



# THE TRUST TIMES

17+ Care Leavers' Newsletter

Summer (July/August) 2025

## SUMMER 2025

### SPECIAL EDITION

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

# SUMMERTIME BEST WISHES TO YOU!

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the July 2025 issue of The Trust Times. We hope you have been applying the sun cream and drinking plenty of water this tropical summer.

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

Make sure you check out the **Care Leaver Internship Scheme** (page 9), and if interested, apply ASAP, as applications close on **25 July**.

You can also read some news stories from two of our **Trust Personal Advisors** (pages 10 and 11).

We also have some **advice if you will be out and about this summer** (page 29), and a new **Global Spotlight**, starting with Eritrea (page 13).

Also find out about our Next Steps Programme (page 16) and could you be a Young Inspector? (page 17).

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



## Get paid to share your good news

We love to hear your voice through poems, lyrics, stories and blogs.

If you'd like us to share any of your writing in the newsletter, send it to **Juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk** or WhatsApp **07825 117381**.

We know every day isn't always easy, but we will publish good news, essential information and positive messages that will bring hope and inspire.

For every item we publish, we'll **pay you £10 in whatever voucher is most useful to you**.

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

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# USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES

Here are four summer themed apps that you can help you.



## PictureThis - Plant Identifier

- PictureThis identifies 1,000,000+ plants daily with over 98% accuracy—your personal plant expert in your pocket. Make the most of your summer walks by checking out the flora around you.



## My Therapy - Pill Reminder

- Within daily life, sometimes it can be hard to remember to take your medication. The MyTherapy medicine app reliably reminds you to take your tablets, pills and vitamins at a regular time.



## Infinite Painter

- Feeling creative this summer? Experience one of the best-designed painting, sketching, and drawing apps for tablets, phones, and Chromebooks, for free.



## Life360

- Stay connected and coordinated this summer with Life360. With this free app you've got the location of everyone (and everything) that matters most right in the palm of your hand.



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







# SPOTLIGHT: Central Birmingham Wellbeing Hub

The **Central Birmingham Wellbeing Hub** is open Tuesday to Friday, from 10am to 4pm

As part of the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health & Wellbeing Hubs service, our Wellbeing Hub provides a safe and secure space for anyone aged 18+ living in Birmingham or Solihull who is seeking mental health advice, support, or guidance.

The service is a collaboration between Birmingham Mind and Creative Support. It supports adults aged 18+ who are under secondary mental health services in Birmingham or Solihull, on the GP serious mental illness list, or living with a long-term mental health condition.

**MAKE A REFERRAL TO THE HUB**

## 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:** BCFC Foundation 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 BCFC Foundation Community Hub.

### Times and dates

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

- Friday 18 July 2025
- Friday 25 July 2025
- Friday 1 August 2025
- Friday 8 August 2025
- Friday 15 August 2025
- Friday 22 August 2025
- Friday 29 August 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](mailto: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.

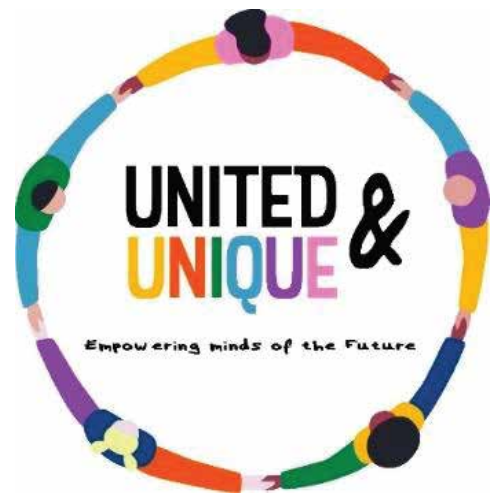
You don't need to disclose anything personal about why you may be in care. All you need to be able to do is commit to attending meetings and work with others to improve things for children in care and/or care leavers.

