



What helps, what harms and
what's needed?

Agenda

- What Helps
- What Harms
- Whats Needed
- Top 3 Issues
- Current Issues
- Case Studies
- Questions



Who we are...



Research groups looking at **what helps, what harms** and **what's needed** in...

Calderdale

Leeds

Liverpool

Manchester

Oldham

Salford

Stoke

Trafford

Care Leaver
Health Report

Our Findings

HARMS

Lack of mental health support

Postcode lottery of what support you get from Local authorities

Lack of knowledge of rights and entitlements

Change of social workers, Personal assistants and foster carers

Unsuitable housing

Not being taught life skills such as budgeting, cooking and cleaning

Loneliness and isolation

Being told what to do, decisions being made for them

HELPS

Long term stable placements

Trustworthy reliable social workers and Personal Assistants

Staying Put

Leaving care and Higher Education Grant

Independent life skills being taught

Support with transport and educational needs.

Having a sense of 'family'

Teachers in school understanding them

NEEDED

Support with travel

Care Leaver specific benefit.
Not managed by Job Centre

Support with driving lessons
and licences

Council Tax Redemption

Life long support

Access to savings after
leaving care

Knowing rights and entitlements

Having a strong network and
people around that care.

Trauma and mental health

- The issue that occurred the most was support with mental health and wellbeing
- Research shows that 45-70% of children in care have experienced mental health challenges
- Our research shows that 87% of care leavers experienced negative mental health
- Can be seen in multiple ways, low mood, sadness, depression, anger, challenging behaviour, outbursts, psychosis, difficulty coping

Trauma and mental health

National Child Safeguarding Practice Review

Many of these children demonstrate challenging behaviour. Much of this will be due to their trauma, which results in an inability to sustain relationships and leads to exclusions from school and all types of care placements

Children frequently have historically had no therapeutic work to help them with their childhood trauma/behaviour- i.e. not met criteria/WNB to CAMHs by their parents/carers in earlier childhood.

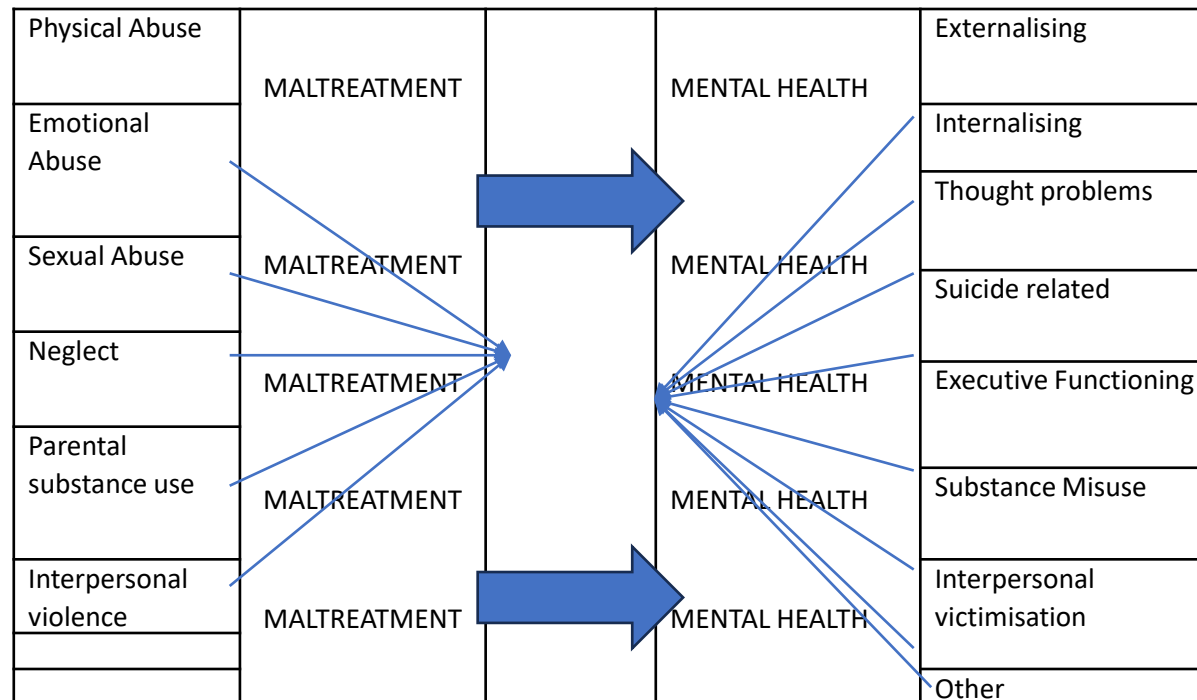
Agencies are therefore left to simply focus on the presenting issue ie criminalisation/gangs/CCE/CSE without addressing the underlying cause

