

ADOPTING CARE EXPERIENCE AS A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC STATUS



THE CONTEXT DURHAM'S APPROACH.....

90

Local authorities have now adopted care experience as a protected characteristic status


STATS -

70% ↑

higher mortality rate

40% 

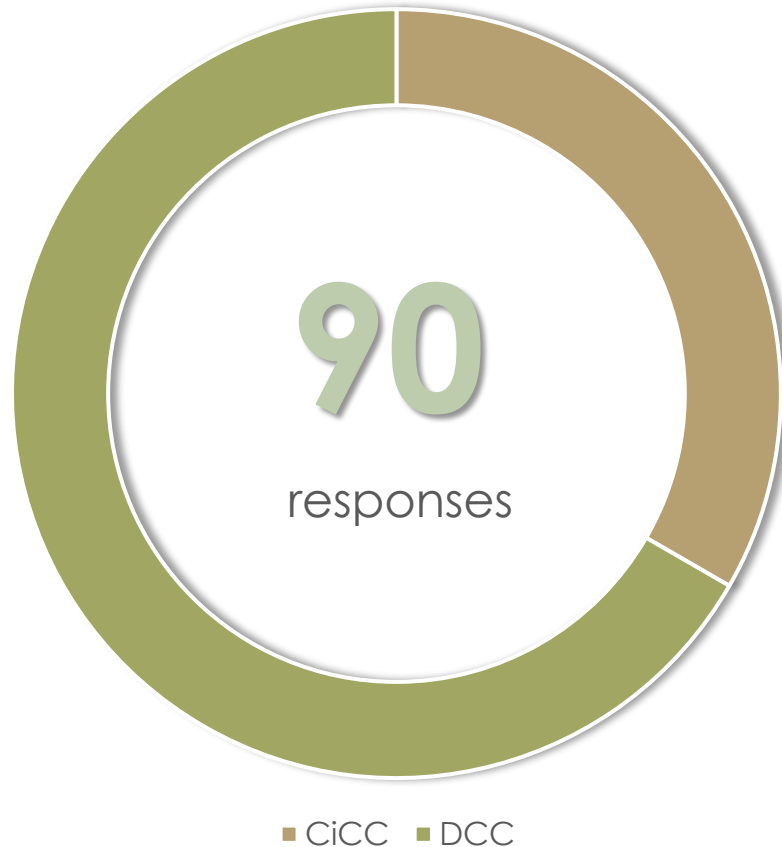
of the population within the criminal justice system are care experienced



we would like to develop this idea and so we don't want to **RUSH** into anything but also, we don't want to be the **LAST** local authority to investigate this idea.

