



Renfrewshire Language Policy

The Promise¹ makes clear recommendations about the power of language in perpetuating the stigma around Care Experience. As an organisation, we must endeavour to improve our use of language and adopt simplified, nurturing language.

The Renfrewshire Language Policy aims to create a set of guidelines for how we speak about and describe Care Experience and Care Experienced children and young people. We must ensure that we move away from overly professionalised words and phrases to adopt person-centred language, which challenges existing stigma. Staff should be encouraged to consider the impact of the language we use when engaging with children, young people and their families and modify this language where possible.

Through extensive consultation with young people, staff and reference to the TACT Alternative Language Dictionary², we have proposed new and updated terminology that should be adopted where possible.

The table below outlines some commonly used terms that have been deemed negative and stigmatising by children, young people and adults who have lived experience of care. This is not an exhaustive list, and individual services and organisations are encouraged to review their language. We understand that this language will continue to evolve, and there will be amendments to this list in future.

<u>Word</u>	<u>Possible Alternative</u>	<u>Guidance</u>
Abscond	Run away Go missing Missing from home	It is important to note the facts in this situation, as many young people may not be “running away” from something but rather “running to” something which can be driven by their current circumstances.
Advocate	Advocate is acceptable	There must be a clear definition for the young person of an advocacy worker versus an advocate and their role. This should be explained in an age-appropriate way.
Asylum seeker	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	This term is currently in use across Renfrewshire
Birth/ Biological Parents	Parents, Family, Mum, Dad Tummy mummy Child or young person's preference	This should be decided by the preference of the child or young person. If appropriate, the views of foster/ adoptive parents should also be considered around the use of these terms. Note the information below this table for minute takers.
Care Leaver	Care Experienced	In recent years, there has been a shift towards Care Experienced in Scotland, recognising the lifelong impact of care.

¹ The Promise - <https://www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Promise.pdf>

² TACT Alternative Language Dictionary, Language that Cares - https://www.tactcare.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/03/TACT-Language-that-cares-2019_online.pdf

		It is important to note the difference between being Looked After and Care Experience regarding entitlement to statutory support.
Challenging behaviour	Distressed behaviour	This phrase emphasises that all behaviour is communication. Staff should be encouraged to use the facts of a situation in case recording to avoid misinterpretation.
Children's Unit Unit	Children's House	
Difficult to place	Can't find an appropriate/ suitable home Important to find the best home possible	It is important to consider the language we use when communicating this challenge to a child or young person. Staff should be encouraged to use the facts of a situation when recording this, e.g., "Crossreach were unable to offer an appropriate curriculum or support."
Drop out	Early school leaver	This term is already commonly used across Renfrewshire
Foster carers	Family, foster family, my family, foster dad, foster mum, their name	Child/ young person's preference See note below for minute takers
Full potential	Aspirational Ambitious Able to flourish To ensure I have access to good opportunities Able to flourish	We must ensure that we are aspirational for our Care Experienced young people
In care	Another home Away from home Living with a different family in a different home My home	This should be decided by the preference of the child or young person. It is important that a Care Experience child or young person decides when their care setting feels like home to them. Ensuring the facts are used and being mindful of the audience of the information.
Isolation Time Out	Reflection time	It is important that children and young people are supported to reflect. Reflection time does not have to be done in isolation, with children and young people being supported to work through their feelings.

LAC Review	Child's Plan Meeting Looked After Review	The word review implies looking backwards to the past rather than looking to plan for the future more positively.
LAC visit	Home Visit	Home visit is commonly used across Renfrewshire
LAC/ LAAC	Care Experienced Or Looked After Child/ Looked After and Accommodated Child	LAC as an acronym should never be used (including in emails between professionals). It should always be used in full as "Looked After Child" or "Looked After and Accommodated Child". This should never be used when engaging directly with children and families, where Care Experienced is the preferred terminology. It is important that children and young people understand why the professionals who are involved in their lives are using terms such as "looked after". These terms should be explained to them in an age-appropriate way.
Leaving care	Moving on	
Lived Experience	Living Experience	This term reflects the lifelong nature and impact of Care Experience
Moving placements	Moving to a new house	Ensuring the facts are used and being mindful of the audience of the information
Permanence	Forever home Forever family Happy and settled	
Placement	Home House House/Home/ Preference for children and young people	This should be decided by the preference of the child or young person. It is important that a Care Experience child or young person decides when their care setting feels like home to them
Respite	Short break Stay over	The term "short break" is commonly used across Renfrewshire
Restrained	Safehold	
Siblings	Brothers and Sisters	This is already being adopted across Renfrewshire as outlined in the Brothers and Sisters policy.
Social Worker	Young person's preference must be used, e.g., the name of their Social Worker	This should be decided by the preference of the child or young person.
Therapy	Talking through sessions	It is important to understand the stigma attached to attending therapy for many young people while acknowledging that counselling can occur in many settings.

	Help to work things out Counselling	It is also important to acknowledge that for many young people, a therapeutic relationship can occur outside of therapy, e.g., between a young person and a teacher
Transition	Preparing for change Moving on	

Areas for Consideration

Child or Young Person's Preferences

For certain words and phrases, such as how they refer to individuals, we should allow children and young people to choose how they would like to describe each person. It must be ensured that the child or young person is not pressured to adopt a term they are uncomfortable with.

"Children and young people will be supported to ensure professionals use the terms, names and words that the child or young person prefers when describing issues that relate to their lives and experiences" (The Promise, Plan 21-24, p19).

This requires minute takers to accurately record these preferences within the formal minutes to ensure consistency for the child or young person and accuracy of records. This information should be included on the attendee list at the beginning of the minutes, with participants actively encouraged to use this language.

Statutory Language

It is acknowledged that there will be times when statutory language enshrined in legislation must be used. It is important to recognise when this is the case, and steps must be taken to ensure that these terms are not used as acronyms under any circumstances (e.g., LAC should be "Looked After Child").

"There will be times where the statutory framework requires certain terms to be used, but this should be done sparingly, with the aim of the reduction of stigmatising language at every opportunity" (The Promise, Plan 21-24³, p19).

³ The Promise, Plan 21-24 - <https://thepromise.scot/resources/2021/plan-21-24.pdf>