

Research Newsletter

Peer Researcher Conference Update

Our peer researchers will be attending the ECSWR conference in Aberdeen in April!

They're looking forward to attending and are currently developing a presentation about their experiences of being peer researchers on the project.

What's next...

Over the next three months... Peer researchers will support work package 2:

- Peer researchers attending the Aberdeen conference in April (15th-18th).
- Completion of the rapid realist review analysis and the start of drafting the academic paper.
- The beginning of data collection in participating local authorities.

We will also hold our next advisory panel meeting on 25th March 2026.

Exploring the Role of Personal Advisors in Wales: A Co-Produced Study with Care Experienced Young People

February 2026 update - preparing for work package 2 (WP2)

Magic Moments Update

We've now developed the magic moments findings using Paulsen and Berg's typology:

- **Practical support**- Support with everyday, basic needs such as economic guidance, financial support, housing and employment.
- **Emotional support**- Having a genuine connection, beyond professional requirements from someone who loves and cares for you and is always there when you may need them.
- **Affirmational guidance**- The chance for an individual to receive guidance, advice and feedback, allowing them to self-evaluate and make rational decisions.
- **Participation support**- Individuals having the opportunity to make decisions for themselves, having control of their lives with the need to be independent, showing they are capable to manage on their own with someone guiding them.

Introducing the team



Elizabeth Payne
Placement student and research assistant
at CASCADE

Realist Review Update

Our review shows that what makes Personal Advisor support effective is not simply what support is provided, but how and when support is delivered. Across the research, consistent and reliable contact and emotionally attuned relationships are central. When young people experience professionals as genuinely caring, available, and persistent, they are more likely to feel "held in mind," less isolated, and more willing to seek help before difficulties escalate.

Our review highlights that high caseloads, time-limited services, and target-driven cultures can undermine relational continuity and leave emotional needs unseen. We are now clustering these findings into broader patterns to develop an initial theory of practice, which will be tested and refined through our upcoming data collection.

Overall, the evidence suggests that effective Personal Advisor practice combines sustained relational presence with flexible, holistic practical support, delivered in ways that prioritise trust, emotional safety, and preparation for independence.

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