



**PURE INSIGHT**  
connecting care leavers



# Pure Insight

Evaluation Report



May 2021  
Dr. Claire Baker



# Summary

## Introducing Pure Insight

- Pure Insight is a charity based in North West England working with care leavers.
- It came about in response to continuing evidence of poor outcomes for many young people leaving care and the variability of service provision to support them.
- The central aim of Pure Insight is to meet the needs care leavers identify in their life and support young people to thrive.
- Core services it delivers include: mentoring, psychological well-being workers, support to care experienced parents and peer group and participation activities.

## About the review: what we did

- Pure Insight commissioned Dr. Claire Baker to conduct an evaluation of its work. The evaluation took place between late November 2020 and March 2021.
- The main aim of the review was to explore people's views and experiences of working with Pure Insight. Those taking part were asked about their involvement, what works well, the challenges, impact and their ideas for the future.

The evaluation focused on two specific questions:

- 1 What do different people (care leavers, volunteers, local authority representatives and staff) think about the work of Pure Insight?
- 2 Does Pure Insight make things better for care leavers?

- A total of 26 interviews were conducted. The primary data collection was supplemented by a review of background information provided by Pure Insight staff. The review focused on Pure Insight activity over the last 2 years from April 2019 to March 2021 (including 1 year of delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic).
- This summary provides an overview of Pure Insight and the main findings from the evaluation (a full report is also available).

## Findings: experiences and impact of Pure Insight

### How people describe and understand the work of Pure Insight

People taking part in the discussions were asked how they would 'describe Pure Insight to someone who has not heard of it'. In their descriptions people emphasised a range of things:

- Firstly, lots of people emphasised the core elements of the organisation; that it was a charity, working with care leavers and local authorities and was based in the community.
- Pure Insight was described as working alongside the local authority to bridge gaps in support and offer additional support that was different to children's social care.
- Descriptions also highlighted that leaving care was a difficult time and that young people didn't always have the support or people they needed.
- One of the main things respondents stressed was that Pure Insight was there for any care leaver who needed support; they didn't have to meet eligibility criteria.
- The type of support available wasn't prescriptive but was dependent on each individual young person and what they said they needed help with. It delivered both practical and emotional support.
- Central to the provision of support were the relationships created. Many respondents talked about how Pure Insight focusses on lifelong connections and was not a one-off or short-term service.

### What is Pure Insight trying to achieve?

- Improving the quality of care leavers' lives, on their terms, was described as the overarching aim of Pure Insight.
- Four interconnected aims were also identified: (1) ensuring care leavers have authentic and consistent relationships, (2) creating a sense of community, (3) ensuring care leavers have the support they identify they need and, (4) empowering young people to take control of their life.
- Interviewees were from different local authority areas, involved in different types of Pure Insight services and occupied different roles, yet they gave a remarkably cohesive narrative about the work of Pure Insight and what the organisation is trying to achieve.

## Different types of Pure Insight activities

### Mentoring: Key findings

- The mentoring service is premised on the belief that care leavers can benefit from a sustained one-to-one relationship with a volunteer who is neither family nor a professional worker.
- Over the last two years, the work of Pure Insight has resulted in: 144 mentors being approved and trained; 257 young people supported by a mentoring co-ordinator and 124 mentoring relationships matched and progressing. Twenty-two mentoring relationships experienced unplanned endings and so far 34 mentoring relationships have progressed past two years.
- Evidence suggests that Pure Insight has well-developed systems in place to deliver this service. Mentor selection, training, matching and support were all highly regarded. These were facilitated to a high standard by a staff team who demonstrated expertise, experience and warmth. The programme was perceived to prepare both volunteers and young people very well for the mentoring relationship.

## Mentoring: Key findings (continued)

- Of central importance to Pure Insight's mentoring model, was the role of the mentoring co-ordinator. They provide support to both mentees and mentors. The structure provides flexibility for care leavers to 'stabilise' prior to matching with a mentor.
- Mentoring was described as offering care leavers a different kind of relationship. Care leavers valued this additional support; it provided practical help and advice, and emotional support.
- Many volunteers stated that their experiences echoed what had been emphasised in their training, namely that they needed to take things slowly and be guided by the young person's own pace.
- The evaluation found that mentors and mentees felt well supported by Pure Insight.
- Pure Insight was viewed as approachable, professional, experienced and effective and provided a mentoring service that those interviewed had confidence in. Things that helped the Pure Insight mentoring approach to work well were related to (1) the 'essence of mentoring'; the fact that mentors can offer one-to-one support, consistency and time. It provides care leavers with someone just for them; to talk to and help them pursue their goals. Trust and shared experiences underpinned successful relationships. The creation of this relationship was helped by the fact that: the mentor is a volunteer, not paid, wants to help and is separate to social care. It is something the young person chooses.
- Other factors that enabled the Pure Insight mentoring model to succeed were related to (2) specific elements of the Pure Insight model including (but not restricted to): rigorous recruitment of volunteers; good quality training; time taken to get to know everyone to aid matching; mentoring co-ordinator availability and specialist knowledge; being clear about length of commitment and strengths-based approach (such as not knowing young people's background).
- Not many challenges were cited in relation to mentoring; the main one related to mentors managing their own personal expectations of the pace of 'progress'.

“

I think by the nature that Pure Insight can offer one to one detailed and specific assistance, it's not possible for a local authority to do that, it's not got the resources to give one person all that time, so that's a massive benefit that Pure Insight can offer. (volunteer)

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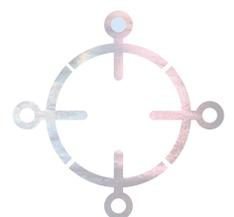
“

Me and my mentee are so close now but [young person] admitted at first she was hesitant. At first I'd check in and not push it and she liked that. (volunteer)

”

## Psychological Well-being service: key findings

- The psychological well-being service comprises of psychological well-being workers and fast-track trauma counselling. The work was seen as much needed. It helped to address the big gap in support available to support care leavers with their mental health needs.
- Over the last two years 166 young people worked with a Pure Insight psychological well-being worker and 116 young people worked with the fast-track trauma counselling service (Beacon counselling).
- Pure Insight offered a more 'out-reach' style of working. Care leavers valued this less formal and flexible approach. They could meet workers where they wanted, the service was not time-limited or restricted to certain types of intervention(s). Sessions were guided by the things young people wanted to work on.



- Relationships with workers were described as respectful and staff were pivotal to the success of the service. They were perceived to be: empathetic, non-judgemental, skilled and enthusiastic.
- Just two challenges were mentioned: ensuring there was sufficient capacity to meet demand for the service and occasional difficulty in finding appropriate places to meet.

“ Nothing has been offered before, only usual mental health services with 6 month waiting list, but this counselling was great... straight away, no messing around. It was great for me. She is a trauma counsellor, all about things happened in my past – helped educate me why maybe I feel the way I do at the moment, so fact comes out to me, I don't think I'd go on my own. (care leaver)

”

“ I'd given up so much hope in getting help, like in trusting anyone, but they've stuck around, there's no time limit, there's no "we've got to be done by this date", it's "we are here for as long as you need us", it's like reassurance. (care leaver)

”

## Supporting care experienced parents: key findings

- Becoming a parent is life changing and can be hard work. Many care leavers don't have their own family to rely on or offer help at this time. Pure Insight have developed two interconnected ways to offer more intensive support to care experienced parents: (1) parenting angel volunteers and (2) Pure Insight parenting workers.
- Over the last two years Pure Insight parenting worker(s) have supported 52 young people and as part of this, 85 children of care leavers. Ten young people were supported by parenting angels (NB: 36 care experienced parents have mentors)
- These services can offer a lot of practical and emotional support and guidance, in the absence of other help. Part of the offer is designed to be temporary and young people direct what help they want to get out of crisis or for new parents. Some support is long term such as childcare and short breaks for a parent
- Like other parts of the service what worked well was the ethos and approach of staff; they were described as very helpful, caring and unprejudiced.
- The main challenge related to supporting (the small number of) care leavers whose children were in formal safeguarding processes. Pure Insight helped parents during this time. Divergence in opinion (from the view of the local authority) of care leavers' parenting capacity were discussed by a small number of people as challenging on occasions.

“ We go to some of statutory [safeguarding] meetings, able to articulate what's going on, share good stuff that is happening... keep an eye on the plan and where professional thinking at. It's about challenge and offering a different perspective. (staff)

”

“ Helped me out massively with baby items, anything that I've needed it's been absolutely amazing, I've ended up with too much, so I've given to others. (care leaver)

”

## Peer groups and participation activities: key findings

- Pure Insight facilitates a range of opportunities for care leavers to come together in peer groups and take part in different activities, including: (1) Peer group social opportunities (2) virtual groups and contact and (3) the Pure Insight young advisers panel which is part of the governance structure of the organisation
- Over the last two years, 144 young people have taken part and 292 young people are signed up to the Facebook groups.
- Care leavers emphasised that, generally, they really enjoyed taking part in these activities. They were fun, a change from their normal routine and a chance to relax away from home. They provided a chance to meet others and get to know the wider staff and volunteer team at Pure Insight.
- Closed social media groups were popular amongst care leavers. There were different ones to join (cooking, creative ideas, swap page etc). The groups were useful; they provided lots of information, helped prevent boredom, connected people and were an opportunity to support others.
- Respondents agreed that Pure Insight involved care leavers in the design and running of service. This worked well because it was part of the culture of the organisation; there was a clear expectation that this would happen, and mechanisms were in place to support this.
- Two main challenges were cited in relation to delivering peer group and participation activities: (1) difficult group dynamics which led to some young people not wanting to attend, and (2) accessibility, linked to individuals' other commitments (such as work or college).

“ Meeting new people made my day cos normally I just sit in my flat on my own thinking 'I hate meeting new people' but it actually helped me build my confidence to meet new people... I got to admit the day was amazing don't think I've had a better day out in my life. (care leaver) ”

“ Think it's really good, to have a sense of community and also introduces you to other people in same kind of boat, but also other people who work for Pure Insight, so able to know everyone, so just feel like one big community, so feels like quite calming for when go on other trips, quite reassuring and makes you look forward to it. (care leaver) ”

“ All of Pure Insight have Facebook pages so makes it a lot easier to message as well, they can see when you are online, and they are online, makes it a lot less formal so makes it more accessible. (care leaver) ”

“ Got really good outcomes... been a really good relationship, really good offer for our care leavers. (local authority representative) ”

## The Building Blocks of Success: what helps Pure Insight to work well?

- In the view of those that took part in the evaluation Pure Insight have got it right in terms of (1) what they offer, (2) how they do this and, (3) who they have as part of the organisation.
- Learning from the evaluation suggests that the ingredients for success relate to:
  - ▶ The configuration of the organisation: the fact it is separate to the local authority, is independent and a charity.
  - ▶ The breadth and range of services offered; each was equally valued for the contribution they made. Responses to young people's needs were not constrained by role or service. Young people genuinely felt Pure Insight could help them in lots of different areas of their lives. The cross-cutting nature of support meant care leavers could easily move between components. It also helped people forge a sense of community.
  - ▶ Cutting across all the service components was a shared value base. At the centre of this was (1) the importance of developing quality relationships including: showing genuine interest, being strengths-based, empathetic and non-judgemental, ensuring consistency and an explicit emphasis on creating lifelong connections. Within the culture of the organisation there was an expectation that (2) 'lived experience' steered the design and running of the service.
  - ▶ Pure Insight worked well because of the practice model. Working in ways that were: unprejudiced, created availability and offered time, led by what young people identified as important, demonstrated flexibility in approach and nurtured partnerships.
  - ▶ It was, people felt, a flexible and responsive organisation. It worked with young people on their terms. There were no eligibility criteria to be met or pre-conceptions about what each individual needed. It adapted provision in response to what care leavers said worked for them.
  - ▶ Partnership working was valued and prioritised: co-location of Pure Insight staff with local authority colleagues, investment in development of relationships with Personal Advisers and partner organisations, attendance at team meetings, explicit recognition of Pure Insight work in local authority strategy documents and regular liaison with senior management.
  - ▶ Ultimately, what was seen as contributing to success, was the people at Pure Insight (staff and volunteers) they were the most important aspect in making the service work so well, their attitudes, knowledge and skills. They showed understanding, empathy and care. Senior leadership was described as impressive and trusted.

“

I think the model they have got having mentors and having young people always close to the heart of the organisation is a good one. They look for mentor representatives on the organising committee and have got care leavers on it too and I think that a good central foundation (volunteer)

”

“

She's never spoken down to me, never looked at me like I'm anything other than another human being and that's what they're all like, even something which might seem like that, quite small, it's really important. (care leaver)

”

- Pure Insight was held in high regard by those who took part in this evaluation; everyone agreed it was an organisation they would recommend to others.
- Most felt Pure Insight offered something different, yet complimentary, to statutory leaving care support. A different type and quality of relationship was described. As described elsewhere, it was less formal, more relational and natural. It offered more time and flexibility. It focused on the support young people wanted, not what services had decided care leavers were entitled to. It was less constrained by rules or age-led cut off points. The premise for the service was different; it was something young people chose, and it was independent. However, for Pure Insight to work well there needed to be close partnership working with the local authority.

“

They don't have a set-in stone thing they do before they meet a new person in the care system, it's like we'll meet you and we'll take it from there, no plan before. From my point of view...everything is very specific for each person, they do things different for every person, the things they help me with, is probably very different with someone else who might need more boundaries or don't understand the concept of boundaries... I suppose actually getting to know the people not the numbers on the pages, is what is different. (care leaver)

”

“

Just get this whole new life, whole new bond with people, it's a massive group, they building every day, getting new local authorities, getting staff, and getting care leavers involved as staff members... it's amazing, it's hard to explain until you're involved you don't understand how much there is going on, I know about the café, not done that yet and the outdoor [activities] I've done a bit, but can't wait to do more, there's loads. (care leaver)

”

## What are the challenges and barriers Pure Insight faces?

- The main challenges facing Pure Insight identified through the evaluation discussions, broadly fell into three themes:
- Firstly, there were different practical barriers. Some issues related to the current reach of Pure Insight; making sure all care leavers knew about the service and locating them in areas that everyone could access. Others were linked to making sure the organisation continued to recruit high quality staff and volunteers and secure sufficient funds.
- Secondly, some difficulties in partnership working were identified. There could be challenges when working with different partner organisations that had different cultures and systems. There was a need to strike the right balance in terms of information sharing and demarcation of role and responsibilities. A critical factor to the success of Pure Insight was whether the partner local authority was receptive to the way Pure Insight worked.
- Finally, the wider context in which Pure Insight operated was not easy; care leavers experienced structural and societal barriers related to poverty, poor housing and stigma.

## Does Pure Insight make a difference?

Everyone was asked for their views on the impact of Pure Insight's work.

These were examined in relation to 3 main areas: **1** impact on individual care leavers taking part, **2** impact on volunteers and **3** impact on local authority.

### 1 Pure Insight impact on care leavers

- All those interviewed were able to identify advantages and changes in care leavers' lives which they attributed (at least in part) to working alongside Pure Insight. Whilst the detail of these varied depending upon the individual, there were ten common areas:
  - ▶ improvements in well-being and mental health
  - ▶ shift towards employability and increased engagement in education or work
  - ▶ improved self-confidence and self-efficacy
  - ▶ more stability in housing
  - ▶ expanded number of people in life and reduced isolation
  - ▶ improved life skills, such as ability to manage money
  - ▶ feeling more optimistic about the future
  - ▶ improved confidence in parenting
  - ▶ preventing issues escalating and problems spiralling
  - ▶ impact on whole life, so feel happier.
- Several of those interviewed were keen to acknowledge that Pure Insight helped to kickstart, accelerate and support these changes and improvements in care leavers' lives, but it was young people themselves who were pivotal to making them happen.

### 2 Pure Insight impact on volunteers

- All volunteers identified the impact working with Pure Insight had had on their lives. The main things related to changes in their own attitude or value-base and the benefit they got from feeling they were making a difference. Other things mentioned, by one or two people, were increased knowledge about care leavers, increase in own self-confidence, gaining friendship and positive influence on career.

### 3 Pure Insight impact on local authority

- Interviewees shared their views on the impact Pure Insight brought to local authority support services for care leavers. The discussions centred on five main areas. Pure Insight added value by: (1) providing extra services and resources to the ones commissioned, (2) sharing skills and expertise with local authority colleagues, (3) enhanced support delivered 'out of hours' and more frequently which gave reassurance to local authorities, (4) money and time were saved (linked to positive outcomes for care leavers) and (5) care leavers who the local authority did not work with could receive support.

“ Having Pure Insight allowed me to have structure back in my life, helped me to meet new people, come out of my shell, speak to people and build relationships with others, best thing could have asked for. (care leaver) ”

“ They, I don't know how to explain it, they make you feel like you're somebody and not just some care leaver person. (care leaver) ”

## Pure Insight in a time of Covid

- Many appreciated the efforts from Pure Insight to continue to deliver support and to increase and adapt the services offered during the Covid-19 restrictions.

## Looking to the future

- Views were sought on 'the future vision' for Pure Insight; how would people like to see the organisation develop in the coming years? The main areas discussed were: (1) sustainability (ensuring Pure Insight continued to secure sufficient funds to deliver quality services) and (2) consider expansion of services offered in areas already worked in and into new areas. Though many urged, this should not dilute the quality of the work already offered.
- Other future vision ideas for Pure Insight included:
  - ▶ Work to establish Pure Insight as a centre for excellence in supporting care leavers and share experience and expertise with other organisations.
  - ▶ Work to raise awareness of Pure Insight services amongst the public – some wanted Pure Insight to be a charity name that everyone knew about.

## Concluding thoughts

- The evaluation tells the story of an organisation about which care leavers, volunteers, staff and external stakeholders were enthusiastic and supportive. It provides evidence of a well-managed and motivated service. All of the core components were highly praised. Services were valued for helping young people with practical and emotional issues. A strength of Pure Insight's service was its focus upon the needs of young person and flexibility in meeting these needs.
- The importance of authentic and consistent relationships permeated the evaluation findings; they were very important to young people's quality of life and well-being. Supportive and caring relationships with Pure Insight helped care leavers in many ways.
- Leaving care remains a challenging time, young people are coping with the transition to adulthood, often without consistent support from their families. Pure Insight offers young people enhanced support which makes a difference to their lives. The challenge facing Pure Insight going forward appears to be: how can they share the success of their practice and increase the reach of their services, so more care leavers benefit from their successful model whilst maintaining the high quality of their offer?

“

Think it makes me feel hopeful – there's someone there I can talk to; someone to support me but also hopeful for other care leavers as well...that there is Pure Insight there for them if they need it. (care leaver)

”

“

Very, very, very, very good to try to keep you engaged...They won't give up even if it takes them months, they are relentless. They try their best to do whatever, go the extra mile all the time, they are relentless, don't pressure you, remind you that it's there if you need it, waiting till you are ready. (care leaver)

”

“

If I didn't have Pure Insight, I've no idea which way my life would have gone, I don't think it would have gone well. They've motivated me to see that there is a life there for me. (care leaver)

”

“

There's been countless times when I've sworn, shouted, done everything and they've not thrown me away. (care leaver)

”

“

When people leave the care system there's not a great deal of assistance to help with general things like how to fit a washing machine and stuff like that but they [Pure Insight] will support you no matter what you need... suppose what most people would have if their dad was around... whatever gets thrown at them they are quite willing to take on and they will help in any way they can and they are more than just rules and regulation. (care leaver)

”



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# Introducing Pure Insight

## Who?

Pure Insight is a charity founded in 2013. It focuses its work on supporting care leavers<sup>1</sup>. The service works with young people from age 16 up to around 28. At the time of this evaluation, it operated across 4 local authority areas in the North West of England. There were around 20 staff and 250 volunteers (as of March 2021). Many staff, members of the leadership team and board have lived experience of growing up in care or overcoming other challenges in life (such as homelessness or mental health problems).

The central aim of the work is to:

Provide opportunities for care leavers to stabilise, prevent crisis and progress to a life that isn't just about surviving. In short, Pure Insight wants to enable care leavers to flourish.

## What?

Pure Insight offers a range of core services including, but not restricted to:

- Mentoring service
- Psychological well-being service
- Support to care experienced parents
- Peer groups and participation activities.

These activities are the focus for this review. Pure Insight is funded through a mix of voluntary grants (e.g. National Lottery) and commissioned work, primarily from children's social care in local authorities.

**Over the last two years  
(April 2019 to March  
2021) Pure Insight have  
worked with:**

**458**

**individual care leavers  
(and 81 of their children)**

<sup>1</sup> Care leavers are young adults who have spent some of their childhood in the care of a local authority, for example, in foster care or a children's home. Some care leavers are entitled to support from the local authority that looked after them, and that support can continue until they are 25 years old.

## Why?

Pure Insight came about in response to continuing evidence of poor outcomes for many young people leaving care and the variability of service provision to support them. Care leavers are expected to make the transition to independence at a young age. Many do not feel ready or prepared for this. The quality of the planning and preparation they receive can be inadequate.

After care life is often challenging. Care leavers say it is a time marked by financial and housing worries, anxiety about the future and loneliness. Some care leavers experience a rise in mental health problems. But evidence suggests support with these issues is not always readily available and does not meet the specific needs of individual care leavers.

Many care leavers report a gap between the reality of their life and their hopes and plans. Young people say that coping with transition to adulthood is easier when they have people to rely on and go to for help and emotional support. In reality, care leavers experience diminishing or lost support networks upon leaving care. Care leavers want people in their lives who 'have their back', are available, show genuine concern and support, given in a way that is not perceived as contractual. (Atkinson and Hyde<sup>2</sup>, 2019; Baker, 2017<sup>3</sup>).

## How?

Pure Insight services are designed to provide "a mixture of genuine love and care, in addition to practical help and support" to meet the gaps highlighted by young people in their lives. The organisation works in partnership with statutory leaving care services.

Pure Insight's work is underpinned by a set of values:

- **Belonging** – places to belong and people to belong to
- **Courage** – telling the story of who we are, our way
- **Integrity** – choosing courage over comfort, choosing what's right and practising our values.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/85570984/Hyde\\_and\\_Atkinson\\_2019.pdf](https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/85570984/Hyde_and_Atkinson_2019.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://coramvoice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Care-Leaver-Rapid-Review-24.10.17-final-proof-2.pdf>



## About this review: what we did

Pure Insight commissioned Dr. Claire Baker to undertake an independent evaluation of their work. They wanted to explore people's views and experiences of working with the organisation, the impact so far and gather ideas for the future. Specifically, the review set out to answer two main questions:

What do different people (care leavers, volunteers, local authority representatives and staff) think about the work of Pure Insight?

Does Pure Insight make things better for care leavers?

To help answer these questions the following activities were undertaken:

- 26 people took part in individual telephone interviews lasting around 1 hour. Participants were from different roles and local authority areas, and had been working with Pure Insight for varied amounts of time:
  - ▶ 10 care leavers
  - ▶ 8 volunteer mentors
  - ▶ 3 local authority representatives
  - ▶ 5 staff/trustee
- 10 key Pure Insight documents and outputs were reviewed<sup>4</sup>.

An information sheet about the evaluation was provided and an informed consent form was signed (or verbal consent given) by all participants before they took part in interviews. The consent form included details about confidentiality, safeguarding and recording. The names of the young people, mentors, staff and the local authorities have been removed to protect their anonymity and identifying details removed. Further information on sample characteristics and limitations to the review can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> These included: board and funder reports, case studies, resilience wheel examples etc.

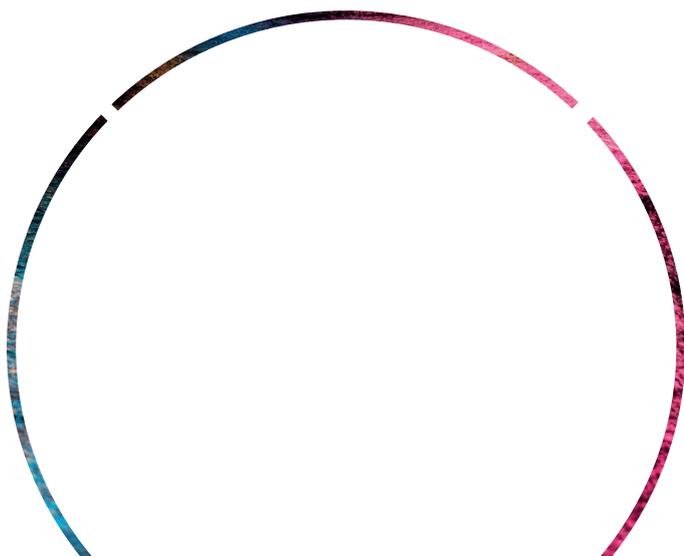
The work took place between November 2020 and March 2021 and focused on Pure Insight activity over the last 2 years (1 year service delivery during Covid-19 pandemic). To help foreground the views and experiences of care leavers, volunteers and others, the report contains extensive verbatim quotes to focus attention on what interviewees said themselves.

All the data was analysed, and key themes recorded. This report describes the main findings from this work.

## Report structure

This report begins by looking at people's understanding of Pure Insight (Chapter 3). It then examines, from the perspectives of those who took part in the evaluation, the main components of Pure Insight's work; mentoring service (Chapter 4), psychological well-being service (Chapter 5); support to care experienced parents (Chapter 6) and peer group and participation activities (Chapter 7).

In later sections there is consideration of what helps Pure Insight to work well (Chapter 8), and challenges faced by the service (Chapter 9). Following this, the impact of the service for care leavers, mentors and local authorities are discussed (Chapter 10). In the final sections, reflections on delivering Pure Insight services during the Covid-19 pandemic are shared (Chapter 11), views on the future (Chapter 12) and concluding thoughts are presented (Chapter 13).





