



**Policy name:** Supporting Prisoners with Care Experience Policy Framework

**Reference:** N/A

**Issue Date:** 11 May 2026

**Implementation Date:** 30 September 2026

**Replaces the following documents (e.g. PSIs, PSOs, Custodial Service Specs) which are hereby cancelled:** N/A

**Introduces amendments to the following documents:** N/A

**Action required by:**

	HMPPS HQ	X	Governors
X	Public Sector Prisons		Heads of Group
X	Contracted Prisons		The Probation Service
	Under 18 Young Offender Institutions		Other providers of Probation and Community Services
	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team		

**Mandatory Actions:** All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

**For Information:** This framework sets out the minimum requirements for prisons to ensure appropriate understanding and support of prisoners with care experience.

Governors must ensure that any new local policies that they develop because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010).

In this document the term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons

**How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored:** In public prisons, Prison Group Directors will monitor compliance of the requirements set out within the framework in their prisons. In privately managed prisons, monitoring of compliance will be through the standard contract management processes.

**Resource Impact:** Resource impact is expected to be minimal. However, we are mindful that some elements are unknown and may impact prisons with a higher proportion of young adults more notably. As such, we will work with these prisons to monitor impact following publication.

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**Approved by OPS for publication:** Helen Judge, Chair, Operational Policy Sub-board, March 2026

## CONTENTS

Section	Title	Page
1.1	Purpose	4
2.1 to 2.4	Evidence	4
3.1 to 3.7	Outcomes	4
4	Requirements	5
4.1 to 4.5	Legal Requirements	5
4.6 to 4.9	Nominate a specific point of contact (SPOC) & senior lead	6
4.10 to 4.15	Staff awareness, understanding and how to access support	6
4.16 to 4.22	Increasing identification	7
4.23 to 4.34	Working with local authority Leaving Care teams	8
4.35 to 4.39	Personal Adviser visits and contact	10
4.40 to 4.49	Access to support and services for care-experienced people	11
4.50 to 4.54	Supporting development of social and support networks	13
4.55 to 4.57	Recognising and mitigating risks of debt and exploitation	13
4.58 to 4.60	Purposeful activity	14
4.61 to 4.64	Accessing social care files	14
5	<b>Annex documents</b>	
	Annex A: Care Leaver definitions for England	15
	Annex B: Care Leaver definitions for Wales	16
	Annex C: Example posters to encourage disclosure	17
	Annex D: Identifying Care Leavers in custody	19
	Annex E: Care experience consent form	20
	Annex F: Support organisations	21
	Annex G: Accessing social care files	23
	Annex H: Over-representation in prison	24
	Annex I: Paralleling experiences: care and custody	25
	Annex J: Checklist for prisons	26

## **1. Purpose**

1.1 'Care experience' is an umbrella term that relates to anyone who has been looked after by the local authority at any point, for any length of time as a child. The term recognises shared experiences these people may have, but it is important to note experiences of care can look very different. This policy framework sets out mandatory actions and guidance for prisons to help improve outcomes for care-experienced prisoners.

1.1 The key aims of all prisons should be to:

- **improve staff understanding** of the impacts of care experience;
- **increase identification** of care-experienced prisoners; and
- **ensure access to entitlements and support.**

This will provide the best opportunity for meaningful engagement, rehabilitation and successful resettlement of people in prison who have experienced care.

## **2. Evidence**

2.1 Most people in the care system will have experienced multiple traumas in their early lives. This may be linked to the circumstances leading to their placement in care, the experience of being removed from their homes and families and/or they may have experienced further trauma and instability whilst living in care. Care-experienced people often have to live independently at a much younger age than others, without the same support networks.

2.2 There are numerous vulnerabilities and challenges this group may face. They may be isolated due to limited or complex family and social support networks, they may feel mistrustful of services and their abilities to support them, they may have difficulty forming healthy relationships and attachments, and typically face increased issues related to mental health, self-esteem and general wellbeing. These vulnerabilities may increase in prison.

2.3 Although the vast majority of those who enter care do not offend, these vulnerabilities can increase the likelihood of offending, and those with care experience are significantly over-represented in prisons. Although internal data is limited due to low identification rates, care-experienced prisoners are also thought to experience poorer outcomes in areas such as self-harm, assaults and re-offending.

2.4 Identifying care-experienced prisoners is challenging. Some may be reluctant to tell us for many reasons including fear of judgement, mistrust, not seeing any benefit, a concern they may be considered a greater 'risk' or that they may make their own children vulnerable to be taken into care. This last concern can be particularly relevant for women who are more likely to be primary caregivers. Prison staff should be proactive in encouraging disclosure and be able to respond to disclosures sensitively to provide support.

## **3. Outcomes**

3.1 **Clear understanding of care experience:** Staff working with prisoners understand what 'care experience' means and recognise the impact this might have on someone's engagement with professionals. They understand how to talk to someone about their care experience sensitively, in a trauma-informed way, and where to signpost for further support.

3.2 **Specific Points of Contact:** All prisons have a known specific point of contact (SPOC) for care experience who has, as a minimum, familiarised themselves with this document and completed the 'Supporting Care Experienced People in Custody' eLearning course. The

band of the SPOC is to be decided locally at the Governor's discretion.

- 3.3 **Identification:** Care-experienced prisoners are consistently identified. Consent is sought, and recorded, to allow information to be shared with relevant parties to provide support, including with other prisons in the event of a transfer.
- 3.4 **Local authority contact:** Where a care-experienced prisoner is under 25 years old (England) or under 21 years old (Wales), appropriate enquiries are carried out with the relevant local authority to establish any duties owed under the Children Act 1989, the Children and Social Work Act (2017) or the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act. This applies to sentenced and unsentenced prisoners.
- 3.5 **Ensuring access to entitlements:** Where a care-experienced person is entitled to local authority support, the prison acknowledges the local authority's important role as a corporate parent (see paragraphs 4.2-4.3) and, as a minimum, ensures that (with consent):
- a. Key information is shared with the relevant local authority in a timely manner
  - b. Where a Personal Adviser (PA) is allocated to support a care leaver, meaningful contact is facilitated in a way that meets the individual's needs.
  - c. The prison works collaboratively with the PA and probation to ensure joined-up sentence, release, pathway and Education, Health and Care (EHC) planning.
  - d. Local authorities can support their care leavers financially whilst in custody, where specified in their 'local offer' of support, including the provision of clothing.
- 3.6 **Access to support and services:** Care-experienced prisoners, of all ages, can access good quality support and services that recognise their unique experiences.
- 3.7 **Support networks:** Prisons support the development of care-experienced prisoners' social and support networks, both in custody and in the community.