## 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 JULY 2025 GOOD NEWS



- **Tim** passed his vocational course and is now a fully qualified carpenter and painter and decorator.



- Feedback from PA Liz Creamer about **Kris**:

"I've been working with **Kris** for seven months and in that time he has moved into semi-supported accommodation and is nearly ready to live independently.

"He has been doing really well on his college course, which is hospitality and functional skills, and he plans to go onto an apprenticeship after college, in the summer of 2026.

"He has gone through a lot of difficulties with his learning needs but he is really resilient and determined – he works with the advice he is given. He's a good role model and is doing so well."



- **Callum** recently secured a job with Coatapart as a paint sprayer. Well done and good luck Callum 😊.



- **Louise Kennedy** is a Business Support Apprentice at the Trust. Louise received a shout out for her tireless work with the Rights, Participation and Corporate Parenting service. She is always willing to help anyone in the service and has supported multiple urgent tasks – including administration support for the Education Awards.

## BIG THANKS TO MIA FOR COOKING UP TREATS

Thank you Mia for the fantastic cooking sessions.

We've learnt how to make Mac 'n' Cheese, Potato & Cheese Kebabs, Butter Chicken and Rice, Pizza, and more!

Your passion for cooking and sharing your skills with young people has been truly appreciated.

Hopefully Cooking with Mia will return when we can get some funding together, so watch this space. If it's on, details will be in this newsletter.



To prepare you for the next sessions, here is **Mia's amazing Mango Cake!** Yummy !!!



## 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 shout out in July is to Leah.

• **Leah Matthews** is a highly talented creator of unique realistic baby dolls.

Leah creates and sells reborn baby dolls. From painting layer-by-layer to individually adding hair strands, Leah hand-crafts each baby doll.

The dolls are provided for different people, ranging from those who lost children, to those suffering from dementia, to avid collectors of dolls.

Leah is on social media and can be contacted by phone or email. Check out Leah's advert below!

**Leah matthews**  
Reborn artist

I create and sell realistic reborn baby dolls. From painting layer by layer to rooting one by one, hair strand by strand. These hypo realistic reborns are for those who have lost children, had miscarriages, elderly with dementia, those who can't have children, just those like to collect. All my content is on my pages detailed below. Please feel free to contact me anytime.

07769103750  
Leahmatthews2801@gmail.com  
Facebook: The forever babies  
Tiktok: rebornleahmatthews589  
Insta: The forever reborns 2025

## Department for Education (DfE) online support for care leavers

Leaving care can be a challenging time. Whether you're still in care or have already left, help is available.

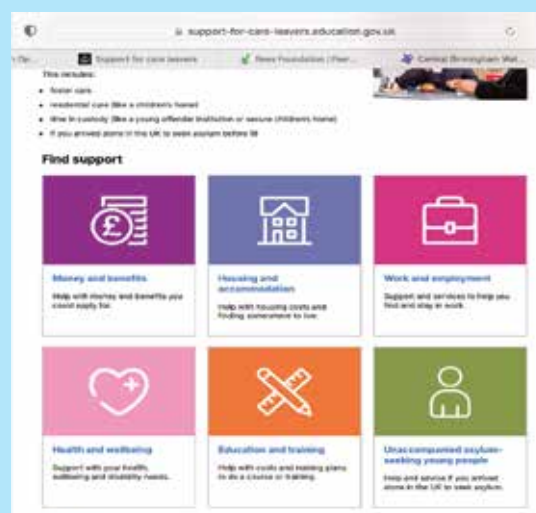
### Who this support is for?

You might have the right to care leaver support if you:

- are aged 16 to 25
- have been in care or looked after by a local authority in England.

### This includes:

- foster care
- residential care (like a children's home)
- time in custody (like a young offender institution or secure children's home)
- if you arrived alone in the UK to seek asylum before 18.



### Visit the website

To get all the latest support information go to the website. Link below.

