

# Tell It Like It Is



Event for primary  
aged children

11th May 2013

# Introduction

This is a report of the key issues for primary school aged children who are looked after away from home, and their carers, which came out of the "Tell It Like It Is" event held on Saturday 11th May in Kintore. The event was organised by the Children's Rights Service and the Family Placement Service and was supported by young people from the Young People's Organising and Campaigning (YPOC) Group.

The event was attended by 10 children aged from 6-12 years, eight of whom were looked after in foster care, and two children of the foster carers. Six foster carers also came along.

There were two workshops, one for the children, which was activity based, to give them the chance to tell us what the important issues were for them when they came into foster care and since; and one for the adults, which focussed on children's rights.

Dale, Shane, Chelsea, Shania and Caitlin from the YPOC Group supported the children and the adults in their workshops. We would like to record a big thank you to them, and also to Jo and Kelly, the face painters who gave of their time for free; and to the Dezibel Drummers who got the day off to a great start.

The day began with Dezibel Drummers, we were shown how to keep time to the music, hold the drums and use the drums. We had great fun and so did our foster carers especially when we were competing for the best drumming routine. This got the day off to a fantastic start where everyone was enthusiastic and raring to go.





# This is the children's story of the day

## Fizz's Story

We began by hearing the story of Fiz (picture) and her journey into foster care. We spoke about the things Fiz would need to take in her suitcase, the things that would make her feel safe and the things that she would need. This is what we came up with:

- Toothbrush
- Photos
- Favourite toy
- Clothes
- Shoes
- Sweets
- DS
- Ipad
- School bag
- Coat
- Books
- Tablets
- Music
- Night light

Some of us spoke about not being able to take anything because it was such a rush and this made us sad. We should be able to take the things that make us happy and will help us settle.

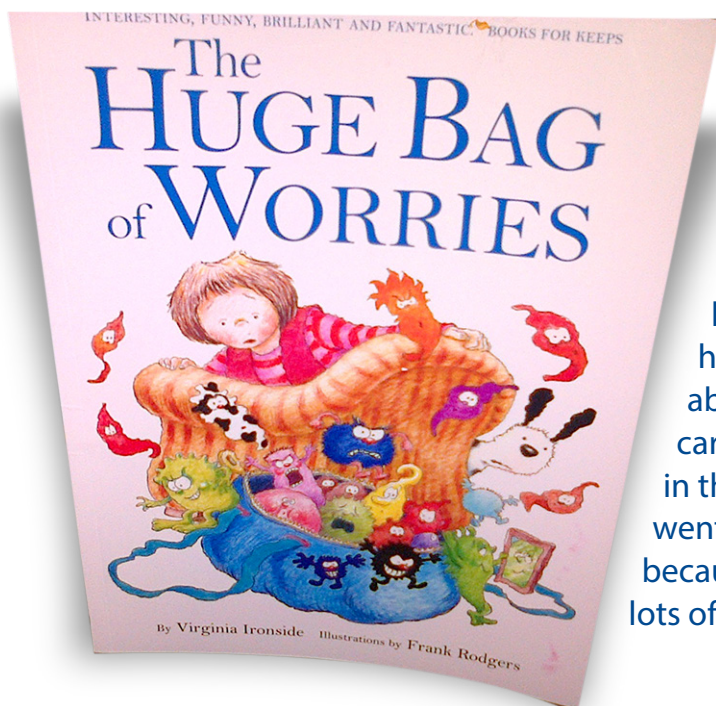




## Who helped us

Then we spoke about who helped us when we moved to foster care. We did this by using Helping Hands. We were able to design our hand template and then on each figure say who helped us. Then we spoke about the kind of help we got and what it meant to us.

- My sister
- My social worker
- Friends
- Children's Rights
- My Mum
- My Dad
- My foster carers
- My foster brother



