



**Cumberland
Council**

Show you care, use language that cares

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Why we need change

Language is important. The language we use when supporting children, young people and families can be confusing and difficult to understand which can create barriers. It can be offensive, degrading and stigmatising, and it needs to change. We need to listen to children, young people and families.

We have worked with our care experienced young people to review the language used by staff across Cumberland's Children and Family Wellbeing service and our partners. Together we will challenge our thinking and work towards language that is more inclusive, personal and easier to understand for all.



Making a change

Changing the language you use can be tricky. Some of the words and phrases have been in use for a long time. Making a change can be difficult but the more we all use it, the easier it will become.

What if I get it wrong? That's okay. Correct yourself. Change your language. The language we use will continue to change as we support children, young people and families and continue to listen to them.

Each person you support will have their own preference, what works for one does not work for all, just ask them what they prefer.

Words have an impact

"Remember the phrase 'Words have power' because they really do. I am now 22, and the youngest of my siblings, but when my family and I get together we still call it 'contact'; even though none of us are looked after anymore."

"It may seem as though the words we use don't matter, but young people have told us that they do. We are not saying that you can't use words like "contact", or "foster carer", we're just asking that you be more mindful of what you say and to who."

Danielle, Care Leaver Ambassador Apprentice

Keep it simple

We want everyone to understand, so ditch the professional jargon and abbreviations and keep things simple.

This means everyone will have a better understanding of why we are involved and what we are working towards.

Describe behaviours rather than using professional phrases. Record the exact words of the child/parent/carer/network.

From this...

We are worried that Jonny is witnessing domestic abuse, and that this is having a significant impact upon his emotional wellbeing.

To this...

We are worried that Jonny is seeing his Mum and Dad arguing and shouting a lot, when they argue items in the home are getting thrown around. Jonny really worries about his Mum and Dad getting hurt, he doesn't like going to School the day after an argument, as he worries what will happen when he is at school.

As part of our commitment to using language that cares we worked with our young people who chose 9 words/phrases to launch our language that cares campaign for change.

1. You say 'contact', we prefer 'family time'.
2. You say 'case' we prefer 'our name or child, young person, family'.
3. You say 'placement' we prefer 'home or where someone lives'.
4. You say 'difficult to engage' we prefer 'we need your support'.
5. You say 'respite' we prefer 'a break for us or stay over'.
6. You say 'peers' we prefer 'friends'.
7. You say 'attention seeking' we prefer 'we want to feel safe, we want reassurance, we want to know you are there'.
8. You say 'care leaver' we prefer 'care experienced'.
9. You say 'looked after' we prefer 'cared for'.

Language that cares is about being mindful of the language we use and the impact that language can have. It is not about replacing one word for another, it is about being supportive, building relationships and ensuring everyone understands.

We have included some more alternatives to support changing the way we think when writing or talking.

**Use words that I
can understand.**



When a social worker repeats my words back to me they can sometimes change them a little, not on purpose, but it changes the meaning of what I have said: lost in translation.



We hear...	We prefer/suggest
Ability to Protect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mum and dad are acting in a way that keeps the children safe when something bad is happening. • We need to make sure that the people caring for you understand how to keep you safe.
Abscond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are worried that you haven't been staying at home or where you live and spending too much time without people knowing where you were at. • Running away.
Achieve your full potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to support you to do all the things you want to do in your life. • What would help to get you to where you want to be?
Additional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs extra help. • Something extra that you have, that we might need to know about so we can help you a little bit more. • Some extra support is needed.
Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what an advocate's role is. • Someone who can help you to share your views and help you to have your say.
Assessment	Get to know you and your family to find out what life is like for you so we can work together to make a plan to support.
Asylum seeker	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking child (UASC) (Home Office term) - Young People, child/young person seeking safety, new to this country.
Attachment	The relationship you have with others, how they make you feel and impact how you see the world.
Birth Parents	Parents, family, mum, dad.

We hear...	We prefer/suggest
Care Plan	Future plans, my plan, (child's name) plan.
Challenging Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people who are finding things tough. • In need of our help and support to make sense of how they are feeling and why, dealing with difficult situations.
Children in care	Child/young person who is cared for.
Children Looked After Review	The (child/young person's name) review.
Child removed from their care	They were unable to safely care for their child, so they live elsewhere.
Designated Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teacher you can talk to and understands what things are like for you. • A teacher who will attend your meeting.
Difficult to place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the moment we are struggling to find the right house/home for (name) to live. • We can't find a home good enough.
Disguised compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you say you are doing something, and it looks like you might be but really you are doing something else. • Agreeing to do something but then not sticking to it. • Working with me and telling me what you think I want to hear. • Someone pretends that they are listening and making positive choices and changes in their lives, because this is what they think someone else wants them to do.
Domestic Abuse	Behaviour in a relationship which makes someone feel scared, frightened, hurt, controlled financially or stopped seeing people, these behaviours are usually carried out in a discreet way so the victim cannot see clearly what is happening.