<http://support-for-care-leavers.education.gov.uk>



# Care Leaver Internship Scheme 2025

by Juliette Walton

Every year the government launches their **Care Leaver Internship Scheme**, an great opportunity to gain an amazing experience to work in a central government service, and 2025 is no different. We very much encourage you to read this article, visit the website, and **apply for a role by 25 July**.

## What is the scheme?

The Care Leaver Internship Scheme is an award-winning scheme run by the Department for Education.

They offer jobs for care leavers in either a central government department or agency. The duration of the internship scheme is 18-months.

You can be made permanent after the first 12-months depending on:

- Your performance over the 12 months
- headcount within the department
- funding within the department.

## Eligibility

**To apply for the scheme, you must be:**

- entitled to a leaving care package\*
- aged 18-30
- meet the Civil Service nationality requirements.

\* = You must have been in care for a minimum of 13 weeks. Some of this time must have been after your 16th birthday. If you are unsure whether you meet this criteria, please speak to your personal advisor or Juliette Walton.



## Making an application

If you would like to apply for this scheme but would like some advice and help with the process, speak to your PA, or your mentor or contact Juliette Walton: The application link is below in an orange box.

**Juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**  
07825 117381

## Here's a quote from Gabrielle, now working with HMRC:

"What I enjoy most about my role is how every day brings a new challenge. It is helping me to build my confidence and social skills, and although this is an ongoing battle, I have seen such a change in myself and in what I am able to achieve because of the supportive nature of my working environment. I would absolutely recommend the internship to other care leavers. My advice would be to just take a chance and go for it, it may just be the fresh start that you need."

**CLICK HERE TO GO TO VACANCIES**

**NOTE:** Applications close on 25 July 2025.

# Meet Stephen the Personal Advisor

by Stephen Wilks

Hi, I'm Stephen, and I'm proud to be joining Birmingham Children's Trust as a Personal Advisor. This role means a lot to me—not just as a job, but as someone who's been on the other side of the system.

I entered care at the age of four, during a very turbulent time in my family. Like many children, I didn't really understand what was happening—I just knew I was being taken away. That moment felt confusing, frightening, and completely out of my control.

But along the way, there were people who made a difference. I remember one foster home in Henley-in-Arden, where the carers were kind and caring. It was the first time I felt what genuine safety looked like. I still carry that with me.

## A moment in time

One memory that changed me was coming home from a trip out and finding my older brother—who had been with me through everything—suddenly gone. We hadn't said goodbye. That moment really hit me and left a mark. It taught me how fragile everything can feel when you're in care.

Leaving care was a huge adjustment. You go from having some level of structure around you to suddenly navigating independence alone. But I was lucky to have people in my corner—like Juliette from the Trust—who believed in me. With her support, I got my provisional licence and a work placement at the Marriott Hotel.

That opportunity changed everything. Hospitality became my safe space. It was where I could be myself, grow in confidence, and feel like I belonged. I even started my own cocktail business, and then went on to work with Springboard, helping others find their path into the industry.



Back then, I didn't believe I'd amount to much. I had that "just another care kid" mentality. But over time, with the right support and chances to grow, that changed. Now, I'm ambitious, grateful, and ready to give back.

I've since worked in care homes and youth support roles, and I'm now excited to bring that experience to Birmingham Children's Trust.

My goal is to walk beside young people - not in front of them. To be someone they can trust, relate to, and feel genuinely supported by.

Today, I'm also a dad of two. I have a partner, a son aged four, and a baby girl just a few months old. My past will always be part of me - but now, I get to build the kind of home I always wished for, while helping others to build theirs.

**To any care leaver reading this:** Your story isn't finished. You have strength you haven't even discovered yet. And people—like me—who believe in you.

# Meet Ria the Senior Personal Advisor

## The role of a PA – Cheerleader?

by Ria Taylor, Senior Personal Advisor



As PAs we are often referred to as your support worker.

