



# THE TRUST TIMES

18+ Care Leavers' Newsletter

April 2024

## LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR CONFERENCE

Hi everyone,

We are delighted to announce that our next face-to-face **conference for care-experienced young people** will be taking place at The Lighthouse Young People's Centre on **Thursday 30 May 2024**, starting at **11.00am**.

The focus of this event will be careers and support services. Employers and organisations attending will include WMP Recruitment, Springboard Hospitality, Aston Villa FC Foundation, Rees Foundation and the Become Charity.

Activities will include indoor archery and lots more, along with FREE home-cooked Caribbean food.

As usual, our newsletter is packed with a wealth of opportunities, advice and guidance, so make sure you take some time out to read all the news.

Remember, if you need to talk to someone then please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

**NEW** - We now offer 45-minute drop-in sessions at The Willows to talk about careers - **see Page 12**.



This month we have a wide range of fantastic opportunities and offers that you can apply for, so make sure you read every page.

**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**

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

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

### IN THE APRIL 2024 ISSUE OF THE TRUST TIMES:

- Unite Foundation and MyBnk - **page 2**
- Useful bereavement apps and websites - **page 3**
- Spotlight on Women's Aid - **page 4**
- Our office base for the 18+ service - **page 4**
- Debt relief orders - a handy guide - **page 5**
- Give Kooth a try - **page 6**
- Back issues of the 18+ newsletter - **page 6**
- Rees Foundation May 2024 update - **page 6**
- Swift Card offer - **page 7**
- Suicide prevention - **page 7**
- Eve Brook Scholarship Fund update - **page 8**
- Child Trust Funds - **page 9**
- Junior Individual Savings Accounts - **page 9**
- Sign up to our newsletter online - **page 9**
- Your Good News and Care Leaver prescriptions - **page 10**
- Rights and Participation updates - **page 11**
- Careers advice and guidance sessions - **page 12**
- Therapeutic Emotional Support Service (TESS) - **page 13**
- KRT introduction to construction advert - **page 14**
- Advocacy Service - **page 15**
- AA Driving Theory Test free offer - **page 16**
- Cleansing our database, Trust Website Care Leavers' opportunities, and Our Offer to You - **page 17**
- Do you want FREE BT Broadband? - **page 17**
- Care Leavers' Fourm - **page 18**

# Unite

# Foundation

## Education is for everyone.

The Unite Foundation supports estranged and care-experienced students with rent-free accommodation for up to 3 years through a nationwide scholarship scheme.

### Deadline to **apply**

If you know someone who is thinking of going to university this year, or has already started their degree but could benefit from the scholarship, applications are now open until **14 June 2024**.

### How to **apply**

All of the information, including eligibility and how to apply, can be found by reading the Unite Foundation adverts on pages **14** and **15** of this newsletter, or scan the QR code below on your phone.

Any questions, drop us a line at **info@unitefoundation.org.uk**



@ f X d

@thisisusatuni  
@thisisunitefdn

thisisusatuni.org

[thisisusatuni.org/unite-foundation-scholarship](https://thisisusatuni.org/unite-foundation-scholarship)



The **Money House** is an award-winning workshop that helps young people, 16-25, prepare for independent living and adult life through a three or five-day workshop in our flat-style space in Digbeth.

You get vouchers once you finish the course (£30 or £50), AND you can also apply to the **MyBnk** grant scheme for £100. Since December 2023 we've awarded almost £5,600!

We reimburse you for your travel each day, there's breakfast and hot lunch, Wi-Fi, free hygiene and period products, a mental health first-aider on site, chill out spaces, a signposting board, gender-neutral toilets and a fully stocked kitchen!

It's much more than money management though – young people tell us that they like going to a new place, the routine is good for them, they never thought they'd like something like this, sometimes they make new friends, and they feel safe and respected. The money bit is often secondary to the overall experience for them!

### Find out more and sign up

Speak to your PA, or contact us on **TMHMidlands@mybnk.org** or **07562 665234** and ask for **Danielle**.

## USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES

Here are three apps/websites that you can use when dealing with loss.



### Apart of me

- If you've just lost a loved one, you might be feeling lonely, angry, overwhelmed or afraid. Or maybe all of these things. They are here to help you. And they want you to know that you're going to be OK.

<https://www.apartofme.app>



### Calm

- Mental health is hard. Getting support doesn't need to be. Their app puts the tools to feel better in your back pocket, with personalised content to manage stress and anxiety, get better sleep, and feel more present in your life. Relax your mind, and wake up as the person you want to be. Get a FREE trial.

<https://www.calm.com>



### Child Bereavement UK

- Child Bereavement UK helps families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies.

They support children and **young people (up to the age of 25)** when someone important to them has died or is not expected to live, and parents and the wider family when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying.

They offer free, confidential bereavement support for individuals, couples, children, young people, and families, by telephone, video or instant messenger, wherever you live in the UK.

They also offer face-to-face support from a number of locations.

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org>



# SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN'S AID



## Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid

support women and children affected by domestic violence and abuse.

- If you, or someone you know, needs help or support Call 0808 800 0028
- Their helpline is open seven days a week 9.15am-5.15pm.
- Their webchat is open Monday to Friday 10am-4pm.
- Their Early Intervention Hub is open for face-to-face support Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 10am – 4pm  
Wednesday: 1pm – 4pm

Find out more on their website today!

<https://bswaid.org>

## OUR 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.

### Our office base

#### We are open:

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

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

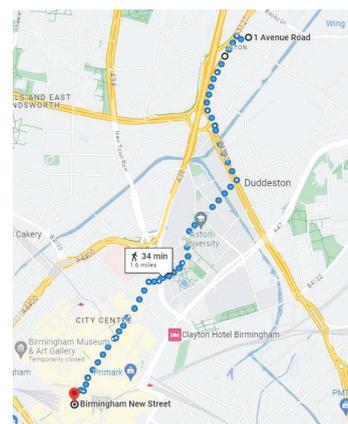
Ask the friendly reception staff, as you go in, to let the 18+ duty team know you would like to see a Personal Adviser. Reception will call us and a team member will come to reception to see you. We have access to a quiet space where you can speak in confidence.

**Buses to use:** The main bus routes are 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 One 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.



# Debt Relief Orders

## A handy guide



Information on this page has come directly from the BBC website.

People on the lowest incomes will be able to apply to have their debts wiped out for free as rules change this month.

Debt Relief Orders clear existing debt on everything from council tax to energy bills and rent.

They cost £90 to apply for which charities said many people in debt could not afford.

But from 6 April 2024 they became free in England and Wales.

### Case Study

Olu from London said being able to apply for free "was like a light switch in a dark place for me."

After being made redundant during the pandemic, she struggled to find work and ended up trying to pay her debts through a credit card.

"Honestly I didn't have the money to pay for anything, so that £90 was like another stumbling block for me," she said.

"I was lacking joy, I was lacking peace, everything seems like a dark place," she said.

But she said she had hope for the future again, knowing that her application will now be at the top of the pile.

### What is a Debt Relief Order (DRO)?

- It is a form of insolvency for those whose debts do not exceed £30,000 - this will rise to £50,000 from 28 June 2024.
- Applicants have to work with a debt organisation and have no more than £75 left each month once essential costs have been paid.
- Those applying for DROs can own a car up to the value of £2,000 - this will rise to £4,000 from 28 June.
- If your application is accepted, some debts will be frozen for one year, then written off.

### What to do if I can't pay my debts?

**Talk to someone.** You are not alone and there is help available. A trained debt adviser can talk you through the options.

