Children's COMMISSIONER

A rapid review of sources of evidence on the views, experiences and perceptions of children in care and care leavers

The National Children's Bureau and Research in Practice on behalf of the Children's Commissioner for England

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research in practice ncb

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Executive summary

The purpose of this research was to assess the feasibility of using existing sources for a future State of the Nation report on the views and experiences of children in care and care leavers in England. These children and young people are among the most vulnerable in our society, and they typically have poorer outcomes than other young people. It is therefore especially important that their voices are heard by local and national decision makers.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB), in collaboration with Research in Practice (RiP), was asked by the Children's Commissioner to collate and analyse sources of evidence relating to engagement with children in care and care leavers since April 2015. Following a public call for evidence and desk-based research, 306 sources of evidence were identified, of which 281 included direct engagement with children and young people. These were collated and passed through a triage process in order to determine which 50 sources were most fit-for-purpose in informing a future State of the Nation Report. (This is not the same as an assessment of whether a source was suitable for its own intended purpose – which was outside the scope of this research.) Topline collation and analysis was carried out for all 306 sources, and further in-depth analysis was carried out for the final 50.

> "My opinions count, staff involve me in making decisions. I feel valued and respected"
>
> Child in care

The sources of evidence outlined activities from a wide range of organisations, including local and national government, regulators, academic institutions, the voluntary sector, and private companies. The activities included surveys, focus groups, Children in Care Councils, and one-to-one engagement with young people. In some cases, the purpose of the activity was primarily to understand the views and experiences of young people, but other activities were undertaken to inform practice improvement, regulation, national and local policy development or academic research.

The research identified sources which reflected the views of 100 or more children and young people (35 sources); activities or research that were presented as using new or innovative approaches (17 sources); and evidence of engagement with particularly vulnerable or harder to reach groups. These include, amongst others, very young children (aged 0-5 years) (16 sources); migrant or refugee children (eight sources); and children in the youth secure estate (26 sources).

Although the remit of this research did not include an assessment of children's views and experiences (this would be the purpose of a State of the Nation report), this report does contain some indication of the type of subjects on which children's views are sought and the types of activity used in producing the sources of evidence.

This research is based on a wide range of sources, which, taken together, provide useful insight into the types of activities undertaken to ascertain the views and experiences of children in care and care leavers. The evidence base in this project is not exhaustive, and not necessarily representative. However, it indicates that activities are taking place across the country, which could be used to form the basis of future State of the Nation report. Such a report could take the form of an aggregation of information, providing a uniquely rich understanding of how these children and young people see the world. There is also an opportunity for the Children's Commissioner to go beyond a single State of the Nation report, and to support the sector (in partnership with others) in improving the quality of engagement and of associated documentation and reporting, resulting in better practice and a more robust evidence base in the future.

1. Introduction

Background

Children in care and care leavers are some of the most vulnerable children in our society. The number of children who cannot live with their birth families is rising. The latest Government figures show 70,440 children are in care in England, compared with 60,300 a decade earlier. Additionally, there are now 26,340 care leavers aged 19, 20, and 21.[1] Unfortunately, on average, these young people are far less likely than others to achieve positive outcomes as they reach adulthood. They are far more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET), to have poor physical and mental health, to experience abuse and neglect, and to have involvement in the criminal justice system.[2]

Local authorities have a range of legal duties towards children in care and care leavers. There is also a moral imperative for national and local government and statutory bodies to care for and advocate on behalf of young people whose birth families cannot provide this role. Successive governments have introduced legislative and regulatory changes aimed at improving outcomes for this group. Recent developments include additional support for care leavers in the Children and Social Care Bill and the policy paper *Keep on caring: supporting young people from care to independence*.

There is a growing recognition that stability (or the lack thereof) is at the heart of the challenge faced by children in care. Children often come into care with a history of difficult and/or fractured relationships, often related to trauma, neglect and abuse. Thereafter, they often experience further disruption, with multiple placements, school moves and changes of key social worker. The new, exploratory "stability index" published by the Children's Commissioner shows that 71 per cent of all children in care experienced at least one of these changes during a 12 month period.[3]

Statistical and other research into children's circumstances is vital to drive improvements in policy and practice. However, alongside this, we also need to hear directly from children and young people, so that they can express their own views and experiences in their own words. The principle that children should be involved in decisions affecting them is well-understood, and enshrined in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.[4] However, the UK record on this is somewhat patchy.[5] Notably in this context, a report by the Children's Commissioner in 2015 found that more than 50 per cent of children in care did not know ***why*** they came into care.[6]

It is clear from the sheer volume of responses to the call for evidence, and additional sources identified through the research, that many professionals and organisations from all sectors – public, private, voluntary and academic – are seeking the views of children in care and care leavers. There is a wealth of activity undertaken for a wide range of purposes. However, it is also apparent that there

1 Department for Education (2016) Children looked after in England, year ending 31 March 2016. SFR 41/2016.
2 National Audit Office (2015) Care Leavers' Transitions to Adulthood. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Care-leavers-transition-to-adulthood.pdf (accessed 14 February 2017); HM Government (2016) Keep On Caring: Supporting Young People from Care to Independence. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/535899/Care-Leaver-Strategy.pdf (accessed 14 February 2017).
3 Children's Commissioner for England (2017) Stability Index: Overview and initial findings. http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Children%27s%20Commissioner%27s%20Stability%20Index%202017%20Overview%20Document%201.3.pdf
4 Article 12:
"1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law."
5 See: Un Committee on the Rights of the Child (2016) Concluding Observations of the fifth periodic report of the United Kindgom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20007&LangID=E
6 Children's Commissioner for England (2015): *State of the Nation: Report 1.* http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Care%20monitor%20v12_1.pdf

is great variety in the methodology, scope and quality of this work, which has implications for developing a future State of the Nation report.

The aim of this research

The National Children's Bureau (NCB), in collaboration with Research in Practice (RiP), was commissioned by the Children's Commissioner for England to assess the feasibility of using existing sources for a future 'State of the Nation' report on children in care and care leavers.

This research collates and analyses activities that have been undertaken to seek the views of children in care and care leavers in England since April 2015. In so doing, we have been able to make some observations about the types of activities being carried out, by whom, and for what purposes. We have also made some recommendations to the Children's Commissioner about how existing sources could be used to contribute to a future "State of the Nation" report. The ultimate goal would be to improve our collective understanding of young people's experiences, as well as to improve policy and practice in relation to participation. While there are some references to the outputs and results of evidence sources investigated as part of the research, this report does not specifically set out to describe or assess children and young people's views and experiences. This was not within the scope of the research.

> "It's great knowing that ideas young people suggest are not just noted down and put aside. They are noted down and taken on board, they are discussed and the professionals get back to young people about whether their idea is going to happen, how it will happen and when."
>
> Care leaver

2. Methodology

Stages of research

The research consisted of the following phases:

- Stage 1 Gathering evidence
- Stage 2 Developing the evidence matrix
- Stage 3 Applying the evidence matrix
- Stage 4 Conclusions and recommendations for the Children's Commissioner

Stage 1: Gathering evidence

In assessing the feasibility of producing a State of the Nation report from existing evidence, the review sought to identify sources of evidence via a call for evidence and via desk research. The 'units of interest' included in the analysis covered information on activities capturing the voice of children and young people in care and care leavers (e.g. documentation) and other outputs, including results of the activity (for example, feedback on consultation with children in care, results of a survey, etc.).

NCB drafted a call for evidence to be completed by individuals and organisations who had sought the views of children in care and/or care leavers for any purpose, since April 2015. The call for evidence was live between 20 February and 24 March 2017. It was accessed via the NCB website, with links to:

- The call for evidence (in the form of a SNAP survey).
- A letter from the Children's Commissioner for England.
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document.

The call for evidence was sent directly to a list of key stakeholders and was further distributed and publicised through an intensive social media campaign.

Promotion	
NCB Twitter followers	80K
NCB Facebook friends	30K
NCB Newsletter recipients	3-5K
Reach	
NCB Twitter impressions	13K+
Bitly link	Opened 670 times

The call for evidence was also distributed by the Children's Commissioner, RiP and ADCS via social media and other channels. NCB also approached local authorities in England directly, after gaining support from the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) research group.

Additionally, NCB and RiP conducted a literature review, focused on identifying suitable sources across four main groups: academic literature; Ofsted reports; other public sector; and voluntary sector. The literature review covered 'grey' items (materials and research produced by organisations outside of the traditional commercial or academic publishing and distribution channels) as well as those published formally.

- Journal articles (search of University catalogue using term 'looked after children' and 'care leaver' (search parameters: full text; online; academic journal; 10 year 2007 to 2017 then sort on latest date, England using 'looked after children' – 130 returned items- see screen shot at end of key words; 'care leaver' – 50 returned; 'foster care' – 401 returned;); in addition consideration of all articles in RiP journals 2015-present, i.e. Adoption and Fostering; British Journal of Social work; Child Abuse review; Child and Family Social Work; Children and Society; Child and Adolescent mental health. NB: a number of articles did not seek children's views but rather focused on teacher, social worker or carers' views so these were not included.
- Funding organisations (current projects / projects in progress. Search included: Nuffield Foundation; Big Lottery; Esmee Fairbairrn; ESRC.
- Ofsted reports (search of 35 reports published since Feb 2015 for LAs rated Good or Outstanding for the experiences of LAC and/or care leavers undertaken. Where only experiences of LAC or care leavers were rated Good/Outstanding and not the other elements, only the relevant section of the report was explored. NB: current list of completed inspections can be found: http://adcs.org.uk/inspection/article/sif-outcomes-summary)
- University research pages (lead academics / research units including UEA, Bristol, York, Loughborough, Thomas Coram, Rees Centre at Oxford)
- Department for Education (DfE) research information (both completed projects and currently funded, e.g. via innovation fund / springboard consortium)
- Key organisations e.g. Become, Coram, The Children Society etc.
- Local authority work – encourage completion of call for evidence via contacts, social media promotion, etc.
- Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) database searched using terms "looked after children" OR "children in care" OR "children leaving care" and "care leavers" OR "foster care" OR "residential child care" OR "family and friends care" OR "public care" OR "substitute care" OR "return home" OR "reunification" OR "adoption" OR "unaccompanied asylum seeking children" OR "unaccompanied refugee children" AND "perspectives" OR "experiences" OR "voice" OR "opinion" OR "views" OR "needs and wishes" AND "united kingdom" and narrower terms AND 2015-2017.
- Email bulletins e.g. Rees Centre, SCIE, PPI, ADCS, NSPCC, SPRU.

Stage 2: Developing the evidence matrix

NCB developed an "evidence matrix" in order to collate and analyse the various sources received through the call for evidence and identified through desk research. In order to answer the overall question posed by the Children's Commissioner – whether it would be feasible to use existing sources to produce a future "State of the Nation" report – it was necessary to develop a clear framework for categorising sources and assessing their quality.

The matrix consisted of two sections. The first section allowed for extracting and recording information **(collation)** about a given activity (corresponding with fields in the call for evidence). The second section comprised a more detailed recording of each evidence source's scope and population of interest (**full review**). This second section was developed by senior staff at NCB and RiP with support from Dr Roger Morgan and in conjunction with the Children's Commissioner's Office. (See below for further discussion of quality and how this part of the methodology developed during the research process.)