### But what does this really mean?

When I was thinking about this recently I started to think about a football supporter.

They turn up to the important games, they follow every achievement and celebrate alongside their team.

They turn up rain or shine, and remain loyal to their team when they are winning and losing.

A football fan will cheer wholeheartedly while their team are on the pitch, always willing them on to be their best and climb the league.

And, on days when the match doesn't go their way, grown adults have been brought to tears to cry for their team's results.

Well in many ways, you can think of your PA as your cheerleader.

I don't think you will catch any of us with pompoms ready to do a routine, but we are in the stands cheering you on, come rain or shine.

Your PA really wants the best for you and will celebrate alongside you for all your wins in life:

- When you get your exam results or are invited for your first job interview.
- When you pick up the phone to make the call you've been worried about or get the keys to your first flat.

We'll be there cheering you on.

We know that life is not always straight forward though, there are wins and losses along the way.

Just like a football fan, we will stick with you through it all.

**So next time your PA is introduced as your support worker, imagine them as your cheerleader!**



## 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:  
[Sajid.H.Khan@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto: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](http://www.unitestudents.com/summer)



# GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

# ERITREA

Big thanks to Trust Personal Advisors Gemma Cunningham and Taslima Akbar for starting a new feature in Trust Times.

Each issue they will focus on a different country, in light of children and young people that are Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers coming into Birmingham from that country.

In this issue we focus on Eritrea.



**Official name:** State of Eritrea.

**Population:** Over 6,300,000 people.

**Capital City:** Asmara.

**Languages:** Tigrinya, Tigre, Kunama, Bilen, Nara, Saho, Afar, Beja, and Arabic.

**Religions:** Christianity and Islam.

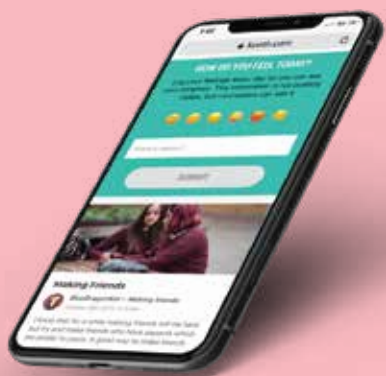
**Currency:** 1 Eritrean Nakfa (ERN) is equivalent to £0.05 British Pounds (GBP).



## Interesting facts

- Eritrea is situated in the horn of Africa.
- The 30 leaves on the wreath on the Eritrean flag represent the number of years of civil war that lead to Eritrea's independence.
- Eritrea has had one president since 1993 following their independence, Isaias Afwerki, who remains the only president Eritrea has ever had.
- Eritrea is one of the hottest places on earth, with one of the highest all year around average temperature.
- Eritrea is home to one of the oldest port cities in Africa.
- Eritrea is the home of ancient ruins and over 400 churches and monasteries.
- Popular Eritrean dishes often feature injera (a sourdough flat bread) and stews.
- Coffee ceremonies are an important part of Eritrean social gatherings, symbolizing friendship, hospitality, and warmth.
- The traditional attire in Eritrea consists of colourful and vibrant clothing.

## 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 July 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](http://www.reesfoundation.org)**

### Courses in July & August 2025

#### Stress Masterclass

**Dates:** 11 August

**Times:** 10.00am - 11.00am



Explore the impact of stress, burnout, and the constant pressure of living in a world that never seems to slow down. You'll look at how everyday demands — from work and relationships to social media and expectations — can take a toll on your wellbeing.

#### Circle of Support

**Date:** 6 August 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.

#### Careers Support Clinic

**Date:** 30 July 2025

**Time:** 15-minute slots



Book a 15 minute slot with Lucy, our Careers Mentor, who will be on hand to offer help and advice to care-experienced people looking for a new job, training or to get into higher education!