# How people describe and understand the work of Pure Insight

## What is Pure Insight?

Everyone (staff, care leavers, local authority representatives and volunteers) taking part in the interviews was asked: **'How do you describe Pure Insight to someone who has not heard of it?'**

The following main elements were highlighted:

- Lots of people emphasised that Pure Insight is **a charity**. On occasion, people expanded on this, describing it as 'grass-roots', a 'roll your sleeves up and do charity' and an organisation that was **community-based** and invested in local volunteers.
- Also highlighted by many respondents was the fact that Pure Insight works with **young people who have been in care** and usually begins to support them around the time when they are leaving care.
- People said that **leaving care was a challenging time** because support often drops away. Young people have to rely on themselves more and often don't have wider support networks of people around them to help.
- Respondents emphasised that Pure Insight was there for anyone who needs support; they **didn't have to meet eligibility criteria** (other than being a care leaver).
- The type of support given by Pure Insight was referred to as **dependent on each individual young person** and what they said they wanted help with. Participants emphasised that Pure Insight's offer was **not prescriptive or pre-defined**.
- Most of those interviewed said Pure Insight **offered a range of services** which helped care leavers with both practical assistance ('helping with the everyday') and emotional support (making sure young people had 'someone in their corner').
- Central to providing support were the **relationships created**. Many respondents talked about how Pure Insight **focuses on lifelong connections**; it is not a one-off or short-term service. Some in their descriptions talked about Pure Insight as 'genuinely caring'.
- On occasion, people described Pure Insight in relation to support provided by local authority leaving care services; participants thought that Pure Insight **bridged a gap, offered additional and different support that children's social care services could not, or did not, provide**.



“ I say they are a charity based, and working alongside the local authority to support care leavers in the community but in a way that is pulling in the wider community, so trying to link young people up with their community to combat isolation they can feel when living alone at a young age. (local authority representative) ”

“ Always say, just someone who comes round to see me, but someone who is genuinely interested. Then would say they can help you with pretty much anything and they are more than just support, they actually care. (care leaver) ”

“ We provide that stability, guidance that these young people maybe never had, or we're trying to. One of the things people take for granted is the support and security that we have. Family and a support network are a way to anchor you. These young people have not got that. Lack of guidance, tips on the way and support, as well knowing you got that back up. Thinking back to when I was 18, if I'd grown up in care then at 18 being told, 'off you go, live your life' and to be expected to know what you're doing, and not be scared or intimidated.” (volunteer) ”

“ Doesn't matter who comes through our door for help, what they have done or might do. There is the recognition that no one is perfect, everyone's got flaws and faults, everyone, and done things wrong, but also all have got a potential and all are missing that closeness from someone who cares about them, on their side no matter what. (staff) ”

“ It is a charity, just for supporting young care leavers, it depends on what the needs are as everyone's got different specific needs. (care leaver) ”

“ It's a grass root charity, it's invested in local communities and in volunteering, amazing humans live in those communities and finding those connections for the longer term. It's not one off, or a one or 2 session type offer, lasting relationship and impact on a young person and on their life course, is just huge. (staff) ”

“ Simply a charity that takes on volunteer mentors to pair them with willing care leavers who have expressed an interest in having a mentor to help them through those years when they come out of care and find their feet, problem solve and work as closely or not as the relationship demands. (volunteer) ”

“ I don't think our offer has limitations, we are really broad and can help with housing, bills, relationships, mental or physical health, literally help with whatever they need more support with. Help to find their feet, go to the shops, budgeting or go to hospital for a serious appointment. All about making relationship, building trust, so they can rely on us, so they have security in a time when they are not really feeling very secure. (staff) ”

“ I reckon they can help you with any problem you are going through, and literally come and talk to you if you've got anything on your mind. (care leaver) ”

## What is Pure Insight trying to achieve?

Those taking part in the evaluation were asked for their views on what Pure Insight was trying to achieve through their work.

Analysis of the responses showed the main aim participants talked about was improving care leavers' quality of life.

There were four additional interconnected aims:

1. Ensure care leavers have relationships in their lives that are non-judgmental, authentic and consistent.
2. Create a sense of belonging and community for care leavers.
3. Make sure care leavers have the support they need to help them achieve the things they want to achieve and provide a safety net.
4. Empower care leavers to take control of their life and make the changes they want to see.

The evaluation found strong evidence of a shared understanding about what Pure Insight does and is trying to achieve. It was striking how similar respondents were in their descriptions of who Pure Insight are, why they are needed and what and how they do their work. This cohesive narrative was notable, given the interviewees were from different local authority areas, involved in different types of Pure Insight services and occupied different roles.

“ Better equip young people so that when they go out into the world, when independent of care system bubble, that they have a better understanding of real life and real world, and can learn to form appropriate relationships. (volunteer) ”

“ Trying to fast track them to a better life. Cut out the years of chaos and not being able to get anywhere by giving them the support they need to thrive; trauma informed, needs led, stage led organisation. To live a better life in whatever way makes sense to you. (staff) ”

“ To make life better for a care leaver. (care leaver) ”

“ It's trying to help them live their best life. (volunteer) ”

“ I think it’s in part to help care leavers feel as though they are part of, as opposed to apart from society, they’ve got a contribution to make, they are valuable human beings. (staff) ”

“ When the kids been in the care system, in whatever form, they are looked after kids but then when you reach 18, all the statutory support falls away, there’s a gap and danger of falling through the crack. Filling that gap while they find their adult feet enables them to push on to achieve their best, avoid the pitfalls and option of good guidance and a path. That’s really it. (volunteer) ”

“ Just trying to make life a little bit easier for kids who have left care, as it’s so uncertain when you leave care, well it definitely was for me. Don’t know what to look for, what things to do in order to get jobs and their aim is just to make life easier, be there if need them, be like a parent or the support they’ve not had but really need, that’s what I think their aim is, to be that person for someone who needs it the most. (care leaver) ”

“ I think it is to give them a better chance of leading a happy, successful life than they might have otherwise. Just to try to recognise the fact they’ve come from a disadvantaged start in all sorts of ways, emotionally, education, motivationally, financially, all sorts of ways, and I think Pure Insight is trying to redress that balance in many ways. (volunteer) ”

“ Helping to build resilience, get to a point in their lives, they are able to think, I can do this. We build relationships so they feel they can do it on their own, don’t want to build relationships where they become dependent, want them to thrive. Working with people who maybe not had strong relationship before. Get them to where they want to be, wherever that is. (staff) ”

“ To make us better people and to progress in life to where we want to be, and they see potential in people to push them. (care leaver) ”



# Pure Insight mentoring service

## Introduction

This section describes experiences of the Pure Insight mentoring service. It relates to the first question of the review:

What do different people (care leavers, volunteers, local authority representatives and staff) think about the work Pure Insight do?

## About the review: what we did

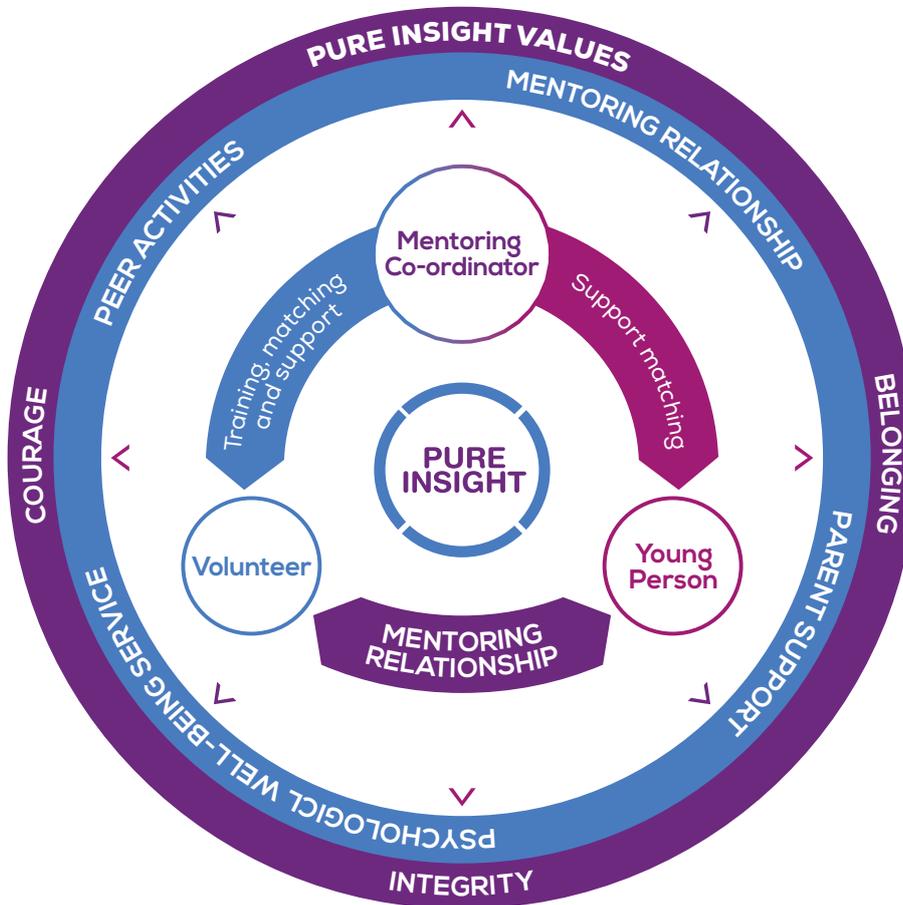
It **tells the story of the mentoring journey**, from the perspectives of those who took part in the evaluation. It starts by describing the core elements of the mentoring model, it then looks at what motivates people to get involved and how they experience the training and matching processes. After this, it looks at how things develop as everyone gets to know each other, describes the type of things mentors and mentees do together and work on. The section ends by examining people's reflections on what is working well and the perceived challenges in delivering the mentoring service.

Impact from mentoring (which relates to the second question the review set out to explore) are discussed later in the report (see chapter 10).

## About: Pure Insight mentoring

The Pure Insight model of mentoring is well established and has been a core part of the service offer since the inception of the charity. The service sits within the wider offer of Pure Insight support (as shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1: Pure Insight mentoring model within wider service offer



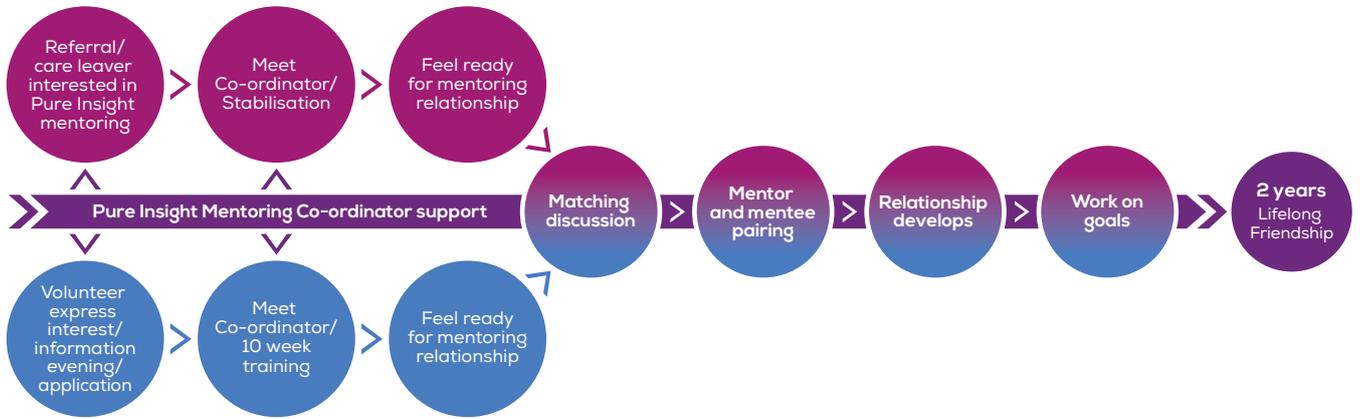
Pure Insight's mentoring service is **premised on the belief that care leavers can benefit from a sustained one-to-one relationship with a volunteer who is neither family nor a professional worker.**

Whilst there have been some developments over time (e.g., increased focus in training on care experienced parents) the main tenets of the mentoring model have remained consistent. The core elements and approach involves:

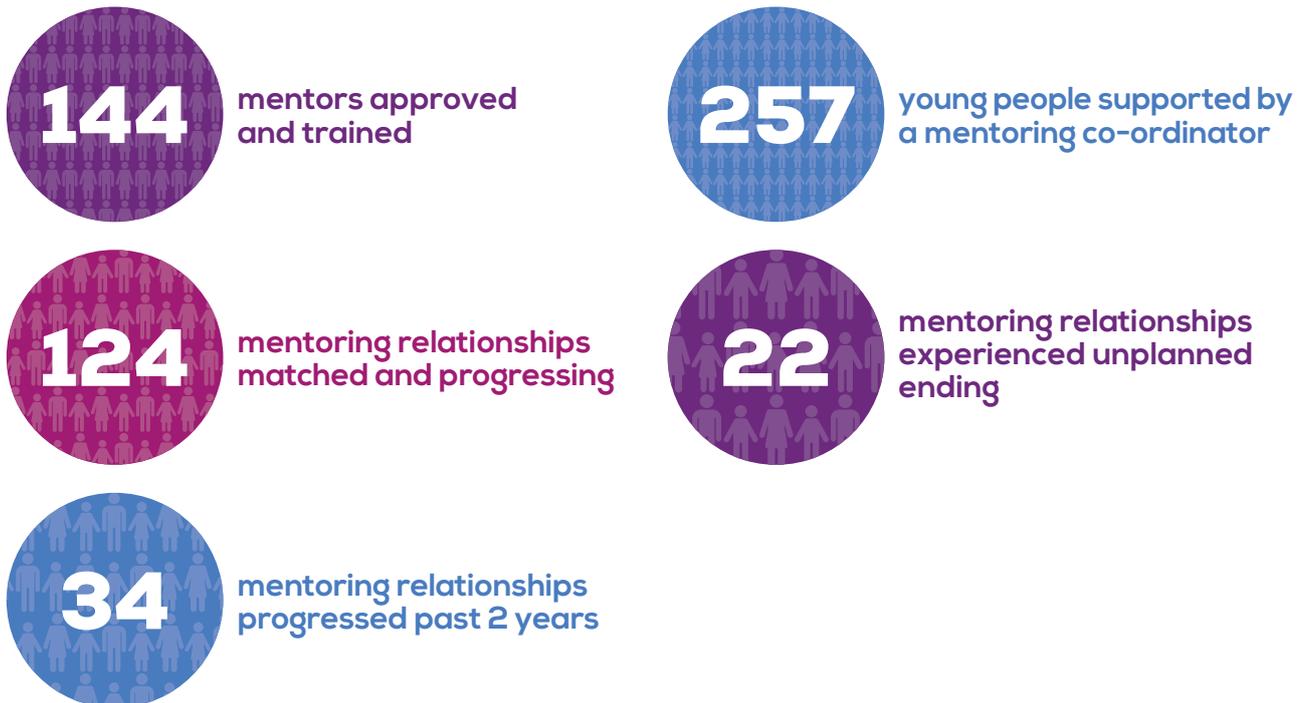
- Adult volunteers recruited from the local community
- No specific qualifications required
- As an organisation, Pure Insight emphasises the benefit that 'lived experiences' can bring to the mentoring relationship
- A rigorous selection and training process
- Careful matching of care leaver and volunteer mentor
- Mentoring co-ordinator support to both young person and volunteer
- Practical and emotional support focusing on areas that young person wants to change or develop
- 2 to 3 hours a week commitment for 2 years, but with the aim that relationships continue as lifelong friendships
- Peer support available to mentors.



Figure 2: Main stages in the Pure Insight mentoring journey



Over the last two years (April 2019 to March 2021), in the four local authorities<sup>5</sup>, the work of Pure Insight has resulted in:



<sup>5</sup> NB: one LA service only started in November 2020.

## Sample information

Nearly all of those who took part in this evaluation were involved in the Pure Insight mentoring service<sup>6</sup> in some way; as volunteer mentors, mentees (care leaver) or overseeing and supporting mentoring relationships. The participants were at different stages in their mentoring journey and reflected a wide range of experiences:

- Some were towards the start of their mentoring journey and not yet matched, but supported by the mentoring co-ordinator (2 young people)
- Others were matched and relationships were continuing (3 young people, 4 mentors)
- A number of interviewees had established mentoring relationships which had already lasted beyond 2 years (4 relationships; 3 volunteers and 1 young person)
- During their time with Pure Insight, four participants had experienced mentoring relationships ending (1 volunteer, 3 young people).

## Findings

### Getting involved with Pure Insight mentoring

Care leavers shared their reasons for getting involved with Pure Insight mentoring.

Some said they were interested as they wanted to **expand the people in their life and opportunities to socialise**, as they lived on their own and could feel lonely.

Others shared how they were **struggling, sometimes with specific problems, and they wanted some help**. Some of these care leavers reported this in the context of the support available to them from children's social care which they described as limited or rationed, e.g., 2 people were over 21 and said there was less help available to them now they were older.

“

I wanted someone just for me, when they explained about the volunteer just being there for me, even though I'm happy giving support to others. So, I have someone, like a friend, who won't judge anything going on, have a cup of tea, get on with me really well and make sure that I'm doing ok, that's what I want out of it, there for me, how and when, I need them. (care leaver)

”

“

It's just for someone to talk to, and go out with for the day, that's something else to get me out to do instead of just being sat in, like a friend and to meet other people when I'm out. (care leaver)

”

Some care leavers said it was not straightforward or easy to accept the offer of Pure Insight support. A few described how they were **hesitant, and to some degree mistrusting**, at the start. Some doubted whether Pure Insight would really help or whether they would let them down (as they had experienced in the past).

“

Must be a strange situation and so brave to say, go on I'll have a mentor, be so hard to say, yes I could do with that help. (volunteer)

”

<sup>6</sup> 9 of the 10 care leavers interviewed had received mentoring support, all 8 of the volunteers were involved in mentoring; 4 of the staff interviewed had held roles as mentoring co-ordinators or oversaw mentoring contracts and all 3 LA representatives had mentoring services in their local area.

Volunteers discussed their motivations for joining Pure Insight. Some described **feeling they could make a difference** and offer something, often connecting this to their own personal experience, such as being a parent or their professional role. A couple of volunteers had previously undertaken and enjoyed mentoring as part of their studies or work. Some explained their **circumstances had changed enabling them to explore volunteering** (e.g., recently retired, their children were now older, or work patterns meant they had free time).

“

It really spoke to me in terms of, I'd been looking at doing some sort of mentoring thing for years...I'd seen different charities but they were never quite right. Just felt with Pure Insight, I felt safe in their hands, they knew what they were talking about, people in the organisation have lived that. (volunteer)

”

## Recruitment of volunteers

Volunteers who participated in the evaluation heard about the Pure Insight mentoring service through several routes: social media, word of mouth (a colleague or friend) or from a general 'google search' for volunteer vacancies. Everyone who is interested in working as a mentor first attends an information evening and has a one-to-one discussion with Pure Insight staff. They then complete an application form, DBS check and 2 references following safer recruitment practices. Following this, people progress to a 10-week training session. Each of the evening training sessions lasts 3 hours. During the training period all volunteers also have an interview with a young person's panel.

Typically, over the course of a year in a local authority area, Pure Insight will recruit two or three volunteer cohorts. Each training course has between 10-15 people. So, the aim is to train about 20 to 40 mentors per year per local authority, depending on the size of the local authority and demand for the service.

Staff from Pure Insight emphasised that the **process of recruiting and selecting volunteers was rigorous** and information provided to volunteers from the outset was very clear in terms of what the 'ask' was.

“

We recruit in a very unapologetic way. We want people who are kind, non-judgemental, that have time. We want to be very clear in what we are asking. Typically, 75% of volunteers we screen will be appropriate. We do have difficult conversations with volunteers who are not appropriate. We do that early on. (staff)

”

“

My responsibility is to touch base on, what's their motivation, their stance on young people, what they bring to that, their skills and more about their lives and whether they have got capacity to fulfil the responsibility... Ultimately we want to get it right, so we explore all these things. (staff)

”

Several young people talked about the thoroughness with which Pure Insight selected volunteer mentors. They said it was **reassuring to know that mentors were chosen so carefully**.

“

He [volunteer] said it took months to go through interviewing. I thought, that really sucks, you'd have thought they needed people, but then when I really thought of it, I am grateful they do it like that. It means you're not stuck with someone who's not that bothered or committed. If someone goes through weeks, and it's not easy training after being at work all day. Obviously shows they care. They'd have dropped out. They push them as they know it can get tough, hit with so many scenarios, before starting to look at pairing. If it didn't work like that it would not be a successful service. Otherwise, could get people who do not know enough about it, who don't know what they're doing, who want to back out and that's really going to be damaging for young people and they think it's their fault. (care leaver)

”

“

I know that they have lots of people who apply for volunteering. The way they decide who is hired is through a panel, other young people go there and ask them questions. The mentor co-ordinator does in-depth background checks, sees what they can offer to young people. That's what I know about how it works and how they choose people. (care leaver)

”

## Training of volunteers

Many interviewees, particularly volunteers, talked about the Pure Insight mentor training. They referred to both the **specific topics covered and the delivery style**.

Volunteers said that the **training covered a vast range of areas**. Some of the topics mentioned included: safeguarding, mental health, trauma, attachment, relationship-building, boundaries and local authority role. At times, the content was described as 'hard hitting' which could be **challenging and on occasion upsetting for individual mentors**. Though people shared that Pure Insight made efforts to 'check in' with how they were doing after sessions.

In addition to learning about lots of different things, the sessions were interactive and **created space for discussion, challenge and personal reflection**. Mentors, as well as staff, were encouraged to **share their own experiences** during the training. Many volunteers emphasised the **intensity of the sessions**. Though one volunteer raised that, in their view, some of the training content was 'fluffy, bit ethereal' and thought this style may put off some potential mentors who do not feel 'totally comfortable in that environment'.

The groups were made up of very different people, but despite this, everyone interviewed felt welcome and included. **Those who had undertaken the Pure Insight mentor training were very positive about taking part**, they felt it was **interesting, thought-provoking and was held within a supportive environment**.

“

I found it something I looked forward to going to and I found it informative, I found it entertaining and I found it a little bit challenging as well. (volunteer)

”

“

Training designed as experiential; you invest a lot of yourself in it. (staff)

”

“ I just remember finding the training really illuminating, illuminated some of my own prejudices and unconscious bias. There were certain elements that I found very fascinating. You do lots in my job with trauma, safeguarding but I still learnt loads. And I feel like they just hit the nail on the head in terms of pitching it in a way that made sure we all got something out of it. We were not only prepared to be a mentor, we felt very supported going into it. Learnt loads and loads, gave us 360 view, even though all individuals about what like to be a care leaver, and potential pitfalls and benefits; how dynamic these kids can be. (volunteer)

“ The training was, I think it's intense, because I have no background in this whatsoever. I come from office-based background. So was completely new to me... lots of role play. Group of mentors, lot of staff from Pure Insight. Getting to know the group. Discussing what the young person needed. Trauma, resilience, recovery; was a really good course. Dependability, equality, respect, freedom, empathy, love of others, all that type of thing are in my notes. (volunteer)

“ Not just safeguarding and being sent out, it's really, really training them. (local authority representative)

“ Did a lot about how they saw mentoring process developing. Lot of stuff about not being judgemental, being very open, not pushing but trying to encourage and assist... One of the things that was explained throughout, care leavers come into contact with lots of professionals, but they change rapidly so don't have continuity of relationship with people. This can lead them to be reserved, not going to invest in a relationship, if think it's going to be very short tenure. So, they said, you are yet another person coming in, probably asking too many questions, really take it very, very easy over first 6 months, don't expect to do anything – form a solid relationship, so recognise not trying to get anything from them, just be there to listen and engage. (volunteer)

One of the things in the training that was particularly valued was the **input from young people and their mentors who shared their story and relationship journey**. Care leavers who had delivered these sessions in the past described feeling pleased they could 'give back' and help Pure Insight. They thought it improved the understanding mentors had about care leavers' lives and helped make them better mentors. Some recognised their own achievement in delivering these sessions and were proud of themselves for being confident to do this.

“

We go back together when mentors are getting trained up, tell them about our relationship. Were sometimes when I refused to speak to her, she was getting a bit much and I'd go back I'm ready now. She knew I was overwhelmed, being so young living on my own, needed time to process. We go back and share the ups and downs of our relationship... The fact that we are still really close gives other mentors an opportunity to have a role model, an idea of what they're getting into. To actually see two people who are still speaking after all of it. I don't know if it's helpful, I hope it is. (care leaver)

”

“

The mentor training, they have us do it with them. They help us with our own experiences to help other people, so it's beneficial for us, getting stuff off our chest but we're also doing that to help others. So, the more they know about their job role, as some of them have no experience of care kids or care leavers, so the more information they have from us about what it's really like, what lives we've lived and how best to work with us and not against us, the better job they are going to do mentoring. (care leaver)

”

Mentors perceived that **Pure Insight were experts in understanding care leavers and were skilled in delivering the training**. It was facilitated to a high standard by a staff team who demonstrated expertise, experience and warmth. Staff were seen to be 'genuine', 'authentic' and 'approachable'. The training also acted as an **introduction to Pure Insight as an organisation**, not just to the mentoring role. It acted to instil confidence in Pure Insight as an organisation. Some volunteers shared that this had strengthened their affiliation and created a sense that they were becoming part of the wider organisation, not just the mentoring service.

“

Pure Insight feels not an organisation that is, how can I say it, not professional as it's very professional, not dictatorial, or not saying 'you have to do this, and this how want to do it', it's a very joint thing, feel like becoming part of the team. (volunteer)

”

Overall, all mentors **spoke very positively about the mentor training and found it extremely valuable**. The programme was **perceived to prepare volunteers very well for their mentoring role**.

“

I thought it was great, was more than you need, but great to have that I think. We come away with a big file to reference to, felt quite secure. You don't necessarily refer back as you are speaking to people, but had that, can go forth feeling more confident. Training was really good, I enjoyed it. (volunteer)

”

## Attrition of volunteers

The mentoring training is an investment of time, resources and 'self' for volunteers and staff. It was reported that **only a minority of volunteers start the training and do not continue**. In the past, when this has happened, it was usually due to changes in personal circumstances (such as a bereavement). However, occasionally a decision is made during the training that an individual will not make an appropriate mentor, and their values and attitudes do not align with Pure Insight. In these cases, Pure Insight will intervene and talk to the volunteer to explain why they cannot continue with the training.

