



# THE TRUST TIMES

## 17+ Care Leavers' Newsletter

October 2024

### 🍁 EPIC FUN EVENT WEEK COMING UP 🍁

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the October 2024 issue of the Trust Times. We hope you are keeping warm and dry. It is **National Care Leavers' Week 2024** (starting on 28 October) so we have three fantastic events for you to come and attend in person, all taking place at the Lighthouse Young People's Centre.

- **United and Unique – Groups and Forums taster day** – 29 October 2024 (11am – 3pm)
- **17+ Care-Experienced Conference** – 30 October 2024 (11am – 4pm)
- **Black History Month Celebration Event** - 31 October 2024 (12pm – 4pm).

See pages **5 to 7** for details, along with QR codes to scan, so that you can register and get **FREE** tix.

As usual, this edition is also packed with useful information and opportunities, and handy tips.

**REMINDER** - We offer 45-minute drop-in sessions with Juliette to talk about careers - **see page 2**.



### 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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## 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 book a 45-minute slot using Eventbrite.

**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 8 November 2024
- Friday 15 November 2024
- Friday 22 November 2024
- Friday 29 November 2024

### Slots

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

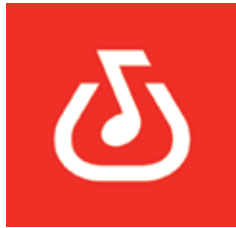
### Book a slot

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:



# USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES

Here are four apps/websites that you can help you in daily life.



## BandLab

- Essentially a studio in your pocket, BandLab is a must-have for any musician. You can create beats, record high-quality audio and loop tracks all for free.



## KineStop

- For anyone who experiences motion sickness travelling on planes, trains and automobiles, give KineStop a try. It will let you watch videos or read without the typical nausea.



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



## Tubi

- Tubi is a completely free and legal app with a huge library of films and TV shows to watch on demand. It does have adverts, but it's a great resource of free entertainment.



## Trolley

- Trolley is a useful app for comparing the price of an item across loads of different supermarkets. You can even use it in-store simply by scanning the barcode to find out where the best deal is.





# SPOTLIGHT ON BECOME'S 'PROPEL INTO WORK'

# BECOME.

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

'Propel into Work' is the charity Become's service for care-experienced young people up to age 27 and their supporting adults.

'Propel into Work' provide information, advice and guidance for care-experienced young people, to help you make confident choices about your career path, as well as providing 1:1 support with things like exploring different careers, job searching, creating or tailoring CV and cover letters, applying for jobs and apprenticeships and preparing for interviews.

Scan this QR code to go to the Become 'Propel into Work' home page:



## 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.







BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST

# GROUPS AND FORUMS taster day

Children and Young people, come and join us to  
find out more about our groups & forums!


Foster Carers | Social Workers | Personal Advisors Welcome!  
Lunch provided | Raffle prizes to be won  
| Meet new people | And have FUN!

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER**



 **TUESDAY 29TH OCTOBER**

 **11AM- 3PM**

 **THE LIGHTHOUSE, 100 ALMA WAY, B19 2LN**



# The Conference

Come and find out about all of the opportunities and support services.



**Freshly cooked  
Caribbean lunch**  
veggie options available\*



**Prizes and  
Giveaways**



**'Meet new people'**

**Visiting organisations:** GFIE and Release Potential:

Jobs with the Civil Service, Equans Construction, NHS and Hays recruitment, TESS and Forward Thinking Birmingham, MyBNK and Evolve – plus lots more.

**Afternoon activities:** Halloween crafts, face painting and henna tattoos. Boxercise with Pete, indoor football and Hairstyling on a budget – with Deshelle's Salon

**Wednesday 30th October 11am - 4pm**

The Lighthouse Young People's Centre 100 Alma Way, B19 2LN



**Juliette.Walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk**  
**07825117381**



Join us in celebrating

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Its ok to be Black

Thursday 31 October  
2024

12 pm - 4 pm

The Lighthouse. Youth  
centre: 100 Alma Way  
Aston B19 2LN.



Braid workshops  
& FREE hair products



African Drumming



FREE food and  
refreshments



MY Tomorrow Barber Shop  
FREE haircuts for men, please ensure hair is  
washed beforehand



Performances

**FREE FOR  
ALL AGES**

Exotic fruit tasting

Arts and Crafts

Face painting and lots more

Poetry

Inflatables

Dominoes

DJ Ty

Scan the QR code to for more info and to get a ticket



BIRMINGHAM  
CHILDREN'S TRUST

LIGHTHOUSE  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S CENTRE





## What's on at the **YOUTH HUB**

### **Apprenticeship Event at The Factory**

Tuesday 5 November, 12 – 2pm

Meet employers - Compass, Balfour Beatty Vinci, Swift, GLP, TDM, Fortem, and Pathway.

**Scan the QR code below to book a space.**



### **TDM - Step Into Tech Event**

Thursday 7 November 2024, 12 – 3pm

An opportunity to find out more about the range of tech and digital skills bootcamps and apprenticeships in and around Birmingham.

**Scan the QR code below to book a space.**



## 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**.



# 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 screenshot of a web form titled "Sign up for our care-experienced news and information". The form has a header with the same diverse children illustration. Below the title, it says "Please add your details below." and has three input fields labeled "First name", "Last name", and "Email address".

# WHAT IS CAREERS GUIDANCE?

## Update from Juliette Walton

**Careers guidance** is about exploring your strengths, interests and ambitions.

**Careers guidance** is about looking at the different options to achieving those ambitions.

**Careers guidance** is about researching those options so you can make a good decision.

**Careers guidance** is about working out the steps you need to take - to get you from where you are now to where you want to be.



If you'd like some of this for yourself, book on the Eventbrite links (**scan the QR code on page 2 to access the links**) and see you at the Birmingham Community Hub on a Friday afternoon.

# GOOD NEWS IN OCT

We are continuing to celebrate your good news in this newsletter, over the next four pages.

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

- **Ryan** has successfully completed three modules of his City & Guilds 'Skills for Working for Life' course at Dudley college.

**Well done Ryan! (pictured below)**



# MORE GOOD NEWS IN OCTOBER 2024

• **Karis (pictured right)** has achieved a First in Law LLB (hons) and won the *Parkinson Wright* prize for best student engagement combined with academic achievement and had this to say:

"I was beyond elated to graduate this year (2024) from the University of Worcester.

"I probably speak for many other care leavers when I say that my time in education growing up was turbulent to say the least.

"It brings me great joy to hear that when I tell colleagues now that I was permanently excluded from my first high school that they are surprised, as this does not seem like me.

"However, what it does is highlight the significance of the effects growing up in the care system can have on a person, as well as highlight the acknowledgement and patience that institutions should strive to have for a care-experienced person.

**"Without strong foundations, a house will crumble; I often felt like the house. It makes no sense to shout at the crumbling house and ask the house to hold itself together, instead you would give the house everything it needs to hold itself up.**

"I don't speak for all schools I'm sure, but I was very much labelled as disruptive with very little recognition for my emotional health.

"I fought very hard to maintain jobs, gain my independence through simple things like a car and driving license that my peers simply saw as a rite of passage. It does become very tiresome.

"I am grateful to social care services for supporting me throughout my journey at university.



**Karis on her fantastic graduation day**

"I didn't believe I would ever get to university and often felt so out of place, especially with Law being so prestigious.

"So, to leave with a First, an award and a post graduate job in my chosen sector is everything to me. I hope that other care leavers see that the struggle and the push to do better is worth it.

**"We don't have to be a child in need forever, look after and be kind to yourself - give yourself the things you need to create a good life, and you won't go far wrong."**

**Inspiring word Karis, and a huge congrats to you from everyone at the Trust!**



# MORE GOOD NEWS IN OCTOBER 2024

## An update from PA Cindy King

• **Cameron** transitioned from the Children in Care team to the 18 plus Care Leavers' service with his mental health very poor.

He was living in an adults solo placement which was fully supported where he was being supported two to one.