## **4. Requirements**

### **Legal Requirements**

- 4.1 This framework uses the term 'care experience' to include people of any age who have spent any time in the care of a local authority. However, it is important to understand the statutory definitions and their differences which are set out in Annexes A and B.
- 4.2 The term 'care leavers' is used in this policy framework to refer to those care-experienced prisoners, aged under 25 (England) or under 21 (Wales), who are eligible for support from their local authority leaving care services. For these individuals, the local authority is their corporate parent. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, when it passes into law, will extend corporate parenting responsibilities for looked after children and care leavers to a wider set of organisations and services, including HM Prison and Probation Service.
- 4.3 As a corporate parent, we will have a shared legal responsibility with other public bodies to be alert to factors that might impact negatively on care leavers in custody (both sentenced and unsentenced) and ensure that their needs are met, voices are heard and valued, and that we enable them to achieve positive outcomes. Further guidance on corporate parenting responsibilities will be provided following enactment of the bill.
- 4.4 Although most of our care-experienced people in prison will not meet the legal eligibility criteria for full 'care leaver' support via local authorities, they may still have some entitlements. Where there are entitlements, we should ensure those individuals are aware and that we support their access to any support available. This can be crucial in supporting

wellbeing, social and community links, and resettlement.

- 4.5 Where a care-experienced person is not eligible for statutory leaving care support, it is still important we identify, engage effectively and consider other avenues of non-statutory support.

Care experience has no age limit, and many will face challenges relating to their experiences throughout their adult lives. Some may not have previously felt ready to discuss their experiences and seek support, therefore offers of support or targeted interventions should be sure to include prisoners of all ages

## **Other Requirements**

### **Nominate a prison care experience specific point of contact (SPOC) & senior lead**

- 4.6 The governor should nominate a member of their senior leadership team to be the senior lead for care experience in their prison. Senior leads are responsible for raising the profile of the care-experienced cohort, ensuring local data (including identification rates) is scrutinised to highlight, and act on, any areas of disproportionality and to ensure the needs of care-experienced prisoners are considered when developing local services and policies.

**Good practice:** Some prisons treat care experience as a protected characteristic, ensuring consideration in diversity and inclusion work, and all equality analyses, as routine.

- 4.7 The governor should also nominate a care experience SPOC to support the senior lead. The band of the SPOC is to be determined locally at the Governor's discretion. The Care Experience SPOC should be a consistent contact for local authority leaving care teams, staff and care-experienced people in custody who may require signposting. The SPOC should also be responsible for monitoring and improving identification.

**Good practice:** Some SPOCs have identified staff "champions" in different teams across the prison to support their work, creating a network to widen their reach.

- 4.8 As a minimum, the senior lead and SPOC should have familiarised themselves with this framework and the adjacent 'Care Experience Matters' guidance, and have completed the 'Supporting Care Experienced People in Custody' eLearning.
- 4.9 Senior leads and SPOCs will be supported via regional leads in their Prison Group Directors' offices, and by the National Care Experience Lead for Prisons in the Prison Operational Policy & Delivery Group (hmppscareexperience@justice.gov.uk).

### **Staff awareness, understanding and how to access further support**

- 4.11 Care experience includes any time spent living with foster families or in a residential home (e.g. a children's home or secure children's home), people who were adopted as children, and people who moved into semi-independent living arrangements from age 16. However, it also relates to people looked after as children via formal kinship care. This is where a child is looked after by a family member or friend who is not their parent. People will not always recognise that these arrangements, where formalised via the local authority, qualify them as being care-experienced.
- 4.12 Most people come into care because they cannot be looked after safely at home and most, though not all, will experience neglect of some form. Children may become looked after due to family crises such as parental mental or physical ill-health, imprisonment, domestic violence, substance misuse or bereavement. Many may experience abuse. Do not make

assumptions about someone's care experience or how they might feel about it. Regardless of the reason, care-experienced people will have experienced significant challenges in early life. A growing proportion will have been looked-after as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and some will have been looked-after due to presenting as homeless aged 16 or 17, being remanded to youth custody or being placed, by the court, with a foster carer to avoid remand. For these people in particular, there is a likelihood they will not recognise themselves as care-experienced and may be less likely to know of potential entitlements.

- 4.13 Someone who has been in care may find it difficult to talk about these experiences. It is important to acknowledge this and think about when and how we ask about it. Relationship building is key and it is important staff asking about care experience understand, and can explain, why they are doing so (see paragraphs 4.19-4.20).
- 4.14 All staff should know how to contact the prison's care experience senior lead and SPOC for further information or signposting. Full staff briefings, posters and site-wide emails highlighting their contact details should be used regularly. The prison may want to set up a functional mailbox, accessed by both the senior lead and SPOC, which can be promoted to staff and local authorities that need to make contact regarding a person in prison.
- 4.15 Staff should be encouraged to complete the Care Experience in Custody eLearning, and refer to this framework when working with someone who is care-experienced. This is particularly important for keyworkers and Prison Offender Managers (POMs) who will work consistently with individuals to build motivational and supportive relationships.

#### **Implement local methods to increase identification**

- 4.16 Prisons should consider the most effective ways to support disclosure of care experience to ensure appropriate support can be provided. Prisons **should not** rely solely on Basic Custody Screening Tool (BCST) questionnaires completed on entry into custody, as many will not feel comfortable or understand the benefits of disclosing at this point.

Prisons should consider the regular use of questionnaires and leaflets, adding information to induction packages and/or displaying posters around the prison to encourage disclosure. See Annex C for examples you can adapt.

- 4.17 When a prisoner has transitioned from the youth estate, information on care experience will ordinarily have been held by the Youth Custody Service. Robust handovers and appropriate information sharing through the transitions process can ensure this information follows the prisoner and avoids us having to repeatedly ask about it. Similarly, the Digital Education Screen may also contain information relating to care experience, if this was disclosed at the time of completion, and can be checked before asking if someone has experienced care.
- 4.18 Not everyone will recognise the same language. Questions can be asked differently:

*“Who was around when you were growing up?”*  
*“What does family look like for you?”*  
*“Who did you live with growing up?”*  
*“Have you ever had a social worker or a personal adviser?”*  
*“Did you ever spend time on remand as a child?”*

- 4.19 Staff in roles where trusting relationships can be built such as keyworkers, offender managers, chaplaincy and teaching staff may be particularly well-placed to have these conversations. Framing the question in a way that highlights the benefit to the individual can also be helpful, e.g. “I am just going to ask a few questions to help me work out what

support we might be able to offer you”. Annex D provides a tool for staff to support this understanding. For further information, see the Care Experience Matters guidance.

