

Capturing the Daily Lived Experience of Children, Parents and Carers



"Your daily lived experiences have helped us to understand and plan with you to improve your child's lived experience"

Guidance and Case Studies for Professionals

Why capture the Daily Lived Experience of a child and parent or carer?

Sharing daily lived experiences of a child/ parent/ carer (care giver will be used through this resource going forward) enable professionals working with and supporting families, to understand what it is like 'to be in their shoes' for a typical day.

If we are able to understand what life is actually like through their eyes, professionals will have a clearer picture of the needs that are or are not being met for the child as well as the impact of professional concern for the child. This in turn will support us to develop effective and SMART care plans to ensure the family and professionals can work together to improve the child's lived experience.

The daily lived experience of the child and care giver helps to inform assessments and reviews being undertaken for Team Around the Family, Child In Need of Care and Support and Child protection. For Children Looked After lived experiences will inform Care and Support Planning and reviews.

It is important that the child and care giver understand why their lived experience is being captured, as well as what the information will be used for and who will have access to this. Having an honest and transparent approach will help the professionals to build a trusted relationship with the family.

To ensure the lived experience is captured using the child or carer giver's own words and experiences the professional should be curious when having a conversation:

- Open questions will help to start the conversation and act as prompts to enable the conversation to progress
- Pick up on clues such as body language and facial expressions to explore feelings or find out further information from the child or care giver
- Go at the child/ care giver's pace when sharing their lived experience
- Check out that you have understood what has been shared
- When a child has limited language due to age or learning needs the professional can use their knowledge of the expected outcomes for the child's age and stage of development as well as their observations and information that is shared by the care giver and professionals working with the child
- Record the conversation using the child and care giver's own words and expressions as much as possible "I had no breakfast today....."
- Be creative to capture lived experiences e.g. pens and paper for drawing, writing it down, record on phone, create a blog.....
- Capture lived experiences over several conversations, it does not have to be done in one go
- Explore what the child and care giver think their family strengths are; what they are proud of
- Explore what the child and care giver would like to change for their family as well as parts of the day that they like or find difficult
- Analysis of what the lived experiences are telling us will inform assessment, planning and reviews

Ultimately as a professional we need to ensure the child's daily lived experience is improving throughout the intervention process and that change can be maintained long term by the care giver without the support of services. The lived experiences will be captured at the start of the family's intervention journey then for every review; this will give a true measure of the child's lived experience improving. If there is no evidence of improvement, the child's plan needs to be reviewed to identify why outcomes are not improving and what else needs to be done, by whom and by when.

Key points to consider:

- **Who will have the conversation?** Identify which professional has a trusted relationship with the child and the care giver. NB: the conversations will be captured separately so the person feels able to share their lived experience from their own perspective
- **How will the conversation be captured and recorded?** Example: through play, pens and paper, using a resource sheet, recorded on a phone, during a journey with the person in the car etc
- **Where will the conversation take place?** Ideally give the child and care giver the opportunity to choose where they would like to talk to you. Be mindful of the space being quiet with no interruptions, confidentiality whilst information is shared and comfortable
- **When will the lived experience be captured?** Ideally give the child and care giver the opportunity to choose when is best for them to have the conversation. Consider factors such as not taking the child out of their favourite lesson or in front of peers, the time of day best for the care giver i.e. avoid when the children are just in from school or morning times if the mother has a poor sleep pattern and will be tired first thing in the morning



“Be curious about a day in my life to help you to understand what life is like for me and my family”



“Listen to my lived experience to help you to understand what a day is like for me and my child”



“Your daily lived experiences have helped us to understand and plan with you to improve your child’s lived experience”

The Daily Lived Experiences in this resource have been captured from families living in North Wales requiring support from across the continuum of need – Team Around the Family to Child In Need in Care and support, Child Protection and Children Looked After. Names have been changed to protect the identity of the children and their care givers.



Daily lived experience of Larry, 7 months, and his mother

The Daily Lived Experience of Larry and his mother was presented at court as part of the court bundle.

Mum had been open to services throughout her pregnancy due to drug and alcohol misuse. When he was born mum developed an attachment with Larry, however an episode of psychosis resulted in her being sectioned and Larry became a child looked after. Mum engaged with professionals and the CLA care and support plan and her mental health and capacity to parent improved demonstrating she was willing and able to make and maintain positive changes for herself and Larry.

Larry

I wake up and try to reach the lambs that are hanging above me on my mobile but I can't quite reach just yet. Mummy comes over and gives me a big smile and says "Good morning". I love seeing her face and I smile back at her to say hello in my own little way. The best thing about my morning is that I get to have cuddles in my mummy's bed.