“

Was also fun to watch some of the others in mentor training when I was there, at least one or two who I thought were very difficult, my god I wouldn't want them as a mentor...The other thing that Pure Insight did was weeded these people out, pulled them aside if they thought their skills may be better in other volunteer roles. I thought that was great as I think, if they'd stayed till the end, it would not have looked good as it was changing the colour of the meeting, highly judgemental, suggesting solutions rather than listening and being empathetic. So, I think that was a measure of the quality of the training. (volunteer)

”

## Preparing care leavers for a mentoring relationship

**Central to Pure Insight's mentoring model is the role of the mentoring co-ordinator.**

Each local authority area has at least one mentoring co-ordinator in place. They occupy an important role in relation to both young people and volunteers.

Whilst the mentoring training is ongoing, the mentoring co-ordinator will spend time with young people. This helps them **get to know the young person which supports the mentoring matching process**.

“

So obviously, [mentoring co-ordinator], she's like the only person, they keep it very personal, assign one person, encourage you to grow a bond, so [name] was like my person who assigned me to find my mentor, who looked after me. (care leaver)

”

Sometimes care leavers introduced to Pure Insight mentoring service are unsure if they want a mentor or unclear about what it will involve. Getting to know the mentoring co-ordinator can help young people decide if this is something for them. Examples were given of this approach, encouraging previously hesitant young people to think about mentoring.

“ Where we have young people, who don't see the need for the mentor, don't know what it will look like, what we can try to do is get [Pure Insight co-ordinator] to meet on a one to one...then they can introduce them to idea of mentoring. (local authority representative)

“ At first, I was not engaging as I'd had a really bad experience with social services after care, so I did not engage at first, then the co-ordinator encouraged me and never gave up, took me for a few months then matched me up and then I met my mentor. (care leaver)

The mentoring co-ordinator (with support from wider Pure Insight colleagues as needed) will also **provide practical and emotional support to help 'stabilise' young people** before the mentoring relationship is introduced. They offer lots of different types of help, examples given included: support with budgeting, housing, supplying laptop, phone or data package as well as bolstering young people's self-confidence and self-esteem. This support was described as very helpful.

“ If I've got a young person that's experiencing homelessness, lacks a support network...isn't engaged with DWP, sanctions, no money coming in, not accessing mental health support through GP, all those base needs not being met. As much as the young person is saying they want the support of a mentor, in our professional judgement they're not going to be ready for that unless base needs are met, not going to be able move forward and get into a more settled place where they can engage with a mentor. So, we will support additionally around stabilisation. (staff)

“ On the other side, getting our young people stabilised and ready; so, the referral comes, is allocated to co-ordinator and we go out and work with the young people, do well-being wheel, not first visit, a couple of visits in when you've got rapport; try to establish where they're at and what areas of their life are like... what the big issues are for them. Could be with budgeting, having fun, improving education or employment, about mental health, but when working with young people they start to share and start to have conversation and reflect and identify what's coming up for them potentially, what's going to be the barrier for me, if we don't move past, won't get to where they want to be in life. (staff)

“ It's nice, normally with some social workers, they made me feel like, not uncomfortable but, you know you're with someone from [social] services and this can make you feel a bit fed up knowing you're in leaving care, but being with [mentoring co-ordinator], it's nice not feeling like you're with a worker, more like with a friend, don't feel uncomfortable. (care leaver)

“ Not got a volunteer yet as I didn't want to jump straight [in], especially as my anxiety at time, don't feel comfortable with people coming in and out of my life at moment, so I put my unpaid volunteer on hold till I feel more comfortable. (care leaver)

Many care leavers referred to their **relationships with the mentor co-ordinator as very important. They were someone they trusted, they were available when needed, got things done and this made a positive difference.** Support from the mentoring co-ordinator was flexible and could last as long as was needed. This may be for a few weeks to a year, or more.

“

We've had a young person meeting the co-ordinator regularly for about a year or year and half. [at first, they said] 'I don't want one, it's not for me' but, 18 months later she has really blossomed and can now see the benefit of having a supportive person in her life, giving good advice, being there and the impact is, now she will be matched, she trusts the co-ordinator 100% in finding someone [to] offer her the support she needs. (staff)

”

As will be discussed later, the mentoring co-ordinator remains an important point of contact and support to mentors, young people and liaison with local authority staff.

## Matching process

The mentoring training sessions are dual purpose; (1) preparing volunteers for mentoring role but also, (2) about **Pure Insight getting to know them as individuals to assist with matching** them with young people. Both the training and matching process are long (average 6 months, but no prescriptive timeline), the expectation is that the rigour of these processes results in more successful matches. There is a team approach to matching; a range of staff attend the training to observe and get to know everyone. Staff group discussions inform the matching of mentors and mentees.

“

The way training is written and delivered, in a reflective and meaningful way, takes the volunteer on a journey; investment in volunteer training and developing a relationship with the co-ordinator to create the kind of understanding of how and who that person should be matched to. (staff)

”

“

They said to me, to us all, a part of it is training but is also them assessing us, our personalities, things we say and do, they are thinking of matching us with mentee. (volunteer)

”

Several care leavers said that, because they **had a good relationship with their mentoring co-ordinator, they trusted them to find a good mentor for them.**

“

If [co-ordinator] says they are a good person, then I believe that. (care leaver)

”

Young people reflected that they felt the **approach Pure Insight took to matching was strengths-based** and they took time to get to know them as individuals. Care leavers emphasised that they didn't feel rushed, and that time was taken to carefully match them with a volunteer. Some felt reassured that their mentoring co-ordinator remained available if they needed and would be there for them if there was a problem with their mentoring relationship in the future.

“ I was in a position and [Pure Insight co-ordinator] knew what I was going through. I was approaching adult life head on with literally no support, no stable family member to guide me. I was in full time education and had to support myself living as well...wasn't just first mentor that came along, this is the person... let's hope it works. She really took time to get to know me as a person and, with the mentors, she got to know them as people. She genuinely went out of the way to match people, as do other staff. (care leaver)

“ So, we start to pick out qualities, personality styles, things in common, or the skill set that young people may benefit from. All of the Pure Insight team from different local authorities are around for training, all of our team have experienced all those mentors, so we have a team meeting and reflect, go through all young people as a team, work out ideas of who the mentor will be good for, and talk through our thinking. Might be by the end of the process we could have three young people for one mentor... go away and reflect and get this feeling of the right way to go. (staff)

“ What do you like doing, what you studying, like doing in spare time? Everything else just went away and we just focused on the positives.... Wasn't like matching on profile and they took time to get to know me. Mentors are scared as well, they are people, will the young person like me. She genuinely thought you two will be really good together. (care leaver)

Taken together, the findings suggested **people felt confident in Pure Insight's approach and regarded them as skilled in matching volunteers and care leavers.**

“ The matching process is the most important bit. It takes their experience to do it in hope they're going to gel and take the relationship forward. In our case, we were matched perfectly which has been fantastic, not only for young person, but for me as well. (volunteer)

## Developing relationships: the views of young people and their mentors

Each mentoring relationship is unique. Each pairing will shape their own mentoring journey. The explicit aim is to create naturalistic, supportive and authentic relationships.

“

For me it's about relationships, the emotional support you get from having a mentor is the baseline for young people to move forward and grow, and be motivated about changes in future. (staff)

”

Despite this variation, those taking part in the evaluation referred to three broad stages in the development of their mentoring relationship: (1) introduction and early stage of getting to know each other, (2) deepening and developing relationships and (3) staying together for the long-term (discussed later in this section).

### Introduction and getting to know each other

During the interviews mentors and young people reflected on their relationships. **Young people emphasised that it was important to them to have a degree of control** in the initial stages of the relationship, such as choosing a place they were familiar with to meet up.

“

Made sure it was on my terms, instead of taking me to somewhere I didn't know, let's go to familiar surroundings and my favourite café, so that made me feel comfortable as I knew I could walk out if needed...If I don't like something I will dart off as I don't deal with stress well. They took it all into consideration. (care leaver)

”

Care leavers shared how **difficult and uncertain, and at times, frightening, it could feel to forge a new relationship with their mentor**. Some mentees emphasised how nervous they also were before their first meeting.

“

I can remember the day very clearly. I was given very basic background information from Pure Insight. We wanted to meet somewhere on the young person's territory...And met up and the young person looked like they did not want to be there. She is slouching, looked moody and we laugh about it now. I just got the impression, she's probably very anxious, as I was, meeting up with a new person under different circumstances to how you normally form friendship. (volunteer)

”

“

Absolutely hated it, hate new situations, for first few months, because of my anxiety – the more I got to know the mentor, the more I liked it – just meant getting out and doing other things. (care leaver)

”

Whilst there had often been goal setting towards the start of the mentoring relationship, facilitated by the Pure Insight co-ordinator, volunteers emphasised the need to focus on the relationship and getting to know each other rather than solely focusing on goal-orientated tasks. People spoke about how they started **doing everyday things together** like taking the volunteer's dog for a walk, going shopping, having a coffee and being available for a chat. Others were more activity focused and did things together such as practical improvements in the house, going out to the countryside walking or cycling. All were seen as **opportunities to get to know each other**.

“

I go round on Saturday morning, have breakfast, take me for drives, tries and gets me out a bit more, go for walks, take the dog out... see mentor once maybe twice a week, that's fine for me as being on my own in my flat is the "boringest" thing to do, so having people round is nice" (care leaver)

”

Many volunteers stated that their experiences echoed what had been emphasised in their training, namely that they needed to **take things slowly and be guided by the young person's own pace**.

“

It evolved naturally. At first the mentee was not that... If things went wrong, she would not necessarily message me but gradually gained trust, and then she would. I had faith the relationship would develop, and it did. Other mentors might have struggled with this. (volunteer)

”

“

It's hard initially... you can't just bowl in and think you can fix all the issues a young person may have, and I think some people might be like that. It's hard, you do want to do your best, taking it as fast or slow as need to go. (volunteer)

”

“

Pure Insight does not expect anything to happen in the first 6 months, take it easy and start to develop the relationship. (volunteer)

”

In contrast, though to a lesser extent, a **small number reported their relationships were intense right from the start** with very regular contact both by phone and in person, sometimes in response to 'crisis' situations.

“

We got on really well and she was quite needy...we were right from the get-go; we were communicating on Messenger. Yeah, literally everyday more often than not several times a day and we were meeting up once a week or sometimes twice a week. Some of that was sensible planned meetings and others were, I've got a crisis will you put your cape on and come & save me. (volunteer)

”

“

Pretty much decided to meet up 1 hour a week. After the first two meetings, we then moved to all afternoon. Then quickly followed to be all day as we got used to each other and realised there was a fair bit we could do together. Then moved to 2-3 times a week. It was quite intense for the first few months. I was in a position where I could spend that level of time (volunteer)

”

## Deepening and developing relationships

Many taking part in the review emphasised that the shape and direction of the relationship were jointly negotiated over time. It needed to reflect what both the mentee and mentor wanted, felt comfortable with and also what the mentor could realistically offer timewise.

Some mentors set initial boundaries related to who their mentee would meet from their family, where they could meet and times they were available. Over time relationships grew and changed. Mentors and mentees got to know each other more, trust each other more and some care leavers confided more in their mentor. Parameters sometimes shifted and mentees were more integrated into their mentors' life; for example, meeting their family or spending more time at their house. Though this was not the case for all, some kept to the routine of regular meet ups primarily just the two of them.

“

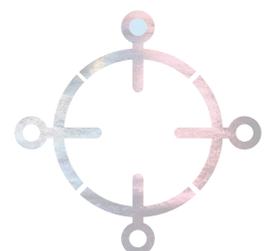
Gradually, as the relationship developed, she opened up more, would call me up when unhappy, could talk and have a vent. Then i'd try to bring her back to herself, step away from the pain and negativity; what can you do now to restart and try to put this away as coming up to end of day; what are you going to do now? She now loves having a bath with a candle or bath bomb, essential oils or listens to music, think about her breathing. (volunteer)

”

“

As time went on, we'd introduce my kids, meet her, pick up, go to park, that kind of stuff, natural normal stuff... Only adults known to her neglected, abused or used her, very untrusting so spent time being normal. We'd go for walk with the dog. (volunteer)

”



Often it was only with time that work on goals became more explicit.

“

Initially I didn't want to go in there, let's do this, sort CV, I wanted to get to know her and what personality she was driven by, how she was emotionally. I was letting her do lots of talking, I rarely asked question. She's very open and honest person, very forthcoming with information, so I never felt I had to question her. She was getting used to my personality as well. I wasn't there to judge her, or her background or what she was going through. I think we gelled quite quick. (volunteer)

”

Building the mentoring relationship demanded consistency, flexibility and a mix of support and challenge. Several mentors commented that, with time, they were able to talk with their mentee about more sensitive subjects. There were examples of how they had begun to challenge their mentee more, e.g., to think about their personal presentation (how they dressed, or language used). Volunteers were clear that they approached such discussions with caution and from a position of caring about the young person.

“

I've been lucky with [name of mentee]. We get on really well and our relationship has built up. I feel like pretty much, if I thought she's getting into dangerous territory, which she isn't, I could say to her, what are you doing, whereas before she does not know me enough to say, that you're just building up the trust continuously. (volunteer)

”

“

I'd check with Pure Insight... and remind myself it's not my job to live her life for her. Have to remind myself. It's getting the right balance and challenging her enough and [not] backing her into a corner. (volunteer)

”

“

Yes, they [mentors] do offer unconditional positive regard, but equally also act as responsible parents on occasions, hang on, willing to say that's not a smart decision, you can make it if choose... They are prepared to do the right thing, even if puts at risk the strength of the relationship, because sometimes we all make daft decisions. We need someone to be prepared to say to us, sorry in my view that's a daft decision, not to patronise or belittle or treat disrespectfully but here are some of possible consequences, there are other ways you might want to consider. (staff)

”

**Difficulties in relationships did occur.** For example, periods of time when the mentee was out of contact or concerning situations in care leavers' lives. These could put a strain on the relationship. Where there were problems, volunteers and care leavers sometimes sought assistance from their co-ordinator. All were encouraged to keep having conversations to work through issues. **Demonstrating 'stickability' through the 'tough times' was highly regarded by care leavers.**

“

I genuinely don't think I would be where I am without her. Even when I ignored her for 2 weeks, and she was worried about me, calling me, knocking on door and I ignored her. She never ever turned her back on me. I think I was trying to push her away. Just to test how much she cared. I don't know. I expected her to go back to [mentoring co-ordinator] and say it was too tough, it not working, she never did, I'm sure she cried about it. We laugh about it. I was so bad. I'm so sorry about all the nights you stayed up worrying about me. She never ever turned her back on me. These people are volunteers, they don't get paid for that. I just think they must select really pure, honest people for the right reasons. You can tell how much thought goes into it as these people genuinely care. I was shocked. And if anyone ever asks me about it, I'm like, yeah, it is really worth it. (care leaver)

”

“

It's really important that Pure Insight is about planned endings, healthy relationships and advocating, just because something comes up as a conflict, there are ways past that, it does not have to be over when something go wrong, modelling that, can maintain relationship by having those conversations. (staff)

”

## The mentoring experience: doing things together and working on goals together

Mentors offered practical support and advice. They also offered emotional support by spending time getting to know young people and listening to them<sup>7</sup>. The importance of **keeping things 'natural' and 'normal'** was a theme nearly everyone mentioned.

Offering **practical help and advice** was described as a big part of the mentoring role. Examples given were numerous: giving a lift to college or doctor appointment, going to the supermarket to shop together, sharing recipes, support with budgeting, cooking or doing DIY in home together, help to move home, getting to know the local area, child related advice or assistance to write a CV and interview practice.

“

And it was everything from going to the launderette and getting your washing done, yeah, fill the recycle bin. Lots of little practical things like that. So, you know, getting a mobile phone that works and sorting out addresses - OK let's go to town, you can get us to phone shop and you can sort out your SIM cards and stuff, and then you go to the bank and I'll be with you. (volunteer)

”

<sup>7</sup> Previous research categorised the work mentors do with care leavers as centred in both 'instrumental' and 'expressive' areas. The former included education, employment and training, and practical skills, and the latter, confidence and self-esteem. (Clayden and Stein, 2005 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/mentoring-young-people-leaving-care>)

Sometimes **the mentoring co-ordinators also supported the pairing through their availability and specialist knowledge** by explaining about entitlements, helping to navigate complex systems (such as welfare benefits) or signposting to relevant organisations. They were also available to offer extra support when mentors supported their young people through serious life events such as prison, safeguarding proceedings or homelessness.

Several mentors and care leavers talked about the importance for them of **finding a mutual interest or activity to do together**, like cycling, working in the garden or attending a baby group.

Other things volunteers talked about doing together were linked to **expanding care leavers' horizons, having new experiences and making memories together**. Mentors helped to raise the aspirations of the young people. **All relations and activities were potential opportunities to bolster self-confidence and self-esteem**. Young people reported that their mentors had helped them in areas of self-confidence and self-esteem by 'being there' for them, listening to them and, to some degree, challenging them.

“ We started going out for a pub meal and work on her coping mechanism with her anxiety, and still making it fun. Not sure she'd really been out for meals, or if she had been it was limited. So, we did that every so often... it was really about confidence building, being around different environments. (volunteer) ”

“ Trying to get him to understand what his best characteristics are, and he couldn't identify them for himself. I asked some of the other Pure Insight contacts and the probation office. We quickly came up with 15 and sent him, and this is what we think, what do you think your top 5, top 10 are. He's friendly, loyal, resilient, but these are things he's not aware of. (volunteer) ”

“ Co-ordinator suggested doing driving theory test, pay for it now, get it booked, go on do it, and mentor did help me, drove me to the theory place, didn't know what to expect so that helped me out, looking at the building, knowing where to go on the day. So did revising and passed it. (care leaver) ”

Mentors and care leavers gave lots of examples of the sorts of things they did together. Sometimes these activities **were linked to specific goals that young people had said they wanted help with**. Mentees described the need to take tasks step-by-step and the value of breaking down bigger goals. Some mentors reflected they had originally felt they may support their mentee with major things, such as getting a job, but in reality, their **initial focus was on working together on small improvements in day-to-day life**. Prioritising these was important and helped improve young people's quality of life. It also supported the development of the relationship.

“ Initially I remember saying this, I might help get a job but sometimes it's the smaller things, the everyday stuff, where to go to mosque, best place to go shopping. (volunteer) ”

“ Lot of little trouble shoots, down the line, each one had a knock on. (volunteer) ”

“ Started putting plans in place naturally like once we got ice breaker out of way, started working on plans. Need to do this, how do we get you there, I can help you. By talking through where you need to be. So, say if I need some furniture from [shop], next time we meet let's go and we can talk in car. Became less structured and more about an actual relationship. (volunteer)

“ So, it was it was just normal stuff really, day-to-day stuff, and aspirational stuff. All normal things you discuss with a parent or friends, someone to help them aspire. Started simple, looking at all different areas, thinking about the goal, what you want out of life, education, career, that probably was said last. First thing was more about, ok what do you do to relax. We'd talk about that which led on to self-care. That's essential for all of us. Relaxing, de-stressing... She didn't have any hobbies. Things she could do, maybe creative things at home or art classes. (volunteer)

“ I challenged her, I bet we can make some home cooked food together and I bet I can get it down to the price of a pot noodle. The following week was so much fun. We got money out of her finance and I put money in too. Bought ingredients together. We batch cooked a chilli, bolognaise all starter things to do when you are younger, and we costed it all out and I showed her that cost the same as a pot noodle. Got containers and batched up and put in freezer. Then had home cooked meals, learning to cook and building confidence. (volunteer)

Several participants referred to the **importance of modelling behaviour and approaches** which could help care leavers observe and learn in a more natural way.

“ She [mentor] was like a role model. I saw her house. [And I thought] That's where I want to be. She didn't patronise me she asked do you want the help? I said, 'Yes, I don't know what I'm doing. Help me get in my own flat. Help me to decorate'. But she did it by making me do it. Not handing me everything...Like a big sister.” (care leaver)

“ If I had something I needed to take back to a shop, will you come with me, she could see how I was dealing with it. Showing how to deal with it without getting angry and losing your temper. (volunteer)

The care leavers thought their mentors helped them in lots of ways, but some participants also stressed that, ultimately what they were trying to achieve was about **empowering care leavers to make their own decisions and take control in their life.**

“ She has extra skills from our relationship, and she will have done it all herself but I'm just kind of there pointing, like a mum would be I guess. (volunteer)

“ Encourages me a lot, to do things for myself, without being too hard on me. (care leaver)

## Descriptions of relationships

In the descriptions of their relationships, mentors and care leavers talked, not just about what they did together, **but also about what the relationship itself offered; someone who was available, consistent and respectful in their actions.**

“My mentee’s been in a huge number of foster homes, so stability is missing from their lives. That’s one thing I can offer” (volunteer)

Looking at the comments, it seemed that participants saw mentoring as offering care leavers a different type of relationship from professional help. Sometimes this was reflected in the terms people used to describe their relationships. **At times friendship or familial terms like “sister” or “mum” were used.**

“Just having a friend, someone they feel they can trust, that can support them without it being, right like I’m going to support you as a social worker or PA, it’s hard. I think I’m a bit like a big sister or a mum as I’m a lot older, I’m twice the age of my mentee, it’s just perhaps having that person there that wouldn’t necessarily be there and that extra support whether wanted or not. It’s on their terms, no one’s going to push it on them. We’re there to keep an eye out for things, nudge things, a different kind of way of doing things, much more natural. I like it, the feel of Pure Insight, everyone needs a friend. (volunteer)

“Where we are now, it’s really nice actually, was with him supporting him talking to a professional he wanted me in the room, he was asked about me and he said, ‘he’s my brother’, I’m his older brother and that’s how I kind of see him. I have protectiveness of him. I feel he’s a relative. (volunteer)

“I’m going here do you want to come, like a friendship, completely free. Sometimes, if I got busy, we would not speak for month. She only lives down the road, so that great if I ever needed anything, I’d just knock on the door. (care leaver)

“I’ve always treated her like my grown-up daughter I suppose as time went by and life normalised. (volunteer)

As this mentor describes, their mentee is like a friend but an extra special one because they really want to make sure they support them.

“Always think about how you are phrasing stuff, even though it is natural I am thinking how to say things, to make sure, I don’t want to alienate somebody. It is a different relationship where you are thinking and being extra caring, I think it the best friend [I] ever have as I really want to give my best to her.” (volunteer)

In contrast, **a minority of mentors were clear they offered something different to friendship more akin to companionship** and being someone available to guide and offer advice.

“

Lonely definitely, very little family and no real friendships. So, number 1, I can offer bit of company. So being cautious. I'm a friendly person but I'm not your friend I'm not your solution to you being isolated socially, got to work out how get you in a group. (volunteer)

”

“

Sees [mentoring co-ordinator] as friend and sees me slightly different. That suits me well. Sees me more like a consultant who will offer him opinion if asked and give some advice occasionally. Coming at it from position of trust. Think he certainly trusts me. (volunteer)

”

## Staying together for the long-term

As described earlier, the recruitment and training from Pure Insight created a clear **expectation that the relationship commitment is for two years at a minimum**. Pure Insight support the relationship over this period. The hope is that many relationships will continue and become lifelong. Pure Insight support and mark the ending of their official support. They aim to have a conversation about 6 months before the two-year period ends to explore people's thoughts about next steps, whether they want to continue or if they have had all the support they needed, and things will end.

**Most who commented on this seemed to feel their endings with Pure Insight went well** but one volunteer had raised concerns over this as they explained:

“

Asked to fill in some stuff. Managed it really clumsily. Left us out on a limb. Right at the end when it mattered. Expressed that view back. Yes, we could have done that better. Fill in form then no further contact... Achievement of mentee and efforts I'd put in, I thought it wasn't really marked like it might have been. (volunteer)

”

Looking at the examples of relationships that had endured for over two years, these were positive. Some planned to continue much as they had done previously, whilst others had settled into a pattern of less frequent meet ups with the knowledge they could get in touch when needed.

“

I think the young person was proud of having a mentor, introduced me as her mentor...It is a lovely relationship. I'm very, very fond of her, very, very fond... I've made it quite clear to [young person] I'm very fond of her, I'll always be here as her mentor, just because it's officially ended. That was difficult coming to end of 2 years, gauging how she felt about things, and I didn't want her to think that was it and feel rejected. We chatted a lot about that. (volunteer)

”

“

I said to her as we are both quite blunt... I just said if you want to leave and get another mentee you've done everything and more for me, she just started crying... She said she can't picture her life without me, and I genuinely feel the same about her. (care leaver)

”

“

My intention is just to, because of the work he put in, to push him, to make sure as much as I can, to make sure he doesn't go backwards...I will put enough into it so not regress, if employment difficulty and need guidance I would do that. Try to tail off a bit. [He] can text too often, he has to remember what's going on in my life, I've got work and family. He needs to not bombard me with stuff. I'm not his answer if he's bored and lonely. I've tried to help him with that...that's the nub of it. Not get sucked in to too much, but doing sufficient to keep him on track. (volunteer)

”

## When relationships do not work out

Whilst some relationships between mentor and mentee endure over the two years, there are times when **relationships end prematurely for either planned or unplanned reasons**. Whatever the nature of endings they need to be sensitively handled.

Some of those who took part in this review, had experienced abrupt endings to their mentoring relationship. Reasons included: people not 'gelling' together, things 'fizzled' out or circumstances change (e.g., mentor or mentee moves from area). Some recalled that there had been a small number of times when Pure Insight have needed to terminate the arrangement due to safeguarding concerns. In the event that **relationships do not work out, lots of people talked about how beneficial it was that the young person still had their mentoring co-ordinator available for support**.