- 4.20 When someone discloses being care-experienced, staff must ask for consent to record this on their case record and share information with key agencies, explaining this is to inform planning and support, and allow entitlements to statutory support to be checked with the person’s local authority where they are under 25 (or 21 in Wales). A consent form can be found in Annex E.
- 4.21 Where consent is given, the care experience flag should be activated on DPS/NOMIS. If the person has a local authority Personal Adviser, their details should be added to the flag with a note to confirm consent has been given. The PA should then be notified of the care leaver’s entry to custody as soon as possible, and always within ten working days, and asked to share any information on health and wellbeing which may influence safer custody arrangements. PAs may also have information to support engagement and help them settle during their early days in custody. See paragraphs 4.25-6 for information on how to contact a local authority.
- 4.22 Peer support is particularly effective in increasing disclosure of care experience, as well as providing a framework to provide, and receive, support. Prisons are encouraged to consider how this could work in their prison.

#### **Work collaboratively with local authority Leaving Care teams to support care leavers**

- 4.23 Local authority ‘Leaving Care’ teams support young adults in their transition from care to independent living and adulthood by providing advice, guidance and support to meet their needs. When someone under 25 in England, or under 21 in Wales, discloses care-experience, the SPOC or Prison Offender Manager should make contact with the person’s local authority (with consent) to determine any support entitlements from their Leaving Care team. Annex A and B set out definitions and eligibility criteria which provide an indicator of entitlements, but contact should always be made with the relevant authority for assessment and confirmation as support offers vary and there can be case-by-case flexibility.
- 4.24 A prisoner does not have to be sentenced to qualify for support and, if they do qualify, they are entitled to support up to age 25 (England) or age 21 (Wales) even if they have previously refused this support. Entering custody is a significant change in circumstances and all local authorities should reassess care leavers’ needs when this happens. It is also important to remember that those individuals who are care-experience due to spending time on remand as a child may not recognise the significance of this remand period and the longer-term duties potentially owed as a result. By asking the right questions, we can make sure as many people are connected with their entitlements as possible.
- 4.25 A care leaver might not know they could have entitlements and/or which local authority they are linked to. You can complete a postcode search on Gov.uk which will provide information on the relevant local authority. Ordinarily, the local authority with responsibility will be where the person lived when they first entered care and so often will not be the local authority they are now located in. Information for care leavers, and professionals working with them, about the services and support available can also be accessed at this website:  
<https://www.support-for-care-leavers.education.gov.uk/>.
- 4.26 Prison SPOCs will have access to a directory of Leaving Care team contact details. If you are unable to find a contact, cannot establish someone’s local authority or have not received a response after seven days, please escalate to HMPPS Care Experience team ([hmppscareexperience@justice.gov.uk](mailto:hmppscareexperience@justice.gov.uk)).

4.27 Key information should be shared with local authority Personal Advisers in a timely way, where we have consent. Local authorities have statutory obligations to fulfil, but they also want to support better outcomes for care leavers and can make a significant contribution throughout their time in custody. Care leavers placed in custody may be especially vulnerable and require carefully planned and well-focused support from their local authority.

4.28 Where consent is in place, information Prison Offender Managers (where allocated) or SPOCs should share with Personal Advisers includes, but is not limited to:

- The person's entry into custody (this should happen as soon as possible and within ten working days of arrival or identification, if this occurs later)
- Prison transfers, including transitions from youth to adult establishments
- Significant safety events (violent incidents, self-harm, injuries, ACCTs)
- Adjudications
- Impending court dates
- Sentencing outcomes
- Release dates/changes to release dates
- Deportation and/or changes to immigration status
- Name and contact details of both the Care Experience SPOC and Prison Offender Manager, when allocated

4.29 Information local authorities should share with prisons:

- Support entitlements, including financial, in custody and on release
- If in place, a prisoner's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) – a legal document outlining the specific needs of a person under 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- If in place, a prisoner's Pathway Plan – a legal document setting out a young person's needs, views and goals including around education, training, health, housing, money and relationships
- Any information helpful for safeguarding and wellbeing
- Important positive contacts, including family and supportive adults
- Details of any advocacy services the care leaver is entitled to access

4.30 PAs should be invited to multi-disciplinary meetings on sentence and release planning, and where a Prison Offender Manager and/or a Community Offender Manager is allocated, they should establish regular contact with PAs to share relevant updates. Co-working and joint planning improves efficiency and communication, allows agencies to agree responsibilities and actions, and reduces the burden on prisoners of having to retell their story to different people. Further information on these expectations and requirements can be found within the Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) guidance.

**Good practice:** Some prisons and local authorities have offered role shadowing which has increased understanding of roles and responsibilities, improved relationships and communication and led to identification of local improvements to support co-working.

4.31 If a care leaver is being supported by ACCT (Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork) case management or CSIP (Challenge, Support and Intervention Plan), with consent, the PA should be invited to reviews to provide support, where possible. Video conferencing can be a practical way to achieve this. Additionally, if a concern is raised by a PA via Safer Custody reporting, or a PA reports that they believe a care leaver poses an increased risk

of violent behaviour (warranting a CSIP referral), acknowledgement and feedback should be given in line with the requirements set out within the Safety Policy Framework.

- 4.32 Consider the timing and necessity of changes to location in the prison, and for prison transfers, for care-experienced prisoners. People who have been in care have often experienced multiple placements during childhood which can make moves in custody particularly destabilising. Where a move is necessary, communicate and explain this to the individual and their PA, where security considerations allow. Arranging a handover meeting between the sending and receiving prison, PA and the prisoner can be helpful, as well as checking the prisoner's case record to make sure any outstanding visits impacted by the move are cancelled and rebooked as part of the transfer process.
- 4.33 In line with the Managing Prisoners' Money PSI 01/2012, paragraph 2.2.4, all local authorities have a blanket exemption in place to allow sending in of money via cheques and/or postal orders for their care leavers in custody. This acknowledges that local authorities are not ordinarily able to obtain a debit card to use the online payment portal.
- 4.34 Prisons should include PAs in all circumstances where HMPPS policy refers to family or friends. For example, PAs should be able to send in books, in line with the Incentives framework. Most prisons also allow a one-off clothing parcel to be sent in during a prisoner's first 28 days; exceptions should be considered for care-experienced prisoners who do not receive property from family to receive a parcel from their Personal Adviser beyond the first 28 days in prison, as it can take time to connect/reconnect someone with their local authority.

Prisons are encouraged to allow the provision of a "Prison Box" from local authorities that supply them. Generally, these boxes contain: bedding, underwear, socks, a pair of sliders and trainers, a tracksuit (not black), a towel, a book and a book of stamps.