Mummy and I make my bottle of milk together, we count the scoops as they go in and when my bottle is ready, we go and sit in the lounge and cuddle up on the sofa. She talks to me and gives me lots of smiles whilst I have my bottle and when I'm finished she cuddles me and blows raspberries on my ears and cheeks; this makes me laugh as it feels all tickly. After breakfast I usually have a kick around on my soft blanket then we listen to my favourite music and I try to copy mummy when she does the actions and make the shapes with my mouth so I can join in. I love playing with my animal A Frame, the monkey is my favourite. I love the colours and the nice noises it makes when I touch the different animals and I like to eat the plastic ring on the lion as it feels nice on my gums. I sometimes have a mid-morning nap after being so busy.

After lunch mummy puts me in my pram and we go for a walk. I love being in my pram watching everything especially the trees when the leaves are waving. Today we went to the playgroup; I played on the mat with the other babies and I really liked the story and songs while mummy was holding me. On the way home we popped in to see Nannie and Grandad. Grandad always takes me out of the pram and gives me cuddles and he takes me out into his garden so I can see the trees.

After teatime, I have a bath. I love lying in the bath and kicking my legs and splashing. I don't ever want bath time to end but mummy gives me a cuddle in my towel, so it makes getting out of the bath a bit better. I have half of my bedtime bottle whilst cuddling with mummy on the sofa and then she takes me into our bedroom and puts me in my sleeping bag for the rest of my bottle. I am so sleepy after my busy day I soon fall asleep.

Larry's mother

I just want to get up and cuddle Larry straight away when he's cooing in his cot, it's the best start to the day. We always have cuddles in my bed, we talk and laugh lots, sometimes Larry falls back to sleep again, but other times he is rolling round the bed and laughing loads.

We make his bottle together counting each scoop of milk that we put in the bottle. I feel this is a learning activity for Larry, it is never the wrong time to teach him things and talk to him is it? It also distracts him for a short time as he shouts at me when he's hungry. We sit in the lounge together and cuddle on the sofa whilst I feed him. Larry loves his milk and I love that he cuddles right into me, it makes me feel dead warm and content. He makes me happy.

When I change Larry after a feed, we spend time singing songs together; he gets excited when we do this, and I know he's happy when he's waving his arms around and kicking his legs. Sometimes we watch Larry's favourite programme together; I get quite involved in it. He usually has a little nap after this, so I go for a quick shower and get myself dressed and maybe grab a coffee.

When he wakes up, we might go for a walk round the block, or go to the park. Larry loves being outside watching the trees or the birds, he gets excited and chatters away to them. Larry has some porridge when we get back, which we both end up being covered in because I'm letting him use his own spoon to teach him how to feed himself. He loves his porridge; well he just loves food in general.

I let Larry have a kick on his mat after lunch so that he isn't always with me; he has lots of toys to play with. I make sure he's safe while I sort the washing out or start the dinner. I try to do the housework when Larry's asleep or playing so I can spend lots of time with him. After lunch we sometimes go and see my friends or go to the local community centre where there's a play group.

We have a little bedtime routine now; we listen to nursery rhymes and have some play time on his mat together. Then it's bath time; he loves his bath; he just loves water. I love seeing how much he enjoys it, even if it does mean I end up getting soaked. Larry settles quite quickly after his bath; he has a bottle and then I take him to bed. Once he's asleep I'll sometimes look through the photos I've taken on my phone which makes me smile. I have my tea and watch some telly then sterilise the bottles and get sorted for the next day; I'm usually in bed early.



Daily Lived Experience of Poppy, 13 months and her mother

Poppy is a child looked care and support plan after on a placement order with her proposed Adopters. The social worker used her observations to capture Poppy's lived experience during a home visit. She noted that Poppy presented as being content and was engaged in playing with age appropriate toys whilst in her highchair babbling to herself. Poppy was aware of where her mother was in the garden and watched Teddy as he played in his tent.

Poppy

My social worker Pat came to visit today. Teddy was home as well, it was a very hot sunny day. I showed the grown-ups that I have learned to stand up by myself in the last week; I hold onto their hands to help me so I can bounce up and down. My mummy was caring for us and daddy was at work. She had some weeding to do in the garden while Teddy played in his tent and I sat in my highchair and watched him and mummy and played with my toys; I have lots of toys to choose from.

I just had a cotton dress on today and my nappy because it was so warm. My mummy dresses me in pretty clothes and Pat said I looked very lovely. I felt happy, my skin felt all soft and smooth. The atmosphere in my home was calm and happy. I babbled some sounds and waved my toys to show Teddy what I was doing and make sure he remembered I was there. Mummy talked to me whilst she was weeding and came to check to see if I was ok.

I'm still a bit shy with Pat but I have seen her quite a few times now as she keeps popping in. She always goes into my bedroom and looks around. She did it again today and checked I have lots of clothes; she said that she saw that my room was clean and there was fresh bedding in my cot. Pat also looked in the bathroom and I heard her say "all is fine there".

I'm very well in myself and my hair is going a bit lighter. Pat tried again to take some pictures for something called a life story book, but I still didn't give her a smile, just a curious look. I don't know why she keeps pointing her phone at me and trying to make me smile. She also took a picture of our house to put in the book and she gave mummy's photo album back and said she had scanned some photos from it.

