

EASTERN COLLABORATIVE CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL NETWORK MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Welcome to our August 2026 newsletter! This month, to complement our usual mix, we have written a short play, which we hope is both entertaining and a useful learning prompt. Please absorb and enjoy!

Government – statistics telling a story

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/childrens-social-care-statistics>

Children's social care continues to grow and now has 6,700 providers, with a 20% increase in the number of children's homes over the past year and 70% since March 2022.

11% Outstanding – 71% Good – 13% Requiring improvement – 5% Inadequate

In the Eastern region there have been 56 new homes adding 150 places.

Newly registered children's homes continue to be smaller on average: those registered over the year were mostly for 3 children, compared to 4 in children's homes registered before the start of the year (for reasons see new book Perfect Little Children's Home.)

*81% of homes inspected received a good or outstanding judgement for how well children and young people are helped and protected.

*74% received a good or outstanding judgement for the effectiveness of leaders and managers

*There has been a 37% increase in the number of supported accommodation providers

Understanding children's social care sufficiency in England: [Ofsted 2Jul26](#) – we suggest reading main findings (1 minute read).

RESEARCH



Care leaver outcomes for children in children's homes: a retrospective cohort study using national administrative data for England - Kingston University London

Research into residential child care has long suffered the effects of attribution and contribution, outcomes are attributed to the last placement and exclude all else before. This research presents the findings as being about **inequality** (that is, children in residential child care are systemically and structurally disadvantaged) and face significant challenges in housing, education. Looking at the factors why those from children's homes experience the poorest outcomes the paper looks at child characteristics, care histories, and final placements. Placement instability, multiple care episodes, and final placements in supported or semi-independent accommodation were strong predictors of poor outcomes. Early entry into care improved outcomes for most young people, but not for those from children's homes (ECCRN adds: due to multiple co-occurring interacting high level, that is, not like the rest of the population of children in care). Ethnic disparities were also evident, with Black and Mixed heritage care leavers more likely to experience unsuitable housing.

And while we are thinking about the number moves and the cumulative impact

<https://becomecharity.org.uk/about-us/news/reports/2026-report-risks-being-moved/>

How being moved far away puts care-experienced girls at risk. This report identifies specific challenges that girls in care face when placed far from their local area and support networks.



Research Residential - A new way

(nothing about us without us doing it!)

Have you thought about your home being an action research project?

In the USA Together the Voice is holding a conference:

‘Honoring Identity, Strengthening Connection’ (American spelling!).

Topics such as:

- *The Inner Work of Helping Others: Identity, Mindset, and Leadership* | **TBD**
- *Roots and Wings: Culture, Identity, and the Power of Belonging* | **International Panel**
- *Presence Under Pressure: Mindfulness Skills for Working (and Surviving) on a Secure Unit* | **Amanda Pryor**
- *The Case for Compassion: How a Culture of Compassion will Revolutionize Residential Intervention* | **New Hope Treatment Centers**
- *Reimagining Family Engagement: Culturally Rooted Strategies to Support Healing and Connection* | **Amanda Quiroz-Guajardo**
- *Rebuilding the Village: Family Reunification from Therapeutic Residential Care* | **Strive Community Care**

[Register here](#)

English residential child care once shared like this through organisations like the Residential Child Care Association and others. An organisation for Residential Child Care Workers- **Residentialist** - is to be launched in Septmeber

Some are already doing it – join them?

Donna Crozier – exploring the impact of AI-assisted writing tools on children’s records in a therapeutic residential school setting.

Jack Smith - reflective and relationally focused research explored the impact of intentionally noticing and praising positive behaviour on staff-pupil relationships and pupil outcomes in an SEMH setting.

Read Donna and Jack’s inspiring insights: <https://lnkd.in/ehYP4AiH>

Consultations

Statutory framework for help, support and protection for children and families (England): [consultation 4Sep26](#) – this could include children’s homes.

Updating foster care standards and guidance (England): [consultation 16Sep26](#) (we will gather your views) We need to make our view of foster care known. See this open Ofsted consultation: [Improving the way Ofsted inspects children’s social care](#) - [GOV.UK](#)

First successful prosecution by Ofsted of illegal children's home provider

Unregistered children's home provider fined £92,400 + victim surcharges of £2,960 × costs of £17,250. Directors admitted operating 3 illegal settings for 9 children, in Kent between October 2022 and April 2025, despite repeated warnings, when they received more than £1.7million in placement income. First successful prosecution of its kind secured by Ofsted. Catalyst Care Limited and directors Davidson Lynch-Shyllon and Miriam Ekathor admitted to charges were also disqualified from carrying on, managing or having a financial interest in a children's home.

PRACTICE

Anti racist practice

<https://basw.co.uk/policy-and-practice/resources/relational-anti-racist-supervision-form>

https://www.nagalro.com/events/38/nagalro_autumn_2026_conference_institutional_racism_a_pandoras_box_that_keeps_being_ignored

Trauma informed practice

Knowing what we all mean when we are talking together – towards a vocabulary

[Trauma Glossary - The Mulberry Bush](#)

[ADHD vs Childhood Trauma: Understanding the Difference - The Mulberry Bush](#)

Read around the subject

[Books on Trauma for professionals - The Mulberry Bush](#)

An approach

<http://www.calmbrainapproach.com>

Remind and refresh

[An Easy Guide to Co-Regulation - The Mulberry Bush](#)

Violence

Prevention Toolkit

[Youth Violence Prevention Toolkit | Youth Endowment Fund](#)

Find what's out there whilst also considering: Cost; Evidence; Impact.

A summary of the best available research evidence on approaches to preventing children and young people's involvement in violence. It tells you about the average impact of each approach, the quality of the evidence, and the average cost.

[What Is Challenging Behaviour? - The Mulberry Bush](#)

RESEARCH



Relational Wellbeing Amongst Care- Experienced Young People in Transition in the Context of Covid 19 (2025).

Maybe, just maybe this will be the game changer needed for transition in or out of a COVID epidemic.

Risk vulnerability among children living in residential care in England (2025)

This study aimed to investigate the patterns of vulnerability to harm from external risk and risk to self among children living in residential care in England. Conclusions: certain groups of children in residential care are vulnerable to different types of risk. Routine assessment of children's risk, alongside training for residential staff, is essential to identify, monitor and safeguard against potential harms.

"It's Silent": Race, Racism and Safeguarding Children – Panel Briefing 4 (2025)

This report highlights that some progress has been made in understanding how race, ethnicity and culture can inform practice responses to children and families. However, analysis reveals too few examples of these issues being considered in any depth or specificity, indicating that there is a need to surface and challenge why there is such systemic silence and reticence in addressing and confronting these issues. It is clear too that more work is urgently needed so that safeguarding leaders and practitioners consistently consider, understand and take account of children's identity and heritage.

This review indicates that there is an imperative need to secure changes in safeguarding practice and policy, including when undertaking learning reviews following serious incidents when children have died or been seriously harmed. It is essential that these changes are secured to protect children from harm, both inside and outside their families. Leaders have a pivotal role in addressing discrimination and bias, and in creating the climate and conditions that supports active, conscious, and consistent anti-racist practice. This necessarily involves multi-agency leaders and practitioners recognising and confronting racism, biases, stereotypes and discriminatory practices so that the importance of these issues is recognised and addressed. Importantly, this involves naming and identifying racism as an issue when it occurs or has been a consideration.



A short play
Children's homes: ordinary houses in ordinary streets
doing the extraordinary



“Is there a children's home in this street?”

“Oh, I dunno dear... There's no children's home round here... It's very quiet round here y'know ... Are you sure you know where to go?... You do! Well maybe, is it the one with ...curtains closed?... That's Norman does it to keep cool and warm, all year round. Nice curtains.”

“Or the one with toys in front garden?... I do like seeing the children out playing together.”

“Is it the one with laughter round the back?... I always like hearing them having so much fun.”

“Or the one with the beautiful flowers? Lovely that someone thinks of the rest of us too.”

“Is it the one with two cars on the drive... Well, they all have.”

“Or the one with the office in the garage? Oh! That's my house!”

“Is it the one with an extension?... that's my neighbour.”

“Or the one where people say hello?... It's very nice when people say hello.”

“Is it the one where they never talk to you? It's nice when people want a chat and a catch up... a good gossip.”

“Or the one with the poster for the school fete? It's good to see people supporting young ones and the local school.”

“Is it the one who has supermarket delivery?... Well, they all do.”

“Or the one with canoes and bikes? There's lots of those everywhere”.

“Are you sure there's a children's home in this street?”

What is your learning from this little play? What is the difference to your home?

Read: [Learning from Stories We Thought Were Just Entertainment - The Mulberry Bush](#)

BITS & BOBS

BUSS

Building Underdeveloped Sensorimotor Systems (BUSS) for children

Monday 28th September 2026 12.00-13.30 Online webinar - Microsoft Teams

Hear about BUSS - brief intervention for children who have experienced disruption to their early development and bodily regulation, including care experienced children living in residential care.

Featuring three children's individual journeys into and through BUSS and the positive findings.

[Register here](#)

Using Generative AI (GenAI) safely and ethically

[Using GenAI ethically BASW](#) We need clear guidance on what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate use to maximise the benefits of using GenAI, whilst avoiding its potential pitfalls, whilst acting with integrity.



Children using social media – support for the grown ups



[Molly Rose Foundation - Social media ban support](#)

[How to Keep Children Safe Online - The Mulberry Bush](#)

Recruitment

[Pay structures to support recruitment and retention in social care in Wales](#)



Who do you think?

[Best Mothers & Fathers in Film - The Mulberry Bush](#)



Some thinking for the future: looking after ourselves is part of looking after children

(a version of Humanising the 'Machinery' of Care)

Kindness is a delicate thing – as soon as you try to ‘operationalise’ it, or scale it up, something of its essence is lost. Kindness is a free spirit.

When a grown up stayed after ‘shift end’ to make a chocolate for a child who could not sleep – and for their colleagues still working too!

Starting the ‘Hot chocolate club’ at 8 o’clock!

Everyday, we are given an opportunity to increase a child’s well-being and so relieve distress.

Everyday touching and being touched by the heart and mind of another when creating the connection that enables relief and comfort.



Residential child care needs to recognise the emotional cost to the carers. How could we do it? An emphasis on checklists of questions can bring apparent structure and certainty, rather than connecting with patients on an equal human level and responding to whatever comes up. A perceived need for staff to have a sense of detachment (often described as ‘being professional’) carries a risk of disengagement from the feelings necessary to build compassionate relationships with children. Part of professionalism is an intention to ensure that individual preferences and personal connections don’t cloud the process of objective, equitable decision-making. However, this emotional detachment can be at the heart of systemic care failings.

To care, we need to feel, but feelings can sometimes invite us down unhelpful paths. Feelings without thought can mean that sometimes we react in a totally inappropriate way, without consideration for others. The solution is to bring conscious awareness to feelings so that we can be aware of the emotion before we act and consider whether this is the best way to respond to the situation. This is a skill that people can learn and develop.

At a local level, reflective practice sessions can offer protected spaces for thinking and being, and not ‘doing’ all the time. Reflective group meetings can be spaces where our own and others’ vulnerabilities can be acknowledged and embraced. Feelings can be combined with thoughts. Individuals and teams are increasingly encouraged to reflect on what matters to them, as a way to reconnect with core values. Experience is that sessions like these can be useful but are tough to set up and maintain.



To care is an interpersonal matter that involves empathy, warmth and genuineness. These vital human qualities are the easiest things to experience subjectively but in a health-care system that values objective outcomes the spiritual essence of care can become lost or diluted. Care can only be as good as the mental state of the carer, and the mental state of the carer depends in turn on the support and nourishment of the working environment.

Carers need nurturing relationships with other people so that their own energy can be constantly replenished. For this to happen, the needs of caregivers have to be recognised and the working environment has to be designed to meet them, in line with fundamental psychological needs.

What we call a ‘psychologically safe’ health-care environment is one in which everyone feels a sense of involvement; an environment where conversations routinely happen whose purpose is to talk through difficult feelings so that people feel refreshed and re-energised to carry on; an environment where not only the patients feel remembered and held in mind, but also the staff. One of the most practical steps, therefore, in ensuring good-quality care is to care for the care staff as human beings too. Simple behaviours that create psychological safety include conversational turn-taking, empathy and a freedom to “say what I think without fear”. We must be able to talk about what is messy or sad with openness, to embrace hard conversations with colleagues (for example in team meetings) with whom we are having difficulty. We acknowledge that these behaviours require some time, and that health care is fast-paced and highly pressured. We lose so much when our focus is on efficiency and protocols.



The top five universal emotional and psychological needs of humans are:

To be loved
To be heard
To belong
To make a difference
To have meaning and purpose

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](#)

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

See you at the next online ECCRN meeting!

