Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Local Authorities

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Working in partnership together

Foreword

The evidence is clear: children who are looked after are much less likely than others to do well in school, and less still to go on to further and higher education. The challenges they face in their own young lives - identity, place, safety, love and encouragement - which others take for granted understandably often come before the strife for academic success. It is incumbent upon all of us who take on the great responsibility of corporate parent - local authorities, schools, health professionals and others - to work harder to ensure that our children have the best opportunities we can provide, to overcome these barriers, and to close the gap. I greatly welcome this resource which I hope will be used to that end, and I thank everyone who devotes their time and energy to giving young people the best start they can.

Foreword from Councillor Hopkins (RCT).

In Merthyr Tydfil we are passionate about ensuring that our children and young people who are looked after achieve stability and success. We are committed to helping every looked after child in Merthyr Tydfil achieve their highest educational outcomes and ambitions. We work together to identify and overcome barriers that exist and to support looked after children - and the adults and professionals supporting them - to have high aspirations for their achievements and attainments. This document is a welcome and valuable resource to assist schools in their work with looked after young people.

Foreword from Councillor Matthews (MT).

Thanks and acknowledgements

The content of this resource has been greatly supported by those who participated in the focus groups that were used as a basis for chapter 4. Without their input, and that of the young people whose views are quoted here, this work would have been of a greatly reduced quality. Particular thanks to Dynamix for their work with the young people.

A big thank you to...

The people who have been most significant in developing our understanding around improving the lives of children who are looked after (CLA). Their knowledge and experience has been hugely influential nationally, supporting professionals working in the field. It is much of their thinking and teaching that has underpinned what has been presented in this resource and is highly recommended for those who want to learn more. Specifically, these are :

Louise Bombèr, Kim Golding, Heather Gedder, Dan Hughes and Marie Delaney. Last but not least thanks to those of you who work directly with CLA who are so exceptional in improving the quality of their lives.

Children Looked After Friendly Schools

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Introduction

This resource has been prepared to assist all professionals who support the education of the children and young people who are Looked After by Merthyr Tydfil or Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authorities.

Children and young people who are, or have been, part of the care system are some of our most vulnerable children and young people. We know from the data that has been collected over a number of years, and government and research reports, that not enough is being done to help these pupils overcome the challenges they face to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes. These children and young people are less likely to move on to Higher Education and more likely to underachieve at school, have later mental health and employment difficulties and end up in the prison system.

The Welsh Government (WG) are working hard to support Local Authorities in addressing the needs of children in the care system. Two key steps within recent years have been the introduction of new legislation to support the care system. These are the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014) and within education the publication of the WG's strategy document and action plan: Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales.

As parents we all want our children to have the best start in life and to reach their full potential. We would not accept poor educational outcomes without challenge. Therefore similarly in our role as corporate parents: whether as a local authority, school or individual professional, we should have equally high aspirations for the children who are currently in our care, and for those who have been previously looked after. Poor educational performance should not go unchallenged and low expectations should not be accepted.

We believe those who work in schools and other educational settings, have a critical role in significantly improving the quality of life and the educational experiences of Children Looked After (CLA). However recent government reports and national guidance suggest that at present those at the 'front line' in education are not sufficiently supported in this task. In particular there is a lack of information, advice and training to help professionals in understanding the experiences and needs of children who come into the care system and also on how they can support this diverse group. Hence the purpose in preparing this resource is to assist in providing key information and advice that will help fulfil this role.

Challenges faced by children and young people in the care system

Many of the children who come into care will have experienced prolonged and severe disadvantage and trauma that were part of the circumstances resulting in the need for Local Authority action. We know that trauma, neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse impacts on a child's development and learning throughout their life. As professionals working in schools we are unable to change what has passed but what we can do is to understand and be aware of the experiences that some children have endured and support them to overcome these so that they can go onto be independent, happy and successful adults.

In addition, there is clear evidence that across Wales educational systems have not effectively supported children who are Looked After. Whilst in care they may have experiences that, as educationalists will be beyond our control, for example multiple care placements, separation from siblings. However it is important to acknowledge that there are also a number of elements that either directly (for example the need for competent and confident literacy skills) or indirectly (the benefits of engagement in out of school activities) that we can influence. It is these areas this document aims to address.

About this resource

This resource provides the information and advice needed by schools (and all settings within the educational system) that will help them to become more CLA Friendly. Schools where pupils will have their needs met effectively by staff who have knowledge and understanding of the barriers and challenges they face and where the systems are structured to actively promote the best possible outcomes for this most vulnerable group.

The resource is subdivided into a number of chapters:

Chapter one - Provides background information, terminology and some contextual data.

Chapter two - Provides an overview of the impact of trauma on brain development and attachment patterns and how these can influence behaviour. This will help in understanding CLA and why they behave in a different way from children with more secure backgrounds.

Chapter three - Looks in detail at what makes a school CLA Friendly. This includes:

1. The whole school systems and practice;
2. Preventive approaches: building the resilience of our CLA;
3. Responsive strategies to support the CLA who are presenting more challenges.

Chapter four - Reports on the views of professionals working directly with children in the care system and provides important messages from the children themselves and their carers.

Chapter five – Details further sources of advice and information.

Chapter six – References.

Where the symbol appears, this is a prompt to photocopy these resources to share with staff in your setting.

For ease of presentation throughout this resource the term Children Looked After (CLA) will be used. This will refer to both children and young people. CLA is terminology that is in line with current guidance from Welsh Government.

Additionally although the focus is on children and young people currently in the care system, much of what is included will in fact apply to all of those who have been previously looked after. This will include kinship care placements, child arrangement orders and special guardianship orders (SGO). In particular it will also apply to **children who have been adopted**. This is for a number of reasons: firstly many children who are adopted or placed in a special care situation will have experienced extreme and often high levels of trauma, abuse and neglect to the extent that the only possible response has been adoption or alternative care. Secondly (as we will explore in more detail later in the resource) simply going into a more secure, stable and caring home does not mean children will be able to overcome some of their past experiences and they will frequently revert to previous and well embedded patterns of behaviour as a coping mechanism.

Equally many of the children and young people currently part of the **Child with Care and Support Needs and safeguarding** processes, may also be experiencing high levels of neglect, trauma or abuse and so similarly will benefit from application of some of the thinking and strategies presented in this document.

Our Vision for CLA of Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) and Merthyr Tydfil (MT).

We want the voice of our children to be heard by all those who work with them so that they are central to the planning that is put in place.

RCT and MT wants to ensure that the children and young people in their care have the best possible life chances and that the impact of the circumstances that led to the need for care are overcome or reduced.

We want to close the gap between the attainments and achievements of our CLA in relation to that of all other children.

We want to ensure that our children and young people have been helped and supported to overcome the impact of psychological trauma with the best and most effective interventions available.

We want all our schools to be CLA Friendly Schools, fully aware of the difficulties faced by the children they educate with a positive ethos and willingness to actively promote high outcomes and achievement.

We want all our CLA learners to have access to good quality teaching and learning which recognises their individual needs and so motivates and equips them with academic qualifications and skills that will provide excellent life chances.

Chapter One

The essential bits: facts and terminology

MAKING SENSE OF THE LANGUAGE: SOME TERMINOLOGY YOU ARE LIKELY TO HEAR.

Like any specialist field of work the world of Children Looked After has its own language that can be hard for those who are new to the area to understand. We have explained some of the most commonly used terms for you.

Children Looked After (CLA)

Both children and young people who are looked after are those for whom the Local Authority (LA) either has full or shared parental responsibility. In most cases this means they are taken away from the care of their parents, provided with alternative accommodation and supported by LA agencies, charities or independent organisations. Children will only be looked after until they reach the age of 18 and not beyond their 18th birthday.

Children In Care (CIC)

Children and young people looked after and children in care are both terms for children in the care of the LA. Some will be subject to legal orders, for example a Care Order which gives the LA shares parental responsibility. Others will be looked after with the agreement of their parents. If there is no legal order, parents retain parental responsibility in law.

Accommodation

Sometimes you will have children who are accommodated rather than having a care order. Previously they were accommodated under what was known as Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This is now known as Section 76 due to new legislation in light of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014). When a child is accommodated, it is not the result of a court proceeding but happens because the child is being accommodated **by request or in agreement** with the parents. In this case the parent retains the primary parental responsibility for their child but the Local Authority still has responsibilities as corporate parent.

Care Orders

A care order is the legal element of a child being placed under the care of a LA. It determines who has the parental responsibilities for the child. Sometimes children will have an Interim Care order because the court wants to have further information before it will make a decision. A court can only make a care order if it is sure that:

- the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm;
- the harm is caused by the child's parents;
- the harm would be caused because of insufficient care being given to the child by the parents in the future; or
- the child is likely to suffer harm because they are beyond parental control.

Care And Support Plans

All CLA will have a Care and Support Plan that brings together the child, their family and professionals to plan for their care and support. This will be reviewed regularly. It contains information about the child's wellbeing outcomes and care and developmental needs and a long term plan for the child's upbringing and education. Achieving permanence in all aspects of the child's life is a key driver within the plan. Reviews will monitor progress towards both the long and short-term targets. The PEP (see later) and a health plan will also be incorporated into this.

The 'Corporate Parent'

Local authorities have a ***'corporate parent'*** responsibility towards the children and young people they look after, to ensure they get the best possible education. All must be proactive and effective champions, ensuring that the young people in their care gain access to, and benefit from, the opportunities on offer. They must work in partnership with other agencies that have a role to play in delivering education to CLA.

Valuing and supporting the education of children in public care is considered to be one of the most important contributions a corporate parent can make to their lives, because it is about investing in and caring about their future, and recognising that education may be their passport to better chances in life. Welsh Government (2015b) tells us that:

> *"A good corporate parent seeks the same outcomes for children in their care and care leavers that every good parent would want for their own children by ensuring they do everything possible to give them the best possible start in life".*

Designated Teacher for CLA

The role of this person will be covered in much more detail further in this resouce. This is a teacher who must be appointed by the governing body of all maintained schools, to promote the educational achievement of children looked after (CLA).

Edge Of Care

This is a term that is often used to describe children and young people who are considered by social care workers to be at high risk of going into care (for example, because of maltreatment, parental mental health problems or parental substance misuse). It includes those currently living with their birth parents or original family (such as step-parents) and those adopted from care but who are at high risk of returning to care. The new legislation, Social Services And Well-Being Act (Wales 2014) repeals Section 17 "**Children In Need**" it is replaced by the concept of a '**Child with Care and Support Needs**".

Foster Care

Generally when children come into LA care they will be placed into foster care. This will be in the private family home of people who are registered as foster carers, who may or may not be related to the child or young person. The child may stay with them for a very brief period as an emergency placement, or it could be a short-term or long-term placement. In many cases CLA will stay in one placement for very long periods, but for many different reasons some children will have a number of different placements which research tells us can compound the difficulties for a young person.

Foster carers will have been through a rigorous assessment process prior to being accepted as foster carers, including approval by a fostering panel. Their position is then reviewed annually. Foster carers may be working for a Local Authority or an independent fostering organisation.

Foster carers will have their own Social Worker who is the supervising social worker.

There may be occasions where CLA are not placed with foster carers but instead move to live in a care home. Generally this is for those in secondary education and entails living in a home with other young people and where the adults are trained and skilled in meeting the needs of vulnerable young people. Again as with foster carers there are independently run homes as well as those run by LAs.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

Every CLA must have a named IRO, who is a LA appointed officer appointed to chair reviews for CLA and monitor the LA's performance in relation a child's case. The IRO acts independently from the LA.

Key Adult (KA)

This is an adult with whom the CLA can develop an attachment-like relationship. The KA works hard to build a positive and secure relationship with the CLA so that they become someone who can be trusted and who makes them feel special.

Kinship Care

This is when care is provided by adults who have a relationship with, or connection to, the child or young person, including grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, godparents or step-grandparents. Kinship carers are assessed, approved and registered and reviewed in the same way as foster carers.

CLA Reviews

A CLA Review is a meeting to review a Care and Support Plan. Schools are expected to send a representative to this meeting with an updated PEP that includes a detailed summary of progress. In exceptional circumstances when someone from school cannot attend the meeting then at the very least a comprehensive report should be submitted. Reviews are completed 28 days after the first plan is drawn up and then again after a 3 monthly interval. Thereafter they are 6 monthly unless there is a need for more regular reviews.

Leaving Care

Care orders and care arrangements cease once the young person reaches the age of 18 and could end sooner if the child's care order is discharged or they are adopted. At this time, if any further support is required Adult Social Service teams take responsibility. However this is not automatic and only happens if the young person has eligible care and support needs. Continuing or returning to education should always remain an option after a young person leaves care. CLA are also entitled to personal adviser support in relation to their education. Careers Wales and the Leaving Care Team (16 plus for RCT) within the local authority will work together to provide this.

Parental Responsibility (PR)

This is defined as:

"All the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property".

It is very important that schools know who has PR for all their pupils. Social workers and foster carers may have 'delegated responsibilities' for some CLA so that they can provide consent for some things such as school trips and photographs. When you are unsure about the accurate picture of PR and delegated responsibilities, then ensure that this is clarified with the child's social worker.

Placement Plans

LAs are required to draw up a placement plan for a CLA. This will detail how the placement will meet the child's needs. It is part of the overall Care and Support plan.

Special Guardianship Order

Some children will be in a placement where there is a special guardianship order in place. This is a legally secure placement for children and young people who cannot live with their birth parents, and parental responsibilities have been legally placed with the special guardian. In these cases the child or young person is no longer considered to be Looked After.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

Local Authorities are also responsible for the support of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. They are expected to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need, by providing support appropriate to those children's needs. This may involve provision for financial support and accommodation such as hostels or supported lodgings. Article 22 of the UNCRC establishes that refugees should have the same rights as children born in the country to which they are seeking asylum.

Glossary of Acronyms

ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ALNCo	Additional Learning Needs Coordinator
CiC	Children in Care
CLA	Children Looked After
DT for CLA	Designated Teacher for CLA
EP	Educational Psychologist
FC	Foster Carer
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
KA	Key Adult
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
LACE Coordinator	LAC Education Coordinator
LACE Team	LAC Education Team
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PR	Parental Responsibility
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SGO	Special Guardianship Order
SW	Social Worker
TA / LSA	Teaching Assistant / Learning Support Assistant

LAC EDUCATION COORDINATOR (LACE COORDINATOR)

Every LA in Wales is expected to have a specialist practitioner, (the LAC Education Coordinator), whose primary role is to act as a champion for CLA and raise awareness to reform culture and embedded attitudes. The LACE Coordinator has a key leadership role within the local authority and a team approach is essential. Their responsibilities are many, but include:

- Ensuring CLA gain maximum life benefits from education opportunities;
- Working towards Welsh Government objectives on the education of CLA;
- Promoting the education of CLA placed within and out of area;
- Working with LAC Education Coordinators in other authorities in relation to out of area placements and to establish working arrangements;

- Developing and promoting a means of engaging CLA and obtaining their views on educational provision;
- Bridging the gap between Social Services, schools and the Education Authority regarding SEN;
- Providing challenge as necessary;
- Disseminating good practice including training for elected members, foster carers; social workers, school governors and designated teachers;
- Ensuring PEPs are in place and provide guidance on their implementation;
- Monitoring attainment of CLA, collating and analysing performance information on an individual and collective basis;
- Establishing and maintaining a list of designated teachers for each school in their authority and for schools attended by children placed out of area; and
- Attending CLA reviews as appropriate.

