

Engaging Care Leavers

Care-leaver's Engagement with Multi-agency Services. An Evidence Informed Good Practice Toolkit



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Glossary of terms

Care Experienced Young Person: Anyone who has been in or is currently in care and has been looked after in the UK or elsewhere. This does not exclude anyone according to time in care, or type of placement (foster care, residential care, kinship care, with parents or relatives under supervision of social workers). Looked after children (LAC) is a term widely used among professionals, although it has been regarded as 'system' language impacting on how professionals perceive children and contributing to young people feeling 'othered' (Jones et al., 2020).

Care-leaver: Section 104 of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) defines six categories of young people regarding leaving care, with specific statutory obligations on codes of practice (Welsh Government, 2021).

Category 1: young person aged 16 or 17 no longer looked after but was looked after for more than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday.	Category 2: young person aged 16 or 17 no longer looked after but was looked after for more than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday.	Category 3: care leaver aged 18 – 21 who was looked after for more than 13 weeks after their 14th birthday.	Category 4: young person aged 21 - 25 who has informed their local authority they are following / want to follow, a programme of education or training.	Category 5: young person aged 16 – 21 and is / was subject to a Special Guardianship Order when reaching 18 and was looked after immediately before the order was made.	Category 6: young person aged 16 to 21 who does not fit into 1 – 5 but spent at least 3 months away from their family aged 16 or 17, looked after by the council / private children's home / living in NHS or council accommodation, or private foster carers.
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Corporate Parent: The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 Section 78 states it is the duty of the Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of every care leaver and child it looks after. Local authorities have the collective responsibility to achieve good parenting, and corporate parenting promotes the 'collective responsibility of local authorities to safeguard and promote the rights and life chances of care-experienced children and young people.' (Welsh Government, 2023).

Personal Advisor: The local authority must allocate a personal adviser (PA) to offer advice and support to care-leavers up to age 21; extended to age 25 if they remain in education/ training and develop Pathway Plans (Welsh Government, 2018).

Pathway Plan: The plan prepared by their local authority for the looked after child before they turn 16. This details actions required from the young person, their carer, local authority, birth family and/ or other parties to assist in the transition from care to adulthood. This plan builds on the existing care and support plan and is reviewed and updated every 6 months until the young person is age 21, or age 25 if there are in an agreed education or training.



1. Aim and rationale of toolkit

The aim of the toolkit is to support practice that responds to the individualised and diverse needs of young people, whilst also being responsive to their changing needs. This is to enhance professional skills in working with young people to remove barriers to engagement. This toolkit is developed from consultations with care-experienced young people in Wales and multi-agency practitioners who identified the need for effective tools based on the attitudes, values and experiences of care-leavers and practitioners.

1.1 Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is targeted to support people who work with young people who are care-leavers, including:

- Social workers
- Personal advisors
- Health professionals
- Housing support officers
- Education support
- Employment support
- Youth services
- Youth justice services
- Learning disability services
- Third sector support services.

The toolkit offers guidance, tools, and recommendations to support those working with care-leavers and help them understand and replicate good practice.



2. Background and context

The transition to becoming an adult with more responsibilities and independent living, can be challenging for any young person. For young people who receive support from the state as their 'corporate parent' there are often additional challenges. Care-leavers must manage many changes when leaving care to live independently (Atkinson & Hyde, 2019). Care-leavers are expected to enter 'instant adulthood' (Stein, 2005) and have financial and residential independence, where other young people may have parental support to help navigate these challenges. However, they often feel unprepared, experiencing a void in 'gradual planning' (Furey & Harris-Evans, 2021).

Practitioners working with care-leavers can face challenges which can impact on the support provided including high caseloads and issues in recruitment and retention impacting on the development of trusting relationships between themselves and the young people (Welsh Parliament, 2023a). Transitioning from child to adult services can pose an additional challenge where services are already under pressure; hence, young adults with multiple, and/or complex needs may face services that are under capacity (Welsh Parliament, 2023b).

2.1 Care-leavers in Wales

The needs of care experienced children are becoming more complex, with UK evidence reflecting that they may go on to often achieve poorer outcomes across education (Barnado's, 2019; Furey & Harris-Evans, 2020), mental health (Smith, 2017) and social outcomes, including links to offending and criminal activities (Farmer Review, 2017). Therefore, the increasing number of children who are care experienced across Wales, the highest rate per population per head across the UK, is a significant cause for concern (Taylor Collins & Bristow, 2021).



Care-leavers are more at risk of poverty, mental health issues and poorer educational attainment compared to their non-care-experienced peers.

Around 20%

of homeless people in Wales are care-leavers
National Assembly for Wales, 2018



Fewer than one in five care experienced young people achieve 5 grades at GCSE A*-C in comparison to more than half of all pupils.
Welsh Parliament, 2023c

Care-leavers can experience low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and isolation

Braden et al, 2017

 **46%**

of care-leavers were identified as having mental health needs with

 **65%**

of them not receiving any form of statutory support
Social Market Foundation, 2018



A quarter of care experienced parents will have at least one child removed from them.
Welsh Parliament, 2023a



2.2 Provision for care-leavers in Wales.

The Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 [Sections 105 -115] (Welsh Government, 2014) places a statutory duty on local authorities across Wales to provide support to a young person, equivalent to the support a non-care experienced young person might expect from their parent/s. Support is offered to young people who are care-leavers from the ages of 16 to 18, when they move from their primary support usually a social worker, to a personal advisor (PA)¹. Support should remain available up to age 21, and 25 for those who remain in education or training (Welsh Government, 2018). Care-leavers can decide whether to engage with support and other non-mandatory services within housing, health, and education.

- Each local authority is required to ensure that care-leavers have a Personal Adviser (PA) and a pathway plan that sets out the support and advice they need (Welsh Parliament, 2023d).
- The pathway plan should consider the needs and the wishes of the young person in areas including health, education, training and employment, accommodation, relationships, independent living skills, and practical and emotional support needs (Welsh Government, 2018).
- A young person will remain with their PA from their original local authority even if they study at a university elsewhere.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015² requires listed bodies to work together to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. This includes a more equal Wales, where everyone can reach their potential.

Corporate parents are expected to adhere to a set of shared principles, many derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (set out in appendix 1). Public sector bodies, services and professionals engaging with or responsible for care-experienced young people are expected to fulfil several promises when working with care-experienced children and young people as outlined in the Corporate Parenting Charter (Welsh Government 2023b). **These are set out in Table 1.**



1. To receive support from a local authority the young person must have been looked after by a local authority for 13 weeks, counted after the 14th birthday and to end after the 16th birthday: Regulation 47 of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015

2. <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/WFGAct-English.pdf>

Table 1. Corporate Parenting Charter: Key Messages

- Treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
- Take time to listen to ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and are actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- Keep all care experienced children and young people informed about involvement with them and explain actions to them.
- Involve them in decisions that are made about them.
- Use straightforward language when communicating.
- Show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- Work with them to help them achieve their goals.
- Advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel there is no adherence to this charter.