“

For a while I've not had a mentor, did get set up with one but the relationship with the mentor did not work out, but I still see the co-ordinator, chat all the time, comes and sees me – comes round on my birthday as well, comes and picks me up and we go for a drive. (care leaver)

”

“

There to get to know young person first so ideally, match them to the right person and the young person has a point of contact – if the relationship [with mentor] is not working out – young person still has someone to go back to if there's a problem– that's really, really good. (staff)

”

“

On paper, we had a lot of the same interests. Why went bad, didn't really go bad but why the first one did not work. I'd met this mentor, a new one on the panel, met and I really liked her and I wanted her to be my mentor and so it was my decision and [mentoring co-ordinator] was like, ok, but it didn't work and as soon as said not vibing with it, [mentoring co-ordinator] put an end to it straight away and it's not about [mentor] feelings it's about your feelings, really supportive of my decisions, both when I wanted to be matched with the mentor and when I decided I didn't want to carry on with the relationship. (care leaver)

”

## Support to mentors from Pure Insight and peers

On the whole, mentors felt well supported in their role. Their **mentoring co-ordinator remained readily available to them for support and specialist advice**. This was valued and provided reassurance.

“ If she’s feeling negative or going through a bad time, it’s only challenging in terms of me being human and wanting to feel I’m being constructive. Things happen that are not very nice...so it’s how I’ve coped with that. At times she [mentee] contacts me a lot. I’d check in with co-ordinator. [Mentee] contacting me several times a day and I’m at work. You feel guilty...Then Pure Insight were always there to guide you and bring you back to earth, explain that that’s normal, [we] talked about the victim-rescuer triangle we’d done in training... Because we can reach out to Pure Insight, it reminded me, I can breathe, she’s ok, I’m here for her. (volunteer) ”

“ Mentors feel empowered and connected to us and feel able to reach out if something’s not going to plan, we’re always there, we pride ourselves on being available but also approachable. That is key in all of this... perhaps you committed to something [which] on reflection not going to be sustainable, how do you get out of this, it’s about being brave enough to have those honest conversations so that we can go back to the young person, we can say, ‘we are really sorry, when I committed to it, I didn’t have enough time to think it through, I don’t think it can work, I’m being honest with you perhaps we can do x, and co-ordinator could support a bit’. (staff) ”

“ I genuinely feel they know what they are talking about. I feel really well supported. It’s a great scheme. (volunteer) ”

“ Any incidents where I felt bit out of my depth, I’ve been able to go back and say I feel out of my depth with situation, can I run it by you. It’s important having the co-ordinator; one person can always go to as you build relationship with them as well. That was excellent. (volunteer) ”

“ So, it probably depends on what life experience you bring, as to how much support you need going forward. I think I’m relatively independent. In one or 2 moments I had check and balance conversation...If I had a difficulty, then phone always answered, some people I prefer to speak to more [at Pure Insight] than others. There one or 2 ‘wishy washy’ and others are ‘do-ers’, that’s the same as life. (volunteer) ”

“ Whilst things have been changing rapidly [we’ve] been in touch on a daily basis sometimes...quite often exchange what’s app message. Then [we have] these slightly more formal catch ups. (volunteer) ”

There is optional peer support available to mentors. Pure Insight facilitates groups of mentors getting together. In addition, some mentors remained in contact with others they had met on the training course, via group WhatsApp messages. This could be helpful; for example, to share information about local amenities or tap into others’ skills.

“ There’s a what’s app group with all mentors and we share things. My mentee’s bus pass only lasted till they were 18. Someone in the group said you can get one if you are a care leaver till age 25 so I could support him to get that. (volunteer) ”

However, **several mentors explained they had opted out of peer support options**, explaining, in their view, there had been too much information shared about mentees' lives, the volume of messages was too large, or this type of support was simply not for them.

“There were also some meetings for groups of mentors, done by training cohort. I found them a bit difficult because you don't want to talk too much about your own mentee except that some people did, so [you] can feel a bit like an interloper but as a social do they are quite nice. And I have one of two mentors who I talk to infrequently but occasionally” (volunteer)

“That wasn't for me [keeping in touch with other mentor], was what's app group for a bit, but notifications at first too much. That's a no. I was matched quickly I was putting focus and attention on my young person and not what others were doing. Quite quickly removed myself out of that training group.” (volunteer)

## Mentoring: what works well?

Later in the report (Chapter 8), what helps Pure Insight work well is looked at in more detail. This section focuses on the **learning specific to the mentoring programme**. Evidence suggests that many of the ingredients for success were related to **(a) the essence of the mentoring relationship** and **(b) core elements of the Pure Insight mentoring model**.

### a. The essence of the mentoring relationship

One-to-one volunteer mentoring means a supportive adult is available for an individual care leaver. The nature of the mentoring relationship distinguished it from other kinds of relationships. Mentors can offer consistency and time. This benefits care leavers by providing them with someone just for them; to talk to and help them pursue their goals. Trust and shared experiences underpinned successful relationships. The creation of this relationship is helped by the fact that:

- ▶ The mentor is a volunteer and not paid to be there (they are not a professional)
- ▶ Mentors are 'ordinary' people from local communities
- ▶ Mentors were there because they wanted to be there
- ▶ Mentors freely giving their time, this was described as important.

“I think the approach of trying to give a care leaver a mentor is fundamentally a sound one. I'm not too involved in what else Pure Insight does.... the part I'm involved with, it's good. I think it can make a difference, to redress that imbalance and I can't think of a better way of doing it. An individual trying to help another over a long length of time. I'm in a fortunate position of having a lot of time. (volunteer)

“I think the mentoring is really important. Gives them someone not in an official job role...mentor not being paid, think that makes a big difference to a young person, they like idea we not doing it cos we have to as it's not a job. Giving your time because you want to help. (volunteer)

- ▶ The mentoring relationship is something the young person chooses. It is not something enforced on them or a requirement of receiving support.

“

I think the important thing was that we all understood that any young person we were meeting, you weren't being imposed on them, they agreed, they thought you were a good idea for them, so in theory pushing at an open door. I went with a member of the Pure Insight team to [the mentee's] flat. We were introduced, started conversations while we were there, I made proposal how often to meet. We took it easy and worked our way in to this. (volunteer)

”

“

Just people doing it because they want to, yeah there's no expectation, it's just purely genuineness and it's a pretty random thing isn't it whether you get on with your young person whether it works for everybody... it's pretty relaxed, there's no requirement on the young person to do anything with the relationship or to be involved with the relationship if they don't want to be, they absolutely don't have to be. (volunteer)

”

- ▶ The mentoring co-ordinator's role is to liaise with the local authority, to get to know Personal Advisers, partner services, to facilitate information sharing, to build trust and avoid duplication of work. This means that **mentors generally did not liaise with children's social care, they were separate, and this was viewed positively.**

“

One of the things Pure Insight do is to try to keep the local authority staff separate from mentors, don't come across each other, to try to protect the mentor so they are not pulled into formal work which part of social work, so don't get involved with decision-making for young people only involved if young people say want me to support them. (volunteer)

”

“

Now have [mentoring co-ordinator], really personable, before all of this [Covid] we were in the office she'd come in regularly, sit with team, chat through what going on and she'd be the link, so we'd know what mentor working on and update Personal Adviser. So, keep mentor separate. Mentor doing own thing, they are working so can't stop for an hour to do Pathway Plan review. (local authority representative)

”

“

We have some young people who are against the local authority as see [it] as moving them away from their families and they've had a lot of social workers in the past – so Personal Adviser can find it difficult to make relationships, so mentor and Pure Insight find it easier as they are separate. (local authority representative)

”

## b. Core elements of the Pure Insight mentoring model

Several specific factors that enabled the Pure Insight mentoring model to succeed were highlighted:

- ▶ Rigorous recruitment of volunteers
- ▶ Good quality training
- ▶ Time taken to get to know mentors and young people to aid matching
- ▶ Mentoring co-ordinator helps to stabilise young person prior to match
- ▶ Availability of peer support for mentors
- ▶ Being clear about length of commitment, i.e. minimum of 2 years
- ▶ Not knowing about young person's background prior to meeting them
- ▶ Mentoring co-ordinator availability and specialist knowledge.

“

I think definitely the 2-year thing is perfect, a minimum of 2 years. If you don't set a timeframe, you're not going to build the relationship and you can't build a relationship in a couple of months. But also, us not having the information about the young person, I think Pure Insight have information for risk assessments but as a mentor we don't, we get their name. If young person has current crisis, then they don't match them, [care leaver] supposed to be quite stable. You don't have that pre-conceived information about where they are and what they are like, gives the young person a chance to make a natural and very clean first impression and develop relationship without any bias. The young person then buys into to that, it's not something or someone who is pushing a certain agenda. (volunteer)

”

Importantly, there was also **flexibility in the mentoring model** when needed. For example, sometimes people were cautious about the two-year commitment and Pure Insight worked with individuals to develop arrangements so they could still volunteer once they had completed the training (e.g., volunteer committing to a 'short burst of work' or helping with DIY skills or driving the van). Other examples included: providing a framework for social workers who wanted to stay involved in care leavers' lives or increasing the number of people around a young person if needed.

“

I'm quite involved with him because he's a very vulnerable chap, we are trying to get as many people around him as possible so that he's got all sorts of additional role models to feed off and if something goes wrong there's always somebody to get help from or support, or somebody to call on. (volunteer)

”

## Mentoring: challenges and areas for improvement

Everyone was asked to reflect on the challenges they saw or had experienced in relation to mentoring. Many people taking part in the evaluation reported they had not experienced any substantial challenges.

There were some individual suggestions of areas for improvement, generally only cited by one or two people, and some of these things mentioned were issues that had already been raised with Pure Insight and subsequently addressed. These areas included:

- recruiting more male mentees
- finding ways to ensure mentors can communicate with mentee without using a personal Facebook account
- further clarifying the role between the mentor and co-ordinator and being clear on who does what in terms of tasks
- ensuring there was more time and support from the mentor co-ordinator at the start of the mentoring relationship
- when a strong relationship was created with the mentoring co-ordinator and the young person expresses they would prefer to stay with them rather than have a mentor.

“

To some extent I think I could take more of the workload off [co-ordinator] as I know him well, she's got a huge caseload and I've got one mentee I feel more of a hand-off to me could have occurred – we've talked about it... I think it will occur as [mentee] only got co-ordinator for another year, but he's got me forever. (volunteer)

”

“

Where it fell off a bit, there wasn't that much contact at all, but I got matched quite quickly but I'd not met the co-ordinator much, just quick phone call then went to meet [mentee], for me that was fine...I would like to have more regular discussion [with co-ordinator] once a month...If you know them more it's easier to contact them. (volunteer)

”

“

How to improve it? I don't know. I personally might think if they could target recruitment for mentors to be a few more 'earthy types of people'...need more men. (volunteer)

”

The main area of challenge which several volunteers shared their thoughts on was linked to the degree of progress they perceived their mentee to be making. **Slow or 'plateaued' progress was described as challenging on a personal level for some mentors.** Linked to this a small number of mentors reflected that they found some of the attitudes of their mentees difficult (e.g., perception of the value of work, attitude to swearing), especially when this was at odds with their own values and personality.

“ Challenge is that you’ve got to go a young person’s pace. [I’m] progress driven as person but pace of progress can feel slow - work hard not to see self and mentoring progress as failure...think you go into it wanting to do a good job, I want you to make progress yeah and for me, I can only speak personally about this so, so for me...I want things to happen and I want to work hard ...[co-ordinator said] you're achieving something if she's okay, yeah she wakes up in the morning then she's alright, you're achieving something. (volunteer) ”

“ It is difficult. I think I’ve not failed as can’t put these goals in place, but I would be very, very happy to see the day my young person got into work. (volunteer) ”

“ No regret in this, if I could have put the same energy into a different personality, my mentee is my mentee, someone who could use it more, really could have been potentially quite dramatic. There is a ceiling to what can achieve with [my] person, in fact they need it more. (volunteer) ”

“ I think I’m quite an emotional person anyway, heart on sleeve, I think I’m always just me, I think you’ve got to take a step back, you can only mentor, you can’t make anyone do anything [they] don’t want to do. (volunteer) ”



# Psychological well-being service

## Introduction

This section describes the Pure Insight Psychological well-being service. It starts by describing what the service offers and how it works. It then looks at the experiences of those who took part in the evaluation who use this service; specifically focusing on why they got involved, what sort of things they worked on, any challenges they have experienced with the service and what they think works well. It relates to the first question of the review.

What do different people (care leavers, volunteers, local authority representatives and staff) think about the work Pure Insight do?

Impact of the Psychological well-being service (which relate to the second question that the review set out to explore) are discussed later in the report (see chapter 10).

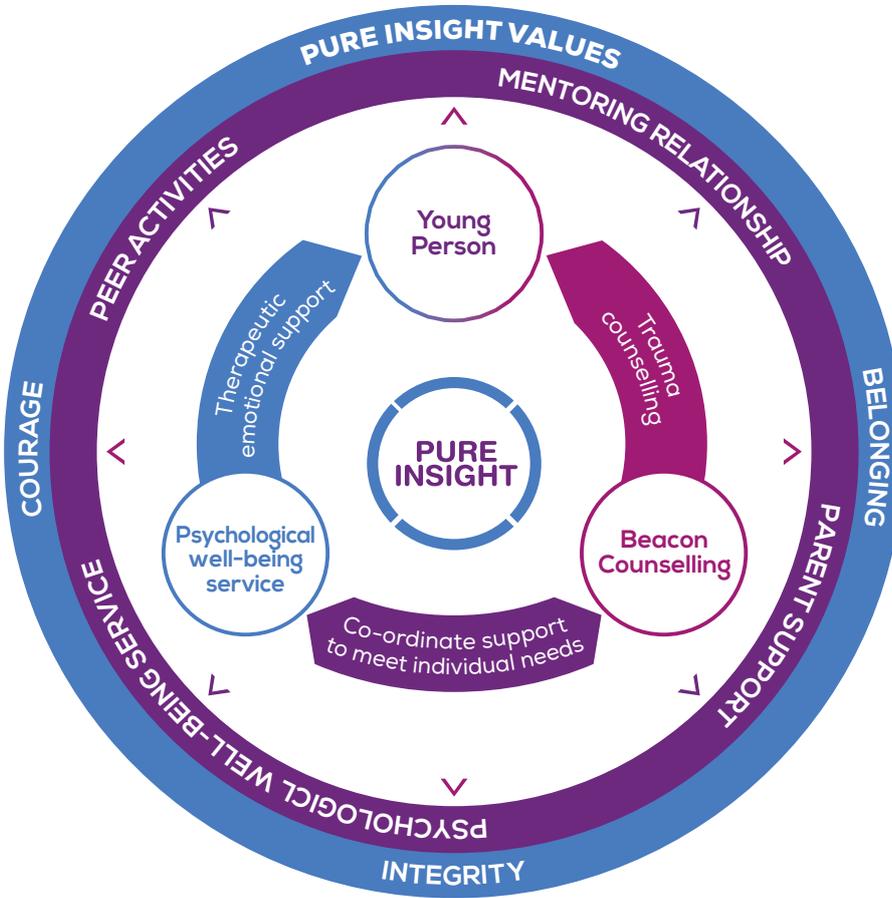
## About: Pure Insight Psychological well-being service

Most children who come into care have experienced complex trauma and face significant challenges in their life. Pure Insight's psychological well-being service originated from seeing, and listening to, what care leavers said was happening, or often not happening, in terms of well-being support. **Young people reported a high level of unmet needs in relation to their mental health.** Services did not always effectively respond to care leavers' needs. To address these problems, Pure Insight decided to set up their own mental health service and to deliver this via a **more outreach style** service (the psychological well-being service).

Pure Insight's psychological well-being service consists of **psychological well-being workers** (PWW) and **Beacon Counselling<sup>8</sup> one-to-one trauma counselling** (see figure 3). The latter service is commissioned by Pure Insight and referrals are managed by the PWW worker. **The service operates within a flexible model, delivering support at times and places to suit care leavers.**

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.beacon-counselling.org.uk/>

Figure 3: Pure Insight Psychological well-being service within the wider service offer



Pure Insight psychological well-being workers:

- Provide therapeutic emotional support and deliver therapeutic interventions to individual care leavers
- Monitor and prioritise referrals into the fast-track trauma counselling service commissioned by Pure Insight (Beacon counselling)
- Build relationships and liaise with other relevant health professionals around the mental health needs of care leavers
- Provide trauma informed training to upskill other professionals working with care leavers.

Over the last two years (April 2019 to March 2021), in the four local authorities:

**166**

young people worked with a Pure Insight psychological well-being worker<sup>9</sup>

**116**

young people worked with fast-track trauma counselling (Beacon counselling)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> NB: one of the LA's does not have a psychological well-being service, so figures based on work in 3 LAs.

<sup>10</sup> Available in all 4 LAs.

## Sample information

Just over half of all those who took part in this review, talked about their views and experiences of the Pure Insight psychological well-being service.

- 5 of the 10 care leavers interviewed had received support from the Pure Insight Psychological Well-being service
- all 5 of the staff interviewed shared their views on the service as did one volunteer, and
- all 3 local authority representatives had experience of the psychological well-being service in their local area.

## Findings

### Filling a gap: the need for the Psychological well-being service

There was much consensus (from both interviews and document analysis), that the current support systems available to care leavers who were struggling with mental health problems, did not work well. Care leavers talked about how **trying to access support from mental health services was frustrating and difficult**. Many shared they had experienced long waiting times, rigid eligibility criteria that didn't reflect their circumstances, and time limits on the amount of support available. Interviewees were very concerned about young people who were not getting the right support. **Mental health services tended to be described as overstretched, inflexible and lacking in understanding about care leavers**. The PWW service was described as very welcome. It complimented other mental health services. **There was a big gap identified in the services available to support care leavers' mental health needs; Pure Insight's work helped close this gap.**

“

Been really, really great –because a lot of universal mental health services are not great, not big advocate of CAMHS, [it's] not right, not proactive, not assertive enough, whereas [Pure Insight well-being worker] do home visits, walks, take to GP, does the bridging work, don't feel get that from universal services, don't think they get care leavers, they don't fully understand that care leavers find it really difficult to access those services. (local authority representative)

”

“

Like other local authorities it's really disappointing the offer we get from adult mental health, it doesn't meet the needs of care leavers, [they] not understand the barriers our young people face trying to access. So, having the PWW worker as someone to give low informal level support, someone to talk to about their mental health and then encourage and get them into services is absolutely key. (local authority representative)

”

Care leavers working with the service **faced a wide range of issues**. Document analysis showed around half of care leavers working with Pure Insight had a mental health diagnosis, but few young people had received help to understand, or support to manage, this. Most common labels that young people had been given were: Personality Disorders, anxiety, depression, PTSD/CPTSD, toxic stress, attachment trauma and autism, ADHD or complex special needs. The service supports young people to understand their diagnosis and needs.

“

Some have more complex mental health diagnosis: OCD, ADHD, autism, borderline personality disorder, bipolar, and they don't understand, don't know what that means, someone stamped that on them, no one clarified it, it's just a label so we help them understand what it means. (staff)

”

The psychological well-being service was designed to work alongside other components of the Pure Insight service. For example, young people working with a mentoring co-ordinator could access support from the PWW worker to help with 'stabilisation' before being matched with a mentor.

“

Mentors do a superb job but sometimes something separate from that is required. There can be real advantages from that being different to a relationship you have with someone caring for you. (staff)

”

“

We don't have to wait for a referral to mental health support as we've got in-house, can fast track - helps with stabilisation - which need before match to mentor. (staff)

”

## Pure Insight psychological well-being service: style of working

Care leavers tended to hear about the Pure Insight well-being work through their leaving care service or from other parts of Pure Insight they already worked with.

At the point of referral, the Psychological well-being worker reviews the information and discusses with the young person whether fast-track counselling could be an option for them if they feel ready to do work relating to trauma. Where this is not appropriate or young people don't feel ready, the psychological well-being worker will start to work with the young person on a one-to-one, usually weekly, basis. They will focus on things the young person wants support with, as well as supporting them to access wider mental health support, as appropriate.

“

[PWW worker] got assigned to me as [I was] getting rejected from most therapies due to being high risk and stuff and [PWW worker] come round every week and we'd talk and she'd help me with strategies and over the years she's become like a friend and like I really trust her, they come round for my birthday and stuff. (care leaver)

”

“

We recognised our young people need mental health support but need support to access the support. (staff)

”

Many of those who spoke about working with the psychological well-being worker emphasised how the service **provided a different model for supporting care leavers with their mental health** and a **different style of engagement**. They cited the importance of:

- meeting young people where they wanted (at their home or going for walk)
- taking the time for the worker and young person to get to know each other
- providing reassurance that the support was not time limited
- progressing at the pace dictated by the young person.

Care leavers **valued the accessibility and availability of the PWW service**. They had their worker (and other Pure Insight team members) contact details. The service delivery felt less formal. Several also shared how their **relationship with their PWW worker felt respectful and non-judgemental**.

“

At first I was intimidated as [it was a] new person, when first met wouldn't have done this conversation but now because of their involvement they've helped me to be more open, to speak to people, at first I really wasn't, I'd given up so much hope in getting help, like in trusting anyone, but they've stuck around, there's no time limit, there's no we've got to be done by this date, it's we are here for as long as you need us, it's like reassurance. (care leaver)

”

“

Got along with [PWW worker] quite well to begin with, she was friendly, approachable... she was relaxed, doing it at your pace sort of thing. (care leaver)

”

Whilst the Psychological well-being service is clear there is much flexibility in its offer, several highlighted there were still parameters and boundaries around engagement in place, to ensure the smooth running of the service.

“

Strict and boundaried. Three out rule. If you cancel on me three times and no reason why, get put on my waiting list. Have to be clear. Young people are aware of that when take on my service. Do get referral where not ready, PA may have told [they] ready, have to be strict in that way. There can be a few where nervous at start. Know how nerve wrecking it can be but if they're not putting work in - it's 50:50 it's give and take. I wouldn't randomly cancel on them. (staff)

”

“

Team learnt to be boundaried with time, [there] is flexibility but is boundaries too. Different kind of value and different learning for young people. Really in demand resource so if you don't want to use it that ok, about recognising if you do, this is what we need you to do to get the best out of it. (staff)

”

## Pure Insight psychological well-being service: views and experiences

The PWW worker initially centres their work around well-being goals:

- 1 create a trusting relationship with a specific target to meet with the PWW for 4 weeks.
- 2 work looking at (any) diagnosis and what they mean to individuals (e.g., what depression means for you, what looks like for you).
- 3 making sure they are accessing the GP for help, this provides a safety net and medication, as appropriate.
- 4 work on safety and stabilisation, emotional regulation and teaching young people self-care coping strategies. The service also support young people to reduce their substance use, access groups and support services in their local community, and support care leavers to stop or reduce unhealthy coping strategies (such as self-harm).
- 5 supporting young people in understanding their own story and impact that has on them, including on physical and emotional well-being.

“ My first point of call is text and say this is who I am [PWW worker] no expectation other than to meet, and I get to know you, so I can do the best I can to support you, then meet them and get to know them and first 4 sessions we just get to know, I learn who they are, they learn who I am, no expectation to talk about feelings unless ready to. Some are quite nervous and don't want to do that just yet. (staff)

“ Then we set some goals, work out where at and what they need at that moment and I learn about them, their life, by doing the resilience wheel, look at the relationships in their life, whether good or bad, and kind of go from there. Some people I meet straightaway they ready to do some psychoeducation with me, some living really chaotic lives might be homeless, might be in domestic violence relationship, at that moment what I try to get them is safety and stability so when ready to do that work. Then start to bring out low intervention therapy work. First work on stabilising whatever they need that support with. (staff)

“ Help with whatever presents as psychological need, stabilise something, practically, getting to doctor appointment for mental health assessment, doing direct work with me eventually, whatever needed at time. Specialise in low intervention therapy, work with them, when they ready. (staff)

**With time, young people then set their own well-being goals; these were 'really, really individual'.** For example, reduce substance use, get out of domestic violence relationship, learn about attachment and parenting, work on anxiety or anger. Those care leavers who took part in the evaluation talked about strategies they had worked on with their PWW worker and **how highly they valued this support:**

“ They got me, they have counsellors called Beacon so I have counselling once a week – which also helps me and without Pure Insight probably wouldn't have got that. Nothing been offered before, only usual mental health services with 6 month waiting list, but this counselling was great. Mentoring co-ordinator said on first day counsellor come round and get to know you and next time be one-to-one and came round with co-ordinator and had the chat and I'll come and see you next week and that's it and straight away, no messing around. it was great for me. She is a trauma counsellor, all about things happened in past – helped educate me why maybe I feel the way I do at moment, so fact comes out to me, as I don't think I'd go on own. (care leaver)

“ So to begin with more about anxiety and that is still there, still an issue but at the moment it is mood which taking over anxiety, so that what we working on at the minute...So with the anxiety she taught me about inner critic, I like to understand things, I like to explain the research behind it, so I can understand it and that was quite helpful for me to share with other people...got [PWW worker] to write down about the inner critic so could give it to my partner to help them to understand more” (care leaver)

“ Couple of young people refuse to meet local authority but when see Pure Insight I know they are safe and well – someone getting a foot in the door – Pure Insight can update on how young people are doing. (local authority representative)

“

At the start of the year I was completely suicidal, so done lot for self, figure out what my triggers are, where sadness comes from, what can I do to make it better, lot of work I do myself, be resilient enough to take self back to those I memories and emotions so sometimes when don't have enough mental power to do that, that's where worker can help me do same thing. (care leaver)

”

“

She's helped me with so much, from my mental health side of it I have got a lot more confident, at the minute don't ask, don't have that much to help with anything, she just knows when I need help with things, usually little problems have with my mum or my family or me just being in the world in general. (care leaver)

”

**Everyone who spoke about the Psychological well-being service was very happy with the support.** Several wanted to expand the offer in their area so more care leavers could benefit.