The Personal Educational Plan (PEP)

It is a requirement that all CLA have an individual plan called a PEP. This is an individual plan that sets out their educational needs, targets improvements in attainments and wider educational outcomes. Young children may have a pre-school PEP identifying suitable educational opportunities such as access to a nursery or other quality early years provision. However this is not universal and is determined by the LA in which the CLA is placed. For older young people, this could be a post-16 PEP to aid transition and support as the young people continue with their education and lifelong learning.

The PEP complements Care Plans but with a specific focus on promoting and prioritising education. It is the dialogue that surrounds the PEP planning process that has proved to be the key to its success. It is the responsibility of several contributors to the PEP to supply and analyse the information contained within it and be solution focused in promoting education, thus setting high expectations of progress and swift responses to address identified need.

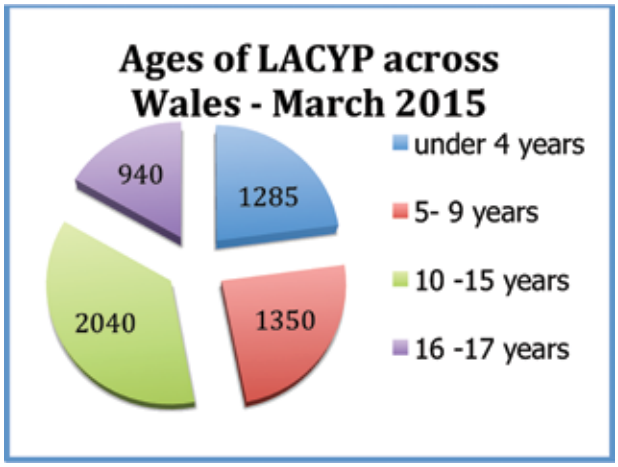
The PEP acts as a record of progress against highlighted developmental and educational needs (short and long term) and provides some record of accountability.

We shall look more at PEPs and how to ensure they are effective and useful documents in chapter three.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

Wales

At the end of March 2015 Wales had 5615 children in the care system, slightly more boys (3020) than girls (2595). Most children were aged between 10-15 years. The detailed breakdown by age is as follows:



Source : Mannay et al (2015)

The vast majority (91.1 %) were white, the remainder being mixed race, Asian or British Asian, Black or Black British, or other ethnic groups.

Of these children a disproportionate number had identified additional or special educational needs. In 2011 in Wales, 21 % of LAC had statements of SEN compared to 3 % of all children.

CLA attainment in Wales

Outcomes of LAC compared to all children in Wales as of March 2013: Stats Wales 2014-2016 (in Wales)

	Percentage of CLA that achieved the expected outcomes at each Key Stage	**All Pupils**
Core subject Indicator KS2	53 %	83 %
Core subject indicator KS3	36 %	77 %
GCSE (5 grade A*-C or equivalent)	13 %	53 %

Source: Welsh Government 2015a

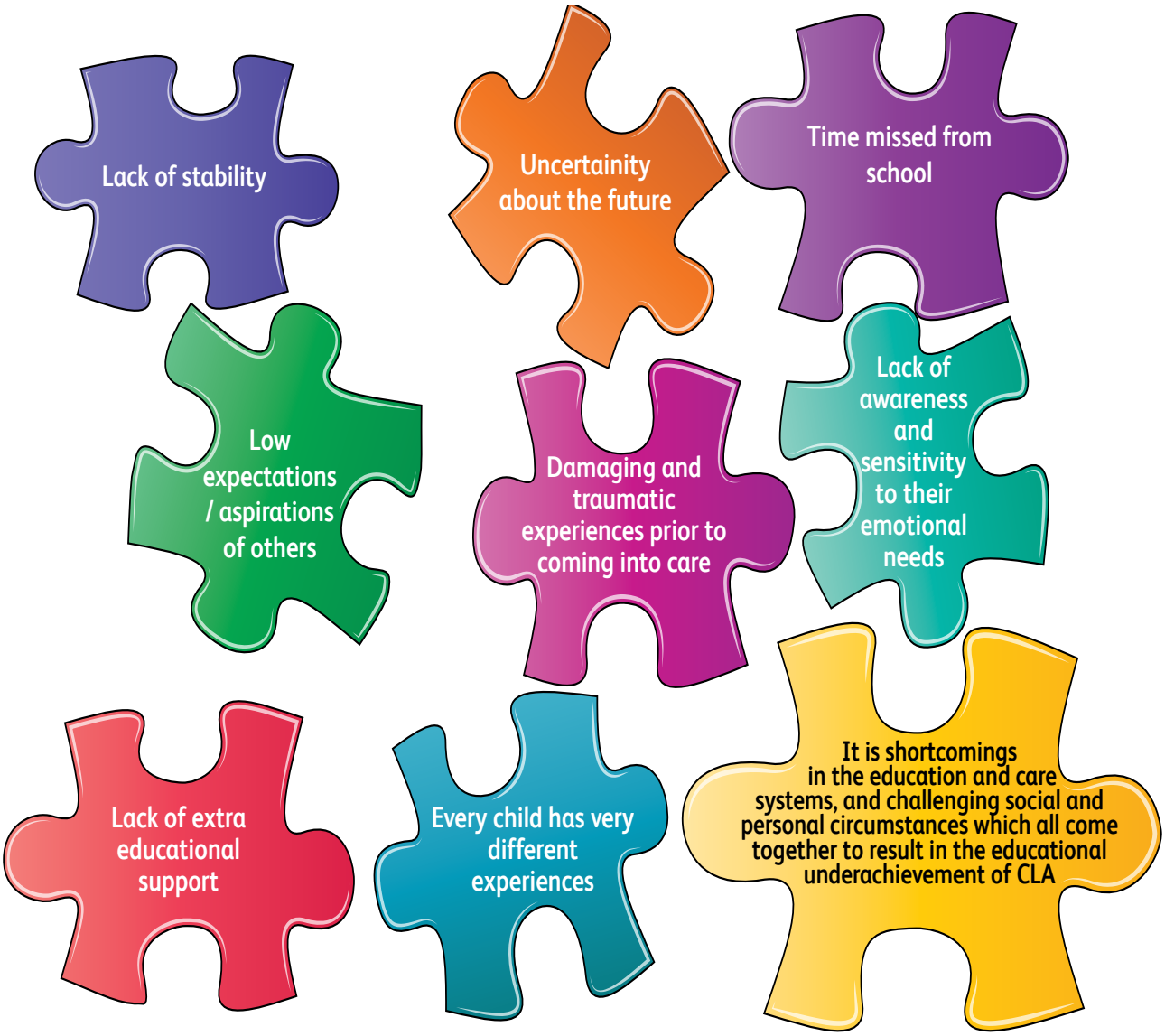
The pattern over a number of years suggests that the gap between LAC and those not in the care system widens across students' educational trajectories. As with England, overall results have improved but results have also improved for non-LAC, meaning that the attainment gap has not closed and at some Key Stages it has widened:

- Of the 427 care leavers who had their 19th birthday during the year ending 31 March 2014, 193 were Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET), 45 % of this group. Welsh Government 2015a.
- 29 % of young people leaving care had no qualifications at all compared to 1 % of the non-CLA population, Mannay et al (2015).

IT IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS JUST BEING IN CARE

As indicated above it has been known for many years that CLA have less good outcomes than those not in the care system: a finding that is the same internationally as well as nationally. At the same time it has been clear that it is not the case for every CLA. Recently there have been two important studies completed that have helped us to better understand which factors impact most negatively on outcomes. What has been the most interesting finding from the research is that we now know that the longer a child is in care the better the outcome. 33.4 % of young people who had been in the care system for more than 6 years got 5 A*-C GCSEs whereas this fell to 20.5 % if CLA had been in the system for less than 18 months Mannay et al (2015). So it is not being in care per se that is the problem: it is some of the associated factors.

Why do CLA do less well than their peers? The factors that the research tells us can adversely impact on the outcomes for CLA:



Throughout this resource we shall look at some of these in more detail to ensure that those factors that are within our control as educationalists, are addressed to the maximum extent possible.

The role of all those who work with CLA

We need to have very high expectations of all those professionals in education settings who will come into contact with our CLA:

✓ Ensure that any CLA is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;

✓ Be familiar with the CLA and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;

✓ Respond positively to a CLA's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;

✓ Contribute to the requests for information on educational attainment and needs made by the designated teacher for CLA, as fully and promptly as possible;

✓ As with all children, ensure that no CLA is stigmatised in any way;

✓ Provide a supportive climate to enable a CLA to achieve stability within the school setting;

✓ Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CLA; and

✓ Positively promote the wellbeing of CLA.

Chapter Two

What we all need to know and understand about children in the care system

It is important to recognise that a number of children and young people will have had experiences that are well beyond what most of us could even imagine. They will have encountered levels of trauma, abuse and neglect that are exceptional and which will impact on how they perceive the world, possibly all of their lives. We cannot take these away, but the more we can support CLA to cope we will improve their life chances and achieve better outcomes. To help achieve this, it is important to provide an overview about what is currently available from the field of neuroscience and brain development regarding the impact of neglect and trauma. This will be followed by a brief outline of current approaches from the world of therapy and therapeutic thinking. Both will help in understanding children who have been damaged and to find explanations for behaviour that is different, and often difficult, rather than making assumptions that the child is badly behaved. **The intention is not that the adults who work in schools should become therapists, but that if they have a greater level of understanding they will be both more able, and more motivated, to deal with the challenges they will encounter with CLA.**

It is important to note at this point, that this chapter could be a book of its own as there is an enormous amount in the literature that would be of interest and relevance. Both at the end of this chapter and in chapter five we have listed a number of books and websites that will provide further, far more detailed information for those who are interested to find out more.

THE BRAIN: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPACT OF EARLY LIFE EXPERIENCES.

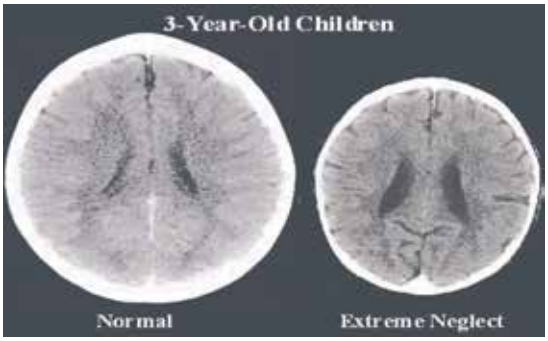
Our brains are complex organs. In recent years, as technology has developed, our understanding of the developmental processes and the difficulties that can occur have increased at a tremendous rate. We now know far more about the impact that adverse early life or *developmental trauma* has on the brain development of many of our children and young people.

Secure, nurturing environments and stimulating, engaging experiences support the development of neural networks – they help to build brains. Empathetic, supportive attachments and relationships are essential to optimise brain development as:

"The attunement of emotional states is essential for the developing brain to acquire the capacity to organize itself more autonomously as the child matures." (Siegel 2012)

Stress in children has the greatest impact on brain development. The brain is the primary stress organ because it controls all the stress mechanisms. Children who experience prolonged and extreme periods of stress have smaller, less developed brains and so reduced cognitive functioning. The higher levels of cortisol that are the result of stress can impact on the different parts of the brain, so that the brain develops different responses, such as children being over or under responsive to threats.

Surprisingly even before being born, a baby's brain development can be adversely effected by their early life experiences. In that if a mother has prolonged exposure to high levels of fear, anxiety or depression then their baby's brain structure can be very different to that of babies who have not had this level of exposure.



This figure compares the brain of a normal 3 year old child (left) with the brain of a 3 year old who has suffered severe environmental sensory deprivation neglect (right). The child who has suffered neglect has a significantly smaller brain and has enlarged ventricles and cortical atrophy

Trauma can then continue to impact on the developing brain during the first two years of life. Even when we have no conscious memory of our emotional experiences, we store them in our brains and they may affect us as we grow and develop. So for example, if a young baby consistently has their needs met by carers who are attuned to them, responding to them and making sure they do not go hungry, cold, unloved or uncared for, then their brains develop, as we would expect. But babies who cry and either do not get help or worse still, have an abusive or threatening response, then they rapidly learn to freeze or separate themselves emotionally. Eventually this becomes 'hardwired' and children can automatically freeze when faced with any sort of threat. Sometimes they even respond to potentially harmless situations in this way, so becoming very numb and unresponsive. However, as children get older, then the pattern of response can change and they may become aggressive and hyperactive, actively seeking the excitement of violence or risk.

These problems may continue into the teenage years. As children enter puberty, the brain as well as the body undergoes a lot of change; the brain experiences the second fastest growth phase of its life. For many teenagers this is very apparent in the changes in their behaviour, which can become volatile and challenging. If the young person has had 'good enough' emotional experiences up to this point then the brain development is able to cope with these changes. However for those who have already had to cope with very difficult and challenging circumstances, unless provided with very sensitive support from adults, then the more reactive and volatile parts of their brain dominate over the parts that are involved with reasoning and decision-making.

So this tells us that the exceptional levels of trauma experienced by some children impact on their development emotionally, socially and in the way they are able to self regulate from the very earliest stage because of the effect it has had on the brain development.

ATTACHMENT THEORY

Many of the children and young people who are in the care system will be experiencing significant difficulties with what is known as 'attachment' and 'attachment relationships'. Understanding what this is and how it affects children, can help those who work directly with our CLA to have some appreciation of the impact on their learning and behaviour at school.

What is attachment?

Attachment is quite simply a system developed through evolution to keep us safe. It is activated at times of threat (separation, rejection or fear) and results in a child seeking comfort from a person they trust. It is proposed that children are predisposed to form attachment relationships that will ensure they feel safe, secure and cared for. Bowlby (1988) is the main proponent of the theory and he defines attachment as:

'Attachment is a base from which children explore their experiences and form concepts of self others and the world'.

Attachments are determined by the nature of the care a child has received. The aim of attachment behaviour is proximity and contact with what we refer to as the primary carer so that the baby feels safe and has a secure base from which to develop. The child learns through the responses that their carer gives them. If when they are hungry, in pain, upset or anxious, they cry and this results in what they need, then that response becomes a learned response. The adult is **attuned** to their needs. Eventually feelings become 'contained' because they do not overwhelm the child. **Containment** is important for children because it helps them to trust and feel secure in the world (Bion, 1962).

Children who experience repeated changes of a caregiver or neglectful, harmful and/ or abusive care are far more likely to have attachment difficulties or attachment disorders.

Why is it important?