Mummy gave Pat a big envelope to be sent to court; they said this was to lodge my adoption papers. Pat told mummy that she is hoping to meet my birth parents this week; she has been researching about them to find out lots of things for that book she is writing and also to give them a letter about my adoption. I was cuddling mummy today, snuggling into her neck. That's the first-time mummy remembers me doing that and Pat noticed that mummy and I quite enjoyed snuggling and cuddling; it feels nice.

Poppy's mother

We don't really have a typical day with two little people. Our days start early when Poppy wakes up and are busy and full of reward at each stage - as each new tooth, step, word or behaviour appears. We try to get out every day when we can, somewhere, even if it is a walk around the block. We like play dates, coffee mornings and messy play sessions.

I'm loving my time off work with Poppy, but when my adoption leave ends my hubby is going to reduce his responsibility in work and his hours because we realise the commitment that is needed; Poppy and Teddy need our time now while they are young.

I don't get time to Hoover up as often as I would like to, the children come first. Mornings are busy, we like to go to play sessions at the family centres, Poppy really loves this. I know I haven't, but I feel as if I have always been Mum, I can't remember not having her. I realise in the future she may have some difficulties due to a difficult start in life, but she is our daughter and we will work through those, after all which parent doesn't have problems at some stage? I can't say it is not tiring raising two under-fives, some days I think we get by on adrenaline, but it is but worth every minute.

Poppy and Teddy like routine, so after a busy morning we tend to come home for some lunch and some down time; Poppy still has a little nap. We have a garden so when it's nice we spend time enjoying playing in the garden.

A special time of our day is after tea; both Poppy and Teddy love bath time and then we have cuddles on the sofa and read a story before the children settle down for the night.

I have to watch Poppy with the cat, I need eyes in the back of my head - she does like to grab his tail. Some days there are toys everywhere, this house is kiddy land nowadays. When did we last go out for a meal? Now what was one of those? However, to be fair my mother in law will mind the children for a couple of hours if we have a special occasion.

Sometimes we bump into Poppy's former foster carer out shopping or in the park and that's a bit weird but nice also! I always pop over and say hello and she makes a fuss of the kids. I believe in being open with the children, so they never get a shock. It helps that our first child Teddy was also adopted; we've always told him he had a tummy mummy first and then me.

It has been all grand with our kids up to now, I often think wow we got dead lucky with our two kids.

Daily lived experience of Lottie, age 5 and Grandad Joe

Lottie's daily lived experience was captured for a Child Looked After care and support Review. The family worker used open ended questions and was curious about what Lottie does through her day. She shared her story whilst playing with the building blocks making a "tall tower".



Daily lived experience of Sonny, 11 years and his mother

Sonny's lived experience is being captured for an EHAT assessment (Early Help Assessment). Sonny has a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition. He has recently started high school and is finding the transition difficult. The family are isolated with no extended family to support them. Sonny struggles with building relationships.

Lottie

I love Candy, my Grandad bought her for me and she sleeps in my room. When I wake up I go downstairs and have breakfast. My Nan makes it or Grandad Joe. I brush my teeth and get my uniform on. Nan puts it on the couch ready for me. I ride to school on my bike, its pink and purple my favourite colours and Grandad and Candy take me.

My favourite thing to do at school is play with playdoh and I like to make cupcakes. After school I go home and get changed. Sometimes Mummy picks me up but mostly its Nan. I like to go on the prom on my bike and sometimes I go in the seat on Grandad Joe's bike. I like going in his seat cos my hair blows when its windy (big smile at this point). We take Candy the doggy too.

My favourite tea is chippy from the chip shop. I don't like to sleep at other people's houses because I like to be at my house. I like going out with Dad. He takes me to the park and to the beach. I like living at Nanny's house because I got a new teddy and we have hot chocolate and I have Paw Patrol on my bed.

Grandad Joe

We're up early now the kids are with us; it's a joy to have little people around again. Mary (Lottie's nan) likes to be organised in the mornings and has us in a good routine; Lottie seems more settled these days and can't wait to get ready for school. She's still waking up in the night with bad dreams, me or Mary just say it will be ok and her new bed is a safe place and she loves her new Paw Patrol quilt cover which Mary has to wash and dry quickly cos it's the only one that settles her.

Candy the dog really helps too; she sleeps in Lottie's room. Lottie loves taking her for long walks especially to the beach. The dog and her bike are everything to Lottie it's a joy to see her happy although she asks for her mum and dad every day. She looks forward to Family Time with them and isn't as upset now when she has to say bye. Lottie's favourite treat is a chippy tea, so we have this after Family Time.

Mary makes sure bedtime is a calm time to help Lottie settle. She likes a bath with her toys and makes potions and cakes with the bubbles. Her favourite story is the one with the elephants in it, think it's called 5 minutes' peace or something like that; that's Mary's job and I'm the one who carry's Lottie to bed and tucks her in after brushing her teeth.