Cameron was unable to complete any tasks independently due to his poor mental health, however he has been supported to continue to engage with support of therapist from Forward Thinking Birmingham.

Whilst at his placement he supported a support worker in working in the garden, and things have '*blossomed*' from there!

Cameron took on a project and planted some vegetables and flowers and plants in the garden and watched them grow, he said that he found gardening therapeutic.

With this it was suggested to him that we could look at volunteering opportunities that he could do at local garden centres.

Cameron was able to identify a charity called 'Ideal for All', local to him, that offered opportunities for people to attend and engage in wellbeing gardening sessions.

Cameron attended the sessions after a period he was offered the opportunity of becoming a volunteer which he took up. Cameron's role and responsibilities included supporting people attending the gardening sessions and taking the lead in a number of gardening tasks.



Whilst working as a volunteer we discussed his future and what he would like to do and he said he would like to continue working in gardening.

As a result he took up a one year Level 2 Horticulture Gardening Course at Mathew Boulton College (in September 2023) which he thoroughly enjoyed. Cameron successfully passed and he continued working as a volunteer at 'Ideal for All' whilst attending college.

On completion of his college course Cameron was offered a Level 2 Gardening Apprenticeship at Ideal for All which he has successfully completed in September 2024. Cameron attended an interview for a fulltime position working at 'Ideal for All' working as a Horticultural Community Health and Wellbeing Officer.

Cameron has now also transitioned into his own flat, where he is now living independently with 16 hours of support from adult social care.

Since living independently for the past three months he has had no worries or concerns and feels that he is now ready for independent living.

**Fantastic work Cameron - well done!**

# MORE GOOD NEWS IN OCTOBER 2024

## An update from Josh at Barnardo's

- From the moment I met **Bilal** he was extremely eager and keen to succeed, he turned up the first day even though he had not been given a place (yet).

I took this as a sign that Bilal would be a fantastic addition to my cohort. From day one Bilal worked his socks off, never letting the fact that English was his second language deter him from being successful.

He worked hard, took part in all sessions both independent and group tasks and turned out to be a valuable member of the group.

All this hard work led him to his interview day – he was fairly nervous, and he would probably admit this himself – but he had put the work in and was extremely ready.

He well and truly smashed his interview and is due to start work at Amazon in the coming weeks.

Bilal is fully prepared and excited to begin his new role, and there's no doubt that he will continue to perform at a high level as he steps into this next phase of his career.

I am very proud of Bilal, and he should be too.

**Quote from Bilal:** "I would say get your education try hard to work hard.

"My PA found this for me, and I tried hard and completed the course and now I have a job. I'm so proud of myself and I am very thankful to my PA Elaine."



**Quote from PA Elaine:** "I am so proud of the hard work and effort Bilal has put in to complete the eight week course.

"Bilal is a shy reserved young man and he was very apprehensive about taking up this opportunity, but once I explained that eight weeks would fly by he jumped at the chance.

"Initially he was unsuccessful and was very disappointed he called me to ask if there was anything I could do.

"I called Josh (course lead) who explained that the course was full but one young person had not turned up today and if he did not tomorrow, he would give Bilal the space.

"Bilal received the call offering him the space and the rest is history.

"Bilal will be working 40hrs per week, on nights and is so excited about this."

## Great achievement Bilal!

For more information about The JOBS Project ring Josh on: **07546 760895**

or

visit the following website:

**[www.barnardos.org.uk/the-jobs-project](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/the-jobs-project)**



# FIND YOUR GREATNESS



**Find Your Greatness** is a Team GB and Paralympics GB campaign aiming to, find young people aged 16-24 who want to find out more about Olympic and Paralympic sport and maybe learn something new about themselves. \

The 9 sports they are recruiting for are skeleton bobsled, modern pentathlon, climbing, shooting, rowing, handball, volleyball, cycling (all disciplines), weightlifting and all para sports.

**The deadline to apply has been extended to 3 November 2024.**

After this, those successful will be contacted to attend their closest regional testing day in November/December.

This will involve some performance-based tests alongside a sports fair with an opportunity to learn more about each sport.

