



## Trusting relationships with PAs; developing supportive relationships

North Yorkshire  
**Building trust  
leaving care  
workers through a  
Strength in  
Relationships  
practice model**  
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Compared with care leavers elsewhere, care leavers in North Yorkshire reported higher levels of trust in their workers. Developing these positive relationships is the foundation for practice in the local authority. All staff have systemic training and family finding work is a core feature. Care leavers are empowered to solve problems themselves, but PAs remain available.

## Why?

Research based on care leavers' views shows the importance of **reliable, consistent and authentic relationships** with workers. When responding to the *Your Life Beyond Care* survey care leavers in North Yorkshire reported higher levels of trust with their leaving care workers than care leavers elsewhere.

## What?

These positive findings fit with the 'Strength in relationship practice model, which underpins all work in North Yorkshire. All staff (including leaving care teams) have systemic training and family finding work is a core feature of the approach. The leaving care team recognise that as a Leaving Care Personal Adviser (PA) they will be a really important source of support to a young person, but at the same time they work to ensure they are not the only support. Making sure young people have strong links in their community and wide networks around them is a priority.

At times of crisis whilst needing to help and support the PA also needs to empower young people to be able to problem solve themselves and utilising others around them. As a result the leaving care teams aim to nurture mature adult relationships with their young people. This means that *"we have some really nice long-term relationships where care leavers pop up to say hi to their workers because they are important to them."* Conversations are framed as important to PAs, not because they have to do it to tick a 'keep in touch' box.

Workers are empowered to keep ongoing contact with their young people. Workers are aware of the power dynamic inherent in the role of 'the worker' and the challenge this can present to the growth of authentic trusting relationships. Over time the aim is to see a shift in the balance of power so it has swung more level so the young person decides if they want to say 'Hi' and the worker is around to respond to that as in any other relationship.

## What difference is it making?

86% of young people in North Yorkshire trusted their worker all or most of the time compared to 78% of care leavers elsewhere in England. North Yorkshire are part of the New Belongings programme – following the survey result the LA are developing an action plan in partnership with young people. One of the areas it will focus on is 'relationships with PAs' to continue to nurture and enhance this area of practice.

