

PURE INSIGHT
connecting care leavers



supporting care experienced young people to thrive



April 2024–March 2025 Impact Report

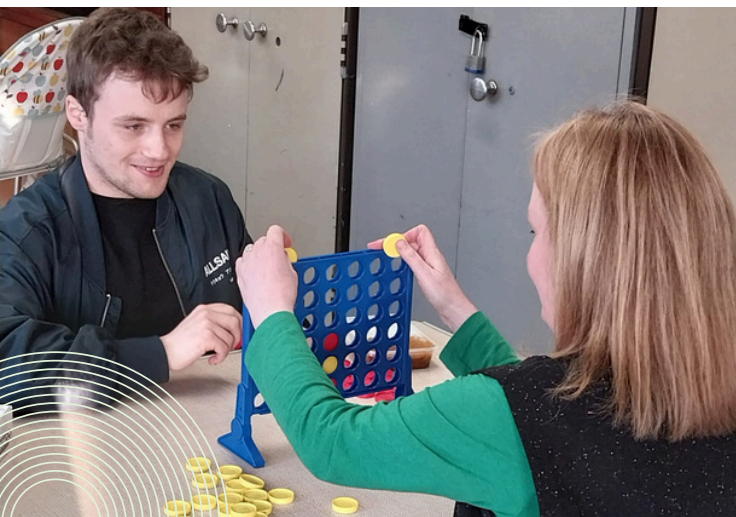
Integrity, Courage, Belonging

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A message from our CEO and Founder

Sarah Sturmey



“

It's been another remarkable year for the Pure Insight Family - a heartfelt thank you to everyone in our network for your contributions of time, knowledge, expertise, support or funding.

”

Thanks to new funders including the Department for Education (DfE) and Liverpool One Foundation we've successfully expanded our Mentoring and Psychological Wellbeing Services into Halton. To date, we've connected with over half of Halton's care leavers (47% of whom are separated young people seeking asylum mostly based in Liverpool)—an achievement we're incredibly proud of. We've listened carefully and responded to the unique challenges facing young people and the leaving care teams supporting them. Working in partnership we've co-designed services that draw on best practice models and are responsive to local needs. Our collaborative work has resulted in securing a 3–5 year contract, which ensures continued support and sustainability for young people in Halton.

We're proud to have been selected as a case study as part of the DfE's evaluation of mentoring for care leavers. This spotlight highlights the vital role that mentoring and accessible mental health support play, especially for care experienced young people facing complex barriers in accessing other services. Young people, volunteers and team members have shared experiences to shape practice.

This year, we've strengthened our support for young people aged 16–18 by growing our provision and refining our systems and processes. Our reach has expanded, and our services continue to evolve in line with the needs of the young people we are supporting.

We are actively working with local authorities across Cheshire and Greater Manchester to improve transitional and contextual safeguarding for care leavers aged 18+. In Warrington, for example, exploitation screening tools and clear escalation pathways have been developed to ensure coordinated, multi-agency responses. We're keen to contribute to regional learning and share best practice in partnership with other sector leaders.

To support our growth and sustainability, we've welcomed two new leadership roles—Business Development Lead, and Volunteer and Community Development Manager—and implemented a new CRM system that enhances our ability to track impact and identify key trends.

Finally, a huge thanks to every young person placing their trust in us, generously sharing their views, experiences and time to understand issues and find solutions.

Sarah Sturmey, CEO of Pure Insight



Pure Insight

Our vision....

is a society where care experienced young people can thrive, able to access a range of practical and emotional support on their own terms that offers connection, belonging and purpose.



Our mission....

We support care experienced young people to thrive and help them make a successful transition to adulthood: gaining the skills and resilience to live independently, form healthy relationships, achieve employment, and (for some) become the caring, supportive parents they aspire to be.



Our Three Core Values



Integrity



We choose courage over comfort, stand up for what's right, do what we say we will do and live by our values every day.



Courage



We own our story and express who we are, in our way.



Belonging



We create spaces where everyone feels seen, valued, and connected—to a place and to each other.

Our achievements at a glance



555



555 care experienced young people supported and 153 of their children. 708 individuals in total.



"Just also made me realise I am really strong. I never used to believe in myself much but I am starting to believe in myself alot."

Harley, 22 years old.



Mentoring

357



357 young people received intensive 1:1 mentoring support.

96%



96% developed Independent Living Skills (eg managing finances, tenancies, looking after self).



Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service



230 young people received 1:1 mental health outreach support and 70 young people benefited from our counselling offer.

94%



94% of young people improved their mental health.

Peer Support and Group Wellbeing Activities

95% 218



95% young people reported a reduction in isolation. 218 young people have joined our peer support and group wellbeing activities.

Care Experienced Young Parents Service

91%



91% young parents increased their parenting knowledge, confidence, and skills.

Experts by Experience & Influencing

26%



26% increase in participation of young people influencing regional and national services.

Employment, Education and Training

57 120



57 care leavers achieved long term paid employment, with an additional 120 securing ad hoc paid employment.

Our support

The services we offer

Our support services have been coproduced with care experienced young people, they are offered in the long term and on an outreach basis to remove barriers to engagement.

- **Mentoring** - 1:1 long term support to equip care experienced young people with skills, knowledge, resources, and a life-enhancing support network.
- **Trauma-informed mental health provision** - assisting care leavers to overcome adverse childhood experiences and mental health challenges.
- **Intensive support for care-experienced young parents** to help them and their children flourish as a family.
- **Bespoke Employment, Education and Training (EET)** support to help young people fulfil their potential.
- **Peer support and group wellbeing** activities that promote skills, confidence and belonging.
- **Experts by Experience** young people's group and advocacy to influence research, practice and policy discussions to transform local and national service provision.



Mentoring

"Someone just for me"



Our mentoring programme has been highlighted as a best practice model for supporting care experienced young people. We've expanded our service into Halton this year, reaching more vulnerable care experienced young people with personalised support.

The programme provides varied support options with the aim that each young person is matched with a mentor who can spend 2-3 hours each week building life skills, confidence and knowledge. We have an intense support offer for young people facing complex challenges including criminal exploitation, being a young parent, and mental health. For many isolated young people, these relationships are transformative, creating connection, purpose and belonging.

Meet Alfie

At 19, Alfie lived isolated in his flat, spending a lot of time in front of his computer escaping into a fantasy world of Vikings and adventures. Here he felt safe, unlike the real world where he had no friends and felt anxious. Alfie's home was cluttered, he struggled with shopping and cooking, and benefit issues left him in debt, worsening his loneliness and mental health

We matched him with Paula. At first Alfie couldn't believe someone would volunteer time just for him. Gradually, trust grew as they explored his interest in flowers, visiting nature reserves and even learning how to collect wildflower seeds.

Plants soon brightened his home. We organised a "cleaning party" with Alfie and now he maintains his flat with pride. Paula helped him access benefits, manage a budget, and tackle his debts. The mentoring relationship has helped build his confidence and Alfie now volunteers at a local allotment, enjoys plant photography, and has come on a few trips. Cooking together with Paula has given Alfie motivation to take better care of himself.

Today, Alfie needs his fantasy world less as reality—with Paula's support, Blackpool trips, photography, and volunteering—has become a place where he feels safe and connected.



357 young people received intensive 1:1 mentoring support



96% developed Independent Living Skills (eg. managing finances, tenancies, looking after self)



92% reported they felt an increased sense of connection and belonging

“

"I genuinely don't think I would be where I am without her, she never turned her back on me"

Chloe, care experienced young person, 19 years old.

”

Care Experienced Young Parents Service

Our specialist Parent Workers and trained volunteers provide 1:1 intensive, practical and emotional support to young families. We focus on nurturing young parents' growth, so they gain skills and confidence in parenting to flourish as a family unit.

Meet Olivia

Olivia had a traumatic childhood, having experienced sexual abuse and lifelong physical health challenges resulting in endless hospital stays. She was exceptionally vulnerable, her background often led to her being around dangerous situations and people, further exaggerated due to her ADHD. She was highly isolated when referred to Pure Insight. When Olivia became pregnant after being raped, she was determined to create positivity out of a massively traumatic and negative event.



We matched Olivia with a volunteer mentor, Sally, who built trust and supported her emotionally through the difficult circumstances surrounding conception. Though social services worried about Olivia's vulnerability and parenting capacity, pregnancy sparked positive change in her – she dramatically reduced risky behaviours to protect herself and her baby. With support from our specialist Parent Mentor and staying in a Mother and Baby Foster placement, Olivia proved herself as a loving, attentive mum, passing a parenting assessment. Her daughter is thriving and hitting all developmental milestones. To help Olivia move toward independence, our "Angels Team" of mentors helped to prepare her flat, offered childcare, taught meal preparation, and helped her establish positive routines.