**Good practice:** Some regions have regular meetings with prison care experience SPOCs, the regional care experience lead, probation and local Leaving Care teams. They discuss good practice, raise concerns and troubleshoot issues. This has improved relationships and communication and led to more timely support for people in custody and on probation.

#### **Personal Adviser Visits and Contact**

- 4.35 Prisons should offer the flexibility for PA visits to be booked as either social or legal visits, depending on the purpose of the contact and the wishes of the care leaver and the PA.

**Good practice:** some prisons enable visits to take place with PAs on the wing or in other more informal settings such as in the prison chapel. Others allow PAs to visit via social visits but without contributing to the prisoners' social visits limit.

- 4.36 When a PA visit is booked, it is important the prisoner knows when the visit is and that it is with their PA. This avoids visits being refused because an individual does not know who the visit is with; this can be a particular issue when legal visits are used.

**Good practice:** Several prisons work with local authorities to provide regular drop-in sessions. Personal Advisers visit the prisons and individuals can drop in to speak to them. They can get advice on entitlements, support and other benefits of engaging with Leaving Care services. Introductions can then be made to their own local authority. This service is offered by those local authorities to all people who think they may be care leavers, not just those from that local authority's area. As a result, more people are being connected, and reconnected, with support services.

- 4.37 Other ways of supporting contact should also be considered. Where someone has a PA, contact details should be confirmed as soon as possible, and their contact number should be reviewed and approved for their PIN.

**Good practice:** One prison allows care leavers to make a weekly call to their PA, without charge, via their care experience SPOC.

- 4.38 Prisons without in-cell telephones should ensure regime timings allow enough time for calls to be made to PAs during standard working hours (Monday – Friday, 09:00-17:00).

- 4.39 Many care leavers, particularly women given the geography of women's prisons, will be held in a prison far from their home area. Therefore, PA visits will take a lot of local authority planning and resource. It is vital prisons support scheduled visits taking place and, if a PA visit cannot take place for any reason, contact should be made as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary travel, with all information also communicated to the prisoner.

**Good practice:** Prisons can use video-link and services like Email-a-Prisoner as additional ways to support contact between PAs and care leavers. These methods should not be used as an alternative to face-to-face contact, but to provide additional options to support the individual's preferences and enable increased support.

**Good practice:** Some prisons allow care leavers to send an initial free email, via Email-a-Prisoner, to their PA to establish/re-establish contact. This is helpful for those who would prefer to communicate more directly, rather than through prison staff.

#### **Provide access to support and services specifically for care-experienced people**

- 4.40 Many care-experienced people have experienced significant trauma and the impact of this is often lifelong. It is important they can access support in prison at any age, regardless of their care status according to statutory definitions.

- 4.41 Keyworkers and POMs can help by developing trusting, stable connections that enable care-experienced people to talk about their experiences and explore what support they need. Consistency in these roles is important and changes to care-experienced people's keyworkers and POMs should be avoided. Where it is necessary for key staff to change, this should be explained to the prisoner in advance and an introduction to any new staff should be made as soon as possible.

- 4.42 Many of the challenging behaviours we see commonly in prison may be heightened for people with care experience. Their lack of trust, yearning for control and low self-esteem may show in their reactions and engagement. It is very helpful to remind staff of this in **verbal and written briefings** and on **training days**, and to encourage staff to consider how they can take this into account when considering their own reactions and responses.

- 4.43 Prisons should have a regular **care-experienced forum** to allow care-experienced people to raise concerns, make suggestions and give feedback. A record should be kept, actions should be logged and monitored, and progress reported back.

**Good practice:** Forums do not always need a traditional format; one prison has activity-based groups where attendees draw, paint or write whilst they talk about their experiences

**Good practice:** The Rees Foundation has held breakfast clubs in some prisons for care-experienced people. Attendees were provided with a hot drink and breakfast and encouraged to share experiences. A theme was set for each session, for example: "community connections" or "strengthening wellbeing," giving attendees time to think about

what they wanted to say. Participants valued the opportunity to listen but, most importantly, to be listened to. **Ask your care-experienced people what they think would work.**

4.44 **Peer support** can make a positive difference when supporting care-experienced prisoners. Some prisons have care-experienced peer mentors with a visible presence and, as a result, have seen increased declaration of care experience and engagement with support. When developing peer schemes, it is important this is done carefully to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all involved.

**Good practice:** One prison uses a network of peer workers for care-experienced prisoners, promoted via posters and leaflets, who are easily identified by their brightly coloured t-shirts. This has increased the number of prisoners disclosing their care experience.

4.45 Some who would benefit from advice and support might not be ready to disclose their care experience to staff or peers. To provide access to support for these people, prisons should add the Become **Care Advice Line** to prisoners' PINs. If the advice line is unable to help, they can signpost. Prisons with in-cell technology can also add information to laptops and tablets. Become can also provide advice to professionals, including prison staff, and families of care leavers.

**Good practice:** The Become charity holds regular 'advice surgeries' in some prisons to speak with care-experienced prisoners and to help staff contact local authorities. Become has also delivered care-experience training for staff and supports their peer mentors.

4.46 Annex F provides a national list of organisations who offer advice and/or services to support care-experienced people. SPOCs should also explore local support available to enhance the offer for their prisoners, keeping a database of these organisations for signposting. The local authority Leaving Care team in your area may be able to provide further information on services available in your area.

4.47 Some prisons will already have services that may be able support their care-experienced prisoners. For example, thought could be given to how roles like prison-based social workers or family engagement workers could provide targeted support.

When considering support and services for your prison, asking the people who would be accessing those services will always be the best way to learn

4.48 Care leavers also have the right to an independent advocate. Advocates can help care leavers understand information, listen to concerns and help them understand their rights, help them communicate their views to professionals, support access to services and help them complain if they are unhappy with decisions made about them. Further information can be found on the Department for Education's advocacy webpage.

4.49 Given the considerable overlap in those who are care-experienced and those who will have eligible needs under the adult social care framework, it is also important for staff working with care-experienced prisoners to be aware of how to make a referral to adult social services, under the Care Act in England or the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Social care support can be provided by adult social services even when no statutory duties are owed by children's services/a leaving care team. The Adult Social Care PSI provides further information on adult social care referrals and staff can also contact [health@justice.gov.uk](mailto:health@justice.gov.uk) should they require additional advice.