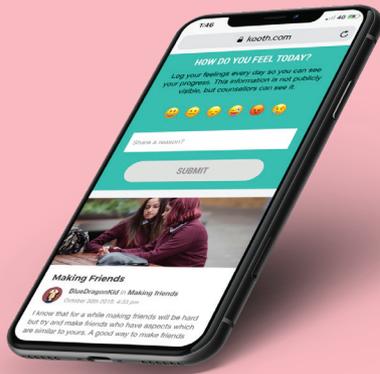
**Take control.** **Citizens Advice** suggest you work out how much you owe, who to, which debts are the most urgent and how much you need to pay each month.

**Ask for a payment plan.** Energy suppliers, for example, must give you a chance to clear your debt before taking any action to recover the money.

**Check you're getting the right money.** Use the independent **MoneyHelper** website or benefits calculators run by **Policy in Practice** and charities **Entitledto** and **Turn2us**.

**Ask for breathing space.** If you're receiving debt advice in England and Wales you can apply for a break to shield you from further interest and charges for up to 60 days.

## 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](http://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 May 2024 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](http://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 May 2024

#### Motivation for Change with Dr Rachel

**Date:** 7 May 2024

**Time:** 1.00pm - 2.00pm



Join Dr Rachel and find out - 'how do we get and stay motivated?', 'how is the brain wired?' and 'why do we find it challenging to embrace change and stay motivated?'. Learn how to develop a toolkit for getting (and staying) motivated.

#### Circle of Support

**Date:** 8 May 2024

**Time:** 7.00pm - 8.00pm



Group for care-experienced people of all ages to discuss a range of topics. Each online session focuses on something different.

To sign up to any of the groups, please complete the form in the link below:

<https://form.jotform.com/203141499622353>



## Transport for West Midlands

The Trust has signed us up to a scheme with TFWM (Travel For West Midlands). The scheme is aiming to get more people using the buses by offering **free bus travel** to different groups of people. Care-experienced young people fit into the 'excluded access' group and are eligible for this Swift Card scheme.

### Swift Card offer - important – please read:

- There will be a question asking if you have a Swift Card – say **No**.
- There will be a question asking how often you use the bus – **say once or twice a month, less than once a month, or never**.

If you got a Swift card in the last round of applications please do not apply again. You will shortly receive a renewal code before your Swift Card is due to expire, as long as you have been actively using your card.

Any problems, please ring Juliette Walton on 07825 117381.

# 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**  
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

- 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](http://www.helpguide.org/home-pages/suicide-prevention.html)

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

Scan this QR Code to apply:



This form closes on 8 May 2024



# The Eve Brook Scholarship Fund

## 25 years of helping young people go to college

by David Edgar, Chair, Eve Brook Scholarship Fund

The Eve Brook Scholarship Fund is an independent charity which was set up 26 years ago to help Birmingham care leavers to go to university. It was founded by a Birmingham city councillor, Eve Brook. Eve had been in charge of children's services and had been inspired by the young people she met. She was sure many of them could go to university if they had the chance.

In 1997, Eve learnt she had cancer and set up EBSF before she died in March 1998. Since then, Eve's charity has spent £445,000 supporting nearly 300 young people to go to university. Currently, 95% of what the fund spends goes directly to young people.

The Fund's Trust meets approximately five times a year to consider applications. We're helped by Sarah Barker from Birmingham Children's Trust 18+ Care Leavers Service, and we work closely with the Trust.

We help with fees for students who can't get loans, support for expenses like travel and childcare, grants for equipment and materials, and a £3,000 postgraduate bursary. Subjects studied by our recent beneficiaries range from drama, creative writing and animation to engineering, biomedical science, forensic psychology and law.

Birmingham care-leavers in higher education are a huge success story. Nationally, 6% of care-leavers go to university. In Birmingham, over the last five years, it has ranged from 7% to 12%.

**To find out more:** Either drop EBSF an email at [evebrookfund@gmail.com](mailto:evebrookfund@gmail.com) or visit our website at [www.evebrookfund.org.uk](http://www.evebrookfund.org.uk), which gives more details about the fund's work, including how to apply (under Award Schemes). Or view our short film, made to celebrate our 25th anniversary last year. <https://vimeo.com/802625640/e9eea87675>

**We will be delivering a 'Going to University' Workshop at the conference for care-experienced young people on Thursday 30 May 2024, 11am – 3.30pm at The Lighthouse Young People's Centre in Aston.**

# 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](mailto:info@sharefound.org)

Or call

**01296 310400**

For further enquiries please contact:  
[Tracey.Britton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto: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.

