



Mia Patel

Care Leaver | Single Mother

Age: 20 Gender: Female

Location: East Ham, London

In Care Since: 5 years old

Nationality: British of Indian descent

Family status: Single mother of a
2 year old toddler

About

The Self-Reliant Survivor: Lost in The Gap between Care & Independence

Mia has been in care most of her life and is used to professionals coming and going, so she's cautious with new workers and only opens up when people follow through. She now lives with her toddler in a small council flat where money is tight and repairs are slow. Admin tasks, long letters and complex forms easily overwhelm her, and she tends to disengage when information feels confusing or repetitive. She prefers brief, clear communication she can read in her own time, and phone calls make her anxious.

Despite everything, Mia still hopes to return to education one day. For now, she wants stability, support that doesn't disappear, and a sense of control over what's happening in her life. When people are consistent, transparent and treat her as an equal, she responds well. When systems feel demanding or chaotic, she withdraws. Underneath the caution, she's hopeful and working hard to build a secure future for herself and her child.

Goals

- Having stability in her life
- Feeling confident and in control
- Achieving financial security and independence
- Dreams of becoming a teacher

Needs

- Steady income stream
- Finding a safe place to live
- Help with prioritising health
- Trauma support therapy
- Consistency
- Sense of belonging

Pain points/ Frustrations

- Repeating her story over and over
- Fear of stigma and getting more sympathy than empathy
- Covering cost of living
- Feeling unsafe in assigned accommodation
- Struggle to trust people
- Uncertainty about the future

“
I hate that I have to bother my key-worker for things that should be simple. It makes me feel like I'm asking for too much, like I'm being needy. So half the time I just don't ask. I try to figure it out myself, even when I know I probably can't.
”

Preferred Modes of Communication:



Knowledge of the system



Control / Power



Comfort with Technology



Satisfaction with Care System



Likelihood of Taking Risks





Beth Walker

Experienced Social Worker

Age: 35 Gender: Female

Location: London Experience: 6 years

Nationality: British Family status: Married

About

Beth qualified as a social worker in 2017, she took a gap year to travel and work on community projects abroad. She originally chose to become a social worker as she did not want a job where she would sit in front of a computer all day and because she wanted varied challenges. She came into this job very optimistic wanting to make a difference in the lives of young people. She is currently a social worker in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Beth manages children in care and on child protection plans. Her day is split between visiting young people, speaking with carers and professionals, and keeping records and plans up to date within the timeframe. Beth is recently married and does not want her marriage to suffer due to stress of the job, but more and more she sees that her job is infringing on her personal life and there is a moral dilemma, is she being selfish if she switches her phone off at weekends. Beth has found her sleeping pattern has been affected in recent months due to pressure at work.

Beth cares about being present, honest and reliable with young people, but is constantly balancing that against policies, deadlines and risk.

Goals

- Ensure the young people receive the best care in line with their needs and particular circumstances
- Build a good, supportive relationship with the youth, based on trust, where they feel heard
- Staying on top of compliance requirements, including information sharing with other professionals
- Help the youth in care maintain family bonds/ bonds with significant others

Needs

- Ability to get an overview of each case
- Support holding boundaries, so she can stay in the job and remain consistent for young people
- Support with language/cultural barriers
- Timely and accurate care records.
- Time to build relationships with the young people in her care

Pain points/Frustrations

- High, fluctuating caseload - little uninterrupted time to build relationships
- Bureaucracy - every contact (visit, call, text) must be documented in detail in the case system within 24 hour timeframe to remain compliant
- Boundaries vs responsibility - late-night calls or texts she feels she should answer
- Juggling diary, travel, meetings and reports, often leading to work spilling into evenings
- Only so much they can do within the system
- Am I making a difference?
- Building trust takes time
- High staff turnover
- Communication affected by trauma, natural un-openness and expression difficulties, stemming from language and/or cultural differences.

“
I want to build trust and consistency but I realise that trust means time and that is not something I always have.
”

Communication channels used



Knowledge of the system

Control / Power

Comfort with Technology

Satisfaction with Care System

Likelihood of Taking Risks