## Worries

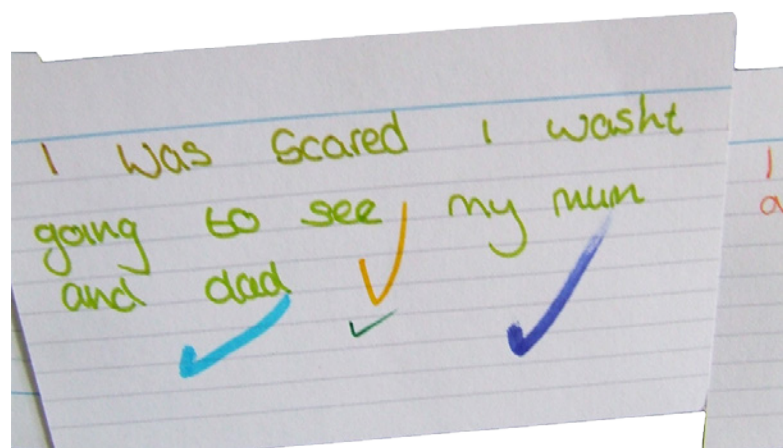
We then heard the story of Fiz and her huge bag of worries and how Fiz managed to share her worries with everyone and then she never had so many. We used our own Worry Bag to think about the kind of things we worry about in foster care. We had to write our worry on a card and put it in the bag and the bag then gave us a sweet. We all went crazy writing down our worries, maybe that was because we got some more sweets. Anyway we had lots of worries and here are some of them.



# HUGE BAG OF WORRIES

- 
- Going home to Mum
  - When I will get to go home
  - That no one visits
  - Don't see my friend
  - I worry that my sister might go missing when she doesn't sleep in my room at night
  - Getting bullied
  - I am worried that I won't get to see Granny
  - That if I went back to my Mum, she would not want me
  - That I wasn't going to see my Mum
  - Getting angry with other people
  - That I will not get back with Mum
  - I was scared that I wouldn't see my Mum and Dad
  - Sister being with me
  - That my foster carer is going to be mean
  - Fitting in again in a new home
  - I worry that I will never see my Mum again also my Dad
  - I was scared when I went away from my Mum
  - Getting bullied
  - That nobody would notice me
  - That people would think I'm weird
  - People saying that I am getting something, when I don't get
  - Getting upset
  - I'm worried that I will never see my Mummy again
  - Not having contact
  - I worry that I would die
  - I was scared I wasn't going to see my Mum and Dad
  - I worry at night because I think a ghost will come
  - Growing away from Mum and Dad
  - I worry I was going to die if I don't see my Mum
  - Not seeing Mum and Dad getting hurt
  - Getting angry
  - Getting bullied
  - Getting pushed around
  - Getting bullied
  - Worried about my family and dogs
  - I was scared when I went a walk with my Mum

As you can see our worry bag was pretty full. We put them on our worry wall and when we discussed them we were surprised to see us all share lots of the same worries.



I was scared I wasn't going to see my mum and dad ✓ ✓ ✓

# What I think of my Social Worker

The next thing we did was speak about our social workers because we all have one. We were able to design our own social workers and write on the back what we thought of them. Here are our social workers we think they look pretty cool.



This is what we wrote on the back about our social workers:

- He takes me out and buys me ice cream
- He cares for me
- I like my social worker he is cool
- My social worker is kind
- My social worker is helpful
- My social worker listens to me
- My social worker comes to visit me
- My social worker helps me
- My social worker is sweet
- My social worker is cool
- My social worker is helpful and kind
- My social worker helps me understand things
- I want to see my social worker more
- My social worker visits me
- My social worker gives me presents
- My social worker helps me
- My social worker takes me out for pancakes
- My social worker speaks to me and listens
- My social worker visits me
- My social worker is kind
- My social worker talks to me
- My social worker is nice
- I like my social worker they make me laugh



Then we had lunch where not only did we get nice things to eat we also got to enjoy activities. Jo and Kelly came and painted our faces and we all enjoyed that. We also got to use glitter tattoos, there was loads to choose from and we had great fun putting them on each other.

