



THE TRUST TIMES

18+ Care Leavers' Newsletter

December 2023



WINTER BEST WISHES TO YOU ALL



Hi everyone,

This time of year can be exciting for many people, but also very difficult for others, with time spent thinking about families and finances.

We know that some of you will be coming to the Brum Community Christmas (applications now closed), but for those of you who are not, we have devoted this newsletter to providing some advice on what to do and where to get support (see pages **3 and 5**). There is other useful information in this month's newsletter, including 'How to write a good personal statement' when applying for university places.

We also want you to keep warm and well and appreciate you may need some extra support, so please check out the '**Help in Brum**' page on the city council website (just scan the QR code) for advice and guidance:



We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



We love your good news

If you have anything you would like to be considered for next month's edition please email it to Juliette Walton.

Juliette.Walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Always remember, **you are never alone**, you are a part of the biggest family in Birmingham, and we are here for you!

If you can't get hold of your PA, please call: **0121 464 1229**.

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

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CHRISTMAS WELLBEING TIPS

From the Trust's Therapeutic Emotional Support Service (TESS)

"It's the most wonderful time of the year!" We are constantly told that Christmas is a time to be happy. This is the message on social media and TV. It feels like pressure to be happy. It gives the illusion that everyone is having a wonderful time at Christmas, but this is what we are led to believe is happening for everyone else!! Even if we don't celebrate Christmas it can be a difficult time of year. Christmas can be especially difficult if you are living alone, especially with the cost-of-living crisis. It can leave you feeling isolated, anxious or depressed for instance.

If this is your first experience of living independently it takes time to get used to and it is important to have support to help adjust to this new stage in your life. While many young people look forward to having their space and not being told what to do, others might feel isolated and lonely.

If you are struggling with living alone and have mental health difficulties Christmas can be even more stressful. Christmas can highlight the things that we miss the most – including those we are close to but unable to be with. Spending too much time thinking about things that make us feel sad or depressed is not helpful.

It is important to do things that are a healthy distraction when we feel like this.

Here are some tips and resources that you might find helpful:

- For some of us being on your own on Christmas Day feels like the only option. An idea could be to reach out to a friend and spend Christmas with them.
- If you are on your own at Christmas it might be helpful to make plans for the day. These plans could include where you might spend the day and what you might do so that the day does not feel as difficult.
- Also think about how much time you spend with others – sometimes we need to set boundaries and spend time that is manageable for us.
- Being kind to yourself involves thinking about the ways we cope when we feel overwhelmed – it is good to have a range of these – like a menu of options. Such as gaming, face-timing friends, reading, listening to music or watching TV.
- Reaching out to others and seeking support can feel daunting. Think of it as an act of kindness and positive self-care.

Go to Page 5 for useful websites.



USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES



Here are four **festive** apps that you may find useful.



NORAD tracks Santa

- For more than 60 years, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (Norad) has tracked Santa Claus's journey, ensuring that the magic of Christmas remains alive for children around the world. The programme starts in December with the actual sleigh-tracking simulation launching early on Christmas Eve.
www.noradsanta.org



Snoop

- The holidays can be stressful for your bank account, so if you aren't using a finance app yet, this is your sign to download Snoop. It helps you track your spending, set budgets and keep track of your bills.
www.snoop.app



Lapse

- The latest photo app, which climbed to the top of the App Store charts last month, Lapse claims to turn your phone into a disposable camera. Unlike your camera app, once you take a picture on Lapse, you won't be able to see it until it "develops" at a random time later in the day, allowing you to live in the moment.
www.lapse.com



Go Jauntly

- If you're finding it hard to leave the house for some vitamin D and exercise, Go Jauntly is just the app you need. Its walking map feature offers beautiful walks near you that you can customise by distance and destination. It may be ideal for that Christmas or Boxing Day walk.
www.gojauntly.com



SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL CHARITIES

BABY AID BIRMINGHAM



<https://www.babyaidbirmingham.co.uk>

BABY BANK CENTRAL



<https://www.facebook.com/babybankcentral/>

From this month we are going to feature a couple of local charities, that you may or may not have heard about.

