



THE TRUST TIMES

18+ Care Leavers Newsletter

May 2021

THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER

Hi everyone,

We are finally at the last hurdles in easing lockdown restrictions, over the next month or two we will be able to meet up with friends, go out and attend events and more.

It is important to make sure we keep a close eye on the news and updates so that we can make sure we are still following the rules.

A massive Eid Mubarak to those who celebrate Eid, I hope you have had a great time and had some fantastic food!

Have a fantastic month and as always, email me at: Kirstie.Cotton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk if you have anything you would like to be included in next month's newsletter, or if you would like to be featured in the 'Good News' section.



Remember we are only a phone call or an email away. If you can't get hold of your PA, please call: **0121 464 1229**.

Thanks, and stay safe - Kirstie and the Trust team

*****NEED HELP ? CALL OUR DUTY LINE ON 0121 464 1229*****

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Join the Care Leavers' Forum

The Forum is a friendly and relaxed group of young people who meet every 3-4 weeks.

We use our experiences and knowledge to improve things for children in care and care leavers, both in the Trust and wider.

We are really looking forward to having our first (Covid safe) face to face meeting later this month where we will be sharing our views to inform the Independent Care Review & the content of the new social work degree which will be used by Social Work England.

We are also spending time with Commonwealth Games partners to have some fun and learn about volunteering opportunities.

This month we have been interviewing new Trust staff, testing software to allow young people to input directly into their own social work files and moving forward on our housing campaign.

Get in touch

Contact Julia Balston
Julia.balston@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
to talk or to be involved in making things better.



MAKATON CHALLENGE



This May half term we are challenging our Birmingham Children's Trust staff to sign Makaton throughout the week from the 31 May 2021 until the 4 June 2021, and we would love it if you joined in too.

We want to get awareness out and be able to communicate with our young people, to find out information on how to get involved or if you would just like to hear more about the project please contact Abba below.

If you want to give Makaton a try and want to know how you can take part please get in touch with:

Abba.loughran@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Good News

- **G.W** has been accepted at Birmingham City University to further study for a PGCE in Physical Education. **G.W** has successfully applied to EBFS for an additional year of financial support.



Suicide prevention

If you, or anyone you know, is feeling suicidal, there is always help available.

However bad you are feeling right now, there is help that you can get.

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

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

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



- Papyrus has a lot of useful advice and also a suicide prevention helpline.

<https://papyrus-uk.org/>

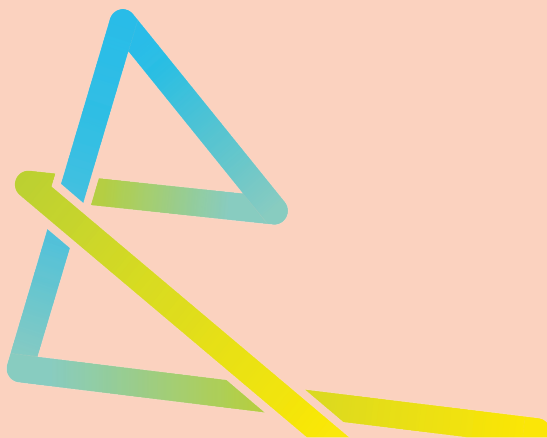
- Samaritans helpline **116 123**
- SANE helpline **0300 304 7000**



- Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) (for men) **0800 58 58 58**
- Help Guide suicide prevention

www.helpguide.org/home-pages/suicide-prevention.htm

COMMONWEALTH GAMES VOLUNTEERING



**BIRMINGHAM
2022**
commonwealth
games

The Commonwealth Games are coming to Birmingham in July 2022.

Volunteering will be a big part of how the people of Birmingham can get involved in the Games.

The applications to volunteer will go live in June 2021.

Below is a link to an expression of interest form, for people who are interested in volunteering at the Commonwealth Games.

This is **not** an application form, but will help the organising team to identify if you are interested.

The criteria and dates for the Commonwealth Games are part of the link below.

<https://bit.ly/3fLpOgi>

Breaking the Cycle needs you!



Breaking the Cycle is a therapeutic reflective programme for parents who have had one or more children placed for adoption.

Breaking the cycle are seeking young care leavers who are parents who may be interested in developing the Breaking the Cycle service for our Birmingham care leavers across the city.