To sign up please use 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

**6 August 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



## Care Leaver Covenant July 2025 update and Case Studies

Care leavers can sign up to **'Connects'**.

Run by the Care Leaver Covenant, **'Connects'** will keep you up to date with relevant work, education and recreational opportunities, as well as information about the support that care leavers may be able to access.

In addition to this, care leavers will be automatically entered into our giveaways!

To sign up click on the link below:

**SIGN UP TO CONNECTS**



## connects JULY SIGN UP GIVEAWAY

If you are a care leaver, aged 16-25, all you need to do is sign-up to 'Connects' by 31 July 2025 and you will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50.00 Amazon gift card.

**Use the link below to sign up.**

**SIGN UP TO CONNECTS**

## Case studies on pages 30-31

On pages 30-31 you can read two awesome case-studies that focus on activities that have been delivered by the Care Leaver Covenant plus a successful work placement completed by Skye, a care-experienced photography student.

# JOIN THE NEXT STEPS BEFRIENDING & MENTORING PROGRAMME!

Let's beat loneliness together and make new friends!

**Are you 16-25 and Care Experienced?**

Ready to connect, level up & have fun?

Link up weekly with our activity  
partners.



**FREE gym membership (1 year)**  
**FREE food at every session**

**FREE Swift bus pass (1 year)**  
**FREE Ask Jan membership (1 year)-**  
24/7 Counselling, legal advice, financial advice,  
mental health support & much more.



**FREE monthly social activities— Bowling,  
Toca Social, Lazer Battlez & more**

**Current activity partners:**

**2MUCH  
PASSION**



*Journal to* **DREAMS**



Scan the barcode to join



**OR CLICK HERE TO JOIN**

**Next Steps**  
Programme



**BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

# YOUNG INSPECTORS PROJECT NEEDS YOU!

At Birmingham Children's Trust, we are developing a new project called, the **Young Inspectors**.

The **Young Inspectors** project offers a unique opportunity for care leavers to actively participate in supporting quality assurance visits to children's homes and supported accommodation alongside placements commissioning officers.

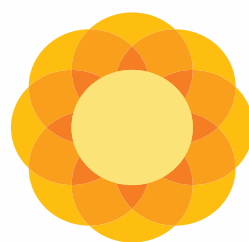
As a **Young Inspector**, you will play a crucial role in ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and considered in decision-making processes. Through training and hands-on experience, you will learn skills in quality assurance, communication, and advocacy.

By joining the Young Inspectors project, you will have the chance to make a real impact in improving services that directly affect young people. Your insights and feedback will be instrumental in shaping the future of care services and ensuring the needs of young people are prioritized.

If you are passionate about making a difference, gaining valuable experience, and contributing to positive change, the Young Inspectors project is an exciting opportunity for you to get involved and be part of a meaningful initiative.

## Interested in becoming a Young Inspector?

If you would like the opportunity to get involved, please show your interest by signing up here:  
<https://forms.office.com/e/bt5wB1G27c>





# 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



## Useful food bank websites

### The Trussell Trust

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

### Birmingham Forward Steps

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

### Birmingham City Council Food Voucher requests

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/xfp/form/825>



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](http://www.citizencard.com)



## CONSTRUCTION SITE VISITS

In May this year young people at Trust staff visited the GRAHAM construction site behind the Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital.

In addition a visit was made to the Volker Fitzpatrick construction site near the M6 A38 junction. The pictures below are from the Volker Fitzpatrick visit.

Two of the young people have their CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Card) cards and now they're doing a week's work experience at the GRAHAM site.

After this, they'll be ready for work. We have good links with Falcon Green construction recruitment agency who will help them find their first construction job.