For December 2023 we are highlighting two baby charities that can offer you support.

OUR NEW OFFICE BASE FOR THE 18+ DUTY SERVICE

Below is some important information for young people about access to our 18+ duty service for care-experienced young people. We are here to help, either by phone or in person.

To contact the 18+ duty service, please continue to call our duty line, 0121 464 1229. There is always a Personal Adviser and 18+ Manager available to give advice or help.

New office base

We are open:

- Monday – Thursday 8.45 to 5.15
- Friday – 8.45 to 4.15

You can call in at our new office, **One Avenue Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 4DU** between these hours.

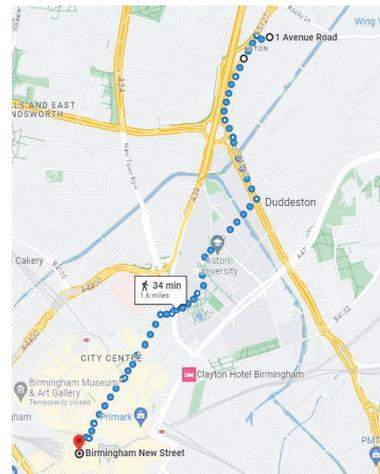
Ask the friendly reception staff as you go in, to let the 18+ duty team know you would like to see a Personal Adviser. Reception will call us and a team member will come to reception to see you. We have access to a quiet space where you can speak in confidence.

Buses to use: The main bus route is the Number 65 and 67, both go from the city centre. These buses will drop you right outside One Avenue Road, and the Number 8 route crosses nearby. The 65 and 67 buses go from outside the large B&M store in the city centre.



Walking here

From Birmingham New Street Station there are a number of pedestrian routes you can take from New Street Station to get to 1 Avenue Road. This is the most direct route that follows a designated pedestrian path from the station, all the way through to the office and is well lit.



USEFUL CHRISTMAS SUPPORT WEBSITES

Scan the QR codes or visit websites below.

Christmas coping tips from Mind Charity



Crisis Team at Forward Thinking Birmingham



Samaritans



Call 116 123 FREE ANYTIME
]www.samaritans.org

Give us a Shout



giveusashout.org

Getting NHS help for domestic violence and abuse



CLEANSING OUR DATABASE

We are cleansing the newsletter mail-out group. Young people who are 26 or older will be taken off the group unless you tell us you want to stay on it. If you are aged 26 or older and would like to stay on the email group, please let us know by emailing:
garry.james@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk



OUR OFFER TO YOU

This is our support offer to you, so you know what to expect as you leave our care and beyond. Our website contains information you need about our support offer to you. Scan the QR code below to go to the offer page.



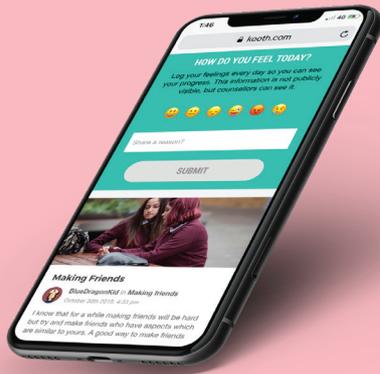
Care Leavers' opportunities

The Trust care leavers' opportunities page contains opportunities for you to get your hands on!

It is regularly updated, so be sure to favourite the page to keep an eye out for updated opportunities.

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

Give Kooth a try



Kooth offers free, safe and anonymous online counselling and support, with many different features and sections to offer you support such as:

- **Magazine** - helpful articles, personal experiences and tips from young people and our Kooth team.
- **Discussion Boards** - start or join a conversation with our friendly Kooth community. Lots of topics to choose from!
- **Chat with the team** - chat to our helpful team about anything that's on your mind. Message us or have a live chat.
- **Daily Journal** - write in your own daily journal to track your feelings or emotions and reflect on how you're doing.