We hear...	We prefer/suggest
Emotional Attunement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to understand how someone is feeling inside their head and/or their body. • Recognise and understand someone's emotional state. • How well you are able to understand how someone else is feeling. • Thinking about how someone else is feeling and responding to that person.
Emotional Wellbeing	Help you understand your emotions and feelings.
Foster care	A person or family to care for you whilst your parent can't, this could be until your parent can safely care for you again in the future.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effect the work we do has on families and young people. • How it affects the person. • How this has affected you/them.
Moving placement	(Child's name) is moving to a different house/home.
Multi-agency working	The professionals who work with you and your family, all work together to help make things better for you and your family.
NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)	Unemployed, not working or in training or education.

We hear...	We prefer/suggest
NFA (This has two meanings no further action and no fixed abode.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action, write the words do not abbreviate. (named person or service) will no longer be involved with you and your family. • No fixed abode - write the words do not abbreviate. Nowhere to live, nowhere permanent to live.
Not engaged/engaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are worried that you haven't communicated with (named person) when they have tried to contact you. This means we can't get your views/voice to help us fully understand what is happening for you and what support we may be able to offer. • Not ready, may need more time • Not in a place where they are ready to make changes.
PA, Personal Advisor. (Leaving Care)	Someone who can offer advice and support, personal advisor.
Parenting Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the parents are able to understand. • How do mummy and daddy do their job as your parents. • The parent's ability to care for their children in the safest way, meet all their needs and be able to do this for the long-term future. • How a parent is able to keep a child safe.

**Don't call a meeting about
me a CLA Review, use my
name in the meeting title.**



Listen to me.



We hear...	We prefer/suggest
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring children/young people are part of their meetings. • Ensuring children/young people are heard and listened to. • Ensuring children/young people can share what they feel they need and what they want to happen.
Pathway plan	<p>A pathway plan is a plan that your Social Worker or Personal Adviser will complete with you between the ages of 16 and 21 if you are cared for/care experienced. A pathway plan sets out what you can do now in terms of your ability to live independently and what you may need help with to develop your skills and how this support will look.</p>
Permanence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forever home/permanent home • A plan so you know where you will live and who will care for you until you become an adult.
PEP - Personal Education Plan/ PEP meeting.	A plan to support you in your education.
Placement breakdown	Where it has been agreed staying where you live now is not best for you or safe for you anymore.
Police Protection (PP)	Police are really worried about your safety at home, so they move you too somewhere safe.

We hear...	We prefer/suggest
Positive coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What you might use yourself to help you manage day to day. • Dealing with things in a healthy way.
Prioritising their own needs	Parent/carer are focusing on and making decisions based on what they need rather than what their child needs.
Prospective Adopters/ Applicants	An individual/couple who are being assessed to adopt a child/young person.
Psychological Assessment	To understand more how someone is feeling in their head.
Reunification	We are working towards the children going back home to Mum/Dad.
Reside	Lives
Restraint	Physical help to stay safe.
Risk taking behaviour	Write or explain what the behaviour and worries are.
Risk/Harm	Things that can hurt you or might hurt you.
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping you safe, staying safe. • Working together to make sure everyone is safe, healthy, and happy.
Sibling	Brother or Sister.
Significant harm	Professionals are worried that something serious may happen to you which may hurt you and affect you in a bad way.
Special Guardianship Order	When you live with someone you know, who isn't mum or dad, to make sure you are safe and happy.

We hear...	We prefer/suggest
Special Needs	Additionally supported, name what the person needs to be supported with.
Statutory Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the government tells us to do. • Because we are very worried, we are going to have meetings and ask mum and dad to work with us, so that we do not need to go to court, and we can know that they are caring for you well. • What we need to do as a Social Worker/as a service.
Statutory visit	When a Social Worker visits you, in your home to see how you are doing.
Supervised family time	Supervised family time means that a safe adult will be with you, to make sure that you are safe and happy.
Team around the family	A meeting/meetings that involves family members, friends and professionals who support you and your family.
Therapist	Someone who is specially trained to be able to help you to understand what has happened to you in the past and how you can make sense of what happened to help you move forward.
Transition	Supporting through a time when things will change.