If you are then successful from here, you will be contacted during the new year and can work with the sports you have been identified as having potential.

They encourage people with physical, visual, or intellectual impairments to apply.

Find out more and make your application on the **Find Your Greatness** website:

<https://findyourgreatness.co.uk>





# 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 November 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



## Racism, fear and trauma

The Trust have recently published an article on their website '*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 simply scan the QR code below:



## 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>**



## LACK CONFIDENCE WITH MONEY?

**Attend The Money House course and take control of your finances!**



**Format:** 5-day or 3-day course delivered face-to-face, free of charge



**Age range:** 16 - 25 years old

**Location:** Digbeth, Birmingham

### What do we cover?

- Spending plans
- Tenuancies & housing
- Staying safe online
- Real life skills
- Benefits
- Banking
- Planning for the future

### What's in it for you?

- Your travel covered each day, breakfast, lunch & snacks.
- More confidence managing your money, maintaining your tennancy and maximising your income.
- We may be able to pay for childcare and translators

Scan the QR code to find out more



To sign up speak to your PA, support or housing officer or email us directly on [TMHMidlands@mybnk.org](mailto:TMHMidlands@mybnk.org)



# 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.



## FAMILY HUBS

For all the latest news about universal services for families, new and expectant parents, children under 5, please do spend some time looking at the **Family Hubs** pages on Birmingham City Council's website.

You can find links to everything family related:

**Family Hubs** bring together a range of organisations and professionals to offer early help services, advice, guidance, and support.

There are health links and housing information links, and lots more.

To go directly to the **Family Hubs** homepage, please scan the QR code below.





# Child Bereavement UK

REBUILDING LIVES TOGETHER

**Child Bereavement UK** has launched a new service in Birmingham providing support for bereaved children, young people, parents, and families in the city.

Based at West Heath Community Centre (South Birmingham), the service has benefited from funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to offer online, face-to-face and group support for individuals, couples and families in Birmingham.

Families across the Midlands will be offered support via Child Bereavement UK's Helpline and other support services.

In addition, the charity will work alongside existing support services in the area to help improve outcomes for bereaved families, providing training for professionals to ensure bereaved people are well supported wherever they first seek support.

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

The charity supports 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.

The charity also provides training to professionals in health and social care, education, and the voluntary and corporate sectors, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families.

Families can refer themselves by contacting the main helpline below:

Helpline: **0800 02 888 40**  
**[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)**



# 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:

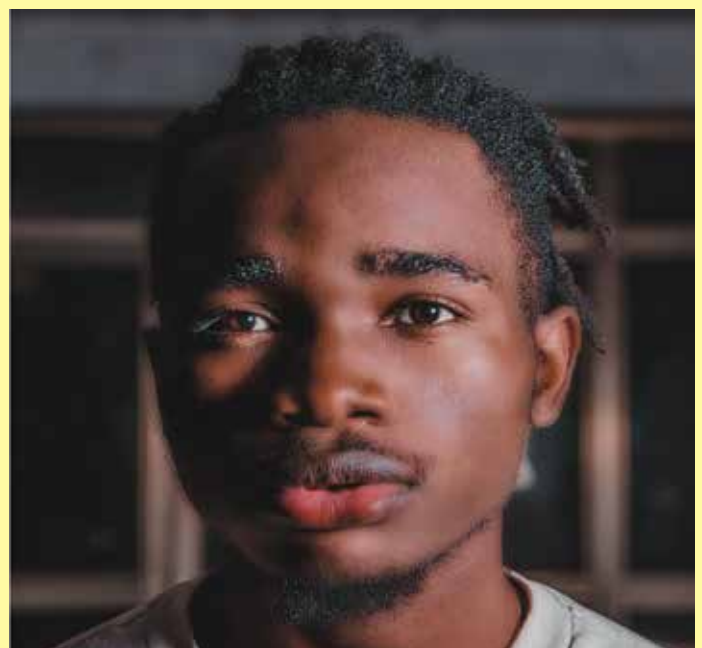
- We meet every month, sometimes face-to-face and sometimes online
- When we meet face-to-face we have food together
- We get help with transport to the meetings if we need it

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).

