



THE TRUST TIMES

17+ Care Leavers' Newsletter

Winter 2024

WINTER 2024

SPECIAL EDITION

- **FANTASTIC
FREE EVENTS**
- **ADVICE AND
GUIDANCE**
- **EMPLOYMENT
AND TRAINING
OFFERS**
- **WELLBEING,
AND MUCH MORE!**

WINTER WELLBEING WISHES TO YOU!

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the Winter 2024 issue of the Trust Times. We hope you are keeping warm and well.

Along with some Winter wellbeing advice, and our usual variety of opportunities, updates and news, we have three very special events for you to attend this month, but **BOOK NOW** please!

- **Winter Funland FREE ticket offer**
12 Dec (5.00pm - 9.00pm)
- **Blues Women's Football Tickets, food and fun**
Match and Fun Day 15 Dec (11.30am - 4.00pm)
- **Trust Christmas Day Meal and presents**
25 Dec (1.00pm - 4.00pm)

See pages **7 to 9** 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.

NEW DATES - We offer 45-minute drop-in sessions with Juliette to talk about careers - **see page 4**.



We love your good news

If you have anything you would like to be considered for next month's edition please email it to Juliette Walton. We love to read and see what you are up to each month, and to be able to celebrate all your achievements.

Juliette.Walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

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

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

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USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITES

Here are four apps/websites that you can help you this Winter.



NORAD tracks Santa

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

www.noradsanta.org



Clear Fear

- Clear Fear is an award-winning app specifically designed to help young people face and overcome their anxiety. Scan the QR code above to get to the app.

Medito

- Medito is a free app designed to improve your mental wellbeing through guided meditations, breathing exercises, mindfulness practices and a vast array of learning courses. Only 5-10 minutes a day could make a huge difference.



My Possible Self: Mental Health

- My Possible Self is the free mental health app using clinically certified content from Priory Healthcare to help reduce anxiety, stress and low mood. These digital tools will guide you through life's challenges and help you take care of yourself.



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



SPOTLIGHT: Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC)



The **Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC)** is an award-winning charity founded in 1999. It has offices in Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham as well as pilot office in Dudley, working with clients from across the Black Country and Birmingham.

RMC is dedicated to helping disadvantaged refugees and migrants fully integrate into UK life and achieve independence. Their service provides comprehensive integration support to a diverse range of clients, including asylum seekers, refugees, EU migrants, undocumented people and those with uncertain immigration status.

Visit the Refugee and Migrant Centre website: <https://rmcentre.org.uk>

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.





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 6 December 2024
- Friday 13 December 2024
- Friday 20 December 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:



CHRISTMAS WELLBEING TIPS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Go to Page 25 for useful websites.



FREE TICKETS TO WINTER FUNLAND

12 DECEMBER 2024 (5.00PM - 9.00PM) @ THE NEC (HALL 5)

PLEASE NOTE THE FIRST ACTION YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE WHEN CLICKING ON THE REGISTRATION LINK IS TO SELECT BETWEEN 1 AND 6 TICKETS. EVERYONE ATTENDING NEEDS THEIR OWN TICKET. YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE DETAILS ABOUT EACH GUEST ATTENDING, UP TO 6 GUESTS PER BOOKING. THERE ARE NO AGE RESTRICTIONS, BUT AT LEAST ONE PERSON IN THE PARTY OF (UP TO) SIX MUST BE AN ADULT.

THIS AMAZING OFFER IS BEING BROUGHT TO YOU BY WINTER FUNLAND THEMSELVES. THE FREE WINTER FUNLAND TICKET AT THE NEC GIVES YOU UNLIMITED ACCESS ON **THURSDAY 12 DECEMBER 2024 (5.00PM - 9.00PM)** TO: FUNFAIR RIDES, ICE-SKATING, CIRCUS SHOW, CRAFT ACTIVITIES AND MUCH MORE!

IT DOES NOT GIVE YOU FREE ACCESS TO ALL OF THE ATTRACTIONS, SUCH AS SANTA'S GROTTO. YOU WILL NEED TO PAY FOR THIS. ANY FOOD OR DRINK WILL NEED TO BE PAID FOR SEPARATELY.