## **Support development of social and support networks in prison and in the community**

- 4.50 Care-experienced people may have limited support networks and connections to their community while in prison. We recognise positive family ties and social networks can improve wellbeing and decrease reoffending, so supporting the development and maintenance of these is key to improving outcomes.
- 4.51 Family can look quite different for someone who has experienced care, and all local ‘family and significant others’ policies should reflect this, making clear a wider interpretation should be applied, taking account of relationships people describe as important to them.
- 4.52 The HMPPS Safety Policy Framework and the HMPPS Strengthening Prisoners’ Family Ties Policy Framework both set out requirements for prisons to identify prisoners who have not provided details of family or significant others (and/or are prohibited from contacting them) or who do not receive visits. Prisons should work with family service providers to help these prisoners develop and maintain connections with at least one external contact or organisation to support wellbeing and safety. This is particularly applicable to care-experienced prisoners and work in this area should extend to local authority leaving care teams, where relevant. Some local authorities have programmes to support identification and connection with people who have had positive impacts on care leavers’ lives (Lifelong Links), providing valuable opportunities to strengthen networks and wellbeing.
- 4.53 The chaplaincy can be a positive source of support for isolated care-experienced prisoners regardless of faith, and Official Prison Visits, where applicable, can also provide a connection to life outside of prison. Additionally, organisations such as the Newbridge Foundation offer befriending services with trained volunteers who remain connected with their matched prisoner throughout their sentence, wherever they are moved in the estate, providing a stable and consistent befriending relationship.

**Good practice:** Some prisons run ‘Community Visits’ days for prisoners without visits and invite local authority PAs, care experience charities, support organisations and community groups. Other prisons hold care experience forums or peer sessions in the visits hall, so care-experienced prisoners without social visits get the opportunity to use those facilities.

- 4.54 Care-experienced people are up to four times more likely to experience poor health in adulthood. Prison staff can refer to RECONNECT (or Enhanced RECONNECT for individuals identified as high risk of harm to the public), a care after custody service designed to improve the continuity of care of people leaving prison with an identified health need. The service can engage with individuals from 12 weeks prior to release. Contact [health@justice.gov.uk](mailto:health@justice.gov.uk) for more information.

## **Recognise and mitigate risks of debt and exploitation**

- 4.55 Care-experienced prisoners can be more vulnerable to poverty and debt, increasing risks of exploitation. Difficulties with money management and debt are frequently linked to a lack of experience managing finances, lack of financial guidance and increased likelihood of limited/no external support. It is important to be aware of these increased risks in custody and to identify prisoners who may be vulnerable.
- 4.56 Ways to mitigate these risks can include: focusing on encouraging these prisoners into paid prison activities, ensuring those eligible for local authority support receive entitlements (e.g. many local authorities pay an allowance to care leavers in prison) and helping those new to custody understand the risks of debt and borrowing. Education teams can also play an important role by providing courses which improve practical skills, including budgeting and finance.

**Good practice:** Acknowledging this vulnerability to poverty and debt extends into the community, some prisons set up a Universal Credit meeting for the second day of someone's release to avoid delays in accessing benefits.

- 4.57 Care-experienced people can be at increased risk of modern slavery, human trafficking and criminal exploitation as criminal groups may target them due to increased vulnerability. This can be a particular risk for those in placements outside of their home area, where they may be more isolated. Staff working with care-experienced prisoners should be aware of this increased risk and of the HMPPS Modern Slavery guidance, which sets out how to make a referral to the National Referral Mechanism, where appropriate.

### **Purposeful Activity**

- 4.58 Purposeful activity can help care-experienced prisoners gain skills, qualifications, experience and self-esteem, as well as allowing them to earn a regular wage to decrease vulnerability to debt and exploitation. However, many care-experienced prisoners will have had negative experiences of childhood education, particularly where unsupported trauma has led to behaviour issues resulting in exclusion, or where there has been significant disruption to their education due to multiple placement moves.
- 4.59 These challenging experiences can lead to a lack of qualifications, making it more difficult to gain employment in the community. It can mean that care-experienced prisoners may not be used to regular purposeful activity and so may be reluctant to engage.
- 4.60 Prisons can help support engagement with purposeful activity by:

- Taking an understanding approach to the causes of disengagement, and investing time to build supportive relationships with those who are not engaging
- Providing consistent encouragement and regular opportunities to begin engaging (including opportunities which are initially part-time, where appropriate)
- Using peer mentors with lived experience of care to encourage participation
- Positive acknowledgment and rewarding any increases in engagement
- Recognising that prisoners may experience blips in engagement, and that responding negatively to this can be counterproductive

### **Accessing social care files**

- 4.61 Accessing social care files in custody will not be something every care-experienced prisoner wants to do, but prisons should be able to support someone through this process.
- 4.62 Personal records can be especially important to care-experienced people as they can contain information about their lives they cannot recall. Social care files typically include details on someone's early life and journey through care including the circumstances surrounding entry to care, details of placements and other important records. However, the availability of these files, and the level and quality of information, can vary greatly.
- 4.63 Care-experienced people have a legal right to this file where it exists and should never be asked to make a payment to access it. For some, it can be important in understanding themselves and their experiences, but the process can be deeply challenging and is likely to have a profound impact on the individual. Prisons should ensure robust support is available for anyone who decides to access their files in custody. Further info is in Annex G.

**Good practice:** Some prisons work with Rees Foundation who offer workshops for people in prison who wish to access their social care files.

## Annex A

### Care Leaver Definitions in England

In HMPPS, we use the term **care experience** to include people of any age who have spent any of their childhood in the care of the local authority, regardless of whether or not they meet any of the below definitions. However, it is important to understand the statutory definitions and their differences.

A **looked after child** is anyone under the age of 18 who has been in local authority care for over 24 hours. They are more often referred to as 'children in care'. **It is, however, important to note that any young person placed on secure remand also becomes a looked after child.** This means any period spent on remand in the Children and Young People's Secure Estate (including secure children's home, secure training centre, secure school or YOI) is counted when determining eligibility for local authority support, as set out below.

A **Care Leaver** is defined in The Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2000 as someone under the age of 25 who has been a looked after child for a period of (or periods totalling) 13 weeks or more after reaching their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday **and** spanning their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. This definition is important as being a Care Leaver means the individual may have statutory entitlements to ongoing support from their local authority after leaving care.

The type and level of support available is determined by the 'local offer' of the person's local authority, and which of the following they are considered to be.

Eligible Children	Relevant Child
Those aged 16 or 17 who are looked after children and have been looked after by a local authority (or remanded) for a period of, or periods totalling, 13 weeks+ between the age of 14 and 18, spanning their 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday.	Those who are no longer looked after but who, before last ceasing to be looked after, were eligible children. Also, those who turn 16 in custody, and before being detained were looked after (The Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010).
Former Relevant Children	'Qualifying' Care Leaver
Young adults aged 18-24 who have spent at least 13 weeks in the care of a local authority between their 14 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> birthdays, spanning their 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday.	Those aged 16-20 who were subject to a special guardianship order; or at any time after reaching the age of 16, but while still a child, were looked after, accommodated or fostered (but are no longer) for under 13 weeks.

