



THE TRUST TIMES

17+ Care Leavers' Newsletter

May/June 2025

MAY/JUNE 2025

SPECIAL EDITION

- **EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING
OFFERS**
- **ADVICE AND
GUIDANCE
AND MUCH MORE!**

SUMMERTIME BEST WISHES TO YOU!

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the May 2025 issue of The Trust Times. We hope you are taking advantage of the sunny weather and spending some time outdoors.

We have plenty of news, features and lots of education, employment and training opportunities.

On **Page 9** we have an important article about exam and revision tips. We wish everyone taking exams or final year assessments the very best of luck. To help you we have an article about Mindfulness on **Page 10**.

On **Page 21** find out about our FREE Eid event at The Lighthouse on Saturday 14 June.

We also have plenty of money saving offers and opportunities for you to learn and develop, so grab a cuppa and have a good read of this issue.

Take care everyone and don't forget the suncream.

NEW DATES - We offer 45-minute drop-in sessions with Juliette to talk about careers - **see page 5**.



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.

We love to read and see what you are up to each month, and to be able to celebrate all your achievements.

Juliette.Walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

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

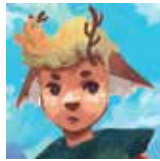
*****NEED HELP ? CALL OUR DUTY LINE ON 0121 464 1229*****

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USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES

Here are four mental health related apps that you can help you.



Apart of Me

- Apart of Me is a beautifully designed and multi-award-winning therapeutic game that draws upon bereavement counselling to create a supportive and magical 3D world. This app is a wonderful way to help process loss.



Calm Harm

- Created by Stem4, a teenage mental health charity, Calm Harm provides techniques to help break the cycle of self-harm.



Clear Fear

- Also from Stem4, Clear Fear uses a Cognitive Behavioural framework to help change anxious thoughts and emotions, alter anxious behaviours and calm fear responses.



Superbetter

- Superbetter is designed to help you build resilience: the ability to stay strong, motivated and optimistic even in the face of difficult obstacles.



All apps are available in the Apple app store or Google Play store.





SPOTLIGHT: **Eve Brook Scholarship Fund**

from care to career



Still going strong!

Eve Brook Scholarship Fund is our local charity supporting care leavers who are heading for university, or who are currently at university.

The Fund has supported over 300 Birmingham care leavers with grants and bursaries.

Please visit the website:

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

If you are interested in applying for a grant or bursary do speak to your PA or call 18+ Team Manager Sarah Barker on 07917 172614

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.



Education, employment and training



Careers **advice** and **guidance** appointments with Juliette face-to-face on Friday afternoons

- 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 ring or message Juliette (details on the right of this page).

Venue: Birmingham Community Hub, 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 30 May 2025
- Friday 6 June 2025
- Friday 13 June 2025
- Friday 20 June 2025
- Friday 11 July 2025
- Friday 18 July 2025
- Friday 25 July 2025

Slots

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

How to book a slot

To book a slot please **ring Juliette** on **07825 117381**

juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk



WE NEED YOU

Here In Rights and Participation, we have groups for our children in care and care-experienced young people to be a part of.

Together all these groups are called **United and Unique** – with the aim of '**Empowering Minds of the Future**'. All groups meet regularly, and their role is to improve children and young people in care as well as care leaver's experiences.

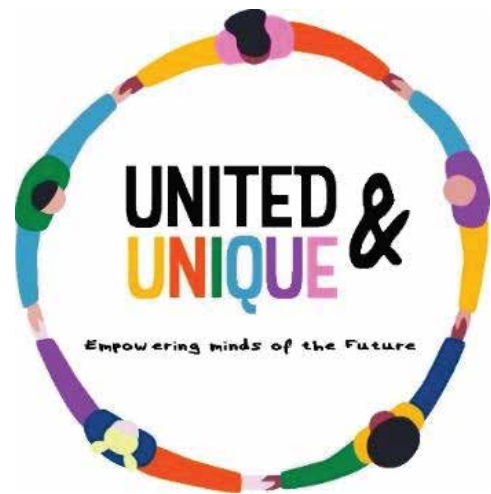
You don't need to disclose anything personal about why you may be in care. All you need to be able to do is commit to attending meetings and work with others to improve things for children in care and/or care leavers.