Children who have developed secure attachments then go on to become confident in 'separating' from their carers and exploring the world. They know that they can be apart from their caregiver for periods without disaster falling upon them. They can be curious and explore the world and so learn and develop. Early attachment relationships are the foundations for a child's development and ability to form positive and close relationships with others. They are also fundamental to development of our capacities for emotional regulation, self-control and cognitive development. Children who have good attachments are more likely to be able to achieve success with:

- Friendships and good social relationship skills
- Trust
- Empathy
- Academic success
- Emotional regulation and self-management of behaviour
- Resilience
- Independence

(Levy and Orlans 1998)

What happens if attachments are not formed effectively?

We now know that those children (who may or may not be CLA) that have not experienced a robust attachment in their early years will encounter many challenges in their lives and, pertinent here, in their school lives. They have not had an adult who has been '**attuned**' to their needs and so unable to '**contain**' their emotions. There has been inconsistent parenting and also inconsistent care; they may have experienced extreme hunger, pain, neglect emotionally or physically, fear and abuse (or seen others being abused). Their attempts for a secure attachment have not been successful for whatever reason. This could be because their caregivers have had their own mental health problems, drug or alcohol difficulties, they may have experienced neglect and abuse as children and not know how to respond or to be a primary carer. These children will encounter far more difficulties as they grow up because they do not have the tools in terms of emotional security that lead to success in different areas that most children will have. The table on the next page helps to understand the extent of the difficulties for our pupils with attachment difficulties that we will see in schools:

Area of impact	*Examples of how this affects children?*
Executive functioning	Difficulties with: ✓ Beginning, managing and finishing tasks ✓ Planning and organisation of self ✓ Sticking with tasks ✓ Solving problems ✓ Coping with frustration ✓ Monitoring and evaluating progress ✓ Anticipation of what may happen ✓ Being flexible and adapting to change as required ✓ Focus, concentration and attention ✓ Being fidgety and restlessness
Emotional regulation and self image	✓ Over reaction to experiences and events ✓ Heightened anxiety levels ✓ Problems with inhibition of behaviour ✓ Poor sense of self ✓ Lacks self awareness
Relationships and interactions with others	✓ Problems in developing and sustaining relationships with others ✓ Difficulties in accepting and understanding that others have authority ✓ Inappropriate social behaviours such as being overfamiliar, needing to control, problems with eye contact and touch, lack of a sense of remorse and difficulties with trust.

Does it have the same effect on every child?

No.
From the work of Bowlby (1969/1988), further developed by Mary Ainsworth (1982), we now know that there are typically four types of attachment that we will see in children. If we understand these then we may be able to do more to meet the different needs of children and develop effective strategies.

The four types of attachment are :

- Secure attachments;
- Ambivalent - resistant attachments;
- Avoidant attachments; and
- Disorganised attachments.

The following table explains more about the 3 forms of insecure attachments.

Insecure	*How this may affect behaviour at school?*	*Strategies that may help*
Ambivalent – resistant *Usually children who have experienced very inconsistent care: who sometimes have had their needs responded to and other times not.*	The child may be: • Very anxious and clingy; • Always wanting to stay close to adults; • Very dependent on others; • Manipulative; • Need a lots of reassurance, reluctant to try on their own; • More focused on adult attention for the sake of the attention rather than to do the task; • Willing to accept negative attention as much as positive attention; • Hyper vigilant to what adults are doing; • May talk incessantly or play the 'class clown' in order to get attention; and • Have poor concentration and attention.	• Differentiation of tasks into small steps; • Use of a timer to moderate anxiety and set short targets for independence; • Introduce holding a special (transitional) object which takes the place of the teacher for short periods – "Please look after this for me for a while"; • Make explicit and reassuring comments across the classroom; demonstrating that you aware of the pupil; • Give responsibility for a task rather than people; • Do a lot of small group activities; • Plan for, and give warnings of, beginnings, separations and endings; • Planning and warnings of changes and class movements; • Reliable, consistent adult support; • Be aware of, and address the high anxiety; and • Use 'calmers' as described in Mosley and Grogan (2009)
Avoidant *Children who have learnt that when they seek attachments with others they are likely to be rejected so they avoid it at all cost.*	The child may be: • Withdrawn / quiet; • Indifferent in the way they deal with new situations; • Hostile to people trying to help them; • Reluctant to accept help; • More self reliant than typical for age; • Active in seeking autonomy and independence; • Inclined to rip up their work so that the adult can't comment on it; • Reluctant to take risks; • Resistant to adults being in close proximity; • Acting as if they don't care and reject interest and support; • Significantly underachieving; and • Vulnerable to explosions that come from nowhere and then disappear just as quickly.	• Use highly structured games with clear rules and outcomes to assist in overcoming resistance to offers of help (avoid games with winners and losers); • Structure written tasks; • Help the CLA to feel good about themselves; • Offer control over task choice; • Find tasks they enjoy doing; • Ensure opportunities for group work as other children can moderate the intensity of the teacher's proximity; and • Ensure all staff provide a consistent response.

Insecure	*How this may affect behaviour at school?*	*Strategies that may help*
Disorganised Children who are likely to have come from very chaotic and disorganised homes where they may have suffered severe neglect and /or abuse. They can be very erratic in their responses. Meltdowns can occur from nowhere, making them very unpredictable.	The child may be: • Subject to very rapid mood swings; • Likely to get very frustrated very quickly; • Abusive to others; • Tending to do things suddenly and completely without an apparent trigger; • Unable to accept being taught and / or unable to "permit" the teacher to know more than they do; • Finding it difficulty to trust the authority of the teacher but may submit to the authority of the head of the school; • Very controlling in their relationships; and • Over aroused much of the time.	• Ensure safety, reliability and predictability; • **Always** be calm; • Create a safe area or object; • Have a structured day with predictable activities, calming routines and rituals; • Provide regular opportunities for mechanical tasks such as dot to dot, word searches; • Use 'calmers' as described by Mosley and Grogan 2009 (see chapter 5) • Try to avoid excitement keeping each day as calm as possible; • Positive feedback can help to develop and reinforce more positive responses; • **Agreed procedures and responses** and **colleague support** are imperative in order to protect the teacher as well as controlling reactivity for the child; and • In unpredictable situations which result in a sudden eruption of violence or distress, stepping back and engaging a "safety routine", avoiding confrontation is a first step. For younger children this could be the removal to a safe, quiet and stimulating place e.g. the room of a senior teacher who is perceived as powerful/safe and being given 'calm box' activities (as outlined by Bombèr 2011). For older children a permission card to remove themselves to a place of safety without the need for confrontation.

What can we do as adults?

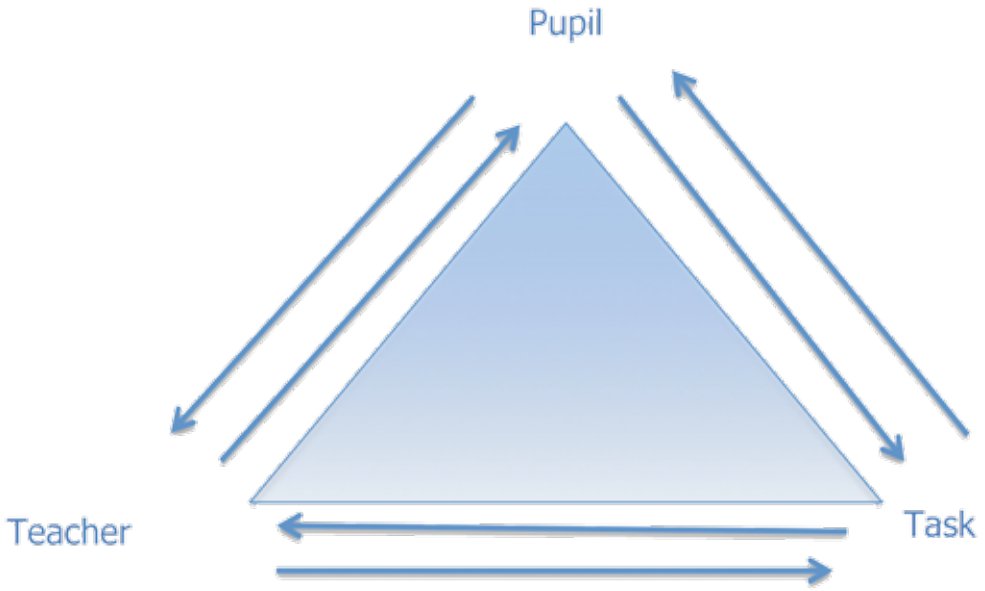
We now understand that as educators we need to establish an attachment – like relationship with CLA in order to enhance learning and development. Secure relationships correlate with better academic attainment, self-regulation and social competence. Therefore for some of our most challenging and vulnerable pupils, one of the most successful strategies schools can implement is to provide children with an identified adult (Key Adult) whose role is to focus on building up this type of relationship with the children in their care.

For successful intervention with most pupils the work of Heather Geddes (2006) provides a very useful way for linking attachment theory with relationships in the classroom between pupils, teachers and activities.

For learning to occur, the pupil will need to feel secure and trust their relationship with the teacher. But also they need to be able to separate from the teacher and work independently on the task knowing that

the teacher will be there for them if needed. The challenge for children with insecure attachments is that this may be difficult for them and so impair the learning triangle process.

The strategies given above are based on the understanding of how the CLA difficulties impacts on their behaviours and this relationship and so how they can be best helped. This is shown in the following diagram:



Source : Geddes (2006)

Where there are secure attachments, children have trust and confidence that they will be helped when necessary, so early in their school life they are able to develop the skills for being an effective learner. For children who have not experienced secure attachments, it is far harder for them to trust the teacher so the Learning Triangle is disrupted in the following ways:

Attachment pattern	*Impact on the learning triangle*
Ambivalent – resistant	The focus for the child is on the teacher – child relationship not on the child – task so child becomes very focused on obtaining the adult's attention.
Avoidant	In order to avoid risking an attachment the focus is very much on the child -task part of the Learning Triangle.
Disorganised	These CLA are not engaged in any part of the Learning Triangle

BE CAREFUL OF OUR EXPECTATION: THE RED ROAD AND THE BLUE ROAD

There is sometimes a tendency from professionals who work with children who have been, or are a part of the care system, to accept that the lives of children and young people have been very traumatic and subject to many challenges, but then to feel that once the child moves to a more stable and secure care situation their behaviour patterns will quickly change to being more acceptable. In the diagram below this is depicted by the 'blue' and 'red' roads. However rather than it being a direct 'link road' between the two pathways, it is much more likely to be the amber road as shown here, with many ups and downs and obstacles along the way. Children cannot just 'forget' learning and emotional memories that have been a pattern of their lives for many years, but they will have a difficult journey that could take them many years and for which they will need a lot of support.

The Blue Road
Secure Attachments

As a baby

Baby is hungry, cold, upset, restless or wants attention so baby cries and carer responds to need.
Carer is attached to child.

In the first years

Child is stimulated, cared for and responded to by adults so learning to talk, developing relationships and engaging with environment.

During the early years

Development is consistent in different areas. Child separates from carers, engages in early years settings and is building effective relationships with others.

As a child gets older

They are:

- Succeeding and achieving at school
- Building strong friendships & relationships
- Developing strength with different skills
- Has competent executive functioning
- Is becoming more emotionally literate

As an adult

Has achieved their potential, developed strong reciprocal relationships, has positive mental health and a range of leisure activities.

The Red Road
Insecure Attachments

As a baby

Baby is hungry, cold, upset, restless or wants attention so baby cries but carer does not respond (or only inconsistently).
Needs of the child are not met.

In the first years

Child is neglected or physically/emotionally hurt so is learning not to cry. Brain development is affected by high levels of stress.

During the early years

Developmental problems start to emerge. Child may be timid, hyper -vigilant, withdrawn, dislike change, angry, repetitive behaviours, low self esteem

Child is taken into care and moves to live in secure home with foster carers

As a child gets older

Attachment difficulties become more evident. Areas of concern may include:

- Mistrust of relationships
- Friendship difficulties
- Poor emotional literacy
- Problems with executive functions
- Hyper-vigilance
- Poor sense of identity

As an adult

Impact of difficulties are evident on outcomes which might include:

- Mental health problems
- Offending behaviours
- NEET
- Relationship problems

Child is now in a secure home so will automatically behave as a child with a secure attachment

ASSUMPTION

REALITY

This is a long and difficult journey for children. It takes a lot of patience and tolerance to overcome past life experiences and learn new and lasting patterns of behaviour

WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ATTACHMENT

As already indicated above within this chapter we have only been able to provide a very brief overview of this complex but interesting topic. There are many resources available for those who want to learn more.

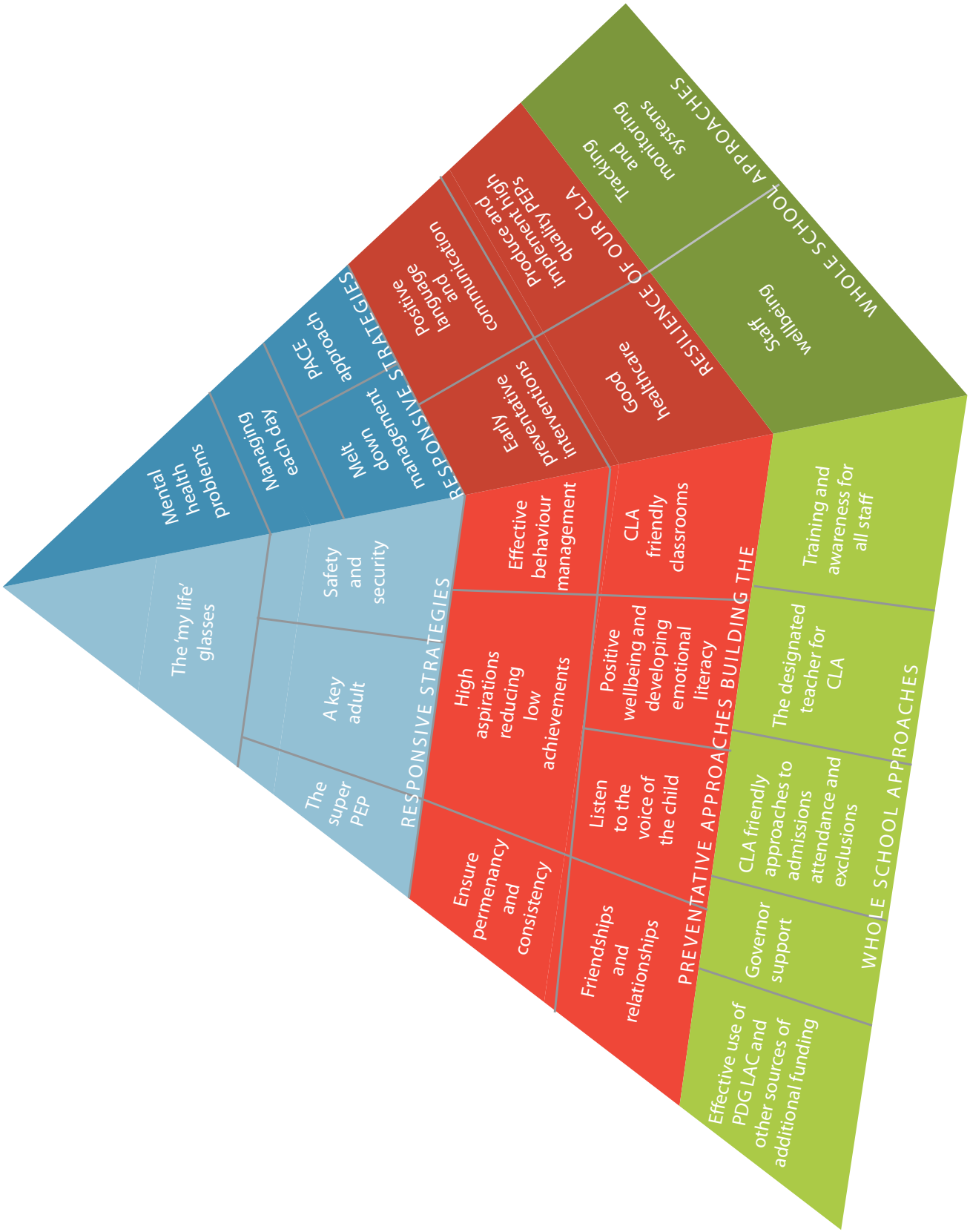
Heather Geddes (2006). *Attachment in the Classroom: The links between children's early experience, well being and performance in school.* **Worth Publishing.**

Kim Golding (2012). *Observing children with attachment difficulties in school: a tool for identifying and supporting emotional and social difficulties in children aged 5-11.* **Jessica Kingsley: London.**
(There is an Early Years version of this book available as well).

