Do you feel that you are listened to at PEP meetings?



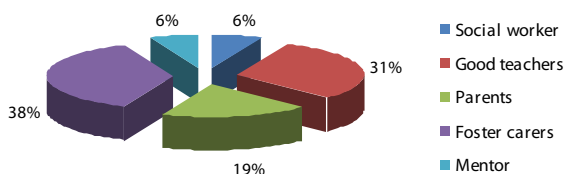
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What helps you to do well at school?



4

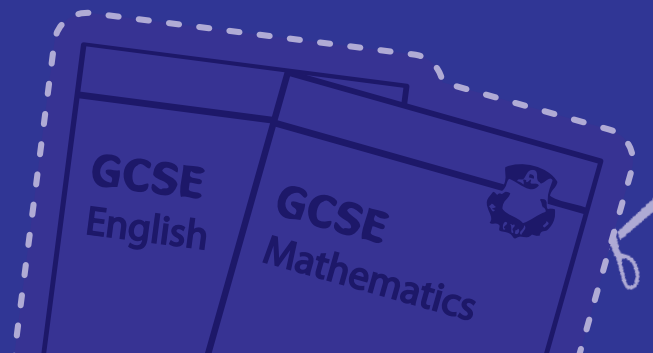
Who do you think helps you the most to get good grades?



Extra support outside school (homework - 1 to 1 tuition)	Emotional support/help with worries and feelings
Staying in the same school even when there is a change of foster carers	Financial help with books, school equipment and tutors
Guidance and advice from a teacher or social worker	Knowing what support services are around
Staying with the same foster carer	Mentoring from a particular teacher who takes an interest in you and your learning
Having a positive role model at school	Help with motivation

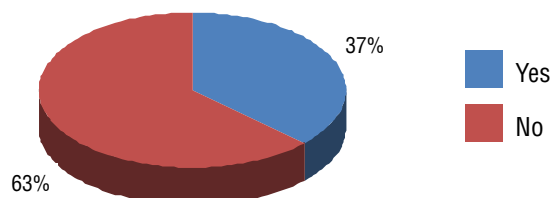
WHAT HELPS THEM DO WELL AT SCHOOL

VIEWS OF CARE LEAVERS AGED 16-25



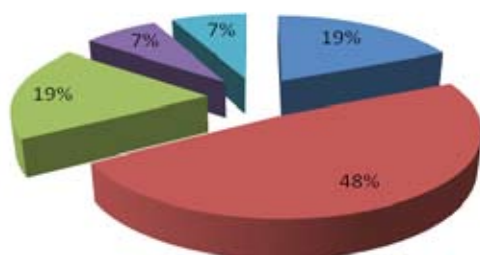
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Have you heard about Camden's Looked After Children Academy?



2

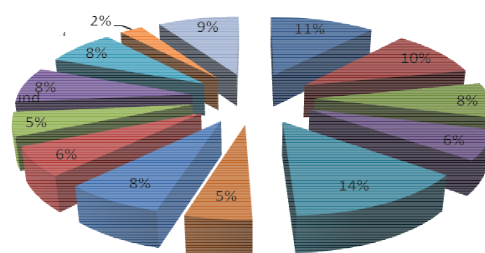
Who is most important in helping you to get good results at School/College?



■ Social workers
■ Good teachers
■ Foster Carers
■ Mentor
■ Myself

3

What helps you to do well at school/college?



Learning support in class	Guidance and advice
Extra support outside school	Placement stability
Emotional support/help with worries and feelings	Mentoring from a particular teacher/tutor
Staying in the same school even when there is a change of foster carers	Having a positive role model
Financial help	Careers advice
Knowing what services are available	Help with motivation
	Going to a good school

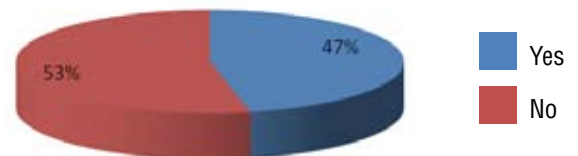


WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAID ABOUT WH

VIEWS OF FOSTER CARERS

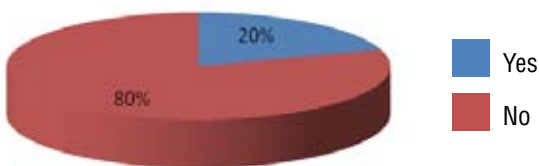
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Have you had any involvement with the LAC Academy (Virtual school for looked after children)?



