



Still Listening, Still Learning: Personal Outcomes in 2025 and Beyond

Story title: Better transitions through care: Working with care experienced young adults to understand what matters.

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Overview:

Transitions through care are an area of focus for young care leavers in Scotland. Challenges include resource issues, such as housing, the need for consistent staff support and the need for staff across sectors to be more aware of the specific challenges and opportunities facing this group as they move into independent and semi-independent living. We recently worked together with five young care and justice experienced adults. and a video company called Braw Talent to produce a short animation called “**Winging It** “. The video is an introduction to the REALTOOLKIT - our Leaving Care Resource for young people and the workforce who supports them. REAL stands for Relationships, Empathy and Love.

Like so many toolkits, there is a risk that it disappears and doesn’t get used because people don’t know about it. The animation is based on the experiences of young people needing practical information when moving on from care, and is intended to draw attention to the toolkit. We hope that the video and the toolkit give young people and all corporate parents easier access to vital information which will support young peoples’ transitions.

What have you had to do differently and what made this possible?

Given the distances between mainland and island communities, we did most of our work together online. We met each worker and young person individually to introduce the project and then as a group to come up with the best way to evaluate and refresh the REALTOOLKIT, making it more accessible.

We met as an online group for seven sessions in May 2025. Each young person could also have a character and voice over recording session with the animator or simply share a recording of their part. After building remote relationships online, we had already got to know each other to some extent. However, it was quite different when we finally met together in Glasgow in May 2025 to do our final preparation and launch the video. Although it is getting increasingly difficult to make the case for face-to-face contact, this story highlights the benefits that can be entailed.

Has this helped to keep a focus on what matters to people in face of current challenges?

The animation was launched on May 8, 2025. Several participating authorities and allied professionals who attended the short launch event explained they feel more able to come to us with direct enquiries about what our organisation can offer in terms of learning, policy and practice support and opportunities for young adults to make their voice heard.

These post launch conversations have led to us offering an authority wide conversation (face to face) to discuss what is working well. This will be on the theme of housing options for care and justice experienced young people.

The young people involved will bring the animation to multi agency corporate parent meetings in their own areas to share their insights. They will also be involved in outreach to youth justice settings with this animation: **'Winging It'** and another one.

What have you noticed in terms of outcomes or impact?

As is often the case, some outcomes were predictable; a few unexpected outcomes appeared throughout the project.

Voice/Confidence – Two young people had already experienced their voice influencing service developments; this was new to the others. We noticed the young people changing through the project, especially the ones who had not done anything like this before. They became more invested in their story / how their voice was going to be used as the project developed. One of the young people felt able to lead and host the presentation to a multi-agency and public group online.

Connections – The young people made new connections through meeting other care experienced young people. They were concerned to know who already knew each other and were relieved when they realised that they were all new to each other and therefore all in the same boat. We spent a full day together in Glasgow, before and after the video launch, to which they all contributed. When we went out together for dinner that evening, the dynamic changed. They spoke more openly about themselves,



telling stories about themselves that they hadn't shared before; sometimes funny, sometimes sad, always interesting. All the young people spoke about feeling lonely on moving to their first tenancy and fears about the potential loss of support and relationship with their throughcare worker. Contact details were exchanged and at least a couple of them will stay in touch, albeit remotely, given the distances. However, regardless of ongoing contact, we noticed how the young people enjoyed meeting folk from different walks of life and with diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, sexualities and accents. It was acknowledged that this had given some at least, new experiences and opened their minds to different people, with one talking about how it had 'taken her out of her comfort zone'.

Contributing – all the young people emphasised that they want to receive the right support as they continue into adulthood and hope the video will help that way. However, for all of them, making a difference for other care experienced young people was also a motivation. A key thing that they wanted was for staff in different settings to be aware of and interested in both the practical and emotional needs of young people coming through care, as one said: "stuff I wished I had known". *"I want to advocate for myself, doing these*

animation projects helps you listen and speak out and well. I don't want to be tied to social work forever. I'm going to be the first in my family to go to college and university". (R, 19)

How did this make you feel?

I am so proud of all the young people we worked with. They each brought something different to the project and were great to work with and ultimately supported each other in the process. And it was also a joy to watch them lighting up through involvement, especially when we finally met up together in Glasgow. I hope that they all recognise the skills they developed through the project and new experiences that might give them confidence to tackle new situations in future. I am happy to have been able to start or join conversations about the lack of a Guarantor Scheme for private renters, where to get help for reading and writing, driving lessons, moving local authorities and student funding.

What have you learned through this?

Prioritising young peoples lived experiences and views seemed to give them and the workforce hope for change. Combining co-production with a creative approach diverts focus *away from* systems and processes. It gave the young people and their workers a space to share and exchange a range of positive and negative experiences whilst noticing resource and support inconsistencies across Scotland. However, I also learned that relationships are hard to build online, especially with a group who don't know each other. The supportive shortcuts and body language of face-to-face communication are missing.

During all the online sessions, except the final two, most young people kept their cameras switched off, feeling uncertain of meeting new people and the new setting. So, until they met face to face, the young people hadn't seen each other. Even on meeting together one young person took a while to take her hood down and feel comfortable.

More time getting to know each other online might have helped, and work online now has its place. However, the project reinforced for me the benefits of meeting face to face where possible.

Anything else you want to tell us?

[The Real Toolkit - A leaving care resource by Staf](#)

[Winging It: Why We Created The Real Toolkit on Vimeo](#)