Stage 3: Applying the evidence matrix

The first part of the matrix, collation, was applied to all sources, but only sources of most interest were to be taken through the second stage, the full review. We therefore developed a triage system to determine which sources should go through the full review.

3a) Collation

All sources identified via either the call for evidence or through desk research were collated. Information was recorded for the purposes of a) a top-line understanding of the source, and b) determining whether the source was of particular Interest, and thus whether it would 'qualify' from the **triage system** to go through the **full review**. Alongside basic information such as the type of organisation and purpose of the activity, the **collation** stage provided answers (where available) to the questions below. These questions were thought to provide an indication of which sources would be most appropriate for inclusion in a potential State of the Nation report

- Is the source based on direct engagement with children and young people? (Including the voice of children and young people is central to the Children's Commissioner's purpose and values, and to values held by the organisations carrying out this research.)
- Does the method used claim to be new or innovative, or is it testing a new or innovative approach? (A State of the Nation Report should capture best practice, and new ways of working, to help drive improvement across the sector. The approach used was to highlight sources of evidence that *claimed* to be using, testing or evaluating a new or innovative approach to listening to the voice of children in care and care leavers.)
- Can the sample size be categorised as 'proportionate' or 'large'? (Sources based on a large sample size can be used for quantitative evidence. Where a sample size is proportionately large (compared to the wider population), it is more likely to be representative (all other things being equal), even if the total achieved sample size is smaller than for other published sources.)

- Does the source indicate engagement with young children? (Younger children are less often consulted and consulting them is more difficult. A future State of the Nation would therefore seek specifically to shed light on their views.)
- Does the source indicate engagement with Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities? (A State of the Nation report should take care to represent the views of the whole care population.)
- Does the source indicate engagement with 'less obvious groups'? (The Children's Commissioner often focuses on children and young people who are even less likely to be heard.)
- Does the source indicate engagement with children and young people in non-standard placements?

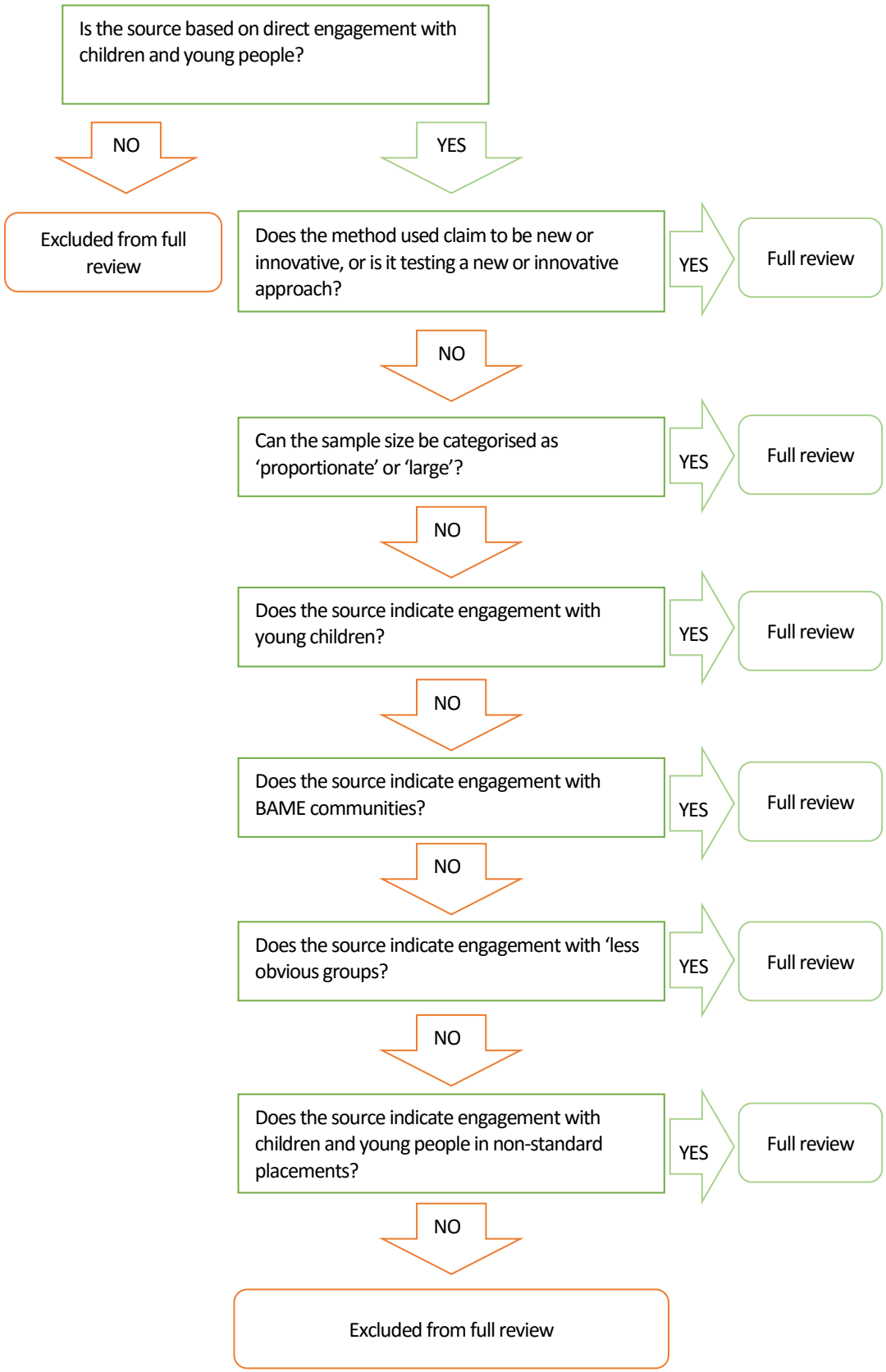
Definitions

- 'Proportionate or large' was usually defined as 100+, with the proviso that a smaller achieved sample may represent a relatively large proportion of the target population. In some cases it was clear that more than 100 children and young people were engaged but it was not possible to ascertain how many of those were children in care or care leavers. These sources were included where they met other criteria; where it was clear that a significant proportion were likely to be children in care or care leavers; and where the source was generally valuable for the purposes of the research. (A good example of a source in this category is the report from HM Inspectorate of Prisons, discussed in the case study box on page 20).
- Where a source had engaged with 0-4 year olds it would automatically be included for full analysis. Where it engaged with primary school aged children it would be included for full analysis subject to a common-sense assessment of the strength of the source overall (i.e. how useful it would be in informing a future State of the Nation report).
- 'Less obvious groups' was used to describe groups who are move likely to be marginalised and may face additional barriers to their voices being heard. This included children and young people with significant or multiple disabilities; who had been involved with youth justice services; those identified as having experienced or being at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation; and child refugees and migrants. Non-standard placements included secure settings; boarding schools (non-special); children's homes (to increase the focus on residential placements); care leavers in hostels etc.; and children under special guardianship orders. We also included out of area placements (though this is not technically a "placement type" and may cross-over with other categories.)

> "I recently had an advocate when social workers hadn't been dealing with my case properly. I had lots of placement moves which affected my education. I was able to get an advocate, and put in a complaint."
>
> Child in care

3b) Triage process

To determine which sources of evidence would be submitted for the **full review,** we put each source through a **triage process.** The detailed triage process is shown in the flow-chart below.



3c) Refining the selection of sources

After applying the **triage process** set out above, 171 sources were initially identified as potentially appropriate for **full review.** However, as the project was intended to be a rapid review of evidence, it was agreed with the Children's Commissioner's Office that this would not be practical within the project timescales and the selection of sources for **full review** should be refined further. The aim was to select a final sample of 50 which, while focusing on sources that seemed most robust, would be nevertheless broadly representative of the full range of sources and would facilitate the assessment of the feasibility of producing a State of the Nation report on the basis of existing evidence. NCB, with input from the project's expert advisers, therefore selected the final 50 sources for **full review** by reviewing the 171 that passed the **triage process**, on the basis of the following:

- How many of the triage exercise criteria did the source meet? (innovation; sample size; harder to reach groups, etc.)
- Is the name of the organisation known? (to enable follow-up searches and/or requests for further information.)
- Is there sufficient information about the source for it to provide helpful insight and contribute the feasibility question?

3d) Full review

Once the final 50 sources had been selected, we applied the **full review.** This consisted of reviewing each of the sources in detail and recording items relating to the following:

- Activity type featured in the evidence source (broadly, the methodology used, e.g. survey, focus group, etc.)
- Purpose of the activity
- Groups targeted for inclusion in the activity (e.g. age groups, gender, ethnicity, etc.)
- Groups actually reached by the activity
- Placement settings
- Frequency of the activity (e.g. one-off, repeated, etc.)
- Whether an advocate was involved in the activity
- Topics covered in the activity
- Intended audience for outputs
- Ethical procedures included in the activity
- Reflections on the activity/source of evidence
- Whether the source of evidence contained findings reporting the voice of children/young people in care and/or care leavers.

In practice, the sources of evidence submitted via the call for evidence or identified through desk research included relatively little detail on methods used in collecting the evidence, even after attempts to identify more information through additional online searches. Thus, the information on methods used tends to be top-line level information such as 'survey' or 'interviews', rather than including details on the types of survey methods and approaches used or the interviewing method. Information on ethics was even less likely to be included, and even less likely to include any detail on how ethical concerns may have been overcome and what ethical safeguards may have been incorporated into the collection of the evidence. For most activities and sources of evidence, it is not possible to judge whether the ethical considerations and safeguards were appropriate as the information required to make such a judgement was not available to the research team in the published documentation or information supplied.

Assessment of quality

The second part of the matrix - the full review - was used to assess the feasibility of producing a future State of the Nation report, drawn from existing sources of evidence.

Given the diversity of the sources found - in terms of their scope, purpose and methodology - it was not possible to judge their quality, related to their original intended purpose, against a single set of standards. This would not be comparing like with like. For instance, some sources were based on activity specifically aimed at capturing the views of children in care, whereas other sources are the product of a much wider-ranging project, and capturing children's views, while important and of interest, may have been incidental to the main thrust of the activity. Instead, the research team developed a means of assessing the fitness-for-purpose of evidence sources in terms of their potential contribution to a State of the Nation report. This was defined by the extent to which they met the following criteria, as set out previously:

- Is the source based on direct engagement with children and young people?
- Does the method used claim to be new or innovative, or is it testing a new or innovative approach?
- Can the sample size be categorised as 'proportionate' or 'large'?
- Does the source indicate engagement with young children?
- Does the source indicate engagement with Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities?
- Does the source indicate engagement with 'less obvious groups'?
- Does the source indicate engagement with children and young people in non-standard placements?

Limitations

The research attempted to reflect the breadth of activity undertaken in England to capture the views and experiences of children in care and care leavers. Perhaps inevitably, the list of sources we included was constrained by a number of factors: as with any call for evidence, sources were self-selected. While it was made clear that organisations would not be identified without their consent (where materials were unpublished), nonetheless responses are more likely where organisations are broadly confident about their output. Additional research could only uncover activities where materials were published or clearly referred to online.