Being a parent can be challenging and we recognise that growing up in the care system can make parenting even harder without the right support in place for you to learn how to parent.

We are looking for young parents who have had experience of being in care and have children either in their care or who are living apart from their children.

We are a team of therapeutically informed social workers and social work assistants who are wanting to have the best offer for our care leavers so that we can try and prevent parents from being separated from their children due to their own past experiences.

We already have a programme that we offer to birth parents who have had a child placed for adoption, but we want our care leavers to be part of shaping the programme for young parents/care leavers.

Volunteering

- Are you interested in being part of the development of the care leavers programme?
- Do you have the time to commit to attending fortnightly meetings to shape the service?
- Do you want to see increased support for young care leavers with children?
- Do you want to be part of this exciting opportunity?

If you said 'YES' then this is an ideal opportunity for you to make a real difference.

We are offering participants a £50 gift voucher and a reference for your voluntary contributions to shape Breaking the Cycle services within Birmingham Children's Trust.

For more information or to have a discussion please do not hesitate to contact Jo Rogers on:

07927 665329

Joanne.rogers@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk



Young Parents Project



The Young Parents Project is open to all young parents. The Young Parent Project aims to improve outcomes through access to support and guidance for young parents.

Currently the forum meets virtually every month via Microsoft Teams.

This month the young parents completed a 'Mind Of My Own' jointly to look at the service they have received as parents, negative aspects of the system they have endured as well as the positives. This information is intended to be fed back to the Corporate Parenting Board to look at how services can be improved not only for our young parents but young parents new to the system.

Jennifer Davis, Deputy Designated Nurse for Children in Care, attended our meeting last week to discuss the new 'pregnancy pathway programme'. The aim is to collectively create a pathway for care experienced children and young people. Young parents contributed to the session by sharing their journey, especially the importance of early intervention and how this can make a positive difference to both mum and baby.

Our next meeting will be held on June 2, 2021, (venue to be confirmed). We are hoping to have a face to face meeting which will involve activities, discussion and a lovely lunch.

Contact us

If you know of any young parents or parents to be who would like join please contact:
Tasneem Akhtar, Rights and Participation Team
Tasneem.akhtar@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk



Under the Sky Events, is a not-for-profit community interest company who offer free experiences in the outdoors to care leavers.

They are currently looking for care leavers across the UK who would benefit from spending time in nature on one of our life changing trips.

They have had many successful trips with care leaver groups in the past and are currently looking to offer our events to care leavers who may not have heard about them yet.

For more information visit their website:
<https://www.undertheskyevents.org>

PREGNANCY RESEARCH

YPEC are a not-for-profit organisation doing some research on pregnancy choices for Birmingham City Council.

If this sounds something you would like to be involved in, we are running a number of focus groups to discuss the following:

- Your views, beliefs, and experiences around pregnancy
- Your thoughts on getting pregnant / being pregnant
- Where you get your information around pregnancy
- Any barriers to accessing services and contraception

As a thank you for your time we are offering a £20 Amazon gift voucher.

For more information please email:
charlotte@ypec.co.uk or jo@ypec.co.uk
or DM us through **Facebook: YPEC_**
Twitter: YPEC_ or Insta: **YPEC** or scan:



Higher Education - A quick guide

by Juliette Walton

If you want to go into Higher Education, there are lots of benefits and it is achievable.

There are changes in HE and things you need to know:

HE stands for Higher Education – it covers courses from Level 4 upwards.

Levels of Higher Education

- Foundation Year (1 year) = Level 4
- HNC (Higher National Certificate – 1 year) = Level 4
- Foundation Degree (2 years) = Level 5
- HND (Higher National Diploma – 2 years) = Level 5
- Degree Apprenticeship (3 – 6 years) = Level 6
- Bachelors degree (3 or 4 years) = Level 6

Careers advice

Try and get some careers advice, this will help you to make well-informed and realistic decisions about career plans:

- All colleges have careers advisers – book an appointment through Student Services in your college
- Or contact Juliette Walton – Employment, Education and Training Manager

07825 117 381

juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

And always talk it through with your PA.

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>
0800 100 900

What are the entry requirements?

- Level 3 qualifications = A levels, Level 3 Diploma, Access to HE.
- English and Maths – GCSE level 4 or above (Grade C) or Functional Skills Level 2.

Many universities will accept mature students (21+) onto Foundation Years and Foundation Degrees with level 2 qualifications and relevant work experience.

This is called RPEL (Recognition of Prior Experience and Learning) .



Applying for a HE course

You can apply for a HE course any time in the academic year.

UCAS is the central administration point for all HE applications

<https://www.ucas.com/>

It costs £20 to apply for one course on UCAS, £25 to apply for more than one.

If you are applying for just one course, you can apply direct to the Uni and save yourself £20.

If you are 21 or older, and don't have the UCAS Tariff points specified on the UCAS website, always contact the Uni direct. They can apply REPL to your application

Whether applying through UCAS or direct to the Uni, you will need to write a personal statement. Get in touch if you need help.

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Higher Education - A quick guide

Funding

If you are currently getting a service from us, the local authority will consider supporting you financially in the following ways (includes 21+ but discuss with your PA first):

- Help with the cost of HE applications and attending Open Days
- £2000 bursary paid in instalments
- Help with accommodation costs (max £130 per week)
- Help with living costs (weekly personal allowance - check current rate with your PA)

To get this funding from the LA, you will need to provide evidence that you are attending, for example:

- Copy of offer letter, copy of registration letter and student ID, evidence of enrolment and copy of timetable.

All HE plans will need to be discussed and written into your Pathway Plan.

Many Unis have bursaries, scholarships and grants for care leavers – check on this website:

<https://propel.org.uk/UK/>

Other useful websites for care leavers going into HE:

<https://www.becomecharity.org.uk/about-us/>
<https://www.nnecl.org/>
<https://www.careleavers.com/>

Student Finance England covers the other costs.

Please check your emails for the message on 'Student Finance applications and Care leavers' that was sent out on Friday 14 May – it will be in your inbox from Careleavers Comms. For young people waiting for their home office decision – there is funding and advice available through this website:

<http://www.star-network.org.uk/>

STAR is Student Acton for Refugees.

The main funding is Article 26 Scholarships and Sanctuary Scholarships – but these need to be applied for, so get on it asap.

[http://www.star-network.org.uk/index-
php/resources/access_to_university](http://www.star-network.org.uk/index.php/resources/access_to_university)

Other sources of HE funding:

<http://www.evebrookfund.org.uk/>

<https://www.capstonecareleavertrust.org/>

[https://www.unite-group.co.uk/responsibili-
ty/unite-foundation](https://www.unite-group.co.uk/responsibility/unite-foundation)

Accommodation

Please speak to your personal adviser about this as soon as possible.

You might be asked for a deposit and / or rent up front – we need to know so we can help you

Any questions about HE

For advice and info about anything to do with education, career planning, training and employment – contact Juliette Walton
Juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
07825 117 381



Women Future Professionals

My name is Charmaine Valente and I am a qualified Careers Adviser, a member of the Careers Development Institute (CDI) and I run my own part time Careers Advice Company called Future Professions. I also work for the Student Loans Company.

Both roles have provided me with insight into good practices being used by support staff and foster parents, but also highlighted gaps in information and advice given to young people.

This is why I would like to hear your points of view on how the system helped you or let you down and I need your opinion on where you think there is room for improvement. It will provide an opportunity for the Government to review methods of support to Care Leavers, this will eventually lead them to attain good prospects in future occupations, entwined with life-long learning, financial stability and hopefully a fulfilled life.

The first part of this two parts research is a questionnaire and in order to look separately at Care Leavers who are in education up to the age of 18 and those who are either in Further / Higher Education or have left the care system aged 19 and above.

I have devised two different questionnaires to give you the opportunity to voice your concerns in order to improve support for children in care during their journey into adulthood.

Should you wish to participate further, the second part is a telephone or video interview. There is the option to leave your contact details at the end of the survey.

Please take the survey

If you are not in Higher Education and aged under 19: <https://bit.ly/3oOdrUQ>

If you are over 18: <https://bit.ly/3yECYnV>

Any questions please email Charmaine Valente: futureprofessions4research@gmail.com



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 ages 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.

You will have lots of questions about the support you can get and the services available to you.

These sorts of questions are so important that the government asked every local authority to produce its own Local Offer, to include all of the services and information that care leavers would need.

The Local Offer was produced with the support of the Birmingham Care Leavers' Forum.

You will find the Birmingham Local offer via the following link:

www.birminghamchildrenstrustco.uk/birminghamcareleaversoffer



BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST