## saferlondon

# **Building Trust**

Understanding Trusted Relationships at Safer London

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## INTRODUCTION

At Safer London, building trusting relationships is at the heart of everything we do.

Too often, young Londoners affected by violence and exploitation share with us how they feel let down by professionals and services meant to help them. Our work centres around changing that narrative by creating spaces where young people feel safe, respected and genuinely supported.

In 2023 we commissioned an evaluation to deepen our understanding of how we can effectively build those essential connections of trust with young Londoners. From our experience, we know that trust is more than just establishing rapport - it involves consistency, honesty and mutual respect.

Through this evaluation, we aimed to move beyond surface-level assumptions and truly explore what makes trust work in practice. Our goal was to gain practical insights that could inform and enhance the way we engage with young Londoners, ensuring that we foster meaningful and lasting relationships.

The results of this evaluation will inform our future strategies and help shape a more effective model for working with young Londoners. The results of this evaluation will inform our future strategies and help shape a more effective model for working with young Londoners.

By commissioning this research, we were not only looking to improve the way we work with young Londoners, but also to contribute valuable insights to the broader youth and safeguarding sectors.

By sharing this evaluation and the framework that emerged from it, we hope others can learn from our findings and adapt them to better support the children and young people they work with.

Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that no young person feels let down by the systems that are meant to protect them.

RESEARCH



## **CFEY RESEARCH AND FINDINGS**

Prepared by Abi Angus, Anamaria Granada, Ciaran Thapar and Shenola Usherwood

#### INTRODUCTION

In 2023 Safer London commissioned CfEY and Ciaran Thapar to support them to understand more about trusted relationships in the context of the work they do with young Londoners. At the beginning of the work together, Safer London outlined four main goals:

#### UNDERSTANDING

To build a deep understanding of trusted relationships and related key concepts. Specifically, what trusted relationships are, how they are built and what facilitates or hinders their development, particularly in the context of working with young people impacted by violence and exploitation.



#### **EVALUATION**

To assess the extent to which these concepts are embedded in Safer London's Strategy and practice and the impact of this.



#### IMPROVEMENT

To understand how your strategy and practice could be improved and strengthened to better embed evidence-based good practice on trusted relationships.



#### SHARING

To share findings from both the evidence base and Safer London's own practice to strengthen sector practice on trusted relationships.

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We believe society should ensure all children and young people receive the support they need to make a fulfilling transition to adulthood.

#### THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH (CFEY)

In all these areas, both CfEY and Safer London felt that the perspectives of young Londoners were crucial to the achievement of these objectives, and so designed multiple opportunities to work alongside young Londoners and hear their perspectives.

This document is the evaluation report, using data gathered in late 2023 to understand how trusted relationships are built and maintained by Safer London practitioners, what impact these have on young Londoners, and how this work can be strengthened.

This report sits alongside three other documents that together address all the goals listed above.

An evidence review, using a wide range of existing literature to develop an understanding of the facilitating factors and barriers to building and maintaining trusted relationships between practitioners and children and young people.

A framework setting out key principles from the evidence review that have been adapted and stress-tested by a group of young Londoners.



An anthology containing stories of trust, structured around the framework principles, written by young Londoners who attended a series of participatory sessions in summer 2023.



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#### **SUMMARY**

#### **IMPACT OF TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS**

The trusted relationships built by Safer London workers make a difference to the lives of young Londoners in two main ways:

Trusting their worker allows young Londoners to listen to their perspectives, gaining advice and insight that supports them to make positive changes in how they see themselves and approach the situations they encounter.

Building a relationship with a trusted adult can allow young Londoners to feel more open to trusting other people in the future.

## STRUCTURAL AND INTERPERSONAL FACTORS THAT FACILITATE TRUST

The situations young Londoners referred to Safer London face in their lives, and their existing or previous relationships with other professionals, can make it hard for them to feel that they can trust other people. Safer London workers build rapport and tailor the support they offer young Londoners to reduce these barriers and build trusting relationships

Young Londoners have agency and choice around the support that they receive from Safer London workers, including where and when they meet, and the objectives they work towards in sessions. This can be particularly important for young Londoners who have been impacted by violence and/or exploitation, who may not feel that they have control over many things in their lives. It also communicates to young Londoners that the support they receive from Safer London is different from that which they might receive from other practitioners.

However, young Londoners have limited agency in terms of who their trusted adult is at Safer London, and when the relationship ends, which, for some young Londoners, can reduce the agency they feel they have over the relationships they build with practitioners.

The support provided to young Londoners by Safer London workers is designed to work towards clear purposes and objectives. Young Londoners are often involved in setting the purpose of the support they receive from their worker, resulting in an increased sense of ownership and buy-in, and in the trust they place in their worker.

Young Londoners and workers all felt that being reliable; showing up for young Londoners when you said you would and being available for them; was key to building trust, and that this is present in Safer London's work. For young Londoners who may not have positive relationships with many other adults in their lives, this level of consistent support from their Safer London worker demonstrates that there are people who care about them.

Young Londoners felt that having a worker they could relate to was beneficial in building trust together, but some did not always feel that this had been present in their relationships with Safer London workers. Workers believed that relatability was important, and that Safer London's workers often did share identities and experiences with young Londoners. But They were not always clear on how they would go about sharing commonalities with the young Londoners they support without crossing professional boundaries.

All participants felt that unconditional positive regard was key to building trust, and young Londoners felt that Safer London workers were able to demonstrate this in their work together. This not only affected young Londoners' relationships with their worker but also how they felt that they might approach future relationships. For example, if they felt judged after opening up about something happening in their life, it would negatively impact how they felt about opening up to other people in the future.

Young Londoners told us that it is important for workers to demonstrate genuineness and congruence in their work with them, and that this is something that was mostly present in their relationships with Safer London practitioners. While workers also believed that it is important to be genuine with young Londoners, many interviewees felt that maintaining professional boundaries could, at times, restrict how genuine they felt they could be.

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#### SAFER LONDON'S STRATEGY

Practitioners demonstrated a high level of understanding and agreement when discussing processes and practices that shape their work, suggesting that Safer London's policies and ways of working are clear to team members and provide space for practitioners to work in a way that is tailored to the needs of the young Londoners they support.

There is scope for Safer London to increase the impact of the support they provide by ensuring that their strategies and processes allow workers to demonstrate key principles for building trust in their work:

Relatability and genuineness: Safer London should increase training and guidance to support workers in understanding what is useful to share with young Londoners to build and strengthen trust, and where boundaries lie.

Reliability: To increase the extent to which workers feel they can be reliable consistently for young Londoners, Safer London should consider:

- Capping workers' caseloads,
- Looking at the geography of workers' caseloads to reduce travel between sessions,
- Expanding work hours outside of 9am-5pm, and,
- Considering how to reduce the risks around young Londoners' travel to provide face-to-face support for all young Londoners that want it.

#### **METHODS**

Between September and November 2023 CfEY worked with Safer London to gather evaluation data from young Londoners, members of their families and communities, and Safer London workers, to answer the following research questions:

> What are the structural and interpersonal factors that facilitate the creation of trusted relationships between practitioners and young Londoners impacted by violence and/or exploitation in Safer London specifically?



What are the barriers to building trusted relationships in Safer London specifically?

To what extent is Safer London's strategy:

- Aligned with the evidence on trusted relationships?
  - Supporting the development of trusting relationships?
- What is the impact of trusted relationships in Safer London's work?

How can Safer London's strategy articulate the conditions necessary for trusted relationships and the intention to create these conditions?

In total, we captured insights and perspectives from 55 different people, using surveys, focus groups and interviews (see Figure 2, below).

RESEARCH ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Practitioner survey	281
Practitioner interviews	6
Young Londoners survey	3
Young Londoners focus group (including 1:1 alternative)	9
Community focus group	3

↑ Figure 2: Overview of evaluation participants

 One of these responses was from a member of staff who stated that they do not work alongside young Londoners themselves, and so this data is not included in our reporting. Throughout the fieldwork period, it was challenging to engage the number of participants we had hoped to include.

Information about the research opportunities was shared with all Safer London practitioners, for them to discuss with young Londoners they work alongside. Young Londoners and their families were offered £20 vouchers for taking part in focus groups or interviews, and told that their travel costs would be reimbursed, to reduce any financial barriers to taking part. Despite this, uptake was low.

This is a finding in itself, and suggests that where external researchers seek to include children and young Londoners impacted by exploitation and/or violence, and those who work alongside them, preliminary work may be needed to build trusted relationships between researchers, workers, families and children and young Londoners before they feel comfortable engaging.

#### SURVEYS

RESEARCH

We designed two surveys to be completed online: **one for Safer London practitioners** and one for **young Londoners** supported by Safer London.

The practitioners' survey was designed to gather data to understand:

- The times and places that workers conduct sessions with young Londoners, and their perceptions of how this impacts trust,
- The factors that impact their ability to build trust with young Londoners, and,
- The extent to which Safer London's strategies impact the trust built between workers and young Londoners.

The young Londoners' survey consisted of two short parts. The first part included survey questions examining:

- Young Londoners' level of trust in Safer London workers, using an adapted version of the KUSIV<sub>2</sub>, a validated scale to measure trust, and,
- Young Londoners' level of trust in people more widely, using the General Trust Scale<sub>3</sub>, a survey used in research across the world to measure individuals' levels of trust in those around them.

The second part included survey questions exploring the extent to which principles from the <u>framework on trusted</u> <u>relationships</u> were present in the support they had received, which principles they felt were more important, and the impact of their support from Safer London workers.

<sup>2.</sup> https://measurementinstrumentssocialscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s42409-020-00016-1 3. https://fetzer.org/sites/default/files/images/stories/pdf/selfmeasures/Self\_ Measures\_for\_Love\_and\_Compassion\_Research\_TRUST.pdf

RESEARCH

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#### **FOCUS GROUPS**

We visited the Safer London offices in Southwark to conduct separate focus groups with small groups of **young Londoners** who had been supported by Safer London workers and with members of their families and communities.

We also conducted an online 1:1 alternative focus group for a young person who wanted to participate but was not comfortable travelling to work with a group in person. The young Londoners focus group activities had eight participants. The community focus group had three participants.