It is likely, therefore, that a number of activities were taking place across the country, especially by services, local authorities and smaller voluntary organisations, which it was not possible to capture in a rapid review such as this, but that might be discovered through a longer research project.

3. Findings

- Overview of the evidence
- Results of the top line collation and triage
- Full review of the final 50 sources

Overview of the evidence

Overall, we identified 306 sources of evidence in scope for the research, including 140 submitted in response to the call for evidence. Initially 334 potential sources had been identified through desk research and the call for evidence. However, after checking for duplication 23 sources were removed. A further five sources were also removed as they were out of scope (activities falling before April 2015, undertaken with children on the edge of care, or taking place outside of England). This led to the overall removal of 28 sources of evidence, with 306 sources eligible for inclusion.

Type of organisation responsible for sources of evidence
The research draws on sources of evidence from a wide range of organisations.

Type of organisation responsible	Number of sources from desk research	Number of sources from the call for evidence	Total number of sources	Percentage
Local authority	92	98	190	62%
Charity or social enterprise	30	13	43	14%
Research organisation (including university)	21	6	27	9%
Other	10	6	16	5%
Health provider	4	7	11	4%
Non-ministerial government department	4	1	5	2%
Government department	4	-	4	1%
Health commissioner	-	4	4	1%
Private company with fewer than 100 employees	1	3	4	1%
Private company with more than 100 employees	0	2	2	1%
Total	166	140	306	100%

Local authorities were by far the most common type of organisation represented in the research (62 per cent of sources of evidence identified). They were followed by research organisations and charities or social enterprises. Note - the numbers above represent the number of individual sources from each category of organisation, rather than the number of organisations. For example, we received 190 sources from local authorities, but in several cases a local authority provided more than one source of evidence.

There was a degree of inconsistency between self-categorisation by organisations that responded to the call for evidence, and categorisation by NCB/RiP staff during the desk research. For example,

organisations identifying as "other" included regulators and other statutory agencies, which were included by NCB/RiP alongside non-ministerial government departments. Similarly, some Children's Services Trusts self-identified as a private company or "other", when responding to the call for evidence whilst equivalent organisations identified through desk research were recorded as "local authority".

Direct engagement with children and young people

Overall 281 sources used direct engagement with children. Generally speaking this was through a survey, focus groups, individual meetings or by requesting feedback from young people.

Number of children engaged

This research was interested in the number of children typically reached through an engagement exercise.

Children engaged	Number of sources	Percentage
Not known	105	37%
0-20	85	30%
21-50	39	14%
101+	35	12%
51-100	17	6%
Total	281	100

Local authorities generally gathered the views of fewer than 20 children and young people (common to 54 sources of evidence), although there were also 11 examples local authorities engaging with more than 100 children and young people. Activities by charities and academic institutions varied in the number of children engaged. The median category for the number of children engaged in the sources was identified as 21-50.

In more than a third of sources (37%) there was no information (or insufficient information) on the number of children engaged through the activity.

Overall, a relatively small but diverse group of sources are based on engagement with more than 100 young people, most commonly local authorities and charities/social enterprises.

Type of organisation	Number of sources based on engagement with 100+ children and young people
Charity or social enterprise	10
Health provider	3
Local authority	11
Non-ministerial government department	3
Research organisation (including university)	3
Other	3
Government department	2
Total	35

Ofsted social care questionnaire 2016

Ofsted undertake an online survey every year to gather the views of children and young people in care about their placements. The findings, along with other sources of information, are used to decide when Ofsted will inspect a setting and what the inspection will focus on. The information from the survey is publically available via a presentation on their website.

In 2016, 2859 children and young people living in foster care or a residential home responded to the survey (out of approximately 57,790 children and young people).
There were several themes that emerged from the findings. Firstly, children need to understand why they came into care. Nine out of ten children in fostering said that they had been helped to understand why they were in care:

> *"My foster mum explained in great detail about why I am in care. She did life story work, which helped me understand about my past. It helped me a lot and I felt a lot better once I understood."* (age 10)

The survey also revealed information about how children find moving into a new home to be a difficult experience. Around one in four children said they did not receive useful information before they moved in or had a short break at their children's home, and one in three children were not able to visit their children's home before they stayed there.

Building a relationship with an adult who children and young people can trust was another theme in the findings. Having a relationship built on trust helped children to deal with difficult situations:

> *"We talk through things that have upset me and they help me to put things into perspective. Things do not bother me as much now as they would have done before I moved to this family."(*age 15)

Age of children engaged

Reported engagement with very young children was rare, justifying the decision to prioritise this group in the triage process.

Age	Number of sources
0-5	16
6-10	100
11-15	116
16+	134
Base	**306**

Note: sources could represent engagement with more than one age group. Also, not all sources contained information on the age groups of children and young people included in the activity.

Engagement with children of secondary school age was slightly more common than engagement with children of primary school age. The median age group for engagement was 11-15.

Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust
Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust completed a pilot to develop a tool that would capture the voice of looked after children and young people for a variety of health and social care services. The pilot utilised a paper survey with tailored versions to take into account the age of the respondent and if they had any additional needs. For example, there was a pre-verbal questionnaire designed for professionals to complete observations about the wellbeing of the child.

There were 58 responses to this pilot and the findings were published in a report for the North East Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board. Findings included:

- Seven out of ten children and young people felt they knew why the health or social care professional had come to see them.
- 72% felt the consultation was important to them and 62% felt the consultation had made a difference to them.
- Nearly four out of five children and young people felt they were listened to.

Quotes from children and young people:

> *"me mummy are getting on a lot better I'm not pooing myself now I liked everything I did with (worker name) more huggies with mummy a lot it makes me feel really happy."*
> *"I like playing with (worker name)."*
> *"I like playing the game I talked about me I told you what makes me happy and sad."*

Other characteristics of children engaged
The research aimed to ascertain which groups of children in care and care leavers were commonly engaged with, and specifically whether any particularly marginalised or vulnerable groups may not be represented.

Characteristic	Number of sources
BAME	98
SEND	80
Transgender	15
Refugee status	6
Involvement with youth justice	5
Migrant status	4
Identified risk of sexual abuse	1
Base	306

Almost a third of all sources reported engaging with children from BAME backgrounds, whilst 28 per cent engaged with children with SEND. From the topline collation, it is not clear for any source/activity whether a significant proportion of children engaged had one of these characteristics.

For instance, an organisation may have engaged with 20 children, only one of whom was from a BAME community, but the source could still be included in the table above.

University of London and University of Hertfordshire
Researchers from the University of London and University of Hertfordshire conducted research into the experiences of black teenager mothers who were in or had left care. Interviews with 15 young women, aged 16 – 19 years, were carried out to understand their experiences of care and views of their corporate parent. The research also aimed to help the young mothers feel more empowered.

The overarching theme that emerged was an image of corporate parents as 'absent' parents. The young women felt different social workers coming in and out of their lives was invasive, as articulated by one woman:

> *"When I was in care I had a lot of social workers…and it was all new to me. I just felt that having so many social workers coming and going all these people that know about you…is really strange".*

As well as fractured relationships with social workers, some of those who experienced foster care also spoke of financial exploitation, material deprivation and unattended emotional needs. One mother said:

> *"Emotionally she [foster carer] was terrible. Sometimes I will be in my room and she hasn't seen me for two days, and she won't even come to my room and ask if I've eaten. And she knows I'm pregnant…" .*

Nevertheless, others reported more positive experiences and relationships with supportive social workers and foster carers. One woman said: "I was like part of the family, up until now she's like to a mum to me. Whatever she had, she gave it to me".

As well as their care, continuing education was also important to mothers. Mothers viewed education as a durable life investment that would help them and their children become economically safe and increase their sense of self-worth. One young woman explained her decision to go back to education:

> *"I want to do something with my life… I just want to go to school to get a good sound education so he could be proud of me".*

Placement type

The research was similarly concerned with whether activities engaged with children in all placement types, and whether some were less well represented.

Placement type	Number of sources	Percentage
Boarding school	2	1%
Foster care	107	35%
Hostel	4	2%
Independent/semi-independent living	15	5%
Kinship	49	16%
Placed for adoption	28	9%
Placement with parents	28	9%
Residential children's home	92	30%
Residential school	27	9%
Secure unit	26	8%
Special Guardianship	3	1%
Staying Put	51	17%
Supported accommodation	60	20%
Base	306	100%

More than a third (35 per cent) of sources engaged with children in foster care (the most common placement type) whilst almost half engaged with children in residential settings (residential children's homes, residential schools, boarding schools, and secure units). A relatively small number of sources drew on engagement with children in specialist settings, including secure units (26 sources; 8 per cent) and hostels (four sources, 2 per cent).

Separately, forty-five sources (15 per cent) reported having engaged with children placed out of area.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

HM Inspectorate of Prisons conducts an annual paper-based survey to obtain the views of children and young people housed in secure training centres (STCs) and young offender institutions (YOIs). The 2015/16 survey was sent to all children aged twelve to 18 in these settings. In total, 767 responses were received.

The survey asked young people questions on a range of topics including personal safety, bullying, education, individual behaviour, health and wellbeing, and leisure activities.

- The survey highlighted that a large proportion of children in STCs felt victimised, for example by being shouted at through windows (31%).
- In YOIs many young people reported feeling unsafe at some point during their stay (46%).
- There was also an increase on previous years in the number of young people in YOIs reporting that they felt victimised by other detainees or staff.
- The survey also illustrated that children with prior experience of local authority care continued to be disproportionately over-represented across both YOIs (37%) and STCs (39%) when compared with the population as a whole.
- Looking at YOIs, the survey found that young people with experience of care expected to face more problems when released than those not from a care background. However, this group were more confident that they knew where to go to get help if they needed it. This compares with children with experience of care housed in STCs who were significantly more likely to report being victimised by other children because of their family and friends and less likely than other children to say that they knew where they would be living once they were released from the STC.

HM Inspectorate of Prisons has been conducting surveys with children and young people housed in YOIs since 2001/2 and STCs since 2012/13. Reports are publically available and aimed at informing national government to improve secure settings. In the case of YOIs, the young people's survey responses are triaged with other data to form part of annual unannounced inspections. Similarly with STCs, responses are considered alongside other data to inform inspection reports and overall judgements/recommendations about a setting.

Engagement activities identified through the call for evidence

The most common type of engagement activity in the call for evidence was a Children in Care Council, followed by a survey, focus groups and verbal feedback from the child. Children in Care Councils tend to undertake a number of sub-activities (including surveys, focus groups etc

ACTIVITY FROM CALL FOR EVIDENCE	NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENGAGED					
	1-20	21-50	51-100	101+	Unknown	Grand Total
Children in Care Council or similar group	31	11	3	6	2	53
Survey	2	5	7	8		22
Focus groups	11	5		3		19
Verbal feedback from child	6	2	2	2	1	13
Advocacy	1		2	5		8
Health assessments	4			3		7
Other	1	1		2		4
Individual meetings	1	1		1		3
Independent reviews	1			1		2
No information given on activity				2		2
Care Leavers Group				1		1
Children's Guide to Fostering				1		1
Rites of Passage Training	1					1
Supported Accommodation Tender Process				1		1
Take Over Day				1		1
Verbal feedback		1				1
Written feedback from child		1				1
Grand Total	59	27	14	37	3	140

Action for Children and Poole Kidz in Care

Poole Kidz in Care (PKiC) and Action for Children completed a report as part of their annual 'Talkback' to help inform the local authority and Ofsted about where young people feel Poole is doing well and what could be improved for children in care across the Authority.