Nicola Marshall (2014). *The Teacher's Introduction to attachment: Practical Essentials for Teachers, Carers and School Support Staff.* **Jessica Kingsley: London.**

Chapter Three

The CLA Friendly School



THE CLA FRIENDLY SCHOOL

In this chapter we are going to consider all the elements that are needed to ensure a school is 'CLA Friendly'. In preparing this we have not only looked at what the research tells us but most importantly we have drawn upon the experiences of some of the most skilled practitioners within the field. As a result the ideas and suggestions presented are not just theory, but practical strategies that we know can work successfully in busy schools.

The pyramid diagram shows the key building blocks for schools, working at three levels which will be discussed in three separate sections within this chapter:

1. **The whole school systems and practice**
2. **Preventative approaches: what should be done for every CLA**
3. **Responsive strategies to support the CLA who are presenting more challenges**

Together these will lead to CLA Friendly schools. We understand that at this stage you may not have all of the different 'blocks' in place but we hope that it gives you a plan to work to developing many of these.

SECTION 1 : THE WHOLE SCHOOL CLA FRIENDLY APPROACH

1.1 TRAINING AND AWARENESS FOR ALL STAFF

A knowledgeable and skilled staff team lies at the heart of any successful, caring and supportive school. A school can only be as good as the people that run it. Therefore for a school to become an effective CLA school all the adults within it should have a level of training that is matched to their contact with individuals. It is essential that to different degrees every adult is informed of some of the elements that are included within this resource. This point is reinforced through much of the government and national level guidance that has been published over the last few years. For example NICE Guidance on Attachment (2015) recommends that:

"….training courses for teachers of all levels on:

- *How attachment difficulties begin and how they can present in children and young people*
- *How attachment difficulties affect learning, education and social development understanding the consequences of maltreatment, including trauma*
- *How they can support children and young people with attachment difficulties."*

It is important to note that this type of training also could be of value in supporting the needs of a broad range of pupils who are vulnerable, such as Children in Need; post adoption; children from homes where parents have mental health or addiction problems and pupils with ALN. Ideally, three levels of training should be available in all schools:

Level one	Basic awareness of the needs of all CLA, the trauma they may have experienced and how they can effectively manage vulnerable children and young people as they come into contact with them at school.
Level two	More detailed training for all teachers who have direct responsibility for CLA.
Level three	In depth training for any senior leaders with CLA responsibilities, designated teachers of CLA and support staff who will be working closely with individual children and young people.

Support staff within the LA such as your EP or LAC coordinator would be more than happy to advise and

support you with implementing this.

"Tell them how they can help"

"Provide training courses"

"Involve young people in training teachers about children looked after."

1.2 THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CLA

The designated teacher for CLA has a central role to play in ensuring the positive wellbeing and happy experiences for a CLA as a pupil in their school. Their role is complex with a number of key functions. These include:

- ✓ Keeping accurate and comprehensive records about all children and young people in their school who are in care or adopted;
- ✓ When a new CLA arrives at the school, ensuring a smooth and welcoming induction for the child and carer, noting any specific requirements, including care status;
- ✓ Ensuring that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed, as soon as possible (at least within 10 days if a child is entering care on an emergency basis or 20 days if a child is entering care in a planned way);
- ✓ Maintaining an up-to-date PEP, setting out how they will be supported in school;
- ✓ Acting as an advocate for the CLA within the school;
- ✓ Providing a key person who can advocate for the CLA and to whom they can go to for support;
- ✓ Allocating a safe place in school, for example a room where a child or young person can go if they are distressed;
- ✓ Attending CLA reviews and providing written information;
- ✓ Encouraging CLA to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- ✓ Ensuring speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school, if and when, a CLA transfers; and
- ✓ Seeking urgent meetings with relevant parties where a CLA is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

AND ALSO:

- ✓ Having had specialist training on attachment difficulties to help them understand and manage pupils competently;
- ✓ Knowing how to manage data protection and confidentiality;
- ✓ Maintaining an effective referral system with other agencies;
- ✓ Ensuring all staff at their setting receives relevant information and training;
- ✓ Acting as an advisor; and
- ✓ Ensuring confidentiality for individual children and only shares personal information on a 'need to know' basis.

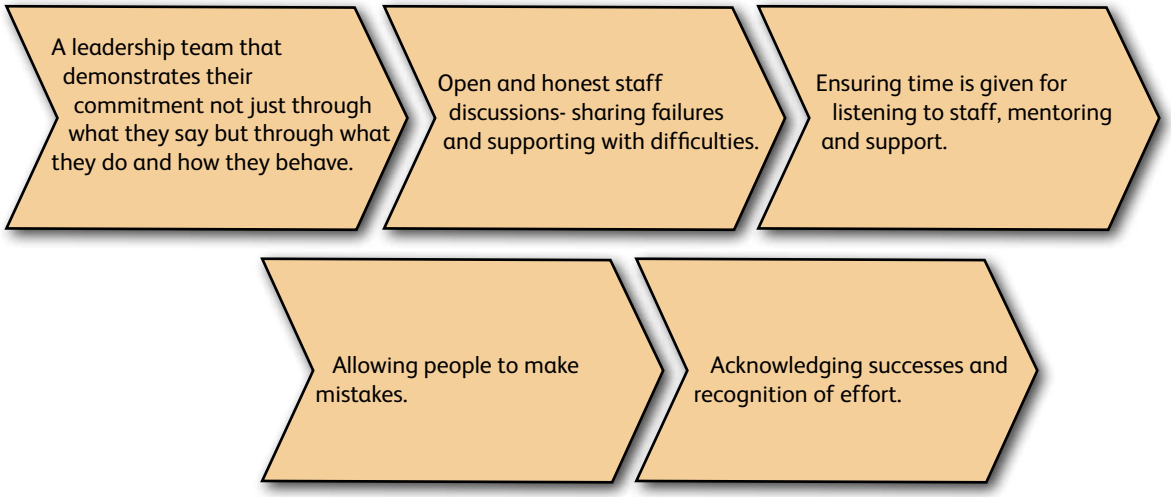
1.3 GOVERNOR SUPPORT

There is an expectation that school governing bodies will also take an active role in supporting their CLA. Ways in which this should be achieved are:

- ✓ Nominating a governor who links with the Designated Teacher for CLA, to receive regular progress reports and provide feedback to the governing body. (These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons). This role is important in acting as an advocate for CLA;
- ✓ Ensuring all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for CLA;
- ✓ Ensuring that there is a named Designated Teacher for CLA;
- ✓ Liaising with the Head Teacher to ensure that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out her/his responsibilities in relation to CLA;
- ✓ Supporting the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher for CLA and other staff in ensuring the needs of CLA are met; and
- ✓ Reviewing the effective implementation of any school policies relating to CLA, preferably annually and at least every three years.

1.4 STAFF WELLBEING

The day-to-day challenges for any teacher or support assistant are immense, regardless of whether they work in a ' dream' school of perfect, motivated and able students or they are in a school that is 'failing' with high numbers of pupils that present extreme behavioural challenges. We now understand that a key contributor to the success of a school is positive staff wellbeing. In a school where this a priority and the emotional climate could be described as vibrant, then pupils are happier, more settled, less disruptive and achieve better outcomes. Clearly this has to be one of the important building blocks for a school that aims to be CLA friendly. Factors that can help with the promotion of this are:



1.5 TRACKING AND MONITORING SYSTEMS

The importance of close tracking of performance and outcomes of pupils is well understood and documented. In the case of tracking and monitoring CLA progress at a school level, the purpose is:

- ✓ To provide an overview of progress and achievement over time;
- ✓ To inform planning as part of the PEP process;
- ✓ To accurately identify interventions needed to build resilience;
- ✓ To identify strengths;
- ✓ To identify any areas where progress is slower and so enable early intervention;

- ✓ To support dialogue with learners to improve learning;
- ✓ To help staff to review their practice in order to support learners; and
- ✓ To enable an analysis of the progress of CLA across the school and so inform actions and interventions that may be needed at a strategic level.

The type of data that needs to be utilised for CLA is the same as for all pupils, but the difference is to ensure that the full picture is ascertained, updated and reviewed much more frequently so that early action is a priority.

1.6 EFFECTIVE USE OF PDG LAC AND OTHER SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Welsh Government is committed to improving the outcomes for CLA. To support schools and LAs in trying to achieve this goal they have invested money that is specifically allocated for this purpose. The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) is their principal means for this. The system for allocating the grant has varied year on year in that it has gone directly to LAs or schools or more recently the Education Consortiums. It has previously been based on numbers of children looked after aged 4-15 years as identified by the Social Services SSDA data from the previous year. However, currently allocations vary in different localities and recently has included CLA, Adopted children, SGOs and CAOs (Child Arrangement Orders) and RO (Residency Orders).

This means that schools have resources that they can dedicate to supporting the CLA within their care that will help to fund many of the strategies, and recognised examples of good practice, proposed within this document. A CLA Friendly school would ensure targeted and planned spending that is focused on enhancing provision at a strategic level, as well as for individual CLA linked to agreed PEP targets. It is anticipated that it could include implementation of preventative interventions such as boosting literacy and numeracy outcomes; supporting the development of friendships; enhancing wellbeing relationships or promoting engagement in positive activities, as well as at the responsive level to more effectively tackle challenges such as the introduction of a key adult.

The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit is a resource now widely used by schools when making decisions about how to best support disadvantaged pupils, providing very useful evidence about what is (or isn't) the most effective and value for money. The Welsh Government also has two very useful documents on their websites:
http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150323-pdg-essential-guidance-en.pdf
and
http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/140512-what-really-works-en.pdf

1.7 CLA FRIENDLY APPROACHES TO ADMISSIONS, ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS

All pupils should attend school regularly and consistently. Minimal periods of non-attendance should only be sanctioned in genuine or exceptional circumstances. For CLA the evidence indicates that this does not always apply for reasons that are beyond their control. **To respond to this there is an urgent need for all schools to adopt CLA Friendly policies relating to timely admissions, attendance and exclusions.**

Admissions

Too often CLA spend extended periods following a placement move waiting for a new school to agree to their admission which compounds the challenges and difficulties a CLA faces at what can be a very traumatic time for them. This is against the current regulations, as CLA and previously children looked after should be ranked first in the oversubscription criteria for all schools where applications for admission exceed the admission number for the school. The School Admissions and School Admissions Appeals Code (2013) states that it is essential that children who have no school place should be found one quickly.

Once a CLA is allocated a place, schools, in particular the Designated Teacher and the CLA governor should put in processes that ensure a CLA is actively welcomed into the school.

The school needs to be mindful that the child can often be arriving after an extremely upsetting and traumatic experience. They may have left behind a strong group of close friends and teachers with whom they had good relationships. At a secondary level, they will certainly have disruptions in their coursework and the options available to them.

Preparing for CLA coming into schools - What can work in schools?

One young person said a new school means:
"Feeling scared – new teachers, new people, new rules "

- ✓ A school that has a positive and caring ethos, welcoming children from the outset;
- ✓ Someone in the school who has responsibility for individual children, to make them feel special;
- ✓ A good pastoral team that works together;
- ✓ A school should know the key information about a child before they arrive at school / being prepared. In particular being aware of the strengths as well as needs;
- ✓ A planned introduction to the school; and
- ✓ Foster carer to be allowed to support young children as they settle in – as this reduces separation anxiety.

Case Study /Example

Following a horrible care placement breakdown that was not the fault of the Year 10 girl, she has to move to a new school. She leaves behind a strong group of mates and was heading towards a number of good GCSE grades. At the new school the young lady is made to feel very welcome and secure from her very first visit.

The LAC Co-ordinator has made sure her timetable is clear. Some other Year 10 pupils are asked to ensure she knows where to go and look after her. All the teachers welcome her to the classes and ensure she is happy for the first couple of weeks, at the end of each day her keyworker meets her to talk about her day.

Exclusions

The current guidance in Wales states that as far as possible schools should avoid excluding CLA other than in the most extreme circumstances. If exclusion is considered to be a possibility it is essential that the Head Teacher contacts the LAC Education Coordinator for their LA immediately in order everything possible can be done to avoid the exclusion. The LAC Education Coordinator will also ensure that the foster carer and social worker know what their role, and responsibilities are, and where to go for any advice and support. The Coordinator may also be able to work with the school, consider any additional assessment and support to help address the problems more positively and constructively than by exclusion. Finally they can discuss appropriate actions rapidly should exclusion be unavoidable.

Attendance

As high levels of attendance are crucial, a CLA Friendly school will make sure that within any policies and practice on attendance in place at school, CLA are an identified vulnerable group with an emphasis on an early and rapid response to address any drop in attendance.

SECTION 2 : PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES: BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF OUR CLA

In this chapter we will be considering the features of a CLA Friendly school that need to be in place for all CLA. Aspects that will ensure we are helping our children to become resilient young people, able to function positively and independently as an adult and to minimise the possible impact of the difficulties they will encounter along the journey through school and education.

The focus is very much on elements that should be thought about for all CLA even if they are seemingly doing well and there are no immediate concerns about their progress and development. This is because we know that at different times as they progress through their educational journey CLA will face more challenges then others who are not part of the Care System. It is important that we maximize their ability to be resilient and survive what life throws at them. Perhaps we could think of this as an "inoculation programme" for CLA.