A sign-up form with a header image of a diverse group of people. The text reads: "Sign up for our care-experienced news and information". Below this, it says "Please add your details below." and lists three fields: "First name", "Last name", and "Email address", each with a corresponding input box.

Sign up for our care-experienced news and information

Please add your details below.

First name

Last name

Email address

# YOUR GOOD NEWS IN APRIL '24

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

Congratulations to every one of you on your achievements in April 2024.

- **Marcus** has managed to secure himself a place onto a masters course in Applied Artificial Intelligence at Teesside University which he is due to commence in September 2024.

His Personal Advisor Gurminder Sidhu is so proud of his hard work, and he is on track to complete his undergraduate degree.

- **Connor** is a skilled artist, and his Personal Advisor Andy Jones has shared some of Connor's fantastic sketches.



- **Zobia** has passed her driving test and has bought herself a little car, Zobia has consented for the photo below to be shared.



**NHS**  
Birmingham and Solihull

## Care Leavers Prescription Form



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

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

[nhsbsolicb.childrenincare@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsolicb.childrenincare@nhs.net)



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

[nhsbsolicb.childrenincare@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsolicb.childrenincare@nhs.net)



### Next Steps – Mentoring and Befriending

For young people aged 16-25 years



This is our brand new Mentoring and Befriending Service that also allows you to develop new skills.

There are some great freebies too like FREE Gym Membership, FREE Broadband, FREE counselling and a 24/7 helpline, Housing and Financial Advice, a MAX discount card and more!

We also make sure you have food and vouchers for any of the activity sessions you attend.

Scan the QR code below to be taken to an application form:



### There are tailored programmes too that include:

- Making the Change – podcast and music production/performance.
- ROCUP – fitness, personal training and positive mindset.
- Wellbeing sessions with Journal to Dream.

### EID EVENT WAS A HUGE SUCCESS

The Trust's annual Eid celebration event was a huge success as children and young people, including some young parents, enjoyed a lavish meal, a DJ and some extras, including chai, candy-floss and cupcakes.



The event was hosted at Tipu Sultan and organised by Trust Rights and Participation officer Tasneem Akhtar.

Trust Chief Executive James Thomas joined in the festivities and met children and young people to wish all a Happy Eid Mubarak.

Following a three-course meal, attendees took to the dance floor to burn off some calories!



# Education, employment and training



## Careers **advice** and **guidance** appointments with Juliette at The Willows every Friday afternoon

- Do you have dreams and ambitions about what you'd like to do in the future?
- Are you hoping to get a job that will make you proud, connect you with people, earn some decent money, and give you independence?

Well everything is possible – you just need to know where to start.

If you would like a careers advice and guidance appointment, to talk through your ideas and options, work out where to start and which way to go, then book a 45-minute slot using Eventbrite..

**Venue:** The Willows, Emmeline St, Birmingham B9 4NG.

**How to get there:** Bus number 17 or 60 from Birmingham city centre.

Get off near the McDonalds by Bordesley Green roundabout, cross over the road and it is a three minute walk to The Willows.

### Times and dates

Slots are available to book for the following times and dates:

- Friday 26 April
- Friday 03 May
- Friday 10 May
- Friday 17 May
- Friday 24 May
- Friday 31 May

- 1.30pm - 2.15pm
- 2.15pm - 3.00pm
- 3.00pm - 3.45pm
- 3.45pm - 4.30pm

### Book a slot

To book a slot please scan the QR code below, and then click on the Eventbrite link for the day you wish to book, or ring Juliette on 07825 117381 to secure a slot:



# Therapeutic Emotional Support Service (TESS)

Come along and join our 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

**2 May 2024.**

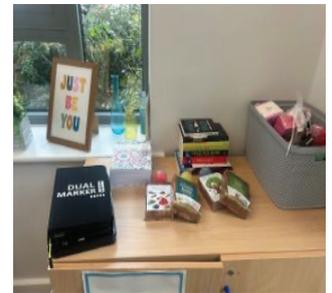
**Time:** 12.00pm – 4.00pm.