## Annex B

### Care Leaver Definitions in Wales

There are some important differences in the definitions and terminology used by local authorities in Wales which determine a care leaver's support entitlements.

The table below provides an explanation of the 'categories' used in Wales. Further information on potential support available for each can be found in the 'Care Experience Matters' guidance.

Category 1	Category 2
<p>A child who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is aged 16 or 17</li> <li>b) is looked after by a local authority, and</li> <li>c) has been looked after for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after he or she reached 14 and ended after he or she reached 16.</li> </ul> <p><b>Known as a young person looked after aged 16 or 17</b></p>	<p>A child who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is aged 16 or 17</li> <li>b) is not being looked after by a local authority or local authority in England, and</li> <li>c) immediately before ceasing to be looked after, was a category 1 young person.</li> </ul> <p><b>Known as a care leaver under 18</b></p>
Category 3	Category 4
<p>Aged over 18 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) has been a category 2 young person (and would continue to be so if they were under the age of 18) or</li> <li>b) was being looked after by a local authority when they reached 18 and immediately before ceasing to be looked after was a category 1 child</li> </ul> <p><b>Known as a care leaver aged 18 or over</b></p>	<p>Aged 18-24 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) is a category 3 young person towards whom the duties under sections 105, 106, 107(3) and (10) and 110 of the Act have ceased to apply (see section 111 of the Act) and</li> <li>b) has informed the local authority that they are pursuing, or wish to pursue, a programme of education or training</li> </ul> <p><b>Known as a young person who reconnects to care for education or training purposes</b></p>
Category 5	Category 6
<p>Aged 16-20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) with respect to whom a special guardianship order is in force (or was in force when he or she reached 18), and</li> <li>b) who was looked after immediately before the making of that order.</li> </ul> <p><b>Known as a young person who left care under a Special Guardianship Order</b></p>	<p>Aged 16-20 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) at any time between the ages of 16 and 18 was, but is no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered</li> <li>b) if so accommodated or fostered is now within Wales</li> </ul> <p><b>Known as a young person who did not qualify as a care leaver</b></p>



# WERE YOU IN CARE AS A CHILD?

WE COULD HELP YOU ACCESS SUPPORT!

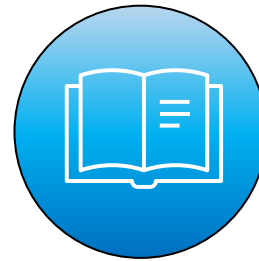
Every prison has a SPOC (**Specific Point of Contact**) for care-experienced people.

**Speak to your SPOC, keyworker or prison offender manager to find out what support might be available.**

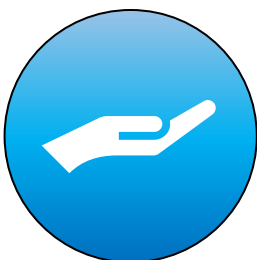
Care-Experience SPOC: \_\_\_\_\_

If you're **under 25 (21 in Wales)** and were:

- in care 13 weeks+ after turning 14 (including your 16th birthday), or
- turned 16 in custody and were in care before you went to prison



you may also be **entitled to help from your Local Authority**, including access to a Personal Adviser.



**Over 25 or not able to get local authority support?** You can still access support here in prison. Just ask for the care experience SPOC.

**BECOME**

**Don't feel ready to speak to someone in prison? Or prefer to speak on the phone? You can access the Become Care Advice Line via your PIN (0800 023 2033)**



HM Prison & Probation Service



## WERE YOU IN CARE AS A CHILD?

WE COULD HELP YOU ACCESS SUPPORT!

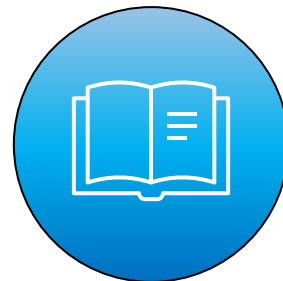
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**Speak to your SPOC, keyworker or prison offender manager to find out what support might be available.**

Care-Experience SPOC: \_\_\_\_\_

If you're **under 25 (21 in Wales)** and were:

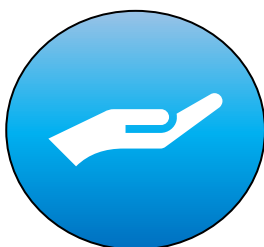
- in care 13 weeks+ after turning 14 (including your 16th birthday), or
- turned 16 in custody and were in care before you went to prison



you may also be **entitled to help from your Local Authority**, including access to a Personal Adviser.



**We can help you find out.**



**Over 25 or not getting local authority support?** You can still access support here in prison. Ask for the care experience SPOC

## Identifying Care-Experienced People in Custody

### Identification is key to support

**Care experience:** umbrella term for anyone removed from their parents and placed into local authority care as a child

Care leavers under statutory legislation, may be entitled to additional support via their Local Authority up to age 25.

With the right support, prisons can transform outcomes for these people, but we need to know who they are to support them.

### How you can help

**Disclosing** care experience can be difficult due to **mistrust** and **trauma** can lead to challenging behaviour. You can help by building **trusting, consistent relationships**.

**Asking** about care experience in **different ways** can also help:

*E.g. "What does family look like for you?" or "Who was in your life growing up?"*

Be **clear** about what you are asking so that the person **gets the right support**.



When you become aware of someone's care experience:

1. Connect them to the care experience lead.
2. Ask for consent to record their care-experience.
3. Add the NOMIS 'care experience' flag to their record.

***"There were three really significant traumas in my life – the events that led to me being taken into care, being taken into care itself, and then being taken into custody." – Care-experienced prisoner***

***"Many care leavers had no one they could talk to about how they were feeling or who would look out for them. A third of care leavers told us they did not know where to get help and support" - Ofsted, 2022***

To find out more, speak to your prison lead or contact [HMPPSCareExperience@justice.gov.uk](mailto:HMPPSCareExperience@justice.gov.uk)

## Annex E

### CONSENT TO SHARE DATA WITH PEOPLE INVOLVED IN MY CARE AND SUPPORT AS A PERSON WITH EXPERIENCE OF THE CARE SYSTEM

- I understand that HMP/YOI ..... has a duty of care to me. I agree that information about me can be passed onto the relevant staff involved in my care and recorded on prison systems, as per the HMPPS Data Privacy Notice.
- This may include prison staff, probation staff, healthcare staff (including those in the prison and outside of it in the local hospital trust), local authority staff (including personal advisors), law enforcement, housing authorities, and voluntary organisations. It does NOT include family members.
- I understand that 'information' means information that staff require in order to be able to safeguard and support me in accordance with my needs. This includes information relating to my location, significant dates (for example release dates) and issues which my personal advisor in their role of corporate parent can support me with. It also includes information relating to planning for my resettlement into the community, which may include any release or sentence plans.
- I understand that if there is a concern that I may be at risk of harm, information about me may be shared with the relevant people concerned with my welfare including my personal advisor, without my consent. This is to ensure the relevant professionals know how to support me. It does NOT include sharing with family members.
- As per the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation, I understand that data sharing will be securely processed and retained for a period of 6 years, and securely destroyed thereafter.

