

MY SAFETY & SUPPORT TOOL

A shared conversation between children, young people, families and professionals

**Co-produced by
the voices of
over 500
children and
families**

"We want people to do it because they genuinely care and genuinely want change."

- Young Person

CONVERSATION, NOT CATEGORISATION

CONTENTS

Toolkit Roadmap.....	3
What is this tool and how to use it.....	4-8
Using the tool in different contexts.....	6-8
How to facilitate good conversations.....	9-10
Filling out the tool and examples.....	11-12
Setting the scene with your young person.....	13
My support battery.....	14
Mini batteries.....	15-23
How to use the Safety Battery.....	16
My Safety Battery.....	17
How to use the Care & Connection Battery.....	18
My Care & Connection Battery.....	19
How to use the My Trusted Adults Battery.....	20
My Trusted Adults Battery.....	21
How to use the My Pressure Battery.....	22
My Pressure Battery.....	23
What would help you?.....	24
Any questions?.....	25
Next steps.....	26
More resources.....	27
Glossary.....	29

MAKING CONVERSATIONS FAMILY-FIRST. NOT SYSTEMS FIRST.



The Insight

Through co-production workshops, families told us they wanted:

- Clearer, more human language
- Honest conversations about what is and isn't working
- A way to be part of decisions – not just informed of them

Above all, they asked for conversations that start with lived experience, not systems.

In Practice

The Big Battery supports conversations in everyday practice, from meetings to multi-agency discussions.

It helps people talk together about:

- How life feels right now
- What's helping and what's draining
- What support is needed
- Who can help best

The Why

Conversations about support and safety can be hard to follow.

- Language can feel overly professional
- Decisions can feel unclear or sudden
- Support can arrive too late, or "get serious" without warning

When this happens, families don't always feel involved or supported.

The Tool

The Big Battery and Conversation Tool has been created from the insights of families and practitioners, and is grounded in:

- Family-first, relational practice
- Curiosity rather than judgement
- Listening to understand
- Prioritisation of the child's needs

The tool isn't the focus. It's the conversation it supports.

The Impact

When conversations are clearer and shared:

- Practitioners feel more confident in decisions
- Support can be agreed earlier
- Children and families know what happens next, and who is involved

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS

What is this tool and how to use it?

The Purpose of the Tool

This tool is designed to support conversations, not replace professional judgement. It helps create a shared understanding of how life feels for a child or family right now, what is working, and what needs to change.

It should be used to open up dialogue, not to score, categorise or make decisions in isolation.

Using the Tool in Practice

Use the battery as a starting point for conversation:

- Ask what feels most relevant today
- Explore what sits behind the rating or description
- Stay curious — “tell me more” matters more than getting a ‘right answer’

The aim is to understand daily lived experience and build a shared picture of what could help the family and child.

Professional Judgement

Strength-based questions should always be applied with professional judgement.

In some situations, particularly where there is immediate action required, conversations may need to prioritise safety and clarity before reflection.

You can return to the tool later to support understanding and planning.

Not One-Size-Fits-All

This tool will not look the same in every conversation.

Adapt your language, pacing and approach depending on:

- The child's age and communication style
- The family's understanding of services
- The level of concern or urgency
- The setting you are working in

The principle remains the same: work **with** people, not to them.

Using the Tool in Different Contexts

Frontline / first contact / crisis response

In urgent or high-risk situations:

- Focus first on safety, clarity and immediate information gathering
- Use plain, direct language (“I need to understand what’s happening to keep you safe”)
- Avoid overloading with reflective questions if the moment isn’t right

The battery can still be used:

- As a check-in (“how are things feeling right now?”)
- Or after immediate risk is managed, to understand context and next steps

Ongoing work / relationship-based practice

For Family Help, or ongoing social work:

- Use the battery more fully to explore patterns over time
- Revisit it regularly to understand what is changing
- Use it to connect behaviour with underlying need

This is where the tool is most powerful:

- Building shared language
- Reducing defensiveness
- Helping families feel understood rather than judged

Planning meetings / multi-agency work

In planning or reviewing spaces:

- Use the battery to create a shared view across agencies
- Focus on alignment, are we seeing the same picture?
- Translate conversation into clear actions

For example:

- What is keeping this battery “low”?
- What needs to change to move it even slightly?
- Who is responsible for each part of support?