Sonny

I wake up in the morning and I'm usually tired because I can't sleep at night. Sometimes I wake Mum up because I've had an accident.

Sometimes I'm so tired I can't be bothered getting dressed for school. This makes mum mad and we argue. I hate arguing with mum and it makes me feel sad when I go to school. I have to go in a taxi to school and it's horrible and the journey takes ages.

In school I try and pretend everything is OK. I hate it when people ask me questions about home life. The thing I like most about school is getting to see my friend who is in year 11, he's called Joel and he gets me, we're alike me and him. We love going to the POD. I don't know what I'll do when Joel leaves school because I don't have any friends in my year.

When school finishes the taxi takes me home. I don't mind this ride as much, I like to see mum waiting for me on the step. After my dinner I like watching telly. I don't have any friends by my house so I stay in. My mum and dad get impatient with me sometimes because I don't like going to bed, bedtime's my worst part of the day I guess. I get up quite a lot before going to sleep and sometimes this makes dad angry when he's not in work. He shouts at me and this makes me upset and sad.

I don't really go out of a weekend. Mum can't really walk far because of her arthritis and dad's always in work or asleep. Sometimes I take my dog Angus out for a walk and dad will play on the X Box with me. I worry that I'm unhealthy because of my weight. I know it makes mum sad



Daily lived experience of Evie, 9 years

Evie lives with her mum and sister who is 13. Her parents have recently split up due to domestic violence. Evie's lived experience was captured for a Child In Need Care and Support review with a recommendation to step down to Team Around the Family.



because she thinks the other kids call me fat. I'm getting blood tests done soon, and they will be my last chance to get healthy. None of this is my mum and dad's fault, it's all mine. I know they do their best.

Sonny's mum

I dread the mornings trying to get Sonny out of bed. I know it's going to end in a shouting match and me dragging at his duvet to move him. He still wets and gets embarrassed even though I tell him it's ok. It's harder now he's at high school cos the taxi beeps for him and when he's not ready we all get stressed out. It's worse when his dad's here as he's trying to get to sleep after working nights. When he's gone to school I'm usually glad of the break if I'm honest and then I feel dead guilty; he's not a bad kid but he's hard work sometimes and it's harder now he's older. I think he's worried about his weight, but he won't talk to me about it.

I don't know anyone round here, we had to move as the last landlord didn't extend the lease and it's really thrown Sonny out being somewhere new. I hate it. I used to work but that's gone too with moving, I can't get there, so it's just his wage coming in. My days feel so long I need to get myself sorted as it's not good for me being stuck in the house. I have arthritis and I stiffen up if I'm not moving enough.

I can't even think what I do in the day but as soon as Sonny's back it's a blur of trying to contain him from the taxi ride and checking he's ok and trying to get him to do his homework. He says he has a friend in school that's older than him. He likes older people he says they're easier to talk to. I worry what life will be like for Sonny when he's older with his problem of being around people. He's very artistic and I enjoy it when he's sketching at the table, and he lets me sit next to him. We have our best chats then and he's got a real talent, even his dad thinks he's a good drawer.

I would like some support; I think you doing this assessment thing has come at a good time for us. Anything to help Sonny be ok is going to help us as a family.

Evie

My mum wakes me up in the mornings and I have a bath and get ready for school.

I often have waffles and crepes for breakfast. I pack my own bag and fill my water bottle up and then mum drives me and my sister to school. Sometimes my sister gets dropped off at her friend's house and they walk the rest of the way because she's older than me and at the big school now.

I quite like school; I enjoy learning new stuff and playing with my friends. Freddy's my best friend but I play with lots of people. Mum picks me up every day when she's finished work. She gets tired my mum because she works and looks after us by herself. Dad doesn't live in our house anymore and I like it now because I feel safe and mum seems a bit happier because she doesn't cry as much.

We have dinner together and I might have another bath; I like relaxing in the bath and sometimes my sister straightens my hair. I play on my laptop downstairs with mum and my sister goes upstairs.

I love pugs and being outdoors and I like making things with glue and bits out of my art and craft box off my nan.

At the weekend I might go for a jog with my mum and sister or get the train to Liverpool for some shopping. I like Home and Bargain best.

I worry sometimes about what will happen to our family because things have changed a lot for us. I don't really want to see my dad the first time after what he has done but I might change my mind later on. I don't really see my nan much because my dad lives with her now.



Lived experience of James 6 years

James's lived experience was captured for a single assessment being completed for the Initial Child Protection Conference. The social worker talked with James at school. He expressed that he knew what a social worker did: "They're there to help and they work in a shop and give families money if they haven't got any".

James

James said, "my full name is James Wright and I'm 6. I'm not sure if it was my birthday or not last week". Social worker asked why he thought it was his birthday and he explained "because mum took me to Monkey Business and got me a DVD. We didn't get food there though just drinks. Mum said we would have to eat before we go."

James told the social worker he lives at "56 Sunny Road, and I go to Wonder School". James does not like school explaining that Blake makes him play a game, "play fighting game with Ethan, Harry, Frederick and Ronnie. They don't like the game it makes them feel sad and I tell the teacher, but the teacher does not believe me." Social worker agreed to talk to the teacher about this.

James was asked whom he lives with and he stated, "Gismo the cat". James wants to rename his cat Mr Fluffy "because he's soft and fluffy". James said Mary lives at his house. When asked if he always calls his mum Mary, he replied "Mary or Mum." James explained that Jason used to live in the house, but he does not anymore. James said Jason and Mary argue a lot, "mostly on Saturdays at the night-time". He believes the arguments are for "no reason. When they argue it wakes me up and I just think what's going on? Then I know it's just them again. They're mean to each other and swear. Once he pushed Mary onto the floor. Jason makes my mum cry a lot." James then said "it's good that mum told Jason to leave. I don't like him because he never plays with me"

James said that he likes playing Minecraft and he made a dragon yesterday. His mum lets him play "she lets me play it better times than before" meaning he can play it longer. James also likes to watch you tube but his mum does not like him watching some things on it but he watches it anyway when mum is in bed.

James said that "mum and Jason drink beer a lot and mum only drinks beer with Jason, but then sometimes drinks without Jason". "Kathy is trying to help my mum stop drinking and stop smoking cigs". James added, "my mum is mean to me when she drinks beer at the morning." James shared that his mother drinks in the night but is then mean in the morning. "She tells me to go back to bed but I'm actually not tired. She is tired. She only gets up at night-time."

Social worker was curious about what James does while his mum is sleeping in the day; "I go on you tube." She asked if mum makes him breakfast and James said "no". When asked what James does for food and drink whilst his mother is in bed he replied "I can make my own juice myself and I make cereal if I can get milk or sometimes water and I have pop tarts. I put them in that thing that has two bits and it pops them out." Social worker clarified that he meant a toaster. James commented "my mum wouldn't normally let me do that myself."

Social worker asked James about what happens in his house most days and he said, "on a normal day mum takes me to the park if its sunny". James then said that he does not like his uncle because he pushed him on the floor when playing tag, "mum seen it but didn't tell him off. I was wet and muddy cos I was pushed into the flowers."

When asked about what makes him happy, James said "lunch at school makes me happy, I have wraps sometimes and sometimes other things. I also like to cuddle up with my cat at bedtime. Sometimes I sneak in mum's bed." "I went under the bed and hid in the suitcase when Jay comes in my room to check if I'm asleep and when he's gone I eat pop tarts in my bed. They're usually soggy as I mustn't do it right". James was reluctant to talk about this more when the social worker asked about what he had shared.

Social worker asked what makes James feel sad; "when mum tells me off. She'll shout at me and my uncle for being mean to each other and he keeps asking if I will sleep over at his but I don't want to and say no and he doesn't like that and then he says I cannot sleep at his house."

James then said he is feeling excited for Christmas as he got a fidget cube and guess who's the murderer game, "I play the game with my teddies." When asked if his mum or anyone else every play the game with him he said "no, I only play with my teddies. Mum doesn't play with me."

As the social worker was leaving, she told James she would come and see him again in a few weeks and he said "that's good, Kathy said you can help".



Lived experiences of the Jones family; Miley 14 years, Cara 7 years and their mum Maria

The Jones family were being supported in TAF when concerns escalated due to the risk of child exploitation for Miley. School and health were also concerned for Cara due to missed health appointments for her hearing and a deterioration in her behaviour. Cara thinks she was on her own one morning when she woke up as she could not find her mummy or sister.

Miley

I never know if mum's in the house or at work when I wake up. Usually Cara wakes me up cos she wants to get to school and I can't ever find the uniforms, they're usually in the wash still dirty. Cara gets upset about not looking nice so there's usually tears. I try to get her there for breakfast club, there's never any food in the house these days.

School's just round the corner so I stick my joggers on then come back to get myself ready. I can't be bothered going to school some days, I'm too tired. I know I'm falling behind with my lessons but the GCSE's are ages away yet so I'll catch up. I don't have any friends now Debbie's moved to another school. When I'm at home I just go on my phone or watch telly and sometimes go back to bed while it's quiet.

Cara

I miss my mummy; she goes out to work early so most days she's not there when I wake up. If she is there she's too tired so Miley gets me ready for school. Miley shouts at me and my ear hurts, and I don't want to wear dirty clothes anymore. I get laughed at in school; they say I'm smelly.

Breakfast club's the best part of my day, Alexa's there; she's my best friend now. I really like the toast and I'm allowed to put my own chocolate spread on. I get sad if I miss breakfast club cos then I'm late for school and everyone stares at me when I'm waiting by the office to be let in and then I can't work out what the teacher's saying. I can't even hear what's going on with me sore ear, it hurts all the time.

Mrs Mitchell's really nice (Cara's teacher) but she just gets cross at me when I haven't done my homework and I say I've left it at home. She tells me to listen more carefully when I ask her what she's said but I don't hear her, I think she's whispering or something. It's harder doing anything if I've missed breakfast club.

Maria

The cleaning company I work for only does zero hours' contracts, it's all I can do to fit in with the girls. I never know when I'm going to be called into work and I'm scared if I don't do a shift when it comes up I'll lose my job. I often get a call at 4 in the morning to be in for 5. I don't like waking the girls that early to say bye; they know if I'm not there in the morning where I am. Miley's old enough now to get things sorted. I rely on her a lot since their dad left.

I find doing the cleaning job is really hard with looking after the girls on my own. I've got to get the bus now the car's packed in and they don't even start running that early in the mornings, so I have to start walking if the first one's not due. If I'm lucky, sometimes I get a lift home so I might see the girls before school.

Working zero hours is a nightmare with my benefits, I'm always running out of money. Some weeks I struggle buying food and depend on the breakfast club and school dinners for Cara. I've had to use the foodbank a couple of times recently; it's so degrading being handed food in a bag but I'm dead grateful.

I feel bad about not being there for the girls as much as I should be but what else can I do? I need to earn some money to pay the rent and bills. I've applied for a loan that will help us for a bit, I think.



Lived experience of Tilly aged 10 and her mum Rachael

This information was captured to inform assessment following a referral to the MASH; Tilly had been reported missing from home (she was found by a shop security guard where she was 'spending her birthday money'). School had previously reported concerns for Tilly being a young carer. Whilst she was sharing her lived experience, Tilly drew on a flip-chart piece of paper that was split into 3 sections; morning, day-time and night-time which Tilly called tea-time and bedtime.

Tilly

Morning: "Me mum wakes me up when its school. She gets up before and has a cup of coffee then gets us up. Mum runs me and Sam's bath. Me mum does our ironing the night before and then we get dressed in our clothes. Me mum or me older sister do our breakfast, I have crumpets or pancakes and then we have half an hour to watch telly before we go to school. When me mate knocks me mum walks us to school".

Day-time/ School day: "It's fun, sometimes its Literacy or Maths. I like doing my handwriting. At playtime me and Kay sit under our coats and make a den with our colouring books. We eat curry and rice for lunch. When its home time I come down the big stairs. Yesterday I did music club after school. It's on every Monday now, for 6 weeks. Me mum or sister come and pick me up after school".

Tea time/ bed time: "Me big sister mostly cook's or we have a chippy. I do the dishes; that's my job. Sam has a job; she picks up her toys. I don't have jobs every day about 3 times a week. Sometimes I do the kitchen for me mum and my mate helps and me mum gives us something for doing it. After tea we get to play out for half an hour then we come in and have a bath or a wipe over (wash). Sometimes I play with Kay if she's out. Sam plays out with older kids, like 8 year olds. I have to keep an eye on her. The older kids can be mean to her and take her bike. Half of them are good; about a quarter of them are naughty. Then we come in and calm down a bit before we go to bed. Sometimes Sam is nice and calm she gets naughty and wants to stay out so I chase after her. We watch some telly then I go to bed about half eight. Sam falls asleep on the couch and me Mum has to carry her up".

Weekends: "If it's the weekend I have a lie in until about half nine and its fun. At the weekend me and me Mum got some sweeties and watched the X Factor when Sam was asleep. I go to bed later on a weekend".

Tilly was asked if she would like to talk about her mum's diabetes and Tilly said that was ok. "It's not very nice when she needs sugar. Then I help her get a sugary drink and help her to the couch or to bed and Sam and I get on the couch and watch telly for a bit. If I'm in school Sam knows were the drinks/ chocolate are or knocks at my best friend's house and her mum helps. She is usually so tired".

Rachael

Rachael has diabetes and constantly experiences back pain which impacts on her mobility. "When I have a hypo, it feels like some faraway part of my mind still works but the part still connected to my body is full of thick, dark nothingness. I wake up in the morning feeling very tired or headachy. The morning Tilly went missing I'd had a Hypo and wasn't with it. I'm always in pain with my back. I took too many sleeping tablets the night before and I'd not picked up on the fact my blood sugars were low".

Rachael said "I want us all to have a better quality of life. I'm hoping the operation on my back helps so I won't need to take so many painkillers. Since losing weight I feel more confident and eating better's having a positive impact on my diabetes".

Exploring how she manages her diabetes Rachael shared that Tilly gets a "bit panicky sometimes". Sometimes Rachael knows when she is about to experience an episode and "puts a high lock on the door in case Sam leaves the house". She explained it can take up to 10 minutes to feel back to normal. "Sam and Tilly both know what to do and will place a cushion under my head". Storage of Rachael's medication was discussed. She said "the children have grown up around my medication and wouldn't touch it and it has a child cap on it". Rachael said the assessment had made her think and agreed to purchase a lockable medication box.

Rachael shared that she does not like asking for help. Her grown up children are a positive support for the family; Rachael relies on them to help and "Tilly has some jobs to do around the house which she gets pocket money for".



