Case study 'Anya', evidence 5: Reflective account 2 - Reflecting on my feedback plan and the feedback received

I have been gathering feedback using the feedback plan I developed for around four months now. The feedback plan is generally working well, although I still find it difficult to ask women for feedback. Two examples of feedback have been particularly thought provoking for me:

Feedback from children
I talked to the children's workers about getting feedback from the children in the refuge. They suggested that I provide a photograph of myself - as the children may recognise me without necessarily being clear about my name. The children's workers then did an activity with the children using the photo and some craft activities. It was really touching when the children gave me their "sheets". It was interesting that some of the younger children had drawn pictures of what they think I do and some of the older children had written a few words. At first I wasn't sure about the value of asking the children for feedback as I don't do much direct work with them (as this is the children's workers' role) but I found the feedback very illuminating. It was interesting that the older children wrote that I helped their mum feel happier and so they liked me. This demonstrates to me that the impact of my work is much more wide ranging than I always recognise. One of the younger children drew a picture of me holding my arms out to stop a man getting near to a house - she told me later that I was stopping "bad men" from getting near to her and her sister and that made her feel safe. I was surprised by my emotional response to this as I drove home from work later that day - and recognise that this feedback has really enhanced my job satisfaction.

Feedback following a direct observation
After Marian had observed me in a one-to-one key working session, she asked the woman to about my communication. The feedback indicated that the woman rated my listening skills highly but that she thought I wasn't always clear in my verbal communication. I found this really useful feedback and felt confident enough to talk to the woman in our next key working session about how she felt I could improve my communication. She said that sometimes I explained things quite quickly and although I ask if she has understood everything at the end of the session she doesn't always feel that she can say that she hasn't understood something as her ex-partner always called her stupid and she worries that I will think she is stupid if she asks a question. So we agreed that at the end of each key working session we will go through what we have covered and that we will both say what we understood about the key areas of discussion. I found this feedback and the subsequent discussion really useful not only in improving my practice with this particular woman but also in improving the way that I structure key working sessions generally, which was something I was lacking confidence in previously.