

# Our Lives, Our Hopes, Our Future

## Draft

**Cumbria  
Children Looked  
After Strategy –  
2019-23**

**My dream is to...**



*Remember don't be afraid to speak out  
You are who you are for a reason.  
Thinking about what happened in the past made me realise,  
How grateful I am for who I am.*  
**From a poem by Cumbrian child looked after**

## 1. Our Vision

The vision for the strategy was developed by children looked after during the summer holidays in 2018. It says:

*“We think children looked after in Cumbria need love and to have a good life and the chance to make friends. Keeping the same social worker really helps. Keep talking to us about contact with our family. We need a good education.”*

*“Keep us safe, let us make our own decisions. Help us live more freely.”*

*“We believe that children who are looked after in Cumbria need to be given the same adventures and opportunities as any other child, and have all the love they need to have a good life. They should be cared for in a home where they are treated as part of the family.”*

*“Children looked after need love because if they did not have love they will not have a nice family.”*

### **Children and Young People who are Looked After said:**

If we could send a text to Children’s Services it would say:

- We all want to feel safe and loved like other children and not ashamed of being in care
- We all want to feel safe inside and outside
- We want to be happy
- Not so many rules – Let me make some decisions
- Stop making us change to new social workers. Soon as I get used to one I get a new one. We’re going to run out!
- We don’t want to feel different to other children who are not in care

## 2. Why do we need a strategy?

Cumbria County Council is committed to making sure that all people are healthy and safe. For children in Cumbria, this means that we support them to have the best possible start in life. In a small number of cases this means taking children into care, supporting them to be adopted, fostered or placed with wider family.

When this happens we want for every child what a loving parent would want for their own. This means that we need to set out what our plans are to make sure that every child in care can achieve the best they can, and be the person they want to be.

Not only does this apply to children in care, it also applies when a child leaves care. Therefore alongside this strategy we are publishing a Local Offer for Care Leavers. This will help care leavers see what advice, information and support is available to them up to the age of 25.

We recognise that the decision to take a child into care is a serious one. We are keen in this strategy to set out how we plan to prevent children being in care, and, where possible, to ensure they can stay with their families.

The Children Looked After Strategy describes what we want to achieve over the next 4 years and the action we will be taking to make sure all children looked after and care leavers get to maximise their potential.



### 3. Who is this strategy for?

The strategy is for all of Cumbria’s children looked after and care leavers. This includes everyone from birth to age 25 who continues to be supported by the Council and partner organisations. It includes children from Cumbria placed outside the county and focuses on all aspects of their lives.

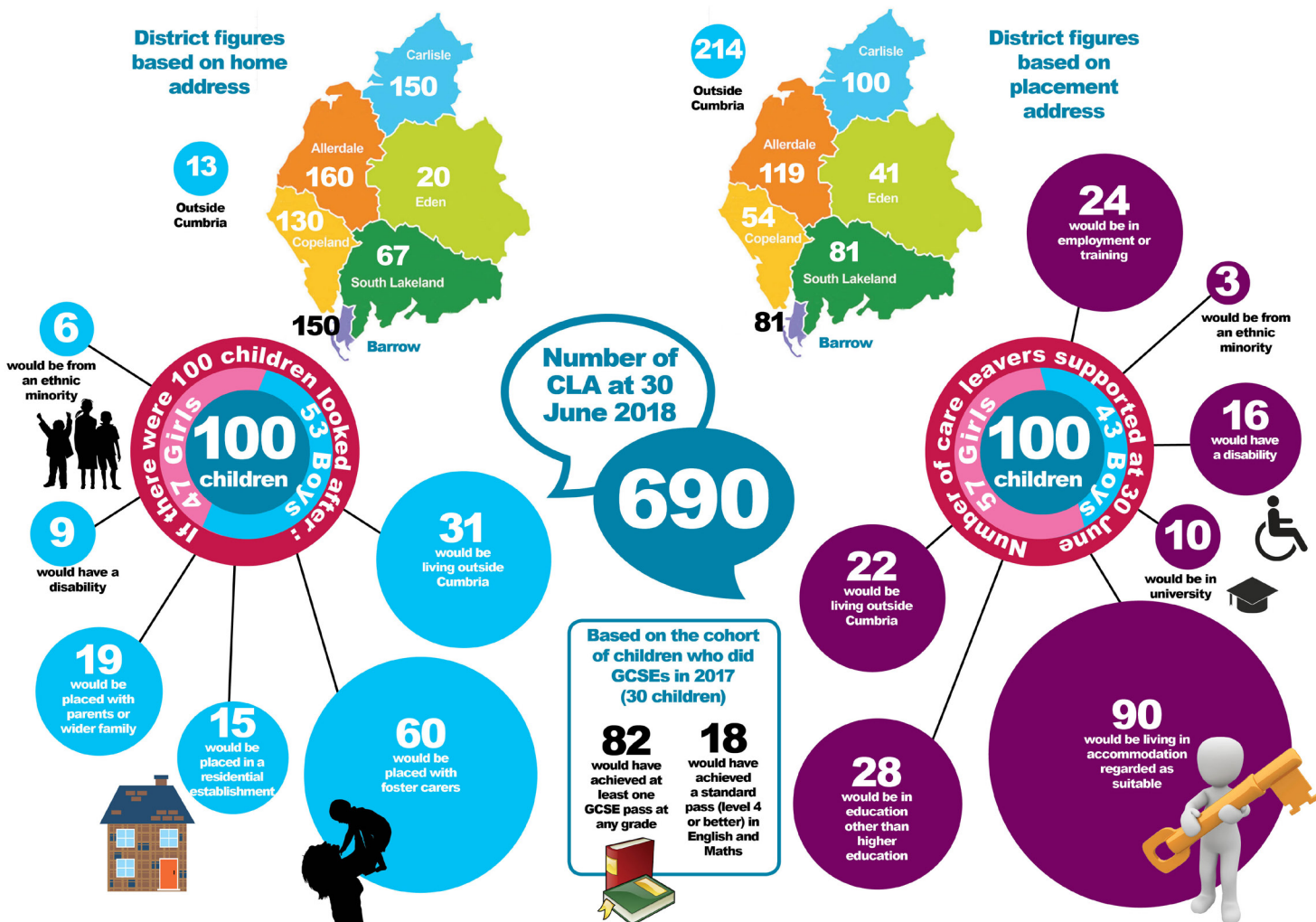
In June 2018 we had 690 children looked after, to give an idea of where they live, how they are placed and how they are getting on, we have produced the 1 in 100 chart below.