2.1 HIGH ASPIRATIONS, REDUCING LOW ACHIEVEMENTS

Educational success has to be the first item on our 'resilience-shopping list'. As we have indicated in the introduction and then in chapter one, at the present time there is a lot of research that informs us that currently many children in the care system are not achieving as well as their peers who are not in care. The impact of this is wide ranging so includes their academic attainments with speaking and listening, reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and basic numeracy. The gap persists and widens as pupils get older until only 7% of children from care attend university compared to over 50% of the general population (O'Higgins et al 2015).

There are many ways to address the situation and much of this document is focused on helping schools to consider what they can do. There are two aspects that are important to highlight here:

High Aspirations

A frequent complaint from CLA is that teachers have low expectations concerning what they can achieve educationally. This is also reinforced by the findings of recent research by Welsh Government (Mannay et al 2015). This research found that the CLA themselves were:

> *"…Not lacking aspiration. Many were able to voice clear aspirations for future careers and employment with their choices influenced by a range of factors. Younger children in particular often had lots of ideas, were confident in their abilities and enthusiastic about their future lives".*

<u>But sadly these same young people also reported that they felt many teachers (and foster carers) had:</u>

> *"Lower expectations of them, or made assumptions about their intellectual capabilities, based on them being in care".*

This emphasises the importance of all professionals who support CLA in any capacity ensuring that they have high, challenging aspirations that will inspire and motivate pupils. Welsh Government (2015a) tells us:

"Learners are at the heart of all we do. We have high aspirations for their achievements and wellbeing: a child or young person's background must never limit their achievements. To put the learner at the centre of our education system we must have relevant, challenging and valued learning, delivered by inspiring teachers, lecturers and support staff who in turn will create inspired learners".

Reducing Low Achievements

There is not a special intervention for improving literacy or numeracy attainments of CLA that is needed to get better outcomes. The specialist programmes and strategies that we need are those related to the attachment issues and associated problems, as highlighted throughout this resource. In order to reduce or overcome the low achievements with language, literacy and numeracy of CLA the solution is simply to use the interventions we know that work with all children but to ***implement them differently for those who are CLA***.

- Prioritise CLA for inclusion in groups as much as possible and even when there is only a slight level of underachievement;
- Use PDG LAC to provide 'Catch Up' support;
- Target CLA for any examination revision opportunities; and
- Encourage attendance at summer schools, holiday clubs and homework clubs.

For some CLA the local LACES team will also be able to help and support where there are a lot of difficulties.

2.2 ENSURE PERMANENCY AND CONSISTENCY

For most of us, child or adult we know with absolute certainty that we have a number of others in our lives who will always be there to love, care, encourage, support and value us. It is what keeps us going at times of challenge, helps us to grow and develop and ultimately gives us our security and happiness. For CLA this has been disrupted, which can be extremely frightening for a child, leading to many of the concerning behaviours seen in schools and should never be underestimated. Looking at the newly changed world the child is experiencing, from their point of view, and understanding this is imperative. Promoting key relationships in schools, so that CLA have an adult 'check in' with them regularly to show they care is essential in promoting a sense of self care and security.

2.3 POSITIVE WELLBEING AND DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Peter Sharp (2001) defined emotionally literate people as those who are 'able to recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their emotions'. We need to recognise the emotions we experience so that we can define them. As we develop an emotional vocabulary we are enabled to put our feelings into words. Emotional understanding is important if we are to learn from our experiences and develop resilience. Being able to manage our emotions allows us to build and maintain healthy relationships with others. Through learning to express our emotions in appropriate ways we are able to help ourselves as well as other people.

The next item on the resilience-shopping list is for CLA to be equipped emotionally for the world with an adequate level of emotional literacy and a positive sense of wellbeing. We understand that children learn best when their emotional needs are met effectively. As adults we know that when faced with serious life issues such as loss and bereavement, financial stress or overwhelming anxiety, it is enormously difficult to concentrate on work and our daily activities because our emotions overwhelm our ability to function. We could not expect children who have, or are, experiencing major trauma and stress to come to school to put their troubles behind them and to settle to learning.

Teaching emotional literacy (and the associated expressive and receptive language) is especially important for the most vulnerable pupils, as their ability to learn may have been adversely affected by emotional and psychological difficulties. If we give them the chance to think about these difficulties within the context of a relationship that is supportive and safe, we can help them become more resilient in the face of adversity. As they feel better able to recognise and manage their feelings, they will engage more readily with the learning challenges presented in school.

There are a number of ways to approach this but the most effective is the implementation of interventions that are already in place in schools across RCT and MT such as **ELSA** and **Thrive.**

ELSAs are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants. They are teaching assistants who have completed a 6 day training to help them be able to support the emotional development of children and young people in school.

ELSAs help children and young people learn to understand their emotions and respect the feelings of those around them. They provide the time and space for pupils to think about their personal circumstances and how they manage them.

The THRIVE APPROACH helps staff to identify unmet emotional and social development needs and to address those needs so that children are ready to learn and better able to achieve their potential. It provides a whole school approach to social and emotional development that is rigorous and measured. Through training staff are able to:

- ✓ *Screen children for social and emotional need against age related expectations;*
- ✓ *Use classroom and curriculum based strategies to help those in need of some support; and*
- ✓ *Provide targeted action plans and 1:1 support for those with greater needs.*

2.4 FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

A further item that will build and enhance the resilience of a young person in the care system is the ability to interact well socially, build relationships and then develop and sustain friendships. We all need friends. Human beings are social animals and we thrive on our many and varied relationships we have with others. These may be our close family members, our good long time friends, friends that we get on with at work or leisure activities, the people we know in the local shop or those we see on the train each day. All of these different relationships give us things that we like and need, such as a sense of belonging and the knowledge that others are interested in, and care about us. They also provide many other things: fun, a common identity, comfort, a 'listening ear', help and support. Without our friends we would be lost.

Many children who have experienced early trauma may initially appear socially confident and easily able to make friends. However these friendships are often superficial, and gradually it may become apparent that they have many difficulties in sustaining friendships. Problems include:

- They are not the same age emotionally as they are developmentally. This becomes particularly evident at times of stress;
- They will not have had the same role models as others, so do not understand the niceties of relationships such as how to show that they care, how to be tactful or how to say 'No' nicely;
- They may have behaviour patterns that frighten or put off others such as lying, stealing, poor attention patterns, a need to control or manipulate.

So how can we help?

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME IDEAS TO CONSIDER, BASED ON WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US AND SUPPORTED BY THE VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PRACTITIONERS.

Don't wait for a problem

Always consider whether a CLA should be included in any small group interventions being run in the school aimed at promoting friendships and relationships. Better to be included and have additional learning opportunities than not to have a chance for extra learning of these core skills.

Structure, structure, structure

Children who have experienced trauma benefit from structure in their free time. Don't just let them loose in the playground and hope for the best. Treat them as you would a younger child, and use structure to teach them how to play.

Explicit teaching of appropriate social skills

In the same way as we teach children to read using a structure which progressively builds component elements, we need to take a systematic approach to the development of social and relationship skills. There are many resources available to assist with this.

Be aware, notice and reinforce when the child is trying to apply new skills he / she is learning

Remember, learning something new and / or changing old behaviour takes a lot of effort and can be very difficult. Be alert to children trying to do this and always reward/ praise/ acknowledge what they are doing so that they are more likely to try it a 2nd, 3rd, 4th time.

Regression will occur - be warned!

For all sorts of reasons children will often take a step backwards and not always move in the rapid forward direction we would like. Be patient and stay calm. They will come back to where they were.

Address the 'naughty' label

Inevitably children who behave differently at school quickly get identified as being 'naughty' or 'bad' by everyone: other parents, children and school staff. It is important to be alert to this and to work hard to address as rapidly as possible. Otherwise it may become self fulfilling, in that a child may work to the identity others have given them.

Engagement in positive activities

One way of providing the right amount of structure for CLA, as well as building up a positive sense of value and self respect could be to encourage involvement in useful activities such as taking a responsibility (e.g. Playground buddy, helping the caretaker) or participating in a club (art club, playing for the football team).

Prioritise this work

To be able to build lasting relationships and to have a supportive group of friends is one of the biggest resilience features we can help our CLA to achieve. It is more important than any Key Stage outcome. It enhances inclusion in school and society and protects against other risk factors such as academic failure, adult mental health problems and offending behaviour.

2.6 POSITIVE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

As explained earlier in chapter 2, however stable, nurturing and caring a child's current care placement may be they will always have a brain pattern that is built up of their past experiences and memories that can't be just 'wiped' in the same way as we may do with a computer. They are on the 'red or amber' roads and it will be a long journey to arrive on the 'blue' road (refer to page 19).

This means that they will respond and relate to others based on their expectations of what has happened to them in the past. Many CLA see their world through their 'life glasses' and will need help to understand that there are different ways to respond to the world. Our communications with children will be crucial to helping them and there are a number of ways we can achieve this:

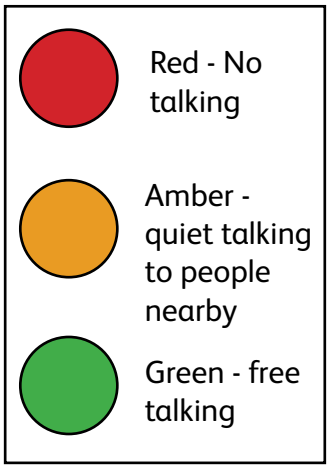
Relationships with adults

CLA may try to be over familiar or equally very disrespectful and exceptionally rude. The response should always be to calmly show children how they can behave in a way that is more socially appropriate for their age.

E.g. give a 'high five', model a conversation opener, shake hands, do a 'thumbs up'.

Helping CLA to learn when it is appropriate to talk

Learning the subtle difference between when children can talk freely in class and when they are expected to listen to others or simply get on with their work can be hard for some.



Use of visual support cues can help enormously with this e.g. traffic light cue cards or commenting on positive behaviour of others.

Use of positive language

It is far more helpful for all children and young people if instead of telling them what not to do we focus on what we do want.

E.g. *"Don't snatch"*

Becomes

"If you want the car, ask Bob if you can have it after he has finished playing with it".

Or instead of

"don't interrupt"

We say

"If you stand at the side and look at me I will know you want to speak and will talk to you as soon as I have finished talking to Sophie".

Explanation / translation of social situations and misunderstandings

CLA will often misinterpret social situations because of what has happened to them in their past. We can help them by being very explicit about what is going on and why.

E.g. Mohammed was coming into the class very upset at the start of the day because the other children were taking his baseball cap from him in the playground and he thought they were bullying him. He needed to be helped to see that this was a game they were playing with all of the children and that most of the others were really enjoying it and their only intention was to include him in their fun.

Social stories / comic strip cartoons are also useful tools that we can use. The most effective way is always to do this 'at the time' rather than assigning it to PSE or set group time.

Avoid and try

Louise Bombèr (2011) suggests the following are important in our communications with CLA (and all our pupils, of course):

Try to avoid	Try instead
Sarcasm	Be straightforward, clear and explicit in the way we talk to pupils.
Public reprimands	Speak to CLA individually and avoid saying '*you*' but say '*let's*'.
Aggressive, unregulated responses	Calm yourself first, and then talk assertively but quietly.
Shaming or humiliating pupils	We all mess up on occasion, these are just opportunities to get better at things, so use language such as *"Let's practice"* **or** *"Let's get better at"*.
Derogatory comments	Always use positive and forward looking language.
Criticising the person rather than their action	We all need to be valued as a person. CLA often feel they are worthless and 'bad' people so emphasise that it is the mistake that was made that is the difficulty not them as a person.

2.7 LISTEN TO THE 'VOICE OF THE CHILD'

In recent years there has been an accelerating movement towards the idea of children's participation, and 'voice' has become an important concept in research with children and young people. Throughout this resource we have tried to reinforce this, emphasising the need to really listen to the children and young people that we work with to ensure that we not only understand their views but also hold them as a central focus when planning how to support them. In chapter 4 'Working with others' focuses on what young people have told us is most important to them, which makes very interesting and informative reading.

The key point here when thinking about what makes a school CLA Friendly is to consider the importance and powerful potential of ensuring the views of CLA, the ones who are living the experience of being looked after, are taken into account when deciding on actions at a school or individual level.

2.8 GOOD HEALTH CARE

CLA have the same health risks as their peers but the extent is often exacerbated due to their previous experiences. Health Services employ specialist health workers for CLA to ensure their health needs are appropriately and promptly addressed. When children and young people become looked after, they require a statutory assessment of their physical and emotional health needs within 28 days. Health Assessments also take into account how a child is progressing and coping with school. Review Health Assessments then take place every 6 months for children under 5 years and every year for those over 5 years, whilst the child remains Looked After. CLA may need time off during school hours to attend this and any other health appointments they require, in order to achieve positive health and wellbeing.

2.9 PRODUCE AND IMPLEMENT HIGH QUALITY PEPS

As indicated in chapter 1 all CLA must have a current PEP. **This is a statutory requirement**. In the most CLA friendly schools, the PEP is much more than a formality that is put in place because of the requirement to do so. PEPs can be very useful and person centred documents that successfully direct and coordinate the interventions and support given to the CLA through raising aspirations and building life chances.