Questions for the annual 'Talkback' for 2016 were agreed with children and young people at Children in Care Council meetings and aimed to establish whether Pool's Pledge to children in care was being met. The survey engaged with children and young people aged eleven – 18. It was sent to all looked after children in that age group in Poole (100 children) and PKiC received 29 responses. The questions were diverse and covered a range of themes including: contact with birth family, education, leisure, pathways service (for ages 15+), placement, rights, and support.

The report provides a thematic breakdown of responses and includes quotes from children and young people about their experiences. As part of the report, PKiC responded to what young people had said and committed to focus on a number of diverse areas over the coming year. This included promoting savings accounts for looked after children to Foster Carers and holding council meetings to consider ways to keep siblings together, raise awareness of Poole's Pledge to children in care, and look at how to improve access to leisure activities. PKiC also said they would work with local children and young people's social care services to address young people's concerns about the number of social workers in their lives. Ultimately, the report was used to help inform practice improvement in Poole.

Young people that participated in the survey hoped that their contribution would make a difference:

> *"I hope the Talk Back will help young people to be listened to and ensure that their points are taken across and are not ignored."*
>
> *"I hope this helps young people and new carers to settle into foster care more easily and to feel less different from 'normal' children".*

Statutory and potentially statutory activities

The call for evidence did not explicitly seek responses based on statutory activities. However, there were 16 sources submitted that pertained to activities carried out as part of a local authority's statutory duties. These were categorised as health assessments, independent reviews, or advocacy. In some cases it was unclear from the source received and information available whether or not an activity was statutory. For example, advocacy services are a statutory entitlement for particular groups of children in care, such as those in the youth justice system or where a child wishes to make a complaint about his or her care. It is not clear from the sources received whether the advocacy services pertained to these groups or all children and care. Further, the term "advocacy" is often conflated with other specific statutory services, such as Independent Reviewing Officers for children in care and Personal Advisers for care leavers.

Activity	Number of sources
Advocacy	8
Health assessments	6
Independent reviews	2
Total	16

London Borough of Ealing
Ealing council consults with children and young people on a quarterly basis to help inform the local corporate parenting panel. This consultation process seeks to include children from all types of care placements and covers a diverse array of topics including care planning, health and wellbeing, family, friends, leisure, education, placement, and individual behaviour and attitudes.

Ealing reported that one of the challenges of engaging with children in care and care leavers on a regular basis is that they can end up suffering with 'consultation fatigue'. This makes it challenging to obtain worthwhile feedback from children and young people while still making them feel valued. To help combat this, Ealing explained that they sometimes trial new methods of engagement as part of their consultation process.

In one of their most recent consultations, Ealing sought the views of 300 children and young people. In gathering feedback, they trailed an innovative smartphone app to gain views. The app, which was described as 'similar to Trip Advisor' but for the care services young people receive, was tested. However, after considering feedback received from the participants, it was established that young people preferred to give their views in group work discussions led by youth workers instead.

Innovation

Overall, 17 of the 281 sources collated state that the methods used to produce the source is new or innovative, or that the activity/programme being tested is new or innovative. Examples include:

- The Young Inspectors programme in Lancashire – a group of children in care trained to inspect local fostering agencies and residential homes.
- An auto-ethnography approach, whereby children in care share information about their day-to-day activities with researchers.
- The use of pictorial methods in addition to discussion and interview techniques in participation work.
- Young Researchers working with the Prince's Trust to run their own research project on supporting care leavers into independence.
- The development of an app by Hammersmith and Fulham Council to enable children in care to communicate their experiences of being in care and prepare for review meetings.

Health passports
One source categorised as a "health assessment" described an activity whereby five care leavers were involved in developing a "health passport" for use by other care leavers. A "health passport" looks similar to a health document and is an easy-to-reference record of medical and health history designed to help young people keep track and take control of their health into adulthood. It is part of a national initiative, but is not required by law.

St Christopher's 16+ Support Services

St Christopher's is a charity providing services including fostering, children's homes, 16+ support, and support to runaway children, across England and the Isle of Man. In 2015, St Christopher's conducted some innovative research with 54 young people (response rate of 87%) from their 16+ services to find out more about their experience of transitioning from care homes to independent living. The survey aimed to establish where young people felt St Christopher's was doing well and what more could be done to improve the service they were offering.

In previous years, St Christopher's had used lengthy paper/computer based surveys to obtain feedback. However, after listening to feedback from young people who said they were 'all questionnaired out', St Christopher's decided to take a new approach to obtaining their views. Through a series of face-to-face interviews, discussion groups and creative activities including sculpture, graffiti, poetry writing, music production, trampolining and basketball, and conversations that took place alongside other tasks such as cleaning their room and visiting a supermarket, staff were able to engage young people in a completely different way.

Young people were invited to give their views on a range of topics that they themselves had selected as important. Themes covered included:

- the importance of key workers for raising self-esteem and self-confidence;

"The co-key working thing here is good. I have been at other placements where staff just leave or go sick and you don't get a replacement key worker for ages".

- the need for staff working in supported accommodation to have mental health training;

"I think they need training mental health because for me or other residents whenever they have gone to staff they just get awkward looks or they just get told not to do whatever they have done again or to be good and I don't think that is useful. They don't understand mental health or they are shocked by it and they don't give the right kind of support"

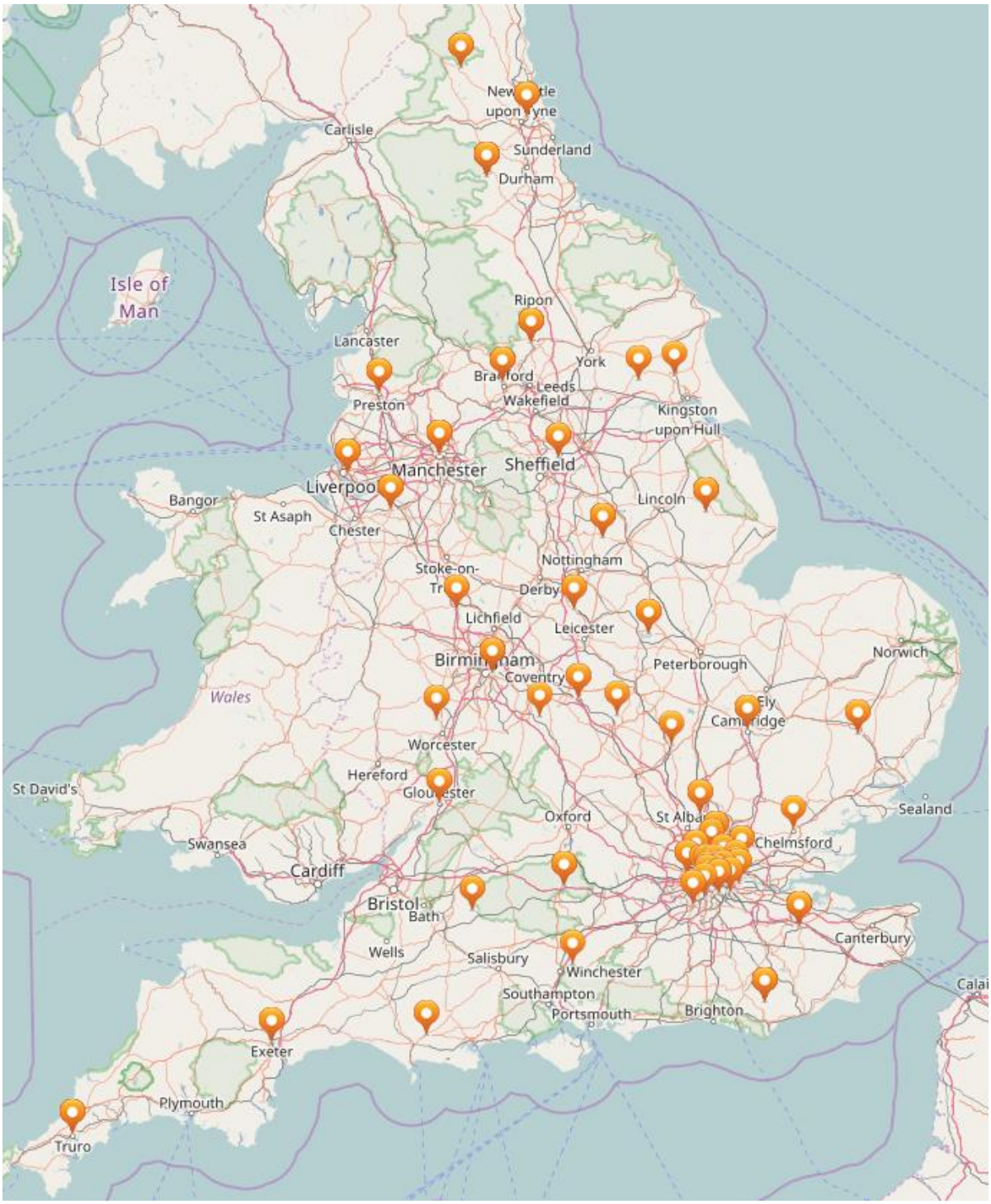
- their feelings about their accommodation including if they felt cared for, safe and respected, as well as how well maintained a property was.

"It gets reported but then staff need to keep chasing it. They don't tell us what they have been doing so we just think it has been forgotten and get angry. We should have a noticeboard so we can see what is going on with the stuff we want fixed".

St Christopher's also took a similar innovative approach to obtaining the views of 21 (of a total of 28) children across their nine children's homes.

Geographic spread

Of the 306 sources analysed as part of this study, it was possible to pinpoint the specific region and, in most cases, the ceremonial county, of just under two thirds (202 sources). The geographic spread (by county and London Borough) of these sources are indicated by the orange pins on the map below.



The table below provides a regional breakdown of the same sources. In terms of percentage breakdown, the spread was higher in London and South East (35%) and Yorkshire and the Humber, and the North of England (37%). Just 20 per cent of sources came from the Midlands (including East of England) whilst 7% were from across the South West.