Adapted from: <https://www.gov.wales/corporate-parenting-charter>

Local authorities are required to work together with social services to meet the needs of the young person under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. They must offer support to access suitable housing up to age of 21, with those leaving care prioritised until they turn 22. Guidance is offered from the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales Act) 2014 (SSWA) part 6 code of practice; 'good practice for local authorities to commission a range of semi-independent and independent living options with appropriate support, for example, supported accommodation schemes, foyers, supported lodgings and access to independent tenancies in the social and private rented sectors with flexible support' (Welsh Government, 2018, 104).

The 'When I Am Ready' arrangement (Welsh Government, 2022) aims to support young people to remain with their foster carer/s up to age 18, and up to age 25 if they are involved in employment or education. Despite these provisions, it has been proposed that radical reforms are required to ensure better outcomes for care-leavers (Welsh Parliament, 2023a).



3. Study background

3.1 Definition of engagement

For this toolkit, **the term 'engagement' means the experiences of care-leavers of 'working with' or 'engaging with' support and services offered on a multi-agency basis.** It can mean being actively involved in making plans: present and future, having voice to express (dis)satisfaction, knowing who to talk to and where to find support, and being aware of rights and entitlements. The type and level of engagement should be according to the known needs and preference of the young person.

The level of engagement can change over time, for example, the young person may not request meetings as frequently as they become more confident. Nonetheless, young people must continue to know that they can engage with support at any time. Not all care-leavers will require or want support up to aged 21. However, it is important that the young person is aware that they can engage with support at any time and that this is open to them, unless they explicitly say so.

Understanding the enablers of and barriers to engagement with services, including the impact on the experiences of support offered and provided, has assisted us to develop engagement approaches that are evidence-informed, bespoke and adaptable to a broad range of needs.

3.2 Barriers, enablers, and outcomes from engagement

Engaging with services can contribute to a young person feeling empowered to lead on discussions around their plans; being more informed and feeling included in the decisions made. Importantly, it can open the space for their wishes and needs to be recognised and understood so that support can be more tailored to meet their bespoke well-being needs and outcomes. Feeling understood and listened to can promote a good relationship between the practitioner and care-leaver (Stein & Wade, 2000).

Where care-leavers feel understood, they are more likely to participate in planning and discussions with practitioners (Gaskell, 2010), and feel more confident (Malvaso, et al. 2017). Where the young person feels comfortable, and able to rely on the practitioner they can also achieve a sense of control and improved wellbeing (Gov.uk, 2022). Furthermore, they may feel less isolated where services are appropriate and accessible (Butterworth et al., 2017). Supportive relationships underpin positive outcomes for care-leavers (Gilligan, 2008; Munro et al., 2016). This highlights the importance of relational work – especially where there may have previously been discontinuities in relationships which have impacted on developing of trust (Bellis et al., 2017). Where care-leavers engage with after care support services, they can experience more positive social and individual outcomes. If they feel comfortable and supported in interacting with services, they are more likely to remain engaged (Mann-Feder & Goyette, 2019).



Other studies have found that care-leavers may avoid contact with services if they do not feel that they are able to trust them (Adley & Jupp Kina, 2017; Samuels & Price, 2008), for example, if they appear not to understand their challenges, or do not feel respected or listened to (Glynn & Mayock, 2019; Gov.uk, 2022). Care-leavers in Wales have previously expressed that they do not feel listened to and feel unable to trust advocates believing they were not independent of social services. They have also expressed the need for practitioners to have patience, empathy and understanding (Welsh Parliament, 2022, 2023b), and better communication from services (Children's Commissioner's Office, 2017).

It is unclear what engagement with services looks like, or what the barriers and enablers to engagement are from the perspective of care-leavers and practitioners. Researchers from Bangor University, Wales, received funding from Health Care Research Wales (HCRW) for a study to explore the barriers and enablers to engagement with services for young people who are care-leavers between the ages of 16 and 25. The overall aim of this study was to co-produce a novel practice model and toolkit in partnership with multi-agency practitioners working with care-leavers and also with care experienced young people. The purpose of the practice model was to provide tools and knowledge for practitioners working with care-leavers to support effective engagement.

As a key part of the study, a scoping review was conducted to map the existing literature on the barriers and enablers to care-leavers engagement with services. This also identified the inputs required to support good practice. These included professional skills and qualities, early engagement, consistency, continuity, and flexibility to foster and maintain engagement (Prendergast et al., 2024). These key messages are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Key messages from a review of the literature

Preventing engagement - care-leavers can experience:

- Self-reliance, stigma and/ or shame preventing them asking for / accepting available support.
- Feeling that support is contractual and that they are treated as a case and not a person.
- Having little trust in services – for example fearing personal information will be shared.
- Experiencing inconsistent, insufficient or irrelevant support.
- Not feeling listened to.

Enabling engagement – care -leavers can experience:

- Continuity of support which is also flexible.
- Their own 'turning point/s' leading to them seeking / accepting support.
- Professionals' skills and qualities: caring, consistent, reliable, and genuine.
- Tailored approaches – accessible and non-judgemental, and enabling opportunities for creative activities.

4. Development of the toolkit

This toolkit was developed using evidence from care-leavers and multi-agency practitioners from four local authority areas in Wales: **Gwynedd, Ynys Mon, Torfaen, and Conwy**.

The project governance structure included a Project Steering Group, which included all the key partners and stakeholders, which met monthly to develop the project. A Project Advisory Group (PAG) was also established, which included four care-leavers and six multi-agency practitioners. The group met every three months to assist with the design of the main issues, consider the ethics and how the research should be implemented, and advised on terminology. A key part of the PAG was to co-produce the development of the toolkit.

We spoke with 21 young people aged 16–24, who were care-leavers to explore what they thought were the barriers and enablers faced when accessing and engaging with support services. We also spoke with 30 multi-agency practitioners to understand their views and experiences of engaging with care-leavers. These included social workers, PAs, and people working with care-leavers in housing, employment, and education support roles (see Appendix 1 for demographics of participants).

Key definition of engagement with care leavers

The term engagement means the experiences of care-leavers of 'working with' or 'engaging with' support and services offered on a multi-agency basis.



4.1 Barriers and enablers to engagement

Through the conversations with young people and multi-agency practitioners we were able to gain an understanding of what they believed were significant barriers and enablers to, and outcomes from engaging with services (summarised in Figure 1).

