

April 2020



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

18+ Care Leavers Newsletter

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Due to the Current Covid-19 situation we have been forced to cancel our next Conference, but don't worry, we'll be back soon with a new date for you!

1. Hello from 18+

Hello and welcome to the April newsletter. Before you start looking at all the interesting articles, useful info and uplifting stories – we just wanted to let you know that we are still here! The 18+ Care Leavers service is still running – from kitchens, lounges, garages and garden sheds all over Birmingham – we are working from home but very much in touch!

If you need help or advice, firstly phone your PA (18+ worker). If your PA is not available (some might be on annual leave or off sick), then phone the duty service on 0121 464 1229. You can call us for any kind of help – or even if you just want a chat.

We know this is a difficult time for some of you – you may be struggling with money, work, studying from home, feeling anxious or lonely – and we will do what we can to help you get through. So – read every article, make a note of useful links and numbers, get ideas, act on info rather than waiting and most of all – keep in touch

2. Birmingham Children's Trust- Covid 19 updates

3. Here is a [link](#) to Covid-19 updates on the Birmingham Children's Trust website. Check this [link](#) for updates as they get published.

3. Birmingham Children's Trust Resource Hub is Open

The Trust has created a Resource Hub – a venue that has essential supplies available for you if you absolutely need them. Contact your 18+ worker if you are struggling to get food or essential baby supplies such as nappies and formula. Food or supplies will be delivered to you directly from the Resource Hub, so you don't need to worry about coming out. Trust staff at the Resource Hub can also help you with emergency gas and electric payments. The Trust have also set up an additional support phone line if your 18+ worker is **not available during the day**. If you cannot reach your 18+ worker during Monday to Thursday 8.45am-5.15pm and Friday 8.45am-4.15pm then **phone 08081 962288**. For any emergencies outside these times continue to contact duty on 0121 464 1229.

4. Employment, Education and Training – update and support.

I have been getting info and advice on how the lockdown has affected job opportunities:

There are jobs in health care, food production (including picking) and distribution, cleaning, pharmaceuticals, shelf stacker and store assistant.

Some supermarkets are taking on people who walk in and ask for work – if you do this, take your CV, NI number and birth certificate or passport.

If you can't print out your CV – don't worry – they need the staff.

How we can help if you are looking for work:

There is a lot of competition for jobs at the moment and we want to help you get a foot in the door.

If you would like help finding a job call / text / WhatsApp Juliette Walton on 07825 117 381 or email Juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.

We also have four intervention Workers from YPP (Youth Promise Plus) – who can help with job applications - more about that in a minute.

5. Message from Youth Promise Plus

I'm Naheeda and I work for CGL on Youth Promise Plus. Have you heard of Youth Promise Plus? It's a programme that helps Care-Leavers who are not in education training or employment. It helps them find work, get ready for the job market or find the right course for them. Our Intervention Workers help you on a one to one basis to build the confidence and skills to get to where you want to be. We've helped lots of young people already; I was recently working with one young person who really wanted to go to university to study fine arts. I supported him throughout the process of writing his personal statement and then organising a portfolio of work. As my background is in art myself I was able to set him tasks to work on during the week. He also wanted to work whilst he was studying to earn some extra money. We worked on applying for jobs and interview techniques as well. It was fantastic when he was offered a place at university. He deserved it after the hard work he'd put into everything. During the Corona-virus pandemic we are continuing to provide support: Helping those people who have recently lost their jobs to secure new employment, sign up for colleges or training courses and helping people stay sane during this difficult time. We're a friendly voice at the other end of the phone that can provide some support. Beckie was referred to Riz at Youth Promise Plus to help her find work. However with everything that was going on from the government advice to stay indoors to the closure of gyms and social spaces, Beckie was used to being active and was struggling to keep a positive mind set. Riz helped her sign up for fitness classes at the Lighthouse done through Zoom. He also worked with her to create a training plan which has really helped.