Region	Number of sources
East Midlands	14
East of England	10
South East	25
South West	15
West Midlands	17
Yorkshire and the Humber	22
North East	26
North West	27
London	46
England wide	27
No geographic information	77

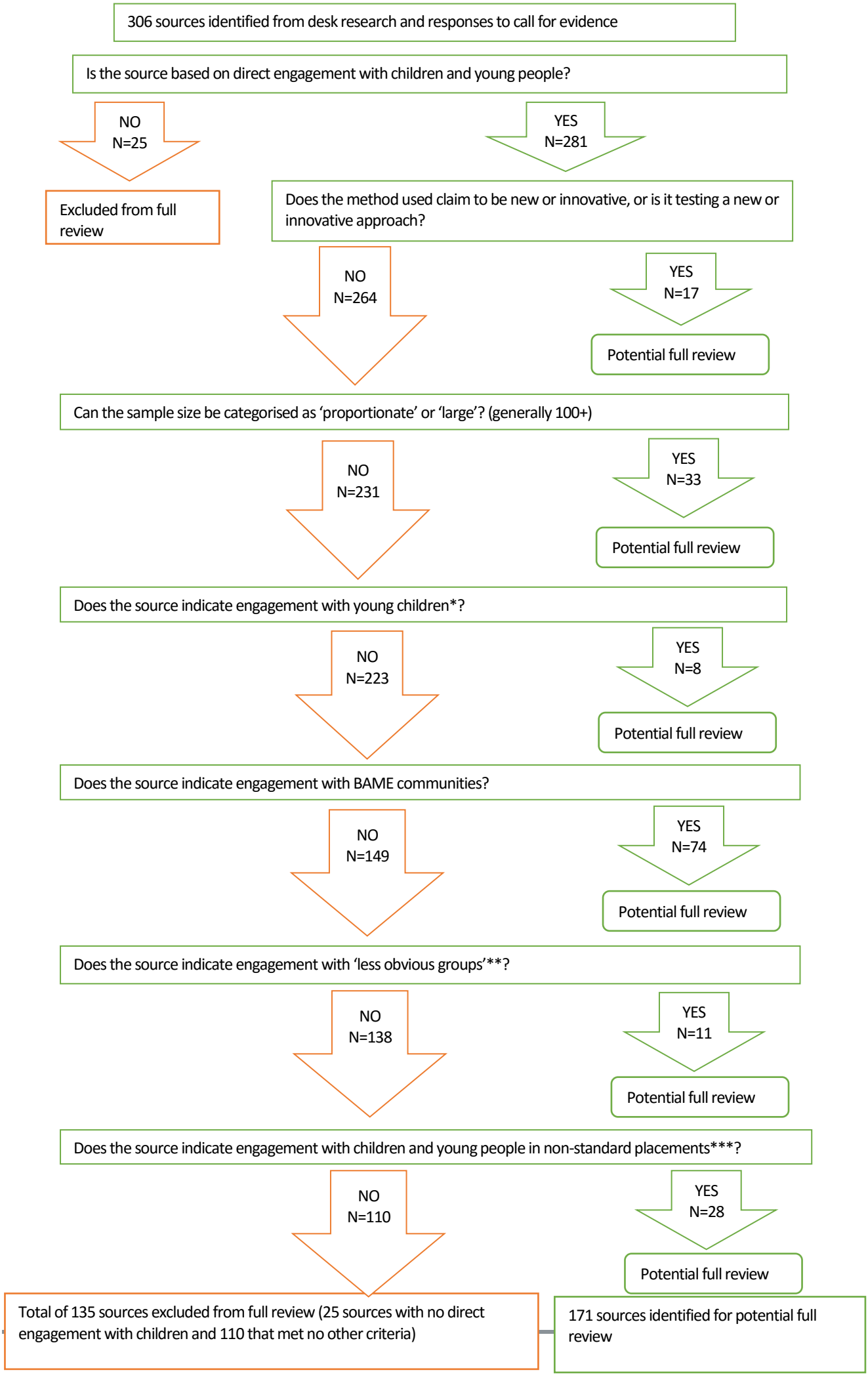
Notably, 25 per cent of all sources (77) provided no information on geographic location. Of this group, the majority were academic reports. Several of these indicated that they were based on a sample from one or more local authority or from a local participation group but did not actually provide any indication of geographic region.

Results of the topline collation and triage

Collation

In order to determine which 50 sources would qualify for **full review**, all 306 usable sources were interrogated based on the following questions:

- Is the source based on direct engagement with children and young people?
- Does the method used claim to be new or innovative, or is it testing a new or innovative approach?
- Can the sample size be categorised as 'proportionate' or 'large'?
- Does the source indicate engagement with young children?
- Does the source indicate engagement with BAME communities?
- Does the source indicate engagement with 'less obvious groups'?
- Does the source indicate engagement with children and young people in non-standard placements?
- See definitions on pages 9-10.
- Sources were then filtered based on the flow chart (set out on page 10), as illustrated on the next page.


306 sources identified from desk research and responses to call for evidence
Is the source based on direct engagement with children and young people?
NO N=25
YES N=281
Excluded from full review
Does the method used claim to be new or innovative, or is it testing a new or innovative approach?
NO N=264
YES N=17
Potential full review
Can the sample size be categorised as 'proportionate' or 'large'? (generally 100+)
NO N=231
YES N=33
Potential full review
Does the source indicate engagement with young children*?
NO N=223
YES N=8
Potential full review
Does the source indicate engagement with BAME communities?
NO N=149
YES N=74
Potential full review
Does the source indicate engagement with 'less obvious groups'**?
NO N=138
YES N=11
Potential full review
Does the source indicate engagement with children and young people in non-standard placements***?
NO N=110
YES N=28
Potential full review
Total of 135 sources excluded from full review (25 sources with no direct engagement with children and 110 that met no other criteria)
171 sources identified for potential full review

Triage criteria	Number of sources that met criteria (N.B. most sources will be counted under two or more criteria.)
Is the source based on direct engagement with children and young people?	281
Can the sample size be categorised as 'proportionate' or 'large'?	35
Does the method used claim to be new or innovative, or is it testing a new or innovative approach?	17
Does the source indicate engagement with young children?	17
Does the source indicate engagement with BAME communities?	98
Does the source indicate engagement with 'less obvious groups'**?	91
Does the source indicate engagement with children and young people in non-standard placements?	144

Refining the selection of sources

As explained on page 9, following discussions with the Children's Commissioner's Office, the decision was taken that it was not feasible to undertake **full review** of all 171 sources that passed the **triage.** As discussed in chapter 2, we therefore took the 171 sources through an additional process to distil the 50 sources likely to be most helpful in making an assessment of the feasibility of producing a State of the Nation report based on existing evidence.

- 25 sources met five or six criteria from the **triage** process.
  - Where the organisation's name was unknown a source was excluded.
- 15 sources were selected for full review.
- 55 sources met four criteria from the **triage** process. These were further filtered:
  - Where the organisation's name was unknown a source was excluded;
  - Where innovative methods were used they went to full review;
  - Where the sample size was over 50 they went to full review; and
  - Only one activity was included from each organisation.
- 18 sources were selected for full review.
- 45 sources met three criteria from the **triage**
  - where the organisation's name was unknown, and where the activity was an evaluation and children's views were sought only for this purpose, a source was excluded; and

- sources were included on the basis of innovative methods and reasonable sample size.

> 14 sources were selected for full review.

> 44 sources met two criteria from the **triage**

- Sources were selected on the basis of Innovative methods; large sample size; and/or were most likely to contribute to the feasibility assessment.

Criteria for identifying sources for full review	Number of sources
Met five or six criteria	15
Met four criteria, used innovative methods	18
Met three criteria, used innovative methods and had a large sample size	14
Met two criteria, used innovative methods and had a large sample size	3
Grand total of sources identified for full review	50

Review of the final 50 sources

Details of the final 50 selected sources were entered into the full evidence matrix. The full matrix comprised details of a number of aspects of the evidence as entered in the call for evidence survey or as identified through desk research:

> Type of organisation producing the evidence

> Type of activity

> Purpose of activity

> The number of children and young people targeted /reached by the activity / research

> Age groups (targeted / reached)

> Placement types (targeted / reached)

> Gender (targeted / reached)

> Ethnicity (targeted / reached)

> Disability groups (targeted / reached)

> Frequency of activity

> Whether activity is ongoing

> Whether an advocate was involved

> Topic(s) covered by the activity

> Audience for the activity

> Ethical procedures documented in the source

> Whether the activity fulfilled its purpose

- What challenges did organisations face in the activity capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers?
- What worked well in the activity?
- Are there plans to repeat the activity
- Did the evidence source include findings on the views, perceptions and experiences of children in care and care leavers?

Types of organisation producing the sources of evidence (final 50)
Of the final 50 sources of evidence identified for the **full review**, 18 were produced by local authorities, 13 by charities or social enterprises and 10 by research organisations. The remaining nine were produced by statutory bodies, such as non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) or similar, government departments and health providers.

Types of organisation producing final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
Local authority	18
Charity or social enterprise	13
Research organisation	10
Non-ministerial government office/department/NDPB	5
Health provider	3
Government department	1
Total	50

Types of activity outlined in the sources of evidence (final 50)
The main types of activity used were Children in Care Councils or similar (12 sources). Beyond this, typical social research approached such as paper-based surveys (10 sources), online or electronic surveys (8) and research interviews (6) were the next most common types of activity.

Types of activity outlined in the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
Children in Care Councils or similar	12
Paper/postal surveys	10
Online/electronic surveys	8
Research interviews	6
Verbal feedback	5
Focus groups	3
Individual meetings	1
Written feedback	1
Survey (method not specified)	1
Multiple activities (in addition to those specified here)	2
Other activities	3
Insufficient information	2

Note that some sources outlined several methods as part of the same response so the sources total more than 50. As above, whilst a Children in Care Council is an activity in itself (carried out by a local authority), within this there may be a number of other activities, such as surveys, focus groups, individual meetings or requests for written feedback.

Purposes of activities outlined in the sources of evidence (final 50)

The main purposes of the engagement activities used to capture the voice of children in care and care leavers are set out below. The most common purpose of activities included in the **full review** was to understand the attitudes of the child / young person taking part. Other commonly featured purposes were reporting to authorities (e.g. the local authority, organisational senior management, central government) and to inform planning (e.g. in relation to care, health or education needs).

Purposes of activities outlined in the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
Understanding the attitudes of the child/young person taking part	36
Reporting to the local authority	21
To inform care planning	17
Reporting to senior management	15
To inform health planning	14
To inform education planning	13
Reporting to the Department for Education	10
To inform an Ofsted inspection	5
Consultation with / feedback to children and young people	4
Other planning at national or local level	4
Evaluation of project / activity	3
To prepare for other inspection	2
To feedback to professionals / academics / researchers / policy makers	1
Other purposes	4

Note that some sources outlined several methods as part of the same response so the sources total more than 50.

CoramVoice and University of Bristol: Bright Spots Survey

As part of their Bright Spots Programme, CoramVoice and the University of Bristol collected the views of 611 children and young people with experience of the care system through four age-appropriate questionnaires (for those aged 4-7 years, 8-10 years, and 11-18 years). The programme was set up to understand what is important to children in care and to share learning on where children are doing well by developing a framework to compare children's experiences in different local authorities. The large sample size, its coverage of six local authority areas, and the fact it does not relate to any particular type of provision, means that the survey provides important independent insight into the views and experiences of children in care. It is also a good example of involving children and young people in the design of research: the survey design was informed by focus groups with 140 children and young people aged 6-24.

The survey collected information in relation to the Bright Spots wellbeing domains - relationships, resilience building, rights and recovery, and was designed to enable comparison of looked after children's experiences with those of the general population. It found that children in care were more likely than other children to have low levels of wellbeing, but that the majority felt that being in care had improved their lives. It also found that children in care were as positive about the future as other children.

Whilst development and piloting for this survey was part of a one of project, CoramVoice are encouraging local authorities to use the survey on an ongoing basis in future.