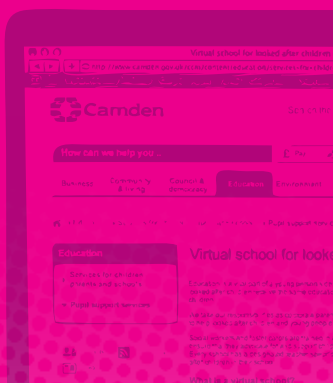
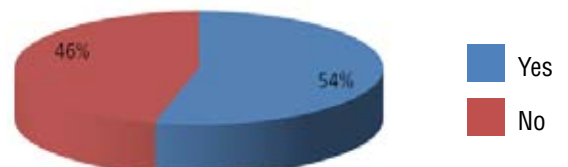
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Have you received training from the LAC Academy (Virtual school for looked after children)?



3

Are there any other areas where you feel you need additional support / information to help you support your foster child with education?

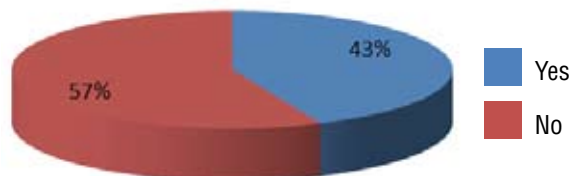


WHAT HELPS THEM DO WELL AT SCHOOL

VIEWS OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND PERSONAL ADVISORS

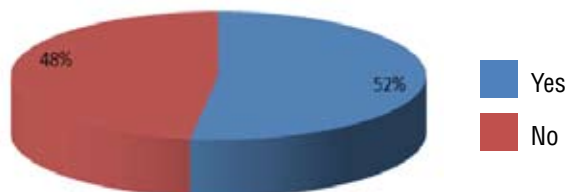
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Do you get a copy of school reports at the end of each year from the school / college?



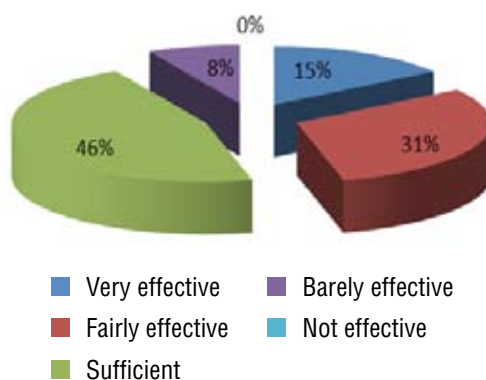
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Does the training you get, help you to understand the educational needs of looked after children and care leavers?



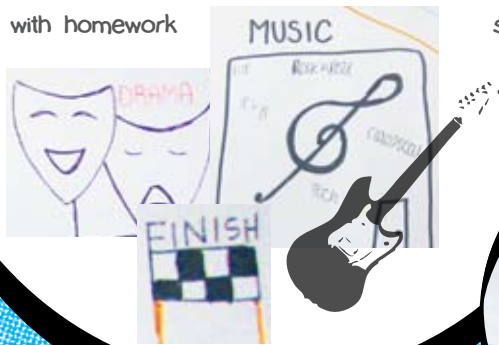
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How effective are PEP meetings at school?



CHILDREN'S WISH LIST

- To have a laptop, because other children in my class understand how to use it and they have one at home but I don't
- Stay with the foster carer I am with now
- More additional help with the course work
- More books available for those who can't afford it
- Help with homework
- Resources, so that I can do well
- Get help in English and Maths
- Laptop and books to help with my course
- Buy a new guitar
- More support for care leavers
- Books for the course and supportive teachers



FOSTER CARER'S WISH LIST

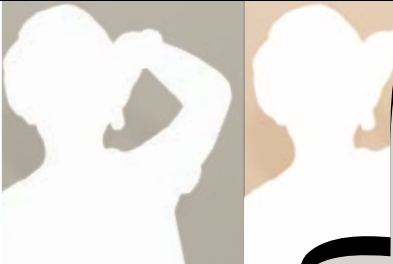
- More funding for educational resources and outside activities during school holidays
- More educational books
- Summer club to support LAC to progress in the educational system
- Support with computer equipment

