

BARNARDO'S CYFLE
STATEMENT TO SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING BILL COMMITTEE
May 16th 2013.

We've spent some time thinking about our experiences of moving to independent living and how these are linked to the **principles** in the Bill.

It's hard living independently for the first time and can be lonely. It feels like it becomes harder to get support and our social workers are around much less.

There isn't always enough consideration of our feelings when the time comes to move placement because of money or age reasons. Sometimes moves can feel forced and sudden and we don't have enough time to prepare ourselves.

There also isn't always enough support to keep in contact with previous foster carers when we want to.

These are examples where we would have liked more help to **adjust to new circumstances** and have a feeling of **stability**.

ID is also really important when you leave care. We need ID when applying for college, opening bank accounts, applying for accommodation, and even just for a night out. Our social workers often take far too long to complete applications for our ID, and they sometimes lose our birth certificates and deed poll documents or take too long to return them to us.

Social services can also be slow organising money we need for college, and when we pay for college things ourselves they take too long to refund the money to us. It can also take too long for us to be able to get access to our personal things in storage, even when we ask many times.

It can often feel like social workers are there when *they* need something, but not when *we* need something. Sometimes we can't get a reply from our social worker for weeks, even when we leave messages, send texts, or are waiting for an answer to something.

These are examples where we could be treated with more **respect** and **professionalism**.

Some of us were helped to learn about things like electricity bills before we left care and were also given help to understand our bills when we moved to independent living. This helped us to **adjust to new circumstances**.

We have all had a positive experience of our Personal Adviser service provided by Barnardo's. We think this service has worked well because it is independent from social services. We think that being independent can help services to work with **professionalism**.

It has meant a lot to us when workers have stayed with us for a long time, instead of having new workers all the time. It can be hard when these long-term relationships come to an end, but they give us real support, make us feel someone is always there, and we build up trust. These relationships give us a feeling of **stability** and make us feel we are being treated with **respect**.