Visit the **Kooth** website to see the features listed above and much more!

www.kooth.com

THE TRUST TIMES

Back issues of the 18+ newsletter

You can find the last two years worth of 18+ newsletters on the Birmingham Children's Trust website. Many of the feature articles, including those providing information and guidance are still valid.

Visit: <https://bit.ly/3yliug3>

REES FOUNDATION December 2023 UPDATE

Rees Foundation run a number of groups called '**Let's Connect**', which allow you to connect with other members of the care experienced community. Rees find that these networks can lead to lifelong and empowering friendships.

Website: www.reesfoundation.org

The groups are facilitated using a team whose members may be care experienced or individuals who are experienced by profession, with the ultimate aim of creating a safe place where care experienced people like you can meet to discuss matters of personal interest.

Courses in January 2024

Circle of Support for

Date: 10 January 2024

Time: 7.00pm - 8.00pm



A group for care-experienced people of all ages to discuss a range of topics.

Each online session focusses on something different.

Uni:fy

Date: 22 January 2024

Time: 7.00pm - 8.00pm



This session is a chance for care-experienced university students up and down the country to come together, connect and share their experiences of university life. Whatever your age or stage of your university life you're at - you are welcome to join!

To sign up to any of the groups, please complete the form in the link below:
<https://form.jotform.com/203141499622353>



PureGym – 50% discount, and no joining fee!

Care Leaver Covenant signatory PureGym is offering a **50% discount** on their gym memberships to provide crucial support for young people with care experience.

To take up this fantastic opportunity scan the QR code below and complete the 'Connects' online application form.



This is your gateway to unlocking exclusive access to the PureGym offer. During the Connects sign-up process, you will have the option to express your interest in the PureGym offer.

Once you've registered your interest, the Care Leaver Covenant team will reach out and guide you through the PureGym sign-up process.

All applications for the PureGym offer will undergo a short verification process. This is in place to guarantee that this opportunity remains exclusively accessible to care-experienced young people.

Suicide and self-harm prevention

If you, or anyone you know, is feeling suicidal, or wanting to harm themselves, 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.

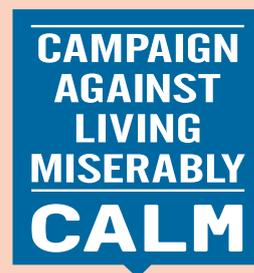
These links will be included in all future newsletters so they will always be here for you to access



- 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.html

Also please see the **TESS offer** on **page 13**.

ADVOCACY SERVICE

The aim of **Rights and Participation (RAP) Advocacy** service is to ensure that Birmingham children in care, care leavers and children on child protection plans (wherever they may live), are provided an advocacy service. You are entitled to have the support of an advocate and access to children's rights.

RAP Advocacy is the representation of your wishes and feelings, your views, and your voice, to professionals and services. This could be at meetings, through the complaints process, or wherever you wish us to do so.

RAP Advocacy is **ALWAYS** led by you the young person - our **BOSS**. Your advocate will work on your instructions alone.

RAP Advocacy is issue based, so it is provided for a particular purpose, and is there until there is an outcome for the complaint, or concern.

Advocacy referrals are normally allocated to an advocate within three working days of receipt. The advocate will then contact you and support you with your issue/s.

You can make a referral for yourself or anyone else can make a referral on your behalf.

To make a referral or if you have any questions about RAP Advocacy service please email advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Testimonials about the RAP Advocacy service

"Thanks so much my advocate - everything went the way I wanted."

"Thank you for helping me learn and grow as a young mum you stood up for me and believed in me. It's all paid off, you're truly amazing and I hope we can always stay in contact."

"My advocate helped me to have housing officials listen to my housing needs. Without her they would not have listened to me and fobbed me off."

Care Leavers' Forum

We are a group of care leavers who work together to use our experiences to make things better for other children in care and care leavers.