Lived experience of Fiona and her unborn baby

Fiona is 23 years old and is in the last trimester of her pregnancy (37/40), this is her first child.

Concerns were raised when Fiona attended an appointment and her Midwife observed a change in her mood and appearance and noted that there were bruises that were fading on the tops of her legs and right arm. When asked about the cause of the bruises, Fiona shared that her partner's behaviour towards her has changed during her pregnancy and she is becoming fearful that he will "really hurt" her.

Research informs us:

- The emotional development of a child begins before the baby's birth
- In utero the baby learns to recognise voices and sounds outside the mother's body.
- The level of mother's mood can impact on the unborn baby's emotional wellbeing.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences, ACEs can have a lifelong impact for a child into adulthood

Fiona

I live with Joe my partner. My baby's due quite soon. I was so excited at first about being pregnant but now I'm petrified about being a mum – what if I can't do it? Joe has loads of kids and just tells me to get on with it, it's easy.

I'm feeling really tired and drained just now. The midwife says it's because I'm in the final few weeks of pregnancy. I'm waking up later these days because I'm not getting much sleep. I don't see many people because North Wales is new to me. I sometimes go down to the Aldi to pick up some bits and I ring my friend every day which keeps me going. I'm going to get the train over to Liverpool see her next week. Joe doesn't like her so she can't come here, and the house is really damp and messy, so I don't want her to see where I live anyway. I like things to be tidy but there's not much point when everything gets damp and smelly.

The landlord sometimes calls round and he seems ok. He said the roof will be fixed soon which will be good because the baby's room is really bad; water pours through the ceiling when the weather's bad. I had to put some of the baby's stuff in the bin the other day cos it was damp and gone mouldy.

When the house is quiet, I like to listen to my music. I put my earphones in and sit and chill. The baby seems to like this, sometimes I feel him move around. This is when I sleep best, when it's just me on the couch with my feet up.

I try to get tea ready for Joe round 6 when he finishes work, but he seems to be getting home later and his mates come with him and I don't have enough food for everyone. I'm not that hungry anyway. I'm never sure what kind of mood he's going to be in; he gets really mad sometimes over the smallest of things. I feel like I'm walking on eggshells. Takes me back to being a kid again.

The boiler's gone on the blink this morning so there's no hot water. I rang Joe at work and he said he'll get one of his mates to look at it next week, but I've rung the landlord; I need hot water.

Unborn baby

My mummy's singing, I like it when she sings, I feel calm. She doesn't sing very often now; she seems to be upset a lot of the time. I don't move around much because I'm tired and it's an effort to wriggle but I think I'll have a little stretch while she's singing.

(The sound of a loud banging noise startles the baby) *Mummy's stopped singing after that loud noise; she's gone very still, and I can hear a deep voice and it's getting louder. I think this might be my daddy but I'm not sure. I recognise the voice, but I don't feel very settled when he's with mummy. I can hear other voices too and I don't recognise those; the vibrations I can feel are making me feel strange.*

My mummy is smoking; I don't like it when my mummy smokes and drinks alcohol as it makes me feel funny. I can hear my mummy's heartbeat; it's getting faster. I think my mummy might be scared. I'm trying to stay still but I can't, I'm being rocked about a lot from side to side; I don't like this; I think mummy's crying again. The voices are very loud now, everything sounds muffled in here. I want it to stop.



Lived experiences for Arthur and his mum Heidi

Arthur is two years old; he is living in a refuge with his mum having fled from a domestically violent relationship. When the worker supporting the family at the place of safety reflected Arthur's experiences to Heidi she said that "hearing things from Arthur's perspective is very powerful and gives me the incentive and determination to make the right choices moving forward for us both".

Arthur

My name is Arthur and I live in a big house with my Mummy. When I lived with my Daddy, he used to make my Mummy sad. Daddy used to scream and say my voice grated on him. When I cried, Daddy used to shout and tell me to stop crying. Sometimes when I hurt myself and I cry, I don't let Mummy hug me, and I need time to myself. Mummy waits until I'm ready for a hug.

In the morning, I wake up before Mummy. Sometimes I go in the fridge and see what I can play with. One time, I poured all the juice down the toilet. When Mummy wakes up, she gives me a yoghurt or cereal for breakfast. Sometimes Mummy gives me her phone and goes back to sleep. Mummy says sometimes it's hard for her to wake up, she says she is struggling because of the corona virus and needs a bit of help getting motivated.

When Mummy is up, we go downstairs and play with the kids. I like playing in the garden, on the slide and with the toys. We had a teddy bears picnic and we took our favourite teddies, there was lots of sandwiches and fruit, but I didn't want to eat, I just wanted to play! Sometimes we paint and make pictures with the other kids.