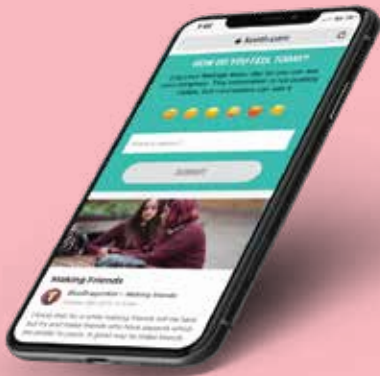
We have work to do for the city council and NHS on these topics, so if you have experience please get in touch.

## Contact us today

Email:  
[advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)



## 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 November 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)

### Courses in November 2024

#### IMPACT with Dr Rachel

**Dates:** 4, 11, 18 and 25 November 2024

**Time:** 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Join the final 4 weeks of Dr Rachel's 8 week IMPACT course where you will explore:

- Introduction to IMPACT
- Integrity
- Meaning
- Persuasion
- Authority
- Communication
- Talent
- Exit strategy



These sessions will provide you with valuable insights and practical tools to help you create a lasting impact in your life.

#### Circle of Support

**Date:** 6 November 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>



# Aquarius Recovery Hub 'Space for Change'



Sometimes the words 'I am grateful to be in recovery' are too difficult to say. But for those of us who have stuck around and picked up the tools to help us climb out of darkness and into the light, a strange thing happens.

One day, without noticing we are making the sentence, we hear ourselves say, 'I am grateful to be in recovery and I'm stronger than I was before my addiction.'

Slowly, with the support of others, and with new trust in ourselves, the world starts to get brighter. Aquarius has created a space for young people who are impacted by substance use to come together and share experiences.

The Recovery Hub in Digbeth, which launched earlier this year, has a monthly schedule including boxing classes, NA meetings, yoga and a breakfast club, to name just a handful of the events on offer.

The space allows young people in recovery to meet with others taking the same journey.

Although each person has a different set of circumstances, a different challenge to face, we know from experience that as we take steps to heal, the courage in a stranger looks peculiarly familiar to the courage in our own hearts.

Darren Townsend, a complex needs practitioner who runs the breakfast club on Wednesday mornings said: "Connection is an antidote to addiction. We provide breakfast and a chat from 9am for young people who might need a chinwag and just a bit of company.

"We have fun and the grub goes down well but it is also a place of safety. We are open to the homeless that the outreach team may have met. They get warm food to set them up for the day with a bit of positivity and we can offer some harm reduction advice."

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**Aquarius** is a charity which offers specialist services to support children and young people who use substances or who are affected by a parent or carer's substance misuse. We also have a dedicated Affected Family Member Team, providing support to adult family members whose substance use is impacting their children and families. This help expands to grandparents and other kinship carers who may be affected.

We work with everyone based on their needs, interests and aspirations. Support might be offered on a 1:1 basis, with specific Aquarius worker, or it might be in a group activity session. We welcome all inquiries and self-referrals.

For more information on the **Aquarius Recovery Hub**, and to speak to the team, contact them on **0121 622 7780** or email **[young.people@aquarius.org.uk](mailto:young.people@aquarius.org.uk)** or **[birmingham.familyteam@aquarius.org.uk](mailto:birmingham.familyteam@aquarius.org.uk)**



# 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

## 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 scanning the QR code below.



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:

**[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.

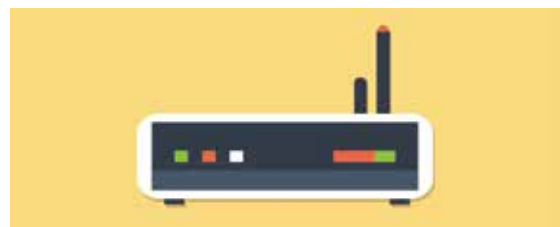
We have the finance to pay for 1,000 young people to have broadband fitted by August 2026.

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.