The focus groups included activities and questions inviting young Londoners and family members to comment on the principles present in their, or their child's, relationship with a trusted Safer London worker and the impact of the support received.

#### **INTERVIEWS**

We conducted two types of interviews: **six online interviews with Safer London practitioners** and **three in-person case study interviews** with pairs of young Londoners and the Safer London worker they had built a trusted relationship with.

The online interviews with workers included questions on the extent to which they believed principles for trusted relationships were present in their work and how Safer London's policies, practises and strategies supported them to build trust with young Londoners.

The case study interviews were conducted by author and youth worker Ciaran Thapar and were designed to explore the story of how trust had been built and developed in each of the three relationships between young Londoners and practitioners, and the impact of the relationships and support. RESEARCH

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BUILDING TRUST

#### **FINDINGS**

Findings were collated into three categories:

How Safer London facilitates trusted relationships

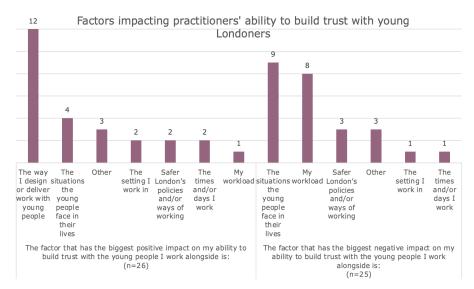
Framework conditions and principles

Impact of trusted relationships in Safer London's work

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#### HOW SAFER LONDON FACILITATES TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS



#### Figure 3: Practitioners' perspectives on factors that have the biggest impact on trust

'In my work with Safer London, my ability to build trust with young Londoners impacted by violence and/or exploitation is made easier by...'

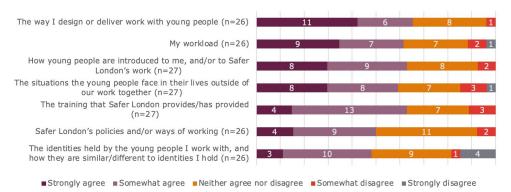


Figure 4: Practitioners' perspectives on factors that make building trust easier

#### Getting to know each other

How young Londoners are introduced to Safer London and to the workers that will support them appears to play a small role in facilitating trust. Around two thirds (17) of the practitioners who completed the survey agreed that the introductions young Londoners have to Safer London or to themselves made it easier to build trust. Of the remaining third, only two did not agree that this supported them to build trust.

The young Londoners who receive support from Safer London may often have complicated lives and may be involved with other support services, impacting on how they perceive adults around them and how they receive support.

A small number (4) believed that **the situations young Londoners face in their lives** outside of their work together was the factor that had the biggest positive impact on their ability to build trust, while around a third (9) stated that this factor had the biggest negative impact on their ability to build trust.

#### "

Sometimes what is going on in their lives has a far greater impact or pull on them than the remit of our work can.

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

Outside of the relationship they hold with their Safer London worker, young Londoners experience relationships with other practitioners, such as social workers, teachers and police officers. **Previous negative experiences with practitioners** could be a barrier to young Londoners trusting their Safer London workers.

#### "

Their previous experience with professionals impacts their ability to trust others.

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

Two workers we interviewed spoke about how they demonstrate the differences between them and other practitioners by showing more empathy than young Londoners might see from other adults around them.

#### "

Some of these young girls I work with are extremely vulnerable and they've had five different social workers in a space of a year and a half, for example, and they may not have contact [with] any of their family... So I think it is really important just showing up and just being that open ear, listening to them if they need them as well.

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

One young Londoner who took part in a focus group spoke about how their worker demonstrated empathy and cared about how the young person felt, and how this supported them to build a trusting relationship.

How long did it take you to trust [your Safer London worker], and what helped you to feel like you could?

Instantly... She was really interactive and she would give me worksheets from the get-go... She always made me feel that my emotions matter, and I got to remember what my emotions were.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Practitioners at Safer London feel able to use their skills to respond to what young Londoners want or need, supporting them to build trusting relationships with each other.

When asked which factor had the biggest positive impact on practitioners' ability to build trust with young Londoners, just under half (12) of the practitioners who responded to this survey question said 'the way I design or deliver work with young Londoners'.

"

It is me and the way I do my work (adapting /being flexible to their needs) that makes [young Londoners] want to work with me or open up.

PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

"

[The way I design or deliver work with young people has the biggest positive impact because] building a good rapport and relationship is often a key factor in being able to create positive change in Young Londoners' lives.

PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

A strength of Safer London's work is providing the space for workers to do this. In interviews, all the practitioners spoke about the different ways that they get to know young Londoners as individuals and use their interpersonal skills to build rapport.

#### "

I think I'm very open and easy-going as well, and I'm a chatter box, very talkative. So, I think that helps me [build relationships]... Usually during [the] first few sessions [with a new young person] we try to [get to] know each other, learn as many factors about each other as possible. So, I let them ask questions... [and] we build trust by playing games, I don't ask triggering questions.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

INTRODUCTION	RESEARCH	REFLECTIONS	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
BUILDING TRUST	Places and spaces to build trust			
"In my work with Safer London, my ability to build trust with young Londoners impacted by violence and/or exploitation is made easier by the setting(s) I work in."				
	In young per Youth justice settings, including accommodation (			
		outh centres (n=5)	1 1	
	Mainstream schools and,	/or colleges (n=14) 6	5 2 1	
	Specialist schools and/or colleges, alternative provision ( In the community, in public place people (n=15)	n=12) es chosen by young	4 2 1 6 2 1	
		Home (n=5) 2	3	
	Safer Lon	don's space (n=11) 3 2	5	
		t agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat ctitioners work and perceived impact		
	We asked practitio	ner survey respondents t	o select all the	

We asked practitioner survey respondents to select all the **settings that they work with young Londoners in**, and then to state the extent that they agree that working in those settings supports them to build trust.

A small proportion reported that the settings they work in can be a barrier to building trust, including a small number of practitioners who work: in mainstream educational settings (3), in specialist educational settings (3), in the community (3), and at home (3).

Only one survey participant reported that the setting they work in is the biggest barrier to building trust with young Londoners. However, for some of the workers we interviewed, the setting they work in could play a large role in how comfortable young Londoners felt engaging in conversation and building a trusting relationship. This could be a barrier to building trust for those who work together in busy public spaces, such as cafes, or for those meeting online.

#### "

Where we have to meet them sometimes is really difficult. If we do have to meet them in a coffee shop or something and you're sat on a table, obviously we're trying and sit away from everyone else, but it might be a bit loud or whatever. And to talk about deeper things there is a little bit difficult.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

RESEARCH

BUILDING TRUST

#### "

It was really tough to engage with young people because the cases that I have minus one were all quite high risk and I couldn't see them in the community. They've had to do phone calls and online sessions. And if we had a safe space to go to, that would've been ideal, like the child social care building. But a lot of these young people live so far away from these buildings, [and] it wouldn't be safe for them to travel... Online sessions are just really tough to do with [young Londoners], especially when you haven't met them face-to-face before.

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

While options for places to meet in the community can be restricted by young Londoners' risk factors relating to their safety in different areas, survey data suggests that youth justice settings, youth centres, community spaces and educational settings are seen as good places to meet young Londoners by most workers.

In interviews we heard that, while schools are good places to meet with young Londoners, working around timetables and summer holidays can be challenging.

Two interviewees also spoke about how **working with young** Londoners in different locations across the city can make conducting meaningful sessions difficult. They told us that sometimes sessions with young Londoners must be shorter than they would like, to allow for travel time. This can reduce the extent workers feel they can be reliable, and, as is explored further in <u>our findings</u>, young Londoners and practitioners believe reliability is very important for building trust.

#### "

Sometimes I'm in [one part of] London and I'm all the way up to [another part of] London and I'm back again. It is very jumbled, and traveling does take a while and [there can be] train delays... Sometimes if the person's been late for whatever reason, and it's eaten 15 minutes of our session, that's a 45 minute session I can only do because I've got to dart off to [another part of the city].

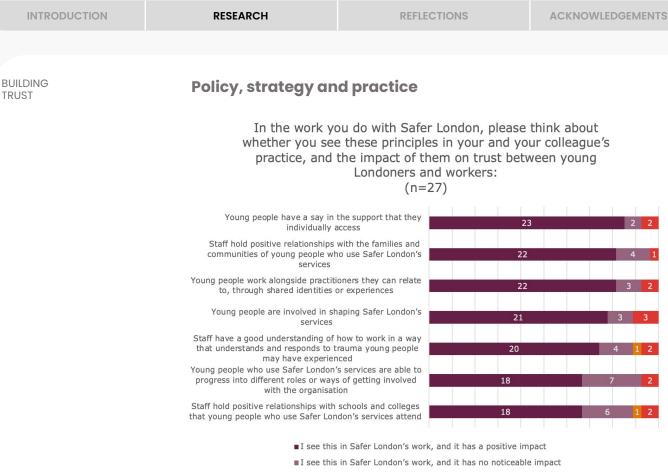
PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

INTRODUCTION	RESEARCH	REFLECTIONS	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
BUILDING TRUST	with young London holding positive rel pass on messages	poke about the challenges lers who don't have their a lationships with parents a s can be useful, in some co rust between a worker and	own phones. While Ind carers who can ases it may be

#### "

A lot of the young people we [support] have either not got phones or got issues with their phone, so you have to arrange things through mum or whoever... Then there's still somebody else telling them you've got to go to a session rather than me arranging it with them, so that can be a bit difficult. And obviously they think 'oh well you are in contact with mum, so what else are you talking about?

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE



I see this in Safer London's work, and it has a negative impact

I do not see this in Safer London's work

#### ↑ Figure 6: Practitioners' perspectives on principles from Safer London's strategy

Around a third of practitioners (8) reported that the factor that had the biggest negative impact on their ability to build trust was their workload. However, when we asked practitioners if they believed that their **workload** facilitated building trust with young Londoners, over half (16) agreed that it did.

This suggests that practitioners' workloads play a large role in their capacity to build trust with young Londoners, and that while overall workers feel like they have the time they need, this is not the case for all workers.

Several practitioners explained how a high caseload can affect their ability to manage time, and the impact that this can have on relationships with young Londoners.

