

Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee
Date: 5 November 2020
Update on Mind Of My Own App (https://mindofmyown.org.uk/)
Report by: Caz Evans – Digital Participation Lead

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 Mind Of My Own is an App which is currently managed by the Voice and Participation team in Children’s Services. The App is used by children and young people to voice their views, thoughts and feelings to their worker. It is also used by workers in Early Help and Children’s Social Care to capture the voice of children and young people during any visits and sessions. The App therefore has a very wide application for promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people through self-expression across a broad range of contexts and circumstances. The Mind of My Own licence has currently been renewed for two years (July 2020 – July 2022) with the intention to increase usage of the App amongst staff teams.
- 1.2 To explain Mind Of My Own in more detail, young people from West Sussex Children in Care Council created a YouTube video on using the Mind Of My Own App which can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/Qqqla0rRtH0>.

2. Benefits of using the App

- 2.1 The impact and benefits of the App can be summarised as follows:
 - An easier and a more fun method of communicating for children and young people, compared to the more traditional paper forms.
 - Reduces the burden of writing up reports by sending workers a PDF of what their children and young people have said, giving workers more time to spend understanding their children’s views, wishes, and feelings. If the worker account is used in session with the young person (through a website rather than an app for this), then notes can be directly added to the worker account which they can review with the young person before submitting as they will be with them (or over the phone in current climate). This means that after submission a PDF is automatically emailed to the worker to be able to upload straight to the appropriate database related to their service. This can save the worker a huge amount of time.
 - Promotes earlier reporting of worries such as bullying, but also a chance for a more detailed statement as young people can submit in their own time and take more time to do so.

- Encourages deeper dialogue with children and young people that can help workers find out more about their lives at school and at home through their own eyes, increasing the ability to improve the relationship with the worker and their situation.

3. Impact for Young People

- 3.1. Each month an impact report is produced which highlights what young people have said about the App.

Young people who have used the App have reported the following:

- It gave me confidence to speak about my problems;
- It made it easier for me to explain my problems to my worker;
- It helped me talk about what was going on and it don't tell anyone but the one I send it to;
- It is useful and gives great help;
- I can help other children with talking to the people that they know and trust.

Case Studies

- 3.2 Outlined here are some case studies which demonstrate the difference the App is making:

A young boy submitted a 'problem statement', asking for his contact with his mother to be moved to an hour later than normal, because his mother was always half hour late. By moving it, would mean she would be half hour early. The social worker did this and then a week later the young person submitted a 'share good news' statement in full capital letters: "I HAD FULL CONTACT WITH MY MUM TODAY, THANK YOU".

A young girl submitted a statement to her Youth Emotional Support worker saying she was having major anxiety with entering her exam room with everyone. It was affecting her concentration and making her extremely anxious all the time. The Youth Emotional Support worker worked with the school and the young girl now enters the exam hall 15 minutes earlier than others and is already seated before everyone comes in. This helps keep her calm and relaxed.

A foster carer provides respite for a young boy, seeing him once a month for a weekend. Sometimes he is happy, sometimes he is anxious about it, and the App has allowed for him to send through the way he is feeling before he arrives which allows the foster carer to be able to make any needed adjustments before his arrival.

One worker had spent five hours in person with a young girl who was choosing not to communicate. She introduced her to the Mind of My own App and asked her to try and express her views in her own time, away from the session. The young girl did and submitted a statement every other day at the beginning, with the first statement providing more information to the worker than she'd been able to glean from all the previous face to face sessions. This has now strengthened their working relationship and the young girl opens up better during sessions alongside continuing to use the App.

Professional Perspectives

3.3 Feedback from workers includes:

- "Total Game Changer! Got two great Voice of the Child (VOC) today through it, a 10-year-old and 12-year-old. It allowed me to get so much more out of them. The 10-year-old was like, can I go back to the family icon, I want to add more, it was visual and easy to navigate. The 12-year-old was using it on her phone while I was doing it on my laptop. They really engaged with it and it was great to be able to show them the summary of everything they had said at the end. Love it!! I shall spread the word."

(Family Support Worker)

- "One of the young people completed the App every week during the 9 planned 1-1 sessions I had with him without prompting from myself. I found it very useful incorporating it into my sessions and would start with reviewing his scores each time and talking it through before the sessions so I do feel he did benefit from thinking about his emotions and doing this through the App made it easier for me."

(Youth Emotional Support Personal Adviser)

- "I use the MOMO 'My Worker is Visiting' tool as a one off with a child and have never used it more than once with the same child as this works well in the assessment team to hear a child's voice. However now that I think about it I could use this with some of my CIN cases for longer term use. Currently the children I have used it with do not have the App themselves. It is useful as a tool to hear a child's voice. I find that some like to type it up themselves which gives them some ownership and control over the situation and also the question about how they are feeling currently at the beginning of the tool helps me gauge how much I can probe taking into account their feelings. The questions used help to gain information from a child without the use of direct questions, so I find that naturally worries come out. I find that this tool does save time in terms of write ups and is nice to have the child's own words without any worry about misinterpretation when they write it themselves."

4. Performance data

- 4.1 Through the App, young people can enter their thoughts and views, which are then structured into a 'statement' about their experiences. This is then delivered to their chosen 'trusted adult' as a PDF.
- 4.2 Between February 2018 and October 2019, the App had **487** statements submitted. This was a percentage increase of **507%** over the 18-month period. This meant that West Sussex usage of the App, went from a position of being 67th out 68 local authorities, to 2nd out of 75 local authorities who currently use the App.

To provide some further comparison data:

- 4.3 From Jan 2018 – December 2018 - **127** statements were submitted. From Jan 2019 – December 2019 – **417** statements were submitted. This represents an increase of **328%** in use during these time frames.
- 4.4 From Jan 2019 – May 2019: **139** statements were submitted. From Jan 2020 – May 2020 – **285** statements were submitted. This represents an increase of **205%** in use during these time frames.

5. Young people's usage of the App

- 5.1. There is considerable potential for increasing usage of the App in conjunction with staff teams adopting it as part of case-working practice. There are currently **386** young people who have accounts on Mind of My Own. 215 accounts submitted **417** statements between the period of January 2019 – December 2019. **218** new young people accounts have been created between January 2020 – September 2020.
- 5.2. A total of **441** statements have been submitted between January 2020 – September 2020. Mind of My Own keeps accounts until they are deleted, and we do not have access to this data in order to delete the accounts when children and young people have finished working with us. Mind of My Own only has access to this data and can delete; (see infographic below related to this information).

6. Staff training and usage of the App

- 6.1. **Over 850** staff have been trained in the use of Mind of My Own between October 2018 and February 2020. Of these staff, 737 staff have a worker's account.
- 6.2. **75** staff have used the App between January – September 2020. There is considerable potential to increase staff engagement with the App, and plans

are being prepared to encourage its wider adoption within the service. A guidance target has been discussed at Senior Management Team where it was agreed that we would aim for a 50% usage increase in staff teams from September 2020 – September 2021. This will be supported through the delivery of training in team meetings and promotion of the App through different networks.

- 6.3. Each month, an infographic is produced by the Voice and Participation Team to highlight the use of the App during that month (and one for the year so far in total). These infographics along with the stats spreadsheets are analysed by the Voice and Participation Team and shared with the Assistant Director of Early Help/Corporate Parenting. It is also shown at during any Steering or Champion group meetings. The latest infographic showing the usage between January and September 2020 is shown below.



- 6.4 In addition, a 'Star of the Month' award is presented to a staff member for their work and commitment in listening to young people's voices through use of the App.



- 6.5 A document has also been created for staff to help outline the benefits and how to use the system, in an easy to understand format (see below).



What does Mind of My Own App do?

- Makes one-to-one conversations with young people (from 8 to 21) easier.
- Creates statements as PDFs of their views which can be uploaded straight away to the databases you work with online.
- Helps them prepare for meetings, share good news, raise problems or ask for something.
- Facilitates problem solving and saves you and them time.
- A fun and interactive way to work with young people, either together or for them on their own.

How to use it

- Understand it first by signing up to Workers Mind of My Own (see p3).
- Introduce it to your young person when you meet or visit.
- Help them sign up for a young person's account, letting them be in control.
- Use it together to guide your conversation, creating a record of their views.
- Ask them to send their views to you or any other workers they choose.
- Encourage them to use it solo when you're not there.



One app: Helps young people to share their views and supports workers to evidence them.

Get your Workers Mind of My Own account

- Go to: workers.mindofmyown.org.uk (Save as a favourite or put a link on your desktop)
- Click 'Sign up', enter your details and wait for your account to be approved by the Digital Participation Lead.
- After approval you'll receive an email - follow its instructions carefully
- Sign in and go to 'Existing profiles'. Select 'Test Profile' and have a practice!
- Create a profile in Workers Mind of My Own for you to use it with them.
- Remember to sign your young people up to their own accounts if you can.

Co-use it with your young person on:

- their tablet, computer or Xbox (best is their tablet).
- foster carer's tablet or computer.
- your tablet, laptop or large screen phone.
- placement's computer.
- school computer.
- any device with internet access.



Young people can sign up on one device then log in again from any other, including their smartphone, as often as they like.