Our Forum groups provide opportunities to:

- Make friends.
- Feel part of a wider community.
- Have a voice and support the voice of others.
- Make change.
- Get paid and receive vouchers.
- Paid consultation opportunities.
- Be a presenter or deliver training at conferences and events.
- Be on young people's recruitment panels.
- Be part of trips, socials, and fun activities.

CLICK HERE to register interest in joining any of our groups and forums.

APPLY TODAY TO BECOME PART OF...



Together all our groups are called **United and Unique** – with the aim of '*Empowering Minds of the Future*'.

Groups available to join:

- Children in Care Council (age 12-18)
- Junior Children in Care Council (age 8-11)
- SEN (age 12-18)
- LGBTQ (age 12-18)
- Young Parents (up to age 25)
- Care Leavers' Forum (age 18-25)
- Group for young people who are Black, Asian or from any other ethnic minority background (age 11-18)

Click on the link below to register:

CLICK HERE



YOUR MAY 2025 GOOD NEWS

- **Devontae McNally** has completed the Forklift course and passed. He shared that it was very easy and found this to be lots of fun!





Small Business Shout Out

We have some incredible young people that are setting up and running small businesses. We want to recognise your entrepreneurship here in the Trust Times. Our first shoutout is to Abigail.

- **Abigail** is doing amazingly well.

Abigail is at Uni (Newman) but has changed her course to Business and Finance. She is in her first year.

Abigail is also working for City Sprint where she did her apprenticeship and has just launched her own business in hair wigs and weaves.

Abigail is up and running online, she has her own website and social media.

Check out Abigail's business card!



Access to Work for Work Experience arranged by your Work Coach through Jobcentre Plus

Access to Work can give practical and financial support to help you overcome difficulties to starting or keeping a job due to a disability or long term physical or mental health condition.

Access to work can also give practical advice and guidance to employers to help them understand physical and mental health conditions and how they can support employees.

Customers claiming a benefit and who start a work experience placement with an employer may be entitled to Access to Work support, as well as disabled people starting a self-arranged work experience placement and who do not claim a benefit.

How can it help me?

Access to Work can help pay for support you need because of a disability or long-term health condition.

The types of support that may be available through Access to Work include aids and equipment in your workplace, adaptations to equipment to make them easier for you to use, and money towards extra travel costs to and from work experience if you can't use available public transport or your own transport, plus lots more

How do I apply?

If you are claiming benefit speak to your Jobcentre work coach. If you are not claiming a benefit, find out more at **www.gov.uk/access-to-work**

Exam and revision tips, and Good Luck!

by Juliette Walton

Many of you will be taking exams soon, and from my own experience – it can be stressful. I have pulled together some useful advice – it's only brief but could really help. So, please read and pass on to anyone else who might need it.

Top five tips for revision

- Make sure your exams are in the diary – what, where and when.
- Make a plan of what to revise and when, and then make yourself stick to the plan.
- Don't revise for too long at any one time – take a break every 45 mins, move around and get some fresh air.
- Ask for help from your tutor, head of department or learning mentor - use past papers if they are available.
- Look after yourself – eat and drink healthily, get a good night's sleep, keep in touch with the kind and caring people (and animals) in your life.



Top five exam tips

- Using the top five revision tips, be prepared for your exam.
- Eat before the exam, your brain works better on food and take water into the exam.
- Arrive in good time – early – with any equipment you need.
- Look through the whole paper and start with the easy questions.
- If it doesn't go well, don't beat yourself up. Remember - from every difficult experience, we learn and become stronger.

If you want any help with your exam prep, speak to your PA or Juliette Walton.

We also have mentors who can help you get through. Good luck 😊



Mindfulness - a quick guide



Mindfulness helps to manage stress and anxiety and support our wellbeing.

We can find ourselves worrying about the past and future; whether this is about finances, where we are living, education, work or our friends & family.

Mindfulness can help us to manage these challenges by being in the present moment.

When we are in the present moment, we are less likely to be caught up in distressing thoughts that can cause us to feel overwhelmed and exacerbate the situation.