- I agree to the information sharing described above
- I agree to the information sharing only with my personal advisor
- Other (*please specify*):

#### Signed by

Name:

Signature:

Date:

# SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CARE-EXPERIENCED PEOPLE



There are multiple organisations that offer support for people with care experience. Whether under 25 or over, the services listed below may be able to help



<https://www.careleavers.com>

**The Care Leavers Association** is a national **user led** organisation dedicated to improving the lives of **care leavers of any age**. They also provide help/advice for accessing social care files.

### CONTACT

**Phone:** 0161 826 0214

**Email:** [info@careleavers.com](mailto:info@careleavers.com)

**Mail:** The Care Leavers' Association Third Floor, Swan Buildings, 20 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JW



<https://www.reesfoundation.org>

**The Rees Foundation** is a national Charity that can provide a lifelong support network. They offer help and advice to care leavers, and many of their services are available to **anyone over 16 with care experience**

### CONTACT

**Phone:** 0330 094 5645

**Email:** [contactus@reesfoundation.org](mailto:contactus@reesfoundation.org)

**Mail:** Enquiries, The Rees Foundation, Craftsman House, De Salis Drive, Hampton Lovett, Droitwich, Worcestershire, WR9 0QE



<https://coramvoice.org.uk>

**Coram Voice** specifically work with **children in care and care leavers under 25**. They deliver advice to ensure those they help know their rights!

### CONTACT

**Phone:** 020 7833 5792

**Email:** [info@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:info@coramvoice.org.uk)

**Mail:** Coram Voice, Coram Campus, 41 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ

## BECOME

<https://becomecharity.org.uk>

**Become** offers advice, advocacy and resources for **those up to age 27 with experience of care**. They also offer advice to professionals, carers and family members, including prison staff.

### CONTACT

**Care Advice Line: (MON-FRI 10am-5pm) 0800 023 2033** or [advice@becomecharity.org.uk](mailto:advice@becomecharity.org.uk)



<https://www.careleaverscymru.com/>

**Care Leavers Cymru** is dedicated to supporting children and young people in care and **care leavers in Wales**. They strive to empower people by providing essential resources, guidance, and a community that understands their unique experiences

**CONTACT**

**Email:** [Contact@careleaverscymru.com](mailto:Contact@careleaverscymru.com)



<https://mycovenant.org.uk>

**The Care Leavers Covenant** helps **care leavers aged 16–25** transition to independent living. It offers exclusive opportunities such as mentoring, career pathways, and discounts!

**CONTACT**

**Phone:** 0800 077 3557

**Email:** [info@mycovenant.org.uk](mailto:info@mycovenant.org.uk)



<https://www.nyas.net>

**NYAS** supports people with care experience of **all ages** across England and Wales, by offering a range of additional support services, listening to their needs and empowering them to make their voices heard.

**CONTACT**

**Phone:** 0808 808 1001

**Email:** [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)



<https://www.catch-22.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-social-care/care-leavers/>

**Catch 22** provides services that help young people leaving care as they transition to independence. They also support sharing of good practice across local authorities, including for care leavers in custody.

**CONTACT**

**Phone:** 020 7336 4800

**Email:** [info@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:info@catch-22.org.uk)



<https://www.support-for-care-leavers.education.gov.uk/en/home>

**DfE** provides **printable guides** that can assist in understanding the rights of a care leaver and finding support.

**Their website** also has sections on accessing housing, money, employment and more.

### Accessing Social Care Files



Social care files may contain new or unexpected information which can impact someone's understanding of their lives and relationships. Records may contain descriptions of abuse or neglect; may be heavily redacted; and in some cases, local authorities may not be able to locate them – each of these outcomes is likely to have a significant emotional impact.

The Care Leaver's Association has excellent guides on the process that staff involved in supporting a prisoner through this process should watch: *Access To Records – The Care Leavers Association*

When supporting a care-experienced prisoner with this process, you should consider the following:

- A Subject Access Request (SAR) would ordinarily be made online. However, prisoners will need help to apply in writing. Visit the local authority's website that holds their file (usually where they first went into care) to find the correct address to send the SAR. A prison staff contact (POM, SPOC or chosen supporting person) should be named on the application.
- Prisons should work with a prisoner to identify a staff member, or responsible person from a third sector organisation, who they are comfortable talking to about accessing their social care files to help them make the best decision for them and support them through the process. This could be a trusted officer, chaplain, Offender Manager, or another staff member that the individual feels comfortable with. This staff member should have a place to safely store the physical files.
- The supporting person's first discussion with the prisoner about accessing their files should be used to build trust; recognising their legal right to access the information and explaining their support role. It should also be used to help them thoroughly consider potential outcomes, including that their file may have been lost or destroyed, that they may read things that are difficult, that they do not agree with and/or that is written using outdated or unhelpful language that might be challenging.
- This conversation should explore strategies to help them cope with a potential negative or disappointing outcome, the support they have access to, and whether the present time and place is right to go through the process. The staff member might want to ask whether there is something specific the person is hoping to learn, and help them consider the possibility they may not find what they are looking for.
- Should an individual choose to go ahead with accessing their social care files whilst in prison, the person identified should be available to support them through the entire process.
- The supporting person should avoid promises or creating any expectations around how long the process may take, but should keep them informed as much as they reasonably can.
- The supporting person should give the person the choice of whether they should be present to go through files with the prisoner or whether they might prefer to do this alone. Either way, the supporting person should regularly check in with the prisoner throughout the process and offer them a non-judgemental space to discuss how they might be feeling.
- The supporting person should consider notifying key members of prison staff that the prisoner's mood may be impacted throughout and in the weeks following the process, allowing for some additional support and understanding, where appropriate.
- It is important to acknowledge that this can be a very difficult process and it will not be right for everyone. Timing and environment can be significant factors to consider, and it might be that people decide not to access their files at all, or that they would prefer to do this once they are back in the community. Whatever they decide, this must be respected.

## Why are care-experienced people over-represented in prison?

Although only **1%** of children will experience the care system each year, research estimates suggest that between **24% and 31%** of people in custody are likely to be care-experienced.