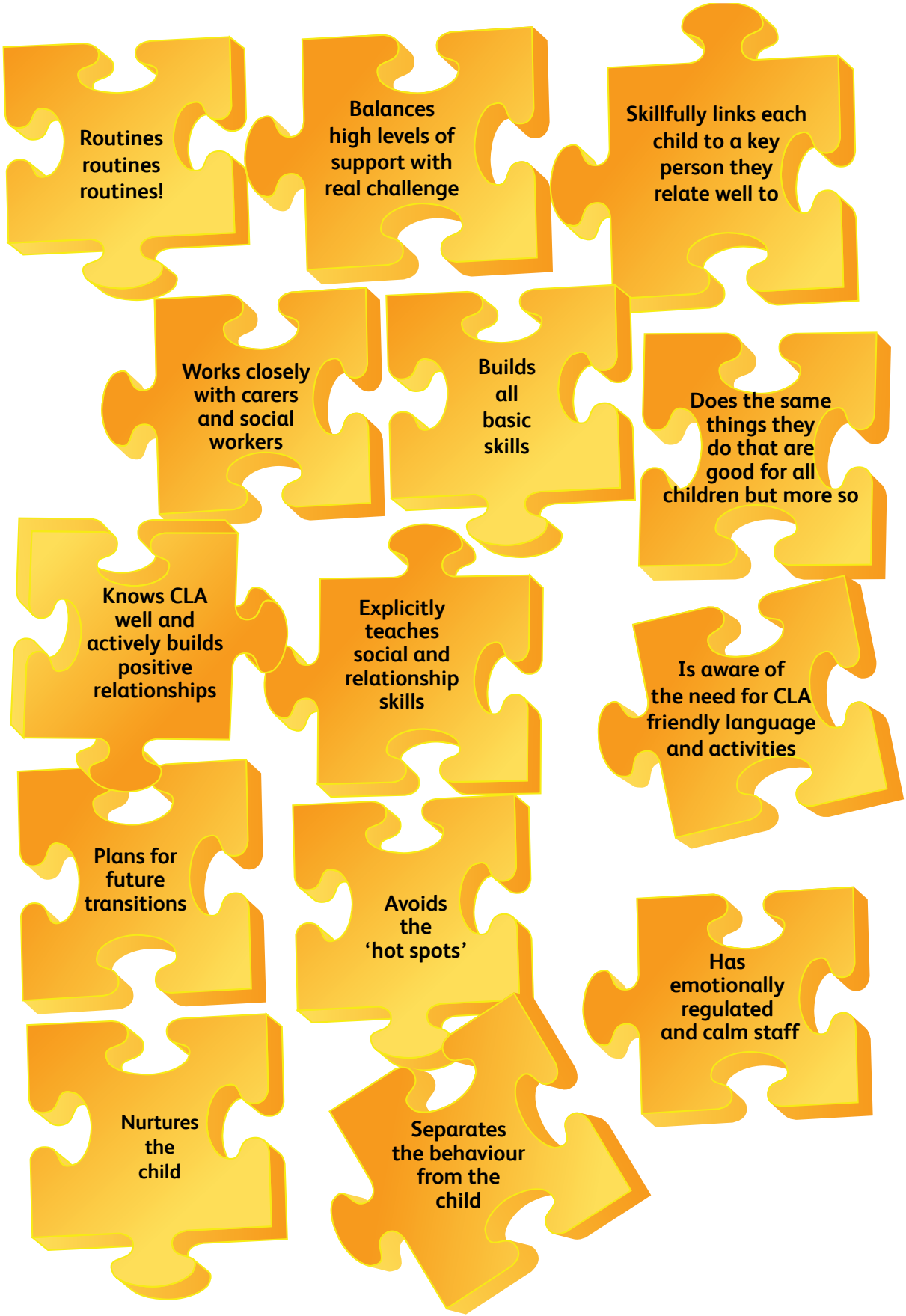
The best PEPs are:

- Shared
- Used
- Updated
- Relevant
- Age relevant
- Have SMART long and short term targets, with actions and time scales
- Aspirational
- Distinct from other plans
- Backed up with a 'one page profile'.

Included in a PEP should be:

- Educational provision, particularly relevant for children in their Early Years;
- Support necessary for the child to help realise their short term and long term achievements and aspirations;
- Catch up support for those CLA whose achievements are lower than is expected given their age and ability;
- Future planning, such as preparing for transitions or anticipated changes for the child or young person;
- "Out of hours" learning activities, study support and leisure interests; and
- School attendance and where appropriate emotional, social and behaviour support.

2.10 CLA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS NEED CLA FRIENDLY CLASSROOMS!



2.11 EARLY PREVENTATIVE INTERVENTIONS

If we know that the pupils in our schools are struggling with the development of their literacy or numeracy skills we have a range of appropriate interventions and packages that we put into place at an early stage to help them to overcome their barriers and to give them the more tailored and structured teaching they need. For children who have experienced an emotional trauma, neglect and abuse their social and emotional skills will need a similar level of additional support to aid development as a child with literacy difficulties. So in the same way as we target literacy we need a package of interventions for social and emotional development. These are not separate for CLA, they are just part of the school provision map. The interventions that CLA benefit from the most are given below but this is not an exhaustive list and there may be many more that will be appropriate.

TARGET GROUP	INTERVENTIONS
All children	'Thrive' trained staff (see page 29) 'ELSA' (see page 29) 'R- time' for the whole class or for a small group that includes CLA Social interactions and relationships support Playground support systems such as buddies and playground stops Literacy and numeracy support until functionally literate and numerate Bespoke packages The local LACE team – see contact details on page 61 for more information.
Young children	Language support e.g. 'Talking Partners'.
Primary age children	'Letterbox' for eligible children.
Year 6	Booster teaching to functional literacy 'WISE UP' PROGRAMME Learning Support Assistant (LSA) intervention Transition PEPs and intensive input to prepare for transition Use of 'High School Starter' type resources
Year 7 - 9	'WISE UP' PROGRAMME Mentoring Options advice and support School based counselling Peer mentoring
Year 10	Increase the focus on GCSE attainments so access to additional resources Youth Mentor support as required Alternative curriculum packages School based counselling Booster literacy Peer mentoring

Year 11	All pupils to be considered for the support necessary to improve GCSE outcomes, focused on: • Course work • Subject support • Study skills • Exam preparation • Study weekends • Homework clubs • Peer mentoring • Study guides for Maths, Science etc
Schools with relatively high numbers of CLA children	A strategic response e.g. CLA specialist TA working with all students as needed taking on a role of a 'significant adult' Tasks could include: • Literacy support • Social interaction groups • Mentoring • Study skills • Foster carer links • Transition support

2.12 EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

We have no wish to state what most education professionals know very well with regards to the management of behaviour. Therefore rather than go into detail, the aim here is to simply emphasise the importance of the core consistent and effective behaviour management strategies that are particularly important.

Top tips for the effective management of behaviour
Be prepared for your class mentally, emotionally and with your general organisation.
Be aware of your own emotions. If you are stressed or tired is there anything you can do to help before you teach?
Build relationships with your pupils, they will help you survive the tricky, more challenging days.
Learn pupil names and use them, personalise your teaching.
Be clear about your expectations, have a few clear and explicitedly stated rules that you apply consistently.
Ensure pupils understand your system for rewards and sanctions and then apply consistently. Remember to use specific praise.
Think about your non verbal behaviour and the messages that you give.
Use positive, constructive language. Let pupils know what you do want not what you don't want; chunk instructions; use language that indicates you expect to be obeyed and most importantly speak respectfully.
De-escalate conflicts and tricky situations quickly. If you feel yourself getting angry then take steps to avoid rather than moving into a 'head on' clash
Try and understand the purpose behind negative behaviour. Why is the child or young person doing what they are doing?

SECTION 3 : RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT CLA WHO ARE PRESENTING WITH MORE CHALLENGES

3.1 THE 'MY LIFE' GLASSES

To effectively work with any challenging and difficult behaviours, we need to consider possible, underlying causes and try to understand its purpose. The key question is "What are they getting from behaving in this way?" Put very simply, when a young baby cries we know that this is because they are either hungry, in pain or in some way unhappy or tired and so we respond with food, comfort and so on. It is similar with adults. If we come home and our partner is grumpy, we ask them what the problem is and try and help them with dealing with it. We know there is a reason for their grumpiness. Similarly when children are difficult to manage we need to understand, not just address the behaviour itself. To do this successfully it may help to think about the following:

- If the CLA has an identified attachment pattern does this explain how they might be thinking/ feeling (please refer to the table in chapter 2 which details this more);
- Think about the child's emotional developmental stage rather than their actual age;
- Think about possible triggers that could be occurring; and
- Look closely at what the child gets from how they have behaved.

What we might see and what we can do

BASED ON WHAT THE EXPERTS IN THE FIELD TELL US AND WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT FROM EXPERIENCE HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS OF WAYS WE CAN RESPOND TO CERTAIN PROBLEMS

The behaviour	The possible 'my life' glasses perspective	So what can we do…?
Fidgety, unable to settle	*" I am not ready emotionally to settle to what I need to do"* As indicated in chapter 2 when we talked about attachment difficulties, there can be many ways in which these impact on executive functioning. This is just one example of this but perhaps one that occurs frequently.	Meet and greet at the beginning of the day to help the child prepare and settle to the day. Settle them into a task, setting short targets to achieve, for example using an egg timer.

The behaviour	The possible 'my life' glasses perspective	So what can we do…?
Problems with PE • Avoiding PE • Poor motor skills	*"I find it difficult to get changed in front of others"* *"I have not had the same early experiences as others and this has led to poor motor skills which I am embarrassed about"* For a number of reasons children who have experienced a lot of abuse or trauma often have very poor body image and will avoid PE and changing in front of others.	Respect the need to change privately for a short period. Help the CLA learn how to change discreetly. Provide the child with differentiated and 'safe' tasks in PE lessons. Provide extra activities on the tricky skills to help the CLA to build and develop their deficit skills.
Break time problems: • Gets into fights • Too rough • Easily becomes angry • Silly and immature, annoys other children	*"I don't know how to behave with friends so have learnt these other ways to get attention."*	Structured teaching of key social competency skills as outlined earlier in this chapter. Ensure all staff are aware of likely problems and are trained to help children to learn to respond appropriately to each other. Staff to supervise closely and preempt situations. Ensure children know which adult to go to if they need a little extra support. Provide a lot of structured leisure / play opportunities at break and lunch times. Ensure child is aware of a 'safe haven' to help them to calm when things become too much. Make use of systems such as playground buddies and playground stops, peer mentors.
Hot spot behaviours	Difficulties at certain times and certain places e.g. on the playground at lunch and break times	Break the pattern – complete a transition early, avoid the hot spot location etc.

The behaviour	The possible 'my life' glasses perspective	So what can we do…?
Unable to cope with disappointment	*"I can't cope with things not being as they should be"* *"Change and the unexpected makes me anxious"* *" I need to know what is going to happen to me"* *"What else is going to happen that I am not expecting"*	Warn CLA in advance, so they have time to get used to the situation. Explain why it is happening. Ensure they are clear about what the change means e.g. what they will do instead, how long it will last for. Accept and acknowledge with them that they will be disappointed – normalise it for the CLA. Look for the positives.
Lunch time problems e.g: • Forgetting to eat; • Not eating appropriately; • Being fussy about food; • Only eating certain foods; • Stealing / Gorging, Hoarding; • Rushing / Hiding food; and • Pushing to the front of the queue to be first to get food.	Food is a basic need for all of us. For many CLA who have experienced a lot of maltreatment in their early life, food may well have been a key part of this. The strategies described as problems may have been ways that have helped them to survive in the past. They cannot be just 'unlearned' because they are now in a place where they will be given as much food as they need. Food is also a comfort to many; a form of nurturing that they actively seek. Some CLA may quite simply have not experienced the routines of social eating and simply not know what to do.	Help children to understand and appreciate the facts about foods: • There is enough to go around; • We all need to eat regularly; • Different people like different foods; and • Sharing food can be a nice thing to do together. Teach the skills of social eating. Help children to experience mealtimes as a very pleasant, positive time to be with others.

The behaviour	The possible 'my life' glasses perspective	So what can we do…?
Constantly wants to talk to adults Finds it difficult to settle to a task or to then focus appropriately on an activity Oversensitive to any possible rejection	*"I cannot be sure that you will always be there to help me and I need you"* Children who have experienced inconsistent and ambivalent care patterns may do anything to seek attention and this can be a useful strategy for them.	Let the child know that they can talk but only at set times. Encourage them to use a system that helps them to learn to wait. E.g. to write on a 'post it' that they have something to say and that you will go to them when you can.
Can't cope with change	*"I have just settled to doing this and now I feel safe and I know what to do"* *"I am enjoying what I am doing and I can't cope/ don't want the stress of moving to another class"* CLA are not the only pupil group who find transitions between activities, lessons, classrooms, teachers and teaching styles, and different peer groups very stressful and hard to manage. For CLA the reasons will be because of the difficulties they have with executive functioning (chapter 2) and because of their past experiences with change and the trauma and stress this has resulted in for them.	Allow more time for an easier transition. Prepare children for all transitions, helping them to be clear about what they can expect. Introduce age appropriate visual cues to support the words. Checklists e.g. for packing away, for a PE lesson, for starting activities. Reassure the child that you will think about her/him when (s)he is in her / his next lesson and that you will see him / her again at a named day or time. For more final transitions e.g. to new schools complete activities that will help them remember such as a photo album, memory book, having a leaving party.

The behaviour	The possible 'my life' glasses perspective	So what can we do…?
Stealing	*"I want that and I have seen it so I shall have it"* *"I wasn't stealing it I was just borrowing it for a while"* Children who have experienced a lot of neglect often simply don't understand the importance of things belonging to others because they have not experienced this themselves.	Stealing is a very emotive word that conveys a lot of meaning. The first thing to do when you think that the CLA is involved with someone else's possessions is check that the facts are correct and then the second step is to find out the child's perspective of the situation. Unless there is complete certainty that the CLA did take the item then the main response is to work on the importance of possessions to others and the need to respect that. A social story can be very useful for that. If it is established that the child was involved then the best response is reparation helping the CLA to find a way to put the situation right. At all times the response should be matter of fact and factual about whom something belongs to and avoid the emotive language of 'thief and stealing'.

The behaviour	The possible 'my life' glasses perspective	So what can we do…?
Lying	*"I don't like the truth (maybe because I am ashamed or scared or it makes me too unhappy) so I shall lie. Even when I know that it cannot be true."* Lying is a common behaviour in children who have experienced a lot of trauma. It is always closely linked to stress even though that may not be apparent to us as adults. It generally goes a lot deeper than just simply avoiding trouble, and it may be a behaviour that a child has developed over many years so has become deeply ingrained.	Always stay calm. Don't get into a direct confrontation about what is or isn't the truth it won't help the situation. Don't discuss this in front of others, students or staff, as this will result in a 'loss of face'. Try and help the individual to find an acceptable way out of the lie, without making a big issue of it, e.g. *"Perhaps what you mean is you thought it was ...but now you realise it was probably..."* If you know it is a situation they may tell a lie about remind them about the need to tell the truth. Use social stories, or other books (e.g. 'Lily tells a lie') to help children to understand why telling lies annoys other people.

The behaviour	The possible 'my life' glasses perspective	So what can we do…?
Running away	*"I am not running away, I am running to something"* *"I need to get away from this situation and I don't know where to go so I shall just go"* *"I can't cope with my feelings of…. anxiety/ panic/ anger/ rejection/ unhappiness/ etc."* For some, when stresses and pressure become too much then fight can be the response. For others it will be flight. Understanding what is happening and why the CLA is needing to escape is the key to an appropriate response.	Ensure the CLA knows where they can go when they are feeling overwhelmed to reduce the need to run. Provide them with a way of being to access their safe area without having to explain or justify themselves to others. Understand what is wanted or the purpose of the running – is it running to rather than from? Talk to the CLA about the anxiety and concern that others feel when they 'run' with an emphasis on the fact that people care for them and get very worried and anxious for them. Again avoid the use of emotive language that attributes a purpose that actually may not be correct e.g. absconding.

3.2 A KEY ADULT/ SIGNIFICANT ADULT (KA)

As we discussed in chapter 2 when we briefly outlined the theories about attachment, we now know that one of the most important ways that we can support children who are encountering a lot of challenges in their day to day experiences of being at school is to provide them with a key adult. This is an adult with whom they can develop an attachment- like relationship. In this current financial climate, it can be difficult to resource access to this support but can be extremely beneficial if used effectively.

Why do some CLA need this?

The degree of loss, trauma and abuse that some children have experienced has major implications for their general wellbeing, emotional development and social relationships. They may have enormous problems in trusting others, understanding themselves and in simply settling and adjusting to day to day situations in the same way as other children. Research has shown the presence of a 'good enough' other, an additional attachment figure at school, can help children to develop the neurological pathways they need and to begin to settle and learn to trust others.