Trauma and mental health

Sequelae of Child Maltreatment: Umbrella synthesis on mental health correlates in over 11 million participants. Coughlan, Duschinsky et al

Findings demonstrate that maltreatment is associated with various psychological difficulties, and these associations tend to be of similar magnitude for different forms of maltreatment

Wider determinants



What does this mean?

- Offer a range of wellbeing and mental health support options
- Individual and group
- Diversionary - <https://photovoice.org/care-leavers-in-focus-clif/>
- Clear Approach – focus on identity, empowerment and care experience
- Understanding what is behind challenging behaviour – thinking about root cause and helping to eliminate
- Helping young people to understand through Modelling and guidance – Express Yourself
- Dealing with day to day challenges

What Works for Children's Social Care: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING NEEDS AND EXPERIENCES OF CARE LEAVERS IN ENGLAND. MAY 2023

Barking and Dagenham Barking and Dagenham has a full-time “emotional wellbeing and mental health practitioner” within their Leaving Care team, offering low-intensity therapeutic support and assisting with referrals to more specialist NHS services where appropriate.

PAs make referrals to this practitioner for the care leavers that they work with. The LA also runs a Children in Care council group that has practical, educational and social sessions for attendees as well as its function as a council.

They additionally work with New Town Culture, a programme supported by the council to embed art and cultural activities into social care services, with a focus on children in care and care leavers. In 2022, they also had a programme of activities for care leavers to promote social connection and offer informal support to participants.

Loneliness and isolation



- The most mentioned in each component.
- Loneliness, lack of family and belonging. What helps was 'staying put', having someone to talk to
- Leaving care can cut off all the relationships they have built.
- Its all about the relationships
- Engaging, fulfilling, teaching
- Things are going to go wrong – unconditional
- Developmental learning
- User led
- Connections

Housing

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Secure base is really important for mental wellbeing
- Quality and availability of care leaver accommodation needs to improve
- Housing offers- Generalised offer to all Care Leavers- So many different housing associations offer a different package to YP.
- Community based workers targeting the more isolated YP

Current Issues

- Supporting those over 21
 - Duty worker doesn't allow a relationship to develop
 - Being as proactive as you can with annual information
 - Do not send out letter "ending relationship"
 - Complete dearth of support services
- Connections
 - Stat min 8 weeks contact is too long
 - Resource implications

Case studies



Kyran:

Kyran is a young black male with anger problems who left care 6 months ago, where he was moved into a deprived area with high rates of crime and minimal opportunities. He suffered domestic abuse at home as a child from his father, who was both extremely physically violent towards Kyran and very emotionally abusive. As a result of his life at home whilst in the care system Kyran has had multiple placement and social worker breakdowns due to inability to accept authority, his inability to form trusting relationships, and his violent tendencies. Instead of talking about how he feels Kyran just erupts and gets angry. On occasion he has been physically violent and damaged property. Kyran has said previously that he doesn't like getting angry he just feels overwhelmed and doesn't know what else to do so he explodes. He also feels as if no one really cares, he stated "no one has ever tried to help me, all they do is punish me and get rid of me. No-one cares, I'm just a job to them." When he has engaged with a PA, he also mentioned not liking authority figures because he hates the feeling of not feeling heard and of decisions being made for him.