### Interested in construction opportunities?

If you'd like to be invited to the next construction opportunity, get in touch with Alex:  
**[alex.hillman@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:alex.hillman@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)**





# 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**

## 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."*

## 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](mailto: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.

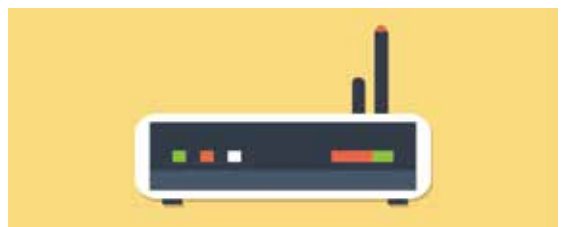
We have the finance to pay for 1,000 young people to have broadband fitted by August 2026.

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](http://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](http://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/](http://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](http://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**

# Get help with the cost of prison visits

If you visit a family member, partner or someone who does not get other visitors you might be able to get help paying for:

- travel to the prison
- overnight accommodation
- meals.

## You can apply to get help paying for visits that you:

- have made in the last 28 days
- want to make in the next 28 days
- You must be getting certain benefits or have a health certificate to get help.

If you take a child with you or someone to help you (for example because you're disabled) you might also be able to get help paying for their visit.

## To find out more visit the website below:

**[www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits](http://www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits)**

# UCAS support for displaced students applying for university

If you're applying to higher education as a refugee, asylum seeker or with an insecure immigration status, there may be support available to help you.

The UCAS website has a page that has been created in collaboration with Refugee Education UK, STAR Network and We Belong.

**Visit the website**



## Corporate Parenting Survey - with chance to win

The Trust's Corporate Parenting team is conducting a survey on our young people around their interests, aspirations and EET status.

For every 50 entrants – there is a chance to win 'Love to Shop' vouchers of :-

- 1st Prize - £70
- 2nd Prize - £50
- 3rd Prize - £30

**Survey link:** <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/1rwr9k2r8>



# HELP YOUR MATE

## Summer Festival Safety Harm Reduction Advice

To make sure nothing gets in the way of you having a good time, CGL has pulled together some top tips on staying safe at this year's summer festivals.

You can get more help by scanning this QR code, that will take you to the CGL website.



### Before you go out

**Charge your phone before you go out** - We all know that feeling when you see the dreaded 'battery low' notification pop up on our screens. It's not just about losing mates and trying to find them again; you might need it to help you get home or call for help.

You might be feeling your best self and take loads of photos for the 'Gram' but this will drain your battery faster. Try and split the selfies between everyone's phones so you all have some charge leftover. Closing down unused apps and turning down the screen brightness can also help your battery life. Now might also be a really good time to invest in a power bank.

**Stay together and look out for each other** - Losing your mates can be a stressful experience. Decide a meeting point and make a pact that you will all meet back there if you notice someone isn't with you. Use apps like What3words designed to identify any location within 3 metres.

**Share your location** - spend a little bit of time before going out to make sure that you know how to do this. It can help you find your mates if anyone gets lost but it could also save a life.

**Have a plan for the end of the night** - At some point, the party's going to end and you're going to want to head home. Create a plan for the end of the night before you've even left to make sure you get back safely. If your plans change, share these with your mates so that everyone is aware. Then you can make sure you don't leave anyone behind. Drop each other a message when you get home so you know everyone got back safely.

**Don't forget to drink plenty of water**, to keep yourself well hydrated.



# CASE STUDY

## Unity Through Sport – Port Vale's Match Day for Care Leavers

**Partner:** Port Vale Foundation & Port Vale Football Club

**Event Date:** 21 April 2025

**Location:** Stoke-on-Trent

**Occasion:** Match Day, Port Vale vs Grimsby Town

**Theme:** Recognition and inclusion of care-experienced young people

► Check out the [Care Leaver Covenant website](#).

In collaboration with the English Football League (EFL) and the Care Leaver Covenant, Port Vale Football Club and Foundation hosted a dedicated match day event that welcomed care leavers from across Stoke-on-Trent to their home ground.