Olivia received the support she needed to process her experiences and move forward. She enjoys meeting regularly with the Mentors from the Angels Team and is socialising with her peers. Today, Olivia says her mentor is the most consistent person in my life *"she's always there to listen to me and I genuinely feel she has become like my family."*

Sally says *"having Olivia and her daughter in my life has been the greatest gift, I have learnt and grown as much as they have, if not more. The support from Pure Insight has been outstanding from being trained with a group of 12 fabulous individuals to the support I have received since being matched. I would highly recommend becoming a mentor with this charity".*

Our work with Olivia has been used as a best practice example locally with recommendations made for support to be replicated across services, and our Angels Team have also been nominated for an award.



91% young parents increased their parenting knowledge, confidence, and skills



80% young parents felt less lonely and isolated.



Provided comprehensive family support to **114** care-experienced young parents and **153** of their children.

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service

Our outreach mental health service is delivered by specialist practitioners (PWW's) offering therapeutic interventions and holistic support to young care leavers facing significant challenges. The service provides care experienced young people a space to understand themselves and their story, the impact of trauma on the body and brain, as well as emotional regulation and healthy coping strategies. We support early intervention needs, severe mental illness or young people struggling to access other services due to a lack of trust or access barriers.

Meet Dylan

Dylan was nearly 18 when introduced to the service, his leaving care worker was worried about his ability to manage when living alone. He struggled to regulate his emotions resulting in him getting into frequent altercations with other people and subsequently in trouble with the police. Dylan was also vulnerable to exploitation and using substances to cope with difficult feelings.



When we first met Dylan, he wasn't receptive to doing any therapeutic work, stating he had "already done all that". He was open to spending some time going walking in a local park and joining our outdoor wellbeing activities, our PWW planned their time around this to build a relationship doing things Dylan enjoyed. Over time Dylan started to open up about his week and the things he was struggling with and became receptive to learning how to recognise his emotions and healthy ways to deal with anger, frustration, anxiety and fear. Dylan was matched with a mentor around this time who was able to continue getting him out on walks, joining a local boxing club and taking part in group activities. Our PWW was able to focus more intensely on supporting Dylan with coping strategies and understanding healthy/unhealthy relationships.

Dylan eventually moved into his own flat and apart from a couple of minor setbacks has enjoyed having his own space, feels confident in safely managing his front door, understanding that his flat is his sanctuary and escape when people get too much for him.

Highlights

In collaboration with young people, we designed and implemented a new initial assessment and wellbeing score system, to ensure greater reflection of the progress made, whilst remaining committed to not causing further distress or barriers in accessing services. This was well received by young people, they enjoy reflecting on what has improved in their lives since being supported by Pure Insight and feel the questions are more aligned to their lives.

We have influenced mental health Transformation agendas across the areas where we provide services through regular input in strategic meetings feeding in the views and experiences of young people.



94% of young people improved their mental health



87% of young people reported an increased ability to cope



Trained **130** volunteers and **86** professionals in mental health awareness and trauma informed responses

Experts by Experience and Influencing

Our Experts by Experience group, comprising care experienced young people, meets regularly to shape and enrich service provision in our own and external provision for care leavers, locally and nationally. While the group has core membership, we extend invitations to young people interested in participating for shorter durations or specific discussions. Additionally, regular group members contribute to ad-hoc consultation groups, tailored to geographic locations or thematic areas, ensuring broader representation and inclusivity.

Young people's contributions also support in shaping service delivery, commissioning & policy at regional & national levels in public services. This year we have been involved with the Evaluation of Mentoring Services for Care Leavers with the Department for Education, sharing good practice with other providers across the country. Our team, volunteers and young people have been interviewed to learn what works about our model of mentoring/mental health/wrap around offer to influence provision across the country and advocate for national roll out.

Highlights

Warrington – Designed training with care experienced young people and delivered to fostering team and social workers around lived experience of fostering, do's and don'ts etc. *"The EbE training Team were outstanding today and made an impact, we have all been talking through what we took from training, till now!"* reflected the service manager.

Our approach has been shared as good practice in meeting the mental health needs of care leavers via [Research in Practice podcast](#)

Scan QR
code for
Podcast



Top 10 Recommendations

A group of 46 care experienced young people contributed towards top 10 recommendations for change in areas of life they are struggling with via survey, focus groups and qualitative interviews. This work is feeding into a guide for services and professionals supporting care leavers and has led to improvements in our own service such as neurodiversity training for all team/volunteers and a guide in how to utilise the right to choose pathway for diagnosis.



