

# BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S TRUST NEWSLETTER



December 2022

## WONDERFUL WINTER WISHES

Hello to Councillors and others reading this, our fourth Children's Trust newsletter.

Since our last newsletter in July a lot has happened, from the hugely successful delivery of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, to the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

At the end of the year I want to reflect back on a warmer and exciting summer, and the legacy of the Games from which countless vulnerable children continue to benefit (see pages 7-9).

To make a positive difference we are working in partnership with our Bfriends Charity, the city council, and commercial and community partners to offer fun activities and events. They include the **Brum Community Christmas** (see page 3).

We will continue to work incredibly hard across all of our services to safeguard those who need it, and we will provide vital services for children, young people and families this winter.

Our appreciation continues for your ongoing support in sharing the good work of the Trust.

**Andy Couldrick**  
Chief Executive,  
Birmingham Children's Trust



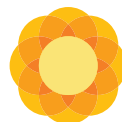
### Foster carers feedback

One of our foster carers, Yvonne, was amongst a number of people given free Commonwealth Games tickets.

Yvonne said: "Just wanted to shout out to the Trust for the tickets provided to foster carers for the Commonwealth Games. We went to the athletics last night.

What a wonderful experience. The seats were fabulous and the organisation was superb. The icing on the cake was a beautiful sunset.

Thank you."



BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST

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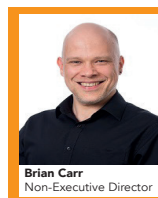
# Our senior leadership team welcomes you

## Children's Trust Board

### Executive management team



### Chair and non-executive directors



### Company secretary



**BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

## Contact our Executive management team

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For many, Christmas Day is a time for celebration with family and friends but for some it can be a time of isolation and loneliness.

This year **Donate1Create1**, in partnership with **Bfriends Charity** (Friends of Birmingham Children's Trust), and **Birmingham Children's Trust**, have joined forces to support young people this Christmas who would otherwise be alone, by hosting the first **Brum Community Christmas** event.

Birmingham care leavers who attend the event on Christmas Day will share a hot Christmas dinner together, take part in festive activities and take home some presents.

The event, which is being funded through donations and run by volunteers, has been supported by **BrumXmasDinner**, the organisation that has traditionally held the annual event.

**Sam Richards, Co-Founder of Donate1 Create1**, said: "It has been amazing to witness what can be achieved with a small group of people who have a passion to make a difference. None of our care leavers should be left to feel alone or isolated, especially at a time of year that is all about family and coming together.

Brum Community Christmas is a family and we will make sure that Christmas Day will always be a special day for our care leavers in Birmingham."

**Lee Yale-Helms, Co-Chair of Bfriends Charity and Director of Finance and Resources at Birmingham Children's Trust, said:**

"It's important that young people don't feel isolated, and Christmas Day can be a very lonely time if you are on your own.

"We are extremely grateful to our community partners who want to help provide a special day for our care leavers. We are also asking businesses and individuals if they can afford to donate, it would make a huge difference to our young people."

**Here's how your donation could help:**

- For **£50** you could support a young person to have a fantastic three course Christmas Dinner and a voucher for them to buy food.
- For **£25** you could give a bag of Christmas treats and food for the young people to leave with on the day.
- For **£10** you could give some extra special toiletries to the young people attending.
- **Any amount** you can afford to give will make a huge difference.

Visit the official Brum Community Christmas fundraising page to make a donation.

**<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/birmingham-community-christmas-2022>**

We thank you for all of your support and wish you all a Merry Christmas.

# TRUST STAFF ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2022

A huge congratulations to all of our finalists and our winners of the Staff Achievement Awards 2022.

It was terrific for those in attendance on Friday 11 November 2022, at the Council House, to see community leaders (see names below) and our own apprentices hand out awards to our individual and team winners.

The awards opened with Andy Couldrick thanking all staff for their contributions during 2022, as well as award sponsors, before passing over to event hosts Sam and Courtney Richards, Executive Directors of Donate1Create1. Sam and Courtney then welcomed Zara Wahid, a Yr11 pupil from Holte School, who performed a powerful self-written poem about managing her mental health.

This was followed by Alex, Gloria, Brian and Kelly, all part of the Blesd Centre, who all performed spoken word pieces in front of an audience of 200 people. Jess, also from Blesd, then had everyone reaching for their hankies, after belting out an Adele song, packed with passion.

After the incredible performances the awards ceremony took place, split into two sections, each with five award winners being announced. The third award, the Young Person's Choice Award, was announced and handed out by Rebecca and Rickail, young people representing the Birmingham Children in Care Council and Birmingham Junior Children in Care Council. The award winner was chosen by a panel of young people.