- » There may be a reluctance to accept support for many reasons, including stigma attached to social services, a lack of trust in services, and a perception that services and the support offered will not be helpful. However, many young people we spoke referred to the importance of giving people a chance:

I've grown up, and I understand all they're trying to do is help me, so I opened up to them and all the help that I could. (Young person 20, interview)

- » Engagement with other services could progress over time:

I think support has increased because I've become less timid myself. So I will now go to people with more things. I'll ask for more help than I would usually or that I would have before. (Young person 10, interview)

- » Some care-leavers may perceive asking for support as a weakness especially when they have felt themselves to be self-reliant previously:

I never used to [engage with support] because I'm such a big believer of, well, I've got this far on my own 'cause, obviously, I didn't have my parents at hand. In my old way of thinking, it was, okay, it's me now. (Young person 7, interview)

- » Young people may disengage where the support appears to be contractual, and they feel that the role of practitioners is to move them out of the system:

I was very sceptical of working with services because, to me, I thought, oh, to them, it's just a job. They don't care. (Young person 3, interview)

- » Crucially, seeing the same key person consistently, could foster trust and engagement over time:

It's had a bit of consistency to it. It helps with my own independence as well because I know that she's there sort of thing if I need it. I think that's really good from them. (Young person 12, interview)

Practitioners' skills and qualities were also identified by talking with care-leavers and practitioners, as being crucial to fostering and maintaining a young person's engagement with services.

Practitioner qualities:	Practitioner skills:
Honest, open, and transparent with the young person	Has good communication with other supporting services
Non-judgemental	Has insight and understanding of the young person's circumstances
Respectful	Persistent and patient
Responsive	Proactive
Genuine	Available
Supportive	Active listening
Consistent	Breaks down information
Accepting & understanding	Offers opportunities for other activities

4.2 Young people's perspectives on outcomes following engagement

The young people we spoke with identified outcomes important to them after engaging with services. These included feeling heard and knowing that someone genuinely cared, increased confidence, and reduced social isolation.

I have the confidence now to reach out to services and speak to them properly and be honest and open about things. (Young person 3, interview)

I just feel relieved because I know I'm being heard. I know someone's listening, and I know someone cares. And I think for a lot of people, and in my case, having someone show that they genuinely care can be more important than anything at times. (Young person 3, interview)

As somebody who spends most of my time indoors alone, I understand how it feels. It definitely feels a lot better to actually see someone, even if it's just to get out of the house. (Young person 2, interview)

It made me have a different outlook on life a little bit more. They sort of push you to move forward and want more for yourself, and I did, so that was really good. (Young person 20, interview)

Figure 1. Barriers, enablers, and outcomes from engagement identified by young people and practitioners.

Barriers

- Has previous negative experiences with social services and other agencies.
- Does not feel listened too
- Does not feel respected
- Has multiple practitioners and has to repeat their story
- Feels like a case and not a person

Enablers

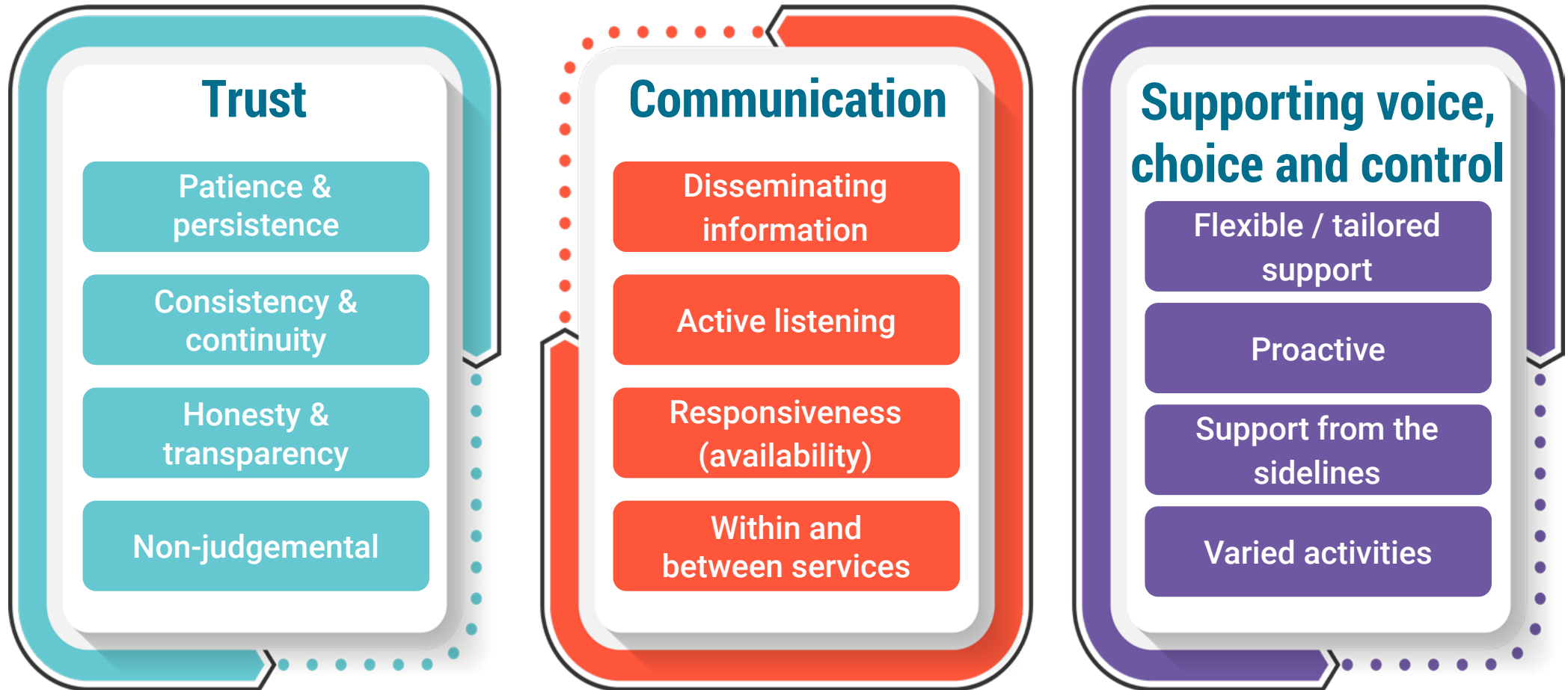
- Feels ready to engage
- Knows that support is available
- Does not need to repeat their story unnecessarily
- Accepts support and 'gives the worker a chance'
- Feels treated as a person and not a case
- Feels able to trust the practitioner
- Has opportunities and access to other activities / services

Outcomes

- Improved mental health and reduced anxiety
- Improved confidence
- Reduced social isolation
- Having a 'professional friend'
- Achieving outcomes important to them
- Experiences improved voice, choice, and control in their life
- More likely to engage with other support offered
- Feels like a case and not a person

5. Principles to underpin effective practice.

The following section discusses themes identified from talking with care-leavers and multi-agency practitioners. Principles are arranged under main 'umbrella' themes. These principles are illustrated by (anonymised) quotes from participants, which highlight their relevance. Key take-away messages are also presented.