> *"Being in care isn't all bad and you should really see it as an opportunity to make the most of your life that have now!"* Respondent to Bright Spots survey (aged 11-18yrs)

> *"Talking to me and being kind [would make care better]"* Respondent to Bright Spots survey (Aged 4-7yrs)

> *"I feel stressed with work at school and feelings about my family - especially my Mum."* Respondent to Bright Spots survey (aged 11-18yrs)

Numbers of children and young people reached by the sources of evidence (final 50)
The number of children and young people reached through activities included in the final 50 sources of evidence ranged from 3 to 3,271. In part, this reflects the range of different activity types included in the 50 which, as described earlier in this report, were chosen because they met a range of quality- or content-related criteria. It is also worth noting that one of these criteria was engagement with 100+ children and young people.

Numbers of children and young people reached by the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
1-10 children and young people	6
11- 20	4
21-50	14
51-100	7
101- 200	6
200+	10
Don't know/information not available	3
Total	50

Age groups of children and young people reached by the sources of evidence (final 50)
Relatively few of the final 50 sources had engaged with children aged 0 to 5 years (seven sources). The practical difficulty of engaging with this very young group and the relatively small number of organisations carrying out engagement with the very young are key reasons for their inclusion as a key criterion in the triage process discussed earlier.

Age groups of children and young people reached by the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
0 to 5 years	7
6 to 10 years	30
11 to 15 years	37
16 years and over	44

Many activities engaged with children and young people across different age groups so the number of sources totals more than 50. As was the case when we looked at all 281 sources above, in the final 50, the median age group for engagement was 11-15.

Placement types of children and young people reached by the sources of evidence (final 50)
The most common placement types covered in the sources of evidence put forward for **full review** were foster care (36 sources) and residential children's homes (29). However, a wide range of placement types and settings were covered by the sources, which reflects the inclusion of placement types in the triage criteria described earlier. It also suggests that, while there may be fewer sources that incorporate the views of those in hostels, unaccompanied asylum seekers or care leavers, such sources do nevertheless exist and could, in principle, be used in compiling a State of the Nation survey from existing evidence sources.

Placement types of children and young people reached by the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
Foster care	36
Residential children's home	29
Staying-put arrangement*	19
Supported accommodation	18
Kinship care	17
Out-of-area placement**	14
Placement with parents	10
Residential school	7
Placed for adoption	6
Secure unit / YOI / STC	6
Independent living	4
Hostels, etc.	3
Care leavers	3
Unaccompanied asylum seekers	1
Other (multiple types / not specified)	2

**Staying Put arrangements are for young people who are classified as "care leavers" but have chosen to remain living with their foster carers.*

*** This is not technically a placement type and will overlap with others.*
Many of the activities covered children and young people in a variety of placement settings, hence the number of sources totals more than 50. Notably, even when considering all placement types relating to care leavers (independent living, hostels, staying put etc.)

Gender of children and young people reached by the sources of evidence (final 50)
Most of the sources specified that their activities reached females (39 sources) and males (35 – four sources reached females but not males). Ten of the 50 sources outlined activities that had included children in care /care leavers who were transgender.

Gender of children and young people reached by the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
Females	39
Males	35
Transgender	10
Information not available	11

Many activities engaged with children and young people in different gender categories so the number of sources totals more than 50.

Ethnicity of children and young people reached by the sources of evidence (final 50)
Sixteen of the 50 sources in the **full review** did not contain information on the ethnic breakdown of the children and young people in care and care leavers covered in the relevant activities. For those sources where information on ethnicity was included, 30 specifically included white children in care / care leavers, 26 covered mixed ethnic groups and slightly fewer covered Asian (19) and black (18) ethnic groups.

Ethnicity of children and young people reached by the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
White	30
Mixed ethnic groups	26
Asian, including Asian British	19
Black, including Black African, Black Caribbean, Black British	18
Other ethnic groups	3
Information missing / not available	16

Many activities engaged with children and young people from different ethnic groups so the number of sources totals more than 50.

Disability and Special Educational Needs among children and young people reached by the sources of evidence (final 50)

Children and young people in care or care leavers with disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs (SEN) were reached through half of the activities included in the full review (see table). In most of these cases, the activity reached CYP with both disabilities and SEN. In most other sources, there was no information to indicate whether CYP in care or care leavers reached through the activity had disabilities or SEN.

In considering a State of the Nation report based on existing sources that needs to be fully inclusive, it is encouraging to note that children in care and care leavers who have disabilities or SEN do seem to be reached by activities that capture their views, perceptions and experiences.

Disability and SEN among children and young people reached by the final 50 sources of evidence	Number of sources
Disability	26
SEN	27
Neither covered (where explicitly stated)	2
Information missing / not available	17

Many activities engaged with children and young people with both disabilities and SEN so the number of sources totals more than 50.

Frequency of activities in capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers reached by the sources of evidence (final 50)

Among the 50 activities documented in the sources put through the full evidence review, 21 were one-off pieces of work that were not repeated activities. Among those where frequency was specified, monthly (seven sources) and annual (eight sources) activities were most common.

Frequency of activities included in the sources put through the full review	Number of sources
Once only	21
Weekly / more than weekly, less than fortnightly	3
Fortnightly	2
Monthly	7
Quarterly / every 3 months	4
6-monthly	1
Every 6-12 months	1
Yearly	8
Less than once a year	1
Information not available/missing	2
Total	50

The full review also asked (either via the call for evidence or as part of the full review for sources identified in the desk research) whether the activity was described as 'ongoing'. Of the 50 sources in the full review, 21 were described as ongoing, 23 were explicitly not ongoing, and information was missing or unavailable for the remaining six sources.

Whether an advocate was involved in activities capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers (final 50)

Advocates were recorded as having been involved in six of the activities included in the full review that engaged with the views, perceptions and experiences of children in care and care leavers. A further 28 sources entered into the full review did not use an advocate while information was missing or unavailable for the remaining 16 sources.

Topics covered in activities capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers (final 50)

Among the 50 sources included in the full review, 35 included health and wellbeing. Not surprisingly, the next most common topics in activities engaging with children and young people in care and care leavers were placements (31 sources) and care planning (30).

The range of topics covered in the 50 sources is encouraging for a potential State of the Nation report based on existing evidence. The topics specified in the original call for evidence and evidence matrix were all covered by at least 18 of the 50 sources reviewed in detail, and further topics not pre-specified were also covered, such as leaving care/transitions (three sources) and bullying (two sources).

Topics covered in activities capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers (full review)	Number of sources
Health and wellbeing	35
Placement	31
Care planning	30
Own attitudes	29
Family	28
School, education and learning	24
Own behaviour	23
Friends	23
Community	20
Leisure	19
Local environment	18
Money	18
Leaving care / transition	3
Bullying	2
Other topics	3
Information not available/missing	3

Each source could cover multiple topics, hence topics total more than 50.

University of Exeter Medical School and University College London
Recognising that looked after young people experience multiple transitions around their 18th birthday, researchers explored young peoples' views of transitions between children's and adult health and social care services to understand what young people described as positive and what could be improved. 24 young people aged 16 – 24 years old took part in participatory meetings and individual interviews with researchers to explore their views of transitions. To aid this process, different methods were used to elicit views; including cutting images from magazines to make a collage of their experiences.

Young people generally looked forward to transitioning into independence; associating this with freedom, their own flat and employment. However, in reality it could also be a time of insecurity and isolation. Young people felt support from a responsive, knowledgeable and easily contactable social worker or personal adviser was vital during this transition. In contrast, healthcare was rarely at the top of care leavers' transition agendas. Where young people had frequent contact with health services, there were mixed experiences of the transition from paediatric to adult services, as illustrated by one young person:

"As soon as I hit their eighteen deadline they wheeled my bed from one floor to the other."

However, there were also examples of exceptional transition planning.

Despite policy focused on young people's involvement in their own care, almost all described adult-led planning of their transitions. Some young people were not informed about or not given the opportunity to participate in important decisions about them, whilst others described going along with decisions rather than actively participating.

The findings from this research informed a short film, which was fed back to the young care leavers.

Intended audience for activities capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers (final 50)
Local authorities (33 sources) and children and young people in care or care leavers (29) were the intended audiences cited most frequently among the 50 sources covered in the full review. Many sources targeted professionals working with children in care (22 targeted all such professionals, 18 targeted key professionals working with the child).

Intended audience for activities capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers (full review)	Number of sources
All information publically available	21
All professionals working with the child	22
Children and young people in care or care leavers	29
Local authority	33
Key professionals working with the child	18
National government	12
Ofsted	15
Primary caregiver only	5
Academic journals	3
Corporate parents	3
Outputs not yet available	1
Other audiences	3
Information not available/missing	2

Each source could have multiple intended audiences, hence topics total more than 50.

The Prince's Trust
The Prince's Trust, a charity that helps young people aged 13 to 30 get into jobs, education and training, carried out research to explore how to support care leavers into independence. Through a peer researcher design, a number of 'young researchers', many of whom were care leavers themselves, received training in research methods and data analysis to run their own research project. They carried out a range of surveys, interviews and focus groups with care leavers, as well as statutory and non-statutory professionals. 13 care leavers completed an online survey and four focus groups were held across the country.

Care leavers accessed support from many different places including social services, charities, schools, friends, and foster carers; but in a number of cases, young people felt they themselves were their main source of support and motivation during the transition to independence. During this transition, care leavers reflected that managing finances, maintaining positive health and wellbeing, managing housing, having an awareness of services and having a career plan were important. To help them with these skills and support them to achieve their goals, they wanted professionals to be flexible, caring and supportive, able to treat them as individuals, reliable, good at listening, non-judgemental, genuine and able to provide emotional and practical support. Some young people the young researchers spoke to had very specific goals; one care leaver said:

"I want to gain qualifications within social services to become a social worker".

Ethical considerations incorporated into activities capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers (final 50 sources in the full review)

The inclusion of information on ethical considerations built into the activities is more routine in the 50 sources included in the full review, compared to all sources identified in the research. However, given that these might be considered the 'most promising' sources (those that met the most criteria for inclusion or had particular strengths), it is disappointing to note that almost one in three (16 of the 50 sources) did not include any of the ethical considerations listed in the table below. While it is unlikely that the 16 sources with missing data on ethics incorporated no ethical considerations, it is impossible to say how many of them did and what ethical approaches they may have used.

This is a further instance where a steer from the Children's Commissioner's Office to professionals and researchers working in the field could make the documentation of ethical considerations more routine.

Ethical considerations incorporated into activities capturing the voice of children in care and care leavers (final 50 sources in the full review)	Number of sources
The activity was confidential	27
Consent was obtained from child or young person	24
Consent was obtained from primary caregiver	14
Followed own organisation's internal ethics guidelines/ procedures	26
Followed external ethics guidelines/ procedures	13
Feedback on activity was provided to child or young person	19
Individuals conducting the activity had appropriate training; CRB/DBS clearance; and were competent to respond to potential disclosures from children and young people	11
There was a named contact for questions	20
Those who took part had an opportunity to ask questions about the activity beforehand	24
It was clear to the children and young people who took part what the activity was for	26
It was clear to the children and young people who took part what information from the activity would be used for	24
Information not available/missing	16

Each source could incorporate multiple ethical considerations, hence the sources total more than 50.

