

YOUNGMiNDS

Welcome



Project Summary

Young people's voices are central to everything we do at **YoungMinds**. This resource is designed to bring the voices, experiences and lens of young people with asylum seeking and refugee experience directly to those who support them.

This project involved young people with asylum seeking and refugee experience at Moat Community College Leicester taking part in a focus group discussion facilitated by the School SENCO. Where required, Google translate was used to support the session around questions put forward.

Overall Content

This leaflet recounts the key needs from young people which are extracted from the focus group discussion and broken down into 3 sections for: Social Workers, Foster Carers, Schools and Education.

Language Caveat

Please note that English was a second language for many of the asylum-seeking young people involved in this work, therefore some of the grammar in the quotes in this leaflet have been edited for clarity.

Social Workers

Coming to the UK as an asylum seeking child is extremely unsettling. Social workers can be the first point of contact that young people make on their arrival, and young people explained that they were looking for reassurance at this difficult time.

To feel reassured young people told us social workers need to:

- **Actively listen** and make young people feel welcome.
- Make sure **young people's needs are responded to**, for example when a young person may be worried that they are unable to stay in the UK.



“ My social worker helped me, and then I got to live here in this country for five years. Then the people are going to decide what's going to happen. ”

“ She (social worker) told me that everything is going to be fine, that she was going to help me. ”




Foster Carers


Foster carers play a crucial role in supporting young people and make a real difference while they integrate into a new society by providing them with a sense of belonging and security.

To feel settled, young people told us their foster carers need to:

- **Build** relationships and engage in activities together.
- **Be patient** – it's hard to make new relationships.
- **Recognise** identity, culture and religion.
- **Support** with education.
- **Facilitate** learning and social integration.




“ They helped me when I didn't know English and they taught me new words. They're still teaching me. ”



“ My foster dad took me to a Swahili mosque and I started to make friends. ”

“ I was scared, unhappy and lonely, and I don't know who they are (foster parents) and I don't want to start a relationship with someone that I don't know. ”




Schools and Education

Entering school in the UK as an asylum seeking young person is intimidating; fitting in with peers, learning the language and being able to take part in activities are all big worries. Schools should play an integral role in promoting integration and reinforcing a sense of structure for children and young people.

To help young people feel like they fit in, professionals working in school and educational settings need to:

- Ensure there is someone easily available who **speaks the same language** as the young person.
- **Encourage social activities** with other young people.
- **Understand** that this is an unfamiliar and confusing environment.
- Offer **additional learning support** where required.


“ I wish I could be independent and do everything by myself but I didn't know how to do anything. ”



“ Sometimes I had learning support when everyone else was learning. It was good but I really wanted to stay in that class and see everyone. ”



“ My support teacher helped me and my friend spoke Swahili. She was with me in the class and she was helping me with something I didn't know. ”



About YoungMinds

YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people. We exist so that young people have the strongest possible voice in improving their mental health.

We strive to make sure everything from practice in schools and services to Government policy is driven by young people's experiences and aspirations. We support parents to help their young people through difficult times, we equip professionals to provide the best possible support to the young people that they work with, and we empower young people to change their world.

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