This helps move from reflection to coordinated action.

Panels / decision-making forums:

- The battery can support context and narrative, not replace statutory frameworks
- It helps ensure the child/family experience is visible, not lost in the process

Use it to:

- Explain lived experience alongside professional analysis
- Support balanced decisions (risk + strengths + context)

Statutory frameworks and legal decision-making remain and the tool should complement, not replace these.

Reviews

At review points:

- Use the battery to track movement over time
- Ask: What's changed? What hasn't? Why?

This supports:

- Measuring progress in a way families understand
- Identifying where plans are working, or not
- Focus on how WE as professionals are planning for meaningful engagement

The tool has been designed in the knowledge that families' situations and change, and that's normal.

HOW TO FACILITATE GOOD CONVERSATIONS

with the Battery Pack tool

Start with Clarity

Be clear why you are having the conversation. Families said they want honesty, not uncertainty.

Make sure the family, child or young person knows this is an honest conversation, not an inspection, and they don't have to worry about "being in trouble".

Stay Curious, Not Assumptive

The tool works best when you:

- Explore before concluding
- Ask questions and check understanding
- Understand behaviour as communication

Avoid treating initial answers as the full story. And never assume how the family, child or young person thinks and feels.

Balance Strengths and Risk

Strength-based does not mean avoiding difficult conversations.

You can:

- Recognise what is working
- While being clear about what is not safe or sustainable

Clarity and compassion should sit together.

Make It Collaborative

Where possible:

- Complete the tool with families, not for them
- Check understanding as you go
- Let the child, young person or family lead the discussion
- Invite correction (“Have I got that right?”)

This reduces defensiveness and builds trust.

Link Conversation to Action

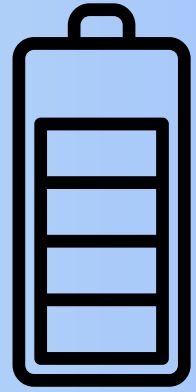
The tool should always lead somewhere:

- What needs to change?
- What is realistic right now?
- What help is the young person or family asking for?
- Who will do what next?
- When will you meet again to reflect on changes?

Keep coming back to it and use it as a foundation for your action plan. It’s a framework for co-production.

FILLING OUT THE TOOL

and examples



Use the batteries to support a conversation about how life feels right now. The aim is not to get a perfect answer, but to build a shared understanding of what is going well, what feels difficult, and what support may help.

1. Introduce the tool

Explain that the batteries are there to help talk things through. Be clear that this is not a test, score or label.

2. Read the statements together

Go through the statements slowly and check understanding. Adapt the language if needed.

3. Explore before choosing

Talk first about what feels most relevant. The conversation matters more than selecting the “right” battery.

4. Ask them to mark or colour the battery

Invite the child, young person or family member to colour, point to or choose the battery that best fits how things feel right now.

[Download the young person's pack here](#)

5. Unpack what sits underneath

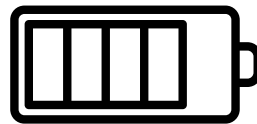
Ask what makes it feel this way, when it is better or worse, and what may be helping or draining things.

6. Agree on what happens next

Use what you have heard to identify any support needed, what could help, and who will do what next.

7. Adapt it to the situation

You do not need to use every battery or follow a fixed order. Please use your judgment and adapt the tool to the child, family, and context.

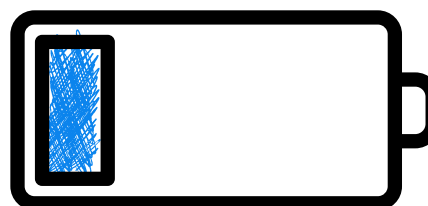


SUPERCHARGED

- My world feels strong and supported.
- Things around me are working well.
- I can cope with challenges when they come up.



Like this



Or this!

There's no right answers.

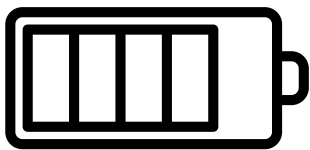
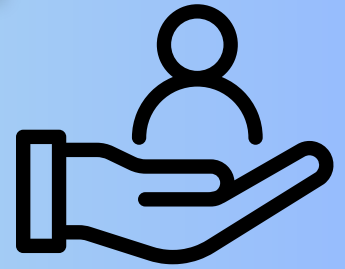
“WHY THIS CONVERSATION IS HAPPENING”

Setting the scene with your young person

Here’s a 3-step start to your meeting. Don’t forget, this is a conversation and you can adapt it to your, and your young person’s, needs.