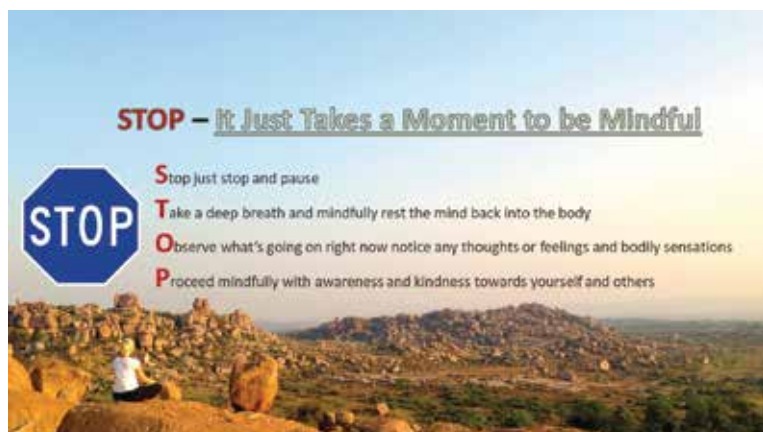
We may not always be able to change our situation, but we can develop the skills that help us to become more resilient and creative when dealing with challenges.

Mindfulness can help to develop calm and clarity, increase self-esteem and resilience, and enjoy the simple pleasures in life.

Here are some simple mindfulness strategies and exercises you can implement in the everyday, particularly when something is difficult.

STOP Exercise

This practice can be particularly helpful to do when experiencing something difficult and is also good to get into the habit of doing it regularly a few times a day.



Mindful Breaths

This practice helps you to check-in with yourself. When waking up in the morning taking 2 deep breaths. Next be aware of 5 natural breaths. Repeat this before going to bed at night

Mindful Walking

Go for a walk for at least 20 minutes each day. Take your awareness into the soles of your feet and notice the physical sensations in your feet. Take time to look at what you see – objects, colours, shapes. Tune into any sounds – notice the quality of each sound, volume, pitch.



Three-Step Breathing Space

This practice helps you to take a pause from what you are doing. It helps you to step back from what is happening and notice your experience. It can help you feel calmer and gain a different perspective on what may be happening.

There are 3 steps in this practice:

- **Step 1** – Broad Focus: Start by paying attention to your thoughts feelings, body and mood. Labelling thoughts as 'Thinking'
- **Step 2** – Narrow Focus: Focus on your breathing, noticing where you can feel it in the body.
- **Step 3** – Expand Focus: Expand your awareness again to your whole body, the space around you, and your environment.

Each step takes about 1 minute, with the whole practice being 3 minutes. However, you can do it for as long as you wish.

You're Not Falling Behind — You're Building Your Own Journey

*A message from leshea Daniel
(She/Her), 18+ Senior Personal Advisor*

Growing up in care means you've had to handle more than most people your age.

That doesn't make you weak — it means you've had to be strong in ways others might never understand.

Life isn't a race, and there's no one "right" way to grow or succeed. You're moving at your own pace, and that's more than okay. The only competition is yourself!

You've already come through things that could have held you back, and that says a lot about your strength.

You deserve support, happiness, and a future that feels right for you. Keep going — your story matters. You have the strength to create your own path.

Every challenge you've faced has shaped you into someone capable of achieving amazing things. Believe in yourself, because you are your own greatest advocate.

Your journey is unique, and no matter where it takes you, you have the power to make it your own. Embrace your resilience, trust in your growth, and keep moving forward—there's so much more ahead for you.

COUNCIL TAX EXEMPTION

A reminder from the Trust's 18+ Service

Birmingham care leavers from the age of 18 are exempt from paying Council Tax, if you live in Birmingham.



Our 18+ team shares data with the Council Tax team to confirm who is a care leaver.

To be thorough you need to apply for the single person 25% discount and any council tax reduction you are eligible for. If you live at the family home or share with others it is only any liability that you have that is discounted and the Council Tax office does not sort that out for you, as you need to declare their situation (or the bill payer would have to).

University students, wherever you live, are exempt from Council Tax, but you do have to let the Council Tax office there know you are a student.

There is information about this and a link to a form that over 21's can use, just click the link below:

[CLICK HERE](#)

If you live outside Birmingham, each individual will need to also apply for any discount and reduction and then send their PA the bill.

The Trust 18+ team will pay the remainder (on condition you are liable for the tax and have claimed all deductions).

This policy is led by Birmingham City Council, and is in place until your 25th birthday.

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:
Sajid.H.Khan@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Do you need Summer Uni accommodation?



Are you a university student that needs to find accommodation during the summer holidays?

If you are away from Birmingham at university for term-time and want to come back for the summer, we have found this resource from Unite Students.

You can view the halls of residence being empty over the summer.