<p><b>TRAUMA &amp; ATTACHMENT</b></p> <p>Impacts of significant and complex childhood trauma and attachment issues. Trauma and attachment issues may be linked to the reasons they were taken into care, the experience of being removed and/or their experiences of the care system itself. Both trauma and attachment issues can have a significant impact on emotional and behavioural development.</p>	<p><b>DISCONNECTEDNESS &amp; LONELINESS</b></p> <p>Many care leavers have limited support networks, if any, and feel disconnected from the community. Coram Voice reported on chronic care leaver loneliness, increasing with age, in 'What Makes Life Good? Care leavers' views on their wellbeing'</p>	<p><b>MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS</b></p> <p>Unsupported mental health needs. Barnardo's 'Neglected Minds' report highlighted that 46% of the care leaver cases that they reviewed as part of their research appeared to have a mental health need and, of these, 65% were not receiving support.</p>
<p><b>LACK OF GUIDANCE &amp; ADVOCACY</b></p> <p>Those who have experienced care are likely to have fewer positive, adult role models to support their decision-making and to provide guidance. Additionally, for those who do end up in contact with the CJS, they are less likely to have someone who can effectively advocate for them and support their contact through the court system.</p>	<p><b>CONSIDERED 'RISKIER'</b></p> <p>Linked to the previous point, people with care experience then may be seen as 'riskier' by professionals, including when being sentenced by the courts due to having limited support networks and advocacy.</p>	<p><b>STEREOTYPING &amp; STIGMA</b></p> <p>Most children enter care for reasons completely outside of their control, but some hold incorrect, outdated views that those who are or have been in care are "troublemakers" etc. This can impact how care-experienced people are treated, isolate and "other" them and impact self-esteem and sense of identity.</p>
<p><b>INCREASED REPORTING</b></p> <p>Although improving since the introduction of a National Protocol, children in care are often criminalised due to incidents, which wouldn't ordinarily be dealt with by the CJS if the child was in the family home, being reported to police by carers/support workers. Early contact with the CJS can increase the likelihood of offending as an adult.</p>	<p><b>VULNERABILITY &amp; EXPLOITATION</b></p> <p>Children in care and care leavers are vulnerable to exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking. They can often become targets due to being isolated from friends and family, particularly when moved into care placements that are outside of their home area. Guidance on how to identify and support victims of modern slavery and human trafficking can be found here.</p>	<p><b>SLCN</b></p> <p>Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are thought to be prevalent in looked after children and in young people in contact with the CJS. Often, SLCN are unidentified until the CJS contact. Those with SCLN can have difficulties understanding what is being said to and asked of them, and can struggle making themselves understood. This can result in communicating through behaviour that leads to offending.</p>

## WHAT WE KNOW...

### THE CARE SYSTEM AND CUSTODY

We know that care-experienced people are more likely to have contact with the criminal justice system and to receive a custodial sentence. We also know that, although a difficult experience for anyone, time in prison can be particularly challenging for our care-experienced people as many aspects of life in prison can parallel experiences of care. This can trigger unhealthy coping mechanisms (including violence, self-harm and self-isolation) and lead to poorer outcomes in many key areas.

### HOW WE CAN HELP

1. Encourage and support engagement with social activities, peer/mentor schemes, etc. Positive peer relationships and support can be hugely valuable.
2. Collaborate and involve care-experienced people in planning and decisions. Provide options, listen to them and incorporate their views wherever you can.
3. Support access to items that make their living environment more comfortable and **personalised**. Ensure those with a Personal Adviser (PA) that provides a Prison Box (containing basic underwear, clothing, bedding) receive **it, and** can receive clothing.
4. Avoid unnecessary cell moves and prison transfers. Where needed, transparency around the reasons, giving notice (subject to appropriate security considerations), giving information about the new environment, and setting up a meeting/call in advance with key staff in the new prison can all help.
5. Ensure join-up with relevant services as early as possible to support release planning. Release can be a difficult transition; help identify positive community links and avenues of support (including PAs and third sector) and incorporate into planning.

### PARALLELING EXPERIENCES

1. Physical custody environment/layout may mirror aspects of residential care that some may have experienced.
2. Living in an environment that doesn't feel like home, with "staff" and "peers" rather than "friends" and "family".
3. Lack of agency/choice in daily life - decisions made for you and about you, not with you.
4. Cell moves and prison transfers can mirror placement moves experienced in care and be particularly **destabilising**.
5. Release from custody – can feel like another "cliff edge" of support, **similar** to leaving care or moving on from particular care placements.

### TRAUMA PREVALENCE

Understanding the potential for life in custody to parallel aspects of someone's time in the care **system, and** thinking about how we can mitigate some of this, is important given the prevalence of trauma. People may have experienced trauma before being placed into care and/or due to the experience of being removed from their family home, but many will also have experienced trauma related to the care system itself.

**The impacts of this trauma can often be lifelong**



Care-experienced people can **experience higher levels of mistrust**. It may take longer for them to feel **psychologically safe** with us and to **trust us**. **Doing what we say we'll do** combined with **transparency, collaboration** and **consistency** can support our working relationships.

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# CARE EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST



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The following self-assessment questions may assist in assessing the current offer for your care-experienced prisoners and highlight opportunities for further development

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- Do you have a named Care Experience Lead and Senior Lead?
- Are key staff aware of how to contact leads? (e.g. dedicated email address)
- Do your leads have access to the Leaving Care teams contact directory?
- Do you use multiple methods to promote benefits of disclosing care experience? (e.g. posters, leaflets, discussions with new receptions)
- Do you have the 'Become' Care Advice Line or similar added to PINs for prisoners to access without needing to make a request?
- Are staff aware of how to record someone's care experience on NOMIS?
- Do you have a process for gaining and recording consent to share information with relevant services including local authorities? (see Annex E of 'Supporting Prisoners with Care Experience' policy framework). Have you communicated this to keyworkers, POMs and induction staff?
- Are Personal Advisers able to book via both social and legal visits?
- Do you have a peer mentor scheme for care-experienced people?
- Are there regular forums for care-experienced people to connect with each other, share experiences and highlight any specific needs they might have?
- Have you made connections with any charities or support organisations who can provide support and advice to your care-experienced population?
- Is this advice and support regularly promoted to both prisoners and staff?
- Is a regular review conducted of your care-experienced prisoners to see who might be a 'care leaver' and so have additional statutory rights and entitlements owed by their local authority?
- Do relevant teams review data for care-experienced prisoners (i.e. self-harm, assaults, use of force) to monitor, and act on, any disproportionality?

**If you need further support with any of the above, please contact  
[hmppscareexperience@justice.gov.uk](mailto:hmppscareexperience@justice.gov.uk)**