Who should take on this role?

Firstly we should highlight that this is not a role for a designated teacher for CLA, they have enough to do!

THE KEY ADULT (KA) JOB DESCRIPTION

Relationships, relationships, relationships - The KA works hard to build a positive and secure relationship with the CLA so that they become someone who can be trusted and who makes them feel special.

Regular contact - The KA needs to ensure that they have regular contact during the day (meet and greet/ tricky times / when there is a disappointment/ to say goodbye at the end of the day).

Translator - KAs should get to know the CLA so that they understand and when necessary, translate their behaviours or needs to others.

Listener - It is very important that CLA know and trust their KA to actively listen them and to act as their advocate.

Be a solution finder - Sometimes problems that CLA encounter can seem almost insurmountable to them. A KA can be very important as someone who helps them to find solutions.

Provide fun and warmth - Make the most of opportunities for nice times together.

Prevent - Be there during hot spot times, prevent or deescalate when a stressful situation is developing.

Special - Ensure the CLA feels that they are special to you. Get to know what they are doing at home, their likes and dislikes, the people that are important to them and talk to them about these.

Be an anchor point - Get to know the carers, ensure that they know you and be there to link between home and school. Be there for the CLA so that when things are too much they know they have someone they can turn to.

Qualifications needed

This person needs to be chosen carefully as they must be right for the role but they are not going to act as therapist so special training is not necessary. The crucial factor is the ability to build a relationship with the child and so it needs to be someone who can be available in terms of time. They do not need to be with the CLA all of every day but just at times during the day, for example for 'meet and greet' and 'goodbye and see you tomorrow'; 'hot spots' and when the stress is building (see section 3 of this chapter). The amount of time will very much depend on the needs of the child. They also need to not just work with the one child; in fact it is better if they don't. They just need to help the child feel special when they are with them.

It is best to choose a person who:

- ✓ Is motivated and eager to take on this role;
- ✓ Wants to learn and understand the CLA they will be working with;
- ✓ Is prepared to attend training and learn about the needs of children who have suffered loss and trauma;
- ✓ Has the key personality characteristics i.e. stays calm in a crisis, is patient and tolerant, works well as part of a team; and
- ✓ Likes children and enjoys being with them.

3.3 SAFETY AND SECURITY

We all need and will strive for predictability and certainty in our lives, a world that is consistent and with few shocks or surprises. Unfortunately for our CLA this is not what they either have or expect. They are wired to expect problems and threats and so become constantly on the alert. With some CLA we see this, as they are what we call **hyper-vigilant**, constantly scanning their environment and checking things out. Others may be not showing how they feel through their behaviour but nonetheless we do need to be very aware of this need.

How we can help

- Allow time for scanning their environment in each different context as they move during the day;
- Try and ensure staff stability where possible. For example, if a member of SMT gets called when there are difficult situations, then when possible it shpuld be the same person. Avoid staff changes e.g. of midday supervisor (or dining room assistant) wherever possible;
- Routines and consistency - Try and build as many rituals and routines into the lives of CLA at your school;
- Try to avoid timetable changes and fully prepare CLA when they are necessary. Keep the special times for the CLA the same;
- Be consistent about expectations and responses in terms of rewards and sanctions;
- Be as explicit as possible – tell children what is happening, why things are being done in a particular way, why a particular response is being made; and
- Listen to children to find out what worries them.

Create a safe place

Some CLA will use 'flight' as a way of dealing with challenges (and sometimes their challenges can be very minor or unimportant to us as secure adults). They will do this in a number of extreme ways, for example walking out of class, hiding under tables, climbing in cupboards etc. What we need to do is to provide 'safe places' where CLA can go to when they need a little space to calm down / off load and simply regulate their emotions. These can be just small private areas where children sit/ listen to music/ play a game or do some simple activities.

Louise Bombèr (2011) suggests that the provision of a 'calm box' individual to each child can be very helpful. One example in a secondary school was a small area in the classroom of the ALNCo. It was a busy classroom with lots of children working in groups or 1 to 1, so one additional person coming in to use the sitting area was not noticed. It was also a room that pupils could use at break times as an alternative to going out on the playground. As there were usually lots of adults around, pupils knew they would be safe there and if need be someone would give them some time. In a primary school a cheap 'pop up' tent has often served as a useful safe space for children. Very rarely do children abuse safe spaces although this is often a concern expressed by adults.

CALM BOXES

A calm box contains an assortment of ideas for children that will help them to de-stress and lower their anxiety levels. Any resources they may need are also included. Activities are things they may have chosen that they like to calm themselves down. Examples include:

- Playing with twiddle toys for 5 minutes (such as rubik's cubes, worry beads, stress ball and blu tac
- Listening to music
- Tracing/ colouring/ or dot to dot pictures
- Word searches
- Maths activities
- Using play dough

Calm boxes are useful to keep in the classroom as well as the 'safe area'.

Bombèr (2011)

3.4 MANAGING EACH DAY

By careful consideration and planning of day to day routines there is a lot that can be done to help CLA to feel settled and secure and so reduce the chances of upsets and problems during the day.

Meet and greet

The start of the school day can be critical for any pupil and so putting in place some mini set routines can be very important to help a child to settle into the day and prepare for what is to come. Louise Bombèr (2007 and 2011) in her books suggests that there are certain elements to this that are very important to follow:

Firstly try and **protect the time**: it is vital that if we plan to do this that we then do it with absolute consistency and reliability.

Welcome the child- always be pleased to see them and convey this non-verbally as well as verbally.

Time to scan- for those CLA who are hyper-vigilant it is important that we let them assess their environment to get a sense of safety and security.

Engagement – have a chat about yesterday (positives only), last night and journey into school today.

Transitional objects – Many CLA, primary or secondary, may want to bring things in from home. It is good to talk about these and to be interested in their value to the child but then they need to be placed somewhere safely for the day and can be returned during 'goodbye and see you tomorrow'. It is vital that the 'safe place' is completely safe and that the child can trust you about that.

Prepare – Move the CLA into thinking about the day ahead. With older pupils this would include going through the timetable and thinking about what is needed for different sessions, for primary pupils it will be about the types of activities. Try to use time language where you can such as 'before, after, then'.

Keeping them in mind – Let the child know that even when you are not with them that you will be there for them. Tell them when you will see them next.

Time for a pause

When possible during the day it can be helpful to plan in brief pause time. This allows children to just take a little time to calm, reflect, have contact with their Key Adult, talk if things are troubling them, check anything they are unsure off and to generally gather themselves and keep going.

'Goodbye and see you tomorrow'

In the same way as we settle CLA into their day it is also important to ensure that a day ends with a positive and caring goodbye. So again a little time from their Key Adult to talk about the day and the things that have gone well or not so well. Ending with a smile and looking forward to the next school day is the aim; this is not the time for any recriminations or difficult conversations. Ensure that any treasured possessions are returned and that any 'good news' for a home – school book is conveyed.

Ensure that any discussions with foster carers at the beginning and end of the day, that maybe more negative, do not take place in front of the CLA. This type of information may be better shared by Email.

3.5 THE MELTDOWNS: AVOIDING THEM, SURVIVING AND DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH

Unfortunately despite all of the many strategies that can be put in place for our CLA there will always be times when situations just completely breakdown and there may be a meltdown. However if we understand a little more about what happens and why meltdowns occur then we may be more able to avoid them. We also need to be clear about how to respond afterwards so that there is 'damage limitation' and perhaps some reparation. Bombèr (2011) has some very good advice to offer.

Why do meltdowns occur?

A complete breakdown of behaviour when a child becomes unable to control themselves and becomes completely unregulated, usually because they are experiencing very high levels of stress that simply cannot be coped with any longer. The trigger may be something of a very low level but has come at a time when their underlying stress level is so high that it becomes intolerable. Children who have had long histories of toxic and extreme trauma are left feeling inadequate, anxious and out of control. They are far less self aware of their own feelings and so can't assess for themselves when they are getting close to an explosion point and so are less able to take steps to manage their emotions appropriately.

How can we reduce them?

Firstly being aware will help us. Getting to know the individual signs of high levels of stress such as being over reactive, hyper-vigilant, sensory seeking, anxious, fidgety and unsettled, then taking steps to help the CLA to regulate themselves, calm and maybe take some time out will help to de-escalate the situation. Try and avoid taking the view that because nothing obvious has happened they cannot be stressed. We all have an invisible stress bucket that at different times and on different days will have varying levels of stress in it and it is the same with children.

How to respond

Sometimes our best efforts will not work, or the child may be on a 'fast track' to breakdown, so there will be occasions when de-escalation attempts do not succeed. When this is the case, the following needs to be considered:

✓ Try to get the child to a 'safe space' away from others and most importantly away from the classroom;
✓ Use calmers that you know suit the individual, maybe music, a quiet area, a chance to just sit with

an adult in close proximity, doing activities the child finds soothing such as playing with play dough, playing a computer game or simply just talking;

- ✓ Use their calm box if they have one;
- ✓ Be very aware of yourself if you are managing this situation, as during this period your own anxiety levels will increase; and
- ✓ Try and ensure there are others to provide back up if you need it.

What can we do afterwards?

The key to helping the CLA is to find a way to move on, and perhaps 'repair' the damage (figuratively as well as literally) that has resulted.
Steps to this could be:

- ✓ Have a calm and direct conversation about what happened and the outcome, be neutral but show you understand they will now be feeling very upset;
- ✓ Be clear about the need to move forwards and find a way to 'repair';
- ✓ Let them think about how they can do this, help with ideas if necessary;
- ✓ Let them know that you understand it might not be easy and that you can help them where they need it; and
- ✓ Once they have engaged in the reparation, be very clear about how proud and pleased you are with them and how it will have helped others as well who will also be feeing better about things now.

3.6 THE PEP

In chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter we have stressed the value and importance of the PEP in ensuring the best possible outcomes for CLA. When problematic and challenging behaviours start to emerge it is very important that we make an early and effective response to avoid any escalation. The PEP is an important way to begin this process because it will involve all the key people working together in the most robust and effective way possible. This is best done through a more focused process.

Enhancing the PEP

The PEP is the perfect framework to make a comprehensive response to any significant behavioral challenges. The approach is individualised and when there are difficulties can include gathering comprehensive information about problems, the aim being to try and understand the function of the challenging behaviours for the child i.e. **Why do they do what they do?** In particular it can include an emphasis on helping the child to learn the skills that they need to find better ways of behaving.
The development of a PEP into a 'super' PEP for occasions when there are a lot of concerns about behaviour, can be useful in a number of ways:

- ✓ As a coordinated multi agency approach to managing difficulties;
- ✓ It focuses on the voice of the child; and
- ✓ It addresses the need for a personalised learning approach for our most vulnerable young people.

How does this differ from other plans that we use already?

Firstly, a PEP can avoid the need to have lots of different plans; it is one plan that can fulfill the role of a PEP but also:

- An **IEP** (Individual Education Plan)
- An **IBP** (Individual Behaviour Plan)
- A **PSP** (Pastoral Support Plan)

Secondly, it is absolutely based on the CLA's perspective through considering the function of the behaviour. As we have emphasised, effective management of challenges depends on using the 'My Life' glasses because behaviour tends to have a purpose and it is essential that this is considered when seeking the best way to support and manage difficulties.

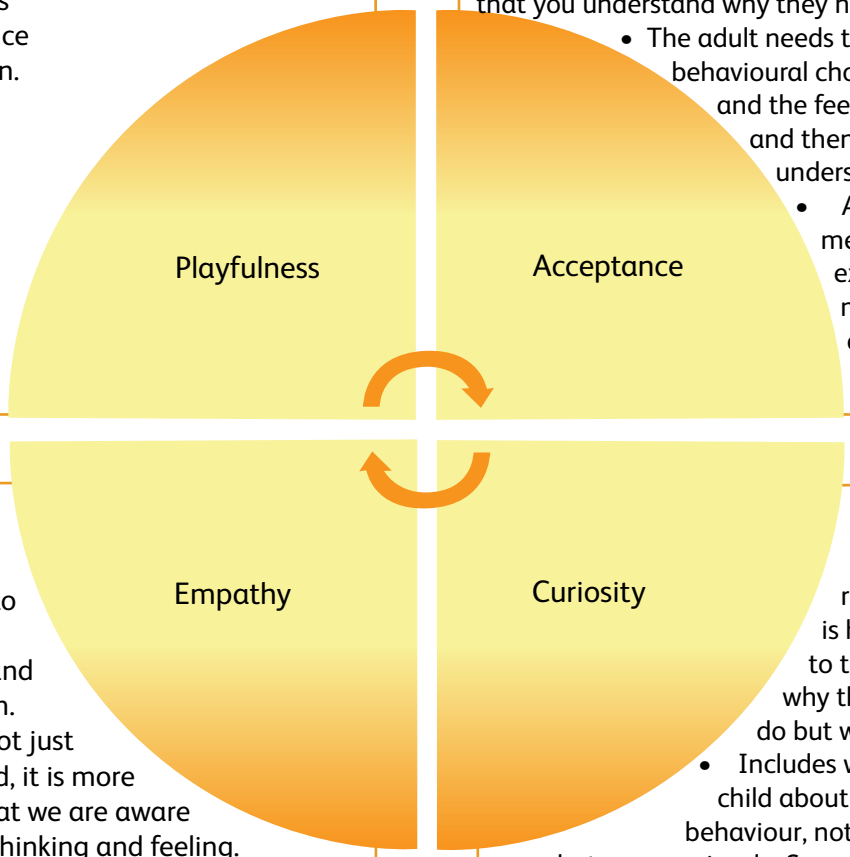
Thirdly, it is a positive approach that considers strengths as well as the difficulties.

Who organises the PEP meeting?

Anyone can liaise with colleagues to arrange completion of a "super" PEP, but normally the Social Worker and / or the designated teacher for Children Looked After would arrange it.

3.7 TRY THE PACE APPROACH

PACE is a way of working with children and young people that aims to provide a pathway for building positive and effective relationships. It is based upon research from neuroscience (Bombèr and Hughes 2013) and focuses on helping children to achieve an 'open and engaged state' which is central to being able to settle to learn. There are four elements to it which are described below:



Playfulness

- At times jokey or playful interactions can help children and young people feel engaged and a part of a relationship. It helps children to experience and enjoy a little fun.
- A light hearted, relaxed and fun attitude that does not pose a threat to a child

Acceptance

- Provides the foundation of the experience of safety for the CLA.
- Understanding and accepting what children say and do. Not condoning behaviour but conveying to the child that you understand why they have done it .
- The adult needs to try and accept the behavioural choices the CLA is making and the feelings that underlie them and then ensure that the child understands this.
- Acceptance does not mean ignoring or excusing extreme behaviours but more that the focus is on the person not what they have done.

