

Connecting Voices - growing up in care and sibling contact

Transcript

Shannon

My name is Shannon, I'm a young care leaver. I went in to care when I was 12 and then left when I was 16 to move into my own tenancy. I am now 23 years old. The group I'm involved in is called Connecting Voices. It's a group that gets young care leavers together to talk about different things like sibling separation, their experiences in care and the hurdle we went through in care. We went to all the young people in spoke to them about their experiences in care and come out with the main thing affected them in care was sibling separation. And that some obviously, young people end up offending and just going down bad roads for getting separated from the siblings. It is horrendous.

Me and my brother were with each other 24/7 and then we get separated and we didn't see each other for the first few months. But it really had an impact on me because I went from seeing my brother all the time to not seeing him at all. That made me feel lonely, angry, confused, when I went on holiday and stuff, the first thing I wanted to do was go and tell my brother, but I couldn't really speak to him. When we went into care, even we were in contact there was always somebody there, so we couldn't really be ourselves and talk about stuff we would usually talk about. I'd say we lost the relationship, the closeness that we had together. So it was not really close until obviously after we left care and then when we started obviously talking again after we'd had kids. That's when we started to get close again, but we've never had that bond that we had before we went into care. It's not been the same as what it was like, the bond we had. Because of that I would like it to change for kids not to be separated so that if they can get placed together, they are placed together. If that's not possible then they get contacted as regularly as they can. That would stop them from losing the bond that have got.

We met with an independent reviewing officers to draw up a set of guidelines between them and young people. We've updated the East Ayrshire Promise so that it was more young person friendly. So it's that the young people can understand that a bit better and to put sibling separation at the top of that because I think it's a hurdle we really need to overcome. We have got a take the findings to the head of the social work, the corporate

parents, the educational system, and we've got our conference - corporate parenting conference. So we are doing some stuff like that. It's changed for the better in some aspects. We just need to keep getting it out there to totally change.

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