Reflections on the 50 sources in the full review

The 50 sources submitted to the full review represents a wide range of activities of different scales, covering different purposes, intended audiences, target groups engaged, ethical approaches incorporated and frequencies. However, despite the obvious variation in these sources, the triage process does seem to have been successful as a way of identifying a final 50 sources of evidence that were reasonably detailed and that outlined reasonably robust outputs. (The selection of *50* sources was essentially an arbitrary figure that represented a big enough sample to test the feasibility of the approach while also being manageable within the time and resource constraints of the project.)

There are, inevitably, a number of gaps in the sources reviewed: in particular, information that would seem to be objectively important, such as methods (*how* the activity was undertaken) and ethics (essentially, what *safeguards* were included to protect participants) were often missing or described only briefly. However, it is important to remember that the sources of evidence were not produced with this research review in mind, and that omissions that appear important from the perspective of considering a State of the Nation report may be of little importance in relation to the original purposes of the work.

Knowsley Children's Social Care
Knowsley Children's Social Care Team established a new group, Knowsley M.A.D.E (making a difference everywhere), to improve participation with children and young people in care across the local authority. Knowsley M.A.D.E. includes 59 children and young people aged eight - 21 and involves members of Knoswley's Children in Care Council at its core.

Representatives from Knowsley M.A.D.E have attended corporate parenting board (CPB) meetings since 2014 and in September 2016, they developed their first yearly action plan in partnership with the CPB. The plan links the needs of the local children's social care service with the views, wishes and feelings of children with experience of Care in Knowsley.

In the past year, Knowsley M.A.D.E. have been involved in a number of innovative activities including the creation of an online virtual memory box, 'MyMemories', designed to ensure that children and young people in care in Knowsley don't lose any important memories. The website allows children and carers to save photos, video and documents in one secure location so that young people don't lose anything important to them whilst in care. Aside from the creation of the virtual memory box, Knowsley M.A.D.E. worked on positive mental health, peer mentoring, changes to guidance for care leavers, independent living skills support and exploring how contact with family can improve via service / policy change.

Progress against the yearly action plan is outlined in reports created by a participation officer working with Knowsley M.A.D.E. This information is then fed back to the CPB for review.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions from the feasibility study

- Are there available sources of evidence?
- The research identified 306 sources of evidence in scope, including 140 submitted in response to the call for evidence. Of these, 281 were based on direct engagement with children in care and care leavers in England since April 2015.
- These sources are extremely wide-ranging, in terms of organisation, purpose, geographic coverage, methodology, achieved sample size, and the extent to which they shed light on the views and experiences of children and young people.
- It cannot be claimed that these 281 sources are exhaustive or representative. However, they do provide insight into the types of activity likely to be carried out, by whom, and for what purpose. We also have some indication of the likely extent of all activity in this area. We can be reasonably confident that the published sources from research organisations (including universities) and statutory bodies represent the total number in these categories (or close to it), as they are published on official websites. However, there may be further current literature, including documents which are as yet unpublished, and "grey" literature.
- By contrast sources received from statutory, voluntary and private service providers are likely to be replicated in some form in many other areas. These "known unknowns" may be useful in determining the methodology involved in a future State of the Nation report.
- What assessment can we make of any gaps in evidence above specific groups of children?
- As directed by the Children's Commissioner, the research focused specifically on groups of children and young people who were likely to be the most vulnerable/marginalised based on their characteristics and placement type. This is reflected in the prioritisation of these issues in the triage process and the further refinement of sources. (See Methodology chapter above.)
- A large number of sources state specifically that activities involved children who are BAME (98) or those with SEND (80), although our methodology did not allow us to discover what percentage of a given cohort fell into these categories. This is encouraging given the prevalence of these characteristics amongst children in care and care leavers. There was not scope within the research to examine to what extent activities were made accessible to children with SEND, especially those with significant needs (though this is referenced in the case study relating to North Lincolnshire and Goole.) Again, this could potentially be included in the methodology for a State of the Nation report.
- A small number of sources appear to reflect the views of children and young people involved with the youth justice system (5), children with migrant or refugee status (10) or those identified as at risk of sexual abuse (1). To some extent this is expected, given the relatively small numbers who have these characteristics. However, there may also be an element of apprehension amongst those working with the most vulnerable children (including where legal proceedings are involved). A State of the Nation report could seek to engage with specialist organisations directly with the aim of uncovering further unpublished evidence.

- Limitations in the evidence base
- The issues of incomplete, superficial or missing information on important information such as methodology, ethics and numbers reached via the engagement activities are sources of concern. Without such detail it is difficult for others to be able to assess the quality and appropriateness of the evidence, or to replicate approaches that otherwise appear to be of high quality. Equally, many sources lacked information about the groups of children reached, limiting others' ability to assess representativeness.
- What did we learn from the full review of the final 50 sources?

The full review of the final 50 sources demonstrated that the triage process was suitable for identifying a reasonably robust cohort of evidence sources. While many items of evidence of interest to NCB, RiP and the Children's Commissioner were missing or only briefly outlined, it is important to note that the sources of evidence were originally developed for purposes other than contributing to a State of the Nation report based on existing evidence.

Evidence sources included in the full review covered a wide range of purposes, though most commonly they included work by local authorities and the care sector relating to the care (including care planning), health and wellbeing of children and young people in care. The evidence was obtained from a variety of methods, mainly the more routine approaches (surveys, interviews, focus groups and the like), but also through new or innovative approaches that could effectively engage with children and young people and that can provide a richer pool of evidence from which to draw.

The final 50 sources demonstrated the ability of professionals and researchers to reach more or less all groups of children and young people in care and care leavers: males, females and transgender; white, black and Asian; people with and without disabilities and SEN; children and young people in a range of care settings and placements; from the very young to young adults transitioning from care settings.

Similarly, the range of topics covered in the sources of evidence represents a strength of the outputs in the sector. As well as reflecting on practical (and critically important) topics such as placements and care planning, activities covered other key topics such as children's and young people's own attitudes and behaviours, , family and friends, education and leisure, health and wellbeing, their local environment, money and, for those leaving care settings, transition.

Key messages for the sector

Analysis of the 306 sources included in this research has allowed us to identify a number of key messages for organisations and individuals in the sector.

- Direct engagement with children in care and care leavers is widespread.
- Many organisations working directly with children, making policy, and conducting academic research appear to recognise the importance of participating directly with children and young people.
- Different organisations use engagement for different purposes.
- Children in Care Councils often undertake activities with the specific and primary aim of understanding children's views and experiences.
- Activities by children's services, voluntary organisations and statutory bodies are often focused on evaluating a programme or intervention, or informing practice and policy at local or national level.
- This report contains a number of examples of good practice, illustrated in the case studies, which could be followed.
- In many cases, organisations do not publish detailed information about:
- the methodology used;
- how successful an activity was (in achieving its intended aim); and
- findings - what it discovered about the views and experiences of children in care and care leavers.
- Importantly, information is often missing on the ethical considerations involved in the research and any actions taken to ensure activities did not compromise the best interests of children involved.
- Organisations do not routinely publish information about the outcomes or impact of their participation work, such as whether it leads to changes in policy or practice.
- Organisations also do not routinely publish outputs from participation work or say whether these are disseminated or to whom.
- For many organisations, this work takes the form of a one-off project, or is in its early stages.
- The sector would benefit from opportunities to access guidance and support on engaging with children and young people; share good practice; and develop systematic ways of seeking, recording and analysing children's views and experiences, including how they change over time.

How feasible is a State of the Nation report based on existing sources?

Overall, the research indicates that the Children's Commissioner could commission a State of the Nation report drawing on existing sources. (This would be very different from the Commissioner's 2015 State of the Nation report, which was based on the Care Monitor survey.)

The research suggests there are a large number of diverse sources of evidence which are likely to provide significant insight into the views and experiences of children in care and care leavers in England.

Existing sources could be analysed to provide an aggregation of information, providing a rich understanding of how these children and young people see the world. The report could have both breadth – e.g. different age groups, characteristics, placement types, geographic coverage – and depth – e.g. large sample sizes, direct quotes from children and young people, repeated activities.

Recommendations for a future State of the Nation Report

Findings from this research can be used for the basis of a State of the Nation report. We recommend the report follows one of the two approaches set out below.

Option 1: A report based on the sources identified in this research

Strengths

- This research identified a large and diverse evidence base: 306 sources potentially in scope, of which 281 included direct engagement with children in care and care leavers.
- This would provide a rich understanding of how children and young people see the world, based on the views of a large number of young people (more than a single survey couple reach) and covering activities from across the sector.
- Topline analysis has led to the identification of 50 sources which are likely to contain some insight into the views and experiences of children in care and care leavers.
- These sources are based on engagement with children in care and care leavers with a range of characteristics and placement types, from around England. The sources also vary in terms of their purpose, the type of organisation responsible, the number of young people engaged and the form of engagement activity.
- As a result, the report could contain a combination of quantitative and qualitative information, including statistics based on large surveys, direct quotes from young people, and case studies illustrating best practice.

Weaknesses

- Just over half of the 50 sources which met the standards for full review concerned one-off activities creating an inherent instability in the source base for future reports.
- Although there is some geographic spread, some areas of the country may be over or under-represented.
- Source inclusion will be limited by self-selection, resulting from the Call for Evidence, and whether or not sources have been published,
- In some cases published sources or responses to the Call for Evidence do not contain all the detailed Information which resulted from an activity. (For example, we may have the draft of a survey or questions for a focus group but not the findings/data sets in full.)
- Sources published from April 2017 would not be included.

A variant of Option 1 would include some limited scope for follow-up inquiries with organisations responsible for the sources identified in the feasibility study.

Option 2: A report based on the sources identified in this research and significant further research, with an emphasis on geographic spread

Strengths

- This could combine the rich and diverse information to be mined from sources already identified in the feasibility study (as outlined in Option 1 above), with a more comprehensive picture from across England.
- This could aim to facilitate some degree of comparison of activities and even children's views and experiences in different parts of England.
- Gathering additional information about local authority level activities (e.g. through Children in Care Councils) could allow the report to capture children's views and examples of good participatory practice, beyond those included in the Call for Evidence or published online.

Weaknesses

- Using the Commissioner's powers to request information from a large number of local authorities could be time consuming and would create an additional (and possibly unwelcome) burden for local authorities.
- Activities around the country (and the methodology used) may well be too different to allow for straight comparisons, limiting the usefulness of the exercise.
- This approach would be time consuming, delaying the publication of a State of the Nation report.

Further considerations

- The Commissioner may wish to limit the sources used in a future State of the Nation report to those which meet basic requirements, such as the statement of methodology and ethical considerations.
- The Commissioner may view a future State of the Nation report as an opportunity to support the sector in improving the quality of engagement with children in care and care leavers. In particular this could include advice on ethics, and how to ensure that research and participation work is carried out in a way that respects children's rights and promotes their best interests. This could form part of a wider programme of work in partnership with, or led by, other organisations. We know there is appetite in all sectors, as demonstrated in examples of innovative practice illustrated in the report. Those working directly with children know that when it comes to participation, we need to do more and better. However, aside from resource constraints, there is also a lack of clear standards or guidance to aspire to.
- An annual State of the Nation report drawing together existing evidence could also highlight best practice and provide advice and encouragement for services and providers.
- A 'kitemarking' system would recognise excellence, encourage improvement and allow the identification of activities robust enough to be included in the report. In addition to providing national-level evidence this would build local capacity, improving participatory practice overall.