In between the two sections, our third young person performance was delivered in style, by rapper Ken Londa. Ken performed two of his own raps, the first written exclusively for the awards event. Ken lit up the stage, and had everyone bobbing their heads up and down.

The event was closed by Trust Chair Andrew Christie.



**Here is the list of winners:**

**Category - Apprentice of the Year**

Winner - **HAMZAH SHAJIRA**

Business Support Apprentice - Fostering

**Category - Leader of the Year**

Winner - **CLAIR GRAHAM**

EMPOWERU Contextual Safeguarding Hub Head

**Category - Young Person's Choice**

Winner - **NARGIS OSMAN-GHANI**

Early Help Worker

**Category - Making a difference in the lives of children and young people - Team**

Winner - **EARLY HELP**

**Category - Making a difference in the lives of children and young people - Individual**

Winner - **TERRI FARRINGTON**

Aftercare Advisor

**Category - Muhammad Islam Award for Outstanding Contribution**

Winner (joint) - **BALBENDER KAUR**

Senior Practitioner Educator

Winner (joint) - **JOANNE MARSHALL**

Business Support Assistant

**Category - Rewarding Innovation**

Winner - **SIRAH ALI**

Senior Practitioner Educator

**Category - Social Worker of the Year**

Winner - **CARLENE THOMAS**

Senior Social Worker (Child Protection)

**Category - Team of the Year**

Winner - **SAFEGUARDING SERVICE SOUTH**

**Category - Executive Award**

Winner - **JANET PARKS**

Senior Social Work Assistant

## WINTER HUB IN ACTION

Our Trust Winter Hub 2022 has started this year on a positive note, and we are very thankful to our kind staff and partners who have supported this year to make sure our children, young people and families get something this Christmas.

We have been gifted presents this December with the volume of donations continuing to grow each day.



If you would like to come down and visit the Winter Hub at Lancaster Circus or arrange any kind of donation delivery please email:

**Alex.Hillman@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**

Please make any donaitions before  
**Tuesday 20 December 2022.**

**We are grateful for all the support you provide to children, young people and families across Birmingham.**

**REMINDER:** Safeguarding children and supporting families is **everyone's responsibility.**

In your work, should you come across a situation that leads you to worry about the safety or welfare of a child, you must contact the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) in the Trust, on:

**Monday to Thursday: 8:45am to 5:15pm**

**Friday: 8:45am to 4:15pm**

**Telephone: 0121 303 1888**

**Emergency out-of-hours**

**Telephone: 0121 675 4806 or 0121 464 9001**

## CELEBRATING OUR PRACTICE EDUCATORS

Birmingham Children's Trust invited **Practice Educators** from across the organisation to a celebration event to welcome newly qualified **Practice Educators** to the Practice Academy Team.

The all-day event, held at Hollyfields Sport and Conference Centre in Erdington in September 2022, gave **Practice Educators** the opportunity to network and share knowledge.

The event also celebrated the valuable contribution the role makes to the social work profession and those in the role who are engaged in developing social work learners in the region.

**Sophie Gilbert, Practice Academy Manager, said:** "Practice Educators play a vital role in the development of social work students. This celebration event enabled us to recognise the achievements of both our student social workers and our Practice Educators at the same time."

After the presentation of the certificates, attendees took part in a workshop delivered by Dr Jo Finch, a Professor of Social Work and Post Graduate Research and Co-Head of the Department of Counselling, Psychology and Social Work at the University of Suffolk.

This interactive workshop explored how **Practice Educators** can best support and assess social work students who are struggling on placements.



# FOSTER BIRMINGHAM LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Foster Birmingham, Birmingham Children's Trust's Fostering Service, have launched a brand-new stand-alone website which is now live.



## Website features

The new website is bright, contemporary and interactive and provides information to people who are interested in finding out more about if becoming a foster carer is right for them and their family.

It features live Web Chat with a Foster Birmingham Agent to answer any questions in real time, an interactive 'Am I Fostering ready?' quiz, an engaging animation that explains the process to become a foster carer, stories from our experienced foster carers, and a booking tool.

## An ongoing collaboration

The new website is an exciting collaboration with Hopeful Studios.

Pip Gagliano, Marketing and Social Media Manager for Foster Birmingham said: "The website is a major resource in providing that first port of call information for people who are just thinking about starting their fostering journey and in encouraging more enquiries."

Phase 2 of the website will be developed next year and will include a secure log-in area for approved foster carers.