"It has helped me so much during this time to stay busy and positive and it's easy to incorporate into my daily routine. Due to the current situation it has been hard to keep a positive mind set but the fitness plan is now what I look forward to everyday. I really appreciate the effort, it helped me a lot"-Beckie

If you would like support from YPP please ask your PA to make a referral

6. Children's Commissioners Guide- Children's Guide to coronavirus

The children's commission have published a children's guide to coronavirus to help explain the situation. The guide aims to answer children's questions about coronavirus, tell children how to stay safe and protect other people and how to help them make the best of their time at home. [Children's guide to coronavirus](#)

7. Working from Home- An Insiders perspective

To all our amazing care leavers I just wanted to say well done! You are handling this difficult time remarkably well done!

We are all finding things challenging right now, things are changing every day and for a lot of us that means we must work from home.

Some mornings it can be so very tempting to crawl back into the bed whose presence you are extremely aware of in the next room, I could swear mine actually calls my name sometimes. Other days you're tired by lunchtime and just want to sneak off to the bathtub for some me time.

What gets me through those times and helps me to discipline myself is that I genuinely have a reason to want to work! I was a care leaver and now I help a lot of people to support care leavers. If you are working from home and finding it tough, remember why you chose that job, remember how hard you worked to get it, and remember how excellent it will look on your CV that you worked consistently throughout all this change!

You will find it a lot easier to work from home if you set yourself a routine and do your best to stick to it the same way you would at work, give yourself time for lunch and ideally sit at a desk or somewhere you can have space and peace to work, plan meetings with your colleagues over skype or phone calls and try your best to stick to the routines you would have at work. It is also good to allow yourself small breaks every hour or so to get up and make a cup of tea or stretch your legs with some Yoga.

I have found this to be an invaluable opportunity for personal growth, as learning to work from home takes discipline, persistence and determination- Kirstie- Editor

8. NSPCC article - Talking to a worried child

The NSPCC has created a new webpage with information and advice for parents or carers who are worried that a child or young person may be struggling with their mental health or has anxiety about Coronavirus. There is information on: Talking about feelings and worries, keeping in touch and balancing screen time, ways to create structure and routine and helping to give children a sense of control. **Read the information and advice:** [Talking to a child worried about coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

9. Good News

Ellesse has started training with Women into Construction via the Jobcentre. She passed her Dumper Truck test and has also secured her CSCS card. Well done Ellesse!

Well done to last week's riddle winners Marshal and Jordan!

10. Matt Kendall Foundation Hardship Grants

The Matt Kendall Foundation is offering one off grants to support people who are aged 16-25 and live in Birmingham, if their jobs have been affected by the COVID-19 situation to an extent which has left them struggling. They will supply cash grants of up to £150 to help young people with their immediate needs whilst they are waiting for benefits etc. You can apply through the following link but you must have a supporting statement from your PA- <http://themattkendallfoundation.org/apply/>

11. Pause Drop In – Covid- 19 Support

As a precaution and in line with national COVID-19 (coronavirus) guidance Pause, our drop-in centre has closed until further notice. To ensure that children, young people and young adults are able to access support trained practitioners will be available by emailing askbeam@childrenssociety.org.uk or calling 0207 841 4470.

12. Advocacy for Care Leavers.

RAP provides advocacy for care leavers and young parents. Our advocates are here to listen and support you with any issues you may have. So whether you want to challenge a decision, need support at meetings, want information or clarity on something as well as any other issues-please email advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk or ask your social worker-Personal advisor or any other professional who works with you to make a referral. We are currently providing virtual advocacy visits so please contact us via the email address provided and we will be happy to help.

13. RAPs Young Parents Project

RAPs Young Parents Project aims to engage young parents who are care leavers. They meet together monthly to enhance their journey as a young parent and shape services they receive from Birmingham Children's Trust.

Young Parents Project met at the Lighthouse in March, on the agenda was reviewing the Baby Buddy App an interactive pregnancy and parenting guide. The app was found to be useful however for the more "affluent parents", this was fed back to Amanda from the MEA (Maternity Engagement Action).

Young parents also invited the Children In Care nurses to the meeting and were able to gain an insight into the services available and the work that they do. Sarah and Adi will be working with the young parent's group to develop publicity for their service on how care leavers can access this.