Accessibility

This option can be used during a session with a young person or by the voice.



My worker is visiting

Why not help them prepare for an important meeting. Help



Get ready for a meeting

Your young person can update you with some good news,



Share my good news



Prepare for a Child Protection Conference



How did the meeting go?

What if they need some help?



Sort a problem

Get them to



Planning for adulthood



Get ready for a foster care review



My education



My wellbeing

A more in-depth version of My worker is visiting. This one gives you more

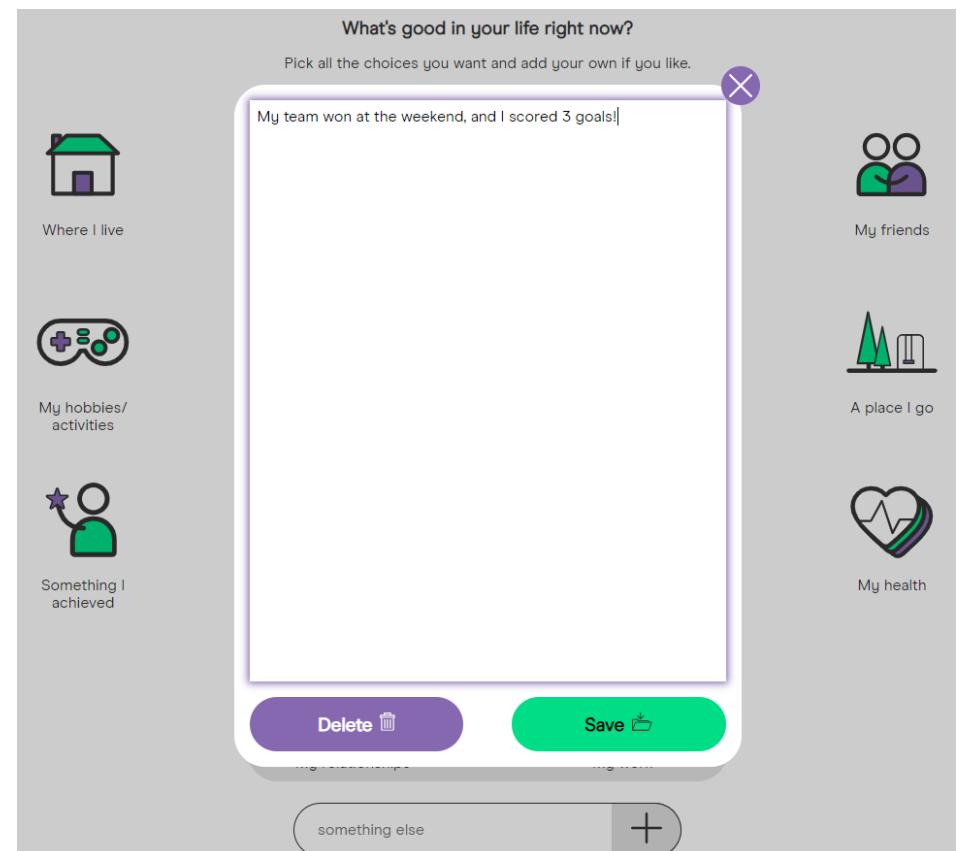
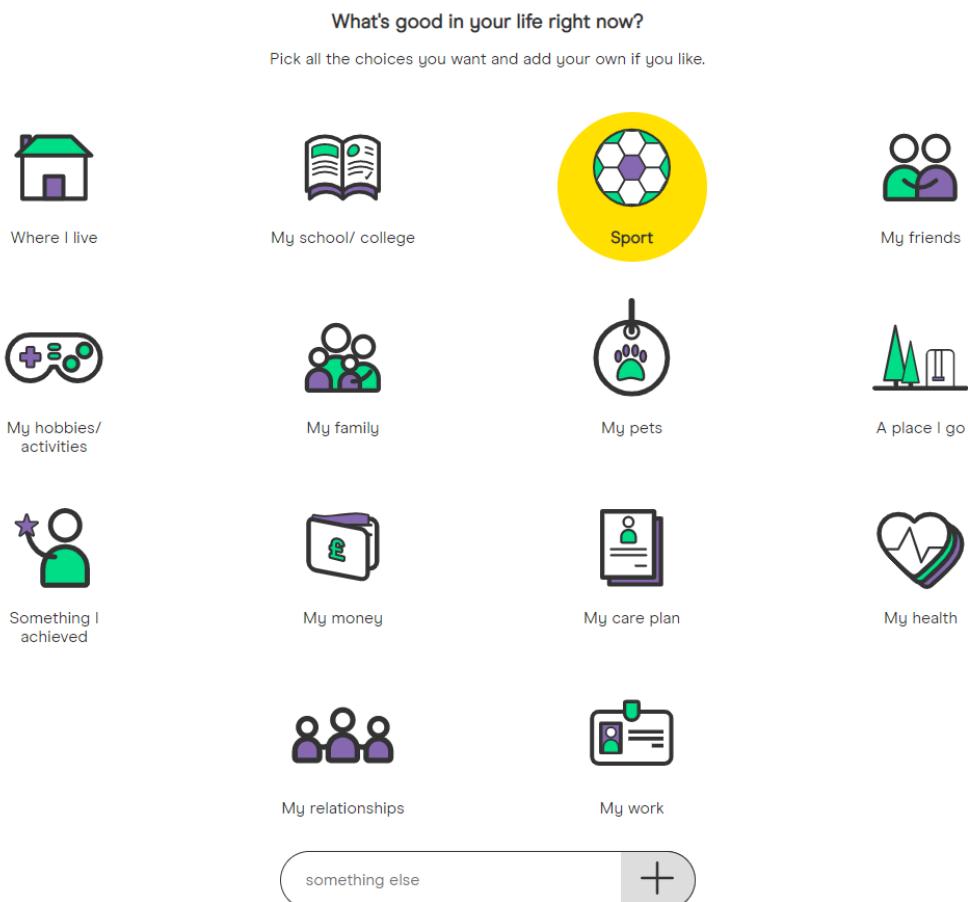


