

Disrupting the Routes between Care and Custody:

10

Ways to Stop Girls and Women Moving between Care and Criminal Justice

MORE CARING

CHANGING THE LAW

1

Listening to Girls and Women

Girls and women want to be listened to without judgement, treated with care and respect, have their views taken seriously and to be believed. Children's services and criminal justice professionals all must make sure that they really listen to girls and women, and take their views into account when making decisions.

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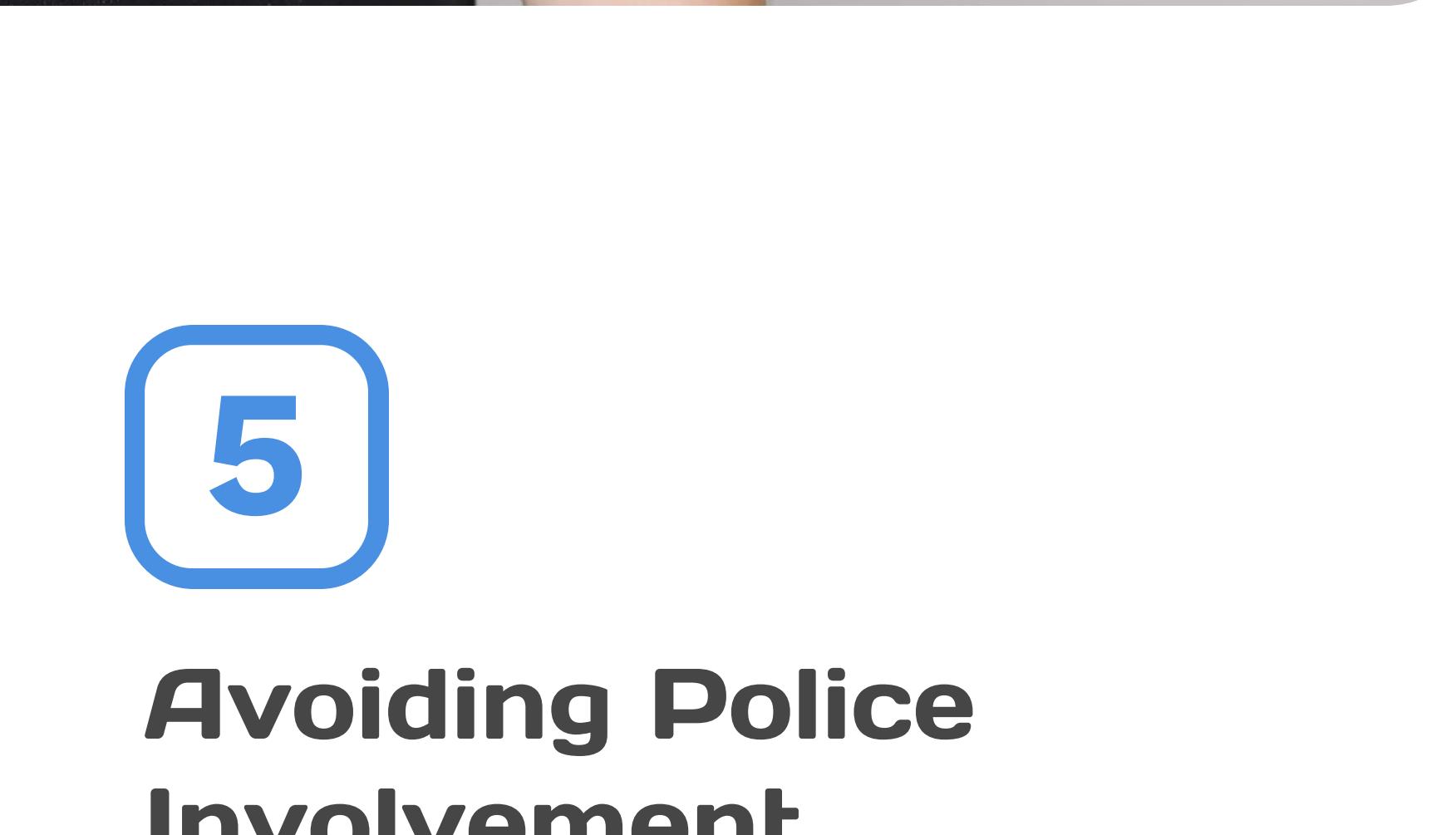
Responding to Trauma

The care system needs to provide a safe and stable environment for girls to deal with trauma. It should not involve unnecessary placement moves or changes in social worker. Carers and social workers should be trained not only to recognise trauma but to respond so that girls feel safe and supported.

3

Providing Mental Health Support

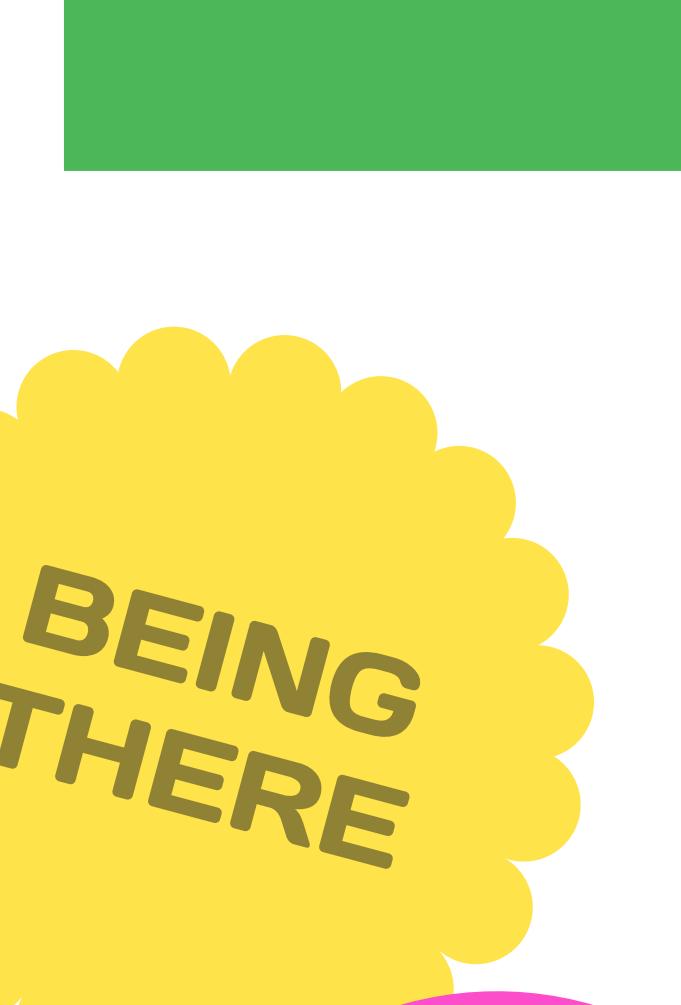
Mental health services can be difficult to access and often the support provided is not enough. Girls and women need access to better quality mental health support, whether they are still in care or have left.



4

Challenging Negative Judgements

We need to challenge negative judgements about girls and women who have been in care and involved with criminal justice systems. We should focus on their strengths including their wish to make change for future generations of girls.