“

The team have been so pleased with that offer. We need more of that. Absolutely definitely an area that could be expanded massively. (local authority representative)

”

## Psychological well-being service: what works well?

Those participating in the evaluation were asked for their views on why the Pure Insight Psychological well-being service worked well. There were a number of facilitators of success:

- Firstly, **the people who worked as well-being workers were described as empathetic, non-judgemental, skilled and enthusiastic.** This was pivotal.
- Lots of reflections related to the **design of the service model; the outreach approach, the fact this felt less formal, offered flexibility and that time was taken to build relationships.**
- Several people emphasised that they thought the **PWW support was genuinely led by young people's individual needs.** It was felt that staff did not have preconceived notions of what young people need help with nor were they constrained in what they offered.
- It was also beneficial that the Psychological well-being service was integrated to the wider Pure Insight service; cross-cutting support between different components strengthened the overall offer of support to care leavers.

“

No expectations of who they're going to meet or help, well you're this age you should be doing this, it's more 'you're doing this, that's fine if anything you want to change we'll help you', very much person based from our side, feels strange to say 'our side' as it doesn't feel it's us and them, it doesn't feel there's that barrier; who a care leaver and who a worker person. (care leaver)

”

“

As there's that relationship, I feel comfortable, I am always honest with her, there's never been a time that I feel I can't be honest with her, never felt she judge me, like made me feel like I'm strange or different or weird which is usually what comes across in these relationships but it's very different how treat people, it's not formal. (care leaver)

”

“

One thing I will add, the flexibility of the model is what makes it so great. I'm a massive believer that the problem with mental health services at moment is not everyone wants CBT or not everyone is for counselling, it's not for all. Pure Insight can get CBT, counsellor etc, so we can buy bit of practical need, but a counsellor in community can't offer to help with other things like Pure Insight can. A lot of our young people are not ready for a therapist, they don't want to sit once a week, a lot of other things need be solved and attacked first. The NHS gets confused, why are they not coming for their appointment? They can't get out of bed. I [PWW worker] go to them, I wake them up. I go to their house. I see where they are living. I become part of their life. See it and live it with them. Easier for me to see what I can help with. So it is more direct. (staff)

”

“

They don't have a set-in stone thing they do before they meet a new person in the care system, it's like we'll meet you and we'll take it from there, no plan before. From my point of view...everything very specific for each person, they do things different for every person, the things they help me with, is probably very different with someone else who might need more boundaries or don't understand the concept of boundaries... I suppose actually getting to know the people not the numbers on the pages, is what is different. (care leaver)

”

## Psychological well-being service: challenges and areas for improvement

When those taking part in the evaluation were asked about challenges they had observed or experienced in relation to the psychological well-being service, many said there hadn't experienced any issues. Only two areas were identified: **(1) making sure there was sufficient capacity to meet demand for the service.** Currently this was reported to be actively and skilfully managed by regular reviews of the 'case list'. For example, to create space some young people were moved to less frequent contact (every 2 or 3 weeks). However, it was raised that it could become an issue in the future, if young people continued to remain with the service and more young people were referred.

“

Pure Insight thinking is all about the relationship, being there for as long as want them but for us that not work as we need that offer to be a fluid offer and needs to be a goal and if it's about them just having someone to talk to, is it more about isolation then we move to mentor scheme which cover that offer. (local authority representative)

”

**(2) the practicalities of ensuring there was always a safe and appropriate space to meet.** As the service was run on an outreach model, there was not an obvious 'office base' in each area.

“

Sometimes young people's lives are very chaotic, so they might not want to go for a walk if weather is bad, or live in house where don't trust neighbour but unlike other therapist we don't have safe space. As go to their house and as only got one hour, at this time of year can be barrier finding a safe space to talk about these things, majority do have and I can have people come and sit in my car. If can't sit still then going for walk. We always try to think that through with my clinical supervisor and suggest other things to give best offer so not having space can be barrier. (staff)

”



# Supporting care experienced parents

## Introduction

This section describes Pure Insight intensive support for care experienced parents. It looks at views and experiences of those who took part in the evaluation who use, deliver or commission this service and relates to the first question of the review.

What do different people (care leavers, volunteers, local authority representatives and staff) think about the work Pure Insight do?

Impact of the support to care experienced parents (which relate to the second question the review sets out to explore) are discussed later in the report (see chapter 10).

## About: Pure Insight support for care experienced parents

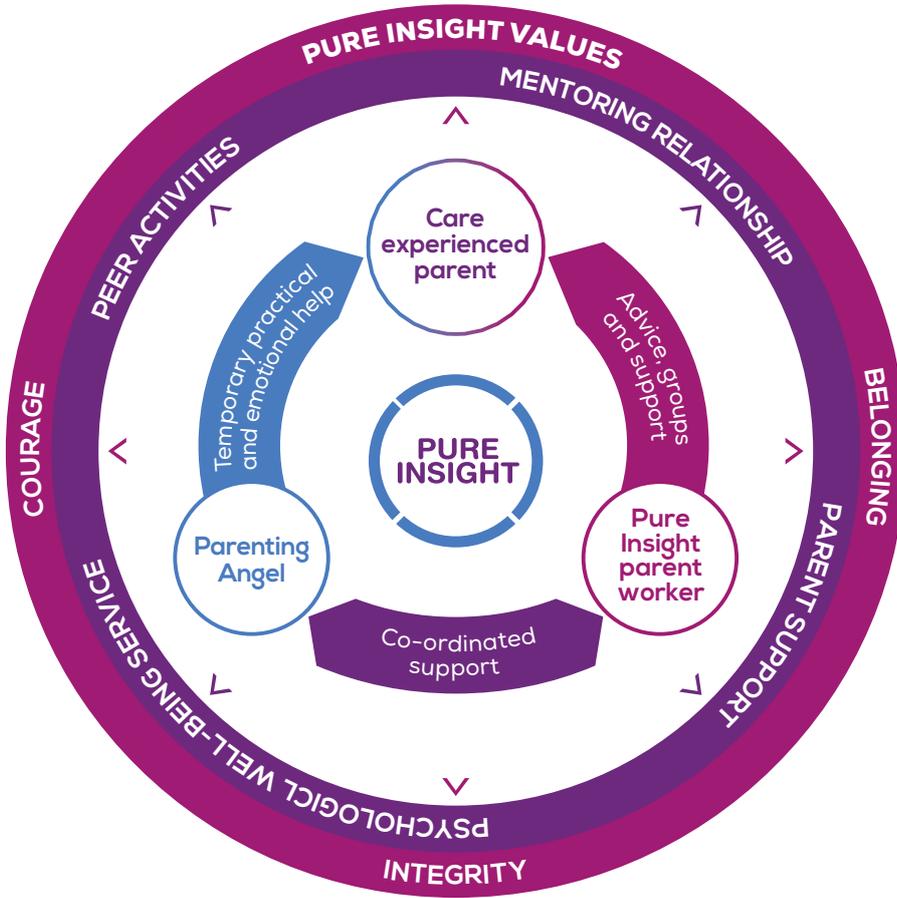
Pure Insight works with care leavers who are parents, as part of their mentoring service and Psychological well-being service. Through this work there was a recognition that some parents would benefit from more enhanced support. In response, Pure Insight developed two interconnected ways to offer more intensive support to care experienced parents:

**(1) through parenting angel volunteers** and **(2) via Pure Insight parenting worker(s)** (see figure 4).

**Parenting Angels** are a small team of volunteers that provide practical and emotional support to new parents (e.g., during pregnancy and in the early weeks after having a baby) or to parents in crisis. Support is designed to be intense, for example, daily visits. The types of help offered are varied; for example, volunteers may help by giving the parent a break, being available for a chat or helping them with structure and routines they want to introduce into their child's life.

Mentors who support young people as parenting angels have all attended the full Pure Insight training. The support from parenting angels is designed to be temporary, it is something chosen by the young person and tailored to what they feel they need support with. The offer is reviewed about every six weeks. Care leavers who do not already have a one-to-one mentor are offered this option after the parenting angels support ceases (ideally one of the angels will step in to act as a long-term mentor). There may be longer term support with childcare that is offered at the end of a plan if it is felt mum/dad need a regular break. This would be provided by a long-term mentor or a volunteer matched to the family specifically for this purpose.

Figure 4: Pure Insight enhanced support to care experienced parents within wider service offer



**Pure Insight parenting workers** spend time getting to know care experienced parents and their children. They offer advice on child related issues such as children’s health, attachment and ideas for stimulating and playing with the child. They also help facilitate peer parent support groups to meet regularly, online or in person, to support each other practically and emotionally. As part of their work with care experienced parents, Pure Insight also supports individuals whose children are in formal child-care safeguarding proceedings.

Over the last two years (April 2019 to March 2021), in the four local authorities, Pure Insight have worked with:



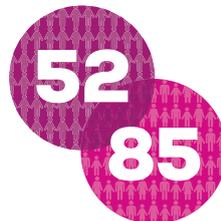
28 individual young people as part of face-to-face parenting groups



57 individual young people supported in virtual peer support groups



10 individual young people supported by parenting angels (NB: 36 care experienced parents have mentors)



52 individual young people supported by parenting worker  
85 children of care leavers supported

## Sample information

Compared to other Pure Insight service areas fewer interviewees spoke about parenting support; just over a quarter reflected on their views and experiences.

- Of those interviewed: 1 care leaver, 2 local authority representatives, 3 staff and 1 volunteer reflected on the support delivered by parenting angels and or parenting support worker(s).

## Findings

### Pure Insight support to care experienced parents: views and experiences

Staff and volunteers explained why they felt the enhanced support Pure Insight offered to care experienced parents was so important. People explained that care leaver mums, and dads, did not usually have their own family to rely on or offer help with the baby. Becoming a parent was recognised as a huge life change. Parenting angels and or parenting worker(s) were seen to be able to **offer a lot of support and guidance in the absence of other support**.

Several of those interviewed commented that **care leavers may be hesitant to ask social care for help** because they were worried about how this would be perceived. There were concerns that asking for help would be interpreted as 'not coping' rather than simply needing extra support.

“

An inequality in expectation. I have a middle-class friend who had children and moved back into their parent's house for that extra support. But when I've worked with care leaver mums who quite often mistrust social care, they only pull them in when absolutely necessary and quite often perception around this, it's seen as lack of ability to cope. (staff)

”

“

So, angels offer what mum needs to support her. It's a temporary offer. Might have good friend to talk to. But actually, needs people on ground, to pop in every day, bring a meal, put a wash on, hold baby while have a shower or could need someone to speak to in an evening. (staff)

”

“

Brilliant, brilliant service, brilliant thinking outside the box. How can we help young people be better parents? How can we help children not be taken into care? Bring in a team of volunteers. When we had our baby, we had people in, day in, day out, feeding while have a nap, we had people dropping in, friends to give us advice, if you are a care leaver you don't have that, friends don't drive or may not be best for advice. When have group of volunteers willing to commit to dropping in, might just be company, give you half an hour rest, have a bath. Invaluable. Really clever thinking. (volunteer)

”

Care leaver parents who received enhanced support from Pure Insight tended to already be working with them. Care leavers talked about some of the things Pure Insight had helped them with, these included: **practical help** (such as getting baby equipment and clothing), as well as being available for **advice, reassurance and parenting tips** (such as 'ways to talk to your young ones').

“ Just offering to have her daughter for an afternoon or morning, or the occasional overnight stay, whilst she gets on with her college work makes a huge difference, she is going to University in September. Every parent needs a break, it can be the difference between a parent thriving or not, I know it is for me!. I am committed to both these girls in the long term, they have become a part of my family. (volunteer)

“ Worked with [parenting support worker] during that time, some of young mums I already knew from past but didn't know them now, arranged a meet up between us and we've gone for coffee and that was quite nice, all gone through pregnancy together, get to know other young mum and still speak to them now... Helped me out massively with baby items, anything that I've needed it's been absolutely amazing, I've ended up with too much, so I've given to others. (care leaver)

“ She's non-judgmental [parenting worker]. Not have pre-conceived ideas. Genuinely lovely lady. The response and engagement get from mum, has a real passion for developing their parenting skills. Not coming from any other place. She believes in those mums and they can be best mum can be. Helped get into better sleep [routine] for baby, nutrition and encourage mum to get out of house to park. (staff)

**Sometimes care leavers' children experience safeguarding processes.** Pure Insight are available to support care leavers during this difficult time, to get to meetings, and bolster parents' confidence to give their view. Pure Insight staff and volunteers tend to have more regular contact with the young person and child so they can provide information and may offer a different view to the local authority on how things are going.

“ [Young person] finds it difficult to engage with social services, meetings are so triggering, having social worker there is so triggering, as so let down, anyone from that system represents that harm. (staff)

“ Lot of parents have [safeguarding] activity and outcomes they have to achieve in short space of time, in child protection plans, expect parent do x, y and z so around some of that, what are the parents' needs around that. Careful eye on what local authority expectation is. As we have seen when they don't go A to B what the consequences can be. (staff)

“ Go to some of statutory [safeguarding] meetings, able to articulate what going on, share good stuff that is happening...keep an eye on the plan and where professional thinking at. It's about challenge and offering a different perspective” (staff)

## Supporting care experienced parents: what works well?

Repeating findings from other chapters much of what was perceived as working well was linked to the **core elements of the model and style of delivery** as well as the staff and volunteers involved. Volunteers and workers who supported care experienced parents **offered support in a non-judgemental and caring way**.

“

One thing will scream through is the proactive roll sleeve up and get stuck in [approach]. Learning from her [parenting worker], role modelling, mums watching what [worker is] doing and it's subtle and thoughtful. So many care leaver mums and their baby benefited from having supportive kind human in their lives not judging them in any way. (staff)

”

## Supporting care experienced parents: challenges and areas for improvement

The main challenge talked about (by staff, local authority representatives and to a lesser extent volunteers) was the **difficulties experienced when supporting care leavers whose children were in safeguarding proceedings**. Issues principally related to **difference in opinion (between Pure Insight and local authority) in relation to care leavers' ability to safely parent their child**. A small number of local authority interview participants explained they were concerned that some mentors may potentially minimise concerns (e.g., in relation to parenting of children) and as a result important information may not be passed to local authority. However, these worries could be largely mitigated by close working relationships with Pure Insight staff and clear communication channels.

“

We are eyes on, and we are in there all the time... Trying to provide a different perspective. Mums had worst experiences in care, exploited by someone in care system and outside of it when care system was looking after them, their level of trust, lack of trust in professionals and paranoia – almost impossible to engage – so go to bits when [with] social worker, can't handle selves in a way that they would like to, so go back to trauma mode. So, when we can see local authority getting it wrong –have to tread carefully. (staff)

”

“

Others have felt [Pure Insight] were the enemy almost. Sometimes have been cast in that role, when say you are getting this wrong, this is not an abusive parent their child can stay with them and safely and do better than if go into care. (staff)

”

“

Have been times where there's been more of a safeguarding issue, and that information not shared with us, and we've felt we should know about that, that can cause rifts between the teams. Fortunately, we've not had anything like that since [co-ordinator] been around last couple of years, much more heavily involved. (local authority representative)

”

“

There has been issues over years, the angel service come in with volunteers and try to support young people with baby and think locality worker had different view about the success of the situation (local authority representative)

”

# Peer groups and participation activities

## Introduction

This section describes the Pure Insight peer groups and participation activities. It begins by describing the core group and participation opportunities then looks at what people feel works well and any issues experienced. It relates to the first question of the review.

**What do different people (care leavers, volunteers, local authority representatives and staff) think about the work Pure Insight do?**

Impact of the peer groups and participation activities (which relate to the second question the review set out to explore) are discussed later in the report (see Chapter 10).

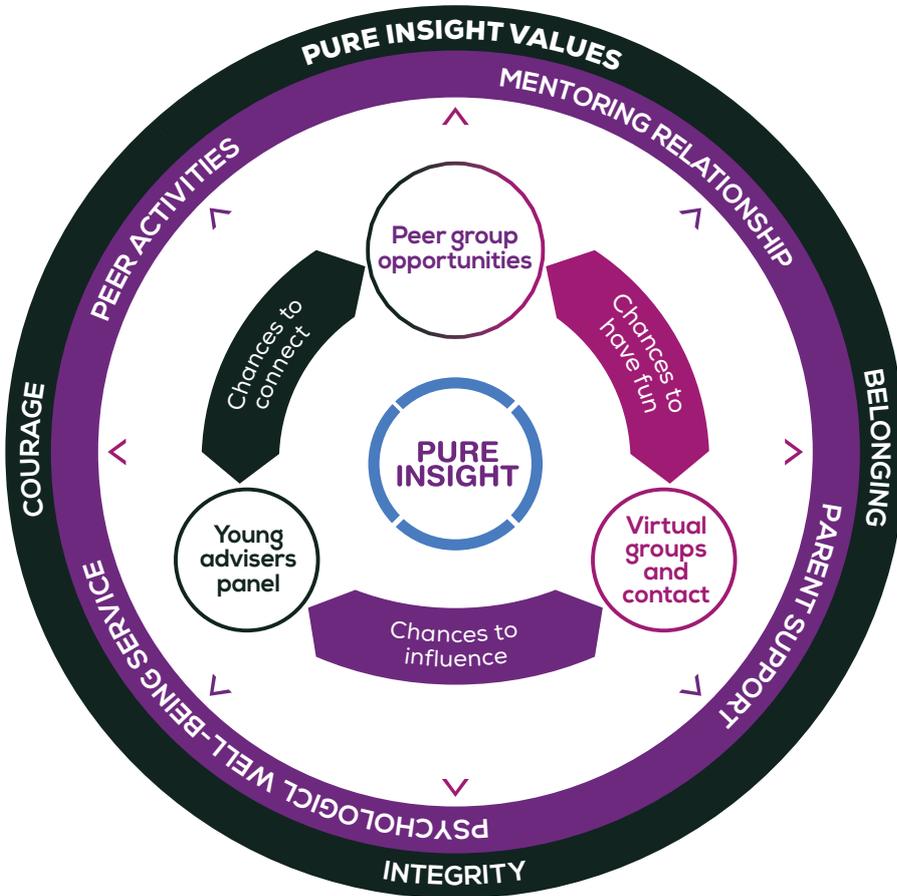
## About: Pure Insight peer groups and participation activities

Part of Pure Insight's core service offer is providing opportunities for care leavers to come together in peer groups and take part in different activities. The rationale for this work is to enable care leavers to develop their social networks, meet others who have similar experiences to them, to create a sense of community and to have fun and create memories together.

In addition, Pure Insight also work locally and nationally to share good practice and increase understanding of the needs of care leavers (for example, facilitating care leavers parents reference group with a local authority; attending local authority strategic meetings such as integrated looked after children board or external work such as Greater Manchester Suicide board).

This section covers this wide range of services. It focuses on the following main activities: (1) peer group opportunities run about once a month (including a drop in café); (2) virtual groups and contact (primarily through closed Facebook groups and Messenger) and (3) the Pure Insight young advisers panel which is part of the governance structure of the organisation(see figure 5). Pure Insight have project workers who facilitate this diverse work. Like some others in the team, some have lived experience of care.

Figure 5: Pure Insight peer groups and participation activities within wider service offer



Over the last two years (April 2019 to March 2021), in the four local authorities, Pure Insight have worked with, and delivered the following:

**144**

individual young people have taken part in peer group opportunities

**31**

the average number of individual young people attending café<sup>11</sup>

**71**

individual young people involved in the Young Person Panel and participation work (e.g., training or interviewing staff)

**292**

individual young people signed up to Facebook groups

<sup>11</sup> NB: The café is run in 2 LAs only.

Over the last two years (April 2019 to March 2021), in the four local authorities, Pure Insight have worked with, and delivered the following:

6

care leaver members  
in local authority care  
leaver group

54

individual guests at  
Christmas  
day event, in 2019

42

care leavers visited on  
Christmas day, in 2020

286

present bags delivered to  
care leavers and children,  
Christmas 2019 and  
2020,

## Sample information

About two-thirds of those who took part in this review talked about their views and experiences of the Pure Insight group and participation activities work.

- Nearly all, 9 of the 10, care leavers interviewed reflected on Pure Insight peer group and participation activities.
- 2 of the staff interviewed shared their views, as did 4 volunteers and 2 LA representatives.

## Findings

### Peer group activities

Care leavers who had taken part in group activities described the types of things they had done and emphasised that they **had really enjoyed taking part**. They talked about day trips to different places, countryside walks, picnics, trips to the beach or a theme park. Group activities were described as fun, they were **a change from their normal routine and a chance to relax away from home**. Several care leavers talked about Pure Insight taking time to visit them on their birthday and at Christmas.

Taking part in activities provided **a chance to meet others and get to know the wider staff and volunteer team** at Pure Insight. Several care leavers shared that taking part **helped build their self-confidence** and sometimes it challenged them to try new things.

“

Having new experiences, making new memories, photographing it, means can have photo frames in your house of things done with others and had fun doing. (staff)

”

“

Done all sorts, walking, did Blackpool one time, bike ride – they just try and get you out and doing stuff. (care leaver)

”

“ Been on day trip with them. Done one to [activity name], meeting new people made my day cos normally just sit in my flat on my own thinking 'I hate meeting new people' but it actually helped me build my confidence to meet new people... I got to admit the day was amazing don't think I've had a better day out in my life. (care leaver)

“ Think it's really good, to have a sense of community and also introduces you to other people in same kind of boat, but also other people who work for Pure Insight, so able to know everyone so just feel like one big community, so feels like quite calming for when go on other trips, quite reassuring and makes you look forward to it. (care leaver)

“ Put together fundraising campaign to buy kayak and clothing and go out and experience some of that, other environments might not be used to being in. Walked up Snowden. Incredible experiences. (staff)

“ Normally go on bike rides with other young people and can go out and meet up, person work with can pick you up and all meet up and get to meet other young people who got a worker, so can meet friends. (care leaver)

“ Engage some of [the] 'higher risk 'or 'very difficult to engage people' – something about having lived experience, being able to connect on a deeper level and real value in that peer led type support. (staff)

Usually, Pure Insight runs a drop in café once a week in two of the four local authorities. However, during Covid-19 this service has been temporarily suspended. Some of those taking part in the evaluation talked about the benefits of the café. It gave care leavers a space to get together, have fun and eat a meal together.

“ Benefit to young people, guaranteed without fail a good quality hot meal homemade with friends, where can chat, socialise, get some support, people to lean on, sometimes subtle education thrown in: baking, cooking or speaker. [Café is] just a valuable asset. (volunteer)

The importance Pure Insight places on these activities is underscored by the fact that all **staff members are encouraged to schedule at least one day a month to do activities with young people**. Volunteers are often invited to join in too.

## Virtual groups and contact

Pure Insight oversees a number of **closed social media (Facebook) groups**. These aim to **bring care leavers together and offer peer support**. The groups have different themes, including:

- Cooking and baking group – sharing recipes and virtual cooking together
- Insight InMind – focused on self-care and peer support
- Creative ideas – opportunity to showcase talents
- Parenting group – care experienced parents
- Swap page – a way to recycle unwanted items and gift them to others
- Geography specific groups – for local advice, tips and connecting volunteers and care leavers.

Young people were supported to become co-administrators for the sites (for example, two care leavers had taken responsibility for posting inspirational quotes and adding information to help start conversations around mental well-being in the InMind group).

Young people talked about their experience of being part of the Pure Insight closed Facebook page. They said there was **lots of helpful information** on there; recipes, art and craft things to do, inspirational quotes as well as donated items. Importantly **they liked that the Facebook groups connected them to others in their local area, along with Pure Insight staff**. Some said this helped them **feel they belonged and were part of something**. Others were **pleased they could support others** through gifting things they no longer needed or offering advice.

“ They have care leaver group page on Facebook, which is a free site, so say if other care leavers have belongings no longer need put them up on that website and other care leavers say whether they want or need it and one of the members of staff will help sort lifts and things like that, transporting the stuff so that’s really helpful. Been on it when needed items but now on it to give items away as I’m doing quite well for myself, it there to help everyone and I think it’s really good for care leavers especially. (care leaver)

“ Never knew about getting involved, I enjoy doing it, feel like I’m making a difference, I’m doing well for myself if I have bits from my house, had some extra tins so brought tins of food and helped another care leaver with some bits and bobs, nice to get involved and do things with them to make changes for our lives, it’s amazing...It’s everything they done for us so we feel we giving back. It’s like a little community to be honest we all work together we all do things for each other that’s what’s great about it. (care leaver)

“ Always putting stuff on the Facebook. If aged between 18 and 24, do you want to get involved in this? Competitions, write a poem, win a prize, always doing creative things to occupy people's minds, especially the way the world is, it’s great that they are thinking of everyone. (care leaver)

“ Being a care leaver don’t get everything, can’t afford certain things, when I wasn’t working it was difficult, there were things I would go without, say if I needed a toaster, things like that, really, really helpful in them areas, make sure you have what you need, absolutely everything. (care leaver)

“ As soon as in them, cooking one, mental health one, young people’s voice one, craft and design stuff and linked in with key worker and that team, got first name and surname is Pure Insight. Connected to gang of really good people. Talk about activities coming up: beach, ice skating, anyone want to come, do this competition. All young people connected through Facebook to us. (Staff)

“ Facebook; do all different things on it, cooking recipes, all sharing with each other, helping me learn different things to do for my tea. Some of things put on there, they put some Motto type things, inspirational stuff and speeches and that helps me a lot. (care leaver)

Through the Facebook pages or Messenger young people could easily contact Pure Insight staff. Several care leavers pointed out that Pure Insight were **available not just in office hours but on an evening and at weekends**. This **made Pure Insight feel different** to other support services.

“ Have own messenger so can just message them any time before a certain time at night which is 10pm – if say I need to talk about something they just ring me there and then. (care leaver)

“ All of Pure Insight have Facebook pages so it makes it a lot easier to message as well, they can see when you are online, and they are online makes it lot less formal so makes it more accessible. (care leaver)

Although the virtual groups did not suit all, as this volunteer explains:

“ I can’t put it better, Facebook group, I’ve had to silence it for me personally... some of emotional emoji sharing not achieving a lot. (volunteer)

## Pure Insight Young Adviser Panel and participation opportunities

Pure Insight was founded ‘with, and by, people with lived and professional experience of care’. Interviewees and the review of documentation demonstrated the continued importance and effort invested to ensure those with ‘lived experience of care’ were central to planning and project delivery.