120 young people influenced local, regional and national services



26% increase in participation of young people influencing local, regional and national services

Endings

Endings are particularly difficult for care experienced young people for various reasons due to past experiences. A focussed piece of work led to some changes in our service delivery model and recommendations for other service providers.

- All contracts were changed to provide a minimum of 2 months' notice
- Language was changed to reflect trauma informed ways of speaking about endings
- Endings are well planned, talked through with care and respect and celebrated in a way that makes sense to a young person
- 'Healthy Endings' guide is currently being created with young people to reflect our learning

Employment, Education and Training

Our Employment, Education and Training Service (EET) supports care-experienced young people overcome complex barriers to work, training and education. We support young people furthest away from employment who require holistic 1:1 support to gain and sustain education, employment and training.

Meet Katie

Katie had been supported by Pure Insight's mentoring coordinator to manage her finances, develop a support network and become established in a flat. However, Katie had never worked and struggled with anxiety and low self-confidence, particularly around using public transportation, which she would need to get to a place of work. Katie was determined to push forward but had very little self-belief.

We helped Katie identify her skills, create a CV, access her birth certificate and gain a passport to prove her right to work. We helped build her confidence, taking short journeys by public transport together and supporting her to interact with other people in different public environments. She was interested in caring professions, so we supported her to enrol in the NHS pre-employment program, completing both classroom training and a hospital work placement. Her outstanding performance led to being offered a permanent position as a nursing assistant at Wythenshawe Hospital!

Katie now confidently uses public transportation independently, is more financially stable, and has developed such self-belief that she's considering university education to become a nurse. In her own words, without Pure Insight's support, she *"would never have had the confidence"* to achieve so much in just nine months, and now proudly tells those who doubted her, that she works for the NHS.



85 care leavers have been supported into education & training



Supported 57 care leavers into long term employment & 120 into ad hoc paid work opportunities



Supported 35 employers to make workplace adjustments & trained 69 employers/volunteers to develop EET pathways

Impact Snapshots

As a delivery partner, we've supported SMBC Workforce Development with their innovative Jumpstart programme (supported employment model), offering Stockport care leavers three-month placements in various Council teams, including estates, virtual schools, local libraries and finance. This included trauma-informed leadership training for managers and partners offering employment opportunities. This has been hugely successful, many young people have transitioned to supported apprenticeships and council employment, prompting other Local Authorities across the country to consider adopting this model.

Examples of support to young people include building confidence to leave the house, challenges with budgeting, building support networks, attending appointments, travel training, and interview preparation.

Peer Support and Groups Wellbeing Activities

Our peer support activities build social connections between care leavers and include regular café nights, bike rides, walks, football, outdoor pursuits like abseiling and kayaking and much more. Here young people can create long-lasting friendships that promote well-being, develop skills and confidence, have fun and make new memories.

“

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 I could have asked for!”

Ryan, 23 years old.

”

Impact Snapshots

A determined team of 12 young people, staff, volunteers and young people conquered the 60-mile Manchester to Blackpool Bike Ride last summer, supported by 13 dedicated individuals stationed along the route to refresh, encourage and cheer them on. Training together, building stamina and skills, facing challenges together, the sense of togetherness and mutual support made the journey so special. One young rider showed remarkable resilience, who, after taking a fall, bravely got back in the saddle, embodying the spirit of Pure Insight. *“I was proud to be involved”* reflected Steve Cunningham, Activities Coordinator. The infectious enthusiasm spread throughout the team, *“Awww man, this is sick. I can’t wait to do it again next year,”* commented another.

Together with the young people, and with support from local businesses, we organised a mini festival- which we called Stockfest! Many of our young people have never had an opportunity to attend anything like it! They designed T-shirts, prepared vocal performances and volunteers created mocktails, applied festival makeup and cooked up a storm on the BBQ. There was a DJ set, games, prizes, a photobooth and even a chill out room. The young people loved the event.

We launched the Social Booth in Cheshire last year for care experienced young people to connect, play pool, snooker, darts and eat together. This has been really popular, it’s hosted in a snooker club, and we regularly welcome a group of young people from local areas fortnightly.