Empathy

- Children need to experience our empathy if they are to understand and trust that we value them and want to support them.
- True empathy is not just saying we understand, it is more reflective showing that we are aware of what the other is thinking and feeling.
- The adult becomes attuned to the child's experiences (as they view them subjectively) and reflects this back to the child in every way (eye contact, facial expression and voice tone)

Curiosity

- The starting point for building up a relationship with a child is helping them to learn to think and to understand why they are feeling as they do but without shame or fear.
- Includes wondering with the child about the 'why' of their behaviour, not in a confrontational way but more curiously. Sometimes curiousity means making a best guess and then trying to think it through with the child.

Once again here we are only providing a very brief overview of something that could be an entire book. For an easy to read book that explains this and much more in much greater detail please refer to:
Bombèr and Hughes, (2013). *Settling To Learn: Why Relationships Matter In School* . Worth publishing.

3.8 MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

In the introduction we highlighted that one of the most significant difficulties in terms of poor outcomes for CLA is the number of those who go on to develop later mental health problems. This is not an exclusive problem for those in the care system. We know that the numbers of children regarded as having mental health problems generally is increasing. Given the severity of the trauma and abuse many experience it may not be surprising that CLA are at greater risk. All of the information we have presented in this resource is an attempt to reduce the likelihood of this occurring through increasing the knowledge, skills and understanding of those who work in schools. However, unfortunately there will always be some CLA who may go on to have mental health problems and so it is important that we are alert to this, and take action when and where necessary.

Below is a list of common behaviours that a pupil with mental health difficulties may present with, which could be a useful aide when considering the pupils' needs:

- *Little pleasure shown at a time when pleasure would be expected*
- *Regression to the behaviour expected of a younger child*
- *Becoming bossy or over controlling*
- *Self-harming behaviour*
- *Becoming withdrawn*
- *Loss of previously acquired skills*
- *Substance abuse*
- *Sudden changes of behaviour, mood or appearance*
- *Niggly, persistent health complaints with no clear cause*
- *Problems with losing/gaining weight*
- *Problems with toilet training or wetting/soiling inappropriate to age or medical issues*
- *Not very responsive to hurt, loss or pleasure*
- *Raised or unusual levels of anxiety*
- *Fighting frequently, temper outbursts*
- *Deterioration in standards of work*
- *Unusual patterns of school attendance*
- *Initiating sexual play*
- *Ritualistic play*
- *Disturbed sleep*
- *Lack of interest or motivation*
- *Being destructive*

Taken from a resource provided by Northamptonshire Schools website (2014)

Generally a lot of these behaviours will be just normal reactions to day-to-day events that are more difficult for them such as transitions, life events or anniversaries. However, monitor carefully and signpost CLA for further assessment and support if:

- ***Problems persist or increase in frequency;***
- ***There are a number of different risk factors already present; and***
- ***These behaviours are increasingly becoming a barrier to their learning or the learning of others***

Within chapter five we have provided information about different services and how they may help you, but in particular you may want to consider consulting with your school Educational Psychologist or the Looked After Children in Education (LACE) team in the first instance.

Chapter Four

Working with Others

Children who are part of the care system inevitably have complex networks of support built around them. From the time that the initial concerns about the family care are identified they enter an arena of professionals who will move in and out of their lives. The figure below demonstrates the extent of this. In itself, this cannot easily be avoided but for it to be an effective system of support, good communication, coherence of approaches and close partnership working are going to be crucial. Everyone needs to work collaboratively to ensure the best possible outcomes for CLA. In particular the link between the school and the carer is important so that the CLA's needs and the approaches to meet these are successfully developed.

This is best achieved through regular dialogue with carers and other professionals (and much more than just at formal reviews). Ensuring that carers know how to have easy contact with schools and how they can help their children at home to support their learning is also very important.

As part of the preparation in writing this resource, focus groups were held with some of the people who have a central role to play in the lives of CLA, as well as with the young people themselves. In this chapter the key outcomes and messages identified as being important for inclusion in this resouce will be outlined.

VOICE OF THE CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON (with thanks to Dynamix for their very skilled support in obtaining these views)

Like all children and young people, CLA have some strong views about how they can be better supported at school. It is very important that these are listened to with respect, as what they have to say is highly informative in helping professionals to be more successful in ensuring they achieve good outcomes and are happy and settled at school.

Here are some of their messages:

When asked: "How do other people see a looked after young person?"

CLA said:

"No family"

"Has baggage"

"Seen as a label"

When asked: "What is difficult about being a CLA?"

A CLA replied:

"Different rules – not allowed to sleep over at a friend's house or go on trips like other kids"

When asked: "What is difficult about school?"

CLA said:

"You get less attention and less help."

"You get treated differently."

"You get bullied."

"Teachers do not understand you."

"You feel that nobody listens to you – nobody understands. "

"Brother and sisters going to different schools"

"[The looked after child] lost his rag because he was shouted at – being shouted at is a trigger as it reminds him of life before being in foster care."

Looked after children may live further away than other children from the school or may travel to school by taxi. This can make them feel different from others and isolate them, restricting their access to after school activities.

Having to travel further to get to school or having to go by taxi can isolate CLA and restrict their access to after school activities. Here are some of the things that children have said about this:

"Not trusted to walk to school, because they think he might run away."

"Have to get a taxi."

"Carer's daughter goes to another school and she gets driven there, so foster child has to get a taxi."

"Carers might not want to drive all the way to school."

There is a difference between how primary school children and secondary school young people feel on the subject of teachers knowing their circumstances.

In primary schools most children felt all teachers should know about the child's background and know that they are CLA.

"Teachers should know about our background."

"Social workers should explain to teachers as well as talking to children."

"All teachers should know who is fostered."

"A friend or teacher who can check in and understand your situation so they can tell how things are going for you and know how you are doing."

"Everybody in school should know who is fostered."

In secondary school, young people feel that only a few trusted teachers should know detailed information about their circumstances.

"Get a favourite teacher – that you can go to. That knows your personal situation."

"Not every teacher needs to know."

"One or two teachers should know (e.g. head teacher, head of year, a teacher of your choice.)"

"The key teacher should say [to other teachers] "If there is an issue with child X, then come tell me."

In secondary school there should be one or two key teachers (or the head of year). This person should be available when the CLA needs to talk. They should also check in regularly with the CLA to see if they are OK.

"Knowing who to go to in school if I need help."

"A head teacher that understands my situation."

"Teachers should know the signs of when someone isn't okay and respond to it."

It is very important to children looked after that they are seen as just the same as children who aren't fostered. It is important for school staff to treat children looked after the same as other pupils and to treat children and young people fairly.

"Teachers treat you the same as the other pupils."

"Look out for everyone, not just children and young people who are looked after. But to make sure and be fair to children and young people who are looked after."

"Don't want to be treated like a mate, want to be treated the same like everyone else, like a young adult."

"Teachers should know what it's like to be fostered – put themselves in our shoes."

"Teachers should spend a week in foster care to know what it's like."

WHAT FOSTER CARERS (FC) WANT US TO KNOW?

THE FCs WE SPOKE TO, TOLD US ABOUT SOME VERY POSITIVE EXPERIENCES THEY HAD HAD WITH SCHOOLS, PARTICULARLY PRIMARY SCHOOLS. THEY WERE PLEASED WITH THE EXTRA SUPPORT AND HELP CHILDREN HAD BEEN GIVEN AND FELT SOME SCHOOLS WERE VERY CARING.

Aspects that help CLA to be happy at school:

'Nice' adults

Children are in school most of the day. If an adult is negative towards them they have to cope with it for a long time.

When teachers try and understand the child

They are effectively using the 'my life' glasses.

Children being given responsibilities

Having a job and feeling important e.g. turning on the computer / helper of the day.

Treating CLA equally

Let them blend in but also individualise when necessary.

Recognition that every one is different

Not thinking all CLA are the same so, for example, reward systems that are tailored to individual.

Liaison with the FC before certain activities

So you can agree how to manage it e.g. Family Tree work – may be better if child is able to do two trees – one for the foster care family and one for birth family.

Be sensitive to some events

E.g. Mothers day / Christmas. Work in partnership with the FC in thinking how to manage it. If special things are being made e.g. a Christmas card then allow them to make two if necessary.

Allow the children to share their life stories if they want to

Be aware that this might need to be managed sensitively.

Decide with the FCs what they are to be called and use this with the child

Use Home School books to communicate

But ensure positive comments as well as other things.

Meet with the FC briefly before and after school as much as possible

Especially at difficult times.

Welcome the FC into the school for different events

E.g. Fayres / Concerts / Sports days.

Involving FCs in meetings and reviews

Recognising the importance of relationships with others

Help for the child in learning how to make and sustain friendships.

Areas where schools could do better:

"Involve Carers in helping children at home - with reading, number skills and with improving behaviour at school"

"Secondary schools should and could communicate positive comments, not just moan and be negative. Also they could focus more on the small things that are good; use different systems more effectively e.g. text / email / phone calls/ journals. A little gesture goes a long way!"

"Teachers should have teaching training, initially and as they go through their career. They don't know enough about development and attachment. Then they should use what they have been taught."

"More focus on educating all children that home lives differ – not everyone lives with their mam and dad"

"Teachers should have higher expectations of all CLA"

VIEWS OF THE DIFFERENT PROFESSIONALS THAT WORK MOST CLOSELY WITH CLA IN SCHOOLS.

We also met with a number of different professionals that support CLA such as designated teachers; members of LAs, CLA Education Support Teams; specialist EPs; Social Workers and an Independent Reviewing Officer. Here are their 'top tips' for CLA Friendly schools:

Barriers that schools can present
Lack of effective communication so… • Past histories are not acknowledged; • Important information not getting to the right people; and • Schools not transferring information about a child's past and educational history. Negative attitudes: *" We all have problems"* *"I am not a social worker/ therapist/ expert"* *"It is not fair on the other children in the school"* *"We shouldn't have to have children like that here"* Lack of training, knowledge and awareness of general needs of CLA **A tendency to assume child is happy if no obvious issues but "still waters run deep"**

What makes a school a CLA Friendly School?
✓ Ensure that CLA thinks / feels and believes they belong in the school, that they feel safe, special and cared about at all times; ✓ Have the key information about CLA e.g. care status; background; ✓ Tailor approaches to meet the needs of the individual child; ✓ Establish, explain and maintain routines with children; ✓ Always end every day on a positive; ✓ Be aware of unstructured times: • Provide a safe place for CLA to go where necessary; • Give them a job to do; • Plan their activities; and • Use buddies. ✓ Spend time on core social skills that others would learn in the home e.g. table manners/ board games / helping with chores; ✓ Use a home school book but ensure it is positive, not just a tally of the day's problems. Highlight the good news as well as the concerns; ✓ Know who to contact for additional support when it is needed; ✓ Understand the terminology (as set out in chapter one); ✓ Communicate; ✓ Use PDGLAC and other forms of additional support funding effectively; and ✓ **Take responsibility not just constantly blame others when things are not going well.**
Every school should….
✓ Listen to the voices of their CLA; ✓ Build relationships with carers and work closely together to address challenges; ✓ Have adults who take responsibility for their own emotional regulation; ✓ Be vigilant about what other children say to CLA; ✓ Address the negative attitudes towards CLA in the same way as a response would be made to racism; ✓ Address wellbeing, mental health and social relationships as well as the academics; ✓ Attend CLA Reviews and then share the information with key staff; ✓ Recognise the importance of the PEP – it is a key document not a paper exercise; ✓ Acknowledge responsibilities as Corporate Parent – treat CLA as you would treat your own children; ✓ Prioritise CLA for additional support where they may need it, not wait for things to become so bad it is too late; ✓ Ensure regular whole school training; and ✓ Give CLA designated teachers time to fulfill their responsibilities;
Working with the Social Worker
✓ Get to know your child's Social Worker – they are very important people in the lives of CLA; ✓ Work with them to ensure a coordinated approach; and ✓ Remember like all professions they are all different – don't assume because you have known one that you didn't value that 'they are all the same'.

Preparing reports
✓ If you can't attend a meeting then a report helps enormously; ✓ The report shouldn't contain any surprises for the child at the review – ensure they are aware of what you have said; ✓ Provide the full picture: academic (attainments and targets)/ social relationships/ emotional issues / behaviour/ attendance; ✓ Include the soft outcomes as well as the hard data; ✓ Be positive / honest / sensitive; ✓ Don't be influenced by the views of others; and ✓ Support what you say for example if there are behavioural problems then also provide the Individual Behaviour Plan that shows what you are doing.

SOME KEY MESSAGES

"Every day is a new day"

"Control your own emotions"

"Pick your battles"

"Think about their underlying concerns and challenges"

"Don't make comments personal – it is the behaviour not the child"

"Remember it is never the child's fault that they are in care"

Closing Comment:

Thank you for taking the time to look at this document. We hope it has achieved its aim of increasing levels of knowledge and understanding about supporting children and young people who are, or have been, in care.

We would like to bring this resource to a close with the lasting comments of our CLA:

"Treat us the same but differently"

Chapter Five

Where to go for further advice, support and information

PEOPLE AND SERVICES THAT CAN HELP

Within both RCT and MT there is a LAC team who can help and advise you on most matters. Whenever there is anything worrying you about a CLA in your care or you just simply want to find out something then contact this team. If they can't help you themselves they will be able to signpost to someone who can.

Contact details are:

Merthyr Tydfil,
Jess Jones LAC Coordinator
Room 126, Unit 5, Triangle Business Park,
Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4TQ
01685 727484 / 07800 708725
Jessica.Jones@Merthyr.gov.uk

Rhondda Cynon Taf,
Hannah Bevan LAC Coordinator
Ty Trevithick, Abercynon,
Mountain Ash, CF45 4UQ
01443 744049 / 07786 523939
Hannah.m.bevan@rctcbc.gov.uk

SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED IN THIS RESOURCE

Attachment in the Classroom: The links between children's early experience, well-being and performance in school *by Heather Geddes (2006).*

Inside I'm hurting: Practical strategies for supporting children with attachment difficulties in schools *by Louise Bombèr (2007).*

What About Me? Inclusive Strategies to Support Pupils with Attachment Difficulties make it Through the School *by Louise Bombèr (2011).*

Observing children with attachment difficulties in school: a tool for identifying and supporting emotional and social difficulties in children aged 5-11 *by Kim Golding (2012).*

The Teacher's Introduction to Attachment: Practical Essentials for Teachers, Carers and School Support Staff *by Nicola Marshall (2014).*

Why can't my child behave? *by Amber Elliott (2013) - Particularly useful for foster carers and parents.*

My Social Stories Book *by Carol Gray (2002).*

Teaching the Unteachable: Practical ideas to give teachers hope and help when behaviour management strategies fail *by Marie Delaney (2009).*

RESOURCES THAT ARE USEFUL FOR WORKING WITH CLA

A. Kelly. (2003). Talkabout – Developing Social Communication Skills. **Speechmark Publishing Ltd.**

A. Kelly. (2003). Talkabout –Building self esteem and relationship skills. **Speechmark Publishing Ltd.**

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USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

Adoption UK

British Association for Adoption and Fostering

Centre for Child Mental Health

Family Futures

Foster Network UK

Nurture Group Network

Post- Adoption Centre

Winston's Wish

Yellow Kite

Chapter Six

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