#### "

Obviously I want to spend as much time as I can with all my young people, but sometimes I can only spend an hour because I've got to dart off to the other side of London [to see another young person]. And I think the more time you spend with them, they see 'oh, [they're] taking more time out of [their] day to spend time with me'. And that builds relationships.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

#### "

By holding a higher workload I have less time to dedicate to getting to know each young person and develop and plan activities and/or sessions that are adapted to their individual personalities and needs. A higher workload also impacts my ability to deliver regular weekly sessions alongside attending any additional meetings. It also hinders me being flexible in case additional needs arise as my schedule will be very busy to fit in appointments with all young people on my caseload.

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

The training that Safer London provides for workers is perceived by workers as somewhat useful for building trust.

Around half (17) of the workers who completed the survey agreed that **the training they had accessed with Safer London** helped them to build trust with young Londoners. However, over a third (11) did not agree with the statement, suggesting that it may be useful for Safer London to explore further which training workers found useful, what training practitioners would like to take part in and who has access to it.

#### "

Sometimes there is not targeted substantial training for the practitioner in order to practically prepare them to respond to the level of severity of some young people's needs.

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

Training around trauma – it's impact on people and how to work in a way that responds to trauma – appears to have been successful in supporting workers to build trust with young Londoners who have experienced trauma.

The majority of workers (20) surveyed believe that staff hold a good understanding of trauma-responsive practice, and that this has a positive impact on Safer London's work. It is worth noting however that around a fifth (6) of survey respondents stated that this had no impact or was not present in Safer London's work, and one believed that trauma-responsive practice had a negative impact. RESEARCH

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Practitioners were not agreed on the extent to which they believed that **Safer London's policies and/or ways of working** supported them in building trust.

While half (14) the practitioners who took part in the survey agreed or somewhat agreed that these policies and practices made building trust easier, over a third (11) didn't agree with the statement and a small number (2) disagreed that these were supportive when building trust with young Londoners. One respondent suggested Safer London's work with young Londoners could be improved by increasing the length of time that young Londoners are supported.

I think the time frame of [some programmes] is too short. I feel as if some of these young people need people to really see them and hear them and that's not always possible in a short time frame especially if they come with trauma.

"

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

Within discussions about ways of working, safeguarding policies were mentioned by practitioners in interviews and the survey, and by young Londoners in focus groups.

A small number of young Londoners spoke about how they understood that concerns would need to be passed on by their worker, and so at times communicated in metaphors to get advice and input from their worker without sharing information that would cause the young person to potentially be referred to other services.

Obviously I was holding stuff back [from my worker]. I can't tell her everything. You know what I'm trying to say? Because of a certain situation or whatever. But I felt like I could trust [my worker] with what I was telling her or if I was speaking in metaphors that I knew she would understand.

The things that you didn't feel comfortable to talk to her about, don't tell me what they are, but why did you not feel comfortable to share those or feel like you could share those?

They would get me in trouble.

Because she would need to pass them to other people?

Yeah, she would, yeah."

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

One survey respondent who reported that Safer London's policies and/or ways of working had the biggest positive impact on their ability to build trust with young Londoners linked this directly to how Safer London's policies safeguard both the young Londoners and workers.

However, for another worker, some of these policies were seen as limiting to their practice.

[Safer London's policies and/or ways of working have the biggest positive impact on my ability to build trust with young Londoners because] it allows the young person and worker to be safeguarded.

PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

"

[This has the biggest negative impact on my ability to build trust with young Londoners because] some of it is not necessary and can be limiting.

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

In interviews, Safer London workers demonstrated a high level of understanding and agreement when discussing **processes and practices that shape their work**, such as how young Londoners are matched with workers, how workers build rapport and get to know young Londoners, and how outcomes are planned and measured with young Londoners.

This suggests that Safer London's policies and ways of working are clear to team members and provide space for practitioners to work in a way that is tailored to the needs of the young Londoners they work with

We asked practitioners what changes they would make to Safer London's strategy to improve how the team build relationships with young Londoners.

Just over a quarter (5) of respondents said that there wasn't anything they should change. A smaller number (3) of responses spoke about improving the organisational information given to practitioners, providing more structure and clarity.

Other suggestions included:

Getting more input from young Londoners and practitioners to shape the services offered.

Increased funding for activities with young Londoners in sessions, tailored to them and their interests or needs.

Clarifying and simplifying the language used in the outcomes framework to reduce jargon.

Providing workers with less information on young Londoners at the beginning of their work together, allowing relationships to be built with information shared by the young person.

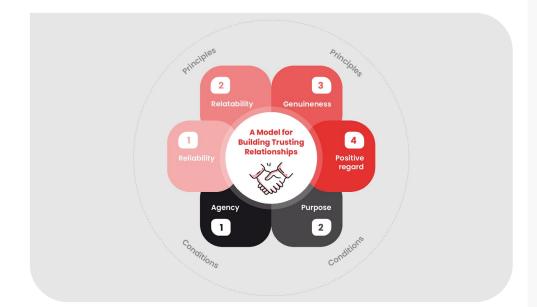
One interviewee told us that they would have liked more information on young Londoners' likes, dislikes and interests at the beginning of their work together, to support them in building rapport, and therefore it would be useful for Safer London to consider what information workers need and what information should be shared by the young Londoner.

Of the small number (6) of practitioner survey respondents who said **other factors** have the biggest positive and negative impacts on their ability to build trust, just one gave more information about which factors they believed were impactful, stating that they believe effective collaboration with other agencies has a positive impact on trust with young Londoners.

#### FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS AND PRINCIPLES

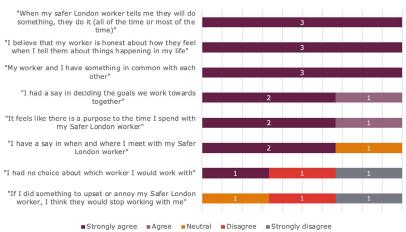
The evidence review completed for Safer London by CfEY earlier this year identified five principles and conditions that facilitate the building of trusted relationships between young people and the adults they work alongside.

After completing the evidence review, CfEY ran a series of five participatory sessions with young Londoners where we tested these findings and worked with the group to understand how necessary they felt each condition and principle is for building trusted relationships with practitioners. The group agreed with the findings and added an additional principle (relatability) that they felt had been vital in their personal experiences of trust. These six final conditions and principles were used to create a framework for trusted relationships for Safer London.



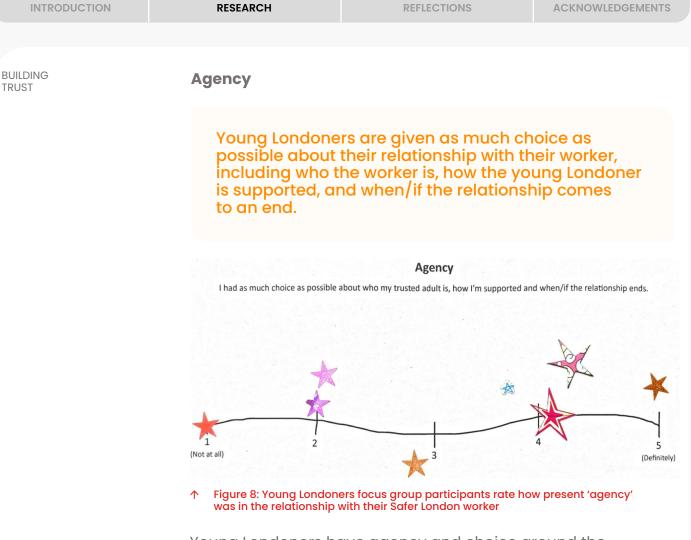
This report will draw on evaluation evidence collected to understand the extent to which these are present in Safer London's work, and the impact that they have on the development of trusted relationships between practitioners and young Londoners, particularly those impacted by violence and/or exploitation.

Young Londoners' perceptions of which principles are present in their support from Safer London (n=3)



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 $\Lambda$   $\,$  Figure 7: Young Londoners' perspectives on framework principles



Young Londoners have agency and choice around the support that they receive from Safer London workers. This can communicate to young Londoners that this support is different from that which they might receive from other practitioners such as social workers or teachers, allowing them to build trusting relationships with Safer London practitioners even if they have had negative experiences with other professionals in the past.

This agency can be particularly important for young Londoners who have been impacted by violence and/or exploitation, and feel that they do not have control over many things in their life.

However, young Londoners have limited agency in terms of who their trusted adult is at Safer London, and when the relationship ends. While this can allow young Londoners opportunities to work alongside practitioners with different perspectives and experiences, and ensures that the service has the capacity for more young Londoners who may benefit from the support offered, this reduces the agency young Londoners feel they have over the relationships they build with practitioners.

Young Londoners did not feel that having agency over the identity of their worker was as important as having agency over the length of the relationship.

TRUST

Practitioners we interviewed felt that the lack of agency around who young Londoners work alongside does not have a negative impact on trust.

One practitioner spoke about how pairing young Londoners with a worker that they might not have chosen themselves could potentially have a positive impact on that young person, by making space for them to build a relationship with someone who they perhaps didn't believe that they would get on well with.

"

I'm just thinking of a couple of examples where a young person may have verbalized that they only want to work with someone of a particular race or a particular gender or whatever, and actually they've worked with the opposite. And actually that's worked really well because through that you can actually challenge some of those stereotypes and those views. So sometimes even if a young person would say 'I only want to work with a man'. Well, maybe actually you need to work with a woman to try and explore that a bit.

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

This perspective was supported by a family member who took part in the community focus group.

They told us that initially their child hadn't wanted to engage with the Safer London worker allocated to them because of the gender of the worker, however after having the opportunity to meet the worker and discuss support, the young person became more open to working with someone they had not chosen.

#### "

When Safer London came in and he had to [change who was supporting him], he wouldn't let go of [his previous worker]. He wanted him, he didn't want Safer London, because [their worker] was a lady... The first thing he said, 'I'm not speaking to her'. So [both workers] came in and they had a meeting with him and that was when he let go of the other youth worker and started working with Safer London.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

>

One interviewee reflected on how increasing young Londoners' agency in who they work with could potentially have a positive impact on how listened to young Londoners felt.