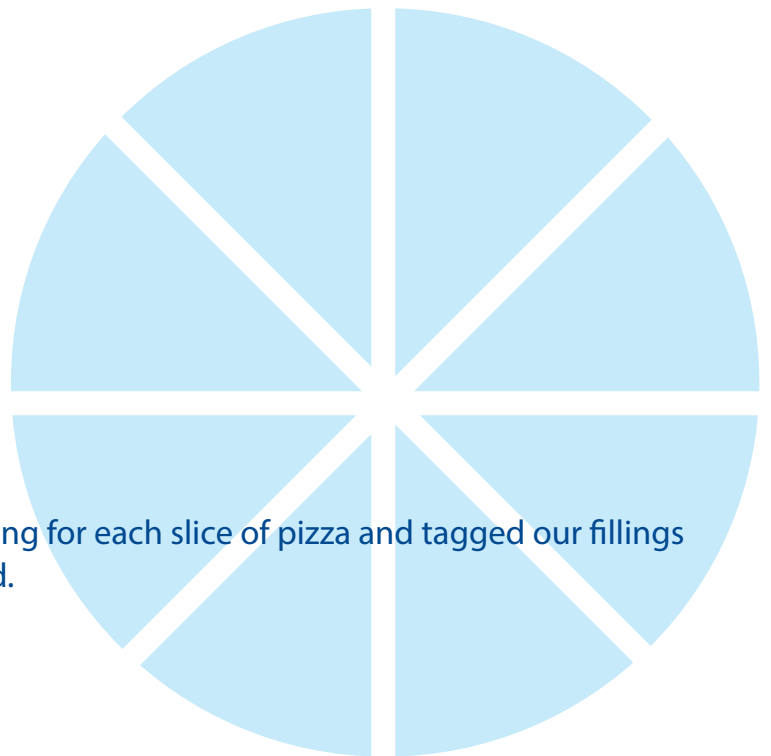


## The Shanarri Pizza

After lunch we went into our second workshop and we discussed our well-being and the eight areas of well being that young people need to progress so that we can do well now and in the future. We made the eight areas below into Shanarri pizza pies:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

Then we thought about how we were doing for each slice of pizza and tagged our fillings to each slice of pizza. Here is what we said.





## SHANNARI PIZZA PIES

### Responsible

- Helping you not hurt other people
- Knowing what is right and wrong
- Be good and follow rules
- Make sure we look after things properly where we stay
- Me – being responsible for what I need to be responsible for
- That we listen to others and they listen to us
- Doing chores
- People keep us safe
- Doing the cleaning

### Healthy

- Making sure we eat fruit and veg
- Make sure we get exercise
- Make sure they look after us properly
- I get to go horse riding
- That I have a doctor
- That I have a dentist



## Respected

- That people listen to us where we live and that social workers listen to us
- That our social worker visits
- That people tell us things
- That we listen to other people
- That we know what our plan is

## Safe

- Our foster carers keep us safe from other people
- Friends can keep us safe
- That people who are supposed to be looking after you do this
- Having rules for people
- That teachers keep us safe
- That someone watches us at contact

## Nurtured

- That people love me
- That I get hugs
- That I am well looked after
- That I am fed well
- That people listen to me
- That people say nice things about me

## Achieving

- That someone helps me with writing
- That someone will help with my homework
- That I am good and get Golden Time at school
- I will work hard at school
- That I will get a gold medal
- That teachers listen to me and help me
- Drawing and art
- PE



## Active

- Fishing
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Horse riding
- Snow boarding
- Cleaning the pets
- Singing
- Playing
- Gymnastics
- PE



## Included

- People really listening to what I say and not pretending to listen
- People asking you what you want
- Getting to pick my own clothes
- Knowing what is happening
- Getting contact

We finished the day by doing our evaluation of how the day had been. It was a busy but fun filled day and we didn't even get through everything so we will have to meet again to have another fun filled day and complete the things we didn't manage to get to.



**For our evaluation** we had a washing line. At one end we had fancy pants and that's where we stuck all the good things about the day and at the other side we had smelly pants and that's the things we didn't like about the day. This is what we said.

## Things we liked Fancy Pants

- Face Painting
- Drumming
- Tattoos
- Listening to other people
- Meeting other young people like me
- The worry bag
- I would like to do it again
- The food was good
- Learning about what other people worry about and they have the same worries as me
- Talking about being in foster care and meeting other people like me
- Colouring our social workers in
- Making our hands

## Things we didn't like Smelly Pants

- There was not enough time
- We didn't like waiting for face painting
- That we don't do this all the time



Then we all got a bag of worry dolls so that we can tell our worries to the dolls and not keep things inside.

We all think we should have another day where we can speak about things we share living in foster care and also have some fun.

# Foster Carers

The foster carers were supported by the family placement team and Dale and Shane from the YPOC Group. Their sessions focussed on Children's Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The activities were all active and thought provoking as well as fun.

The adults group came up with an Epitaph and here it is...

## What do we need to remember/change?

- Remember you are not the guys living with the child.
- Treat every child as an individual, they are all different
- Involve children in all decisions – good, bad or otherwise – and have built in support for all parties.
- Make sure that the child is the most important individual in the system. Always include the child in every thought that you may have. Share responsibilities with the child too.
- I receive a lot of support from my family placement worker. Children always have to be told the truth about what's happening to them. No matter what age.
- Improvement in communication when decisions are being made so foster carers aren't the last to know what's happening. The "Having Your Say" form is great but limited – might be more helpful for especially older children to just write what they want.
- Improved communication. Feeling as if we as foster carers are part of a team – a valuable resource who live 24 hours with children who are in care. Children's Hearings should stop the "Having Your Say" form.