We feel that the group:

- Stops us feeling alone and isolated
- Makes us feel like we are making a difference
- Builds up our confidence
- Builds up skills, such as speaking in front of other people

What we do:

- Interview new Trust staff
- Use our experience in producing and delivering training
- Discuss issues – what works and what needs to change, and make changes happen

We tell people what we need and get people to work in a different way. We don't share anything that is painful or private and have lots of support for you. Some of this work is paid (in vouchers). We also organise days out – like a trip to Drayton Manor.

How we do this:

- We meet every month, sometimes face-to-face and sometimes online
- When we meet face to face we have food together
- We get help with transport to the meetings if we need it

Over the next few months we are particularly going to look at **HOUSING** (including the state of housing, repairs and semi-supported) and **HEALTH** (including mental health, in-patients, autism and neurodiversity). We have work to do for the city council and NHS on these topics, so if you have experience please get in touch.

Contact us today

Try **Julia Balston**, Children's Rights Officer
Julia.balston@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
or **Emily Blythe** by text or call **07704 539 011**
Emily.Blythe@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Emily is our Transformation & Improvement Apprentice!

Child Trust Funds



If you were born in the UK and turned 18 after 1 September 2020 and don't have details of your Child Trust Fund (CTF), please use the online form below to find your details and take control of your CTF (usually worth £250 or more): <https://findctf.sharefound.org>

Junior Individual Savings Accounts

If you turned 18 before 1 September 2020 (born since 3rd January 1994) you may have a Junior Individual Savings Account (JISA) set up with £200. To be eligible you must have been in care in the UK, continuously for 12 months or more, since 2 January 2012. Please use the online form below to find your details so you can take control of your JISA:

<https://myjisa.sharefound.org>

If you need to contact the Share Foundation regarding the online forms please email:

info@sharefound.org

Or call

01296 310400

For further enquiries please contact:
Tracey.Britton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE

We are looking to provide future newsletters in a different way for care-experienced young people like yourselves.

The plan is to move to using an emailer platform called Mailjet to send you updates direct to your inbox.

To do this we will need your permission to send direct emails from this platform, so we kindly need you to complete a short online form on our website. **Scan the QR code below** to go to the form. There are just eight quick questions.



Once you click 'Sign up' at the bottom of the form you will be sent an email to verify that you wish to sign up to future newsletters. Please make sure you accept this invite, and your name and email will then be added to our database.

You can of course opt out of receiving these newsletters at any time, using the 'unsubscribe' link, but we hope you will stay with us for future newsletters and bulletins.

Sign up for our care-experienced news and information

Please add your details below.

First name

Last name

Email address

YOUR GOOD NEWS DEC '23

We are continuing to celebrate your good news in this newsletter.

Congratulations to every one of you on your achievements in December 2023.

- The very talented **Zobia** is at university in Wales. Personal Advisor Terri Farrington went to visit Zobia in November to see her exhibition, and left incredibly impressed.

See some pictures of Zobia's work below:



- **Chloe** is currently working as a SEN teaching assistant at Pines School. She has been in this employment for over a year now. She has secured herself a permanent position this academic year at the school which officially commenced in September 2023. Chloe continues to do well and work full-time in order to support herself financially. We are so proud of everything Chloe has achieved.

NHS
Birmingham and Solihull



Care Leavers Prescription Form

NHS Birmingham and Solihull have published a form for you to apply for free prescriptions.

This is for you if you are a Care Leaver, aged 16-25, entitled to support from Birmingham or Solihull local authorities, and not otherwise eligible for free prescriptions.

Simply scan the QR code below, complete the form, save it and send it to:

nhsbsolicb.childrenincare@nhs.net



You can get a copy of this form from your Personal Advisor or by sending an email to:

nhsbsolicb.childrenincare@nhs.net

BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

There are lots of different ways **Become** can help you.

From ongoing coaching, helping you in stressful situations, to providing a friendly space to meet other care-experienced young people. It's up to you.

Care Advice Line

We know the care system can be complicated, and it can be hard to know exactly what you are entitled to.

If you are feeling confused, concerned, or need some support, we're here for you.

Our friendly Care Advice Line team are care system experts.