The event — aligned with Port Vale's official signing of the Covenant — offered more than just a football match. Care-experienced young people were treated to a VIP experience, including free match tickets, hospitality, and the chance to meet senior figures such as Carol Shanahan, Club Chair, and EFL Director Debbie Cook. The match against Grimsby Town ended in a celebrated 2-2 draw — the exact result Port Vale needed to secure promotion to League One, creating a jubilant and unforgettable atmosphere.

Approximately 10 young people attended, many of whom had English as a second language. One attendee walked over an hour each way in the rain to be part of the event — a powerful testament to the value and appeal of such inclusive experiences.

The day was about more than sport. It was about belonging. Families, care-experienced

young people, and club staff celebrated goals side-by-side, breaking down language and social barriers through shared joy. One guest, Rosie Blackett from the Care Leaver Covenant — herself care-experienced — attended with her foster father and children. She described the community spirit as “a real moment of unity and inclusion.”

Beyond match day, Port Vale has expressed a strong interest in expanding the partnership. Plans are underway to explore employment opportunities for care leavers in catering and stewarding roles, as well as facility access for youth training sessions.



## WHY IT MATTERS:

This event demonstrated the powerful role that sports clubs can play in inclusion, social mobility, and visibility for care-experienced young people. Sport has the unique capability to transcend language barriers, which is particularly important for young people from separated families. Through community spirit and a willingness to go beyond the pitch, Port Vale has set a meaningful example for other organisations across the UK.

# CASE STUDY

## Empowering Through Experience – Skye's Work Placement with Suited & Booted

Partner: Suited & Booted

Location: Central London

Care Leaver: Skye, supported by Sefton Council

Experience: Two-day photography work placement

► Check out the [Care Leaver Covenant website](#).

Skye, a care-experienced photography student supported by Sefton Council, recently completed a two-day work placement with Suited & Booted, a Covenant signatory dedicated to equipping men with clothing and confidence for employment.

Despite never having visited London before, Skye travelled to the capital city to join the team at Suited & Booted. Supported by travel and accommodation funding from Suited & Booted and Sefton Council respectively, she was welcomed into an environment of opportunity and aspiration. Skye shadowed stylists and documented the transformation of clients as they received high-quality tailored suits from brands like Hugo Boss and Ralph Lauren – many for the first time in their lives.

With guidance from Maria Lenn, the charity's founder, Skye photographed newly-suited clients (with consent), helping to elevate their confidence and document their journeys into employment readiness. The experience concluded with a fundraising cabaret event, further immersing Skye in the charity's ethos of inclusion and community.

Skye expressed her deep appreciation, saying the experience was “amazing” and that she “wished she could work there permanently.” Suited & Booted has since invited her back for further collaborations. The experience not only enhanced Skye's portfolio, but also offered her a valuable insight into professional practice and charitable operations in a high-end, real-world setting.

*“I just wanted to let you know that London and Suited & Booted were truly amazing. Maria is the most wonderful lady and so unbelievably kind, and the work the charity does is just fantastic. It was just so incredible the effect these one hour appointments had on the clients and how thankful they were; it was truly eye-opening. Thank you so much to the Care Leaver Covenant for creating this opportunity.”*

## WHY IT MATTERS:

Skye now plans to establish a Community Interest Company (CIC) aimed at providing professional ID photos to other care-experienced young people – removing barriers to identification that often hinder access to essential services.

This placement exemplifies how Covenant signatories can create deeply impactful, tailored experiences that not only empower care leavers but also foster innovation and future social enterprises. It's a powerful reminder that small, committed actions from organisations can spark lasting change.



# ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

OCTOBER 2025 - JULY 2026

18-25, West Mids based and want to have your voice heard?

Join us on our FREE programme!



## LEADERSHIP

Develop transferable skills for your CV, whatever your career goals.

## ACTIVISM

Learn how to spark positive change in your local area and beyond.

## COMMUNITY

Connect and build relationships with passionate, like-minded people.

Scan to apply!



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