# BE PREPARED

## Winter is Coming



Worried about energy bills and energy debt!!!  
Act on Energy will be at:

**BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE,  
6 CENTENARY SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM, B1 2EP**

**Thursday 31<sup>ST</sup> October**

**10:00a.m. - 3:30pm**

**We are offering:**

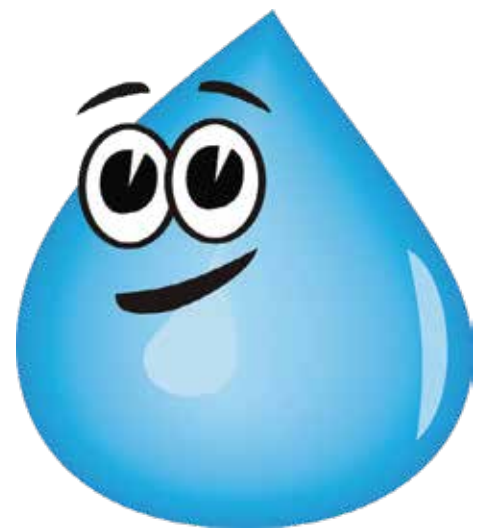
- ▶ **FREE** energy saving advice and small measures
- ▶ **FREE** fuel vouchers\*
- ▶ **FREE** advice on tackling fuel poverty & the cost of living
- ▶ **FREE** essential cooking & heating appliances\*

\*subject to eligibility criteria



[www.actonenergy.org.uk](http://www.actonenergy.org.uk)





## 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 scan the QR code to complete the form for the Big Difference Scheme:**



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/)**





**Birmingham Women's  
and Children's**  
NHS Foundation Trust



# UNIVERSAL FAMILY CAREER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

19 November 2024 (12.00pm – 2.00pm)

Join us at **Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Hospital.**

Find out about careers in the NHS.

Join the workshop and find out more about **Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust** including:

- Routes into the NHS.
- Job search, application and interview techniques.
- Practical training skill(s) from the NHS Trust core education team.
- Meet healthcare professionals and other Industry professionals to inspire your journey.

## Eligibility

- You are 16+ and care-experienced.
- Living in the West Midlands.

## Venue

**Birmingham Children's Hospital, Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham, B4 6NH**

Please feel free to contact Nav or Femi for more information:

- Nav Sharma - [navsharma@nhs.net](mailto:navsharma@nhs.net)
- Femi Kuforiji - [o.kuforiji1@nhs.net](mailto:o.kuforiji1@nhs.net)





# WE NEED YOU

If you care about other care leavers and want to help make things better for them in Birmingham – we would love you to join our Corporate Parenting Board.



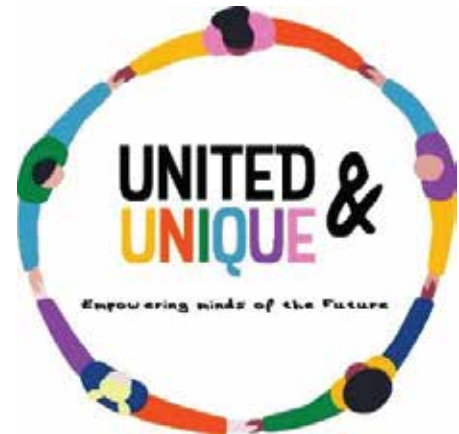
The Trust Corporate Parenting Board meets every two months in Birmingham (travel expenses paid).

Everything that matters is discussed, ranging from accommodation to funding, and mental health to opportunities, and much more.

Solutions are found and businesses and services are challenged to see how they can help.

It's a great opportunity to really make a difference.

If you'd like to get involved contact:  
[CorporateParenting@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:CorporateParenting@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)



Thanks to Trust apprentice Rakia Gayle we now have three new social media accounts to share the great work and news of all of our groups that represent different children and young people in Birmingham.

'United & Unique' is the collective name for the different groups, such as the Care Leavers' Forum and the Children in Care Council.



The new social media accounts are on 'X', 'Instagram' and 'Tik Tok'.