I love going to see my Nanny and Grandad and sometimes Grandad comes to the big house too. I love my Nanny, Grandad and all my Aunties. I love my Mummy – I love snuggling on the sofa with the big bear blanket. Sometimes, I squeeze my Mummy really hard and I say her head will come off, this makes Mummy laugh. Mummy said she loves my sense of humour and thinks I'm really funny.

When I used to live with Daddy, I was shy and didn't talk much. Sometimes, Daddy used to wake me up in the middle of the night. In my new house, I go to bed at 7pm and sleep all night, no one wakes me up. Mummy likes living in the new house, she is happy and smiles a lot. Mummy says I am more confident, and she can tell because I play with the other kids now and I talk a lot more. Mummy is excited to move into our own home but is happy living in this big house until we are ready to move. Mummy loves me and doesn't want Daddy to shout at us again. Mummy talks to the Police and they keep us safe.

Heidi

My name is Heidi and I'm Arthur's Mum. I used to be frightened of Arthur's Dad. He was unpredictable and I was constantly scared and worried about what mood he'd be in. He was very controlling, and he wouldn't let me go out, he didn't even like me sitting with my Mum downstairs. He'd pester me and threaten to leave and go out and that terrified me because I know what he's capable of, he hurts people, so I'd always have to do what he said otherwise I'd make it worse.

He used to make me do everything. Even take his socks off. I was his slave. I did everything he said, hoping that he wouldn't kick off. He'd usually kick off when he couldn't get weed. I used to pay for him because I was frightened of what he'd do, he'd go out and steal from people and he threatened to sell Arthur's pram too, so it was easier if I just gave him money.

When he did get angry, he'd smash the room up and he'd kick me and hit me. He didn't care that Arthur was there. He didn't care about Arthur at all. I used to feel like I was failing Arthur. Like I was a terrible Mum. Living with Arthur's dad was draining. I was always sad. I slowly faded away until I wasn't me anymore. I felt trapped and helpless. Eventually things got too much for my Mum and she told me he had to go. I can't believe I picked him over my family, but that's how much control he had over me. I stuck by him and we were homeless. We ended up in a B&B and he assaulted me. Social Workers visited me and told me that they were worried, and they'd remove Arthur if they had to. This was the moment I realised. Enough was enough. And I woke up.

Since moving into the Refuge, I feel a million times better and I feel like I'm finally back to myself. I can get ready without being accused of impressing someone else. I can be me. I notice a huge difference in Arthur too and it makes me so happy. He's always had a cheeky personality, but he was quiet and timid in front his dad, he was scared just like I was. I love seeing him being happy and cheeky and every day he grows in confidence. In the future, I hope that Arthur and I find our own happy home, where we can be ourselves. I want Arthur to settle into a nice Nursery and I will start my driving lessons. I want to work and start a course - I'm not sure what I want to do yet, but I know I can finally do anything I want.



A typical day for Sarah aged 16 years

Sarah attends sixth form and has a mentor for support. She and her family have suffered significant loss with her father passing away recently. Sarah's mother has a history of poor mental health which has been exacerbated by the death of her husband. Sarah's lived experience was captured by Sarah's mentor as part of a support session to check in on her mental health and wellbeing.



Sarah

So my alarm usually goes off at 8 in the morning and I try to wake mum up for the school run, she often can't get up straight away, sometimes not at all. I usually have to wake Connor up too or he'd be late for school or not even go at all and then mum gets annoyed. If it's a day he doesn't want to go to school it takes me ages to get him ready because he gets so distressed. No one has breakfast at home. If Connor's in school I take him in, but mum waits in the car. If I'm not in college I go back home and mum goes back to bed. When I do go to college, I'm often late.

Mum does the food shopping but struggles and sometimes spends money on the wrong things like a top that she wants. I cook the evening dinner, usually something like pizza and chips. If I don't cook mum will do it. The house is a mess and I have to tidy it up; I'm expected to clean the kitchen straight away after cooking or mum will be angry; it's not fair though because when I get home from college or being out, she's usually left the kitchen in a mess. I help with the washing too. Sometimes me and mum take the dog for a walk later in the day; I actually like doing this together.

Nan visits us 3 or 4 times a week. Nan and mum have some long-term issues stemming from mum's childhood, it's hard work sometimes. Nan comes round and helps tidy up but that can sometimes cause arguments with mum. I think nan is on my side sometimes about mum not cleaning the house. I don't see anyone else from my family very often.

Sometimes I worry about money and I barely have any clothes. Any spare money usually goes on mum or Connor and he has lots of clothes. Nan sometimes buys me new things, or I use my own money.

Our family have had Family Support Workers in the past, two of them were really good. Mum didn't like them though, so the support stopped.

In Summary:

Capturing the Daily Lived Experience of the unborn, baby, child, young person and care giver will give the professionals a clearer insight into their world from their own perspective.

This in turn will enable us to assess and plan with a clear focus on the needs of the child and what needs to be done to support the family to make and maintain changes to improve the child's lived experience.

For more information, resources and multi-agency training opportunities please visit the North Wales Safeguarding Board website: <https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/>