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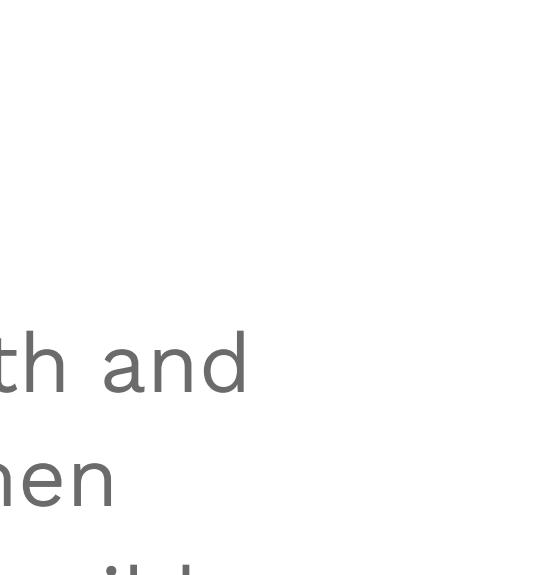
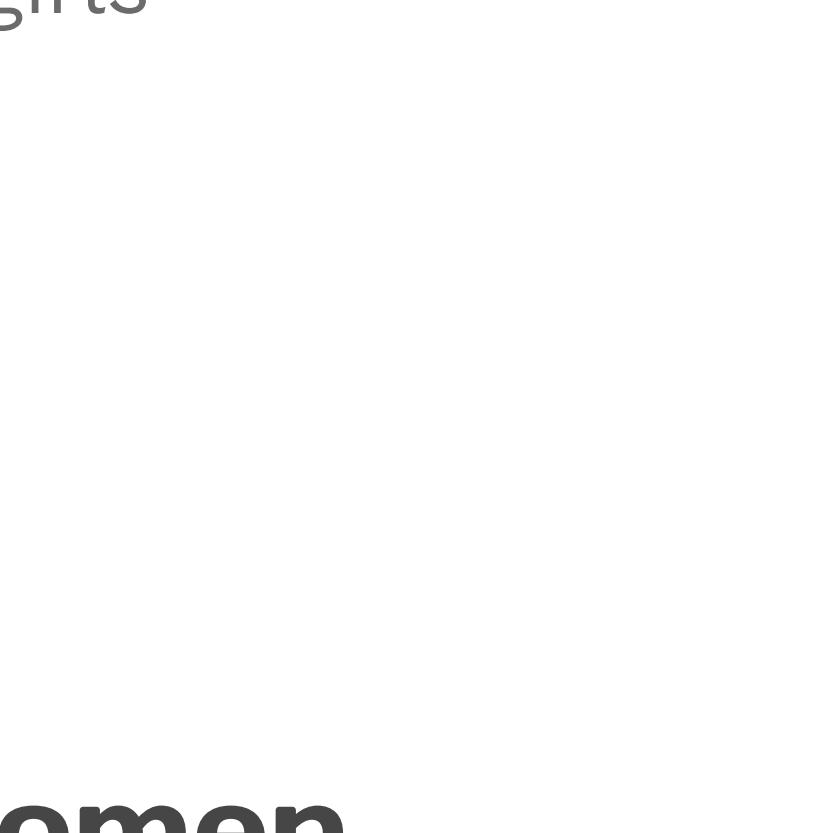
Avoiding Police Involvement

Girls in care continue to get into trouble with the police for behaviour that would not involve the police if it had occurred in a 'family' home. Carers need regular training so that they know how to respond to incidents in care placements without involving the police.

6

Moving Beyond Official Files

The requirement to record information in care could lead to a thick file of 'incidents' for girls that would not be recorded if they lived in a non-care setting. When incidents are recorded, details should be included about the circumstances surrounding the behaviour. Carers should avoid over-reliance on official files and take the time to understand girls' actions.