Recently, some reports have come into social care from the YOT services that Kyran is hanging round with some boys who are known members of a local gang. The report states he is deeply involved in county lines and is also known to be carrying weapons. When his PA was last able to contact him via telephone Kyran stated that he "doesn't need or want to speak with her" as she has nothing to offer him, he stated "your job was to give me a family and you couldn't even do that. So, Yanno what F@\$K you! Cos now I have found my own people, and they really care about me.!" Kyran hasn't spoken to her in over 4 weeks. With him currently not engaging with his PA and with current case load demands on her, Kyran is now seen not only as high risk, but also hard to reach, easy to ignore. How can we support him before he falls through the cracks?

Zenib is a care leaver, she left care just before lockdown began in 2020, and during her transition found herself isolated from her PA, friends, and education. With not being able to access social care Zenib wasn't given full access to her leaving care grant or the support and resources she was entitled to start out living independently. As a result of this Zenib was left with the following to start her leaving care journey:

- only a mattress – (A whole bed was meant to come in 2 deliveries, however when lockdown kicked in, they couldn't deliver the base)
- a second-hand sofa
- a second-hand fridge
- some storage for clothes
- The Tv and Bluetooth speaker that she left care with

She was also given (before services stopped in 2020) £500 from her leaving care allowance this paid for some essentials like:

- a towel bundle
- some bedding
- cutlery
- plates, bowls, cups x2
- a rug,
- some blinds
- bathmats
- basic pan set
- Microwave, kettle, toaster
- 2 cushions
- clothes airer.

She was moved into unsuitable accommodation, with no carpets and isolated from any basic support. The new PA who has been in to visit has recorded the severity of the unsuitable accommodation Zenib was placed in. The damages are as follows:

- Damp and Mould in all rooms and around windows and bath
- Ceiling has caved in – (potential leak from the roof, built up over time and gave way)
- Poor framing around front door – poor security and cold drafts coming through – heat escaping.
- No double glazing in windows
- All wooden frames rotten due to damp
- Property smells of damp and mould
- Mouse droppings in kitchen under cupboards.
- Floorboards damp and rotten

All the upheaval, then being isolated from the only support she ever knew, while living in horrific circumstances and this has really taken a toll on her mental health. Zenib is very pale, her eyes are sunken from lack of sleep. She has stated she eats mainly toast and chocolate (when she can afford it) and drinks tea only. She doesn't have any friends that she socialises with and rarely leaves her flat. Zenib believes because she wasn't loved by her family that she isn't deserving of a nice life or love now she has left care. Zenib recently disclosed feeling very anxious and depressed and indicated that she has thought about self-harm. She really feels she has nothing to live for and is just a drain on social services. She has given up all hope of ever going to college, she has lost her passion for her hobby of photography (she has always been passionate about since a little girl) not having many physical objects from growing up made her feel capturing memories in photos was an important thing to do.

Zenib has had 2 PAs in the last year which has left her mistrusting her new one and refusing to engage, as she thinks "this one will just leave as well". How can we help rebuild Zenib's trust and help her get the support she needs?



How to make the leaving care process as beneficial as possible?

- Support with life skills such as cooking, budgeting and DIY
- Knowing their rights and entitlements such as council tax exemptions and free travel in certain areas
- Support with how to spend the leaving care grant
- Having a strong network around them so they don't feel alone
- Better emotional support and consistency of workers
- More support with finance (government needed)





Discussion

- How could we better support Kyran and Zenib
- Anything you were surprised about in presentation?
- Anything you would like to challenge?
- If you had a magic wand what would you change?
- Anything you are thinking about now that could be changed locally...

Thank you

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