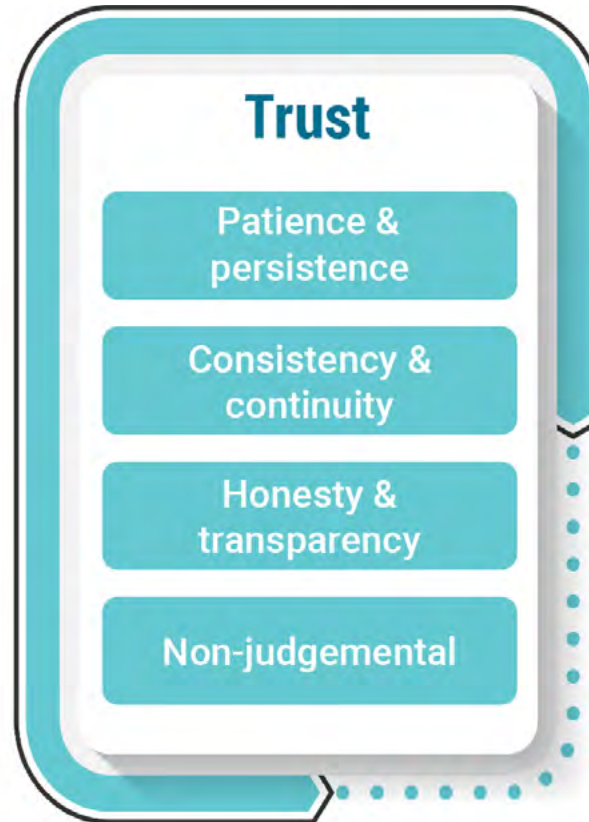
5.1 Principle 1: Trust

The importance of a trusting relationship between the young person and practitioner within the support service (for example, their PA), was noted by young people and practitioners. They acknowledged that trust was key in underpinning involvement, participation, and engagement with services. The key principles contributing to the development of trust included the practitioner having patience as well as being (sensitively) persistent, consistent and providing continuity of support. Additionally, being honest and transparent, for example, in what could be achieved, as well as actively listening were key elements contributing to a trust.

If you've got a good support worker that understands you, then that bond does become quite good between them, and you're able to trust them more and trust them with more information. And if you are in a pinch and you need help, if you trust them, you're more likely to go to them for that help.

(Young person 14, interview)

Key aspects identified by participants underpinning trust.



It was made clear that trust was unlikely to happen immediately but could develop over time. However, it was explained that not all young people felt that they could fully trust professionals, due to many factors including their own previous experiences.

I may have come across as a bit disengaged, but I wasn't. I was just a bit reserved; I think. I had my guard up so much, and another new person coming in, and I just thought I'm not going to not trust them, but I just need them to show me that I can trust them first.

(Young person 21, interview)



5.1.1 Patience and persistence

Recognising that a young person's attitude to support could change over time, it was outlined by the people we spoke with towards receiving support that the young person should not feel pressured to engage but know that they could do so when they felt they were ready to. The patience of the support worker and caring attitude were more likely to promote and sustain engagement, with empathy, patience and understanding required to avoid meetings feeling like a tick box exercise. Being patient when working with the young person was important when discussing their goals and plans. Some young people noted that they needed to be patient and give the practitioner a chance to work with them.

I think some people, when you first meet them, come across quite differently to once they let their guard down and once you get to know them. So don't rule them off straight away if they come off in a way that you might not really like at first. (Young person 21, interview)

I've looked at professionals in a certain way [...] But it's only now that I'm starting to see they're just like everyone. That professional is still like everyone else. (Young person 13, interview)

If we didn't meet the goals, then it was okay and we would just try again. And if we did meet the goals, it was really brilliant and it would be a really uplifting meeting. (Young person 8, interview)

Practitioners needed to be patient as it could take a long time to find out what worked best for the young person.

Being sensitively persistent, such as checking in with the young person for example, via a text message, would remind them that support was there; and even if they did not want to engage at that time, they could do so at any time without the fear that support would be removed.

[She] now sends messages every so often just to check in, just say, "Is there anything you need? How are you doing?" Because sometimes it's quite hard to message yourself, whether it's just time, or sometimes you don't recognise you need to talk to someone until they message and say like, "How are you doing? Are you okay?"
(Young person 21, interview)

One of mine will never ask for anything, would never say they were struggling. So then it would be, "I'm going to pop over for a cup of coffee," or, "Do you want to meet in town?" So it is about knowing them. (Practitioner 2, interview)

Key points - patience and persistence

- Let the young person lead the discussion on the support that they want.
- Let the young person know that you are there so that they can engage if/when they decide they want to.
- It may take a while for the young person to want to engage, therefore where possible keep the offer open and available.
- Be sensitively persistent instigating contact with the young person.

5.1.2 Consistency / continuity

Continuity of support is needed to provide the consistency to foster a relationship. Regular meetings with the same person or people result in the young person being less likely to have to repeat their story:

I feel we're constantly reopening wounds every time we're accessing a new service. (Young person 3, interview)

There's no point coming in to see me one week and telling me a whole bunch of stuff, and then the next week popping in to see my colleague and having to have the same conversation and having that inconsistency. That's not good, not good. (Practitioner 28, interview)

Continuity can be achieved by the young person having the opportunity to have the same key practitioners. This can foster a more mutual understanding, and awareness of the young person's needs and context:

She really did stick around. And she's quite consistent. She doesn't ever forget about me. She always messages me and says, "Hi, I'm available Monday to Wednesday," and things like that. So, yeah, just that consistency and not being too intrusive at first, yeah, really good traits. (Young person 8, interview)

Key points - consistency / continuity

- A stable and consistent relationship with the practitioner can provide a trusting relationship.
- Consistency of staff is important to maintain continuity of support recognising that this may be challenging for some organisations. Introduce other key workers to the young person early on if possible.
- Consistency and continuity can lead to mutual understanding and enables more tailored support to be provided.



5.1.3 Honesty and transparency

Honesty and transparency in communication was highlighted as a key element needed for the young person to develop trust. For example, this could mean the practitioner managing the young person's expectations of what could and could not be reasonably achieved and ensuring that they had a clear understanding of this:

With my worker personally, she's always been very honest with me, and I've always appreciated that. And that's allowed me to put a bit more trust in her. (Young person, 12, interview)

I think if they understand the process, even if the outcomes aren't what they want, they understand the process and they feel like they have been part of it and they've been in control of it, then they're much more likely to come back again 'cause they know how it works and they know that we're there for them. (Practitioner 29, interview)

If you are open and honest with them about what is going on. They will respect you so much better for it. (Practitioner 13, focus group)

Honesty and transparency included the practitioner giving regular updates, for example on appointments or applications. The practitioner could be viewed as dependable and open to questions without the young person feeling awkward. This was key to the young person feeling respected and developing trust:

She's always been very honest with me, and I've always appreciated that. And that's allowed me to put a bit more trust in her. (Young person 12, interview)

We're adults, and I was an adult [...]. I'm not stupid, you know. I want to be told what's going on. (Young person 21, interview)

Key points - honesty and transparency

- Clarify roles, boundaries and responsibilities from the outset: what you can and cannot do.
- Maintain honesty and transparency throughout to prevent unrealistic expectations.
- Encourage questions, feedback and reflection to help ensure there is understanding – reassure that the young person's contributions are important.