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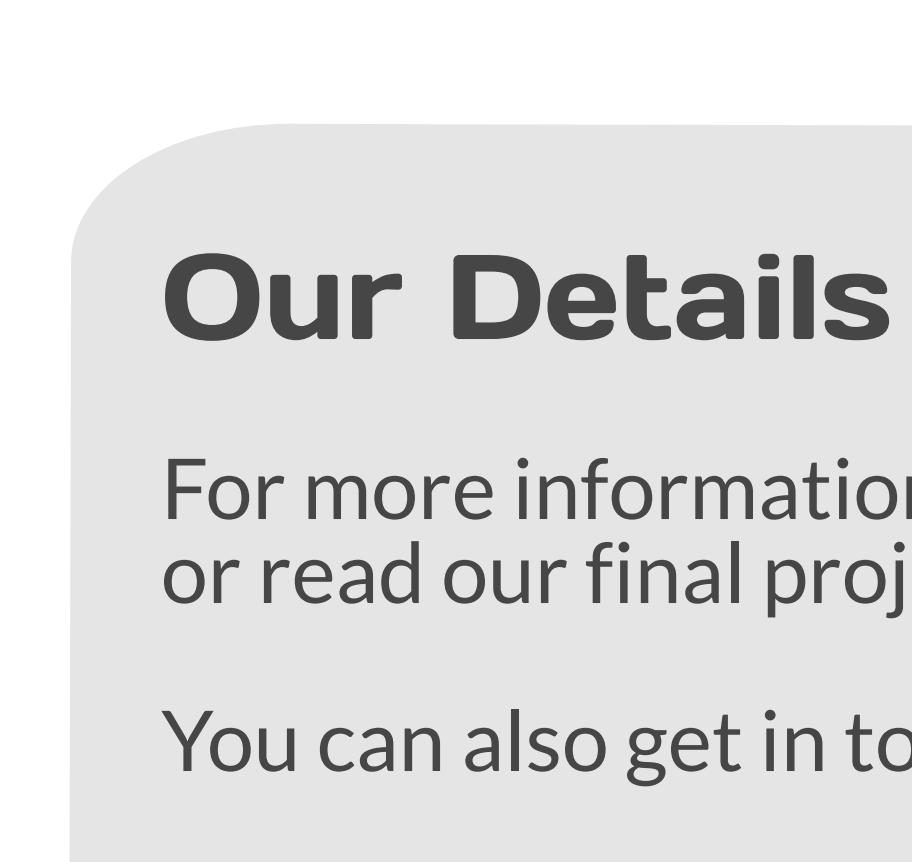
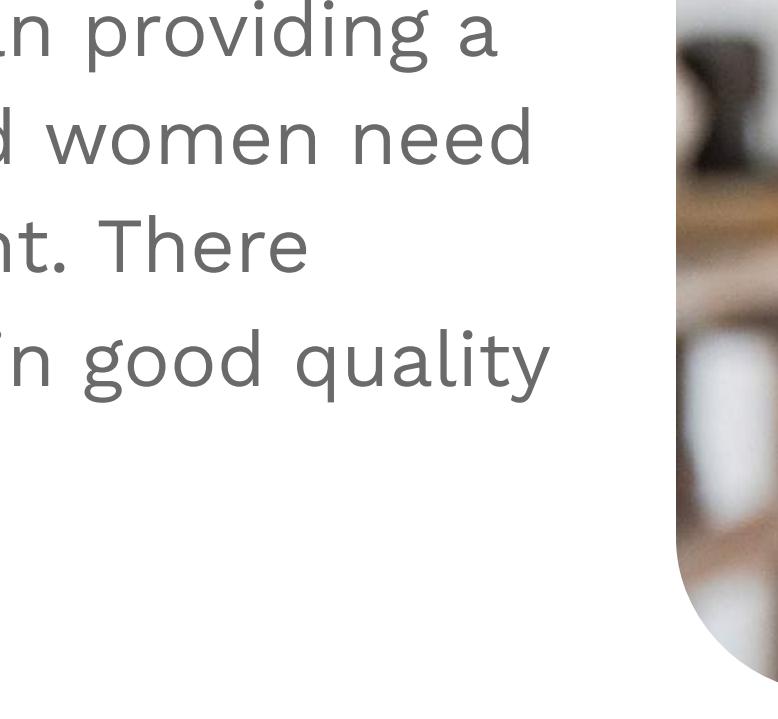
Trusted and Consistent Relationships

Trusting, consistent and caring relationships are very important for care-experienced girls and women who are also involved with justice systems. Professionals need the time to really get to know girls and women and understand their lives.

8

Keeping Girls and Women Out of Prison

Prison can seriously damage mental health and affect family relationships. Girls and women should be kept out of prison wherever possible and instead be supported and supervised in the community to help stop them getting into trouble.



9

More Than Just a Roof Over Head

We need a care system that goes beyond the basics. 'Care' needs to be more than providing a roof over someone's head; girls and women need a supportive and loving environment. There needs to be more money invested in good quality care placements and leaving care accommodation.

10

Changing the Law to Protect Girls and Women

In England and Wales, the minimum age at which a person can be cautioned or convicted of an offence is just 10-years-old. By raising this age, we would prevent younger girls from getting into trouble and receiving a criminal record. Increasing the age when leaving care support is available could also help care leavers settle into living on their own. Both changes in the law could prevent girls and women from moving between care and the criminal justice system.

Our Details

For more information, please visit our project [website](#) or read our final project report.

You can also get in touch using twitter or email:

[@CareCustody](#)

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This project was carried out by Dr Claire Fitzpatrick, Dr Katie Hunter, Dr Julie Shaw and Dr Jo Staines.



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