"

I guess that if the young person did have more of a say in it from the outset, it might immediately help in terms of building that trust from the outset and it might give them immediate permission to understand that their voice is being heard.

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

Similarly, one of the parents who took part in the focus group spoke about how giving young Londoners agency over the support they receive could be particularly important for young Londoners who had been impacted by violence or exploitation, and might not feel that they have agency over many other things in their life.

#### "

My daughter's control was taken from her. Everything. She felt her whole life had been taken from her... I definitely think it's a major factor of [building trust,] allowing them to control who it is that they speak with and see on a weekly basis. And if they don't feel that they're comfortable with that person, then they can turn around and say 'I'm not comfortable talking with you. I'd like somebody else'. It's giving them that option as well as the control.

FAMILY FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Of the three young Londoners who took part in the survey, one strongly agreed that they had no choice over the worker who supported them, and the other two felt that they did have a choice.

One young person who took part in the survey reported that they didn't see how agency was important to trust.

#### "

"[I think this is the least important principle because] I don't think agency has anything to do with building trust.

YOUNG LONDONERS SURVEY RESPONDENT

One young person spoke about how their readiness to receive support meant that they were open to working with any Safer London worker who was matched with them.

#### "

I just really wanted help, so I wanted to accept [the worker I was introduced to] either way... [I was thinking] 'I don't feel like I'm going anywhere, I need to start trying to figure life [out]'. That's why I started accepting help from [my Safer London worker].

#### YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

However, agency over the length of the relationship was something that several young Londoners in the focus group felt was more important.

Two young Londoners spoke about how they wouldn't have chosen for the relationship to end when it did as they found the transition to less support hard. One young person said they returned to pre-support behaviours as the relationship wasn't long enough to let them feel like they could change their habits.

#### "

I don't think I was ready for [the relationship to end] either just because I went straight back to what I would do... the help wasn't done. It was good while I was there... But yeah, I think definitely should have maybe [had] a deeper evaluation to see if I was ready for [the support to finish].

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Agency over other aspects of their support such as where and when sessions were held made a difference to young Londoners and is present in Safer London's work.

The majority (24 of 28) of practitioners who took part in the survey stated young Londoners have a say in the support they receive from Safer London, and that this has a positive impact. Two of the three young survey respondents also felt that they had a say in when and where they meet with their Safer London worker.

#### "

Our sessions are the only times he has left his house in the last few months, because he was given some control of where and when and what we did.

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

Most of the workers who took part in interviews spoke about how they give young Londoners agency over the goals that workers and young Londoners work towards in sessions.

Two interviewees spoke about how they use the Safer London outcomes tool to co-create objectives with young Londoners, leading to increased ownership and buy-in.

This also demonstrates to young Londoners that the support they receive from their Safer London worker differs from support provided by other services and practitioners they may have encountered.

#### "

Initially, or within the first couple of sessions, I might suggest on the back of us getting to know each other, that we look at a list of topics that could be useful over the coming weeks or months... I think it aids trust. I think again, because it's done quite early on, it makes them realise that actually they do have an input in this and their voice is being heard.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

#### "

I make it very clear from the outset that I'm not the police, I'm not social services, it is all on their terms.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

## **CASE STUDY:** Young Londoner Marijay and Safer London worker Amy

#### Themes: Agency and purpose

Amy is a specialist emotional wellbeing worker who has worked for Safer London for less than a year, offering long and short-term services to children and young Londoners. Marijay, a keen athlete from southeast London, was referred to Amy when she was coming to the end of year 9 in June 2023

#### "

Keeping your feelings inside you is like a balloon, you fill yourself up and up and up until everything is going to pop, so I realised it's good to let some of that air out!

#### 'MARIJAY' YOUNG LONDONER CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT

Their first few meetings were held at school, and when the summer holidays started, they organised to meet at a local coffee shop. They would work together for a total of 10 weeks, demonstrating an effective example of a short-term intervention.

Over the first few sessions, both Amy and Marijay admitted it was awkward as they got to know one another. But it was the simple things that helped make things more comfortable: Marijay has a sweet tooth and enjoyed having a cookie with hot chocolate. She thought that Amy was kind and genuine, which helped her relax quickly into opening up and being herself.

Amy posed questions: What were their goals? What kind of things did they want to achieve in life? What did Marijay want to accomplish from receiving support from Safer London? She decided that, after some challenges she had faced in her family and school lives, they would focus on trying to develop healthier relationships, communication skills and boundaries.

To help Marijay deal with her busy thoughts, and be more present, they did mindfulness exercises, but because they were in public she didn't like breathing exercises; she preferred playing games or closing her eyes and counting her teeth.

"I could tell that I could trust Amy because she really listened to what I was saying about my feelings. She didn't force me to try and be happy if I was unhappy. If I was unhappy, she made me feel like I was being supported. I liked the comfort of knowing that she was there to help me."

>

Marijay appreciated that Amy made the sessions adaptable, too.

"I think we would adapt the sessions based on how we were feeling," recalls Amy. "Sometimes we were both a bit tired, or things would come up and we would feel a different way. And sometimes we would ditch serious topics to play games. Sometimes we would just talk, but if we weren't in the mood to talk, we'd do a quiz or something like that. I think we were good at changing, responding to each other."

They discussed risks that can come from being in different physical and online spaces.

"I learned to put myself first instead of caring about others all the time; to say no to people and tell someone when I'm uncomfortable. I became better at self-care. Even small things, like cleaning my room and doing my skin care routine, have helped me to love myself more. I'm good at things but sometimes I'm not consistent, so our meetings helped with that, too," says Marijay.

"Marijay is confident, or at least she presents as confident, but there are still things that she was very guarded about at first, like her feelings. She keeps things close to her chest. But she gradually got more and more open about her feelings as our meetings progressed," says Amy.

Marijay had some difficulties with a group of girls at school who were verbally and physically abusive to her at the end of year 9, even though they used to be her friends.

But through her conversations with Amy, and her growth across the summer holidays where she became determined to surround herself with positive people, she returned to year 10 and put distance between herself and the girls. They even approached her to apologise for what they'd done.

Marijay now feels like other people at school have started to see her as more mature and stronger in herself, as she has got better at judging people around her.

"I know who's real and not real, you know what I mean? So I feel like I hang out with better people, who would actually encourage me to do better, encourage me to do good. Deep down, I know that I'm better, and I don't really care what everyone else thinks. As long as I know, I know."

On reflection, Amy and Marijay realise that they clicked most and were able to develop trust because of their shared values and their sense of humour. Marijay says that she thinks a mentor is good when they are truthful, they listen and they can give advice.

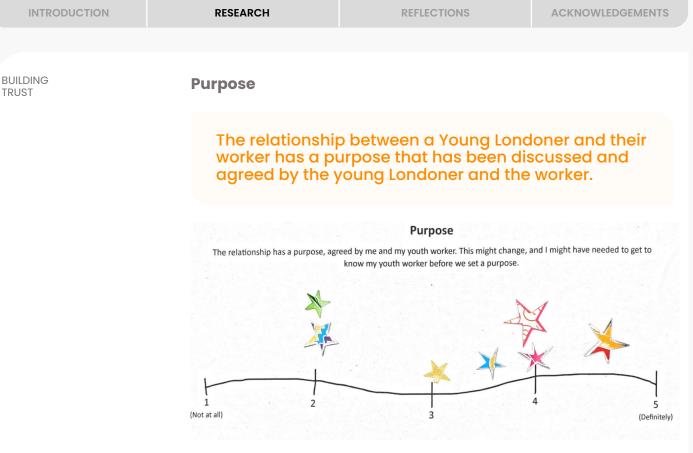
Marijay would recommend Safer London and their workers to other young Londoners by explaining her own journey of growth; how she was at the beginning and how she is now, even though it's not even been very long.

#### "

A youth worker like Amy is not there to judge you, they are there to help you improve on yourself. And it'll be fun and relaxed. And you can get free food and drink, you can never go wrong with that! You can talk about whatever you want.

Don't view them as your friend, because they're your youth worker, but view them as someone that you can trust, 100%

'MARIJAY' YOUNG LONDONER CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT



↑ Figure 9: Young Londoners focus group participants rate how present 'purpose' was in the relationship with their Safer London worker

The support provided to young Londoners by Safer London workers is designed to work towards clear purposes and objectives. Young Londoners, their families and practitioners believed that having a shared purpose was key to supporting young Londoners to make progress, and that this purpose should be co-designed by workers and young Londoners together.

By linking purpose to agency young Londoners feel an increased sense of ownership and buy-in to their support, which increases the trust they have in their worker.

However, not all young Londoners felt that this was present throughout their relationship with a Safer London worker.

Having your say as well is really important because this is about myself..

"

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

RESEARCH

BUILDING TRUST

All the workers we interviewed spoke about how they work with young Londoners to identify how each young person would like to be supported.

Most interviewees used Safer London's outcomes score tool or assessment tool with each young person at the beginning of their work together to help the young person identify where they might benefit from support.

#### "

Usually when using the outcome scores, we explain the areas of intervention, also ask the young person where they think their greatest need is at the moment... Internally, we do a needs assessment that has five categories, and sometimes I just go through them with the young people for them to tell me how they think they're doing on each one of those categories and what they think would be helpful to them... In that way we set some targets and they will be aware of what kind of topics we'll be talking about and discussing.

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

While not all focus group participants felt that purpose had been that present in their relationship with their Safer London worker, young Londoners also believed that purpose was important in their work with practitioners, and saw this as very linked to their sense of agency about the support they received.

#### "

There needs to be [purpose, and] it's like a two-way street. It's not just what one person thinks.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

For one young survey respondent, purpose was the most important principle for building trust with their worker. Another young Londoner felt that knowing the purpose of working with their Safer London practitioner was useful for them to know how to make the most out of the support available.

What impact does it have if you don't feel like there's a purpose in your relationship?

You might get confused as to what you actually want out of your youth worker

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Two family members spoke about how purpose gave relationships between young Londoners and practitioners a unique identity: the informal nature of their work together meant that a purpose was necessary to ensure that the trusting relationship was boundaried and did not feel like a friendship.