5.1.4 Non-judgemental approach

Young people who are care-leavers can experience stigma and perceive that people have made their minds up about them and their behaviours. In this way, they may feel that they are being judged:

I didn't want anybody to pity me or to ask me about my past. Even though I accepted help and I did end up just going to people in the end, at the same time, I didn't want to be labelled just a care-leaver because I feel like sometimes when you tell people that, that's all they see you as. (Young person 10, interview)

I don't always feel like they talk to us like human beings. You know, they talk to us like we don't understand what's going on, or they think that we're just trying to make their life harder, when we're not. (Young person 4, interview)

It was emphasised by many practitioners that young people needed to feel that they were in a safe space, and that they were not being judged, so that they could communicate honestly about their situation, wants, and needs:

Once young people feel that they aren't being judged that they're safe here and they do feel safe, they're safe to be themselves, and they can share how they feel at their most vulnerable without any form of judgement. (Practitioner 2, interview)

Many practitioners told us that they emphasised to young people that they only need to tell them details about their life and previous experiences if they wanted to:

I don't need to know all the details of their life unless they want me to know about it. Unless it affects the issue that we're working on, unless it's going to have an impact on how we're going to handle an issue, there's no need for me to know all the details of what's happened in their lives. It's a bit of relief that they don't have to go through the whole story and all the rest of it unless they particularly want to. (Practitioner 2, interview)

This non-intrusive approach was recognised by young people as a key element in them beginning to trust the professional. Young people told us that they did not want questions that could appear intrusive:

The same social worker kept pushing for the same thing. Some, they're ready to talk. The more you push, the more someone's going to close up. (Young person 7, interview)

She didn't overwhelm me or bombard me with questions or dig into my past or anything. She just did like a face-to-face introduction. (Young person 11, interview)

Key points - non-judgemental approach

- Ensure that the young person knows that they are in a 'safe space'.
- Take time to get to know the young person.
- Do not ask for information about their past unless absolutely necessary.
- Be open from the start – for example – letting the young person know if something isn't working then they need to let you know.

5.2 Principle 2: Communication

Communication was a key principle identified in facilitating young people's engagement with services. This principle includes disseminating information appropriately, active listening, being responsive and communicating within and between services to enable collaborative working.

Key aspects identified by participants underpinning communication.



5.2.1 Appropriate dissemination

Many people we spoke with highlighted that for young people, there could be a lot of information to take in when working with services:

I feel like too much information's too much for me. Really, you could spread it out over a few months and explain the impact of this, "You can have this service, that service." Maybe not all at once but spread it out a little bit. (Young person 9, interview)

The good thing is like they'll only say like one thing each time because, otherwise, I'll get overloaded. (Young person 2, interview)

Participants recognised that it was essential not to give excessive amounts of information to the young person, and that it should be delivered in 'digestible' chunks, with clear instructions, and repeated if necessary. This could allow information to be processed, reflected on, and space and time for questions to be raised and addressed. Some young people preferred a gradual build up in meetings rather than 'jumping straight in':

Worker is jumping straight into business, adding things to my schedule, that stresses me out, and it makes me sort of, oh, don't want to meet that person again. (Young person 18, interview)

Similarly, the language used to convey information to young people needed to be clear:

Checking that they understand the language that you've used [...] there's no point using fancy pants words if that person's going to get back and look at it and think, "What the hell does that mean?" (Practitioner 28, interview)

They asked him a question in the homeless assessment, and he said, "I don't know what these words mean." (Practitioner 9, interview)

Practitioners also recognised the importance of the language used where talking with young people – especially using terms that could be associated with being in care which could be off putting to some:

I think for some, when you say the word 'review', it's been carried with them through children's services. I don't know. It would be about speaking to them. 'Cause I try and speak to them and say, "How would you engage? What do you want? [...] a lot of them just want an informal meet-up and will speak about what they want. (Practitioner 3, focus group)

Practitioners needed to understand what worked for the young person in terms of receiving information, and how they wanted to be contacted. An informal and relaxed environment was frequently suggested as being conducive to discussions. A space and/or relationship that was less bureaucratic could be fostered through informal activities. Talking whilst walking, driving, or visiting a café for example could relax perceived barriers of a power imbalance:

We'd have a chat in the car. It's them times I feel like that's when you start to like someone, not when someone's in your face with a little piece of paper, just writing down what you're saying. (Young person 19: interview)

However, as one young person noted, it was important to be mindful of bringing paperwork into a public space:

They'll bring out all these laptops and files and that, and I'm trying to say, "Well, no. This doesn't make me feel comfortable, everyone looking at me why I'm sat here with two adults with loads of paperwork. Like, why do you have to do this in a public setting?" (Young person 4, interview)

It was also acknowledged that practitioners should reflect on their own assumptions about the young person. For example, ensuring that they use the young person's preferred name and pronouns.

Key points - appropriate dissemination

- Ask, listen, and reflect – give the young person time and space to respond, ask questions and have queries addressed.
- Have an awareness of the language used e.g.; 'review' may be associated with children's services.
- Use the person's preferred name / pronouns.
- Foster a welcoming, relaxed and less formal environment.

5.2.2. Active listening

Good communication skills can result in a person feeling that they are being heard. This can contribute to feeling understood; with concerns taken seriously. It could take weeks, or even longer for the young person to recognise that they were being listened to. For practitioners, conveying genuine interest in the young person was instrumental to getting to know them:

You're not just this robot that just puts figures in and they're just another statistic to you because you're getting to know them on a bit more of a personal level. (Practitioner 27, interview)

It's not about assuming they're going to let us into their lives and let us talk about whatever we want, is it. It's about saying, "I understand you. I hear you. I'm here for you." [...] You know, there's things that you can do, aren't there, that normalise the relationship with support services that are really positive, that make it a lot more about being interested in their lives and being alongside them. (Practitioner 25, focus group)

For many young people, this could lead to relief knowing that the person did genuinely care about what they were saying:

I just feel relieved because I know I'm being heard. I know someone's listening, and I know someone cares. And I think for a lot of people, and in my case, having someone show that they genuinely care can be more important than anything at times. (Young person 3, interview)

Key points - active listening

- Be genuinely interested, and empathetic where needed.
- Recognise that not every conversation will be or needs to be 'therapeutic'.
- Different young people have different needs and circumstances – just being there can be a good starting position.



5.2.3 Availability

For many young people we spoke to, their continued engagement with a service or practitioner was related to knowing that the person they wanted to talk to was available. Having this knowledge that someone would be there for them was an important safety net:

If I need her at any point, then I just pick up the phone and phone her. But if she's not available to talk, then she'll phone me back when she can. (Young person 1, interview)

"She was just always there, and she was almost like my backbone. (Young person 7, interview)

It was important that the practitioner was responsive in replying to texts or phone calls. This meant that the young person did not feel like they were a burden, and made some feel more secure:

It makes you feel more secure, I guess, than anything, knowing that they're there. And if anything does go wrong, you can have a chat with them. (Young person 12, interview).

