

# Policy & Practice Postcard



Developing and Maintaining Relationships for Care-Experienced People - 2021 Roundtable

## A responsibility to connect

Children are born with the instinctive capacity to reach out and connect with their caregivers. Where caregivers are able to respond sensitively to children's communications and needs, the child will develop a sense of trust and engagement with caregiving adults. It is the responsibility of parents, families, communities, and systems therefore to be sensitively responsive and focussed on the emotional well-being, physical safety and indeed survival of the child. Every child and individual has a need and a right to experience consistent sensitive responses. A secure and sensitive relational set of experiences will create a sense of safety and opportunity that enables further connections with the world around a child. Connection is vital for human survival and research using attachment models has demonstrated how essential early relationships are in children's lives. It is the unequivocal responsibility of the social care system in its role as a 'corporate parent' to ensure the need for relationships that provides a sense of security is fulfilled for children and young people during their time in the care system and beyond.

This is one finding from the UCL Developing and Maintaining Relationships for Care-Experienced People 2021 Roundtable funded by UCL Public Policy - organised by Eva A Sprecher and chaired by Dr John Simmonds OBE from Coram BAAF.

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### Artist's Note:

In recent years, I've become increasingly interested in mythological accounts of orphans, foundlings and foster children, which often emphasise familial love in the face of difference. Since these stories are usually fantastical, the differences between caregiver and child are often exaggerated, as in the common motif of children adopted by animals, which inspired this image

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