SCAN THIS QR CODE
TO GO TO THE
EVENTBRITE
BOOKING PAGE:



TRANSPORT: UNLESS ORGANISED BY COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS DIRECTLY (NOT VIA THE TRUST) THERE IS NO TRANSPORT PROVIDED IN 2024. BUSES AND TRAINS GO DIRECTLY TO THE NEC FROM BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE AND OTHER DIRECTIONS.

PARKING: CAR PARKING MUST BE PURCHASED DIRECTLY FROM THE NEC. THIS CAN BE BOUGHT IN ADVANCE TO AVOID QUEUING.

PLEASE NOTE: WINTER FUNLAND TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE ON A FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVED BASIS. DUE TO SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS ON THE DAY, ONCE THESE TICKETS SELL OUT THERE ARE UNFORTUNATELY NO ALTERNATIVE TICKETS AVAILABLE.

All children and families known to Birmingham Children's Trust:

HAVE A DAY OUT ON US!



SUN 15 DECEMBER
2PM KICK-OFF

MATCHDAY FUN & ACTIVITIES
START FROM 11.30AM

ALL GUESTS RECEIVE:



FREE MATCH TICKET



FOOD & DRINK ITEMS



PRESENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ST. ANDREW'S
@KNIGHTHEAD PARK
BIRMINGHAM, B9 4RL

REGISTER HERE



LIMITED NUMBERS!



TRUST CHRISTMAS DAY MEAL 2024

We have a 'cracker' of an offer for you on Christmas Day (25 December 2024), as the Trust are providing a **FREE** Christmas Day meal, **FREE** transport to the venue and transport back home, along with presents and surprises on the day.

Places are limited, so please apply ASAP (deadline is 16 December 2024) by scanning the QR code below and filling in the online application form.

You can bring a guest, and if you are a mum or dad yourself then you can of course bring your own children. Although it is Christmas Day we welcome all faiths as this event is open to all Birmingham care-experienced young people.

In the form there are two different meal options, one being organised by the Trust and one being organised by Donate1Create1 (the people that organised the event in 2023). If you want to attend the Trust organised meal please type **TRUST** in the application form.

Don't worry if you are not a meat eater, we will take on board your dietary requirements, when you add them to the application form.



SCAN THE QR CODE
BELOW ON YOUR
PHONE BY **16 DEC**
TO VIEW THE
APPLICATION FORM

2024 Christmas Day Dinners for
care experienced young people
aged 16+





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

Scan the QR code below to go to the current opportunities:



connects

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

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

Scan the QR code below to sign up:



COUNCIL TAX EXEMPTION

A reminder from the Trust's 18+ Service

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



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

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

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

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



If you live outside Birmingham, each individual will need to also apply for any discount and reduction and then send their PA the bill and the Trust 18+ team will pay the remainder (on condition you are liable for the tax and have claimed all deductions).

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

YOUR WINTER 2024 GOOD NEWS



- **Nathaniel** has started his Health and Social Care course and is really enjoying it. Nathaniel hopes to pass this course and then in September 2025 start an access course.

Nathaniel's goal is to enrol onto a university course. What a great plan.



- **Zenub** has overcome many barriers over the last few years, and has now successfully completed her Adult Nursing Degree. Well done Zenub.



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



Child Trust Funds



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

Junior Individual Savings Accounts

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

<https://myjisa.sharefound.org>

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

info@sharefound.org

Or call

01296 310400

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



SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE

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

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

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



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

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

A screenshot of a sign-up form titled "Sign up for our care-experienced news and information". The form includes a header with the same diverse children illustration, a sub-header "Please add your details below.", and three input fields labeled "First name", "Last name", and "Email address".



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.