#### Who am I?

*I am someone who....*

*Likes reading; Likes animals; Likes eating; Likes fish; Likes fish and chips; Likes gaming; Likes being me; Is a good horse rider; Is a person; Is good at painting; Is good and nice; An individual; Unique; Like a super hero; Eats ham to keep me strong; Me; Beautiful; Funny; Is nice; Is fast; Is good at Lego Ninjago (go on adventures and get baddies)*

**From Blue Jam consultation session with children looked after about the strategy**



## 4. Where are we now?

### Successes

Currently Cumbria is improving its services for children looked after. Our original Children Looked After Strategy (2015) set out our ambition to make improvements by 2018. This meant addressing parts of the service that were not working well and putting in place new systems and practices. For children the following things have improved since 2015:

- On coming into care a child has a Permanence Plan in place that says where they are going to go. This means less children are staying in the care system unnecessarily;
- Children have a much greater say in how they want to be treated and this is strongly reflected in their reviews.
- The voice of children is much stronger thanks to improvements in the use of advocacy and the Independent Reviewing Officer service, who can speak up on behalf of the child;
- We are seeing more children in care being supported into university and have opened up access to apprenticeships and traineeships on a scale providing better future opportunities;
- We have more in-house foster carers and are building a stronger relationship between the foster carers and the Council;
- Children in care are benefitting from much better management oversight, which means social workers are being better supported to provide the best possible care for the child.

### Children's Improvement Plan – getting to good

Following the 2017 Ofsted inspection, Cumbria moved from a rating of Inadequate to Requires Improvement. There were many aspects of the service which were rated as Good, and the Children's Improvement Plan sets out what we need to do to make sure that we reach a rating of Good or Outstanding in future. The actions from the Improvement Plan have been included in this strategy.

### Signs of Safety

In delivery of the strategy we have adopted the Signs of Safety model. This is a particular method of working with children and families at the earliest point when they come into contact with our services. Using Signs of Safety will enable us to build a more relationship and solution focused approach. It helps us to work more in partnership with children and their families/networks and enable them to find their own solutions.

### CLA Recovery Plan

While we celebrate the progress we have made, we still have a number of challenges if we are to reach our goal of being an outstanding local authority for children looked after and our care leavers.

**High numbers of children looked after:** Our number of children looked after remains above the average for local authorities with similar populations to Cumbria. In June 2018 we had:

- 690 children looked after
- 294 in foster care (own provision)
- 10 in Cumbria County Council residential care
- 78 in other arrangements placed for adoption or placed with parents for example
- 308 were in externally provided placements (95 in residential homes and 213 through Independent Fostering Agencies).
- There has been a decrease in children under 1 year's old coming into care, but an increase in 10-15 year olds, who are harder to place.

The spread of children looked after across Cumbria is also a challenge. This is shown with the rate of children looked after per 10,000 population (the average for the North West is 91 per 10,000). Looking at these figures there are large gaps between the rates of children looked after in Barrow and Copeland than Eden and South Lakeland, even when accounting for rurality and differences in population:

- Allerdale 160 (88.4 per 10,000 children)
- Copeland 130 (99.6 per 10,000 children)
- Carlisle 150 (70.5 per 10,000 children)
- Eden 20 (21.8 per 10,000 children)
- Barrow 150 (111.9 per 10,000 children)
- South Lakeland 67 (38.1 per 10,000 children).

**Sufficiency of placements within Cumbria:**

Sufficiency of placements is about there being the right amount of foster placements and specialist placements for children looked after in the local area. Throughout much of the country Councils are struggling to meet their sufficiency requirements, resulting in more children being placed out of their local area. This is happening in Cumbria and has been driven by the increased complexity of the needs of children entering the system. Across the North West this can be seen in terms of the increased numbers of purchased placements in the North West from 571 in 2015 to 836 in 2018.

To address these challenges, the CLA Recovery Plan has been developed to:

- Increase availability of local residential placements.
- Increase number of in-house foster carers.
- Explore the market for a range of supported and independent living options for 16-18 year olds including increase use of Homestays.
- Provide good management oversight of placements.
- Strengthen the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer to provide oversight and challenge.

**5. Where do we want to be?**

We want to be known as one of the best local authorities for supporting our children looked after and care leavers. To achieve this ambition, we need not only to address the challenges we face, but to set out a positive vision based on better outcomes.

The Government have produced new guidance on Corporate Parenting Principles that local authorities should follow when making plans for children looked after and care leavers.

**These principles are:**

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children looked after and care leavers. (Best Interests)
2. To encourage children looked after and care leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings. (Voice of the child and young person)
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children looked after and care leavers. (Voice of the child and young person)
4. To help children looked after and care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners. (Access to services)
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children looked after and care leavers. (Aspirations and outcomes)
6. For children looked after and care leavers to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work. (Safe and stable)
7. To prepare children looked after and care leavers for adulthood and independent living. (Preparation for adulthood).

In making this strategy we worked with children looked after, care leavers, our staff and our elected Members about where we want to be.

**To act in the person's best interests and promote their physical and emotional health and well being**

Children looked after have been very clear that emotional health and mental health is one of their top priorities. They would like to see an improved CAMHS service, better information about what is available and for us to continue to provide online support so they get instant help.

**Outcome:** We will review the fast track arrangements into CAMHS and ensure Children looked after and care leavers will have better access to and experience of emotional health and wellbeing and mental health support across the system. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Smooth transitions for people accessing CAMHS services into adult mental health services.
- Early help and intervention around emotional health and wellbeing is consistent for all children looked after, and that there is effective signposting and referral to a range of health and therapeutic support where CAMHS is not appropriate.

**Outcome:** We will work with children looked after, foster carers and care leavers to uptake opportunities for sport and physical exercise, recreation and healthy lifestyles (including food). The impact of this will be seen by:

- Increased uptake of leisure passes as a result of this being in the Care Leaver Offer;
- Children looked after and care leavers participating in a mixture of targeted and universal activity to improve physical health, fitness and active leisure.

### Voice of the child and young person

Children looked after have told us how important it is to have people who are trustworthy and do not put them under pressure. That people speak to them about the good things and not just when there is an emergency. They have also said that they do not like being asked the same questions again and again, and that it is really important that professionals treat them with respect, and understand the stress caused by changing appointments and being late.

**Outcome:** There will be a stable and meaningful relationship between every child looked after and the team that supports them. This will include the social worker, carers, foster carers and partners involved in the child's life – including school, health, third sector and others involved. Children and young people are engaged in the role out of Signs of Safety and can say whether it is making a difference to them. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Children's plans are simple, accessible and show the child or young person has ownership of them;
- There is evidence of meaningful direct work with the child or young person which informs planning, and is based on their life story.

**Outcome:** Young people will be able to tell us how things are improving. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Young people directly reporting that the voice of the child is being heard and acted on.
- Greater participation in Children in Care Councils, Care Leaver Forums and through a variety of channels including greater use of digital support.
- Our elected Councillors (or Members) would be able to promote the interests of children looked after and care leavers in their local communities (this could be done by promoting foster carer campaigns, encouraging local businesses to provide work experience opportunities and let them know about apprenticeship schemes, and generally raising questions about whether people and organisations are thinking about children looked after and care leavers, or could do more for them).

### Access to services

Children looked after and care leavers want to have access to a full range of services, from transport, leisure, advice and information, and access to cultural, sporting and physical activity.

**Outcome:** Children looked after and care leavers benefit from access to a wide range of support from district councils, health partners and the third sector. For Care Leavers this will be published in the Care Leaver Offer. The impact of this will be seen by:

- District councils, NHS and third sector organisations contributing to the Care Leaver Offer.
- Greater involvement in sports, culture, and social activity, for example access to leisure passes.
- Better provision of advice and information.
- Financial support and relief, i.e. Council Tax relief for care leavers, and similar kinds of support targeted at foster carers.
- Support to access transport to get about, i.e. through travel passes or additional support in learning to travel independently i.e. for young people with a learning disability or autism).

## Aspirations and outcomes

Children looked after and care leavers have highlighted the importance of about having positive aspirations for their future. In particular they wanted to be able to access a wide range of post-16 learning, training and work opportunities, including universities and apprenticeships.

**Outcome:** We will develop an Aspiration Programme that will provide a joined up pathway towards people having a positive destination at 18 and beyond in relation to employment, education, training or participation in society. This will include a scheme of work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships, so that all children looked after and care leavers have a clear plan to ensure that they can access employment, learning and training suited to their aspirations. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Children are supported to think about their future in terms of learning and employment and a plan is put into place to help them reach their aspirations.
- Increased rate of care leavers in employment, education and training up to 25 years old.
- Increase in rates of children looked after and care leavers accessing work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships as well as Higher Education.
- All departments of the County Council offering work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships to children looked after and care leavers.
- Children looked after and care leavers actively supported to access work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships across the public sector.
- Increase in private sector employers signing up to the Care Leaver Charter and offering work experience, traineeships and apprenticeships to children looked after and care leavers.
- Adult and Community Education supporting care leavers up to age 25 to meet level 1 and 2 skills gaps.
- All care leavers who are not in employment, education and training, benefit from positive opportunities to participate through volunteering, social activities and do not experience isolation.
- Young parents as care givers who are not accessing education, employment and training do not feel stigmatised and are supported to plan for their future in terms of education, employment and training.

## Safe and stable

Children looked after clearly say they value their placements with foster carers, and see the social worker as an important person in their life. They value their siblings and close family, but also their friends and their pets. Having a secure home life, knowing the people involved in their care and being respected are vitally important to them. Tracking placements and making sure that all plans address this is vital in supporting stability.

**Outcome:** Children looked after will experience less moves, live closer to where they grew up, and benefit from the loving support of foster carers, who are supported by the Council. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Children report feeling safe and being well-looked after.
- Increased number of in-house foster carers.
- Use of Signs of Safety to strengthen the relationship between the foster carer and social worker in planning more jointly with the child.
- Foster-carers supported and trained so they can deal with the complex needs of children, reducing the risk of a placement breakdown.
- Foster-carer networks stronger and having more impact on policy.
- Foster-carers feel more supported by the services and through peer networks.
- Children are placed according to their assessed needs, and that matching with foster carers, contact and placement support are effective.

**Outcome:** Children placed with extended family and 'connected people' will receive a high standard of support. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Children say their social worker supports them well when they are living with extended family and friends.
- Where a child is placed with their family there will be a review to see if the child still needs to be looked after and whether other legal options are more appropriate.

**Outcome:** Children at risk of child exploitation will be safer and services will be better able to prevent children at risk. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Children at risk of exploitation and their families and carers get the support they need.
- Practitioners confident in identifying children at risk and working effectively with them to prevent harm.

**Outcome:** Children looked after and care leavers will get the same quality of service that respects their diversity and identity. This means culturally sensitive services that respond to diversity in relation to gender, sexuality, transgender, ethnicity, faith and disability. This will mean that Equality is embedded across the whole delivery of this strategy. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Effective training and support in place for foster carers and professionals on Equality issues.
- Participation activities reflective the diversity of children looked after and care leavers.
- That there is the cultural infrastructure in Cumbria to provide support around Disability, LGBT and BME groups, especially in relation to the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Programme (UASC). This can be done through promotion of foster caring recruitment among BME and LGBT groups, working with AWAZ and other community infrastructure organisations that reach minority groups and mapping local resources including places of worship, Halal shops and other support.

### Preparation for adulthood

Care leavers have fed back their priorities in terms of relationships, housing, managing their finances and access to education, work and training.

**Outcome:** We have produced a Care Leaver Offer that lets care leavers know what support they can receive around health, accommodation, relationships and social participation, access to training and employment and support around finances. This has been put together by the Council, NHS, District Councils and we will continue to add to the Care Leaver Offer. The impact of this will be seen by:

- Care leavers given support to take time to discover more about themselves and what they want from life when making decisions.
- Care leavers feel socially and emotionally connected to friends, family and the community, reducing loneliness and promoting good wellbeing.
- Increases in care leavers living in suitable accommodation.
- Care leavers managing their finances and benefitting from good financial support and advice.
- Decreases in care leavers involved in the criminal justice system.
- Care leavers reporting satisfaction with the support they are receiving in their transition to independence.
- Care leavers feeling confident to be open with friends, employers and others about being able to be open about their past without fear of stigma.

**Outcome:** Care Leavers who require adult social care and specialist health services, will benefit from a smooth transition from children's services, and continue to receive the support they need. The impact of this will be seen by:

Effective transition plans in place for all children, based on funding secured and in place, and early involvement of transitions workers.

Young people reporting they have been involved in their transition plan, understand the options and how they will be supported.

Parents and carers report positive experiences in being engaged in the shaping of the plans.

Transition points into post 18 services are well managed and part of a clear pathway, with young people and families feeling that they were well informed and supported into new services and decisions were clear and timely.





## 6. How will we get there?

While Cumbria County Council has lead responsibility for the strategy, making it happen will involve health services, district councils, police, schools and third sector organisations playing a crucial part. We will also be working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and employers to make sure that the needs of children looked after and care leavers are being addressed in the Cumbrian economy.

## 7. Delivering the plan

The Strategy will be delivered over 4 years. There will be an annual Delivery Plan setting out what we will be doing and when, with actions informed by what children and young people have told us and the Equality Impact Assessment.

The Corporate Parenting Board will be responsible for making sure that services are delivering against the strategy. They will receive quarterly a report updating progress. They will also carry out an annual 'deep dive' on the Equality Impact Assessment.

Every other year there will be a RESPECT assessment that will look at how we are doing against the standards they have set. The RESPECT assessment is led by young researchers with direct experience of care and care leaving. They interview senior managers, front line staff, foster carers and consult with children (including children placed out of county). They will present their report to Corporate Parenting Board.



# Appendix 1

## Blue Jam – 21, 22, 23 August – Children and Young People – Looking at issues around the Children Looked Strategy

(Photos and copies of art work/ story work to follow)

### Who am I?

- I am someone who....
  - Likes reading
  - Likes animals
  - Likes eating
  - Likes fish
  - Likes fish and chips
  - Likes gaming
  - Likes being me
  - Is a good horse rider
  - Is a person
  - Is good at painting
  - Is good and nice
  - An individual
  - Unique
  - Like a super hero
  - Eats ham to keep me strong
  - Me
  - Beautiful
  - Funny
  - Is nice
  - Is fast
  - Is good at Lego Ninjago (go on adventures and get baddies)

### What does safe look/feel like?

- Like a vault
- A blanket
- Happy
- Friendly
- Building
- No stress
- School
- Nice
- Warm
- Home
- Protected by superheroes
- Having my 3 dogs
- Sleep
- Feel peace
- Calm
- Home Is love, holidays, carers, sister, me, Greece, Pizza, dogs, friends, trips to Energi, gymnastics iphones, emojis

### Things I want to do

- I want to be Kai from Lego Ninjago, get the bad guys and look smart
- Get a job
- Go home
- Build a house
- Be a lifeguard
- Protect people
- Go to McDonald's
- Be a foster carer

### Who can help me do what I want to do?

- Myself
- Fireman
- Friends
- Brother/siblings
- Social Workers
- Foster carer
- Pets
- School
- Family

### Where have I been?

- Holidays
- Different homes
- Different schools
- Legoland
- Swimming
- Horse riding lessons
- Home

### Where do I want to go?

- To get a career
- Bakery
- Building site
- Gymnastics classes
- Singing

**Who can help me to get where I'm going?**

- People who know about jobs
- Mum
- Carers
- Training people
- Gymnastics people
- Someone who celebrates with me
- Children's Rights Officer
- Mum and Dad
- Fireman
- Friends
- Brother
- Siblings
- Foster carer
- Side kick – like a super hero
- Me
- Dad
- My dogs – they keep me happy

**What tools do I need on my journey?**

- Roof over my head
- Friends
- Dancing
- Food
- Someone to support us
- Chance to have some new experiences
- Money
- Music
- Career
- People to celebrate birthdays and Christmas with
- Clothes
- Holidays
- Love
- Someone to talk to
- My 3 dogs
- Best friend
- Mam and Dad
- Side Kick like a super hero
- Super hero gadgets that I need – Sidekick to help me out
  - Grapple hook to get you about and keep you from falling
  - Car – Need to get around
  - Invisibility spray in case don't want to be seen
  - Utility belt – Something to protect yourself
  - Shield for protection
  - Ability to save yourself

**Ideas for vision:**

**Key words** – Family, Normal, Safe

**Suggestions**

We think children looked after in Cumbria need love and to have a good life and the chance to make friends. Keeping the same social worker really helps. Keep talking to us about contact with our family. We need a good education.

Keep us safe, let us make our own decisions. Live more freely, not so many rules.

We believe that children who are looked after in Cumbria need to be given the same adventures , opportunities and all the love they need to have a good life. They should be cared for in a home where they are treated as part of the family.

Children looked after need love because if they did not have love they will not have a nice family.

Children should be offered a nice family and they should be treated not any differently and have the confidence to be the same as normal children and to let them so the same activities as normal people but to not be treatment and differently or not allowed access to what normal people have so therefore they can have the ability to be with family and see family and friends.

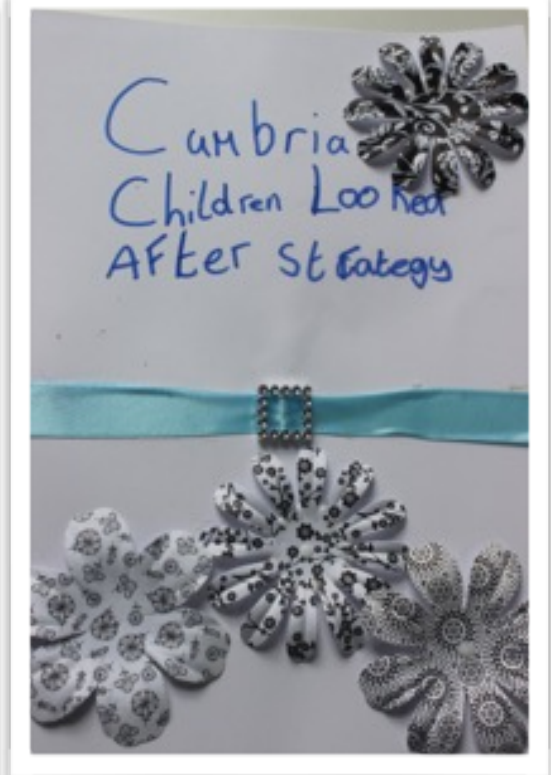
**If Children in Care could send a text to Children's Services what would it say?**

- We all want to feel safe and loved like other children and not ashamed of being in care
- We all want to feel safe inside and outside
- We want to be happy
- Not so many rules – Let me make some decisions
- Stop making us change to new social workers. Soon as I get used to one I get a new one. We're going to run out!
- We don't want to feel different to other children who are not in care

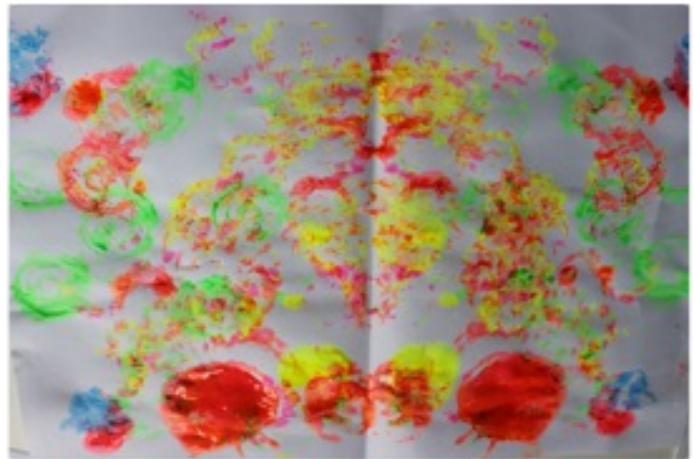
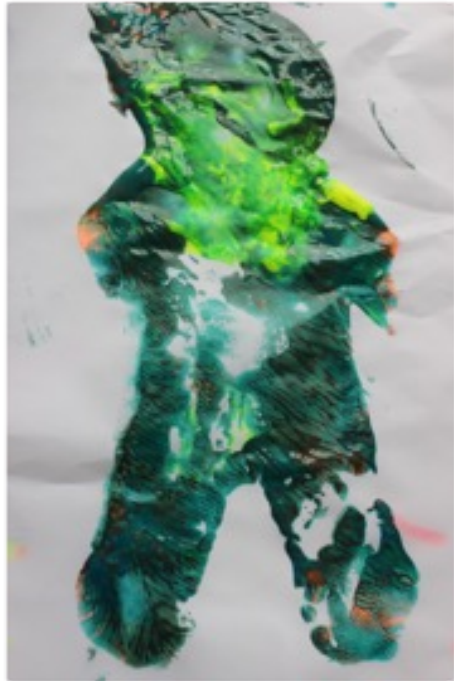
**Title**

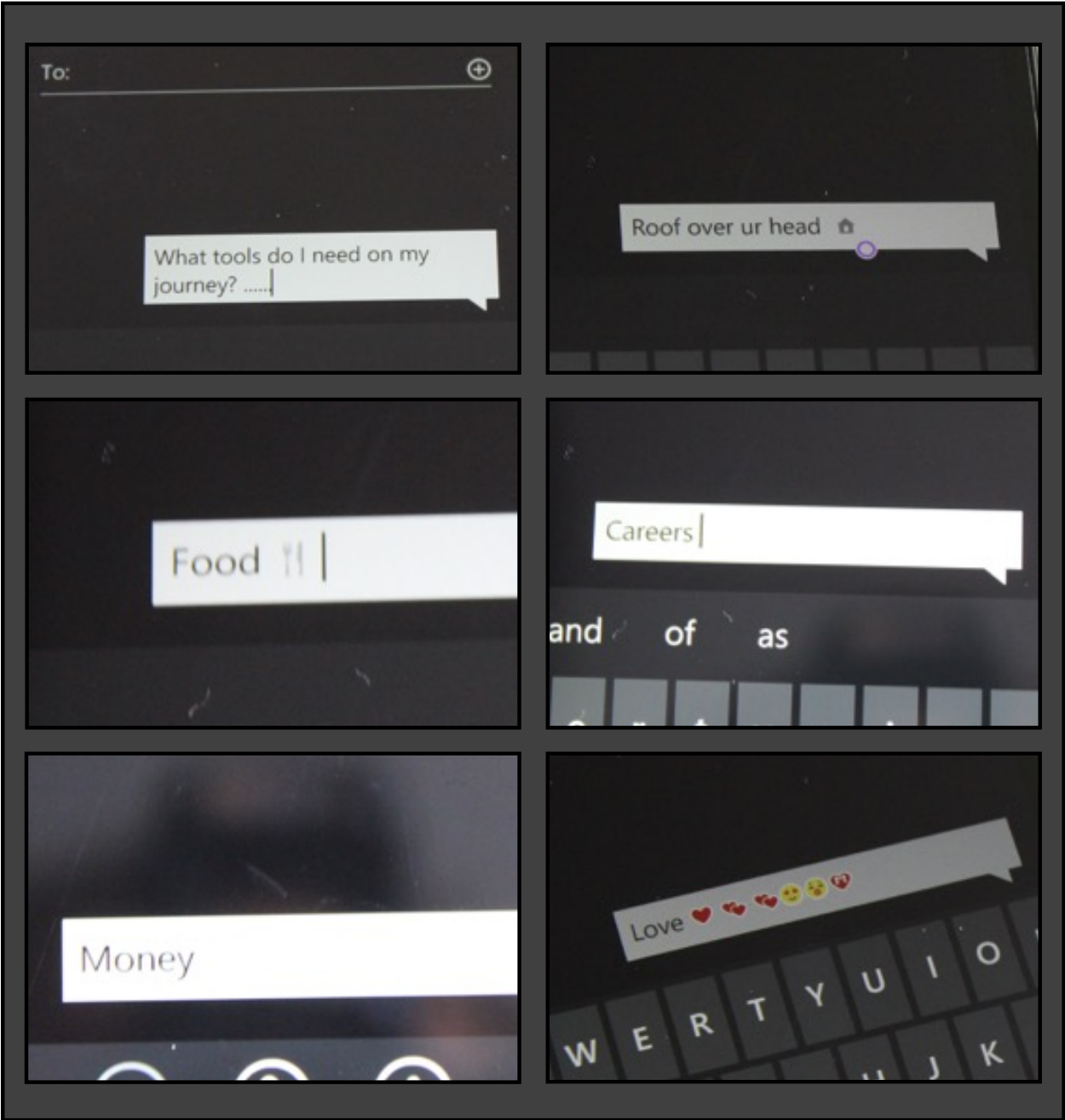
Would like those writing the document to suggest some titles that children and young people could chose from.

## Appendix 2











### The Dark Shadows

Batman was playing electric guitar in the Bat Cave, Alfred the butler is very sick and getting upset with the noise Batman is making. The Black Ninja has come round for some Lobster Thermidore with Batman and sees Alfred being upset. The black Ninja says to Batman, "Please play your guitar quietly."

Batman simply says back, "I'm Batman."

The Black Ninja is frustrated that Batman isn't listening to him. The Black Ninja tries again to give Batman some help and suggests they go with White Ninja and Green Ninja to the music festival.

Alfred thinks this is a good idea as he is getting tired of Batman's music. Alfred loves Batman a lot and has looked after him since he was six so sometimes gets a bit tired and needs help.

So Batman, Black Ninja, White Ninja and Red Ninja head to the Market Festival of music. They travel on Green Ninja's dragon, Mec, to get there.

When they arrive at the festival, Batman gets on the stage to sing and play the guitar, but the technical stuff breaks and everyone realises that Batman is lip syncing. The crowd boo and throw tomatoes and chase Batman through the streets. Snakes fly out of nowhere and cover the stage, and people run back to their homes.

The Batcopter and the rescue helicopter come to rescue everyone and take them back to the Bat Cave. Batman is upset and is not hitting his punching bag as hard as usual and a tear is rolling down his cheek. The Ninjas try to help Batman and say, "Don't cry. You are the strongest person we know. Please don't be embarrassed."

The Green and Black Ninjas go and get Alfred to cheer Batman up. Alfred is feeling better and is happy to see Batman. Alfred gives Batman a huge hug and makes him an extra big Lobster Thermidore. Alfred tells Batman he is proud of him and how he managed the situation.

Batman says to Alfred, "I know I don't always act like it, but I really love you and feel happy and proud that you are looking after me."

Alfred says to Batman, "I am so lucky to look after you. You are like my own son and I am happy you are here."





## The Trouble Chapter 1

Ryan is a normal person with a wonderful heart. He has a girlfriend called Beauty who used to go out with Jack, but the reason why Beauty dumped Jack is because Jack bullied Ryan and Beauty didn't like it. It started on a sunny day when Ryan and Beauty were kissing. Then out of nowhere Ryan grabbed out a ring and proposed to Beauty. They were on a romantic date having dinner.

Jack was spying on them and saw the proposal. He decided to kidnap Beauty because he still loved her. Ryan says he is going to the toilet and Jack decides it's a good time to trick Beauty into following him. He says that her parents want her, so she follows him. Ryan sees what is happening and sneaks behind them. Jack says her parents are at Jack's house.

Back at Jack's house, Jack put a love potion on Beauty. She falls asleep. Ryan, who has seen everything, comes out and throws a chair at Jack, but he dodges it. Meanwhile, Beauty wakes up and says she loves Jack over Ryan.

Ryan cries and runs away.

## Chapter 2

Angus, Ryan's older brother and Jack's reluctant friend, asks why Ryan is upset. Ryan tells Angus what has happened. Angus is really angry and says it has to stop, first me and now Beauty. He tells their parents Max and Belle what has happened and they all go to Jack's house.

When they arrive Jack is about to propose to Beauty. Ryan pushes Jack out of the way and Angus uses his cleverness to find out how to remove the love potion from the Beauty. He realises a chocolate chip cookie will cure her. They call Jack's parents who come and take him away. Ryan and Beauty finally get married and go on a honeymoon to Spain.



## A Week in Spain

Once there was going to be a week in Spain for one person named Maximus Jerimiah. He goes to Spain and finds there are lots of aliens there. One alien is very inventive. He invents a weather controller because Spain is too hot for him. An evil mastermind makes a machine to give him low confidence on purpose because then he knows the alien won't succeed. One of the humans, Maximus Jerimiah, helps the alien to defeat the evil mastermind by altering the mind machine into a shrinking machine instead. They shrink the mastermind.

Then they end up making the weather machine and it turns the small mastermind to ice. The alien feels good about himself.

The end.

Oh by the way the alien eats underpants.



**Murder Mystery:  
The Mysterious Murder**

**Scene One: A Street**

*(Emlinor and Henel stand upstage left, scheming. Downstage right, Mr. Jeffries and Mr. Sniegelheimer stand innocently. Jeffries and Sniegelheimer are played by a kitchen roll and a box.)*

Emlinor: We're so poor.

Henel: I'm totally broke. If only we could get some money fast.

Emlinor: Seems to me, the best way to get quick cash is to kill some rich people.

Henel: Where would we find some?

Emlinor: What about those two over there? They're wearing a lot of gold and diamonds.

Henel: Let's go make friends.

*(Emlinor and Henel cross to Sniegelheimer and Jeffries. They shake hands, smiling, and put their arms round their new friends' shoulders.)*

Emlinor: Sniegelheimer did you say? Funny you should mention that! My uncle was a Sniegelheimer. In fact we come from a long line of Sniegelheimers. The Minnesota Sniegelheimers, if you've heard of them?