Another highlight was a Kayaking/Picnic Day on an incredibly hot summer’s afternoon. *“Thanks for one of the greatest days I’ve had for a long long time ❤️ I loved it”* Jake, 20 years old.

“I can’t express how much these days are making such an impact. This is what it’s all about!! This is actually the biggest part of the Wellbeing offer” Lindsey, Personal Advisor, Halton Council.

“These kids are having the time of their lives, it’s so nice to see huge beaming smiles after all the trauma they have experienced” Warrington volunteer mentor.



171 young people have enjoyed social connection, a meal and fun activities at our Cafe Nights



218 young people have joined in with group wellbeing activities



95% young people reported a reduction in loneliness and isolation

New! Business Champions Scheme



We have launched a Business Champions Scheme to help businesses support care experienced young people locally and demonstrate their social impact. Businesses can champion care leavers by giving a monthly or yearly donation, starting from £1,500 a year, and changing a young person's life!

Businesses joining within the first year will also have "Founding Business Champion" status like Comfy Quilts who have joined us as a Silver Business Partner and Red Rose Packaging who has joined as a Founding Bronze Business Champion

"Red Rose Packaging is committed to developing and delivering strong principles around its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices. This includes how we impact and engage with society and our local community. Pure Insight is a superb organisation that works in the heart of our community supporting vulnerable young people to have the best chance of success in their adult lives."
Sharon Garner, Director, Red Rose Packaging



Volunteer and Community Development

We welcomed Helena Smith as our new Volunteer and Community Development Manager. With ten years of leading volunteering projects and four years as a Pure Insight mentor herself, Helena brings a valuable perspective to this role.

"It's because I know how much Pure Insight have helped these young men that I wanted to work for Pure Insight, and enable us to reach further with our volunteers," says Helena.

Helena has streamlined our volunteering processes, creating more time for direct work with young people including making matches. She's worked with the volunteers to enhance support for them, through improved training approaches and a stronger peer support model, alongside valuable staff support. We've introduced new roles, like activity volunteer roles which now support our peer activities, free up staff time and create more connections between volunteers and young people.

In 2025, Helena will focus on creating additional roles for skilled volunteers and measuring impact for the mentor relationships which extend beyond the initial two-year match as our young adults matured into just adults!

We work closely with local communities, with people and organisations in our communities giving their time, connections, practical support and funds to help support our young people. We will look to further strengthen our community relationships across our five local areas, through our unique collaborative approach that empowers communities to respond to the needs of vulnerable care leavers.



Volunteers have
dedicated **30,482**
hours valued at
£609,640

Voices of Change

Scan QR code
or click play
below to watch
the video



Almost half of care experienced young people face mental health challenges, compared to 10% of the general population (NICE 2021). Our Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service is meeting a vital need.

Meet Lauren



We asked our young people -
Why they are involved in Pure Insight
and how does it make them feel?



"PI wraps up that young person with positive influences, gives them self-belief and tons of practical support."

Funder

"Can't help but be enthused by your staff – their passion. We get great impact reporting, so we understand the difference you are making to young people's lives"

Funder

"The work at Pure Insight is integral to those leaving the care system and provides a much needed stepping stone between care and the adult world."

Business Supporter

"She has drastically impacted my life in the best way possible. She genuinely understands what I'm going through and has been a huge source of comfort and validation"

Karly 21 speaking about Pure Insight's MHEWS worker

"I really don't think I would be alive without this support"

Katie, Care leaver, aged 18

Future Plans

Our Top 3 priorities are:

Participation and Influence

We are committed to amplifying the voices of care-experienced young people by sharing their insights on what works—and by employing a Participation and Influencing Lead to build on our participation work, creating clear pathways for meaningful, inclusive involvement. We will develop future leaders—ensuring young people shape both our services and wider systems. We will continue to build strong connections with key policy advisors and decision-makers to inform and improve both local and national provision.



Enhancing the Volunteer Journey

We will strengthen volunteer impact by investing in support, development, and recognition—maximising the incredible talent, skills, and dedication within our community network.



Expanding our services

Expanding our services and building relationships with new local authorities to address the increasing number of teenagers entering care, the rising population of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and the growing group of young people facing additional challenges due to criminal exploitation or cycles of offending.



We are deeply grateful to our funders



We asked young people, referral partners, funders, staff and volunteers –
What's the most important thing we do/how
do we make a difference?



PURE INSIGHT
connecting care leavers

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