Responding to the young person as soon as possible could be to say that they were not available at that moment to talk, and / or keep them up to date with any progress. Where a professional was responsive, then the young person felt respected.

If I try and call her and she's on another visit or is busy at the time, she will send me a message to say, "Can you text me, or can you call me back at a later time?" That's something that she does and I really appreciate because it doesn't take that much time to do that. But no one else seems to do it. (Young person 4, interview).

Some young people explained that it was essential that they knew who to contact when a key practitioner was not available, and how to contact them. A functioning and accessible 24-hour helpline and / or a list of contacts in one place was suggested.

Key points - availability

- If you are not available then let the young person know who is – preferably someone they already know.
- Respond to calls / texts on the same day where possible.
- Ensure that the young person has a list of services available to them. Having knowledge of, and collaboration with other services and organisations can be beneficial.



5.2.4 Within and between services

Many practitioners told us that they felt welcomed and supported within their organisation or team, helping them to deliver their role successfully. They could meet with others to debrief, and/ or share success stories where appropriate on a regular basis:

You know, we are lucky here in [place]. [Name], is unbelievable - has time for everyone, everyone. And has a nice little team. And I'm proud. [...] Again, the guidance is amazing. (Practitioner 15, interview)

If a practitioner did not have sufficient knowledge to address a young person's query, they knew who they could ask. Therefore, they felt confident that they could offer the young person up to date information:

There are certain things that I'll go to another YPA for advice for, and there are other things I'd go to a social worker for. I'm very clear on who I need to go to for each of those things. (Practitioner 17, Focus group)

We can arrange for other organisations to come in. So if we do have somebody that might want some support but they're scared or they're too apprehensive to make that connection themselves the first time, I will. (Practitioner 28, interview)

Young people over the age of 16 are required to give their consent for any information about them to be shared with other professionals. If consent is given, then potentially more holistic support can be achieved. Where practitioners had consent to contact others they could ascertain if a young person not turning up to a meeting was a cause for concern. Practitioners working together in the interest of the young person promoted seamless wraparound support:

A few of our young people in particular who are quite vulnerable, and if we're quite concerned, then we will share that information along. And it won't just be one of us looking to support that young person. We'll all have that opportunity through our individual relationships and come together. (Practitioner 24, interview)

A young person may need support to understand their rights, responsibilities, and entitlements. This can include rights to grants, independent advocacy, housing, and other services. Practitioners were aware that good communication and collaboration between services gave them better awareness of opportunities, and to pursue information for the young person:

Having fully informed staff. So that comes around training, around a lot of things. I think working with young people, you have to have quite an idea of a lot of different things, you know, understanding of housing, understanding of benefits, understanding of health, understanding of a broad range of things on a more than basic level. (Practitioner 27, interview)

I feel really strongly that those (professional) relationships need to be nurtured and built upon and we trust one another as professionals. I do feel strongly about that. They're always included in the pathway reviews. If they can't attend, most of them will give updates. (Practitioner 2, interview)

Key points - communication within and between services

- Build relationships with other professionals in key services.
- Having information about the young person beforehand can be beneficial and prevent them having to repeat their story.
- Recognise the young person's circumstances and tailor support accordingly.
- Agree a protocol for sharing information with the young person if there is not one already in place.

5.3. Principle 3: Supporting and promoting voice, choice, and control.

Supporting and promoting choice and control, involves working with the young person. This means being involved in decision making, with opportunities to exercise their own choices. For example, the young person should be engaged fully in the development of their pathway plan. The key elements underpinning this principle were defined as: being proactive, flexible and delivering tailored support, providing opportunities for varied activities, and having something to offer.

Key aspects identified by participants underpinning the support of voice, choice, and control.



5.3.1 Flexible and tailored support

It was clear that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to working with young people. All practitioners pointed out that everyone is different; has a different personality, past experiences, and present set of circumstances. Time and patience were needed for a trusting relationship to develop. Through continuity and consistency of support, the practitioner could know the young person better, and adapt communication and support accordingly. For instance, a young person might not wish to talk over the phone, feel too anxious at a particular time, or be otherwise engaged. It was highlighted that any support that could be made flexible should be, for example, meeting times, places and/ or communication methods; asking the young person where they would like to meet and preferred means of communication.

Nothing's one size fits all, is it. We have to tailor what we do. We have to tailor how we converse with them. We have different ways that we can run meetings. (Practitioner 28, interview)

Once I know that they can understand how I feel and they cannot tailor but -- yeah, tailor to my needs, it makes it a lot easier to have a relationship with them. (Young person 3, interview)

Once they know more about you, they know how to change certain things to work with you. 'Cause not everyone's going to be the same, so you can't just follow a baseline, you know. You have to adapt it to each person, yeah. (Young person 2, interview)

Key points - flexible and tailored support

- Ask the young person how they would like to be contacted, and preferred times to make contact recognising that preferences can change over time.
- Allow the young person to choose the times and places to meet which suits them if possible.
- Be on time, and try not to reschedule appointments or cancel them.
- Tailor the support to the needs of the young person by listening and responding to their needs and concerns recognising that these can change over time.



5.3.2 Proactive

Not every young person feels comfortable asking for support. This can be for many reasons which may include self-resilience, stigma, and/or previous experiences with services. Instigating conversations around support can provide a space for the young person to discuss issues important to them.

Sometimes it's hard to ask for support. So, for them to initiate it instead of me saying, "Oh, I need this." When they say, "Is there anything else you need?" "Oh, actually, such and such is causing me a bit of an issue at the moment," and then they might be able to point me in the right direction of what could support you with that. (Young person 21, interview)

Some practitioners referred to the importance of the young person coming away from a meeting with something tangible so that they could see benefits from engaging. Being proactive in delivering practical support for example, help with securing a grant or ID, could influence a person's decision to engage in the future. Having 'something to offer' could also be a catalyst in deciding whether to engage in the future. Some young people referred to the practitioners who were good, were the ones who could 'get things done':

Having help to do practical things at first, which is what I needed, helped me get enough independence and enough of a voice to be able to be like, "I need help with this," or to ask for what I needed. (Young person 21, interview)

However, gaining support from other services was not always achievable for the young person due to factors out of their control:

You reach out for help and you think you're going to get the help, but then you're told, "Oh, no. You're on a waiting list." It's really off-putting. (Young person 3, interview)

Practitioners recognised that there were waiting lists and high caseloads, with more staff, funding and time needed. The impact on young people could be de-motivation and disengagement:

It just makes me not want to engage 'cause I'm asking for the support. It just makes me lose motivation and everything. (Young person 17, interview)

This highlighted the need to maintain a positive outlook and sustain engagement whilst managing expectations.