Open Monday to Friday 10.00am-5.00pm

Call us: 0800 023 2033

WhatsApp: 0786 003 4982

Email: advice@becomecharity.org.uk

Coaching

Every young person in the care system deserves the opportunity to achieve their goals in life. We want to help you get there.

Our coaching programme helps you to unlock your potential for positive change, giving you the tools to move forward positively in your life. We can help you identify your strengths, plan for the future, and grow in confidence.

Find out more: <https://bit.ly/3GausSz>



Amazing Apprenticeships

Amazing Apprenticeship guide for care-experienced young people

You can download a fantastic guide to the world of apprenticeships by scanning the QR code below.



Key facts about apprenticeships:

- You are paid a salary.
- You will have a contract of employment, paid holiday and sick leave – just like any other member of staff.
- You learn from industry experts.
- The equivalent of 6 hours per week of your paid time is spent undertaking off-the-job learning.
- You do not pay for your training.
- A £3,000 bursary is available for care leavers aged 16-24 when they start their apprenticeship. This amount came into effect from from 1 August 2023.

Find out more by visiting the Amazing Apprenticeships website:

<https://amazingapprenticeships.com>

How to write a good personal statement

How to write a good personal statement for your uni application.



If you are thinking about Higher Education for September 2024 and applying through UCAS – your application needs to be submitted by **31 January 2024**.

The most important part of the application is your **Personal Statement**.

If you are applying direct to a University - not through UCAS – you will still have to write a personal statement as part of the application, so hopefully this will still be useful (applying direct to the uni it may be called 'Additional Information' – but it's the same thing).

Here is some guidance and remember, you can ask your PA to help, or the college or Sixth Form you are attending, or contact:

Juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

A personal statement should be **4,000 characters** max. (This is a maximum of 1000 words, or one side of A4 paper).

There is loads more useful advice on this link: <https://bit.ly/41mhxXI>

Plan it on a piece of blank paper or blank screen by answering these **eight questions**:

- (1) Why have you chosen this course?
- (2) What excites you about the subject ?
- (3) Is your previous or current study relevant to the course?
- (4) Have you got work experience that might help?
- (5) What life experiences are you proud of (this can include things like living independently, budgeting, personal organisation skills, being a parent)?
- (6) What achievements are you proud of?
- (7) What skills do you have that make you perfect for the course?
- (8) What plans and ambitions do you have for your future career?

Steps to take:

- Write a draft copy of your personal statement.
- Start your personal statement with your answer to Question 1 (see above).
- Write in short sentences so it's easy to read and understand.
- Put your sentences into paragraphs – not one big chunk of writing – so it's easy to read.
- End your personal statement with a repeat of what you said at the start – so it has a nice circular shape.
- Proof read as you go along.
- Get other people to proof-read it for you.
- Then you are ready to add it to your UCAS application.

Good luck with your applications, and don't forget to tell your PA, or contact us on 0121 464 1229, so we can tell you about funding.

Therapeutic Emotional Support Service (TESS)

Come along and join the Trust's monthly TESS afternoon drop-in sessions for Birmingham's 18+ care-experienced young people, aimed at enhancing your emotional wellbeing.

Where will sessions take place:

TESS
67 Bournbrook Road
Selly Oak
B29 7BX

Phone to book: 0121 675 1781

Dates: These will take place on the first Wednesday of every month.

The next session will be on

3 January 2024.

Time: 12.00pm – 4.00pm.

What can I expect:

- A relaxing and welcoming environment with an outside garden and indoor area.
- Connection with the TESS 18+ team, which will give you the opportunity to talk and engage in activities and learn coping skills and strategies, that will help you to improve your emotional wellbeing.

Staff available on the day:

- Davinia Burrell
- Paul Campbell
- Vibha Jivan
- Sally Burgess
- Emily Kigonya
- Rachel Quinn

Understanding Anxiety

Anxiety is what we feel when we're worried, nervous, or feel a general sense of unease – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future.