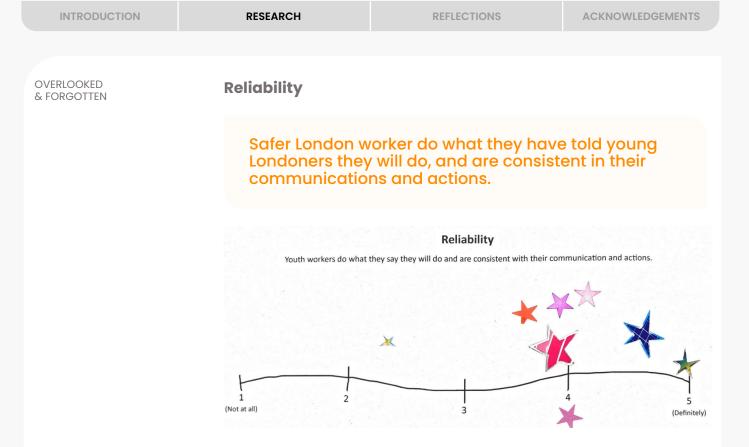
[Workers] have to be professional. Cannot be like a mate

So you feel like by having purpose it is a more professional relationship?

To an extent... Teenagers will build a foundation with somebody and they'll look at it, especially [with] a youth worker, they'll look at it as a friendship. They won't look at it in a professional manner as yourself [the researcher], all right, in a meeting.

Because [the relationships is] not so formal. Even if it's professional, it's more informal [than other relationships].

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS



### Figure 10: Young Londoners focus group participants rate how present 'reliability' was in the relationship with their Safer London worker

Safer London's workers do their best to be there for young Londoners and to do what they have told young Londoners they will do. Young Londoners and workers all felt that being reliable is vital to building trust and is something that is present in Safer London's work.

For young Londoners who may not have positive relationships with many other adults in their lives, consistent support from their Safer London worker demonstrates that there are people who care about them.

#### "

Having a reliable person to speak to shows that there's people in the world that care about you and that's a really big one for me because it shows you that you're important to at least one person.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

#### "

It's just really important to be that adult, to be that professional that shows up each time, shows up with a smile on their face and is there when they said they'll be there... That's one thing that I really, really make sure I do. So if I say, 'Right, I'm going to see you later today at three o'clock', I will be there at 2:50, I'll be there, I'll be early for you.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

OVERLOOKED & FORGOTTEN One practitioner felt that reliability was not only key to building trust, but needs to be in place from the beginning of a relationship. Being reliable and showing that they would do what they said they would do is what allows workers to demonstrate that they are trustworthy to young Londoners.

## "

Quite a few of the girls that I work with... they won't really open up to you until they really know you and until they really know you are there to stay... They may not be able to rely on many other people to be that constant in their life, so I think it's making sure that you're doing that [that is so important].

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

Some practitioners we spoke to told us that this is especially important when supporting young Londoners who have been impacted by violence and/or exploitation, as it models a way of relating to and working alongside others that young Londoners might not have experienced that often.

By having a reliable adult supporting them, young Londoners can experience stability that may not be present in other aspects of their lives.

## "

A young person I used to work with... he was like, 'You're always the same. You're always consistent. Every day you're the same and you have the same energy'. I think it's important because [young Londoners we support] are used to a lot of chaos in their lives and people that are maybe emotionally all over the place, mental health, trauma, all of that stuff. So I think just being stable and making sure your emotions are stable in front of them helps them trust you and feel secure.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

The majority (7) of young Londoners who took part in focus group activities and all young Londoners (3) who took part in the survey told us that reliability was present in their relationships with Safer London workers.

One young Londoner explained that it was important for them to know that their worker would do what they had said they would do in between sessions, and that this reassured them that they could continue to trust their worker.

However, in interviews, several practitioners spoke about how logistical issues, such as travel, the times they are at work and their high caseloads, could reduce their ability to demonstrate reliability for their young Londoners.

The impact of logistical challenges on workers' ability to be reliable was also discussed in section 3.1, and is important to consider alongside evidence on the importance placed on reliability by workers and young Londoners.

## "

I had my cases all going great and then school started again and they're all over the place and I'm having to figure out, 'Right, well I can't see you then, but I'll have to see you...' So just working around their timetable and their life and then our life, meetings here, meetings there, and doing the nine-to-five model is a bit difficult.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

38

#### **CASE STUDY:** Young Londoner Mya and Safer London worker Rachel

#### Themes: Reliability, purpose and agency

When Rachel, a London-based worker originally from the north of England, and Mya, from the south-east coast, first organised to meet in June 2022, it was initially a slow start. Mya, who lives with her mum and younger siblings, had been referred to Safer London by her social worker. She had been through a lot that made it hard for her to trust people.

## "

Rachel's really taught me a lot of good things about relationships. Now I'm more aware of men and how they should treat women with respect.

#### 'MYA' YOUNG LONDONER CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT

Over the preceding months, older men from her local area had been taking exploiting her. She'd been let down by services and staff at her school, who had failed to identify and challenge what became clear to Rachel was a growing problem that needed fixing immediately. At first, they met at a local coffee shop once-a-week during the summer holidays.

"Honestly, I thought I needed a bit of help, so I put my trust in Rachel," Mya says. She found Rachel's accent comforting and enjoyed trying to impersonate it; she liked that Rachel had a sense of humour, so their sessions weren't always just serious, but could be fun, too. "Then I just came out with more and more of how the men and the people that were pretending to be my boyfriend, but were just using me for things. So that's why I wanted support. It would make me depressed that I had no support."

Mya liked the fact that, unlike social workers she'd spoken to in the past, she felt that her conversations with Rachel were secure. She could open up about her life without worrying about the information being used in a way that she didn't want. Sometimes, because of all the things going on, Mya wouldn't be able to make sessions, but she appreciated the fact that Rachel didn't take it personally and persevered with their meetings anyway.

"Some social workers say they don't spread information about you. Some of them do, some of them don't. But I actually trusted Rachel the most. She's a very nice woman. Literally, I appreciate Rachel being there for me and helping me through things. She would listen to me and tell me things like things that would make me happy. That's how I gained trust with her, because I actually spoke out and told her everything. Now I feel better about myself. I don't think about any of the men anymore. I'm very aware of relationships now," says Mya.

"It was important to listen to Mya and let her lead and share what she wanted to share, and not push for any more information than she was willing to give, and just give her the time to do that," says Rachel. "Whether that meant us just meeting and talking, having a nice drink in Starbucks or some sweets in college, just those little things to not put any pressure on her to do anything. And then I think just honesty and being open is an important part of a relationship, and letting Mya know that I am here for her, and that whatever she needs for help and support within the time we're working together, I can provide that.

So it's about being consistent for me. I know, from being a young person myself, what I would need from somebody in order to build that trust, so I just try to mirror that within my own young people. Mya's been very adaptable to all the changes that we've had to go through in order for us to work together."

When Mya started college in September 2022, she and Rachel started holding their meetings there. But it quickly transpired that other students in the community had become aware of them.

The perpetrators who had abused Mya caught wind of the fact she was opening up to Rachel about what they'd done. A girl was coerced into taking a video of Mya, which was sent around the school and played in class. Mya was courageous enough to tell Rachel immediately. It showed Rachel the extent to which Mya's college was failing to safeguard her. What should have been a place of learning was a source of harm. The college did not have an effective policy in place for dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), nor did they know how to support a victim of it like Mya. It made the support Safer London was providing her even more important.

By Christmas 2022, their original meeting place of the coffee shop had become compromised, too, when one of the perpetrators discovered they would hold sessions there. So they switched to speaking remotely.

The consistency, trust and adaptability that Rachel and Mya developed in their dialogue together held firm, despite the barriers and complications that arose. Rachel says that a key reason for why their meetings continued to take place was because of Mya's mother, who recognised the benefit of Rachel's presence in Mya's life and was a big advocate for the support provided by Safer London. She made sure Mya attended as many sessions as possible.



"Mya's case has come with an abundance of things I've been able to learn about," says Rachel. "Knowing Mya so well through her being so open with me and working together for a long period of time, I'm very aware of her needs. And so I'm able to then articulate that a lot better to professionals to ensure that she's getting the support that she needs and requires."

Mya is proud about all the things she learned from Rachel; she is able to articulate them clearly and believes she has been putting them into practice in her own life to make herself more safe. She has learned how to put more boundaries in place when she communicates with people over the phone, and has become passionate about healthy relationships.

## "

Now I know how to think about what makes an appropriate relationship. There should be no abusive relationships with men, because it's cruel. I feel like some men are taking advantage.

I learned about relationships and how men should treat women. I learned about women's rights and how women can get groomed. Rachel's taught me about how to support women, about what women in abusive relationships can do to get out of them.

'MYA' YOUNG LONDONER CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT

Mya would recommend that other young Londoners who need support in their life should put their trust in Safer London. She says she has since learned to identify other adults to trust through her work with Rachel. It has had a ripple effect in the rest of her life.

Rachel and Mya had their last weekly session in April 2023, but they keep in touch. Rachel is proud of how far Mya has come.

"Mya has been through a lot and I know how difficult it is for her to trust people," Rachel says. "Although we've talked a lot about trusting me and youth work in general, I think it's also about what Mya has gained for herself through this journey. There's a lot of strength that she has gained, a lot of resilience. She has regained confidence and taken control back in her life, and she needs to give herself credit for that."

INTRODUCTION	RESEARCH	REFLECTIONS	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
BUILDING TRUST	Relatability		
	Young Londoners are able to see experiences or identities they have in common with their worker, allowing them to better relate to each other.		
	<b>Relatability</b> Me and my youth worker have an experience or identity in common that means we are able to relate to each other.		
			4

(Not at all)

↑ Figure 11: Young Londoners focus group participants rate how present 'relatability' was in the relationship with their Safer London worker

3

Relatability, in the context of trusted relationships between young people and adult practitioners, was not particularly present in the evidence we reviewed when creating the framework for trusted relationships.

However, the young Londoners who took part in the participatory sessions and stress tested the framework principles felt that it was vital to developing trust. They told us that it is not about workers and young Londoners being the same, but that instead it's about having an experience or identity in common that allows young Londoners to feel that their worker understands them and can empathise with some of their perspectives or experiences.