One of the mechanisms to do this is through the **Young Advisers panel which is part of the Pure Insight organisational governance and scrutiny structure**. The panel contribute to the monitoring and review of how well Pure Insight are doing. The group meet quarterly and are part of a closed Facebook group. Members are also **part of the recruitment process for new staff and volunteers**. Several care leavers commented they enjoyed this and taking part had been a positive experience for them.

“ Some of the workers are care leavers and they do involve us...they help us with our own experiences to help other people so it’s beneficial for you... it’s really helpful as helped me to feel helping others. (care leaver)

“ Do panel interview – basically a good thing to do – let care leavers interview the staff, so can pick who they want to be on the team. (care leaver)

“ I think the model they have got having mentors and having young people always close to the heart of the organisation is a good one. They look for mentor representatives on the organising committee and got care leavers on it too and I think that is a good central foundation. (volunteer) ”

“ Young person has a good relationship with Pure Insight. Been on interview panel giving young person’s perspective, what it’s like being in care and coming out of care. Good to try to involve young people in structure of organisation. It’s not just people doing stuff to care leavers it’s the care leavers having a say in how they like things done, how things are and keeping it close to that I think that’s part of the ethos. (volunteer) ”

“ With Pure Insight have interviews with CEO first and then with us, but [CEO] does really value all of our opinions, that’s really different. If we say no, [CEO] disregard them, she will listen to us foremost because she genuinely respects everyone’s opinion especially when coming from people who going to be working with these people. (Care leaver) ”

However, several of those interviewed highlighted that Pure Insight were mindful that **participation opportunities needed to happen in lots of different ways**. Attending a group or filling in a survey was not for everyone. The whole Pure Insight team were expected to listen and collate issues and feedback from young people as spend time with them. This way of working could act as an ‘early warning system’ to help understand what was happening for young people.

“ Certain type of person like to get together and talk about issues, and are others we need to hear from, so capture that in the moment, rather than ask painful things, we’re there in the moment, capture and use that as feedback as to what’s going well or want to do different. (staff) ”

Everyone who commented on this **overwhelmingly agreed that Pure Insight did involve care leavers in the design and running of services**.

## Peer groups and participation activities: what works well?

Different interviewees (staff, volunteers and care leavers) highlighted that what worked well was the **culture of the organisation: there was a clear expectation that care leavers (and others) were integral to the design and running of the service**. Other important things were the **range of activities to join in with and the flexibility with which these were offered**. They helped keep young people busy, to make new friends and to feel less isolated.

“ Pure insight facilitates it, they don’t do it all, they enable and empower young people to do it. Build self-esteem, confidence from a point that’s bloody low through no fault of own. (staff) ”

“

Sometimes all it needs is a catalyst, Pure Insight acts as a great catalyst, one of the hardest things about leaving care is loneliness, you can't underestimate impact of that. Almost all care leavers are lonely. So, group activities mitigate that. Introduced to others, got something in common, yes, I'm not the only one and that is so, so important. These activities are like planting seeds, probability those seeds grow nicely, sometimes won't. It's not clever but it's brilliant. It works, putting people together, most of the time. (staff)

”

## Peer groups and participation activities: challenges and areas for improvement

Two main challenges were cited in relation to delivering peer group and participation activities: **(1) difficult group dynamics** and **(2) accessibility, linked to individuals' other commitments** (such as work or college).

A few people talked about past issues related to difficult group dynamics and being with others who they found challenging.

“

Young person loves getting involved with Pure Insight, but mentee discussed with me hanging out with other care leavers, she's withdrawn from that. We went to café every week but then went less. Was chatting about getting more involved again. But then mentee saying she is happy not to go as much. As a lot of other care leavers might be quite chaotic, not as settled as my young person, so funny thing I guess it's having people who've had similar experiences, safe space to discuss things maybe help each other but she finds it tricky, felt like was being bullied a little bit, as so proactive...was picked to go on trip and got laptop as she is studying. Some of the other care leavers were just a bit jealous maybe giving her grief why she got this... At first felt comfortable as had similar background, but now she's matured, lot of gossiping and drama, she said 'I find it quite childish and can't be bothered'. (volunteer)

”

“

That happened, classic forming, norming group theory. It started to become quite clique issues between fractions and for me, I always wanted to see an exit strategy... we weren't getting new young people in, so this group are blocking this, younger group hearing [about issues] and not wanting to go, so need to move this group on, could help them to find own space, organise it and that was really good progression. Pure Insight were very much we are a family, you always welcome to come as long as want and that a real struggle at time, took ages, about a year, to get it sorted and trying different things. (local authority representative)

”

“

Only little negative, they do encourage care leavers to be around other care leavers and one mental state may be better than another and they try to help each other and sometimes it can cause a bit of distress... basically say you help a care leaver and they take it for granted...we are put around other care leavers, some of us are more screwed on, and others bit more behind, don't always see eye to eye, so this only thing would say bad in my view, care leavers mixing together not always a good idea. (care leaver)

”

Some care leavers explained they had not joined in group activities like trips or going to the cafe, because of other time commitments from University or work or their anxiety prevented them going.

“

I'm not very outgoing at moment, I tend to keep my circle small, have been asked to go on walks with people and other mentors, asked if want to do yoga, cooking classes. Loads of opportunities if one day I change my mind and think I could give that a go. (care leaver)

”

“

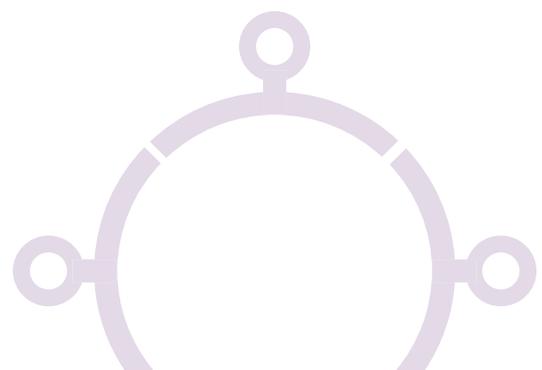
We've met in the park, to meet other care leavers and other people who work with Pure Insight, know they do trips to beach, hiking but they're always on when I'm in University...booked on for ice skating as that when I've finished University, they've got loads. (care leaver)

”

“

I didn't want to go on days out. Sometimes when people in care, when go on days out, to me it was embarrassing. You feel like, you don't want people to know you are in care. If you go on day out with people in care, even if to zoo. Feel that people know. But Pure Insight take a much more relaxed approach. But I think I already had my blindfold on so I'm not even attempting it. I've seen other bits in action, and I think they great for people who like to do that. (care leaver)

”



# Building blocks of success: what helps Pure Insight work well?

Overall, those taking part in the discussions were very positive about Pure Insight services. Earlier sections of the report looked at what worked well in relation to each component of Pure Insight, this section looks at cross-cutting elements.

Those taking part in the evaluation conveyed that **Pure Insight have got it right in terms of:**

1. what they offer
2. how they do this
3. and who they have as part of the organisation.

Learning from the evaluation suggests the building blocks of success and these are presented below (see also figure 6, page 80).

**The configuration of Pure Insight contributes to the success of the work**, people talked about:

- the fact that it is **separate to the local authority** – this was seen as helpful and supported some care leavers to get involved.
- their **charitable status** – this is important for accessing funding and attracting local volunteers.
- **independence – people thought there was less bureaucracy**, compared to statutory services, so Pure Insight are able to do things quicker and in different ways.
- **care leavers actively chose to get involved** with Pure Insight; it was not something they had to do.

**The breadth and range of services provided was valued:**

- Evidence suggested that **no one component of Pure Insight was prioritised over others**; all aspects of the service reviewed – mentoring, psychological well-being service, peer and participation activities, support to care experienced parents – were equally recognised and valued for the contribution they made to supporting care leavers.
- Care leavers could join **in more than one component** if they chose. Both volunteers and young people talked about how useful and beneficial this was. Cross cutting support, between different components, strengthened the overall offer of support available to care leavers.
- **Responses to young people's needs were not dictated by role or service**; it was positive to have a number of people available who knew different young people to ensure support was readily available. Part of the rationale of interconnecting components was to facilitate connections between people and forge a sense of community.

“ With coming out of my shell, lowering my social anxiety, with Pure Insight having all these activities, networks, connection events, something I really hope will help me manage my social anxiety. Also just having someone who is so consistent in my life from a point when I was struggling a bit more than I am now, I think that will be a really nice thing to have, have someone to change and grow alongside, be nice thing to have for next year. (care leaver)

“ Just get this whole new life, whole new bond with people, it's a massive group, they building every day, getting new local authorities, getting staff, and getting care leavers involved as staff members... it's amazing, it's hard to explain until you're involved you don't understand how much there is going on, I know about the café, not done that yet and the outdoor [activities] I've done a bit, but can't wait to do more, there's loads. (care leaver)

“ When people leave care system [there's] not a great deal of assistance to help with general things like how to fit a washing machine and stuff like that but they [Pure Insight] will support you no matter what you need... suppose what most people would have if their dad was around... whatever gets thrown at them they are quite willing to take on and they will help in any way they can and they are more than just rules and regulation. (care leaver)

“ Accessing other services. We've got psychological well-being worker and trauma counsellor, other services might have a barrier as waiting for service, we can do some fast-track within our own service. (staff)

It has in **place a strong value base which permeates across the organisation:**

- Cutting across all the service components was the **centrality of developing quality relationships**. These were described as authentic and required people to invest (to bring their self). Good relationships are the most powerful intervention. Relational trauma requires relational repair<sup>12</sup>.
- There were lots of facilitators of strong relationships, including: showing genuine interest, being **strength-based, empathetic, caring and non-judgemental**. The **consistency of relationship** was another of the 'magic ingredients'; there were no **arbitrary time-limits** and an explicit emphasis on creating lifelong connections.
- Though there are different services and support provided, there was **evidence of a shared ethos** in the way staff and volunteers described Pure Insight and in how they brought the values of the organisation to life through their relations with others.
- Within the culture of the organisation there was an expectation that **care leavers' views were integral to the design and running of the service**. There was value placed on the **inclusion of 'lived experience'** at all levels of the organisation, to steer planning and delivery.

“ They've never once said you have to be different; you have to change who you are for anybody or anything, they value you as a person just because you are you, it's not the usual from organisations or things like that. (care leaver)

<sup>12</sup> Treisman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTsPdMqVwBg>

“ What’s amazing about Pure Insight as an organisation...values permeate and pervade through the organisation and come from the very top. The values we are shown or taught or made to understand are ones that carry through all the organisation and all it does. So, there is a really refreshing approach that’s so non-judgemental, accepting of everyone, welcoming no matter what and a recognition that most of the young people that come to us for support have had a significant lack of support, influence, care, love, nurture, growing up and that is ultimately what they need to live the best life they could possibly live. So, I’ve been very impressed with the value base. (volunteer) ”

“ I think a lot of it is down to modelling, if you are going to be there for someone you need to really be there. I can’t expect her to look up to me if I’m going to repeatedly disappoint her, she’s had that all her life, all these social workers, foster parents, everyone has let her down as they moved on as that’s what they do, the nature of that industry. None of them impacted in a positive way otherwise she wouldn’t be where she was when I met her. It is important to be consistent, to commit. (volunteer) ”

“ It’s like a cocktail of transparency, honesty, non-judgement, admitting you can be wrong and going back and apologise and owning it, 'I’m so sorry, can we look at doing it a different way', holding hand up and being accountable, being authentic. (staff) ”

“ I think that the most crucial part of everything we do is that we do it with love and we do it for the right reasons. Part of what we are taught; why we are doing it, every decision; why are we making that decision, for ourselves, our ego, pride, angry or is it because it will help the person? That’s really what we are about as an organisation. (volunteer) ”

As referenced elsewhere many talked about Pure Insight’s **practice model and style of working** as integral to why the service worked so well. Core elements of the approach included (but were not restricted to):

- **Being non-judgemental:** e.g., not sharing the history of young people.
- Having **availability and time:** e.g., working out of hours such as evenings or weekends, one-to-one model, accessibility via Facebook.
- **Led by what young people identify** as important to them: e.g., no pre-conceived expectation of what support will look like as this is shaped by each young person.
- **Demonstrating flexibility:** e.g., in how and where the organisation works with care leavers.
- **Nurturing partnership relationships:** e.g., through co-location, strategic links to senior leaders to elevate the voice of care leavers.
- **Ensuring fluidity in role demarcation:** e.g., staff help each other to do what is needed to ensure young people feel supported.

“ It is the flexibility, it is informal, us going to them, not having to go to office, working with workers, making sure safeguarding followed if needed, highlight concerns, they’ve got the right model. (local authority representative) ”

“ They, I don’t know how to explain it, they make you feel like you’re somebody and not just some care leaver person. (care leaver) ”

“ Pure Insight it's very much leave your ego at the door. Not sure how to quantify that. It's very down to earth. Let's just be honest and real about things. Got right balance – about being compassionate and practical too. (volunteer)

“ And feels very different power dynamic, very different. We don't come in with big case file of all information we know about you. We don't have any of that. So, there's that trust there. Once set stall at beginning and say to young person I don't know these things, I'm just learning about you as you are learning about me. Can feel really refreshing. So moves relationship at nice steady real pace where they do start to share, start to learn where this young person want to go, what coming up for that young person. (staff)

“ Having the time – they are in demand all the time, there are a lot of people...always in high demand, I'm laid back, speak when spoken to unless it's an emergency then I will get in contact, they've always got time no matter what, showing you've got someone there, if something goes wrong, even if just want to talk something through – it's the time that they dedicate to people. (care leaver)

Pure Insight's ability to be **flexible and responsive in its offer has** helped it to work well:

- Pure Insight, people felt, **responded to young people on their terms**. At a basic level, this was demonstrated by the fact that there was no 'eligibility criteria' to meet in order to receive a support. The **support offered was led by what individual young people said mattered to them**, it was not about achieving 'outcomes' set by others or service parameters.
- There was evidence of Pure Insight **adapting their provision in response to what care leavers say works** best for them. Examples included, but were not restricted to, evening and weekend availability; ease of getting in touch through Facebook groups, delivery of psychological well-being service outreach style in young people's homes.
- There was **fluidity in role demarcation**; so that team members and volunteers could help each other to ensure young people felt supported.
- This led some to describe how services **felt much less formal (whilst still retaining high standards)**.
- Several respondents commented that they admired and appreciated the **tenacity of Pure Insight; they didn't 'reject' young people** but wanted to work with everyone. Care leavers remarked on this '**stickability**'.

“ Phone, text if need anything, she gets back pretty much straight away, whenever said need help with anything. Every time said I need help always been back in touch, always straightway pretty much. (care leaver)

“ There's been countless times when I've sworn, shouted, done everything and they've not thrown me away. (care leaver)

“ Very, very, very, very good to try to keep you engaged...They won't give up even if it takes them months, they are relentless. They try their best to do whatever, go the extra mile all the time, they are relentless, don't pressure you, remind you that it's there if you need it, waiting till you are ready. (care leaver)

“ What drives us is something so genuine and pure; it's to see the change for that young person. [You] can go months, without a positive outcome coming through, 'am I not being inspiring enough?', about remembering everyone has got their own timeline, they get there when they get there. It's that consistency, longevity – lot of mandated service say it is 6 weeks or 6 months. We are kind of open-ended on the need, work around where that young person is at it's not a one size fit all. (staff)

“ Psychological well-being worker works closely with the mentoring co-ordinator, [so] team around the young person approach. Everything being communicated and lines drawn and nice transition from one service to another if needed, huge investment as a team around an individual. (staff)

**Effective partnership working** with local authority and other services was prioritised.

- Factors that supported partnership working included: co-location, investment in development of relationships with Personal Advisers and partner organisations, attendance at team meetings, explicit recognition of Pure Insight's work in local authority strategy documents and regular liaison with senior management.
- Pure Insight **brings a level of challenge to local authority practice**; some partners explicitly welcomed this explaining it helped them reflect on, and review, their own work.

“ Get on really well with them [leaving care colleagues]. It's about co-parenting. About identifying you both in this together trying to support this young person...All about partnership working if not rubbing along together and not having the conversations you are not going to have the collaborative approach to support the young person, then that means you're not going to get the best offer you could get for the young people. (staff)

“ Lot of evidence to say they [Pure Insight] know what they are doing – co-ordinator comes across well and other workers are open, up front about some of our interventions changing, so don't think they are being too compliant – think they are enhancing our reflection as well. (local authority representative)

Ultimately it was **the people who work at Pure Insight** (staff and volunteers) that were the most important aspect in making the service work well.

- **Rigorous recruitment practices for both staff and volunteers** were the foundation for this.
- Respondents talked about Pure Insight as made up of **quality people with the right attitudes, knowledge and skills**. They demonstrated understanding of what it is like to be in or leaving care (sometimes linked to their own personal experience).
- In their descriptions, people emphasised that the organisation felt **non-hierarchical and equitable**.
- Several of those interviewed highlighted the **quality of the senior leadership at Pure Insight**. This was described as impressive and trusted.
- Importance was placed on **creating a supportive work environment** (for staff and volunteers). Several respondents mentioned the idea of the 'Pure Insight' family and described a sense of community, where people are highly motivated to ensure that the work is successful.

“ The type of people they are hiring I think is a really good bonus that they have as well, as I know how rigorous their employment methods are, so I think that is something that really helps them and benefits them. I know they always looking for people who really will make a change for young people’s lives. Whereas care services are looking for people who have a degree not necessarily people who have a personality...everyone I’ve met from Pure Insight has had a nice perspective, fresh kind of insight into what the world of a care leaver is like. (care leaver)

“ We are human beings we really feel this, as a team we pride ourselves on having those objective conversations when working direct [with young people]. Certain things can be really emotive, so we reach out to the team, pick up the phone and say, 'I've had heavy day'...so important to reach out to colleagues I regard them as really great friends not just work colleagues, they're very special and I really respect their opinion and go to the team for advice about different things that come up. (staff)

“ In general, I've met quite a lot of them, even though the CEO is quite high up, she's still very down to earth. They all behave like people... they all behave equal, all equal with other staff and with us as well. It's very much a level playing field. (care leaver)

“ Such a crucial part of the organisation [we've] got great people, they are available, they are knowledgeable, and they've got good sound judgement. Testament to Pure Insight recruitment, 99% of time bring in right people. (staff)

“ I've worked with a lot of charity people over the years but never have I been as impressed with a group of people in terms of their ability to understand and act to make the lives of the people they want to help better as I have been with the Pure Insight leadership and management team. (volunteer)

“ Our ethos, if fail, then fail fast. So, staff induction there is a lot of learning, lot of theory, they are out with the team, exposed to many of the teams, so we hear from them, so team gets to see what they like, if an inkling that not 100% we will be quick and be honest with them and address it straight away, then quickly invoke processes, respectfully and honestly give them the feedback and information on things to improve. (staff)

“

CEO has personality, that drive, innovation – comes across very eloquently, professionally and she’s got a nice personality, but [she] will tell you straight, feels very honest, not afraid to act if see something not working. (local authority representative)

”

“

CEO is amazing, brilliant and lot of it about her passion, energy, commitment and drive and that shines through and people just want to work with her. (local authority representative)

”

## Would you recommend Pure Insight to others?

Pure Insight was clearly held in high regard by those who took part in this evaluation. There was universal agreement that it was an organisation they would recommend to others. Care leavers shared how they had already told other young people about it and urged them to get involved as it was something that would help them. Volunteers gave examples where they had talked to their friends and colleagues, and sometimes encouraged them to think about getting involved (though some stressed they only did this with people they felt had the right attitude).

“

I talk to a lot of people, so had countless conversations about Pure Insight and the work they do. It is important. I think a lot of us take for granted our upbringing, safe environment to grow up in, I did, I don’t think people think that there are young people out there, don’t appreciate it, young people get lonely too. (volunteer)

”

## Pure Insight – offering a different but complimentary service to local authority leaving care support

Some care leavers shared their experiences of the support they had received from local authority leaving care services. Experiences were mixed, but a common perception seemed to be that the ‘leaving care system’ was over-stretched. In this context, people thought Pure Insight offered something complimentary, additional and different to statutory leaving care support.

- Pure Insight offered a different type and quality of relationship from other professional help. As highlighted elsewhere, it was described as: less formal, had an explicit focus on relational ways of working, less rules on how workers could ‘be’ with young people, felt less official and more natural and, there were more visits and time available.
- Pure Insight provided additional and different support to that provided by leaving care services. It engaged volunteers, did more on a weekend and evening, did different activities and worked in a different way.
- Pure Insight focussed less on formal plans such as ‘pathway planning’ requirements and what services decided care leavers were entitled to and more on what young people identify they need or want support with.
- Pure Insight aimed to create long-term and lifelong commitments, in contrast to leaving care services which had cut-off points for support, based on age.
- Pure Insight was less constrained by rules and bureaucracy. It could often do things quicker and differently (e.g., access fundraising monies). It helped that Pure Insight was independent and not part of the local authority.

- Pure Insight tended to work with a wider group of care leavers for example, older care leavers and those not in touch with leaving care support.
- The premise for the service was different; young people chose to engage with Pure Insight.
- However, people also emphasised the importance of close working with local authority leaving care services and working in partnership. On balance, roles were seen as complimentary. This was supported by good communication, delineation of responsibilities and tasks along with formal recognition of the role of Pure Insight in the delivery of local authority services (e.g., as part of the local offer).

“ The offer is the offer, between 18 to 21 to support with housing, with bills but even that’s not 100%, it is the bare minimum. Got a roof but nowhere near liveable, it is basic. We [Pure Insight] try to make a house a home. It’s not the local authority’s fault, I think Personal Advisers are amazing [but they’ve] too much work, too little funding and too little time. (staff) ”

“ Yes, it’s definitely different, as with leaving care support young people have to meet certain check list and criteria to even be considered for half of the support... with Pure Insight it’s so varied and they literally help you with anything and the only check list you need to meet is you are care leaver, so it allows for lot more support to be offered to you. (care leaver) ”

“ I do believe that the Personal Advisers do have their young person in mind, but I feel, from my experience, it feels as though they have their agenda, they have their plan. (volunteer) ”

“ Being based outside the local authority is a help. We have disgruntled customers who view the local authority as cause of all evil, so for them it’s brilliant to have someone completely independent. (local authority representative) ”

“ Pure Insight recognise that people need a little bit more one to one support rather than just being generalised. For me that’s helped me grow as a person, not a number. Social services, no one really wants to be involved with them do they, it’s not like a vacation. Their goals are: are you safe, are you well, are you meeting the requirements of the law? Whereas Pure Insight are like: are you ok? Let’s get the best for you. How are you feeling sort of thing? (care leaver) ”

“ Yes, cos a social worker can only be with you for so long or can’t text you straight back, they do support you and stuff. They are good but obviously all leaving care kids they’ve got, they are that busy, they can’t always help you when you need it, sometimes a social worker not been in that day as in meetings I’d probably be in a bit of mess as need help with something but Pure Insight worker just text back straight away. (care leaver) ”

“ We are very, very different, and I think that’s great. The fact we are opposite gives the whole offer. We need the Personal Advisers, we do need them, their authority has helped me a million times, pushing for better housing, pushing for mental health assessment... they are relevant, they are just different to us. (staff) ”

“ I think by the nature that Pure Insight can offer one to one detailed and specific assistance, it’s not possible for a local authority to do that, not got the resources to give one person all that time, so that a massive benefit that Pure Insight can offer. (volunteer) ”



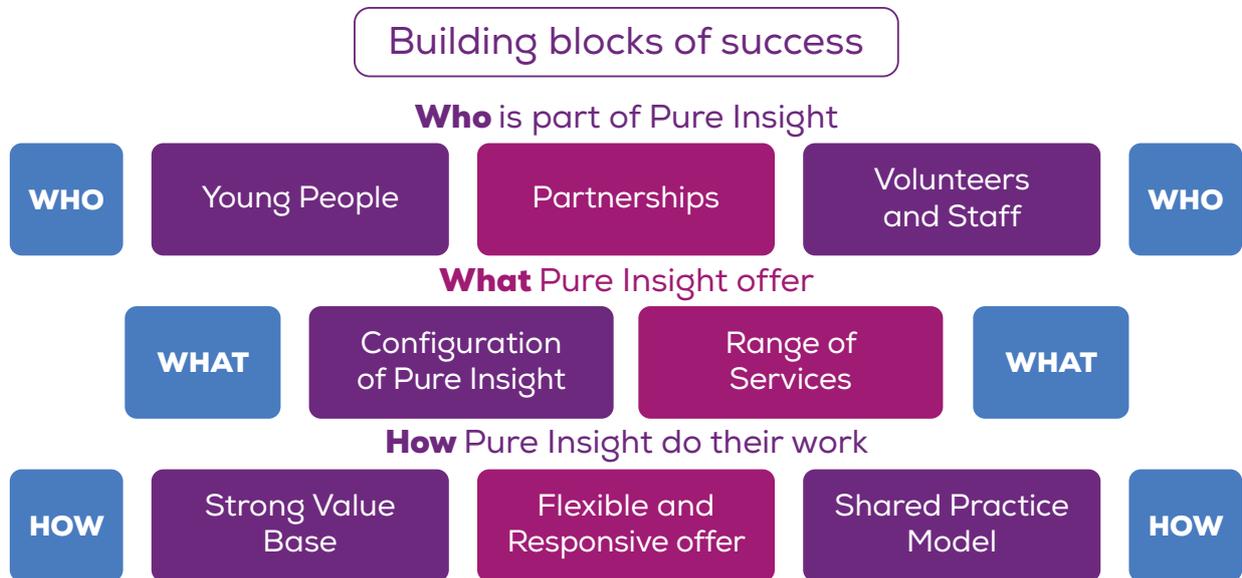
“ I’m not saying [leaving care] support not good. It’s not as tailored. They do care but you are just a number. They’ve got so many kids. Just trying to do what right by all of them. Whereas Pure Insight is really about this young person, they’ve got goals and aspirations. They are for people who have had a poor upbringing and no matter what happened to you, it not going to stop you from growing, they don’t approach you as damaged goods. (care leaver)

“ They are 100% different. I was afraid that Pure Insight was going to be too like leaving care. No one wants to be involved with that. It is not something you’d volunteer yourself to be part of. It’s not nice. It’s very legal, only there as legally have to be. Not that you’re not grateful. I’ve had great Personal Advisers and support workers. (care leaver)

“ We do the things they wish they could do. But the local authority are bound by restrictions and time. (staff)

“ Pure Insight whereas they are quite free, build proper friendships and not just professional friendship, not always on the clock either, feel can speak to them more, do more with them. (care leaver)

Figure 6: Building Blocks of Success



# Challenges and barriers

Everyone was asked about any challenges and barriers they had experienced or observed when working with Pure Insight. From the discussions **three main areas were identified: (1) practical issues, (2) partnership working and (3) wider context**. Although, some people were also keen to highlight that any issues they talked about were not insurmountable, and sometimes things were already in development at Pure Insight to tackle the problems identified.