Key points - proactive

- Have up to date information about grants, services, opportunities for recreational activities.
- Be honest and transparent about what can be achieved – and communicate the process with the young person.
- Ensure that the young person is aware that they can have access to an independent advocate which may help them understand processes.

5.3.3 'Support from the sidelines'

For young people, support was often appreciated as, and when it was needed. As the young person felt more confident, they might not want to meet with their PA as frequently as they had previously.

She is only there if, and when I need help. She'll guide me in every way. She's like a fairy godmother is basically how to describe... She's not going to control me. I can do as I want, and she's just there for my best interests. (Young person 3, interview)

In some scenarios being supported 'from the sidelines' could mean the practitioner accompanying the young person to places (e.g., GP appointment, job interview, etc.) to support them to gain the confidence to do so independently later. As one young person noted:

They sort of push you to move forward and want more for yourself, and I did, so that was really good. (Young person 8, interview)

Some young people noted that they did have more autonomy and felt more able to make choices since leaving care. They appreciated the support from practitioners in doing with and not for them:

Historically, my PAs have been there to help me get back on track, whereas my social workers have been the people who have sort of made the decisions about me going into hospital and into care, which has not always been what I wanted. (Young person 21, interview)

Key points - 'support from the sidelines'

- Draw on the young person's strengths – highlight what they can do, not what they can't (or think they can't) whilst being mindful of barriers, limitations, and challenges.
- Support the young person to develop the strategies that they may need to manage situations.
- Accompany the young person to appointments, if possible, if this is what they want.
- Encourage the young person to think about what they want to happen.



5.3.4 Varied activities

It was noted by several participants that activities and events with peers could improve the young person's confidence and facilitate their further engagement with services. Some young people expressed surprise that they had enjoyed activities that had been suggested to them, a sentiment recognised by many practitioners:

She tried to get me involved with activities for care-leavers together, and I think that made a bit of a difference. I think that's what partially helped increase my confidence. Because when you don't know many other care-leavers, it's not so easy to make friends in that department. (Young person 10, interview)

I always try and look at things like that to build confidence, capability, put people into situations where they're not necessarily comfortable. We'll go from, "I don't want to go. I don't like it. I'm not getting on the minibus," to, "Oh, my God. I loved that so much. When can I go again?" (Practitioner 28, interview)

In addition to enabling young people to gain new experiences, these opportunities could help break down perceived barriers to working with practitioners:

They play football with each other. And it is breaking some of the barriers, I think, between staff and young people. And 'cause they've been to [place], they're then happy to come to the other activities, or they're happy to come to the office or have a conversation. (Practitioner 25, focus group)

Key points - varied activities

- Ensure you have up to date information of activities, grants, policies, other services available.
- Ensure any activities suggested are accessible – are there any travel, financial, social and/ or cultural barriers preventing engagement.
- Do suggested activities fit in with the young person's schedule – e.g., work, education, other commitments - Is there flexibility?
- Can the young person access any (peer) support in starting an activity?



6. Logic model

In developing this toolkit, we explored both the research literature and the views of young people and practitioners within Wales. From our findings, we were able to create a 'logic model'. This is a visual representation of the key elements needed to produce the desired outcomes of a programme or intervention. The key components in a logic model are the inputs – the resources invested in the program. The activities – the actions needed to reach outcomes, and outputs that result from activities. The outcomes - occurring as a result of the activities and outputs. Outcomes can be short and longer term. The evidence-informed logic model components are detailed in Figure 2. As a visual representation a logic model can be useful as a starting point for planning processes, implementation, and evaluation.

Figure 2: Logic model

Inputs	Activities & outputs	Outcomes	Outcomes
Practitioner's qualities and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive • Honest (manages expectations) • Consistent • Available • Listens / appears genuine • Flexible • Good communication with other services • Professionally supported within team 	Tailored support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know the young person gradually • Continuity of support, time, patience • Provision of, or directing to recreational activities • Informal communication • A safe space 	The young person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to meet practitioner again • Gives the practitioner 'a chance' • Develops a sense of trust • May get involved in additional activities 	The young person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels able to access support if needed • Improved self-esteem • Reduces isolation • Reduces anxiety • Improves confidence • Achieves all or some objectives • Practitioner: witnesses a positive difference in young person over time

7. Practitioner Tools and Checklists

- ✓ Be clear and transparent about what you can and cannot achieve for the young person.
- ✓ Be reliable. Show up, return a call/ text when you say they will; follow agreed actions, establish, and honour boundaries.
- ✓ Be non- intrusive – reflect on whether you do you need to ask certain questions / conversations for example relating to their past.
- ✓ Use verbal and nonverbal communication: smile, nod, engaged posture, encouraging verbal comments.
- ✓ Pay attention to what the young person is saying, responding where appropriate. Listen all the way through and avoid interrupting.
- ✓ Ask the young person to clarify points if they are not clear.
- ✓ Different care-leavers have different needs, which can change over time: ensure that you understand the young person's perspectives and be mindful of their individual set of circumstances.
- ✓ Work with the young person to help them define what they want to achieve – this can be a gradual process.
- ✓ Work with the young person to find out what they find challenging and work with them to build the skills and resilience to address these areas.
- ✓ Language matters – avoid overwhelming, stigmatising, embarrassing and othering.
- ✓ Ensure there is continual professional development and ongoing staff support – to update on use of language, opportunities, and other support services available.
- ✓ Aware of the young person's culture and identity. Young people might experience exclusion because of their identity; therefore, conversations can be positively and negatively impactful.



7.1 Principles underpinning trust

Trust	Practitioner Checklist
Patience & persistence	Have you contacted the young person recently especially if they have not been in contact?
	Do you feel you have the time and skills to build meaningful, trusting relationships with the young people you support? If not, how can this be addressed?
Consistency & continuity	Does the young person have the same person or people they can speak to?
	Does the young person have consistent access to key practitioner/s, to enable the time and opportunity for them to foster a sense of trust, and avoid having to repeat their story?
	Do you have information about the young person that means they do not need to repeat their story? If not, how can this be addressed?
	How are you supported to have the time to establish and maintain relationships and interactions with young people with as much continuity and consistency as possible?
Honesty & transparency	Have you explained and revisited processes and possible outcomes?
	Is there a shared understanding of expectations?
	Does the young person know who they will be meeting, for how long for, what to expect?
	Do you convey the limits of what can be provided?
Non-judgemental	Is contact welcoming, informal and supportive?
	Is there the capacity and time within the organisation to develop non-judgemental relationships – do the service/ organisational structures enable this?
	If a young person presents with a behaviour which may feel “challenging”, are you supported to respond by listening and not judge, with a curious rather than corrective approach.
	Do you have access to training and resources to support you to reflect on your own values / unconscious bias, and to support you in supporting young people.