(Definitely)

BUILDING TRUST Young Londoners felt that having a worker they could relate to was beneficial in building trust together, but did not always feel that relatability had been present in their relationships with Safer London workers.

REFLECTIONS

Workers believed that relatability was important, and that Safer London's workers often do share identities and experiences with young Londoners, but were not clear on how they would go about sharing commonalities with the young Londoners they support.

Young Londoners who took part in focus group activities felt that relatability was important for building trust, as it allows young Londoners to feel understood and can make space for humour and fun in sessions together.

## "

If a youth worker is similar to you and you have similar backgrounds, I feel like you'll click more because they'll understand why you are going through the stuff you're going through or why you do the stuff that you do and why you feel like you need certain stuff for validation.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

I feel like just being able to joke around and just the little stuff like that, it helps ease tension...

And is the joking easier if you've got stuff in common?

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, 100%. Yeah, because my worker wasn't too much older than me. Well obviously she was, but I mean comparing to other workers that I have worked with in the past... they've been a lot older and she was quite young.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

One young Londoner told us that working alongside a practitioner, who shared aspects of the young person's identity that had not always been accepted or welcomed in other spaces, helped to increase their confidence and provided a positive role model the young person could relate to.

"

"[My worker] helped me with my confidence and made me feel comfortable being a young Black lesbian in this town... [I] didn't know if people was going to accept that. So my confidence went really high, obviously because we had similar backgrounds.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Not all young Londoners agreed on the importance of relatability. Of the three young Londoners who took part in he survey, one told us that to them relatability was the most important of the framework principles, but two believed it was the least important.

## "

"[I think this is the most important principle because] it makes me feel less isolated... [My worker at Safer London] made me feel like I'm not alone."

YOUNG LONDONERS SURVEY RESPONDENT

## "

"[I think this is the least important principle because] U don't always need to relate just understand.

YOUNG LONDONERS SURVEY RESPONDENT

BUILDING TRUST The majority (22) of practitioner survey respondents believed that young Londoners who access support from Safer London work alongside practitioners they can relate to, and that this has a positive impact on trust.

REFLECTIONS

However, young Londoners who took part in focus groups did not agree that relatability had been present in many of their relationships with Safer London workers (Figure 11, above).

In interviews, practitioners varied in how comfortable or confident they felt sharing things that they had in common with young Londoners, or aspects of who they are as people outside of their role as a worker.

This lack of agreement in what could be shared resulted in some workers feeling hesitant to share their identities or experiences with young Londoners, and some also felt that young Londoners might not want to know more about their workers.

## "

It is important to show that you are not a robot. It is important to have that boundary with them, but it's also important to show your vulnerable side... There definitely is a boundary, [for example] I don't tell any of my young people how old I am, sorry. Even though some of them ask. Maybe I might tell them by the end of our intervention, but I just think there's certain information and certain things you just wouldn't tell a young person.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

## "

In my experience... most [young Londoners] aren't that interested [in my identities or experiences]... It's very much about them and they recognize that and that's what we're there for. They're not that interested.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

Two interviewees spoke about how a sharing a minoritised or marginalised identity might become more important, as sharing a culture that might not be widely understood or that experiences discrimination can support an increased understanding of each other's perspectives.

## "

I'm obviously of an Indian background, I work with another young Indian girl. And I think it's just for her to have that person that looks like her a little bit and looks like her and have the same family background, I think it's really important to identify with that culture, I think.

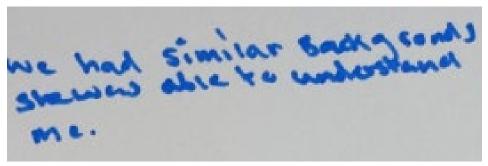
PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

## "

I think young people would maybe be more willing to trust more readily [if they're supported by people with similar identities]. There are certain experiences and situations that are just read. So if you meet someone that's Black, you can pretty much guarantee that they're going to understand what it's like to be a victim of racism at some point.

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

For one young Londoner in the focus group, these commonalities in background led to an understanding between the worker and young person, which helped them to feel that they could trust their worker more (Figure 12).



↑ Figure 12: Image from timeline produced by a young Londoners focus group participant saying "We had similar background. She was able to understand me."

## **CASE STUDY:** Young Londoner Naomi and Safer London worker Henna

#### Themes: Relatability and purpose

When Henna first met Naomi, she'd been referred to a long-term service with Safer London, having already been engaged in their short-term service. It was July 2021, when Naomi was on her summer holidays between year 9 and 10 at school, and they would work together for the best part of a year, up until spring 2022.

## "

I think I'm more street smart now. I know what to look for in a person, whether it's a friend or in a relationship. I'm more aware of people's actions and I've gained self-confidence.

#### 'HENNA' YOUNG LONDONER CASE STUDY PARTICIPANT

"I think Henna's understanding helped a lot," remembers Naomi. "She was very in touch with the youth. She understood how we think and stuff. She was never too formal, never intimidating. I never thought that I had to act a certain way around her. She was very welcoming and non-judgemental. But the same way, she would also hold me to account and make sure that I'm doing well, because she knows that I know better than to be immature."

Naomi expressed to Henna that she wanted to talk and learn more about boundaries around sex and consent. They would meet to hold structured, formal conversations about these themes, but would also veer into relaxed conversations about life and values.

"We were focusing on healthy relationships, safety, self-esteem, growing confidence, thinking about self-worth and boundaries," says Henna. "We had sessions every single week, and Naomi would always turn up and look forward to the sessions, which was really positive and uplifting. It was uplifting for me, and I think it felt like that for Naomi, too. We looked forward to our sessions."

"We would talk about sex and consent, and talk about the capacity and freedom to give consent," adds Henna. "Often, Naomi would know and understand without me saying it. We were doing that kind of work to embed in Naomi's mind what was appropriate, what was inappropriate, what was suitable, what was not suitable. And that was the basis for grounding her and her confidence and her self-esteem, and being able to reaffirm those boundaries to her peers and her friends.

I think Naomi shared the information that we learned together with her friends as well. I used to hear her putting it into practice, which was amazing. And then that developed into how to keep yourself safe, and what you should look out for, and what are healthy relationships around you, and what are not healthy relationships. And then it progressed into: how can you do better for yourself? How can you continue succeeding in school? Why is school important? What do you want for yourself? Talking about aspirations, and Naomi has so many aspirations, it was easy to do that work."

Naomi holds a passion for writing lyrics and performance arts, and in one of their sessions she decided she wanted to write a spoken word piece about school life, which Henna helped her with. Naomi still has the piece of writing in her notebook, and hasn't shown anyone, but it remains evidence of how safe and trusting their dialogue together became. She is able to look back at it as a form of expression that they were able to create in partnership.

"I think from before I knew about Safer London, I was always sceptical or just too lazy to get to know adults, or to talk about my feelings with adults. And even with Henna, when we first met, I was a bit...I feel like I was a bit distant. But then slowly I warmed up to her, and it was easier to enjoy our sessions."

"I love all the young people that I work with, but Naomi really sticks out for me," smiles Henna. "She's just incredible. And I say this to her all the time, because a lot of my young people that I have worked with aren't as confident as she became, or don't know how to progress as she did, and aren't in school still. Everyone's circumstances are different, but I was always in awe of how much Naomi did, because I can't do half of that stuff! She can act, can dance, she can sing, she's good at art, and she's so articulate. And although Naomi said she doesn't like writing, she'd write so much in our sessions."

At first they met every week, later reducing their meetings to every fortnight, working towards a positive closure. Henna felt that Naomi would be great to get involved in Safer London's VIP (voice, influence and participation) service, as a young champion for the organisation, so suggested it to her.

"Naomi's got so much to give, and I knew that she'd be an amazing person for what the service is. It's where we have young people embedded to help develop and give a voice to Safer London, because at the end of the day, Safer London is young person-centred and led," adds Henna.

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Naomi trusted Henna that it would be a good idea. They had a joint meeting with the person who runs the VIP group and the fact that Henna had recommended it meant that Naomi had the confidence to stick with it. She says that she wouldn't have even thought about it the year before, because she was too shy, but she felt confident to try a new thing.

Henna and Naomi both agree that being keen to learn new things and passionate about what they do — Henna as a mentor, Naomi as a performing artist — meant they clicked.

Naomi is clear on the barriers to why many young Londoners don't easily trust practitioners and organisations like Safer London. But she feels like being paired with someone who is trustworthy and relatable, like she was with Henna, can change someone's life. She has taken the learnings and confidence she has gained to people in her social network.

"I think lots of people, they trust their friends a lot. They don't realise that having adults around them can help, and that they should trust certain adults when they're in certain situations," she says. "I tell them that Safer London isn't like any other service. Obviously, they'll do the same type of things, but their mentors are different. I'd say they're a lot better, they're a lot more skilled, and because the company is youth-led, mostly, the service is better."

"I think it's just about being really patient, starting off slow," reflects Henna, on how to be an effective mentor or worker. "And my main thing is about being person-led and person-centred. It was important to meet where Naomi wanted to meet, to meet at a time she wanted to, if I could facilitate that. I do that with all my sessions, because otherwise they're not going to be beneficial.

It's also just taking time to get to know the person, letting them know that you're a real person. Play some games where they can learn about me and some of my life to see that I'm not just a professional, I'm actually human as well. I have either gone through stuff and know about stuff. I am happy to talk about things, to a certain extent, just to let the young person know that I can relate and I do understand, that I'm not just doing it to tick a box or because it's just a job. It's because I actually really enjoy it."

## "

I feel like most people that I know, they're not very selfaware, so they'll think that they don't need help, or they don't need someone to talk to you," she reflects. "And some of them don't believe that having someone to talk to will actually help them a lot...maybe they've had past mentoring but it wasn't for them, or they didn't enjoy it, or it just wasn't good enough. My friend said that she had counselling and it didn't help her at all. It just made everything worse. Basically, after that, she lost faith in any kind of service.

#### **Genuineness and Congruence**

#### Safer London workers are authentic with young Londoners. Their internal thoughts and emotions align with what they do and say to young Londoners.