## Practical issues

Several people (especially care leavers) raised concerns related to the **current reach of Pure Insight services**, issues highlighted included the:

- Challenge of making sure care leavers know about Pure Insight services; some of those interviewed said they wished they'd known about it sooner and were worried that others didn't know about the support.
- Risk of 'gatekeeping' from referring services, resulting in some care leavers not accessing Pure Insight.
- Challenge when care leavers moved out of area and, as a result, lived at too great a distance for volunteers to keep in regular contact. There is no network of reciprocal mentoring services to link with.
- Challenge of geography and decisions about where to situate services, such as a drop-in cafe or activities, so the maximum number of care leavers can access.

Several participants, particularly local authority representatives, expressed concern about the potential future capacity of Pure Insight. They argued that, with time, if Pure Insight continued to 'hold on' to young people there may be issues in terms of availability for other young people. However, there was limited evidence that this was currently an issue, rather it was something that Pure Insight needed to continue to review and manage.

“

Get certain parts of the team, have issues with other partner agencies, always happens. Where [they] think someone not doing something they would do, they stop referring. Have had this problem. Tried to address individually with workers. (local authority representative)

”

“

I find not everyone knows about it so the more people find out, the more help they can get, it's brilliant. (care leaver)

”

“

They are doing loads of brilliant activities, cycling, kayak, mountain walking, especially with mental health and isolation of some of our young people that's brilliant. It's the established Pure Insight young people benefitting not the ones [who have] never been involved with Pure Insight. As it's hard to get them involved, it's just where we are with everything, how difficult it is [Covid context]. (local authority representative)

”

Other issues were located within young people's own experiences; for example, their readiness or willingness to engage with Pure Insight opportunities. There was a **challenge in encouraging young people who may be cautious and hesitant to get involved**. They may, due to past experience, feel Pure Insight does not offer them anything or find it difficult to reach out for help.

“ Young people [have] experienced other professionals and other systems, been a lot of young people let down, so coming to us can feel like meeting another professional that is going to tick some boxes and then be on their way again. Getting across to young people that we work differently. Having those transparent conversations at the start about how we work, what we are about, what our offer is and reinforcing that in our actions and modelling to our young people, so they see, what we say we mean, and we are accountable for our actions. (staff) ”

“ Getting care leavers engaged, really it must be quite hard – don't forget we've come from a social service system that finishes at 4pm and after that you can't really get in touch and have to wait till the next day. (care leaver) ”

**Challenge of continuing to recruit high quality staff and volunteers.** Across interviews there were only a handful of occasions when interviewees said they had not had positive experience of working with staff or volunteers. When this had occurred, this was dealt with swiftly and individuals were no longer in post or had ceased volunteering.

“ Not happened yet – is there an endless source of good volunteers? Got to constantly look for mentors...lose people for understandable reasons. Constantly recruiting. Succession strategies is a challenge. (staff) ”

Making sure Pure Insight had secure **funding streams and income was a priority and continual challenge**. There could be difficulties and frustrations in securing sufficient funding.

“ To have an organisation come and do all the positive things I talked about and then have them let you down too, is a catastrophe, so what Pure Insight have as a challenge is to have funding to support young people as long as need which is the principle they work on. Money may run out; they've got to balance this– this is a real challenge for staff and the board. (staff) ”

“ Finance is a barrier, most of the money is time limited projects, with local authority or a grant like Children in Need so planning becomes a problem. The last thing we want to do with a service is set people up knowing it could hit brick wall and might drop them. (staff) ”

## Partnership-working

A critical factor to the success of Pure Insight was whether the partner local authority was receptive to the way Pure Insight worked. There could be challenges in the partnership working, for example:

- Challenge in **getting the right balance in terms of the amount of information shared and communication of what is happening for young people, between the local authority, Pure Insight and volunteers.**
- Challenge in **the clarity of roles** and making sure it is clear about who does what in terms of supporting the young person.
- Challenge of working with **different partner organisations that have different cultures.**

Things that helped mitigate these challenges were discussed previously; for example, co-location, attending team meetings, communication, access to senior leaders etc.

“

What they are able to do most commonly is work with people in the local authority to help them to understand it's a team, we've got a different skills set and working conditions and we can work in a complimentary manner. On occasion it does not work, been examples where it's not worked...Some local authorities really embrace it. Others have felt [Pure Insight] were the enemy almost. Sometimes have been cast in that role, when say you are getting this wrong. (staff)

”

“

It's about communication a lot of the time, where we had issue, where Personal Adviser felt the mentor seen the young person, and doing things the Personal Adviser doing...Pure Insight really clear that's not the mentor role, not involved with the local authority, they are there just for the young person, that did cause issues, that's where some of the resentment comes from...they felt they were working against us. (local authority representative)

”

Some identified **challenges with local authority systems being slow or at odds with Pure Insight values.**

“

I think Pure Insight want to be independent of the local authority but by the sheer fact they get funded by them means [they] can't be fully independent. Don't want to bite the hand that feeds you. Sometimes highlighting deficiencies in a local authority comes at a price. I think that's a thing I've noticed more recently...all the hoops and correspondence to get to this point, it's taken far longer than if they were completely independent companies, Pure Insight would have been quire forceful at an earlier stage and that would have been it. (volunteer)

”

“

Quite often the work you are trying to do is undermined by the bureaucracy of all of the services [you are] trying to support your young person to access...these people we are supporting are very often, voiceless, insignificant in the eyes of any level of authority, challenged at each turn, told no, dismissed...and that slows everything down, right down. (volunteer)

”

## Wider context

Pure Insight's work does not exist in a vacuum but operates within the **wider structural challenges and societal disadvantage care leavers tend to experience**; poverty, poor housing, employment opportunities and stigma (of being young, of being care experienced) could all cause difficulties.

“

Barriers, again a big one, a lot of social housing, young people end up in tenancies where huge poverty and anti-social issues which young people can become potentially exploited due to limited support networks. [We] support young people in those tenancies to thrive, work out how to be a good neighbour. It's easy for young people to be taken off down another road, to feel it's a friendship but its exploitation. Being really honest with them...empower young person and reflect with person that this does not look like a good friend. (staff)

”

“

Wider challenges of working within structural inequality. I personally struggle with supporting young people living in extreme poverty, [they] might be able get through this week, budgeting support but ultimately poverty continues to be issue or housing is an issue. (staff)

”

# Does Pure Insight make a difference?

This section of the report turns attention to the second main question for this review.

## Does Pure Insight make things better for care leavers?

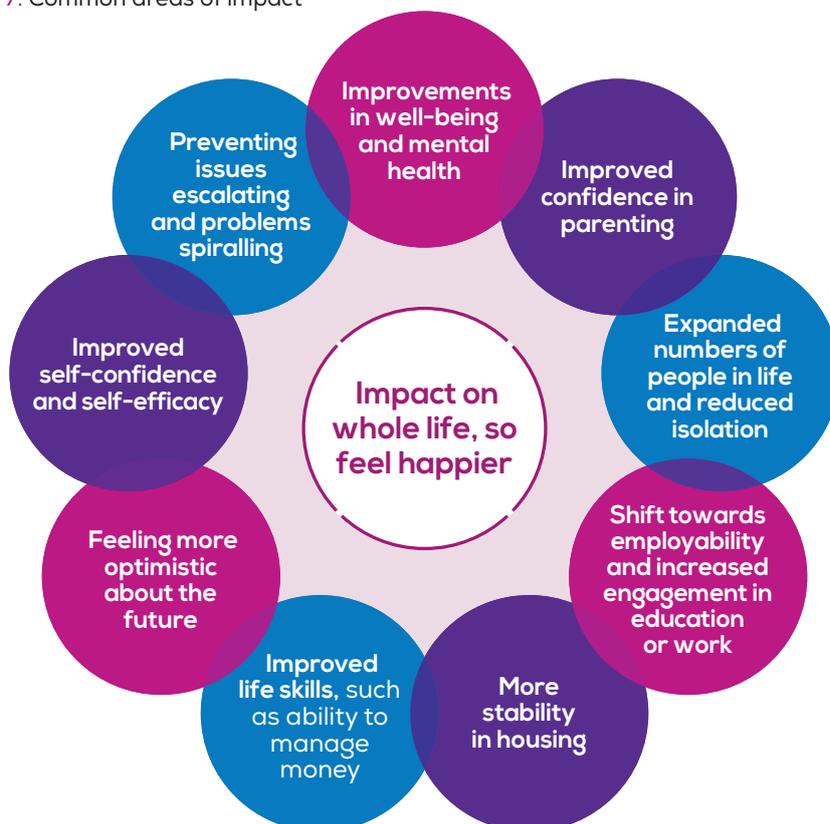
Those taking part in the evaluation were asked to reflect and share examples of where Pure Insight had made a difference. Those interviewed identified three different, but interlinked, areas of impact: (1) impact on the lives of young people; (2) impact on volunteers and (3) impact on local authority service delivery.

### Impact of working with Pure Insight on care leavers' lives

When thinking about the Pure Insight service, the majority of those who took part in the evaluation were able to identify advantages and changes in care leavers' lives which they attributed (at least in part) to working alongside Pure Insight.

**Whilst the nature of these changes was unique to individuals, there were 10 common areas:**

Figure 7: Common areas of impact



Each of these areas will now be explored further.

**Improvements in well-being and mental health** were shared. Some care leavers reported that they now had better access to specialist support which they felt was helping them. Several said care leavers' mental health had improved. Sometimes people gave examples of this, e.g., reduction in self-harm, less emergency hospital use, feeling more able to manage negative feelings such as anger, and lower stress and anxiety levels reported.

“ Definitely helped working with Pure Insight and my anxiety, didn't really have much education on what was wrong with me, what anxiety doing to the body, no one had ever told me. These people are trained in psychology, obviously it's educated me as well, what's going on in [my] brain. (care leaver)

“ It's definitely helped because I did try to access counselling and I just didn't feel that was the right thing for me, it was too structured and not flexible enough...Definitely helped having [PWW worker], helped having someone to talk to, as it is so sort of flexible, I think that really helps...It's definitely helped with the anxiety, being able to explain to other people so they can understand as well, worked a lot on anxiety and self-esteem which has helped me. (care leaver)

“ They got this person who comes round called [Name] and she talks about different ways of controlling my anger, which has actually helped quite a lot, because normally if someone says something about my family, I used to fly off the rails pretty quick. Now I remember what [PWW worker] said, what [mentoring co-ordinator] said and try to keep it under control. (care leaver)

**Shift towards employability and increased engagement in education or work.** Examples were given of care leavers sustaining their college course, engaging in volunteering or new educational courses or getting a job whilst working with Pure Insight.

“ I did CV for him, interview practice with him to help him communicate a bit better, got some improvement, then got job at [Name]...and he's held that down, really proud of him. (volunteer)

**Improved self-confidence and self-efficacy**, examples were given such as learning to drive, going out to different places and care leavers feeling more empowered to advocate for themselves. Some observed changes such as increased eye contact, willingness to eat in public and ability to use public transport independently.

“ Come on leaps and bounds...Don't think needs me as much. Doesn't ring as much in a crisis situation. So, whether dealing with crisis on own more or got less crisis, not sure, either way seems to be coping a lot better than was 3 years ago. (volunteer)

“ Most of all his confidence, seen him come out of his shell a lot more, when first met him, was very insular, never leave his room, barely go anywhere and now he goes other places. (volunteer)

“

A lot has changed about me thanks to Pure Insight, I'm now managing to actually cook proper meals, I'm keeping my flat spotless, I'm also managing to use the washer which I could never do, I always got someone else to do it for me, and my self-confidence has gone through the roof, got to admit, my self-confidence now is amazing. (care leaver)

”

“

Having Pure Insight allowed me to have structure back in life, helped me to meet new people, come out of my shell, speak to people and build relationships with others, best thing could have asked for. (care leaver)

”

“

If someone has put my self-confidence down because some person said this, they [Pure Insight] always saying to me, every time we come see you, your flat is nice and clean, you are looking after yourself, you're not getting into trouble and you're just a lovely person to be around and that puts my self-esteem right back up. (care leaver)

”

**More stability in housing:** Pure Insight had supported some with their moves from temporary housing and supported care leavers to make their house to feel more like a home.

“

My main thing that I wanted to try to improve, getting out of the house a bit and just having a nice place to come back to, it's not in the best area- between me and Pure Insight we've got it spot on now, it's brilliant. (care leaver)

”

“

I used to be sofa surfing but thanks to the help of Pure Insight I've actually got my own space and [it's] actually helped me a lot. (care leaver)

”

Lots of people spoke about the relationships that had been created through Pure Insight. Care leavers said they have **more people in their life to give them emotional support and they felt less isolated.**

“

Keeps you involved, keeps you active, keeps you busy, always in this network of people, communicating with people, gets you out the house, stops you feeling trapped in your house. Your whole life changes. I remember feeling so alone, still don't have many friends, but having them I can probably list about 20 people I'm involved with, 10 with Pure Insight and 10 with leaving care but since doing all this they like my support network, that's like my family it's absolutely amazing, if ever in any trouble or if ever need any help in any area, there's so many people in different areas can access support from. It's wonderful. (care leaver)

”

“ I’m always going on them [activities], I find it fun, meeting new people is helping me meet new friends as I’ve got no friends near where I live so making new friends near the places I live is helping. (care leaver)

“ Nice to have someone come round to talk to about my problems, as normally I won’t talk to anyone, but having these people around me, it’s made me build up and talk to people. (care leaver)

“ Makes you feel like you’re not alone – there’s always someone there for you. (care leaver)

Improved life skills such as **ability to manage money** were mentioned by some; they appreciated this help with managing their bills, avoiding benefit sanctions and reducing their debt.

“ Finances, reminding young people when they need to contact the job centre so avoid sanction, budgeting money, take young people shopping so get a food shop. Some mentors drive so can go to budget supermarket rather than corner shop, small and practical [things] make a big difference. (local authority representative)

“ With me I struggle with money budgeting, and we’ve literally sat down and talked, and they’ve helped me save money, in places I don’t need to buy things I used to buy, I’ve saved the money to go proper food shopping. (care leaver)

Through working alongside Pure Insight several care leavers reported that they felt **more optimistic about themselves and their future.**

“ People perceiving care leavers not going to do much, they going to be on benefits for rest of lives, they scum of life, which is still a very prevalent idea that people who’ve not experienced care perceive us but Pure Insight do change that, they are giving us purpose, after a while people tell you, you are something, you start to believe it, but now, I’d never have thought a care leaver would be going to university and I’m working towards that and I never thought I would. (care leaver)

“ Now I feel like because I’ve seen the work they do, wanting to exist and experience things [I] wouldn’t maybe think about, they’ve given me a reason to think about why I’m here, everyone’s born for a reason, it’s made me look at myself in a very different way, and it’s a good thing I suppose, as I wasn’t a particularly nice person before” (care leaver)

“ With their support I’m on my way to good things, I feel anyway. (care leaver)

“ If I didn’t have Pure Insight, I’ve no idea which way my life would have gone, I don’t think it would have gone well. They’ve motivated me to see that there is a life there for me. (care leaver)

“ Think it makes me feel hopeful – there’s someone there I can talk to; someone to support me but also hopeful for other care leavers as well...that there is Pure Insight there for them if they need it. (care leaver) ”

“ I just think I’ve grown up a lot, took more responsibility and changed in my attitude, and want to think that the world is my limit, not just a typical care leaver who gets in trouble... confidence building as well. (care leaver) ”

Some explained they had observed care leavers’ **confidence in their own parenting grow**. Examples related to this included: confidence to join play groups, to continue breastfeeding and to seek advice on child-related matters.

“ It’s made a huge difference, not feel so isolated or alone. Not feel failing as a mother, got people saying you are doing a good job. That’s been life changing for her. (staff) ”

Some people talked about how support from Pure insight had helped **prevent issues escalating and problems spiralling**. Examples were given of care leavers not losing their housing, keeping families together and avoiding getting in trouble with the police.

“ Pure Insight worker took me to court, she supported me, I have really bad anxiety, panic attack when go out, without Pure Insight I wouldn’t have gone to court so therefore I’d probably be inside [prison]. (care leaver) ”

“ A lot of young people go into a tenancy at 18 and impact is huge. Imagine doing it without having someone to ask these questions: what kind of bills be looking at? As much as Personal Adviser be around, a statutory visit is 8 weekly. We are capturing this stuff before it becomes a big problem by being around, have regular conversations so stop someone get into debt, always advocate setting up a direct debit. (staff) ”

“ There were some days when I could have ended up arrested so I’m glad I’m not, I’m glad they were here to help [with anger management]. (care leaver) ”

Everyone reported there were benefits for young people from working with Pure Insight. Some didn’t specify areas in care leavers’ lives, rather they said **the impact had been positive across their whole life** and several said working with Pure Insight was ‘life changing’.

“ New worker she, came on scene, and she is the business, we have a close relationship, she came in, saw the flat, weren’t getting anywhere, saw state of place, I kept it tidy reasonably but what can I do no money, no job, my mental health down the drain, ever since she [mentor co-ordinator] came along my life has improved massively. (care leaver) ”

“ O wow, I’ve had people homeless, try to kill self, one year on and they are in their own home. People come out of prison and not relapsed into criminal justice system. People whose children on child protection and now wonderful mothers. Lives changed so much. People in hospital in past, but not self-harmed for years. It’s incredible the work we do. The service is so invaluable. (staff) ”

“ They took action and got it sorted. It put my trust right in people. If not get sorted out, I'd have left leaving care. I probably still be homeless and struggling so I genuinely think they changed my life. (care leaver)

“ Stuff that...never dreamt of, not present with that angry defensiveness, really transformed herself into the person she was probably meant to be, needed someone to walk alongside her to encourage that potential out of her. (volunteer)

“ And I've got where I am today and it's all thanks to Pure Insight. (care leaver)

“ I'm happier with my life now than I was back then. Pure Insight always had an involvement with making me happier. (care leaver)

“ For the young people – just don't know where to start. Lifesaving, life changing and some of that is subtle. Get to track young people who known Pure Insight, get to see those changes so subtle but happening. Success is different for everyone – every human needs connection and belonging and that's what we provide. All other things, housing, university are by-product, feeling a valued member of community and having your tribe around you. (staff)

“ Got really good outcomes for young people... been a really good relationship, really good offer for our care leavers. (local authority representative)

Respondents were keen to acknowledge that whilst Pure Insight was making a significant contribution to the changes people talked about, they also wanted to recognise that much of what happened was due to young people's own hard work. Pure Insight **helped to kickstart, accelerate and support the changes and improvements** in care leavers' lives.

“ Got young person I'm working with does interview panel, when we drive back, she says you guys really inspire me, I'm just sitting at home waiting for life to come to me...I said I didn't go to university till later in life, none of us are normal, what is normal? These conversations spark motivation. She'd been contemplating doing [education], signed up and now on an access course. Loving it. Massive change in her. Seeing her learn, she is thriving. She's alive. She's engaged. She wants to get up next day. Out every day proud of herself for doing it. Just putting her application in for University. Massive change for her. If we'd not been involved, I think she'd have got there but I'm not sure if it be at this point. (staff)

“ Wow, amazing what you've done, it's nothing I've done that's so special I was just there for her and she understood that, and the power of knowing that someone there for you and gives a shit about you, we don't need lot of people in that position we just need one or two and she never had anyone and knowing that, ultimately that's what transformed her. (volunteer)

## Impact of working with Pure Insight on volunteers

All eight of the volunteers who took part in the evaluation were able to identify impact resulting from their experience of working with Pure Insight. The main things talked about were:

- Changes in their own attitudes, outlook and value base
- Feeling they were giving back and making a difference, and the impact of this on their own well-being.

Other things mentioned by one or two volunteers included:

- Gained friendship
- Increased knowledge and understanding of issues care leavers can face
- Increase in self-confidence
- Postive influence on career (job choice or increased knowledge at work).

### Changes in their own attitudes, outlook and value-base

“ Been phenomenal in terms of personal transformation, understanding as well I would say.... I've learnt a hell of a lot about the care system and what it is like for young care leavers, my eyes been open...The most profound element is certainly the influence and learning from people like [Pure Insight staff] in terms of their impact not just in training but working with them...When working with and around, under those sort of people, if open to it, can learn a huge amount. So, I think for me, transformative, my outlook, my approach the way I view other people, the way I might judge others, decisions I might make, all of that has been a significant learning. (volunteer) ”

“ I think looking at it on a one-to-one level given me a lot more to think about politically, and I mean politically, what politics are playing out. How difficult benefit system is to navigate for example. Actually, how easy it would be to become homeless. Is really, really obvious. For me personally I am significantly less judgemental than might have been previously. There is a balance to that I know what things cost. It's made me appreciate how fragile it is for some people. So, I'm more empathetic, less judgement and significantly more aware how big a factor mental health is in all this. (volunteer) ”

“ I would say so, I've become more patient probably, I like to think my listening skills improved. (volunteer) ”

“ My [relative] says I have become nicer. I'm not sure if that's since I retired or since Pure Insight training. My [relative] puts it down to Pure Insight training. Less judgement, more considered and calmer. (volunteer) ”

### Feel giving back and making a difference and impact of this on own well-being.

Several volunteers talked about how rewarding an experience it was working with care leavers and described it as a 'privilege' to get to know their young person and have them in their life.

“Volunteers, the majority would say it enhanced their life. Having relationship with young person and organisation as well... life changing for everyone not just young person. (staff)”

“Once she'd batch cooked on her own. She'd got it all portioned out into tubs. I nearly cried. I was more than proud. O wow. She's taken on board some of this stuff. (volunteer)”

“I felt it was like a huge privilege to be involved with [name] so you're making a bit of progress and see the things that she's achieved. (volunteer)”

“Been a really, really good experience from my point of view. And I hope, and I think know, underneath, without sounding overconfident I've made a lasting impression on my young person, and will continue to do so, I think she does look up to me and I hope that will continue for as long as she wants. (volunteer)”

“Have to [give] credit to Pure Insight, for opening me up to a different part of life really that I can have an impact in. (volunteer)”

### Gained friendship

“She's part of my life now, I've appreciated being able to go and see her though Covid. Both making the effort to see each other, I've found it really nice, lovely to get out and see her. It's been a lifeline for me. (volunteer)”

### Increase in own self-confidence

“I was very, very insular and it changed, that I'm much more confident in myself now. (volunteer)”

### Increased knowledge and understanding of issues care leavers can face

“I've got so much more understanding, I've learnt so much and it's just really fulfilling, really fulfilling. (volunteer)”

## Impact of working with Pure Insight on local authority services

Interviewees shared their views on the impact Pure Insight can bring to local authority support services. The discussions centred on the following five main areas:

- 1 Pure Insight brings added value (extra services and resources).
- 2 Pure Insight shared their skills and expertise with local authority colleagues, e.g., through training or providing specialist advice on supporting care leavers with mental health problems or on successful participation with care leavers.
- 3 Pure Insight enhances the support offer to care leavers by offering an additional and different type of service; this was very reassuring for local authorities.
- 4 The impact of Pure Insight's work on individuals also had a positive impact on services, saving money and time.
- 5 Pure Insight worked with some care leavers who the local authority did not work with and often supported young people whose voices' and experiences may be less heard.

Several local authority representatives talked about the added value gained from working with Pure Insight. Some mentioned that as a charity Pure Insight can bid for funding which brought tangible benefits to local authorities in terms of **extra services and workers which were not paid for by the local authority**. Care leavers could join a service commissioned by the local authority from Pure Insight but could also access other parts of Pure Insight.

“ Also, the way they are able to harness the community if the local authority was trying to get volunteers, lot of community would say, 'why are you not doing it, you're supposed to look after them'. (local authority representative)

“ [Pure Insight] they do do a lot for everyone – it's like you are part of something, it is like a family, it's lovely. (care leaver)

“ For what they pay, they get additional 2 or 3 projects they are not paying for, some much more. Added value, [we have] increasing volunteer network, grows year on year. Other things do as a charity; care leaver swap page, Christmas offer, as a charity can get things local authority can't. Provide lot of solutions, save money, tackle issues, that they can't do. (staff)

Pure Insight can also **gain funding for extra things for care leavers such as: laptops, bikes, data package or hampers**. This was appreciated.

“ Can claim for more grants than I can access, so come to us asking do I need this, that and the other. So, I'm a taker, take what you can give me, that's been the beauty of this model. (local authority representative)

Sometimes Pure Insight **delivered training or provided specialist advice to workers in local authorities**; for example, on supporting care leavers with mental health problems or participation with care leavers.

“ This is such a gap. It’s really bad. I’ve delivered mental health [training] to my Personal Advisers as they don’t get any training in mental health. Don’t understand diagnosis, or how trauma can affect the brain. What their young people are struggling with. Sometimes I’m a huge support for the young person and for the Personal Adviser too, who rings me a lot with questions, to make sure they are doing the right things. I’m seeing their young person more frequent, weekly. They see them every 8 weeks. So, they check in with me a lot. (staff) ”

As discussed, Pure Insight aims to bolster what the local authority can provide; they are set up to deliver a different type of service, they have more time available and want to make lifelong connections. Therefore, when things work well, Pure Insight enhances the local authority provision. Several reflected that this **extra support to care leavers was very reassuring for local authorities**, knowing there were more people available and available at different times for care leavers.