7.2 Principles underpinning communication

Communication	Practitioner Checklist
Disseminating information	Are you aware of any language and communication needs for the young person?
	Do you provide and deliver information in manageable sections?
	Is the language you use appropriate for the individual?
	Do you offer the choice of meeting: walking / café? – If meeting in a public space - avoid bringing papers.
	Are the forms easy for the young person to understand to understand?
Active listening	Do you give space and time for the young person time to think and process information?
	Do you practice active listening?
Availability	Have you checked that the young person knows when you are available?
	Do they have contact details of someone for when you are not available?
	Do you respond to the young person as soon as possible even to let them know that you are not available at that time?
	Is it easy for them to contact you / your service in different ways (e.g., text, phone, in person)?
Within & between services	Are there approaches and mechanisms in place that enable you to link in with other service providers?
	Are these links sustainable – what happens if the contact person leaves?
	Do you know where to find information / contact person for: health & mental wellbeing, welfare benefits, employment, training and education, housing, advocacy?
	Are there opportunities for you to feedback on positive stories as well as more challenging ones?
	Are there processes in place that facilitate good communication across other services and practitioners?
	Are you supported to feel comfortable in asking questions or raising concerns for yourself / the young person at any point?

7.3 Principles contributing to supporting voice, choice and control

Supporting voice, choice and control	Practitioner Checklist
Flexible & tailored support	Does the young person have a choice over their appointment time and place of meeting to account for other factors – transport, work, education, parenting?
	Can you provide information on specialist service provision e.g., accessible communication to meet the young person's needs?
Proactive	Do you have clear processes for resolving any challenges the young person may face?
	Do you ensure that the young person is fully aware of any financial / practical support available to them?
Support from the sidelines	Is your support inadvertently disempowering the young person from helping themselves?
	Do you have an up-to-date list of other people / services for to offer the young person?
	If discussing support plans, how do you ensure that these are collaborative and appropriate so you are “doing with” not “doing to”?
	How are the young persons’ strengths and skills identified and utilised, and how are they encouraged to have autonomy and responsibility regarding the services they receive / wider aspects in life?
Varied activities / opportunities	Are there mechanisms in place for you to be updated with opportunities for recreational activities available for care-leavers?
	Are contact details for other organisations helpful for the young person, up-to-date and easy to find?

8. Summary Table

This summary table presents a checklist that can be used to reflect on key areas of supportive practice.

Value based practice	Strength based practice	Relationship based practice
Value based – listening, empathy, respectful, empathise without patronising	Strength based practice – focussing on what the young person can do	Person centred – involve the young person in all planning, implementation and reviewing
Remind yourself that some aspects will feel out of control for young people	Awareness of local services available to support young people, how to access these and consider possible practical or personal limitations (transport / finance / confidence)	Understand the young person's context and be aware of any factors which may influence the relationship
Just meeting or talking can be engagement	Offer active help – a plan towards goals	Build rapport e.g., start with a shared interest - an informal environment and active listening
Avoid making judgements on a young person's behaviours	Understand the roles, remits, and type of support offered by other professionals	Reflect on your own perspectives - stereotypes, assumptions, and attitudes
Don't give up on the young person – remain responsive, consistent, and sensitively persistent	Actively seek opportunities to build knowledge of other services. Initiate / maintain communication	Maintain the young person's privacy (not being intrusive) for example, be mindful of sharing documents in a public space
Explain your role with understanding of the language they use	Encourage the person to take part in activities they may feel comfortable doing	Support the young person to make their own decisions and to build their confidence over time
Avoid jargon in language and communication	Being proactive - does the young person have a GP? Identification? Passport if wanted – can you help secure these?	Agree on goals with the young person but do not focus too much on these as the only positive outcome
Offer bite sized information – do not overload the young person in one meeting	Allow the young person to make mistakes and reflect on these – they must be allowed choices	Maintain consistency and continuity where possible

Additional sources of support

Mental health and wellbeing:

Dewis Cymru

<https://www.dewis.wales/ResourceDirectory/ViewResource.aspx?id=17547>

Housing Shelter Cymru

<https://sheltercymru.org.uk/get-help>

Young minds Mental health support

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/2/2/1675767932/lgbtq-action-plan-wales-contents.pdf>

BECOME: Charity for children in care and young care leavers – resources

<https://becomecharity.org.uk/get-information/resources-for-lgbtq-young-people-in-care>

Refugees / asylum seekers:

Refugees and asylum seekers focus toolkit

<https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Refugees-Asylum-Seekers-Focus-Toolkit-English.pdf>

Migrants' Entitlements to Education Services in Wales

<https://wrc.wales/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/MSiW-Legal-and-Policy-Briefing-Migrant-Entitlement-Education.pdf>

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children: guidance for social workers

<https://www.gov.wales/unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children-guidance-social-workers>

Other

TACT: Language that cares - Changing the way professionals talk about Children in Care

https://www.tactcare.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/03/TACT-Language-that-cares-2019_online.pdf

nyas Cymru: national youth advocacy service

<https://www.nyas.net/get-support/support-in-wales>

The Care Leavers Association

<https://www.careleavers.com/who-we-are/mission>

The Mix: free confidential help for young people under 25

<https://www.themix.org.uk>

Coram Voice: help and assistance for care leavers. Call for free at 0808 800 5792 or email

<https://coramvoice.org.uk>

CLASS CYMRU Care Leavers Activities and Student Support

<https://classcymru.co.uk>

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Appendix 1. Demographics of participants involved in the study.

Gender	Number	Work role	Number
Male	9	Personal advisor	13
Female	21	Social worker	6
Local authority		Housing support worker	2
Torfaen	14	Mental health support worker	1
Gwynedd	6	Education support worker	1
Conwy	5	Youth service worker	1
Ynys Mon	4	Advocacy	1
N. Wales counties	1	CAB	1
		After care worker	1
		Team manager	1
		Employment support worker	1
		Third sector worker	1

Multi agency practitioners

Gender	N	Age	N
Male	9	16	1
Female	11	17	1
Undisclosed	1	18	2
		19	1
Local Authority	N	20	2
Gwynedd	8	21	2
Ynys Mon	1	22	3
Torfaen	3	23	4
Conwy	9	24	5

Young people

Appendix 2. Shared principles for Corporate Parents in Wales

(Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales “A Shared Parenting Pledge”, Welsh Government, 2023)

Principle.	Corporate Parents in Wales - promises.	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
Equality	To support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales.	All children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1).
Eradicate Stigma	To recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care.	All children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2).
Togetherness	To work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services.	All children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).
Support	To ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people's needs and/or have access to information and training.	
Ambition	To ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities.	All children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
Nurture	To make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved.	All children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
Good Health	Provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people.	All children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
A Stable Home	To seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people.	All children have a right to special protection if they don't live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests (Article 21).
Good Education	To provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be.	All children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).

Principle.	Corporate Parents in Wales - promises.	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
Thrive	To ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood.	All children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
Lifelong	To work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care.	Adults have a duty to act in children's best interests (Article 3).