If you would like to attend or get involved in the YPP please contact Tas at RAPs or email tasneem.akhtar@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

14. Eve Brook Scholarship Fund (EBSF)

EBSF is a small Birmingham based charity just for care leavers. The Fund was set up 21 years ago to help care leavers achieve their educational ambitions. We work closely together with the 18+ Care Leavers Service. The Fund has helped over 300 young people by awarding them small to medium-sized grants and bursaries which have been used to buy books, equipment for courses, travel costs, towards childcare costs, fees for short courses, and most recently, a bursary for young people taking a one year postgraduate degree.

The Fund is open to requests for support for young people at University who are currently affected by the Covid-19 virus and the impact it's had on education – maybe for example you could do with some extra books to study at home, or some unexpected travel costs? Let us know.

The application form for EBSF can be downloaded from the website. You will need your PA to help you with a supporting letter. The Fund committee meets every 2 months or so. The Fund likes to keep in touch with young people and get them involved and you will be pleased to hear that current former beneficiaries help out at our fundraising events, design our annual greetings card, perform and speak at events, and in advising the Fund on how to help young people for the best. The Fund really listens to young people.

The Fund raises money by holding events such as the annual quiz and music performances and all the money raised is given to young people.

Sarah Barker – Fund administration – I am a TM in 18+ and am very happy to advise you about your wishes and needs (add my email here).

Fund website is www.evebrookfund.org.uk

15. Student loans updates;

Students who have recently applied for funding for Annual Year 2019/20 or 2020/21

Their applications are being processed as normal. If we need any additional evidence, we will request this in due course. The students do not need to take any further action at this time.

Students awaiting summer term maintenance payments

These students will receive the scheduled or next instalment of their Maintenance Loan at the planned start of their summer term. This applies regardless of whether their higher education provider has made alternative arrangements for teaching.

Here's a link to the gov.uk student finance page- <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

16. Useful Links

- **Catch 22 Short film-**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IABFL0QSsLc#action=share>

This short film was made by young people from the Catch 22 Young People's Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum.

- **Become Charity for care leavers Coronavirus advice-**

<https://becomecharity.org.uk/for-young-people/care-advice-line/coronavirus-advice/>

- **Birmingham careers service-** www.birminghamcareersservice.co.uk

- **Barnados-** Support and information service for young people under 18 who are experiencing emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

Phone: 0121 359 5333

Email: ruth.garbett@barnardos.org.uk

Website: www.barnardos.org.uk

- **Forward Thinking Birmingham-** Phone- 0300 300 0099

Web link- forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk

- **Healthy Minds (Birmingham) –**

Web link- www.bsmhft.nhs.uk/our-services/birmingham-healthy-minds/

Phone- 0121 301 2525

You can also text 'BHM' to 60777 and they will call you back.

- **Reach out Recovery-** Drug abuse advice- 0121 227 5890

17. Monthly Riddle

The answer to last month's riddle- What month has 28 days? - Is all of them!

This month's riddle is- What gets wet the more it dries?

Email your answers to Kirstie.cotton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

The first person to give the correct answer will win a prize!

Good Luck!

18.The local offer

The 18+ Care Leavers Service is here to help young people make the move from living in care to enjoying independent life as an adult. We support young people from age 18 to 21, and this can continue up to the age of 25 if you wish.

We understand that leaving care is a time of big changes in your life, and you will have lots of questions about the support you can get and the services available to you.

These questions are so important that the government asked every local authority to produce its own Local Offer including all of the services and information that care leavers would need. The Local Offer was produced with the support of the care leavers' forum.

You will find the Birmingham Local offer via the following link

<https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/birminghamcareleaversoffer>

19.Suicide prevention information

If you or anyone you know is feeling suicidal, there is ALWAYS help available to make things easier, however bad you're feeling right now, there is always another way!

Lots of people have felt like this and – with help – managed to get through it.

Here are some numbers and links to professionals and organisations who offer support to those feeling suicidal.

These links will be included in all future newsletters so they will always be here for you to access!

- <https://papyrus-uk.org/> - The Papyrus page has a lot of useful advice and also a suicide prevention helpline!
- 116 123 – Samaritans helpline
- 0300 304 7000- SANE helpline
- 0800 58 58 58 / Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) – (for men) CALM
- <https://www.helpguide.org/home-pages/suicide-prevention.htm> - Help Guide suicide prevention page

That's all for now, stay safe and keep in touch!