Henel: Why Mr. Jeffries what beautiful sapphires you're wearing. You have such a lot of gold on your head!

Emlinor: Why don't we continue this conversation somewhere more comfortable—like this dark and threatening alley for instance?

*(They cross upstage left, leading their rich victims. Once they get to the alley, it's no more Mr. Nice Guy.)*

Henel: Give me all your jewels!

Emlinor: You don't wanna give me your cash? I'll just have to murder you then.

*(Poor Mr. Jeffries and Mr. Sniegelheimer are thrown to the ground.)*

Emlinor: Quick, take all their diamonds!

Henel: Let's get out of here! *[Exit stage left, running.]*

*[Enter Sökkie, stage right. When she sees the bodies, she gasps in shock but immediately begins CPR]*

*[Enter Abram, upstage right, dancing and singing. He sees Sökkie sat above the body of Mr. Sniegelheimer and thinks the worst.]*

Abram: Hello? 999?

Sheriff *[Upstage right, in a chair]* 999. What is your emergency?

Abram: There's a woman here, and she's just murdered two people!

Skokie *[Jumps up, shouting and waving her arms to get Abram's attention]* I didn't kill anyone! I was trying to save them!

Abrams *[Backing against the wall, too scared to listen]* Now she's threatening me! Please, hurry!

Sheriff *[Instantly on the scene]* You're both under arrest.

Abrams *[Being handcuffed]* Wait, what?? Why am I under arrest?

Skokie *[As he handcuffs her]* I was trying to save them!

Sheriff: You were both seen with the dead bodies. Now go to jail! *[He leads them off, upstage. Henel and Emlinor, watching from far stage left, laugh and point sneakily.]*



**Scene Two: That Night in Prison**

*[Sokkie and Abram are in tiny prison cells, played by tables. They are shouting that they are innocent.]*

Sheriff: Shut up, it's bedtime. Go to sleep! [He bangs on the bars.] I'm not going to acknowledge you anymore.

Sokkie: Please, please, I'm innocent. Please acknowledge me!

Abram: I shouldn't be here. This isn't fair.

Sheriff: Be quiet. Nobody cares.

**Scene Three: The Street, the Next Day**

Henel: Good morning officer! I'm glad to see you arrested the murderers.

Sheriff: Yes, they are safe behind bars.

Henel: And I do feel safer.

Emlinor: Allow me to say how very much I admire the law enforcement profession. [Shakes his hand] Anyway, we innocent people had better be going. [They exit stage right]

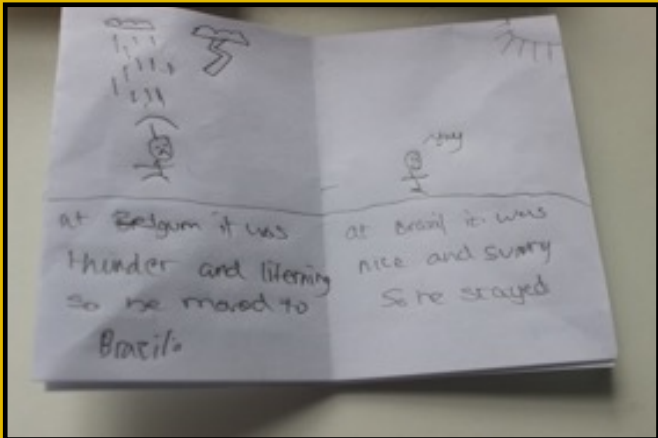
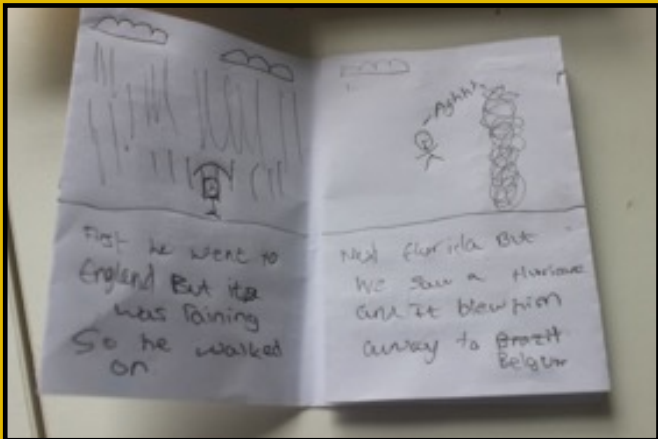
Sheriff: I need to investigate. *[Chooses someone in the audience.]* You there, did you see anything at all yesterday?

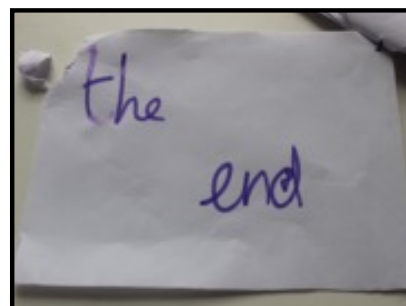
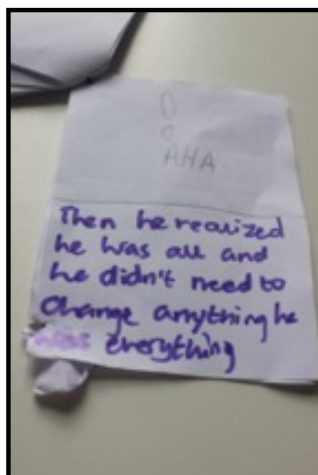
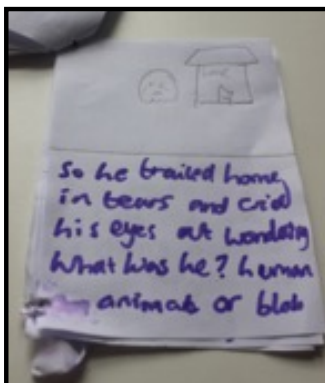
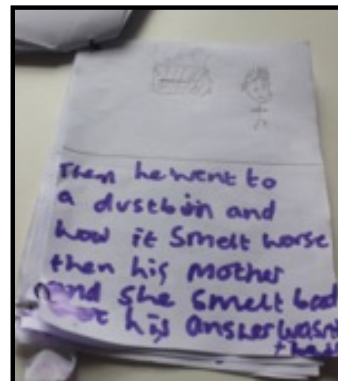
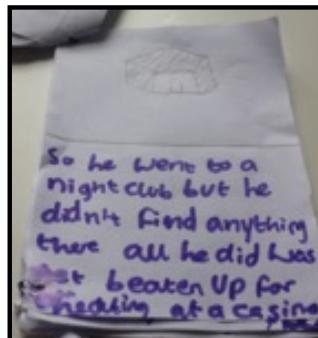
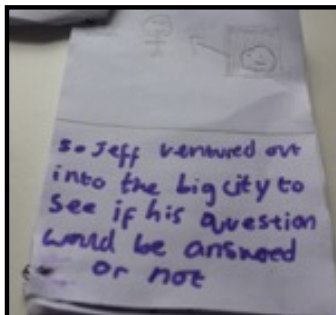
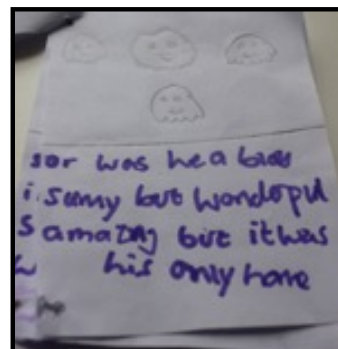
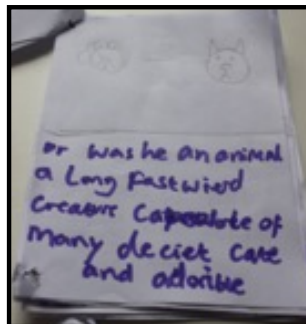
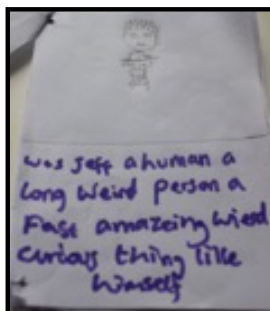
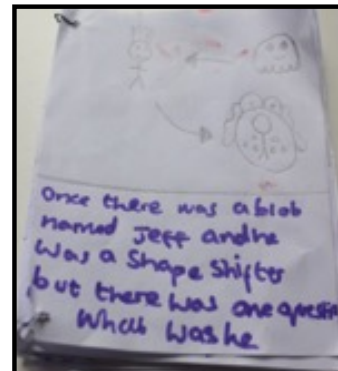
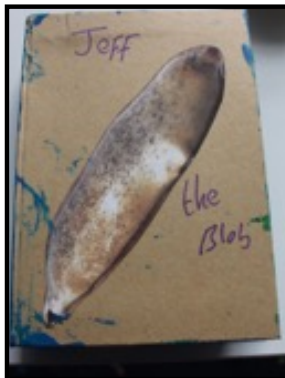
*[He questions them about the murder: what did you see? Who did it? What did they look like? He turns around and sees Emlinor and Henel watching. He runs after them, chases them and catches them. He puts them in jail, and Sokkie and Abram jump out, singing and dancing.]*

"I'm Free"

We're free, we're free  
We're really free now!  
Now they caught the baddies!  
I'm free, I'm free



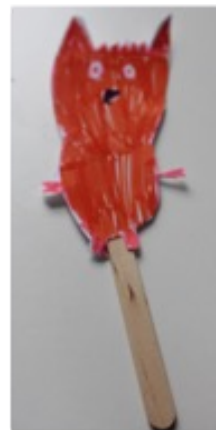






### Thunderstorm

Rebecca is scaredy of scaredy cats. Her imagination sometimes scares her. For example she imagines monsters under the bed, dragons, sharks and thunderstorms (but she likes them too). One day Rebecca was stuck in a thunderstorm and she lost her phone and her favourite teddy. She tried to find it but it was nowhere to be seen. So she went even further into the thunderstorm. She lost her home because it blew away. Then the thunderstorm stopped and the phone and teddy hit her in the head. She hugged the teddy really hard but her phone had smashed. So she went to her friend's house and rang her mum and asked for a new phone please. She is now more confident because she faced her fears and got a new house.





## Appendix 3

### A New Life!!!

September the first, my first day at school  
All alone with no one beside me  
Except for my family  
But they're not to be seen

All my friends went separate ways  
Left me stranded with nowhere to go  
Except into this room full of people  
But there's no one I know

All alone, nowhere to go  
No friends or family beside me  
No one here besides me

I try to make friends  
With the person beside me  
But they just turned from me  
I tried again, on the other side  
But this time they turned on me

All alone, nowhere to go  
No friends or family beside me  
No one here besides me

Someone walked up to me  
and for the right reasons  
they were just like me  
no friends or family  
then we became best of friends  
we knew this wasn't the end

I'm not alone, I have somewhere to go  
I'm not scared, cuz I have friends and family  
My new friend's here beside me



## Appendix 4

When you're not in care  
You're alone most of the time  
You feel different and are treated differently  
You're left out, you're not included.  
You've got no one to run to.  
You feel alone.

School's your only hope  
There's nothing to fear  
Because it's your happy place  
You're not in trouble  
For being the way you are

I told my friend how I was  
And realised I should tell an adult.  
My teacher was worried for me  
And asked me what was going on  
And I spoke out  
And showed I had a voice  
Things changed.

Social services got involved  
And made things more comfortable  
With family, helped them  
Work on their issues and take responsibility  
They weren't willing to take this on for me

My social worker helped me find a better family  
It wasn't great at first  
I didn't fit in.  
I didn't know how to fit in.  
Things weren't working for me.

I got moved again, to have a better life  
But once again, it never worked out  
Another six weeks went by,  
But they never treat me like family

So I moved once again with more hope  
At the first sight I knew  
Things were going to work out so greatly.  
We got to know each other,  
Treat each other like family,  
Because it was meant to be.

We went to exciting places  
That made us feel at home  
Then settle in, and things went our way  
The past was rough  
But not to be thought of

Because this is a new life  
To achieve and get bigger in life.

Remember don't be afraid to speak out

You are who you are for a reason

Thinking about what happened, in the past made me  
realise how grateful I am for who I am .