Unite Students let them out cheap to other students, for example those taking summer schools. You can view available accommodation throughout England, including Birmingham.

The website is well worth a look and very affordable:

www.unitestudents.com/summer





The Care Leaver Covenant has created over 2,000 opportunities covering employment, training and holistic support along with home kits, home DIY refurbishments, free tickets, discounts and giveaways.

Go to the website:

<https://mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/care-leaver-opportunities/>

connects

You can also stay up-to-date with news and events by signing up to CLC Connects.

Opportunities including work and education, through to recreational offers and giveaways.

Go to the website:

<https://mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/>



**Birmingham and Solihull
Integrated Care System**
Caring about healthier lives

WORK WELL SERVICE

WorkWell is a new service for anyone aged 16+ with a health condition or disability who is struggling to find work or stay in their job because of their health.

Their team of friendly WorkWell coaches will help you to make a plan to address your work and health needs and get the job you want.

They can help improve your confidence with CV's, job applications and interview preparation and offer advice and support on getting the right job for you. They can also help you to access a range of light touch physical and mental health services if you need support as part of your work and health plan.

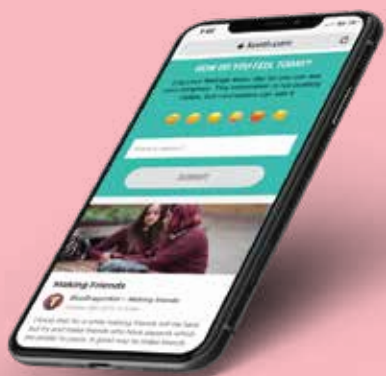
They can also provide in work support to help you to stay in your job if you are already employed and struggling with your health, including working with your employer.

If this sounds like the right service for you, click on the link below refer yourself and provide the team with some details about you.

CLICK HERE



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 June 2025 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**

Courses in June 2025

Dr Rachel's Trauma and Anxiety

Dates: 2, 9, 16 and 23 June

Times: All sessions 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Would you like to better understand how trauma and anxiety affect us, learn how to manage them more effectively, and build your own anxiety toolkit for the future? Join Dr Rachel for a four-week course exploring the impact of trauma, practical strategies for managing anxiety, and ways to feel more in control day-to-day.

Circle of Support

Date: 4 June 2025

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.

Access to Records Support Group

Date: 10 June 2025

Time: 7.00pm - 8.00pm

This support group is for care-experienced people who have either already accessed their records or are in the process of accessing them and need support.

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

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 the 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

4 June 2025.

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



Racism, fear and trauma

The Trust has published a website article on *'Supporting our children and young people experiencing racism, fear, and trauma'*.

Whilst the key audience is children, we felt it would be useful for you to read too.

This article features part of a statement made recently by the British Association of Play Therapists (BAPT).

To read the article

CLICK HERE



Employment and Emotional Wellbeing

Why not explore volunteering opportunities to help build your 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>**



GROWTH PATH

INTRODUCTION TO CONSTRUCTION

Registration dates 2025:

30th January	17th July
27th February	14th August
27th March	11th September
24th April	9th October
22nd May	6th November
19th June	

You'll get

- CSCS training
(Construction Skills Certification Scheme)
- Health and Safety training
- Free CSCS Green Card
- Routes into employment, training
and apprenticeships
- Work experience on real jobs
- Employability skills

Go for it !

Call 0121 439 6780 or
email hello@growthpath.org.uk

www.growthpath.org.uk

Growth Path Services

1 Brookvale Park, Erdington,
Birmingham B23 7AG

Our qualified trainers support you every step of the way. 70% of people find work or enter further training within 6 months of completing our course. Course is for ages 16 – 29. It is **free of charge**. PPE, lunch and bus travel cards provided.

DATA OFFER

Information from Care Leavers' Association

Are you struggling with the cost of living and in need of data? The Care Leavers' Association Data Bank is here to help!



In association with The Digital Inclusion Network, The Care Leavers' Association presents:

'Keeping Care Leavers Connected'.

They know how important staying connected is, especially in these challenging times.

If you're a care leaver in need of data, please reach out to the Data Bank at:

info@careleavers.com

This offer is open to care experienced people of any age

Please email: **info@careleavers.com** with any queries.

Contents insurance for council tenants and leaseholders

Birmingham City Council has worked with Royal & Sun Alliance to create a contents insurance scheme that's just for council tenants and leaseholders.