## Interested In Fostering?

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a foster carer, take a look at the new website at [www.fosterbirmingham.co.uk](http://www.fosterbirmingham.co.uk) to fill out our online enquiry form.

# 'CHILDHOOD' NEW FOSTERING FILM

In a ground-breaking national collaboration, 56 local authorities across England have worked together to share ideas and jointly fund the creation of a short film to raise awareness of fostering.

It is aimed at finding more people who may be interested in becoming foster carers and providing nurturing, positive homes for children and young people across the country who need them.

The new film, simply called 'Childhood', highlights the impact of neglect on children, particularly brothers and sisters who may be left at times to try and care for each other. It shows the journey of 'Sophie' and 'Charlie' who are in a very difficult home situation where their needs are not being met, to being nurtured and supported through foster care to attend school and be able to enjoy their hobbies and interests. In other words, have a childhood.

Lisa Jamieson, Birmingham Children's Trust Assistant Director - Foster Birmingham, said: "We are happy to be part of the collaboration with authorities across England, showing the amazing work our foster carers do on a daily basis. We all work together to support our children to be the best they can be."

A total of 56 local authorities have been involved in the project, and the film had a live premiere in October at The Everyman Cinema, Birmingham.



Watch 'Childhood' the film on YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vm7gGekGuBY>

## LABOUR LEADER VISITS KEY PROJECT

On the day the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games began, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer visited Donate1Create1 at Action Indoor Sport.

Sir Keir Starmer was welcomed by Trust Chief Executive, Andy Couldrick, who spoke about the Trust's Commonwealth Games legacy work in Birmingham communities.

Andy was joined by Birmingham City Council Leader, Councillor Ian Ward, Deputy Leader Councillor Brigid Jones, Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Karen McCarthy, Erdington MP Paulette Hamilton and Street Games Director Jen Carter.

Sir Keir met Samantha and Courtney Richards, directors of Donate1Create1 and their community hub team from Erdington.

Donate1Create1 was the lead provider for the Trust's main summer programme.

The visit included meeting young people from the local community who have been accessing the programme since it was founded in 2021, who were taking part in Commonwealth Games-themed team-based sporting activities.

Sir Keir met young ambassadors who have been part of the programme and its developments, trying his hand in a game of basketball.



**Caption (l-r):** Jen Carter, Andy Couldrick, Sir Keir Starmer, Sam Richards, Natalie Loon, and Courtney Richards.

Sir Keir also joined young people and practitioners taking part in football and trampolining.

He then went on to meet a young adult who has secured employment as the programme has developed.

Parents taking part in a healthy eating workshop invited Sir Keir to join them and talk about parent and carer sessions and what it means to the community to have a hub in Erdington, and the benefits of working in partnership with Donate1Create1.

The Trust welcomed the opportunity to share its journey with its partners and the community and its aspirations for future Commonwealth legacy activity in Erdington and beyond.

## ABBA BECOMES OUR VERY OWN BATON BEARER



The Trust and its partners celebrated when Abba Loughran, part of the Rights and Participation team at the Trust, ambassador for care leavers, and co-chair of the Trust's Bfriends charity, proudly carried the Queen's Baton on behalf of Birmingham children and adults.

Abba was chosen for all her inspirational voluntary work for young people and adults and her unwavering support towards the establishment of the Trust's new charity.

Abba wore a special Baton Bearer uniform and completed her leg of the relay in style, cheered on by a huge crowd.

## FUTURE YOU CIVIC RECEPTION

Birmingham Children's Trust was delighted to be invited to host a celebratory Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Civic event in the drawing room at the Council House.

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive at Birmingham Children's Trust, welcomed an audience of 125, including corporate parenting partners, businesses, community groups and leaders, Birmingham elected members, Birmingham City Council and Trust staff.

Future You showcases the emotional and inspirational journeys of four amazing Birmingham care leavers Musa Nela (**pictured below**), Zaynab Sohawon, Levi Allen, and Sabina Begum.

The Future You team had worked on the project for over a year and remain passionate about inspiring other young adults across the city and beyond.

As part of the event the audience was given the opportunity to ask questions of Abba and two of the other films' stars, Musa and Zaynab.

The event was then closed by Birmingham Children's Trust chair, Andrew Christie.

Following the event guests networked and many pledged to further support the Future You programme and the work of the newly formed Bfriends, Friends of Birmingham Children's Trust Charity.

**Abba said:** "It's been a privilege to have had the opportunity to develop four inspirational films with care leavers in Birmingham. These films show the reality of growing up in care and different challenges young people face in their lives.



**Caption (l-r):** Abba, Musa, and Zaynab

"Our young people want other young people to see their stories and know they are not alone and they are not labels, they are in the driving seat of their own lives and can do anything and be anything they want to be.

"We defy the typical stereotypes people throw our way and we stand together. Care is not a label it is an act of looking after those you love."

**Zaynab added:** "The event was not just a celebration of the Future You films, it was a celebration of the courage of young people's unwavering supporters and a celebration of how empowering self-transformation is.

"I'm indebted to the team at Birmingham Children's Trust for allowing my journey to be shared, in order to make meaningful changes in my 'why', and I hope it helps other people find their 'why' too."

**Andy Couldrick said:** "It was a privilege to host this screening of our Future You films.

"The strength, resilience and potential of our young people shines through the films.

"Everyone in the audience cannot fail to have been touched and moved.

"Musa, Sabina, Levi and Zaynab are a credit to themselves and to all who have cared for and supported them on their journeys."

The Trust plans to produce more Future You films over the next twelve months.





## SUMMER PROGRAMMES SUCCESS

The Trust and its charity Bfriends, Friends of Birmingham Children's Trust, formed a network with community providers that aspired to deliver programmes in the community for young people, and importantly work on how together we give legacy to this work.

Blessd, Essence Youth Mentoring, Law and Leisure Learning, and Solve, in partnership with the Trust and new Bfriends Charity were successful in bids to deliver Summer programmes across communities.

In addition, the ambition continued to further develop a hub model and the decision was made through Bring it on Brum, Street Games and the Trust that Donate1Create1 would lead a flagship hub for the summer at Action Indoor Sport in Erdington.

The programme included a main activities and sport hub, SEND and Sensory programme, football programme, gymnastics club, parent and toddler workshops and employment opportunities for young adults.

Two important principles have underpinned the work. Firstly that providers should come from, and be working in, the communities we are seeking to serve, and second that our programmes should provide skills development and employment opportunities to participants.

Alongside this Birmingham City F.C. Community ran their own Bring it on Brum programme. In partnership with the Trust and Bfriends Charity they took young people who have been a part of the programme since 2021 on a residential to a farm on the beach in Wales, in partnership with the charity, Farms for City Children. **See pictures on this page.**



Following the completion of our summer programmes we have received lots of important feedback from young people and parents.

### Young people are telling us:

- "Being part of the programmes has developed confidence, new opportunities, friendships, new skills and talents."
- "A place that has become a second home that I feel confident to learn and grow in."
- "A loving and caring environment."
- "A place to go so I don't end up in trouble like my friends have."
- "Something that has kept me out of being in trouble with the police."

### Parents are telling us:

- "I was worried about the holidays and my son being in trouble, this has given him focus and me peace of mind."
- "I feel I have been welcomed into a family myself I have learnt so much about several areas and I have made friends for myself in the local community."
- "My daughter had not spoken since lockdown, and I was really worried. A week into programme a new confidence came and when I left she said 'Bye Mum', a huge moment!"
- "We need more of these opportunities for our young people in the local area. I work evenings and weekends - these programmes have become a lifeline for us in so many ways. We cannot afford activities for our children and we worry about what else is out there when we let them out into the community alone with other young people."



We are really pleased to have welcomed our fifth cohort of Newly Qualified Social Workers onto our Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme, as well as our third cohort of Social Work Apprentices into the Trust.

All have been busy with inductions and joining their new teams as they start their learning journeys with us.

Our ever growing ASYE programme recently received its largest ever cohort of 49 newly qualified social workers.

Our Practice Academy Manager, Sophie Gilbert says " It is so important to bring newly qualified staff into the workforce, fresh out of their learning and eager to make a difference; we are able to grow the future generations of social workers."

Each learner will experience monthly specialised training and development opportunities while working directly with children and families of Birmingham. They will receive wrap around support from their teams and the Practice Academy to enable them to complete their evidence-based portfolio and complete their ASYE year successfully.

Our ever developing ASYE programme has changed and adapted over the last few years and in a recent quality assurance visit, governing body Skills for Care leads noted the Trust's ASYE retention rates as impressive and the programme to be thorough and well developed.

In September we welcomed our latest cohort of Social Work Apprentices into the first year of their apprenticeship.

All apprentices have been recruited internally from within the Trust and all have experience of working with the children and families of Birmingham.

The programme creates a fantastic opportunity for our staff to develop and use their skills and knowledge to progress their careers.

Each year of the programme, apprentices gain experience by working in a range of teams across our front-line services.

We share our warmest of welcomes to all our new starters and look forward to working together on their developmental journey in the Trust.



**Find out more about the Trust Practice Academy on our website:  
<https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/practiceacademy>**