



Voices From Care and The National

Reference Group

'When I Am Ready'

Young People's Response

January 2013



Voices From Care & National Reference Group's consultation response to 'When I Am Ready'

Introduction

This is Voices From Care's National Reference Group consultation response to the Welsh Government's proposal, 'When I Am Ready'. This report outlines the responses that Voices From Care received when consulting with young people about the scheme. Voices From Care gave young people the option to fill in a specially developed questionnaire, or to take part in a focus group discussing the scheme.

The National Reference Group's Response

The following quotations are a synopsis of the overall comments made by young people. In general the comments given were highly positive, although many young people raised concerns for those in residential care. A balance between positive and negative comments is presented in order to give a rounded view of the topics discussed during the consultation process. Although we asked more questions than the consultation required, it is felt that the answers are still relevant and integrate well with the provided consultation questions.

1) What do you think about the idea of being able to stay in your foster placement?

To have a safe environment in order to study and learn more life skills is great. It is hard enough anyway for any 18 year old finding a job, controlling finances, paying bills and finding a place to live.

It totally depends on how the foster placement is going. Personally, staying in my foster placement would have erupted even more due to people clashing and not



getting on. I think personality matching would be an idea, especially with older young people.

I think it's very positive as some young people are not ready to leave their foster placement at 18.

It's great as young people who are settled don't have to worry about moving as soon as they turn 18.

Yeah it's a good idea. It is really stressful knowing you have to move out at 18 and knowing you're not ready.

Great idea! What normal 18 year old wants to move out? Or better yet, what sort of parent/guardian would expect that of an 18 year old?

I think some people may like to stay with their carers, but also many young people often want to move away from the system.

I'm not in care anymore, but if I had the choice I would have been part of it. It's a brilliant idea.

It's a great idea as some young people may not be mature or ready to live responsibly on their own.

2) What do you think are the barriers for young people wishing to be part of the 'When I Am Ready' scheme?



Not feeling comfortable in the placement.

There is more of a demand for foster placements for younger people.

You tell me, there shouldn't be any barriers!

Workers not listening to what you want.

If you're in residential care.

If you have been in residential care for most of your life it would be such a change to move into foster placements.

You may not have the best relationship with the carer.

Potentially, if service users don't get on with long term placement. It would be a real success if there is continued support after 21 but this would have to come from the foster carer and not through social services.

The current foster carer may not want to be part of the scheme.

3) Do you think this is a positive step for young people about to leave care?

Not all young people are the same. It depends on the situation and relationship between the young person and the carer. I also believe that young people will get better opportunities if they were part of the scheme. For example, help with managing finances which can be a major problem when trying to be independent.

Definitely, as time is precious for young people in care,



although their needs would have to be met.

Yes, but maybe have some sort of half way option.

Yes. However, I feel children and young people in residential placements may feel excluded.

Yes, keep up the good work. Make it happen.

Yes, this is a great idea for some.

I was in residential care and I really wanted to stay. I wouldn't have wanted to go into foster care after being in my residential home for so long.

This is a positive step forward, as it is a mutual commitment between the young person and the foster carer.

4) What difficulties do you think Local Authorities will face to ensure there are enough places available?

Staffing and funding for the placements.

Number of foster carers.

Money.

There not being enough foster carers, there is not enough at the moment.



Lack of foster placements.

Money it's always about money.

Not enough foster carers wanting to take in a young person over 18.

5) What information do you think you will need about the 'When I Am Ready' scheme so they can decide if it is right for them?

What will happen to you when you leave the scheme and what support would be available to you.

Information on living independently, the financial support available to care leavers and most importantly, the emotional support available.

How it will be funded and clarification on what age they can stay up to.

A pamphlet explaining the scheme which would be handed out to young people by social workers and organisations.

It would be good to have a breakdown of what support you get if you leave care at 18, so you can compare it to the support you get with 'When I Am Ready'.

6) Is 'When I Am Ready' the right title for this scheme?

Yes (all the young people consulted thought it was a good title for the scheme).



Yes. It's the right name, I think, but a few may not feel ready at the end of the scheme, although if the right support is given it should be successful.

It's not really 'When I Am Ready' is it? What young person is at 18, with the little support given that is?

Yeah, I think the name is good.

7) Should there be any safeguards or special arrangements if there are young people over 18 living in a 'When I Am Ready' arrangement with children and young people under 18?

Independence again would be seen as an issue, with curfews and friends staying over etc.

There could be, but there would be an adult around as well so it should be okay.

Maybe CRB checks and then see if the young person would live well with young children. However, I wouldn't want to have a CRB, being in care means your stigmatized enough.

No, obviously they will have a CRB or some kind of



background checks but it's down to the foster placement and social services to make sure that decisions are based on each situation.

Yes, the same as being in care, there are rules and boundaries.

Individual basis, there could be risk assessment and then WIR should only happen if it is safe for everyone involved.

8) Any other comments

I am so glad my foster carers let me stay on. They have encouraged me to learn to drive. They have paid for this and they are making sure I do my school work. I am very happy with them, they are like my real mother and father. If I had to move I don't think I would do as well in school. I feel cared for living here.

I think it's very positive as my younger brother is 18 and has a strong bond with his foster carers. My brother is also seeking employment and his foster carers are helping.

The idea sounds awesome, I completely agree with it.

There should be some sort of life skills and corporate parenting package included.

Young people who require extra help should be offered a



mentor who has been through the care system so they can learn from their experiences. This could be offered as a half way scheme between 'When I Am Ready' and independent living.

