

EASTERN COLLABORATIVE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL NETWORK MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Welcome to February 2026 ECCRN newsletter. This month, amongst other things, we are thinking about 'belonging' and feeling safe in residential and care placements from the perspectives of both staff and young people.

Please absorb and enjoy!

Belonging in Residential Child Care



We've come across some excellent diagrams re: Belonging in Residential Child Care that would make excellent discussion starters and demonstrative tools for supervision, reflection and training.

A Sense of Belonging in Children's Residential Homes: A Qualitative Exploration of Staff Members' Perspectives

(Dr Kate Jobbins, Dr Rachel Hitchiner, Dr James Stroud, Dr Aimee Pudduck)

Home and belonging: Mapping what matters when moving on

(Pages 17 and 18).



Belonging and Residential Child Care workers

Thursday 19th March 2pm-2:45pm

Register here [Online Event](#)

1. Give insight from **lived experience into the range of neurodivergent identities** that exist, and how these can impact on people's daily lives and experience of work.
2. Provide advice workers who are neurodivergent themselves on how they can harness their strengths, seek any support they need, and – **crucially – feel a sense of 'belonging' in their work.**
3. **Empower managers and colleagues** to consider how they can become allies to neurodivergent practitioners and **foster a sense of inclusivity and belonging in the profession.**

Communication & Connection

Making the case for Residential Child Care means communication to the wider public is crucial. Here's how one provider is seeking connection: [What Does a Typical Day Look Like in a Children's Home?](#)

Following on in the spirit of connecting we have found a treasure chest of resources from: [Beacon House](#)

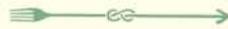
After all these years we are still finding new resources and new lists. We think practice needs to be **free** to share.

One to watch out for...

[Secure](#) by Amir Levine. This book is out in April and is the follow-up to [Attached](#). The book argues that there are broad categories that people fall into in terms of how they operate in interpersonal relationships –anxious/ambivalent, anxious/disoriented/disorganised, avoidant, and secure.

Creating & Sustaining Safer Spaces for Black Children in Care

AN INVITATION TO BRAVE SPACE



Together we will create *brave space*
 Because there is no such thing as a “safe space” —
 We exist in the real world
 We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.
 In this space
 We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,
 We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,
 We call each other to more truth and love
 We have the right to start somewhere and continue to
 grow. We have the responsibility to examine what we
 think we know.
 We will not be perfect.
 This space will not be perfect.
 It will not always be what we wish it to be
 But
 It will be *our brave space together,*
and
We will work on it side by side.

by Micky ScottBey Jones

www.thepeoplesupper.org

Points of Consideration

- What is preventing Black children and young people from feeling safe in care placements? What can we do to change this?
- What is a ‘safe space’ for Black children and young people in children’s homes?
- How can we support Black children and young people in care to understanding their identity and feel connected to their culture and community?
- How can we support Black children and young people to feel empowered and informed using their voices?

This **report** is essential reading for everyone in Residential Child care. Research shows that care placements for Black children in England often fail to meet their racial and ethnic identity needs. This research sought to make recommendations for Children's social care policy and practice to inform the creation of '**Safe Spaces**'; environments, relationships, support systems, and transitions that offer the best possible experiences and outcomes for children and young people who may not be able to live permanently with their own families.



The research reinforces that creating truly safe environments requires more than policy or procedure; it demands relational trust, cultural awareness, cultural safety, and active anti-racist practice.

See also:

1. [Martin Luther King for kids](#)
2. A jam packed [list](#) of publications, podcasts, articles and resources useful in articulating the Black experience.
3. [Understanding identity and race in social care](#)

The ECCRN has created a practice prompt for readers to use: [Creating and sustaining safer spaces for black children in care.](#)

OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS...

Sex and relationships

NSPCC Learning has refreshed its puberty and sexual development materials for children and young people with learning supported booklets and new responding to humping and supportive, non-shaming way. carers and professionals compassion and confidence.



disabilities, including symbol-guidance for parents on thrusting behaviour in a. These [Resources](#) can help approach puberty with clarity,



Managing children's digital lives

The Children's Commissioner for England has released a **guide** for parents and carers to help manage children's digital lives. It covers common online challenges, promotes open conversations, and offers boundary-setting support, including a checklist and an activity pack for children.

Webinar

Dr Lynne Cairns, Post Doctoral Research Associate in the Global Centre for Contextual Safeguarding at Durham University hosts a webinar exploring:

- How young people's stories challenge dominant risk-centred practices and the importance of considerations of safety and children's rights alongside risk management and reduction.
- What young people's stories reveal about how we conceptualise and perform 'risk work', including the language we use and its impact on young people's identities, experiences of their social worlds and their futures.
- Ways through which practitioners can reorient their responses towards safety-building, contextual understanding and relationships.
- How risk assessment, management and reduction can better reflect the tempos, rhythms and spaces of everyday life, rather than abstract or anxious responses.
- How the UNCRC can serve as a conductor - positioning practitioners and multi-agency teams around the child like an orchestra of duty bearers - to inform more rights-based, future-focused responses to HSB.
- Key UNCRC articles relevant to HSB and related practical resources to support practitioners to make rights tangible, accessible and actionable in everyday practice.



Wed 4 Mar 2026, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

Online, Teams. Book [here](#).

Alternatives to DOLS

NCERCC received a reply regarding concerns raised about this article: **[Alternative to containment for children at risk of deprivation of liberty being developed](#)**.

You can read the comments, proposal, and response **[here](#)**.

Tea Break Reads

Purely for your perusal we would like to highlight two things of interest which you could visit on your next tea break:

- **CELCIS**, the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection, Scotland, has some useful & relevant articles and information.
- A paper on **Social pedagogy-informed residential child care**.

What People Are Saying About Us In Parliment

Public Accounts Committee

Financial sustainability of children's care homes

This is the toughest, important accountability of the DfE in many years.

It's not only about the finance you'll see why in the Conclusion and Recommendation #1:

Conclusion

The Department has not demonstrated the urgency and leadership needed to provide a children's residential care system that works. The Department recognises it has a critical role and overarching responsibility for the residential care system in England. However, its actions have not reflected the urgency needed to address the significant challenges faced. While it has begun to make changes in response to two independent reviews, it has not yet carried out many of the actions identified and its vision of what the sector should look like is unclear. It has not clearly set out how and when it will support local authorities, who retain the statutory duty to care for looked-after children, it lacks up-to-date information on the support children need and cannot confidently say that children are in homes best suited to their needs. More widely, a lack of joined up leadership across the system has contributed to gaps where organisations need to work more effectively together. This includes disconnects between children's and adult's social care which can have serious impacts on the outcomes for some children and young people.

Recommendation

The Department should demonstrate how it will take more ownership of the system by setting out: a clear definition of its role; what it wants to achieve, the associated actions and timeline; and how it will develop a joined-up system and approach with local authorities and wider government. It should write to us in six months setting out its approach.

See also: [The House of Lords Briefing: Children in Care](#)

[Looked after children - House of Lords Library](#)

(it's very short!)

Thank you for reading our newsletter, your feedback would be very welcome. If you wish to be removed from the distribution or wish to add a colleague, please email us:

SLI Programme mailbox: EasternRegionCIB@norfolk.gov.uk

SLI website: [Commission East – Improvement East](https://www.commission-east-improvement-east.com)

Linked In: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/improvement-east/>

See you at the next online ECCRN meeting!



Partnering for Practice