When we face new challenges or begin a new chapter in our lives such as moving home, starting a college course or going to university, it is normal to experience some worry and anxiety. Anxiety is manageable, and there are plenty of ways you can manage it such as:

Practice breathing exercises: Breathe in and out for the count of three. Repeat. There are some videos and websites to help you with guided breathing exercises to calm your body and feelings of anxiety. <https://bit.ly/3Z9efG8>

Taking care of your sleep: Sleep is important and can help you reduce any feelings of anxiety you may be experiencing. For further information on how to improve sleep please visit The Sleep Charity website:

<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/>

Staying active: Exercise is good for our mental health and helps control feelings of anxiety. For information and advice on this please visit this website: <https://bit.ly/3slfwrs>

Talk about it: Talking to other people about your anxiety is really important. Sharing your feelings can help them understand what you're going through and how to support you. This could be with a friend. Alternatively, if you are at college or university you can access support from pastoral support or student wellbeing services. Many young people experience anxiety and worry and student wellbeing services are there to support the unique needs of university students.

When anxiety and worry is having a significant impact on you and your ability to do everyday tasks and meet your responsibilities it is important to seek professional help for instance by speaking to your GP.

The NHS website provides helpful information and advice on this as does the Mind website: <https://www.mind.org.uk>



Housing and Financial Awareness Service

This landmark 3-year funded partnership between Shelter and HSBC, offers housing and financial help to individuals and families in Birmingham. We **provide advice through appointments and workshops in the community, focusing on housing and financial issues, aiming to empower people and organisations to fight for their rights** and improve their ability to handle their situations confidently.

Assistance Available Includes:

Housing Options | Disrepair in your Home | Managing your Home e.g. bills and furnishing | Money Basics e.g., understanding bank accounts & bank statements, recognizing fraud | Budgeting and Managing your Money | Welfare Benefit Checks | Maximising Money | Improving your Spending Habits | Accessing Bank Accounts (criteria applies) | Charitable Grants & Social Tariffs |



For more information, please email:
HSBCReferrals@shelter.org.uk





SERVICES WE OFFER



DAAR UL JANNAH
CENTRE OF ADVICE AND EDUCATION

DUJ Advice Centre | Food Bank Centre Education Centre | Nadra Card Services

Private & Confidential Service

Debt Advice



Welfare Benefits



Housing Support



Rent Arrears
Budgeting
Dealing with Creditors

UC, ESA, PIP, DLA,
Carers Allowance
Tribunal Support

Housing Related Support
Landlord Disputes
Private & Social Housing

Phone Support



Food Bank



Nadra Card Services



Health & Well-Being
Support

Emergency Food Parcels
Delivery & Collection

New Applications
Renewals/Updates

☎ Office: 0121-792-5442
 📱 Mobile/watsapp: 07847661022
 ✉ info@daaruljannah.co.uk
 📌 @daaruljannahservices
 🌐 www.daaruljannah.co.uk



Opening Times
10:00AM - 4:00PM
Monday-Friday



Address
861 Stratford Road
Birmingham B28 8BH

AUTISM SUPPORT SERVICES

for 18-25 year Olds

A tailored programme to gain Life Skills and access your right to services in the community



Taking referrals now



THE WAY WE CAN HELP



Boost your confidence and learn important life skills in a welcoming space for everyone. Join our workshop to practice things like shopping, budgeting, and managing money through fun activities



Join our workshop for kitchen safety tips and using appliances responsibly. Learn to keep your workspace clean and choosing the right cleaning products with our expert guidance.



Explore our personalised support program to help you discover suitable work experience and job opportunities. Get help to access services, benefits, and housing rights. We're here to support you on your journey



Participate in a Workshop that teaches you skills of maintaining a clean and organised bedroom, changing duvet covers, pillowcases, and bed sheets



DAAR UL JANNAH
CENTRE OF EDUCATION

Contact us for more information

861 Stratford Road, Birmingham, B28 8BH

Phone: 0121 792 5442

Mobile: 07847 661022

Email: info@daaruljannah.co.uk

In partnership with:



Funded by:



Birmingham and Solihull