“ It’s too young to be putting an 18-year-old in a flat on their own. For our young people with all their vulnerability and needs, but the reality is we do have quite a lot where that’s the only option, so we try to support that as much as can, so having that extra support from Pure Insight is really key for those young people. (local authority representative) ”

“ A lot of the time they rely on the fact they know that I’ve checked in on them. I get invited to loads of meetings as they sometimes not seen them for 16 weeks. Personal Advisers are very overworked. So me being in there is a massive thing for them. (staff) ”

“ I think they do a really good service; it’s not about calling out the local authority for what they’re not doing right, it’s there to pick up the slack, there to boost what can offer, it works really well. There are things Pure Insight can do that the Personal Adviser can’t do as they’ve got 20 odd kids maybe on their books and 2 are in crisis but mentor can do it, see them to make sure things ticking over. (volunteer) ”

“ I do wonder where some of my young people would be. I’ve had 3 times this week, ‘if not for me I’d be dead’, [it’s] actually crazy, some of the people I see I’m just surprised they’ve not been sectioned they are that unwell, some of it is very serious. There’s only me notifying the Personal Adviser for safeguarding. If we weren’t checking in on them, it would go unmissed. The risk is huge, there is a huge gap. I wonder what was going on before we came in. (staff) ”

“ Brought to me – some things that may have had but added to, some things not had at all – plugged a massive gap. (local authority representative) ”

“ She spoke privately about appreciation. They felt his mentoring was a weight off their back, so they get in touch with him and periodically visited him. (volunteer) ”

Earlier in the report, some of the positive impacts for individual young people were high-lighted, for example, avoiding benefit sanctions, maintaining tenancy, avoiding homelessness and improved mental health. Whilst clearly important for the individual, these changes also have a **positive impact at the strategic service level, saving costs and staff time.**

“ Sustaining housing and tenancy has been really, really good. Young people at 18 are not ready to live independently, nature of the beast and they can't remain where they are, it's very, very difficult. Support from mentor checking in frequently, helping them, building their confidence has made some of our young people not lose their accommodation, it definitely has. (local authority representative)

“ Care leavers who are parents because [Pure Insight] have weekly contact, have better understanding of young persons' lived experience. If a young person has a child on child-protection plan then Pure Insight are part of the process, sharing information from when visiting and sharing how well young person doing at conference. They give a better picture to those people sat round the table so can make more informed decision. If social worker only doing 4-week visit don't really have true understanding of how well young person doing. (local authority representative)

“ Since [date] had no young people going into A & E due to their emotional well-being. At the moment they [Pure Insight] are working with [number] of young people, emotional well-being worker and counsellor, certainly seeing an impact on the service. (local authority representative)

Sometimes Pure Insight **worked with care leavers who were no longer in touch with their local authority.** This may be because they were older, out of area, were not in contact with their authority or support services were not effective in working with young people. Again, whilst beneficial for individual young people, there were service-level benefits too. One interviewee hypothesised that, because Pure Insight worked with older care leavers and supported them, young people were less likely to return to the local authority for a service under the 'PA to 25' duty at times of crisis, as they already had support.

“ Been at a contract meeting [with Pure Insight] young peoples' names I remember, and what I hear about young people and how doing, mentors stopping those young people from returning for a service, not being in crisis, reduced the number of returnees. Think we have reduced the number due to Pure Insight – don't want young person to return in crisis if can be prevented and managed and stopped before a crisis. (local authority representative)

“ Because you are over 21, they [local authority] are there for support but can't support as much as did, but they said if they got me a worker from Pure Insight there is more support because obviously, she [social worker] has got lot of younger [children], she got lot of other young people still under her care that she works with. (care leaver)

## Pure Insight in a time of Covid

The coronavirus pandemic necessitated changes in the way Pure Insight services were delivered. Reviewing documents from Pure Insight revealed details of how support was adapted and enhanced. Key things Pure Insight did included:

- Reviewed all young people to determine who was most likely to be in most need and ascertain what types of support were needed by care leavers. Continued to review regularly.
- Assessed with staff their personal circumstances (e.g., working from home, childcare responsibilities) to adapt working patterns.
- Applied for emergency grant funding and linked with community organisations offering help.
- Peer groups moved online e.g., parenting worker fun session, cooking session etc.
- Daily live session to engage with a specific worker was offered.
- Increase in opportunities to get involved with things to help keep young people busy and connected, e.g., new Facebook group developed on arts, crafts, music, writing and poetry, new social media space for young men developed, competitions run etc.
- Practical help with provision of laptops, mobile phone data, food parcels, bikes, gas and electric payments etc.
- Strategy for regular contact developed, checking in with care leavers via the phone and physically distanced walks with some young people. All care leavers sent personalised card, sharing something Pure Insight admired about the young person.
- Psychological well-being service (PWW worker and Beacon counselling) continued to be delivered via phone or online.
- Frequency of virtual staff meetings and supervision increased.
- Volunteer peer support groups delivered more frequently.

Those interviewed for the evaluation appreciated the efforts from Pure Insight to continue to deliver support and to increase the services offered during Covid-19 restrictions. Care leavers talked about the online competitions and Facebook groups, receiving a laptop or help with mobile phone data. These activities and support were appreciated. Some said this work showed that Pure Insight cared about them and they were not forgotten during this time. Several mentors and care leavers talked about missing seeing each other.

“

I just think it's really rewarding, I've gained a friend really, there's certain things I think about I think I'll tell [name], she's part of my life now, I've appreciated being able to go and see her though Covid. We've both been making the effort to see each other, I've found it really nice, lovely to get out and see her. (volunteer)

”

“

Risk of increased social isolation greater than ever, one of the amazing things about Pure Insight is it carried on and, in some ways, got stronger in the pandemic and testimony to people who work there. Done an amazing job. (staff)

”

## Future vision for service

In the discussions, everyone shared their future vision for Pure Insight, this section details these reflections and ideas. Overarching themes were:

- **Sustainability: securing funding and continuing quality delivery of the services Pure Insight already runs.** As noted earlier, Pure Insight need to keep securing voluntary funding. They also require local authorities to provide some match funding for services provided. Some local authorities were keen to ensure monies were sourced from across the local authority not just children's social care e.g., contributions from clinical commissioning group etc.

“

First is sustainability of what we've got. Outside of that we are open to sensible growth. About quality over quantity” (staff)

”

- **Consider expansion in the future:**
  - ▶ Expand services in the areas already work in. Some urged Pure Insight to look at ways to ensure more young people can receive support. Suggestions included: increase the volume of services already delivered; add core components that are not already in place, e.g., add café offer or parenting worker or change the way care leavers are referred e.g., one authority were considering the idea of Pure Insight as an 'opt out' offer so the expectation was that every care leaver in the local authority got the chance to work with Pure Insight.
  - ▶ Move delivery to new local authority areas – people's views on this differed. Some wanted to see a Pure Insight service in every area of the UK, others wanted to keep any expansion local, e.g., to neighbouring authorities or at most, across the Greater Manchester area. One respondent reflected that any new area would benefit from a Pure Insight service which has already been piloted, tested and refined over the preceding years.
  - ▶ Find ways to ensure care leavers who want to, can easily stay involved with Pure Insight as they get older.

- However, many of those who talked about possible expansion were also very clear that any growth should not be at the expense of the quality of what Pure Insight already deliver.

“ The moment you hit 25 a lot of people feel they have got no support ... Pure Insight could really take them on board, get them involved and get their experiences to help younger [ones], as they can tell us what it's been like...I know there is an over 25 group [at Pure Insight], and they have taken them out for walks and stuff but some of activities, not allowed to be involved in much, which is quite sad. (care leaver)

“ I do see a need for more Pure Insight services as there is natural progression in terms of being embedded in community to avoid cliff edge at 25, mentoring, participation, different type of café and that would help that throughput. (local authority representative)

“ To know that some of them are getting support and some aren't it leaves not a great feeling in me. I would hope that Pure Insight if it didn't deliver direct but had a real influence in how that delivered in those remaining boroughs in Greater Manchester, that would for me be a positive and lasting legacy. It's a model that deserves that credit and value. (staff)

“ We need to be making more people aware of Pure Insight, took me a while, wish I'd found out sooner, so make sure leaving care team making young people aware, all Personal Adviser should be informing every care leaver, trying to get every care leaver with a mentor through Pure Insight, not just certain amount cos it is amazing. (care leaver)

“ Be great if it was a service offered all over the country, as only in Greater Manchester, I think it'd really benefit young people all over the UK, if carry on as going could grow into a massive support network for care leavers. (care leaver)

“ [We have] a higher proportion living independent, have Pure Insight to combat isolation but it is not enough, what more do we need to do? Have we got the Pure Insight offer right? So, it comes down to the opt out offer I'm hoping this will help for those not yet involved in Pure Insight. (LA representative)

Other ideas shared by one or two individuals, in relation to their thinking about the future, included:

- **Increase focus on supporting care leavers into work** and or partner with organisations who already do this.
- Ask Pure Insight to **explore ways to tap into the skills and volunteer opportunities of the local authority workforce more.**
- Establish **Pure Insight as a centre for excellence** in supporting care leavers and share experience and expertise with other organisations – this could involve working more closely with campaigning organisations.

- **Make Pure Insight resources available more widely, e.g., model of working, tools and resources such as mentor training programme** – to facilitate other organisations to adopt practices and upskill others to deliver support to care leavers elsewhere in the country.
- **Increase the training opportunities or consultancy offer<sup>13</sup>** for others to learn from Pure Insight (e.g., Pure Insight mentoring model, practice in supporting care leavers' mental health, Pure Insight skills in participation and ensuring young people are involved in service design and decision-making)
- **Work to raise public awareness of the work of Pure Insight** – some wanted Pure Insight to be a charity name that everyone knew about.

“ I'd like to see them develop more partnerships because the remarkable staff can't be skilled in everything, there are other organisations working in the field, maybe bridges can be formed and partnerships for example with employment and training organisations, there must be some overlap. (staff)

“ Maybe like the care leaving team from social side they would integrate more with Pure Insight the way they do things, the way they work, I know they work closely with care leaving team anyway, but I think care leaving team needs to change for the better and replace that with similar working way to Pure Insight as they do it better. (care leaver)

“ I'd like to see Pure Insight in every borough in Greater Manchester. And possibly slightly further afield. Was a time wanted in each town but would like to think other towns will do their own and copy what we do or parts of it. (volunteer)

“ I would like to see a version in as many areas as possible. Recruit people who are able to take on our values and what we do. So, training people up. Provide charity package to train others to replicate in their area as we can't alone go to Liverpool, Birmingham but we could set up services to help others set up... Before this job I didn't understand what a care leaver was, the chaos that presents and imagine that happening elsewhere and not every care leaver got Pure Insight like offer...it's amazing and so needed. (staff)

“ To be known by everybody. Everybody sees the good that they are doing. Some people think it's just another charity but it's not. (care leaver)

<sup>13</sup> Pure Insight have a training and consultancy service and have supported other areas in developing mentoring models.

## Concluding thoughts

This evaluation set out to look at people's views and experiences of working with Pure Insight, the impact of Pure Insight and ideas for the future. The report tells the story of an organisation about which care leavers, volunteers, staff and external stakeholders were enthusiastic and supportive. The report provides evidence of a well-managed and motivated service. The report has highlighted the achievements and challenges in providing the service.

All of the core components (mentoring, psychological well-being service, intensive support to care experienced parents and peer activities) were highly praised. Services were valued for helping young people with practical and emotional issues. A strength of Pure Insight's service was its focus upon the needs of young person and flexibility in meeting these needs.

The importance of building authentic and consistent relationships permeated the evaluation findings; these were very important to young people's quality of life and well-being. Supportive and caring relationships with Pure Insight helped care leavers in many ways.

“

I actually love everything about them, cos they are all doing a wonderful job, there is nothing I'd change for the world with them. (care leaver)

”

“

Honestly, usually I'm first to point out when someone is doing something I don't like or wrong, but there isn't anything I don't think works really well. (care leaver)

”

“

Make sure when this is fed back that staff know how grateful I am for the service they are offering. (care leaver)

”

Leaving care is clearly a challenging time, young people are coping with the transition to adulthood, often without consistent support from their families. Pure Insight offers young people enhanced and holistic support which makes a difference to their lives. The challenge facing Pure Insight going forward appears to be: **how can Pure Insight share the success of their practice and increase the reach of their services, so more care leavers benefit from their successful model whilst maintaining the high quality of their offer?**

# Appendix 1

## Methodology information

### Sampling information

The sampling frame for the interviews consisted of all young people and mentors. Pure Insight were asked to select interviewees to reflect variation in local authority, type of service experienced, how long worked with Pure Insight. The mentors interviewed were generally not the mentors of the young people interviewed. It is recognised that the 26 interviewees may not be representative of all young people, staff or volunteers worked with in the past two years as, on the whole, they all still had some contact with the organisation. Two potential interviewees were approached but did not respond to requests for interview (1 local authority representative and 1 young person).

Participants were from different local authority areas:

- LA 1 – 5 young people and 3 volunteers
- LA 2 – 1 young person and 2 volunteers
- LA 3 – 2 young people and 3 volunteers
- LA 4 – 2 young people and 0 volunteers.

Participants had been working with Pure Insight for varied amounts of time:

- Working with Pure Insight for under a year – 3 young people
- Working with pure insight for 1 to 2 years – 3 young people and 4 volunteers
- Working with Pure Insight for 2 to 5 years – 4 young people and 4 volunteers.

Sample information – care leavers

- Of the 10 care leavers: 3 were male and 7 were female

Sample information – volunteers

- Of the 8 volunteers: 5 were male and 3 female

Sample information – engagement with different Pure Insight services (care leavers)

Of the 10 care leavers:

- 4 young people were involved with only 1 Pure Insight service i.e., mentoring or PWW only
- 3 young people were involved in 2 Pure Insight services
- 3 young people were involved in 3 or more Pure Insight service areas.

Of the 10 care leavers:

- 9 were involved with mentoring
- 5 involved with PWW service
- 4 involved with participation activities
- 1 involved with parenting support.

### Limitations to the review

No interviews took place with young people or mentors who were no longer engaged with Pure Insight. Although, for some of the interviewees their formal relationship with Pure Insight had ended as they had been mentoring for over 2 years, but the mentee-mentor relationship continued. It is therefore acknowledged that the views represented in this evaluation report tend to be from people whose match is ongoing and successful. In order to mitigate for this bias, interviewees were asked about matches that had not been successful, and some of those spoken to, had experienced unplanned endings. It is also important to note that the interviewees were identified and contacted by Pure Insight staff. This means that there is a potential for bias in the sampling of participants. However, Pure Insight were keen for the evaluation to not only talk to care leavers and volunteers with positive opinions of the service and, within the limitations of the evaluation, the evaluation concludes that the participants reflected a wide range of experiences.

## Appendix 2

# Testimonials

Separate to the evaluation staff from Pure Insight collected the following testimonials.

### Testimonial - Cheshire and Mersey Specialist Perinatal Service

**Cheshire and Mersey  
Specialist Perinatal Service**

*Mental healthcare for women and families*



25/11/2020

**Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Service**

Cherrybank Resource Centre  
Wellington Road  
Ellesmere Port  
CH65 0BY

Tel: 0151 488 8434  
Fax: 0151 488 8431

To whom it may concern

**Re: Pure Insight**

I work with women with complex perinatal mental health disorders and their families as a clinical nurse specialist. Our team which is funded by NHS England is a small one covering the vast area of Cheshire and Wirral. Without the support of voluntary agencies such as Pure Insight, our women would not get the much needed on-going support they need during the perinatal period.

I have co-worked with Pure Insight with a number of families along with other professionals/agencies. I know just how much the women I work with value their time, support and availability along with their partiality as they are not from a statutory agency such as health and social care.

The type of support Pure Insight offer is client centred and flexible to meet the individual needs to the women and their families. This includes mentoring women, assisting them to better themselves by exploring paid or voluntary work or support in applying for college or University and have even helped with the purchase of a lap top. They have been an advocate for women who are under children's social care which can be a daunting experience for women in the perinatal period. They offer a psychological wellbeing service in the woman's home which has been extremely beneficial to our clients who struggle to go out and attend appointments. In addition they offer practical support to mums such as; decorating, child care, shopping with mum or encouraging them to go out to the park or walks and help with budgeting.

In addition, Pure Insight has always helped in difficult cases and have been adaptable in their approach and support given. One such example is when a young mum who was struggling to bond with her baby but did not want any other professionals involved and found it difficult to trust people (especially professionals). Here, we co-worked and the volunteer was able to do some very important bonding/attachment work to encourage the young mum's relationship with her baby.

We have been extremely fortunate as a team to have Pure Insight to refer to and work together with and I hope they continue to be able to offer this much needed service to vulnerable families.



Jane Tyre, Clinical Nurse Specialist (Independent Nurse Prescriber)

A joint initiative between: Cheshire and Wirral Partnership, Mersey Care and North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trusts

[www.cmperinatal.nhs.uk](http://www.cmperinatal.nhs.uk)

## Testimonial - Cheshire East Council

Hello Greg/Sam,

I just wanted to expand on my comments at ignition in Wednesday.

Kim & Becky at pure insight have been just fabulous, they are gathering everything young people need to get a better chance at accommodation. They are working hard and chasing reasons for and challenging knockbacks, in a very non aggressive/ critical manner. They are helping young people through reviews, working with them to present positive cases. They are quick at getting back to us and chasing documents and references. They are providing positives to overcome negatives. It is hard for me to pull off figures as I don't have a reportable tick in a box for "customers supported by Pure Insight" but from our side this link with the young people is appropriate, prompt and well managed.

You know me always first to complain but equally happy to share the love.

You will note from recent meetings that Nicky has been logging in too. Nicky is picking up Care Leavers to give your team and the ladies from Pure Insight a first point of contact and I think in this is beneficial to have Nicky at Ignition, I will continue to support ignition too so on all cases if you could link me and Nicky in that would be great

**Thanks**

**Nic**

**Nic Abbott**

**Cheshire Homechoice**

**Homechoice Team Leader**

**Cheshire East Council**

**Tel: 01625 378055**

**Town Hall, Macclesfield, SK10 1EA**

**Please note I leave at 1.30pm on Tuesday & Friday**



**Working for a brighter future together**

## Testimonial - Stockport Family



I have worked quite closely with the Leaving Care Team and Pure Insight over the last year, to support a young person who wished to address his cannabis use. It was having a significant impact on his life, from his mental health to his ability to keep his flat clean and tidy. Pure Insight supported him with accessing positive activities and giving him a focus and some direction during the build up to him attending rehab. Whilst he was in rehab Fiona, Matt and their mentors along with Steve from the Leaving care team were instrumental in sorting his flat out for him to have a nice and fresh environment to come home to. They gave up their time to clean, remove rubbish and decorate and find new furniture for him. This has been vital in terms of his recovery and giving him the stability he needs to move forward. Without their support it would have been very difficult to achieve this.

Every worker/mentor/volunteer that I have encountered from Pure Insight have been nothing but helpful, completely focussed on supporting care leavers and going above and beyond for them. I definitely feel that my young person would not be in the position he is now without their support – both practically and emotionally. I know he has felt a sense of belonging and takes great comfort in having people to turn to. In regards to working together as professionals I have found everyone I have encountered to be extremely helpful and proactive and keep the young people at the heart of what they do.

**Michelle Cleator**  
**Drug and Alcohol Family Treatment Worker**  
**Mosaic Treatment Team**  
**Mosaic Young Peoples' Drug & Alcohol Services**  
**Stockport Family**

## Testimonial - My Experience with Pure Insight

### My Experience with Pure Insight

When I first began my training with Pure Insight, I was in between jobs and having a hard time with my mental health. I had lost a lot of confidence since being made redundant, living in a new place, and not being able to get the type of job I wanted (despite having the experience!). I forced myself to go to my first Pure Insight Training session. This was a bold move for me! In my first session, I'll never forget looking down at my feet, and struggling to make any contributions. I was so anxious! But by the second session, and then the third, I felt so comfortable and connected with the group. It was petrifying thinking about being matched, despite the amazing and thorough training provided, but I was excited as well, to put the training into action.

I first 'met' my mentee in an online chat set up by Pure Insight. It was pretty awkward and stilted, as she's not really one to message much. However, a month or two later, we finally met in person! We met with my coordinator, Becky, which really took the pressure off and eased us in gently. We have since met practically every week, and whilst it's been difficult to do things during the pandemic and lockdown after lockdown, it's given us that real quality time of being able to talk properly and go for walks – simple but effective activities.

Trust yourself, trust your boundaries, and trust your young person. As the relationship grows, you will be blown away by how awesome your young person is and how much you can help just by being there. It can be frustrating, wanting to fix things for them, but as comes with experience, you soon realise that your time is the most valuable thing you can give. They are so capable; they may just not realise it yet – that's our job to help encourage them to grow. It is rewarding reflecting on how far my young person has come, what they have been through, and how they still strive for more out of life. Feeding that hunger to get a good start and equipping them with the tools to do so is vital. Every single individual deserves the same playing field, the same opportunity, and it's our job to help them get it for themselves.

For me personally, I have grown alongside my young person. I'm more confident than I have ever been, and feel so fulfilled with what I do. I've even been a guest speaker a few times for PI training, which I probably would have run a mile from a couple of years ago! I'm finally finishing the degree I started in 2003 with Open University (graduate next year!) and have just started a new job as a Wellbeing Advisor in a college. Becoming a mentor with Pure Insight has played a huge role in all of this – the experience, the belief and the genuine compassion for all – has encouraged me to follow my passion for supporting others, as well as myself. Self-care, boundaries, confidence and knowing yourself first, are key elements of becoming a mentor. Even if you don't have these at first, you soon will!

It's been such an amazing experience – the best thing I've ever done, and highly recommend it! Not only has it helped to improve my confidence and give me invaluable experience, but it has also helped me to help my young person more than I thought possible. Knowing that you're the steady, stable and trustworthy person in their life can feel daunting, but it is the most worthwhile thing we can do. Seeing your young person grow and develop is truly special.

## Testimonial - Stockport Family



Customer Hub Number:  
**0300 777 7777**  
[www.traffordhousingtrust.co.uk](http://www.traffordhousingtrust.co.uk)

Date: 29 April 2021  
 Our ref: PI/THT  
 Contact: Natasha Jenkins  
 Tel: 0161 968 0114  
 Mob: 07802 653 318

Re: Pure Insight - Testimonial

Trafford Housing Trust (THT) has always assisted Care Leavers to access training and employment opportunities and receive support to help sustain their tenancies. However, THT felt that a lot more could be done to help combat poverty and so, in August 2008 CleanStart was formed. Previously sub-contracted services were brought in-house and a wraparound support service to run alongside a paid employment opportunity was created. The CleanStart Employment Programme is a 12-month programme of in-work training and wrap around pastoral support to help ensure an engaged client can develop stable foundations, connections, work experience, and social skills to grow upon and thrive, all whilst earning an income. We take around 20 clients per year onto the programme and have grown our Care-leaver cohort alongside the support of Pure Insight.

Care-Leavers are one of CleanStart primary target groups. CleanStart recognise this group as being particularly disadvantaged, often having a great distance from the labour market due to their experiences that led to care in the first instance. The success of the outcome for the client relies on the strength of the relationships we build with statutory and third sector partnerships and their links to the Client. This is particularly emphasised with our Care Leaver cohort who often present with a deep distrust for the statutory sector and perceived authority generally. In our experience this distrust will often be acted out, rather than communicated with work being a particular trigger due to hierarchical structures and codes of conduct demonstrating power imbalances. Care-Leavers referred into CleanStart generally have little to no experience of workplace demands or etiquette and challenging and complex behaviours are commonplace at the start of the journey. A robust multi-agency collaboration, with a stakeholder both the client and employer trusts, is the lynchpin to successful outcomes.

Establishing trust with Care Leaver's is the crucial driver to enable change. Pure Insight cherish this premise and work incredibly hard to get to know their clients and communicate this understanding to the client. They appear to take an invested, person centred approach to establishing that trusting foundation with clients, and champion an asset-based approach, drawing out and building upon the unique strengths of the individual. Their relationships with their Care-Leavers appears to be mutually respectful with their non-statutory status seeming to grant a lot of merit with the young people they support who understand they have chosen to be in a relationship

Head Office: Sale Point, 126-150 Washway Road, Sale M33 6AG



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Charity Registration No: 1106967



Testimonial - Stockport Family (continued)



Customer Hub Number:  
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with Pure Insight (as opposed to being mandated). There appears to be a genuine consensus from the Care Leavers who have been referred that they are cared for and understood by Pure Insight and they are keen for their case worker to be a continuing part of their employment journey.

From a business perspective - where constructive feedback has needed to be delivered to Care Leavers engaged on the Employment Programme, we have been able to call upon the case-worker to help us deliver this message in a way that feels enabling and supportive to the development needs of the Client. Pure Insight have consistently demonstrated to CleanStart that they fully understand and support the demands that a performance led business needs to sustain whilst balancing this with strong social value purpose. Case officers will offer ample challenge to clients, as well as support, thereby promoting agency and ownership.

In summary, CleanStart have experienced unprecedented success with Clients referred and supported by Pure Insight. Very few referrals into the CleanStart programme are received from statutory services directly and so we anticipate a smaller representation of the workforce being made up of Care -Leavers in the short-term future as their presence in Trafford diminishes.

Without hesitation we highly recommend their services and welcome contact for further elaboration, or anonymous case study sharing that can bring the impact this service deliver to life through the lives that they help transform.

Your Sincerely,  
 Natasha Jenkins  
 Enterprise Coach - CleanStart  
[Natasha.Jenkins@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk](mailto:Natasha.Jenkins@traffordhousingtrust.co.uk)

**Head Office:** Sale Point, 126-150 Washway Road, Sale M33 6AG

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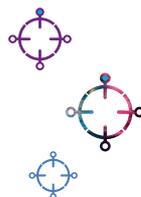

  
 Charity Registration No: 1106967



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May 2021  
Dr. Claire Baker

For more information contact:

[info@pure-insight.org.uk](mailto:info@pure-insight.org.uk)

[www.pure-insight.org.uk](http://www.pure-insight.org.uk)

 [@pureinsight1628](https://twitter.com/pureinsight1628)