To find links to them all, please scan the QR code below:







MIKE



# DADS ARE DIAMONDS

This support group provides a safe space for care experienced fathers, or partners of care experienced individuals, to discuss parenthood.

## Why come along?

Both new and experienced fathers have the opportunity to network and share experiences openly and honestly ✓

Older children are welcome to come with you ✓

Led by a mental health professional and dad, sessions aim to strengthen emotional wellbeing ✓

The group seeks to reduce feelings of isolation and build new relationships ✓

Sessions also available virtually ✓



Weekday



Morning / Afternoon



Hodge Hill  
Ladywood  
Northfield



Sign up today using the QR code!



[www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife](http://www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife)





JACKIE



# PARENTING BEYOND CARE

Join our friendly group and meet other parents who have been in care. The care experienced group leader will share her experiences of becoming a mother, and now a grandmother.

## Why come along?

- Relaxed and informal group ✓
- All children are welcome to come with you and remain with you during the course ✓
- Led by an Ofsted registered, care experienced childminder and parent ✓
- Topics include identity, accessing services, and overcoming stigma ✓
- Sessions also available virtually ✓

Weekday

Morning / Afternoon

Hodge Hill  
Ladywood  
Northfield



Sign up today using the QR code!

[www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife](http://www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife)





ABBY



## NURTURING BEGINNINGS Q&A SESSIONS

An opportunity to ask questions of a midwife to support expectant new parents as they prepare for the birth of their baby.

### Why come along?

- Get ready for the joys and challenges that come with becoming a parent ✓
- Find support for day-to-day life from both the group leader and also other parents on the course ✓
- Learn about taking care of your wellbeing and the emotional wellbeing of your baby ✓
- Sessions are virtual ✓



Weekday



Morning / Afternoon



Hodge Hill  
Ladywood  
Northfield



Sign up today  
using the QR  
code!



[www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife](http://www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife)





SARAH



# IT'S TIME FOR FRESH STARTS

50-minute one-to-one sessions developed specifically for care experienced parents, focusing on taking control and making positive, informed choices into the future.

## Why come along?

Especially developed to support parents who have lost children through care proceedings ✓

Addresses issues overcoming low self-esteem, anxiety, and low mood ✓

Each session is with a counsellor with professional care experience, specialising in loss and bereavement ✓

Up to four, one-to-one sessions available per person ✓

Sessions also available virtually ✓



Weekday



Morning / Afternoon



Hodge Hill  
Ladywood  
Northfield



Sign up today using the QR code!



[www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife](http://www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife)







## START FOR LIFE: SUPPORTING CARE EXPERIENCED PARENTS IN BIRMINGHAM

Start for Life is a project being delivered by the Rees Foundation to support care-experienced parents across Birmingham to navigate the joys and challenges of parenting, manage stress, and boost self-esteem. The sessions will include:



Weekday



Morning / Afternoon



Hodge Hill  
Ladywood  
Northfield

Getting together to chat with other care-experienced parents ✓

One-to-One Wellbeing: to offer support to managing stress, anxiety, and mood ✓

Support for Dads: Providing a safe space for fathers to come together ✓

Beyond Birth Parenting Courses, Question and Answer sessions about pregnancy and being a parent facilitated by a midwife ✓

Sessions are both virtual and in-person ✓

Various resources and activities at our Rees cafes including art therapy, budget management, cooking classes, and assistance in finding employment ✓



For more information and to sign up, go to:  
[www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife](http://www.reesfoundation.org/startforlife)





# Connects Sign Up Giveaway

We are announcing our October giveaway! This time, we're offering you the chance to win a one of two Madlug Bags!

Connects is how we connect you to our opportunities. You will receive updates on brand new offers that come to the Care Leaver Covenant right to your inbox.

Sign up to Connects now to enter the draw.

Goodluck.

Here's how you can participate:

Any care leavers (aged 16 to 25) who sign up to connects via [mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/](https://mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/) (or by scanning the QR code below) between the 16th and 27th of October will be automatically entered into the draw.

Winners will be picked at random from the Connects members. Selected winners will be notified by 6th November.

Please support any care leavers in your network to sign up!