we want to do this the **RIGHT** way

THE QUESTIONNAIRE



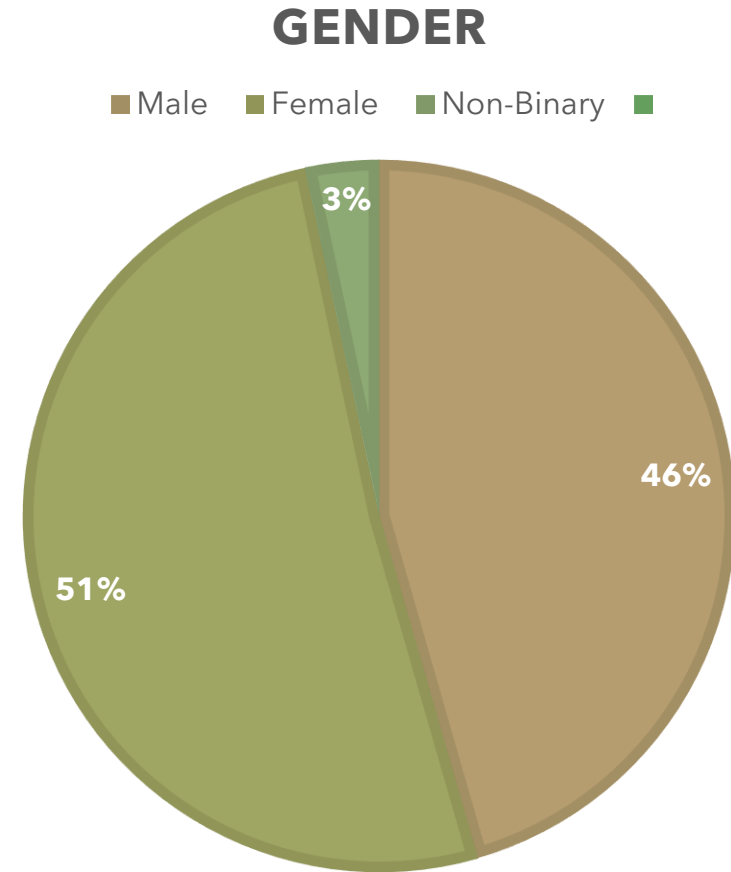
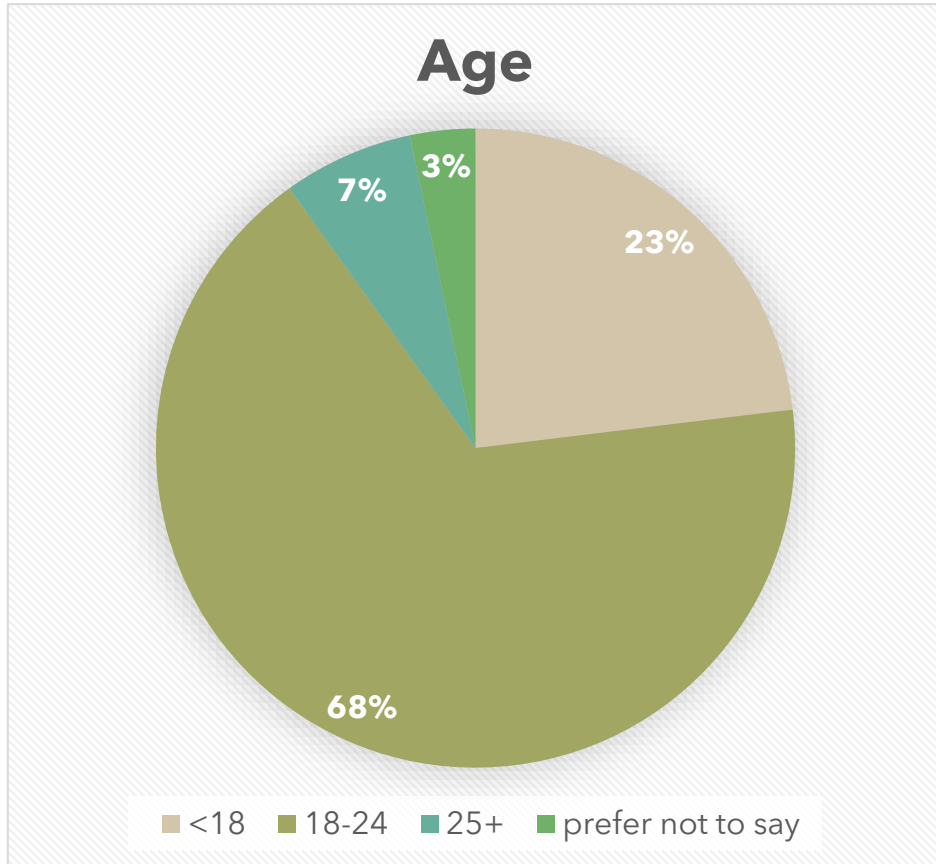
Children in Care Council produced a questionnaire in which **30** young people had responded



Durham County Council then had a questionnaire that went live and received **60** responses from young people

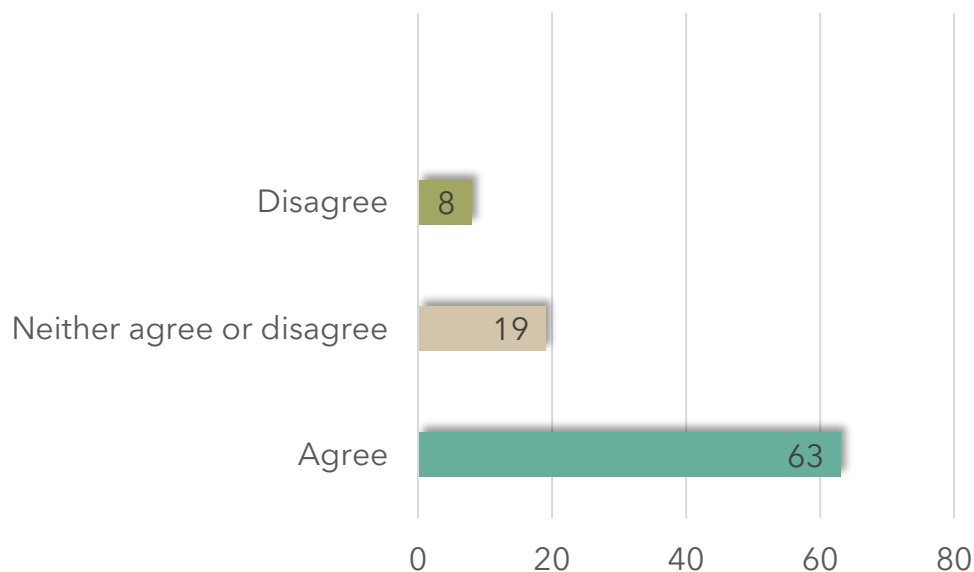
DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic of young people that completed our survey-





YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE


Do you **agree** or **disagree** that Durham County Council should do more to prevent care experienced people from being treated unfairly by giving them a protected status?




