Language That Cares

Show you care by using 'language that cares' when you are talking to children, young people and their families, with other professionals, or writing in their files.

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All children and young people are individuals; and children and young people in Coventry have asked us to always ask them how they would like us to refer to the things which are important to them, such as their preferred name (and making sure we spell their name correctly), their pronouns, and how they want us to refer to the place where they live or the adults in their lives.

Show you care by using 'language that cares' when you are talking to children, young people and their families, when you are discussing children, young people and their families with other professionals, and when you are writing in children and young people's files.

This table shows some of the words, phases, and acronyms which children and young people in Coventry have said they do not want us to use, and some suggested alternatives:

Let's make sure all children, young people and their families know that we care about them by using 'language that cares'.

DON'T USE	USE
Acronyms	Terms in full and ensure you explain what this means clearly and check that the child, young person and their family understands.
CIN	Child in Need
LAC	Child in Care
Placement	Where I live
Respite	Staying with another person for a short time/ Going on a short break
Does not engage	Have not found the right way to engage with them yet/ Have not built a relationship with them yet
Case	Child or children
Contact	Time with family/ friends
Challenging behaviour	Expressing their emotions

Children and young people in Coventry would like us all to know:

"You are writing on my file about my life and what's happening to me. I'm more than a statistic, I'm a person in the end".

"How you act and what you say is important. Take time to understand me and get to know me".

"My behaviour today might not be about my past experiences or trauma; I might just be having a bad day. Ask me what's going on, don't make assumptions".

"Some of the abbreviations like LAC or CIN sound wrong. If a young person accesses their file and doesn't know what these mean, they can come across as us 'lacking something' or making us feel like we did something wrong".

"I'm a person, not a product".

"Please think before you talk and write. What you write now stays with me over my life".

"Please make sure I know what is happening to and around me. Don't assume I know what a PEP meeting is, what a LAC Review is, what a Core Group or ICPC are. Take the time to explain these things to me in a way that I will understand and check that I have understood".

"In meetings, don't talk about me like I'm not there".

"Think about me, make sure I know why, communicate in a way I understand".

"I think when anyone is documenting on a young person's personal file, it needs to reflect who the young person is".

"I don't know all of these abbreviations, but I just don't think they're necessary for our files".