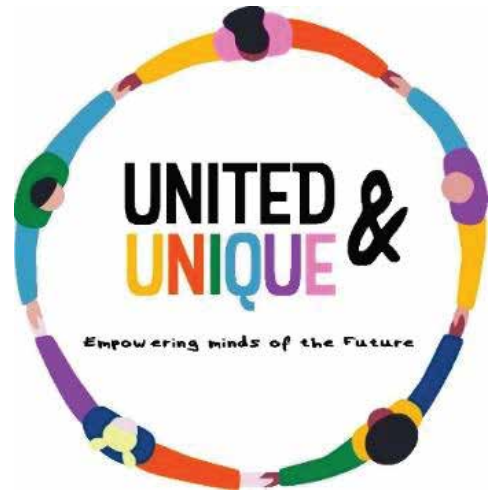
Solutions are found and businesses and services are challenged to see how they can help.

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

If you'd like to get involved contact:
CorporateParenting@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk



APPLY TODAY TO BECOME PART OF...



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

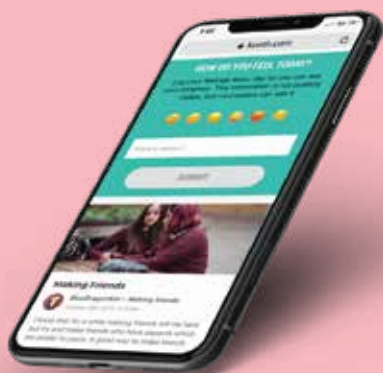
Groups available to join:

- 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)

Scan the QR code below to register your interest:



Give Kooth a try



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

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

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

www.kooth.com

THE TRUST TIMES

Back issues of the 18+ newsletter

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

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

REES FOUNDATION December 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

Courses in December 2024

Creating Your Own December

Dates: 2, 9, 16 and 23 December

Time: 1.00pm - 2.00pm

Join Dr Rachel for her 4-week course where you will explore how to create your own December through:

- Setting intentions and self-care
- Creating new traditions
- Connection and community
- Reflection and celebrations

Circle of Support

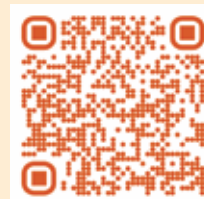


Date: 11 December 2024

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.

Find out more about Let's Connect events by scanning this QR code:



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

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

Therapeutic Emotional Support Service (TESS)

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

Where will the sessions take place:

TESS, 67 Bournbrook Road, Selly Oak B29 7BX

Phone to book: 0121 675 1781

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

The next session will be on

8 January 2025 (not 1 January).

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
- Tennancies & 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

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.



WORD LOUNGE

THEATRE COMPANY

**DO YOU LOVE PERFORMING AND THEATRE?
JOIN OUR WORD LOUNGE THEATRE COMPANY!**

Word Lounge is for 13-17 year olds who are care experienced, are young carers, and who have additional educational needs.

This 10 week programme is where you will be developing skills in:

- **Music**
- **Drama**
- **Poetry**
- **Performance**

With a showcase at the end to share what you have created!

Deadline: 13 December 2024

**Contact: Vicky Pritchard (Associate Director)
vickypritchard@womenandtheatre.co.uk**



**Women
&
Theatre**

Writing your UCAS Personal Statement

The deadline for UCAS applications is 6pm on 29 January 2025.

The personal statement is the most important part of your application. I went to a webinar about this recently and here is the guidance:

Why is my Personal Statement important?

- It gives evidence that you've got the skills needed for the subject you are going to study
- it proves that you are interested in the subject
- It shows that you are committed



Personal Statements - The Basics

- You will only write one personal statement which will be used for all your Uni choices
- 47 lines or 4000 characters – whichever comes first.
- Blank lines are included in the line count, so don't worry about using paragraphs
- Write it on a Word document – spell check and grammar check – then cut and paste it to your UCAS application (Don't use italics, bold or underlining)
- Keep a copy because this is what you will be asked about in your interview

Personal Statement sections

1 Introduction – Say why you want to study this subject and what brought you to this career decision.

2 Academic focus – This should be two thirds of your statement: What subjects did you learn at school and college that prepares you for this subject? What have you learned 'beyond the curriculum' that prepares you for this subject? Beyond the curriculum means learning at work, researching on line, listening to relevant pod-casts, watching documentaries and doing online courses.