Please explain your responses to help us gain a better understanding of your views

for  Because I have a care order, I cannot change my name until I'm 18. Other young people can do at the age 16. Also financially penalised staying put because I have an apprenticeship. Others get housing benefit.

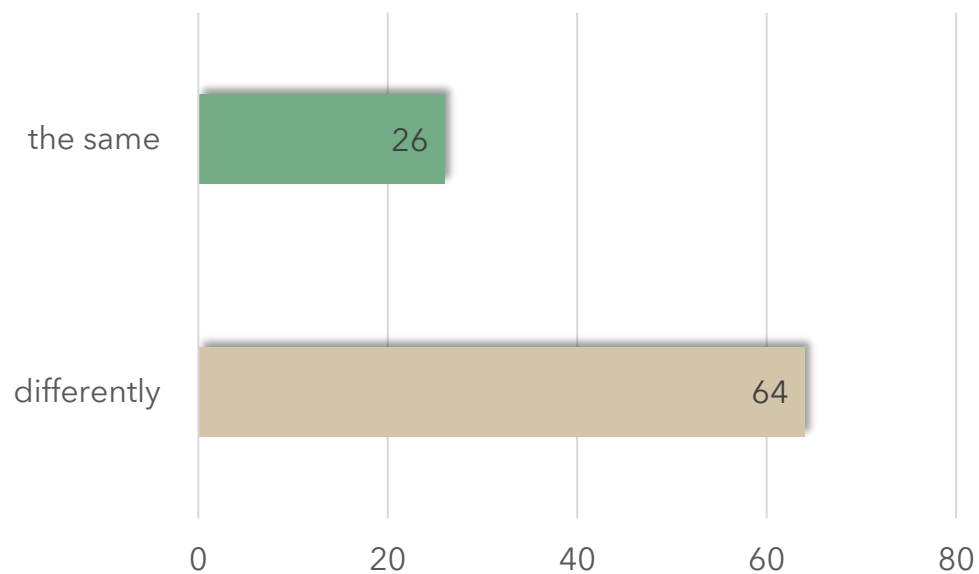
against  Care leavers should be given the skills to be able to deal with adversity, not handed everything, Yes, we need support but not a protected status

for  For all, I think this is a brilliant idea. Some people are ashamed of their past and being labelled, I don't think they should be treated differently. I think they should be treated as equals. Giving them a protected status could make some care experienced young people feel more welcomed.

for  YES, because people can judge a person in care for being in care and they can think what has that young person done wrong to be there"

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE

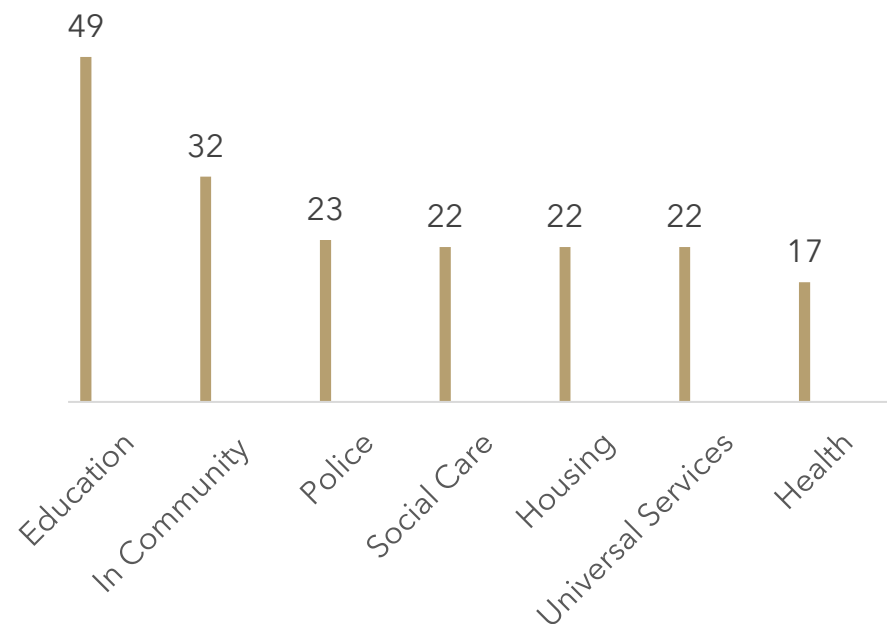
Do you think being care experienced means people treat you differently or the same as people who are not care experienced?



You feel like you are less than the people around you

How many of the following treated you differently?

Please tick all that apply



Some of them treat you different not so much badly as sometimes its in a good way

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE

can you tell us how this affected you?