## 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.

## Staff available on the day:

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



## Employment and Emotional Wellbeing

Continuing to work can be challenging when we feel anxious or low in mood and it is natural for us to want to avoid places or situations where we feel stressed. Whilst we might feel better for a while, the longer we avoid places where we feel anxious the more difficult it becomes to manage our feelings.

This can become a vicious cycle. This also leads to feeling more isolated, stressed, low in mood and self-confidence. If we stay off work due to experiencing anxiety or low mood these difficulties can feel worse. The longer we avoid work places because of the way we feel, the more challenging it can become to commit to work life.

It feels daunting to go into employment because of the new responsibilities that this involves and the impact this might have on our entitlement to benefits. One way of helping us prepare for this is to consider working part-time to begin with.

Another option is to explore volunteering opportunities to help build our self-confidence. There are lots of opportunities to volunteer with local charities for example food banks or charity shops. Please click on this link for the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council for more information:

**<https://www.bvsc.org/>**

Returning to work provides you with a routine, gives you a sense of identity and purpose, opportunities to form friendships, better financial security and the feeling that you are playing an active part in society.

Please note the following links for tips on maintaining good mental health:

10 ways to maintain your positive mental health on Spunout - **<https://bit.ly/495lqRK>**

Top tips for care experienced young people - IMO - **<https://bit.ly/4ar0BCw>**

# FREE COURSE

## Introduction to Construction

### COURSE START DATES:

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024



### YOU'LL GET...

- CSCS training (Construction Skills Certification Scheme).
- H&S training (Health and Safety).
- Obtain your CSCS Green Card to work in construction.
- Routes into employment.

Our qualified trainers support you every step of the way. 80% of people find work or further training within 2 weeks of completing our course. Ages 16-25.

**GO FOR IT! Call 0121 439 6780 or email: [hello@krtbirmingham.co.uk](mailto:hello@krtbirmingham.co.uk)**

**Follow us on Facebook! @KingstandingRegenerationTrust**

# 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.

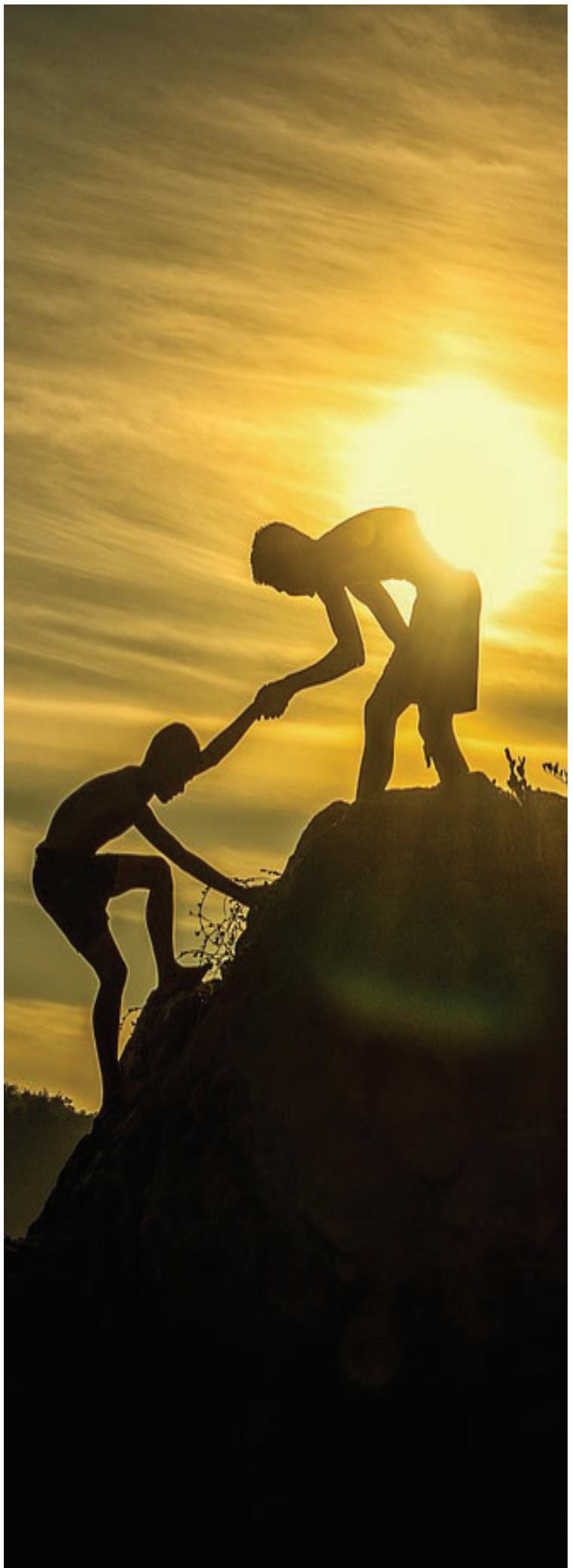
To make a referral or if you have any questions about RAP Advocacy service please email [advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)