SOCIAL WORKER'S WISH LIST

- Laptops for children and care leavers
- Resources and individual tuition
- Supporting self confidence and attainment
- More peer mentors
- Better link with Designated Teachers
- Support for all children and young people to achieve their goals, not just on GCSE's but also on other schemes that children and young people want to engage in
- More funding for care leavers who want to go on to vocational training



YOUNG INSPECTORS' VIEWS ON THE INSPECTION




"This project has motivated me even more to push through any educational barriers that may stop me from achieving my best. I enjoyed interviewing the professionals and hearing their point of view about the educational support and how they would like to change it"

CHLOE




"I enjoyed sharing ideas and putting ideas to work. It was a great experience to interview senior managers. I learnt new things like writing questionnaires, analysing data from questionnaires and making pop art with photo shop".

STEPHANIE




"This project has helped me to improve my confidence to speak in front of other people. I am now motivated to make sure I can go to University and get good qualifications."

NAZEER



"I enjoyed working with a good group of young people my age. I enjoyed interviewing managers of services as they gave full answers to our questions and all the information we needed for the project."

AMANDA



"The project has changed the way I view certain things in life. It has increased my confidence. I am going to use the skills that I have learnt in the future as they really helped me improve my self-esteem and motivated me to do well and succeed to my highest potential."

ALLIE

WHAT HELPS LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN DO WELL AT SCHOOL / COLLEGE?

Young Inspectors carefully considered what helps looked after children to do well at school or college and identified the following 15 points as most important:

1. A place at a good school
2. Availability of excellent advice and guidance
3. Adults having aspirations for children and young people and helping them to develop their own aspirations
4. Good communication - between teachers, social workers, professionals and young people
5. Learning Mentors
6. Friendly, compassionate staff, helping to bring out positive traits and skills
7. Additional support at school and outside school such as individual tuition, including primary school, revision courses and homework
8. Encouragement and empowerment
9. Praise and recognition of achievements throughout their time in education
10. Access to excellent facilities and resources, including provision of laptops, books and tutors
11. Opportunities for extracurricular activities and educational trips
12. Emotional support
13. Help in finding jobs, training and apprenticeship schemes
14. Career advice and guidance
15. Inspirational mentors looking out for CYP in care and giving positive encouragement

Young Inspectors' Key Messages

to help looked after children do well at school or college

The following recommendations are based on the responses received from children, young people, social workers and foster carers:

- 1. To provide support and motivation** for all LAC to help them achieve their goals, not just at GCSE, but also in other qualifications and achievements in non academic subject like sports, music and drama.
- 2. To ensure the availability of individual tuition** for children and young people of all ages. Those children who had individual tuition said that they have benefited greatly from the provision.
- 3. To extend the education section of the Pathway Plan** to include the support needed for further and higher education, training and employment. The service should consider implementing an effective PEP for everyone up to the age of 18 and ensuring PEP meetings are held for this age group.
- 4. To have an education specialist assigned to the 16+ service** to provide specific help and support for care leavers with education and to maintain contact with the LAC Designated Teacher.
- 5. Clear information** needs to be provided for social workers, foster carers and LAC about what educational support LAC are entitled to.
- 6. To provide regular training** for social workers and foster carers to help them keep up to date with the different types of qualifications available, the education system in the UK and information for social workers about the LAC Academy.
- 7. Foster carers and social workers should reinforce their role of motivating and inspiring** LAC to do well educationally and in their interests and activities.
- 8. Social workers, foster carers and LAC highlighted the critical importance of laptops to enable learning.**
- 9. A peer mentoring scheme** to be set up to motivate and encourage children and young people to do well in their education and to have goals and ambitions.
- 10. Children and young people in care need to be supported emotionally** to ensure they are able to progress educationally and should be praised when they do well.
- 11. Stability of foster placement and continuity of school placement** are the best ways to help improve children and young people's chances to do well educationally.
- 12. To have inspirational mentors** looking out for children and young people in care and giving positive encouragement to them.

If you would like to be a Young Inspector or would like to know more about the project, please contact us via the Backchat website.