Prices start from £0.45 a week for up to £4000 contents cover, and will depend on your postcode.

The cost will also include a transaction fee.

The price depends on individual circumstances, postcode and cover chosen.

The cover has these benefits:

- the option to pay for the insurance weekly, monthly or yearly
- no excess payable on any claim
- no minimum security requirements
- fast and efficient claims service
- new for old cover (except for household linen and clothing where an allowance is made for wear and tear)

How to apply

If you are interested in taking out contents insurance with Royal & Sun Alliance, you can apply by phone:

0345 671 8172.

To find out more information you can visit the city council website:

CLICK HERE

Join us in building your own *Jacket Potato* business venture



Are you a young adult aged 19-24?

Then get in touch, as we are looking for young people like you to be part of an exciting new business venture that will provide jacket potatoes and refreshments across the city and on match days.

The programme includes:

- Education and Training Programme in **food hygiene, customer service** and **cooking** with first hand opportunities with experienced chefs.
- **Full support and mentoring** throughout the training and development of the business.
- Working as a team to develop your own **business model, name, brand and shape the business as it develops.**
- Flexible volunteering hours once the business is up and running options including **daytimes, evenings, and weekends.**
- Good incentives and benefits programme including **gym membership, travel expenses, tickets to home games and other experiences.**

"Be part of something deliciously different"

To express your interest in becoming the next jacket potato social entrepreneur please scan the QR code



In proud partnership with , **Lets Feed Brum** and **South and City College.**



Alternatively **CLICK HERE** to reach the application form

LOW COST FOOD CLUBS



You or someone you know may struggle with their food bills.

There is help available to buy good quality food at a low prices.

Family Action has launched Food Clubs (Food On Our Doorstep).

- Pay £1 a year for your family to become a member.
- Once joined, you can purchase food items every week worth approximately £15 for just £3.50.
- Your Local Pantry offers food at affordable prices.
- Members pay towards a membership scheme which gives them the option to pick food items from the pantry for free.

Visit the Food Clubs website:

<https://bhamforwardsteps.co.uk/food-clubs/>



GRUB AT THE HUB

We now have our very own food store at the Birmingham Community Hub (formerly the Willows), Emmeline Street, B9 4NG (Bus 60 from the city centre).

It is open to care leavers every Friday afternoon from 1.30pm – 4.30pm.

No need to book, just turn up and take as much as you want – it is all good quality and completely free.

Currently in stock we have soups, sauces, pasta, tea, coffee, chocolate, baby-milk and much more!

We also have chopping boards, baking trays and muffin trays.

So come and grab some grub from the hub 😊

Enquiries to:

Juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
07825 117 381



CitizenCard is an alternative to carrying more valuable ID about with you. It is affordable and recognised as ID by all sorts of companies and official agencies.

The CitizenCard is:

- recognised by police
- recognised by retailers
- affordable and practical, and
- verifiable online

Anyone can apply for one. All CitizenCards display the PASS hologram endorsed by the Home Office. In addition, their 18+ photo ID card displays the logos of the Police and Security Industry Authority that give their full support to the scheme.

Find out more by visiting the CitizenCard website: www.citizencard.com



UNI SURVEY OPEN FOR YOUR VIEWS

Are you a university student with experience of care?

In 2019, colleagues at the University of Sheffield and the Care Leaver Covenant published the findings of a study Pathways to University from Care.

These findings included recommendations on how government, local authorities and universities could better support students with care experience through their university journey.



They now want to know if students with care experience are having a more positive experience of university life. They also want to know if there are improvements that still need to be made to better support care leavers.

There is opportunity at the end of the survey to enter a prize draw to win a £250 Amazon voucher.

You can access the survey below:

CLICK HERE

The survey will take around 20 minutes to complete.

All responses will be confidential and anonymous.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Katie at:

k.ellis@sheffield.ac.uk

Eid Mubarak

**FREE ENTRY
FOR ALL AGES**

**SATURDAY 14th JUNE 2025
12PM-3PM**

**The Lighthouse, 100 Alma Way
B19 2LN**

ACTIVITIES

**FREE HOT FOOD AND CHAI
RAFFLE PRIZES**

360 PHOTO BOOTH

FOOD AND CLOTHES STALLS

SLUSH — BOLLYWOOD DANCERS — DJ

FACE PAINTING — CANDY FLOSS

LIVE DRUMMERS — BOUNCY CASTLE

MEHNDI (HENNA ART)

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."

