

Get curious about the language of social care

Language is at the heart of how we understand one another. In social care, the words we choose do more than describe people and situations — they shape attitudes, influence decisions, and help define the culture of care itself.

Get Curious About the Language of Social Care shares the findings from a series of workshops bringing together people who draw on care and support, alongside professionals. Together, they explored how everyday words and phrases — often used without a second thought — can unintentionally create distance, reinforce labels, or shape expectations in limiting ways.

The report highlights how common terms, acronyms, and system language can depersonalise people's experiences, sometimes reducing individuals to categories or "cases". It also shows how labels — especially when applied repeatedly — can stick, influencing how people are seen and treated over time.

Importantly, this work is not about policing language or creating rigid rules. Instead, it invites a different approach: one rooted in curiosity. By pausing to reflect on the words we use — asking simple questions like "*Would I use this with my family?*" or "*Does this create a 'them and us' dynamic?*" — we can begin to shift towards language that is more human, respectful, and connected to real lives.

The report introduces practical ideas such as limiting acronyms, being mindful of labels, and creating space within teams and organisations to reflect on language together. It also presents the "Curiosity Ripple Effect", showing how small, personal changes in language can spread outward to influence teams, organisations, and the wider system.

Ultimately, this is a call to action. By becoming more aware of language, we can help build a culture of social care that reflects people's full identities, strengths, and possibilities — not just systems or labels.

Read the full report on the Inclusion North website [here](#) (Plain English and Easy Read versions available)