



# Adolescent Resource Centres (ARC)

## Case Studies: Experiences and insights

ARC provides therapeutic support to young people on the edge of care, those looked after and those who are adopted. The service works at the child's pace, builds trusting relationships and supports families through emotional, psychological and often complex challenges. Young people and families describe feeling listened to, understood and safer, with support that helps them regain confidence, strengthen relationships and feel more hopeful about the future.

*During the year, we conducted semi-structured interviews with people associated with the project and thematically analysed the responses to summarise people's experiences and the impact of the service.*

### Young people's voices at the centre

- **Listening when others have not:** ARC is described as the first service where young people feel genuinely heard, especially around fears, bullying and unmet emotional needs.
- **Respecting children's choices:** Workers allow young people to shape sessions and activities, helping them feel more in control of what happens in their lives.
- **Families feeling understood and valued:** Parents and carers say ARC listens from the beginning and works with sensitivity to their context.

*"My worker listened to me and we did stuff that I wanted to do."*

*"I was being bullied in school and no one would listen to how scared school made me feel. I could tell my worker who listened to me and helped me not feel so sad about it."*

### Creating safety, stability and emotional support

- **Support that reduces fear and overwhelm:** Meeting at home or in familiar places helps young people open up and engage without added anxiety.
- **Consistent, reliable relationships:** Regular sessions build trust and emotional stability, allowing families to explore difficult issues safely.
- **Rapid response in crisis:** ARC steps in quickly during high distress, offering reassurance, reducing risk and preventing escalation.

*"Consistent engagement helped the family feel supported and safe to explore difficulties openly."*

*"My worker came to my house. I didn't have to go anywhere new to see someone."*

*"Responding promptly to crisis situations provided stability and reassurance when they were most vulnerable."*

## Building confidence, connection and hope for the future

- **Supporting family connections:** Small but meaningful interventions, like helping young people reconnect safely with parents or siblings, create lasting emotional impact.
- **Encouraging positive choices:** ARC supports young people to consider new education pathways and life goals when they feel ready.
- **Incremental changes that build hope:** Improvements in the home environment or daily routines help young people feel happier and more confident.

*"Because I was able to talk about it, I want to go to college now and feel happy about that."*

*"We went on the train together and now I've been back to see my mum two more times. It makes me so happy."*

## Tailored, flexible and trauma informed support

- **Working at the child's pace:** ARC avoids pressure, taking time to understand the root of difficulties rather than forcing quick fixes.
- **Adapting to complex and changing needs:** Workers tailor support around emotional needs, communication preferences and family circumstances.
- **Therapeutic and trauma informed practice:** Support helps families understand trauma and how it affects behaviour, strengthening relationships.

*"The family faced complex challenges and we adapted our work to suit their needs."*

*"She didn't pressure me. She wanted to find out why I didn't want to go to school and helped me with my feelings."*

## Joined up working that strengthens outcomes

- **Coordinated multi agency support:** ARC works closely with social workers, health teams, education and CAMHS to ensure consistent messages and a full understanding of the family's needs.
- **Shared planning and information:** Joint meetings and coordinated visits prevent families from feeling overwhelmed and strengthen safeguarding.
- **Holistic support through partnership:** ARC complements medical, educational and wellbeing input so families receive joined up care.

*"A clear plan was in place with all professionals so we didn't overwhelm the family."*

*"Health professionals addressed medical needs while we supported emotional wellbeing and safeguarding."*