FREE APPLIANCE FITTING SERVICE



If you are a care-experienced young person living in Birmingham, you are entitled to **free** appliance fitting from Birmingham City Council.

This includes fitting cookers (gas or electric), washing machines and other appliances.

How to get this free service

To get this service please download a request form by clicking on the link below:

CLICK HERE

Complete the form and send to **ALL** the email addresses listed at the top of the form.

Please copy in your PA.





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:

heena.rana@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.

To go to all the information click on the link below. Take time to read all sections:

CLICK HERE

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.

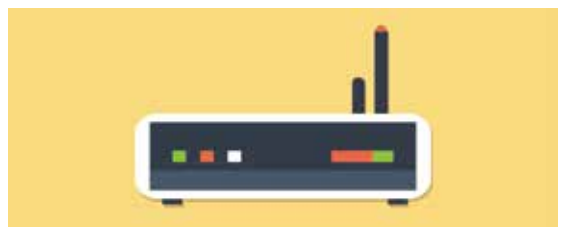
We have the finance to pay for 1,000 young people to have broadband fitted by August 2026.

Since August 2023 we have had over 300 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.





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 14**.



HELP WITH WATER BILLS

Birmingham Children's Trust has been working with Severn Trent Water and we are pleased to let you know, Severn Trent Water are now able to offer a discount on water bills for care leavers.

Severn Trent Water is committed to supporting care leavers through the **Big Difference Scheme**, which can reduce water bills for care leavers living independently up to the age of 25. Severn Trent have taken steps to help care leavers access this opportunity.

If you live within the Severn Trent Water region, and receive services from Severn Trent, care-leavers can join the **Big Difference Scheme**, offering a reduced tariff of up to 70% off water charges. To qualify for the reduced tariff, they must receive notification from Birmingham Children's Trust. We will be sending names every month (the last Friday of the month) in one transaction, so once confirmed as eligible there may be a wait before it is sent to Severn Trent Water.

For this and for you to opt into the scheme, we will need to share with Severn Trent Water that you are a care leaver. We will only share that you are a care leaver to Severn Trent Water and will not share any information around why or how you are a care leaver.

PLEASE NOTE: Severn Trent Water only supply to certain areas of the West Midlands. Please check the link below to confirm you receive water from Severn Trent.

To check if you're a customer of STW, check this link:

www.water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier

Please click on the link below to complete the form for the Big Difference Scheme:

CLICK HERE



Like many other utilities, Severn Trent Water share your personal data with, and receive your personal data from, Credit Reference Agencies (CRAs). The Big Difference Scheme is a non-standard payment arrangement to help those who need assistance with their water charges. If accepted onto this scheme Severn Trent Water will share information with credit reference agencies, and this could influence your credit status. For more information, please visit www.stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/customer-information/sharing-data-with-credit-reference-agencies/

PAUSE HUBS

Leaving care can be a challenging time for many young people.

Care leavers are identified to be at a higher risk of experiencing mental health issues and report lower wellbeing compared to their non-care-experienced peers.

If you need support or would like to talk to someone... **Have you heard about Pause?**

Pause is a service delivered by The Children's Society, in partnership with Forward Thinking Birmingham:

- They provide access immediate support and you can speak to an Emotional Wellbeing Practitioner.
- They listen to you and help you find solutions.
- There are no referrals or waiting lists - you choose when and how to use their service.
- Pause can help anyone under 25 years old who is registered with a Birmingham GP

Pause drop-ins happen at different places or 'Hubs' each day.

Pause hubs are in Digbeth, Northfield, Sparkbrook and Erdington.

Each week we publish the Pause drop-in dates, times and locations.

Please see this link:

<https://forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk/pause>





Sexual health and wellbeing services for young people (up to 25)

Did you know that Umbrella provides dedicated counselling and support for people up to 25 years with any issues that may impact on your sexual health and wellbeing.

This includes support around:



- Sexuality
- Relationships
- Pregnancy
- Body image and self-confidence
- Sexual assault and abuse
- Problematic pornography use
- Gender identity
- Domestic abuse



You can expect a safe, non-judgmental and confidential environment

umbrellahealth.co.uk

0121 237 5700

**Monday 9.00am - 5.00pm
Tuesday 10.15am - 5.00pm
Wednesday 9.00am - 5.00pm
Thursday 9.00am - 5.00pm
Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm**