

Eastern Collaborative Children's Residential Network

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the September 2026 ECCRN newsletter.
We are trying out a new look this month. We hope you like it!
Please, absorb and enjoy!

FEATURE ARTICLE

What Out-of-Home Care Really Looks Like

Inside a system built around safety, loss, and relationships

An important read for anyone in residential.



“Entering care does not mean children stop loving their parents.”



One of the most important realities of out-of-home care is that entering care does not mean children stop loving their parents.

Many children continue to feel strong attachment, loyalty, worry, hope, anger, grief, and confusion all at the same time.

Children are often trying to hold two realities together.

“Safety does not always feel safe.”



One of the most misunderstood realities of out-of-home care is that safety and felt safety are not the same thing.

A child may be physically safe in a new placement while still feeling emotionally unsettled, frightened, confused, or overwhelmed.

Key Takeaways



Children often maintain strong emotional bonds with their parents.



Young people frequently carry multiple emotions at the same time.



Feeling safe and being safe are different experiences.



Relationships remain central to recovery and stability.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE [HERE](#)

CARE LEAVERS & CARE EXPERIENCED

A Journey That Doesn't End at 18

Why enduring relationships matter long after care ends.



Tackling the Loneliness of Leaving Care (England)

Clare Chamberlain

“We heard of extreme vulnerability, of acute loneliness, and of young people who really had no trusted adult to help them deal with enormous difficulties they faced as older teenagers moving into their early twenties. These young people had experienced abuse, turbulent childhoods, instability, and trauma. Making sense of your childhood and thinking about your future as an adult is difficult enough for most of us, but without the solid support of family and friends, it can feel overwhelming.”

Why this matters



Housing stability



Trusted adults



Rebuilding family relationships



Mental health support



Confidence and resilience

What the report recommends

- ✓ Wider support networks to help Personal Advisers
- ✓ People who can form a relationship of trust
- ✓ Practitioners who understand systemic practice
- ✓ Support to rebuild relationships with family
- ✓ Mental health expertise
- ✓ Help to reflect on and come to terms with an unstable childhood
- ✓ Build confidence and emotional resilience to move into adulthood

Read report [here](#)

SUPPORT FALLS AWAY

‘You really are on your own’

A study of the early deaths of young people who were in care

by Clare Chamberlain and Ashley Baptiste

KEY FINDINGS



112

notifications of deaths of care leavers in 2025 (age 18-24)



36%

likely died by taking their own lives



3-4x

higher mortality rate than the general population



20%

of deaths occurred at age 18



A CLOSER LOOK



42% female (47)



58% male (65)



68% White | 12% Black | 12% Mixed ethnicity | 3% Asian



7 road traffic accident deaths



4 knife crime deaths



8 deaths involving diabetes



These findings highlight the urgent need for better support, stronger connections, and safer futures for care leavers.



“These lives ended far too soon. Their lives truly mattered.”

This [report](#) highlights the devastating impact of isolation, vulnerability, and a lack of enduring support. They died, in the words of the report, from being alone and cast adrift.

See also a [response](#) from Become.

Read paper [here](#)



Enduring Relationships

The people who stay matter most.

One of the strongest messages from care-experienced young people is that formal support ending should not mean important relationships end.

Many young people do not need another assessment. They need consistency. They need belonging.

They need someone who stays.



Relationships matter.



Leaving care is a process, not an event.



Trusted adults save lives.



Emotional resilience requires support.



No young person should face adulthood alone.



Working together to see neglect, act sooner, and change lives



THE REALITY

Ofsted's previous work has shown that neglect can go unseen, with children left to suffer harm that builds gradually and is too often missed.



These children can become those we see in children's homes.



WHAT WE KNOW (2018 REPORT)

Tackling neglect of older children requires a coordinated strategic approach across all agencies.

- ✓ Neglect of older children sometimes goes unseen
- ✓ Work with parents to address neglect doesn't always happen
- ✓ Services in most areas are not effective in identifying potential neglect
- ✓ The behaviour of older children must be understood in the context of trauma
- ✓ A coordinated strategic approach across all agencies is essential



THE DEFINITION OF NEGLECT

“ Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. ”

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:



Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)



Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger



Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)



Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment



Provide suitable education



It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



Joint targeted inspections bring partners together to identify neglect earlier, help families sooner, and ensure no child is left behind.