Most experiences have been positive, however, there have also been some experiences where it has been negative and where false assumptions about someone's family life or personal issues are stereotyped, misunderstood or misconstrued



You feel less that the people around you



" I don't feel like people know that I was in care because they treat you like you are broken, fragile and feel pity for you. They never treat you like a normal person"

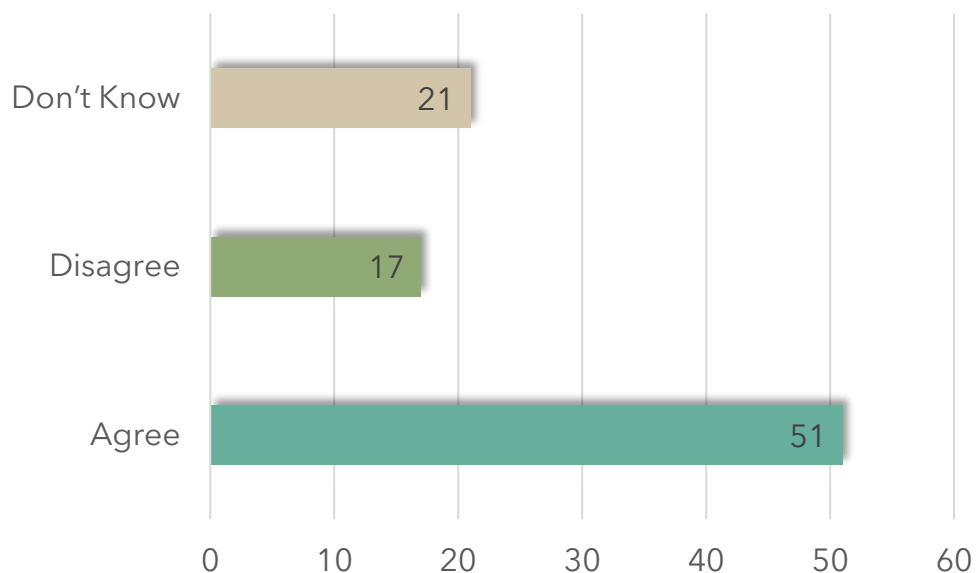


It made me feel every time I feel I have made a step forwards the people around me push me two steps backwards and I thought this would impact me for the rest of my life.


YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE


Do you think that being care experienced has created barriers in your life that wouldn't be there for other young people that aren't care experienced?


Please explain your responses to help us gain a better understanding of your views



 Because you are always moving, and it makes it hard to get to know people in education

 Having to get permission to do stuff, a lot of paperwork for people to agree

 Overall. I believe it hasn't created any barriers however as a child I was unable to join in things such as being on the school website/ public photos which made me feel left out as a child at the time

 If a parent of a friend, who my carer deemed to be safe asked me to go on a trip last minute trip for the weekend, my carer would have to say no because she couldn't contact a social worker. Things take so much longer to do when waiting for a social worker. Especially if you have lots of different workers.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE

Makes me stronger

I know I have support
whenever I need it.

how do you think being care
experienced will affect your future?

I will not allow it to affect my
future


Always being judged


YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE


how do you feel about telling people that you
are care experienced?

“Not Bothered”

mentioned **12** times in total

 Personally, I'm not fazed about telling people I have previously been in care, however growing up I remember being ashamed and looked down/ treated differently to other children in school

 I don't mind if I trust them and know they won't judge, but sometimes, I lie about my parents and my 'great' family which is untrue

 I'm fine with it because most people are really normal about it, but some people are so confused by it and it's tiring to explain

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE

what do you think other people think about
care experienced young people?



- ☞ People can be nosey and might think it's my own fault for being in care
- ☞ That we are mostly likely to end up in prison, unlikely to go to uni
- ☞ That it's is our fault and that it is like Tracy Beaker

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICE

comments and thoughts in relation to our proposal-



Treat us like people, **not just a box to fill**, we have wants and needs like everyone else, we need guidance for some of the maybe unorthodox ideas but if we have strong emotional connection with support workers, we can work through anything in time



Young people can do anything we put our minds to

CONCLUSIONS & REFLECTIONS

63 out of **90** respondents felt adopting care experience as a protected characteristic was a good idea

An example of why would be to minimise stigma and discrimination that young people face by services

Some young people did not want to adopt it as a protected characteristic because they think it would be an extra label and cause more problems in the long run

Our **reflections** as Experts in taking part in the survey would be:-

- Give more thought or attention to what young people may need to better inform them about the issue, its significance the potential difference it makes – taking learning from other local authorities .
- In respect of question design consider using Likert scaling to represent different strengths of opinion in responses young people give back
- Formally launch and cascade the survey so that we maximise the opportunities for care experienced young people to know about it and think that responding to it is meaningful for them