



Language that cares

Changing the way professionals talk about
Children in Care



A

Abscond

We prefer: **Run away; Go missing**

Advocate

"Says what it is but it might need explaining to some children and young people."
Cheshire East Young People

Asylum seeker

We prefer: **Young people**

"Asylum seeker is a home office term, these young people are much more than a Home Office label." Social Worker

B

Birth/Biological Parents

We prefer: **Parents; Family; Mum or Tummy Mummy; Dad**

"You should access each child individually to find out what they like calling their family members." Cheshire East Young Person

"The words can also be excluding and disadvantageous to birth parents and it is important for this to be considered as well." Foster Carer

C

Care leaver

We prefer: **Care experienced adult; Moving on or Moving up**

"We prefer 'care experienced' but we are not always keen on the word 'care' as this can mean anything due to 'care' having a wide definition." Cheshire East Young People

Care plan

We prefer: **Future plans; My plan**

"The word 'care' needs less usage, it is used too commonly, and I am fed up of hearing it." Cheshire East Young Person

Challenging Behaviour

We prefer: **Having trouble coping; Distressed feelings; Different thinking method; Difficult thoughts**

"Children and young people who are finding coping tough are not 'challenging' they are in need of your help and support." Social Worker

Consistent guide

We prefer: **Constant support**

"When we fall, you will catch us and help us get back on track."
Cheshire East Young People

Contact

We prefer: **Making plans to see our family; Family meet up time/Family time; Seeing Dad/Mum/Grandma/etc.**

"Contact should be changed to meeting with friends and family!"
Waltham Forest Young Person

"I would prefer 'seeing family'. Seeing family is normal for anyone but 'contact' makes it sound like it's not normal." York Care Leavers Forum

"Contact means staying in touch with the people that you care about."
Waltham Forest Young People

"For me it would be 'golden time', because seeing your family is golden and it's the best time." TACT Young Person

Contact centre

We prefer: **Family centre**

D

Designated Teacher

We prefer: **Teacher**

"Just say it's a teacher we can talk to, who is trained and who attends our reviews. The word is too obvious, we don't want everyone knowing." Cheshire East Young People



Difficult to place

We prefer: **Can't find a home good enough for them; Failed by the system**

"The phrase 'difficult to place' blames the child for a failure of the system."

Charity Social Worker

Drop out

We prefer: **Early school leaver**

F**Foster carers**

We prefer: **My family; Foster Mum; Foster Dad; People who care about me; My new family; The family that chose us; Aunty/Uncle; Their name**

"The use of language is at a very individual level, so a term used for one child may not be right for another. Children use different words in different contexts, they may call foster carer 'Mum or Dad' in one situation but not in another. Foster carers and the children they look after need to work this out between them." Foster Carer

Full potential

We prefer: **You will make sure I have every chance to achieve my dreams**

H**High aspirations**

We prefer: **Good choices**

"You will try your best to help me because you want me to achieve."

Cheshire East Young People

I**In care**

We prefer: **Another home away from home; Living with a different family in a different home**

Isolation

We prefer: **Reflection time**

L

LAC review

We prefer: **My meeting or my review meeting; Improving your time in care; [Child's name]'s Review**

"It is your time to speak up and talk about what is happening or what's happened, what is good and what is bad." Waltham Forest Young People

LAC visit

We prefer: **Home visit; [Child's name] visit; Catch up**

LAC/Foster child

We prefer: **Call children by their names; LA should say 'our children' or [insert name of LA]'s children; Young People or Children**

"Every child is 'looked after'; there is no need to point us out. Some would consider themselves looked after before coming into care." Cheshire East Young People

"I do not mind the saying, but just don't say it a lot." York Young Person

"The acronym 'LAC' can be understood as a suggestion that the child or young person is 'lacking' something." Professional

"Take away LAC acronym completely." Herefordshire Young People

M

Moving placements

We prefer: **Moving to a new house, A new chapter or fresh start**

N

NEET

We prefer: **Unemployed or not in training or in education**

"NEET is a silly word, no young person knows what it means yet we are called it."
Warwickshire Young People

P

PA

We prefer: **Advisor; Personal advisor; Guidance giver**

"PA is commonly known for personal assistant. People ask more questions with PA because of that reason." Cheshire East Young People

Pathway plan

We prefer: **Future planning for 16+; Leaving care plan**

PEP

We prefer: **School review; Education meeting; Education plan**

"It is not about the word 'PEP' itself, it is how it is presented in school. Some teachers openly announce in class that the LAC student has a PEP meeting and this will arouse the interest from the rest of students, leaving the looked after student to explain what it is and why they have it." Rotherham Young People

Permanence

We prefer: **My home without disruptions**

Placement

We prefer: **Our home or home; My house or the house where I live**

"Placement sounds like you are being forced to live there." TACT Young Person

"I don't like when they say, 'you are a normal child living in someone else's home' or when they use the term 'child in care.'" Bristol Young Person

"This should be a word used more for a temporary placement, not when you see it as your home and have been there a long time." York Young Person

"A foster home might be somewhere where you're placed against your will, but that doesn't stop it from being a home." York Care Leavers Forum

"We should talk about 'foster homes' and not 'placements,' particularly when children themselves are referred to as placements." Foster Carer

R

Respite

We prefer: **A break for children (not carers); Day out; Home away from home; Stay over/ Stay over family; Sleepover; Time off/Time off for us/Time off for our carers**

"This word does not make much sense. It is too formal and not a word we use everyday." York Young People

"It can be offensive as it means an escape or a break from something that is not enjoyable." York Young People

Restrained

We prefer: **Physical help to stay safe**

Reunification

We prefer: **Going back to live with my family**

S

Siblings

We prefer: **Our brothers and sisters; People who are related to me**

"This is too formal, and it is ok in written language but in spoken language I think it should just be brothers and sisters." York Young Person

Sick

We prefer: **Unwell**

"I don't like when they say that my Mum is sick, I would rather they say Mum is unwell." Bristol Young Person

Social worker

We prefer: **1:1 worker; Someone who understands your family background and knows what you have been through**

Special needs

We prefer: **Additionally supported; The needs name, i.e. disabled; 'global developmental delay'; learning need, etc.; Additional learning needs**

"Everyone is special, and everyone has different levels of need."
Warwickshire Young People

Staff, Support worker, Unit manager

We prefer: **Their name**

"Explain their role but use their name to refer to them." Professional

Stat visit

We prefer: **Coming to visit to see how we're doing**

"I didn't know what a stat visit is. For me it is when my social worker just comes around, so I do not feel there has to be a specific word for it." York Care Leavers Forum

T

Therapy

We prefer: **Speaking things through sessions; Trying to make sense sessions**

Transition

We prefer: **Preparing for change**