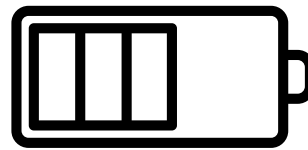
- 1** We’re here to check in and talk about how things are going in your world.
- 2** Together, we can understand what’s important to you and what you need.
- 3** We’ll discuss how to support you and/or how to keep you safe.

MY SUPPORT BATTERY



SUPERCHARGED

- Things feel strong and supported right now.
- Support around me is working well.
- I feel able to cope when challenges come up.



CHARGED BUT TAKES EFFORT

- Things are mostly okay, but it can take effort to keep going.
- Some things feel harder than they should be.
- I might need a bit more support to stop things getting tougher.



LOW – RUNNING LOW ON SUPPORT

- Things feel heavy or tiring at times.
- I'm coping, but it doesn't always feel easy.
- Some support could make things feel more manageable.



EMPTY - NEED HELP NOW

- Things feel overwhelming right now.
- It's hard to keep going without more help.
- I need support and change to feel safer and steadier.

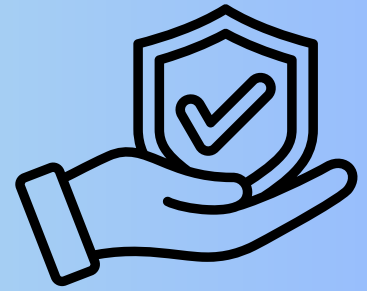
Tell me more about what makes it feel like this.

MINI CONVERSATIONS

Each one helps us focus on a different part of your world and understand what support might help.

You don't have to complete everything — we can focus on what matters most today.

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS



How to use the Safety Battery

This conversation focuses on how safe a child or young person feels in their day-to-day life — and whether that matches what professionals understand about risk.

Safety is both felt and actual. A child may feel safe in situations that are harmful, or feel unsafe even when risks are being managed. This tool helps explore both.

Use the battery to explore:

- Where and when the adult, child or young person feels safe or unsafe
- Who notices when something isn't right
- What helps them feel protected

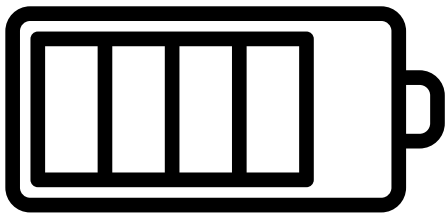
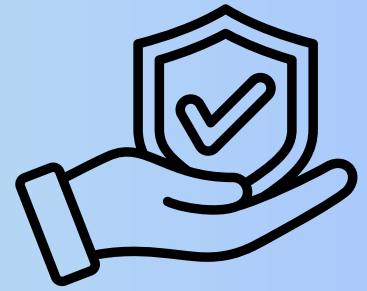
Things to be mindful of

- This may be a sensitive or exposing conversation, go at the child's pace
- In high-risk situations, prioritise clarity and immediate safety over exploration
- Do not soften or avoid risk, but explain it in a way that is human and clear

Safety conversations must lead to clarity:

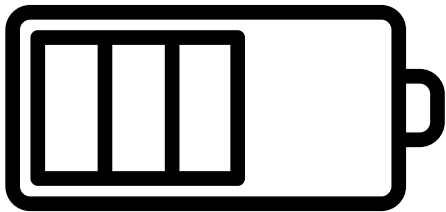
- What needs to change to improve safety?
- What will happen next?
- Who is responsible for keeping the child safe?

MY SAFETY BATTERY



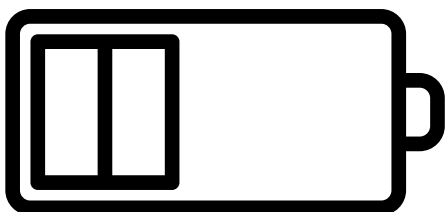
SUPERCHARGED

- I feel safe most of the time.
- The adults around me notice when something isn't right.
- I feel protected and supported.



CHARGED BUT SOMETIMES WORRIED

- I usually feel safe, but some things worry me.
- There are times when I feel unsure or on edge.
- I'm not always sure who would step in to help.



LOW – FEELING UNSURE OR UNSETTLED

- I often feel worried or unsettled.
- Some people, places or situations don't feel safe.
- I can feel on alert a lot of the time.



EMPTY - NEEDS SAFETY NOW

- I feel unsafe or frightened.
- I don't feel protected right now.
- I need support and change to feel safe.

Can you tell me more about when you feel most safe — and when you don't?

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS



How to use the Care & Connection Battery

This conversation explores whether a family, child or young person feels seen, heard and connected to the people around them.

Connection is a key protective factor. When it is low, children may feel isolated, overlooked or unsupported, even if services are involved.

Use this space to understand:

- Who the family, child or young person feels close to
- When they feel noticed or ignored
- Whether support feels consistent or unpredictable

Focus on everyday experiences:

- “Who checks in on you?”
- “When do you feel most listened to?”

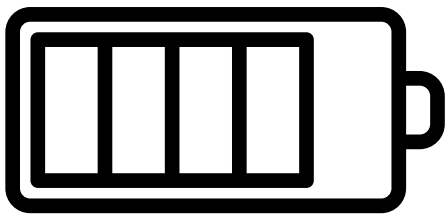
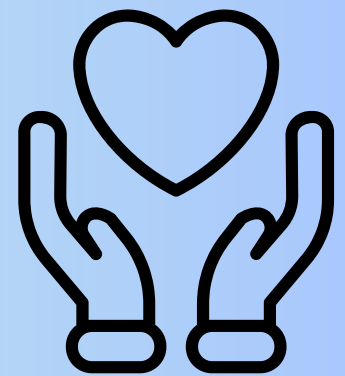
Things to be mindful of

- They may minimise loneliness or struggle to name it, give time and prompts
- Being surrounded by others does not always mean they feel connected
- Be aware of differences in communication styles, neurodiversity and relationships

Connection should translate into practical support:

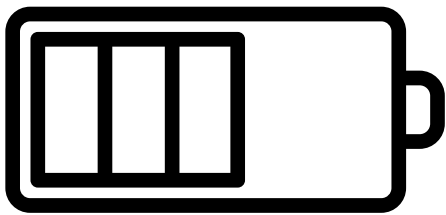
- Who can show up more consistently?
- What small changes could help you feel less alone?
- How can relationships be strengthened, not just services added?

MY CARE & CONNECTION BATTERY



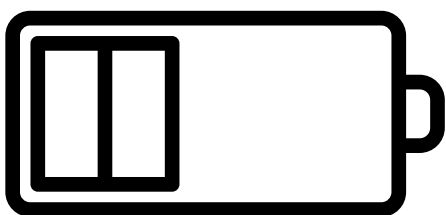
SUPERCHARGED

- I feel cared about and noticed.
- There are adults I trust and can talk to.
- I don't feel alone.



CHARGED BUT NOT ALWAYS CONSISTENT

- There are people around, but they're not always available.
- Sometimes I feel noticed, sometimes I don't.
- Support can feel a bit up and down.



LOW - FEELING OVERLOOKED AT TIMES

- I can feel overlooked or not fully seen.
- I'm not always sure who to turn to.
- I sometimes keep things to myself.



EMPTY - NEEDS CONNECTION NOW

- I feel alone or not noticed.
- It doesn't always feel like anyone is checking in on me.
- I need someone to notice and support me.

Who are the people that make you feel most noticed or cared about?

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS



How to use the My Trusted Adults Battery

This conversation looks at the adults in a child's world — and whether those adults are able, available and supported enough to meet the child's needs. It recognises that children's well-being is closely linked to how well the adults around them are coping.

Explore both presence and capacity:

- Who are the important people / adults around me?
- How are they managing?
- What support do they have themselves?

This is not about blame — it is about understanding:

- Pressure on adults
- Gaps in support
- Impact on the child

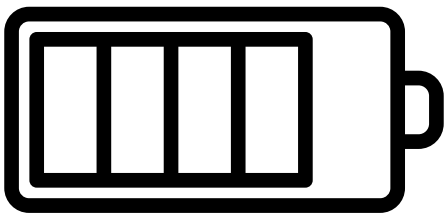
Things to be mindful of

- Families may feel judged, be explicit that this is about support, not criticism
- Avoid assumptions, understand context, history and patterns
- Be mindful of hidden pressures (e.g. mental health, finances, caring responsibilities)

This conversation should inform support for adults as well as children:

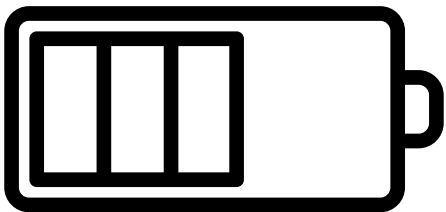
- What would help me/us cope better?
- What support is missing or delayed?
- How does strengthening adult support improve the child's situation?

MY TRUSTED ADULTS BATTERY



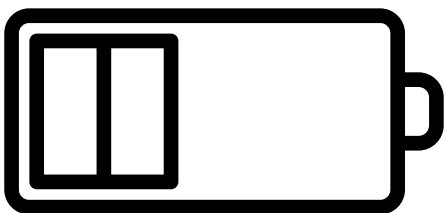
SUPERCHARGED

- The adults in my world are coping well.
- They have support when they need it.
- That helps me feel safe and okay.



CHARGED BUT UNDER PRESSURE

- The adults in my world are managing, but things can be hard.
- Support is there sometimes, but not always.
- I can notice when things feel stressful.



LOW - ADULTS FEEL OVERWHELMED AT TIMES

- The adults in my world can feel overwhelmed.
- It's not always easy for them to get the help they need.
- This can affect how things feel for me.



EMPTY - SUPPORT NEEDED AROUND ME

- The adults in my world are struggling right now.
- They don't always have the support they need.
- This can make things feel unsettled or uncertain for me.

Who are the adults you feel most comfortable with?
What helps the adults around you when things are hard?

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR PRACTITIONERS



How to use the Pressure Battery

This conversation focuses on the pressure in a child, young person, or family's life, and whether it is manageable or overwhelming.

Use the battery to explore:

- What is building up right now?
- What feels hardest to manage?
- Whether there is space to recover, or if things are stacking up

Help break this down:

- One pressure vs many
- Short-term vs ongoing
- Practical vs emotional

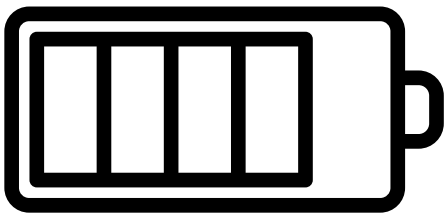
Things to be mindful of:

- Families may be used to coping, “managing” does not always mean sustainable
- Small issues can accumulate into a crisis if not addressed early
- Be careful not to overwhelm, prioritise what matters most

Pressure conversations should lead to relief:

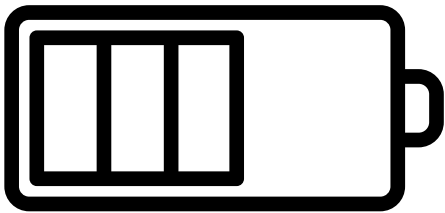
- What can be reduced, removed or supported?
- What is realistic to change now?
- How can we prevent things from escalating further?

MY PRESSURE BATTERY



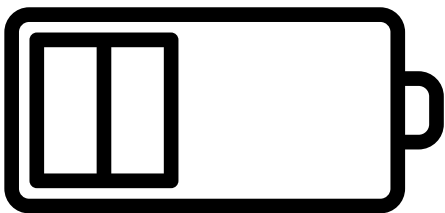
SUPERCHARGED

- Pressure feels manageable most of the time.
- When things go wrong, there's space and support to sort them.
- Problems don't tend to build up.



CHARGED BUT BUILDING

- Some pressure is starting to build.
- It takes effort to stay on top of things.
- Small problems can hang around or begin to stack up.



LOW - LOTS OF PRESSURE ALL AT ONCE

- There are lots of pressures happening at the same time.
- Things can stack up quickly.
- It can feel hard to catch a break.



EMPTY - RESTART NEEDED

- Pressure feels overwhelming right now.
- Things may feel like they're building or getting harder to manage.
- I need support to help things feel more under control.

What's putting the most pressure on things right now? (This could be anything — home, school, money, health, or services.)

WHAT WOULD HELP YOU?

What would help things feel a bit better?

Who could help?

What small, everyday changes can we make together?

ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

*This is your space to ask anything, or
share any feedback.*

NEXT STEPS

This is what we talked about...

These are our next steps and who is responsible...

We will chat again on...

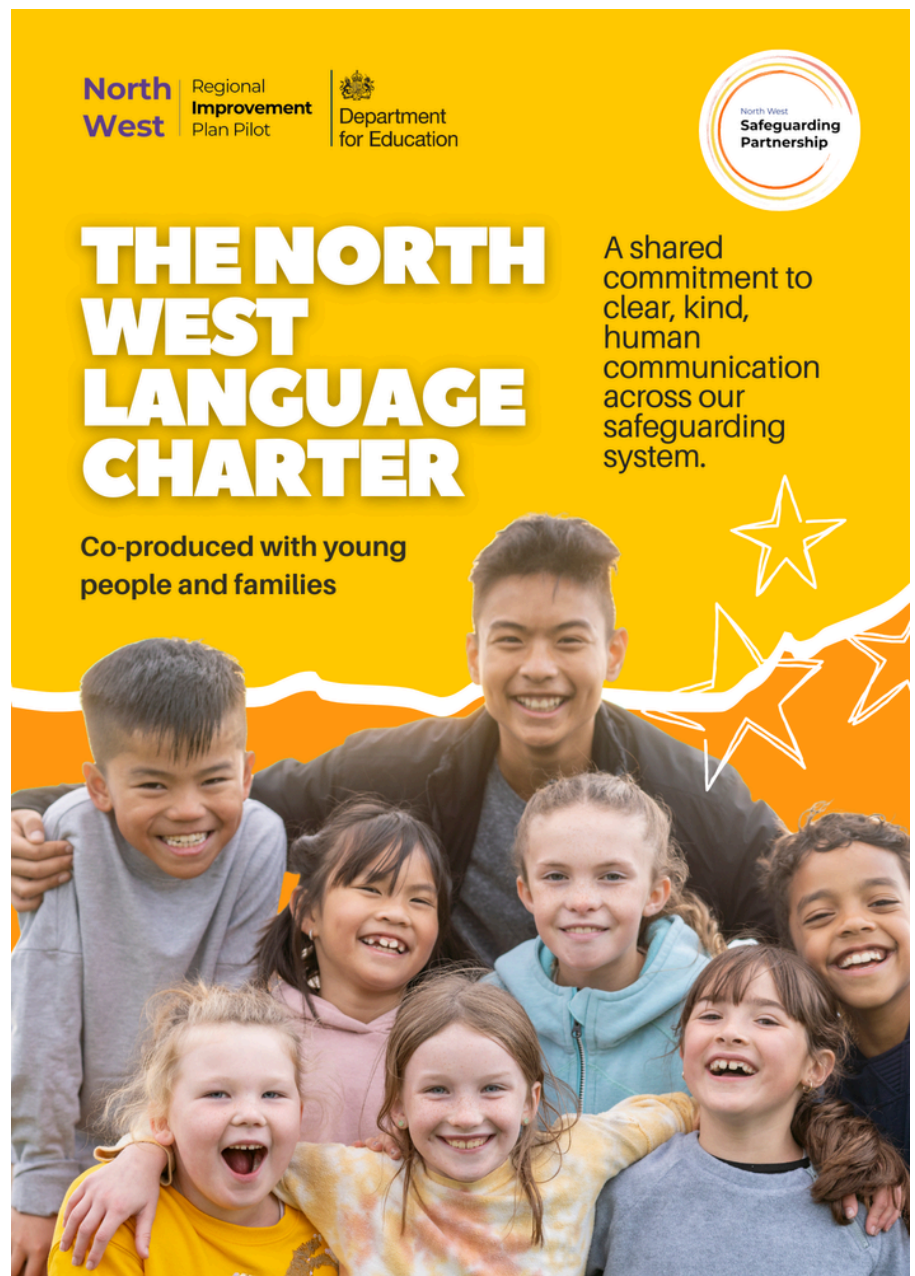
MORE RESOURCES

The Language Charter

A shared agreement for clear, kind, human communication across North West services.

Making sure how we talk to young people and families is consistent and easy to understand.

[Read it here](#)



GLOSSARY

Term	Description
Co-Production	<i>A collaborative way of working where participants work together as equals to design or create</i>
Framework	<i>A basic structure underlying and supporting a system</i>