Return from missing

Why not get feedback from your session together to help shape your

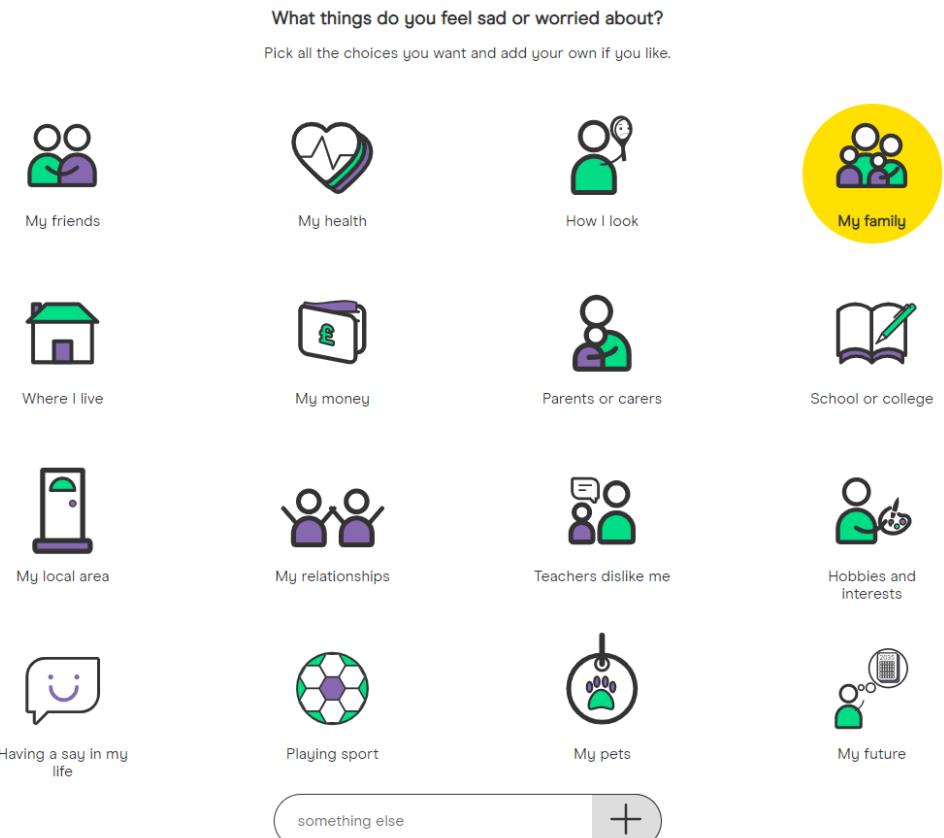
My worker is visiting:

- an example question below that can be done with young people in during a session but also by the young person before they see you, so you can discuss this further.
- Select an option and type in the box using keypad.



My wellbeing:

- an example question below that can give you a more in-depth conversation with your young person and can be done in session but also by the young person before they see you, so you can discuss this further.
- Select an option and type in the box using keypad.



What things do you feel sad or worried about?
Pick all the choices you want and add your own if you like.

I keep arguing with my little brother.

My friends
Where I live
My local area
My relationships
Teachers dislike me
Hobbies and interests
Having a say in my life
Playing sport
My pets
My future

Delete Save

something else +