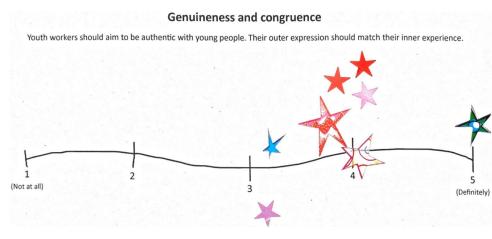


Figure 13: Young Londoners focus group participants rate how present 'genuineness and congruence' were in the relationship with their Safer London worker

When workers are able to demonstrate genuineness and congruence with the young Londoners they support, young Londoners feel more able to trust them.

If young Londoners do not feel that a worker is being genuine and congruent then this becomes a barrier to trust. Young Londoners felt that it is important for workers to demonstrate genuineness and congruence in their work with them, and that this is something that was mostly present in their relationships with Safer London workers.

While workers also believed that it is important to be genuine with young Londoners, many interviewees felt that maintaining professional boundaries at times restricted how genuine they felt they could be.

For young Londoners who took part in the survey and focus group activities, practitioners being genuine allowed them to feel that the worker cared for them, and helped young Londoners to understand expectations around honesty and openness within their work together, helping young Londoners to build trust with their worker.

## "

"[I think this is the most important principle because] it's nice to have someone that actually cares.

YOUNG LONDONERS SURVEY RESPONDENT

Two young Londoners told us that if they believed a worker was not being genuine with them, they would feel less motivated to be genuine with their worker in return.

Therefore, genuineness and congruence are not only principles for building trust, but can become a barrier to trust if young Londoners do not believe that this principle is present in the support they receive.

I feel like to trust someone, [they] need to speak up. Because I can't read your mind, you can't read mine. So you'll have to speak about how you feel, what you're thinking, everything. Because if you don't, then I don't know what you expect from me, you don't know what I expect from you.

Do you feel like for you to be able to share bits of you, you need someone to share bits of them?

Yeah, yeah. And they need to share they're a trustworthy person, because if they're not, then I don't know what you expect from me because you're not going to get nothing.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

## "

I reciprocate energy. I feel like if she wasn't [genuine] then I wouldn't've been [with her].

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Practitioners we interviewed spoke about the importance of talking to young Londoners about how they felt, and how a level of openness in their response to difficult situations could show young Londoners that their own emotional responses to situations are valid.

## "

If they share something concerning or something where they've been the victim of a crime, showing that compassion and to an extent, [that] it's okay for you to also feel upset about it [is important]. [The young person has] only told me and it's affecting me, so it's okay that you think this is something [they] might feel sad about.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

OVERLOOKED & FORGOTTEN However, most interviewees spoke about the importance of maintaining professional boundaries with young Londoners, in order to maintain an effective working relationship.

Several interviewees told us that when they have an emotional response to something a young person has shared with them, they aim to share only the parts of their response that feel helpful for that young person's development or understanding of the situation.

"

It's difficult to share your genuine emotions [with a young person]. I think it's important to be able to hold onto your genuine emotions if it's inappropriate and maybe just share what you need to share, and share what is useful and helpful in order to get your point across or in order to empathise.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

## "

You can't always share everything, can you? Because it just wouldn't be helpful. So for example, this young person, when she was telling me about stuff that she'd experienced, I'm just like 'f-ck'. I just became really angry... [but] it would not be appropriate for me to say 'God, those people were complete a-seholes', or whatever.

#### PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

This limit to what workers feel they can share with young Londoners may be why the young Londoners who took part in focus group activities did not believe that genuineness and congruence was present in all of their support from Safer London workers (Figure 13). OVERLOOKED & FORGOTTEN

#### **Unconditional Positive Regard**

#### Safer London workers accept young Londoners as they are, the support they offer does not change, regardless of what a young Londoner might do or say.

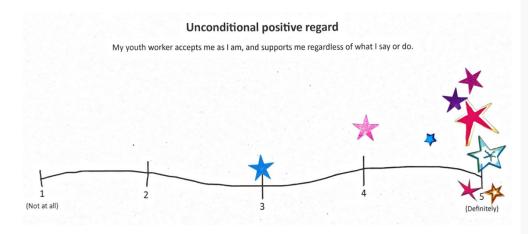


Figure 14: Young Londoners focus group participants rate how present 'Unconditional Positive Regard' was in the relationship with their Safer London worker

Unconditional positive regard is key to building and maintaining trusting relationships between workers and young Londoners at Safer London. Young Londoners believe that their workers will continue to support them regardless of what they say and do.

This maintains trust in that relationship, but also supports young Londoners to feel able to open up as they approach building relationships with other people.

Practitioners we interviewed were very familiar with the concept of unconditional positive regard. They told us that they believed it was vital for young Londoners to feel that they weren't being judged in order to open up more about things happening in their life.

## "

I think unconditional positive regard is very important. I think young people, it's really important for them not to feel judged, and if you're able to create that relationship then you'll get more out of them.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

Two practitioners spoke about times when they had needed to consciously consider the regard they held for a young person, for example where they may be complicit in exploiting other young Londoners, or taking part in illegal activities.

In both these examples, interviewees felt that it was not only vital to ensure that the regard for the young person did not change, but also provided a mechanism for them to give advice or support that challenged difficult behaviours.

#### "

Where young people ... might be a victim of exploitation ... they may end up grooming another young person. So they might be complicit in peer-on-peer exploitation or grooming. And then if the way you treat them changes based on whether you think they've done something themselves, that could be really problematic... You do have to be consistent in your regard for the young person there, essentially being a child and being a victim. That doesn't change.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

## "

"[Unconditional positive regard] has a massive impact on trust because if a young person came up to me and said, 'I've done this, this and this', and I was like, 'Oh my god, why did you do that?' and I reacted really badly, they're going to say, 'Oh, I'm not going to be telling her anything because she's just reacted really badly to me telling her this'. So you've got to be friendly with it, you've got to be nice about it. [As an example] one of my young persons bought cannabis into our session and I could smell it instantly and I was like, 'Right, I'm going to stop our session here because you are not safe. I'm not safe'. But the way I obviously said it, I wasn't telling [them] off, it was just like, 'Please don't ever bring that into a session again. You are putting both of us at risk'. And [they've] never done it since.

PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWEE

54

Young Londoners who took part in focus group activities spoke about a 'clean slate feeling' when discussing their understanding of unconditional positive regard.

All young Londoners felt that this clean slate feeling, where their workers treated them the same regardless of what they said or did, was vital in allowing them to feel that they could open up to their worker about things happening in their life.

"

I think that if my youth worker was not the same every time... a clean slate type thing,.. I would feel kind of judged because of some of the conversations we were having. She might have been thinking, 'oh you know what? I don't know'.... [My worker] was unconditionally positive. Even if I would tell her, 'Oh it just happened like yesterday'... I don't think it's a thing where she would look at me differently.

#### YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Most young Londoners who took part in focus group activities and most (2) who took part in the survey felt that their Safer London workers did demonstrate unconditional positive regard in their work together.

This not only affected their relationships with the worker but also affected how they felt that they might approach future relationships. One young Londoner told us that if they did not feel able to open up about aspects of their life without feeling judged by their worker, it would negatively impact how able they felt to open up to other people in the future.

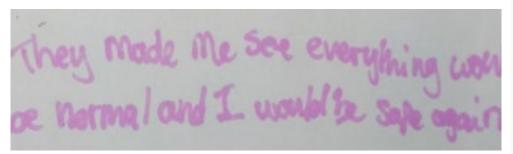
## "

"[If there wasn't a clean slate feeling] I'd be more closed up from that point almost to more people. Because you know how it feels when you're judged by someone but they don't know you, they don't know the real me? ... I don't want to feel that feeling again. So you just feel like the next person I meet, I won't express who I am. I just put my persona on.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

#### IMPACT OF TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS IN SAFER LONDON'S WORK

The evidence review completed for Safer London by CfEY earlier Developing a trusted relationship with a Safer London worker impacts young Londoners in two ways: changing how they approach situations in their life now, and the way that they approach future relationships.



↑ Figure 15: Image from timeline produced by a young Londoners focus group participant saying: "They made me see everything would be normal and I would be safe again."

Young Londoners who took part in focus group activities or the survey spoke about the positive impact of their relationships with Safer London workers.

Young Londoners told us that after working alongside Safer London practitioners, they often felt more confident in themselves, and felt better equipped to make choices about how they dealt with situations for themselves rather than their peers.

"

My youth worker made me feel confident in myself and I built up my self-esteem over the times that we had our sessions and I wouldn't be as confident as I am today without her... If I didn't trust her, I wouldn't have seen her as such a good person... As good of a person to have an impact on me as much as she did.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

## "

With my worker, [the change] was more about how I made a change in myself from thinking I needed to do certain stuff, as in to be cool or whatever. And she helped me change to someone who looks out for myself more than the validation of others.

YOUNG LONDONERS FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Two of the three young Londoners who took part in the survey said that the biggest change in their life since spending time with Safer London workers was being more open and able to talk more about issues they were facing, which helped them to change how they perceived different things happening in their life.

## "

[The biggest change in my life since spending time with Safer London workers is that] I've realised things about my life and I feel like I see things in a more optimistic way.

YOUNG LONDONERS SURVEY RESPONDENT

## "

Young people appreciate having a reliable and trustworthy person they can reach out to or share difficult experiences with. I believe it helps them develop a sense of not being alone and of being supported through the most difficult times.

#### PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

Family members of young Londoners supported by Safer London appreciated the relationships that had been built between Safer London workers and their children.

In some cases, these relationships provided young Londoners with an adult who they could go to for advice or guidance on matters they did not feel comfortable discussing with members of their family.

#### "

"[Trusting someone] makes [young Londoners] more secure. So if they don't trust you, they're a bit wary of what to say around you.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

So you feel like by having purpose it is a more professional relationship?

So if anything was to happen and they can't talk to even myself or another adult within the household, there's somebody that they can go to.

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

BUILDING TRUST Developing a trusting relationship allowed young Londoners to feel more open to trusting others in the future, but they also felt that if they weren't listened to or experienced barriers to trust this would put them off talking to other adults.

The young Londoners who took part in the survey generally had quite a low General Trust Score (scoring an average of 18.7 out of 30), but reported greater trust in practitioners at Safer London (scoring an average of 13.7 out of 15).