## 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."*



# GET ACCESS TO THE AA DRIVING THEORY TEST APP FOR FREE



We've got exciting news. The AA has joined on board with the Care Leavers' Covenant. They've committed to supporting care leavers to become safe and competent drivers on the roads.

## **Their full offer can be found here:**

<https://mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/aa-charitable-trust-theory-test-app/>

Found in the app store, the AA's Driving Theory Test App, originally priced at £4.99, is now available exclusively for care leavers to download and access for FREE.

A great discount initiative to encourage young people to take the first steps to obtaining their driver's licence.

Providing a super user-friendly interface and a database of information covering essential topics to guide them successfully through the DVLA Theory Test.

## **Information on how to access this offer can be found below:**

You will need to confirm that you are a care leaver by signing up to Connects and selecting 'I'm interested in FREE access to the AA Driving Theory Test app.'

Connects Sign-up – Care Leaver Covenant ([mycovenant.org.uk](https://mycovenant.org.uk))

Once verification is completed, an individual access code will be issued.

Care Leavers will need access to a smartphone or device, either on iOS or Google.



## 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](mailto: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>**

## DO YOU WANT FREE BT BROADBAND?



We want to give you an update on the BT care leavers' broadband project where you can apply for a 24 month broadband contract with BT. Birmingham Children's Trust will pay for using funding from an HSF grant.

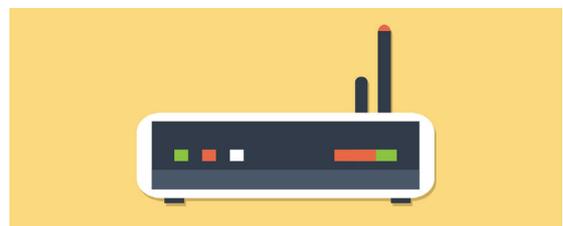
We have the finance to pay for 1,000 young people to have broadband fitted by August 2026.

Since August 2023 we have had 66 young people referred to BT for a broadband connection, and 40 now have an internet connection.

The average wait from sending BT the order to the order being completed was four weeks plus when we started the project in August 2023. For the majority of young people, the wait is now just 2-4 weeks

### How do I find out more?

To find out more about this terrific offer, please contact your PA (personal advisor), and ask them to support you in applying for a BT Broadband line where you live.



# 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](mailto:Julia.balston@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)  
or **Emily Blythe** by text or call **07704 539 011**  
[Emily.Blythe@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:Emily.Blythe@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)

Emily is our Transformation & Improvement Apprentice!