Annexes

- Call for evidence questionnaire
- FAQs
- Letter from the Children's Commissioner for England
- List of organisations that submitted responses to the call for evidence and/or whose work was included via the desk research
- Copy of the completed evidence matrix (spreadsheet)

Call for evidence: A rapid review of sources of evidence on the views, experiences and perceptions of children in care and care leavers

The National Children's Bureau has been engaged by the Children's Commissioner to:

- Gather information on mechanisms used to seek the views, experiences and perceptions of children in care and care leavers in England.
- Identify related sources of evidence produced since April 2015 that relate to the views, experiences and perceptions of children in care and care leavers.

The purpose is to understand the current evidence base on views, experiences and perceptions of children in or leaving care in England. This will involve exploring the range of methods used to engage with children, as well as any products of such engagement.

Analysis will focus on understanding whether it is feasible to describe a national picture by drawing on individual exercises that have taken place around the country. This will guide the Children's Commissioner on whether there is sufficient evidence for a future "State of the Nation" report on children in care and care leavers.

We therefore ask that you to respond to this call for evidence with information on:

- Activities you undertake, or have undertaken to gather the views, experiences and perceptions of children in or leaving care.
- Resulting published or unpublished outputs from these activities.

Please note that we are interested in **outputs published or unpublished, carried out since April 2015**.

Even if you undertake no activities, we would still be interested in hearing from you.
We would also appreciate you sharing this call for evidence with colleagues or organisations who capture looked after children's voices.
Please describe each evidence gathering activity and its related output. If you undertake more than one activity, please answer the questions for each one. If you have carried out many such exercises please prioritise those that draw on a large sample or are clearly indicative of the views of a well-defined group of children.

It should take between five and ten minutes to complete the questions for each activity.
All responses will be treated as confidential and no individual or organisation responding will be identifiable in any published document, except with the express permission of a respondent.
We would be grateful if you could also share with us any documents related to your activities. You can upload these at the relevant question.
Once you have completed all questions, please press submit.
If you have any queries about this call for evidence, contact Dustin Hutchinson, Research and Policy Assistant at NCB on dhutchinson@ncb.org.uk or 0207 843 6048.
Further information is available at [insert web link]
Thank you for responding to this call for evidence. We appreciate your time and effort.

Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.)

1. Why is this research being done?
The National Children's Bureau (NCB) and Research in Practice (RiP) have been commissioned by the Children's Commissioner to review existing sources of evidence on the views, experiences and perceptions of children in care and care leavers (up to and including the age of 24 years).
The purpose of the research is to understand what information is collected on the views, experiences and perceptions of children and young people in care and care leavers in England. This will inform a report to the Office of the Children's Commissioner on the feasibility of using existing evidence to inform a future State of the Nation report on children in care and care leavers.

2. Who is doing the research?
The Children's Commissioner has engaged the National Children's Bureau (NCB) to carry out the research on the Commissioner's behalf. NCB will be working with Research in Practice (RiP) to carry out the research.

3. Why have I/why has my organisation been approached?
We are contacting a number of individuals, organisations and institutions known or believed to be working in the field of looked after children and/or care leavers.

4. Do you want information about individual children or young people?
No, we do not want materials that contain any information that identifies, or could lead to the identification of, children. If you wish to submit detailed information, please make sure to anonymise these contributions before submission. If we are sent identifiable data the sender will be immediately notified, and information will be destroyed.

5. Will you refer to people or organisations in the report?
Submissions from individuals and organisations will be anonymised, except where examples of good practice are cited with express agreement from the contributor. We are not seeking to evaluate or pass judgement on organisations' effectiveness at collecting the views of children in care or care leavers. The aim is to assess Call for evidence: A rapid review of sources of evidence on the views, experiences and perceptions of children in or leaving care whether available information is sufficient to inform a future State of the Nation report.

We will produce an appendix containing a list of all contributing organisations. If you wish to be excluded from the list please indicate in your response to the call for evidence.

6. What safeguards are in place during the project?
No information on individual children/young people will be sought or reviewed during this project.
All materials and information will be securely stored and encrypted.
All staff handling returns to the call for evidence have Enhanced DBS checks.
Rigorous ethical procedures are implemented through all NCB activities. These inform the handling and reporting of information and evidence. NCB works in accordance with the Social Research Association ethical guidelines, which are available here: http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ethics03.pdf

7. Aside from submitting evidence, can I contribute to the project in other ways?
Yes. The Children's Commissioner's Office will hold a meeting of multiple stakeholders from across sectors to gather views on the findings. If you would like to be involved please indicate so when you respond to the call for evidence.

8. Who can I contact to confirm this is a legitimate piece of research commissioned by the Children's Commissioner?
If you would like to confirm that this is a genuine piece of research, please contact Prof Leon Feinstein, Director of Evidence at the Children's Commissioner's Office (Leon.feinstein@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

9. How do I contact the project team at the National Children's Bureau with a query about the research?
You can contact NCB using this email address - Voice@ncb.org.uk
Alternatively you can contact Dr John Dodd, Director of Research and Policy at NCB (jdodd@ncb.org.uk or 020 7843 6072).

Letter from the Children's Commissioner for England

Dear Colleague,

Children's Commissioner: Call for evidence - capturing the voice of looked-after children and care leavers

I am committed to putting the interests and voices of looked after children at the heart of policy and practice that involves or affects them.

Therefore, I am pleased to have engaged the National Children's Bureau (NCB) with the support of Research in Practice (RiP) to carry out a review of sources of evidence on the views, experiences and perceptions of children in and leaving care in England.

NCB is working with my Director of Evidence Leon Feinstein to:

- Gather information identifying the existing mechanisms by which the voices of children in and leaving care are captured.
- Identify sources of evidence since April 2015 relating to the views, experiences and perceptions of children in or leaving care.

The aim is: to understand the types of evidence available; to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence base; and to assess any gaps in the evidence on the voice of looked after children and care leavers. This will help determine our plans for further national reports on the state of the nation for looked after children.

I would be very grateful for your support in communicating and responding to this call for evidence. If you have any questions about this call for evidence, please contact the research team directly: Dr John Dodd, Director of Research and Policy, at the National Children's Bureau (jdodd@ncb.org.uk). If you would like to confirm that this is a genuine piece of research, please contact Prof Leon Feinstein (Leon.feinstein@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely
Anne Longfield OBE Children's Commissioner for England

Organisations that submitted responses to the call for evidence and/or whose work was included via the desk research

The organisations listed below submitted responses to the call for evidence and/or produced sources of evidence identified through desk research for the review.

Action for Children
All Party Parliamentary Group for Children and the National Children's Bureau
Association of Independent Visitors and Consultants to Childcare Services
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust, Keele University and Staffordshire University
Barnardo's
Barnet Council
Become
Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
Birmingham Community Foundation Trust
Blackpool Council
Bracknell Forest Council
Bradford Through-care Aftercare
Brent Council Social Care Services
Brighton and Hove Council
Buttle UK
Cafcass
Cambridgeshire County Council
Camden Council
Canterbury Christ Church University
Cardiff University
Cardiff University and University of Bristol
Care Quality Commission
Catch22
Cheshire West and Chester Council
Children and Youth Services Review (Jennifer Roberts, Karen Winter and Paul Connolly)
Children's Commissioner for England
Children's Rights Alliance for England
Children's Society
CICADA Services
City of Wolverhampton Council
City of York Council
Coram Voice / Community Care
Coram Voice and University of Bristol
Cordis Bright
Cornwall Council
Council of Europe
Darlington Borough Council
Department for Education
Devon County Council Children and Young People's Services
Doncaster Children's Services Trust
Dorset County Council
Dudley MBC Children's Services
Durham County Council
Ealing Council
East and North Hertfordshire CCG and Herts Valley CCG
East London NHS Foundation Trust (Newham)
East Riding of Yorkshire council
East Sussex County Council
Enfield Council
Five Rivers Fostering Service
Fostering Network
Gateshead Council
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Gloucestershire County Council
Greenwich Council
Hackney Council
Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care, University of Bristol
Halton Borough Council
Hammersmith and Fulham Council
Harlow Council
Hartlepool Borough Council
Hertfordshire County Council
HM Government
HM Inspectorate of Prisons
House of Commons Education Committee
Keele University
Kennet Care
Kent County Council
King's College, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Devon Partnership NHS Trust
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Lambeth Council
Leaving Care Service
Leeds City Council Voice, Influence and Change Team

Leicester City Council
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
Lewisham Council Children's Social Care
Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services
Loughborough University Centre for Child and Family Research
Luton Borough Council
Manchester City Council - 'The Change Group - The Care Leavers Council' (CiCC)
Manchester City Council - 'The Group' (CiCC)
Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Central Lancashire, Liverpool John Moores University
Match Foster Care
Medway Council
Merton Council
Middlesbrough Council
Nagalro
National Audit Office
National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)
National IRO Managers Partnership
National Network for Education of Care Leavers
Newcastle City Council
Newcastle Gateshead CCG
North East Lincolnshire Council
North Lincolnshire Council
North Tyneside Council
Northamptonshire County Council
Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Northumberland County Council
Nottingham Children's Partnership
Nottinghamshire County Council
NSPCC
Nuffield Foundation
Office for Fair Access (OFFA)
Ofsted
Oldham Council
Participation Works
Pennine Care Foundation NHS Trust - Bury
Plymouth City Council
Portsmouth City Council
Prince's Trust
Prince's Trust and the National Children's Bureau
Prison Reform Trust
Redbridge Council
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Rees Centre for Research in Fostering and Education, University of Oxford
Rees Centre with University of York, Institute of Education
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Rutland County Council
Salford City Council
Sheffield City Council
Sir Martin Narey's independent review of children's residential care
Slough Children's Services Trust
Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
South Gloucestershire Council
Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
St Christopher's Fellowship
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS trust
Staffordshire County Council
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Suffolk County Council
Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)
Sutton LA
Swindon Borough Council
Tameside Safeguarding Children Board
The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT)
The Care Leavers' Association
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Tri-Borough (Westminster City Council, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham Council)
University of Bedfordshire
University of Central Lancashire Centre for Children and Young People's Participation, National Children's Bureau
University of East Anglia
University of Exeter Medical School
University of Kent
University of Leicester
University of London and University of Hertfordshire
University of Nottingham, Nottingham City Council, Liverpool University, Mental Health Foundation, YogaNova
University of Oxford, University of Surrey
University of Sheffield
University of Sussex School of Psychology
University of York

Wakefield Council (CiCC)
Walsall Council
Wandsworth Council
Warrington Borough Council
Warwickshire County Council
Westminster City Council Children's Services
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
Worcestershire County Council

In addition, a number of organisations submitted responses to the call for evidence without providing key details (such as the name of the organisation). These bodies included health commissioners, charities, children's services and other organisations that could not be identified at all.

The research project teams at the National Children's Bureau and Research in Practice would like to reiterate their thanks to all organisations and individuals who engaged with this review.

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