See neglect sooner



Act together



Change lives

Read more [here](#).

In April 2026, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published a thematic [report](#) on neglect.

What the Thematic Review Found

Why children continue to be missed



1 Identification delays

Unclear definitions and inconsistent thresholds.



2 Fragmented responses

Professionals may only see part of the picture.



3 Children's voices

Children's lived experience are not consistently captured.



4 Home conditions

Daily lived environments are often not explored in enough depth.



5 Early help barriers

Consent barriers, capacity pressures and inconsistent multi-agency working.



6 Trauma-informed practice

A more proactive, child-centred and trauma-informed approach is needed.

 Addressing these themes together will help ensure children are seen, heard and supported. 



Book reviews



The case for and against Guardianship Ceremonies.

Ready-Made Training

An introduction to attachment and the implications for learning and behaviour

Communicating with children during assessment - Ruth Dalzell and Clare Chamberlain

The Art of Relational Weaving - A Guide to the Essence of Relational Practice

John M. Digney, PhD – June 2024

"Relational practice refers to an approach that has the emphasis on meaningful relationships as the core of effective intervention and support for young people. The book is a collection of pieces from an eclectic and knowledgeable group of authors, practitioners, scholars, and trainers."

This is a good question and a good answer:

<https://www.communitycare.co.uk/content/news/would-you-spot-a-teenager-experiencing-coercive-control>

Ofsted
raising standards,
improving lives.

Ofsted has published its latest annual statistics on children's social care in England, providing a valuable snapshot of the provision available to children in care and families involved with children's social care.

Children's Social Care in England 2026
Key statistics and insights

EXPLORE THE FULL REPORT AND MAIN FINDINGS
Comprehensive data and analysis to help understand children's social care and drive better outcomes.

- Up-to-date data and trends**
Access the latest statistics and emerging trends in children's social care.
- Insights on children in care and support services**
Understand the experiences of children and the support available to them.
- Information to support better outcomes for children and families**
Use evidence to improve practice, services and outcomes.
- Evidence to inform practice, policy and decision-making**
Reliable evidence to shape effective decisions and drive positive change.

Poster of the month
Applying polyvagal theory to relationship based therapeutic care practice tool

The Whole Book Approach - Megan Dowd Lambert
See also Doors to the world



Do they mean us?
The problem of poor record keeping in children's homes and what to do about it.

Human Rights of Children in the Social Care System in England
See especially paragraphs 168 – 180

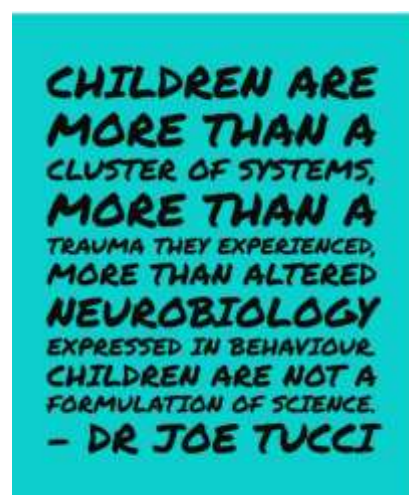


Picture edited from [Research in Practice](#)

Trauma-transformative practice is the new paradigm which aims to transform the ways that professionals understand and work with children and young people.

Meaningfully embedding trauma-informed approaches requires organisational, cultural and systemic change. These [resources](#) support social care organisations to strengthen and progress their trauma-informed journey.

This [workshop](#) captures the key knowledge and dimensions described in The Handbook of Trauma-Transformative Practice (Tucci, Mitchell, Porges, Tronik 2024). With intention and purpose, this knowledge base and its application transforms systems and communities around children.



- [What is trauma](#)
- [Trauma informed care](#)
- [What comes after trauma informed practice](#)
- [Trauma informed social care organisations](#)



Ames, R. L. and Loebach, J. E. (2023) p805-817 [Applying Trauma-Informed Design Principles to Therapeutic Residential Care Facilities to Reduce Retraumatization and Promote Resiliency Among Youth in Care](#)



Bailey, C., Klas, A., Cox, R., Bergmeier, H., Avery, J. and Skouteris, H. (2019) p10-22 [‘Systematic review of organisation-wide, trauma-informed care models in out-of-home care \(OoHC\) settings’](#)

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!



Partnering for Practice