

Language that Cares

Glossary of Terms - Children, Young People and Learning

This glossary of terms has been compiled by the Care Leavers Advisory Board and the (Children, Young People and Learning) Language Project. It lists some of the potentially 'careless' language used in practice and recording and offers preferred strengths-based and trauma-informed terms. This should be read alongside the [Language that Cares](#) - Language Guidance for Children, Young People and Learning and [Acronym Guide](#).

This glossary should be used as a guide only. It is recommended that you ask the person you are working with what their preferred name/term is. Be descriptive, use the words of children, young people and families wherever appropriate, and consider what emotions and experiences might lay beneath presenting behaviours.

This is a working document and will be updated over time. If you have additional strength-based alternative terms for inclusion in this list, please email

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CareLESS language	Language that CARES
Abscond	Run away / go missing
Advocate	Might need explaining to some children
Aggressive / angry / hostile	Be descriptive and add context
Alcoholic / drug addict & Placed themself at serious risk of abuse because of their substance use.	Alcohol / substance misuse issues and/or dependent & Had substance use issues which increased their vulnerability.
Alleged / disclosed	Reported
Asylum Seeker	Young people
Attention seeking	Seeking care / care seeking / needing attention
Avoidant	Consider possibility of flight / freeze / trauma response
Birth / biological parent	Parents / mum / dad - ask preferred term
Care Leaver	Care experienced
Challenging Behaviour	Behaviour that challenges – be specific and give context
Case / caseload / client	Child / families / name of person
Contact	Family time / keeping in touch / seeing / spending time with XXX
Defiant	Holds strong beliefs
Demanding	Is clear about what they want
Difficult family situations	Family is under stress
Disguised compliance	There are barriers to engagement
Drop out	Early school leaver
Dysregulated	Be descriptive, add context & consider potential trauma response.
Engagement	Give context. Consider investment
Failed to protect their child	Despite their protective efforts, the children remained at risk from their behaviours.
Hard to place	Needs a home / carer that can provide XXX
Impulsive	Give context and description

Intervene / intervention	Work with
Lacks focus	Pays attention to many things / multitasks
Lack of engagement	Give context and description
Manipulative /controlling	Describe behaviours and context. Consider if seeking to meet attachment needs / attempting to elicit care through XXX
Placement / 'my placement'	Home - ask the preferred term / 'the child I care for'
Problem	Challenge
Rebellious	Assertive
Refused	Declined / chose not to
Refused to engage	We were unable to engage them
Respite / Respite Carer	Stayover / Stayover Carers
Resistant / non-compliant	Chooses not to / unsure / isn't ready for / ambivalent / working to find ways to engage – be curious
Reunification	Returning home
School refuser	Currently unable to access school / unmet needs meaning they are unable to access school
Sectioned	Detained under section XXX of the Mental Health Act
Service User	Family / child
Sibling	Brother / sister
Special needs	Additionally supported due to XXX
Suicide	Took/made attempt to take their own life
Suffering from	Living with / recovering from / experiencing
Stubborn	Describe behaviours and context
Unfit to parent	There are parenting difficulties