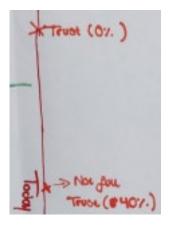


Figure 16: Image from timeline produced by a young Londoners focus group participant, showing how over time their level of trust changed from 0% to 40% As the young Londoners that Safer London support often have difficult relationships with other adults in their lives, such as social workers, police and, at times, family members, building a trusted relationship with a Safer London practitioner can transform the support that young Londoners feel able to receive in the future by demonstrating a positive working relationship.

Around a fifth (6 out of 22) of practitioner survey respondents reported that the biggest impact Safer London's work has is allowing young Londoners to develop a positive relationship with an adult.

"

Sometimes this is their only experience of a safe and boundaried relationship where they don't have to provide anything except their time.

PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

One practitioner survey respondent wrote that for some young Londoners, building trusting relationships with Safer London workers affected how young Londoners perceived and responded to other professionals.

## "

They became more confident in trusting professionals and working with them in order to achieve their goals.

PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESPONDENT

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Throughout this report, we have highlighted key areas of practice utilised by Safer London practitioners, some of the barriers they face, as well as factors that young Londoners and their families value.

#### STRENGTHS

Overall, Safer London practitioners recognise and rely on the strengths of the nature of their work to build and maintain trusted relationships. Workers at Safer London feel able to use their skills to respond to what young Londoners want or need, supporting them to build trusting relationships with each other.

A strength of Safer London's work is providing the space for workers to do this. Additionally, being able to design how they deliver work with young Londoners, adapting and being flexible to their needs, facilitates trust, enabling young Londoners to work together more easily, and therefore drives positive change in young Londoners' lives.

Although the degree of freedom of choice is limited, centring practice around young Londoners' **agency and choice** is a strength of Safer London's services. This agency can be particularly important for young Londoners who have been impacted by violence and/or exploitation, and who do not feel in control over many things in their lives.

This can communicate to young Londoners that this support is different from that which they might receive from other practitioners such as social workers or teachers, allowing them to build trusting relationships with Safer London practitioners, even if they have had negative experiences with other professionals in the past.

Having **relationships built around purpose**, with practitioners and young Londoners working towards clear objectives, is another key strength of Safer London practice.

Young Londoners, their families and practitioners believed that having a shared purpose, co-designed by workers and young Londoners together, was key to supporting young Londoners to make progress. By linking purpose to agency, young Londoners feel an increased sense of ownership and buy-in to their support, which increases the trust they have in their worker.

By being **reliable and genuine**, Safer London practitioners work towards repairing young Londoners' trust in relationships with adults in their lives, and allowing young Londoners to feel heard and seen in their working relationship.

For young Londoners who may not have positive relationships with many other adults in their life, consistent support from their Safer London worker demonstrates that there are people who care about them; and the more genuine and congruent practitioners act towards young Londoners, the easier it is for young Londoners to trust them.

Finally, the **unconditional positive regard** underpinning Safer London workers' approach strengthens the relationships they build with young Londoners. Young Londoners believe that their workers will continue to support them regardless of what they say and do, maintaining trust in that relationship and supporting young Londoners to feel able to open up as they approach building relationships with other people.

#### Ways of working

Regarding Safer London's overarching strategy and practise, we found evidence of three key factors that support workers and young Londoners to build trust.

The first is **workload**. When practitioners feel their workload is manageable, they are able to dedicate as much time as necessary to building trusted relationships and supporting young Londoners. However, workload is seen as a key barrier to building trust when practitioners have more cases than they can manage. A manageable workload gives workers enough time to be present, to be reliable and to be supportive to the young Londoners they work with.

Second, Safer London's **safeguarding policies** were mentioned by some practitioners as supporting their work and how they build trust with young Londoners. It provides clear guidelines that help create boundaried relationships built on honesty, agency and trust.

Finally, most of the practitioners we spoke to had a clear understanding and agreement of **processes and practices that shape their work**. This suggests that Safer London's policies and ways of working are clear to team members, providing space for practitioners to work in a way that is tailored to the needs of the young Londoners they work with, while remaining aligned with Safer London's goals and objectives.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE**

Based on these findings, we are able to make recommendations that could help Safer London increase the impact of future delivery:

#### Relatability, genuineness and congruence

While not all young Londoners agreed relatability was vital to developing trust, most appreciated being able to relate to their workers and saw this as beneficial to building trust.

Some Safer London practitioners expressed difficulty in understanding how to be relatable to young Londoners without crossing lines or changing the nature of the professional relationship. In line with this, lack of genuineness came up as a barrier to trust. Workers think it is important to be genuine but do not always know how open they can be as a professional.

This suggests a need to find ways to support workers in knowing what is relevant and when to share it. More support or training around this might prove useful in scaffolding appropriate, genuine and professional responses.

#### Training

Linked to the previous point, there is scope to look into further training with the team.

Although practitioners did not agree on whether the training they had received had yielded positive or negative impact, it is important to explore with the team at Safer London which training workers find useful for building trust. Key questions to ask here include:

- How would further training in such areas support . building trust?
- Who has access to said training? •
- Are there styles or themes of training that are not helpful?

Based on some of our interviews, training on traumaresponsive practices was perceived as helpful in building trust, and Safer London should consider whether all practitioners are receiving regular training to maintain and improve their skills in this area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BUILDING TRUST

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE**

🔶 Time

Evidence suggests that time available for working together is treasured, and both practitioners and young Londoners expressed frustration at instances where a lack of time got in the way of their progress, or their relationship had to finish early.

We recommend increasing the period of time available to support young Londoners, beyond the standard 9-5, Monday to Friday model, and providing flexibility to continue with support if appropriate.

## Reliability

Linked to the previous recommendation, a lack of time impacts negatively on workers' ability to be reliable.

Some practitioners expressed frustration at having to cover large geographic areas in one day, and therefore having to cut sessions short to accommodate for travel. We suggest considering assigning workers a caseload within a smaller geographic area to reduce time travelling.

## Data about young Londoners

Finally, an issue around how much data or information about young Londoners is available to practitioners ahead of time emerged in our interviews.

Although some practitioners felt that having more information ahead of time would impact their ability to build trusted relationships from the start, one other practitioner mentioned that they would value having a clearer picture of young Londoners' likes, or communication preferences ahead of time.

# We recommend having a section in young Londoners' files with their likes or dislikes, which may support that initial meeting.

In parallel, when working with young Londoners who are high-risk, it is important that practitioners have enough information available to make a decision on whether meeting face-to-face or online might be more beneficial for them.

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## SAFER LONDON REFLECTIONS

Safer London is committed to strengthening our approach to building trusted relationships with young Londoners.

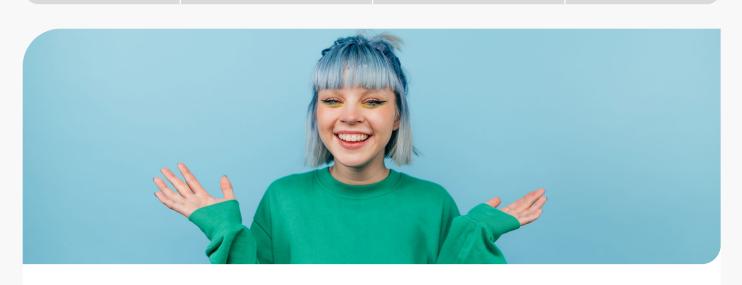
Trust is the foundation of effective support, and we are encouraged by the insights gained from both young Londoners and caseworkers as part of this evaluation.

While progress has been made - such as capping caseloads and assigning caseworkers to geographical clusters to reduce travel time - challenges like limited control young Londoners have in choosing their trusted adult and limited face-to-face time persist.

We are addressing these barriers by exploring extended working hours and refining case allocation. Additionally, we recognise the importance of giving young Londoners more agency in their support, including involvement in The new trusted relationship framework will guide caseworkers in building stronger connections, ensuring that every young Londoner feels supported, valued, and empowered.

Moving forward, we remain committed to refining our services based on these insights, making our support more responsive and trust driven.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We sincerely thank all the young Londoners, parents and carers who participated in the focus groups, contributed to the Pattern anthology creative sessions, and completed the research surveys.

We also extend our gratitude to the young Londoners and Safer London caseworkers who generously gave their time and shared their experiences of trust for the research case studies.

#### **SAFER LONDON**

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- Chyna-Mae Whyte, Participation and Development
  Ambassador
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- Terry Boyce, Interim co-CEO
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## **ABOUT SAFER LONDON**

Safer London works with young Londoners and families affected by violence and exploitation.

Through specialist one-to-one intervention, we are supporting young Londoners to move onto the positive futures they deserve. We put young Londoners at the centre of their support, focusing on them and their needs. By building strong, trusting relationships we gain an insight into their world, begin to understand what they need and together we find the best ways to keep them safe.

Understanding young Londoners' lives are shaped by the world in which they live, we work not only with them and their families, but also their peer networks and directly within the communities and places where they live and spend their time.

With a footprint in every borough in London, we build trusting, professional partnerships to embed our approaches and work towards achieving our vision of a city that is safer for all young Londoners who live here.

Safer London is a registered charity in England and Wales No. 1109444; and a company limited by guarantee No. 5190766. <u>www.saferlondon.org.uk</u>

## **ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

The Centre for Education and Youth is a think and action tank. We create connections, insights and actions that improve young people's childhoods and life chances.

Our vision is of a society that ensures all children and young people receive the support they need to have a great childhood and make a fulfilling transition to adulthood.

We work collaboratively with a large active network of organisations and individuals, breaking down divisions and bridging the gaps between sectors, policy makers and researchers. We shape debate, inform policy and change practices, so that all young people, but especially those most at risk of poor outcomes and marginalisation, thrive.

We are positive about the future and, as a team of teachers and youth workers, believe in the power of brilliant practitioners to realise the potential of all young people.

www.cfey.org

## **GET IN TOUCH**

To discuss potential partnerships or to commission our services, please email <u>bd@saferlondon.org.uk</u>

Information on our services, including criteria and how to make a referral, can be found on our website <u>www.saferlondon.org.uk</u>

For general enquiries please email info@saferlondon.org.uk



Understanding Trusted Relationships at Safer London

# saferlondon

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