If you don't have a lot of standard qualifications, make the most of everything that you have learned for yourself beyond the curriculum.

3 Extra curricular – This section is everything that you do in your free time. Include activities that demonstrate physical fitness, team work, hand eye coordination, skills and concentration - like languages and music.

If you want to mention some of the skills and qualities you have gained from living independently – this would be the place to do it – personal organisation, budgeting, using initiative, creating a home, cooking – all of these are great skills and qualities.

4 Conclusion – Say what you want to do in the future and how studying this subject will help you to achieve your dreams.

Continued on page 20.

Writing your UCAS Personal Statement

Personal Statement checklist

Make sure you have included these things in your statement:

- **Reason for choosing the course and careers goals - intro**
- **Relevant study – at school and college – academic focus**
- **What have you learned beyond the curriculum through work and learning in our own time – academic focus**
- **Hobbies and interests – extra curricular**
- **Plans for the future – conclusion**

The ABC guide for writing about things you have done (at college, at work and in your leisure time):

- **Activity** – what did you do ?
- **Benefit** – what did it teach you ?
- **Course** – how is it relevant to the subject you want to study ?

Proof read

Get one or two people to proof read your statement before you cut and paste it in.

Advice

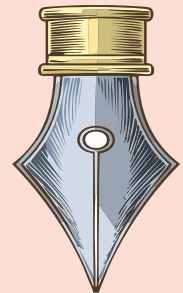
For extra help and advice, contact Juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
07825 117381

Useful websites

Scan the QR codes below to go to these useful website pages:

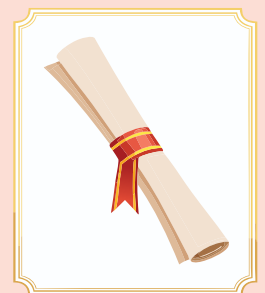
Ultimate Guides

Writing a personal statement



Applying to University

Complete University Guide



Find and Compare the Best University and Degree Courses –

The Uni Guide



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** or **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

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

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



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.

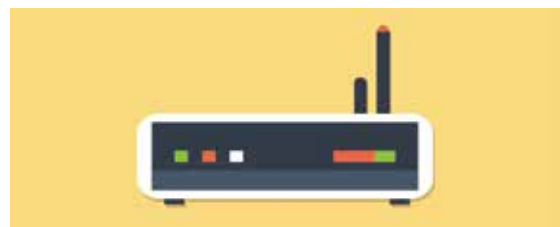
We have the finance to pay for 1,000 young people to have broadband fitted by August 2026.

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.



OCTOBER 2024 CONFERENCE RECAP



A big **thank you** to everyone who helped with the most recent care leavers' conference, held in late October at The Lighthouse. Thanks also to the Personal Advisors who came along to join the fun with young people.

It was a big success with a record seventy eight young people and seven little ones attending.

You can see above and below some of the activities that took place. They ranged from a book passage discussion to Halloween arts and craft, through to Boxercise with Pete.

Food was provided, along with plenty of prizes, and our exhibitors did a great job giving out both advice and freebies.



Suicide and self-harm prevention

If you, or anyone you know, is feeling suicidal, or wanting to harm themselves, there is always help available.

However bad you are feeling right now, there is help that you can get.

Lots of people have felt like this and - with help - managed to get through it.

Here are some numbers and links to supportive professionals and organisations who offer help to those feeling suicidal.

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



- Papyrus has a lot of useful advice and also a suicide prevention helpline.

<https://papyrus-uk.org/>

- Samaritans helpline **116 123**
- SANE helpline **0300 304 7000**
- Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) (for men) **0800 58 58 58**
- Help Guide suicide prevention

www.helpguide.org/home-pages/suicide-prevention.html

Also please see the **TESS offer** on **page 14**.



HELP WITH WATER BILLS

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

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

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

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

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

To check if you're a customer of STW, check this link:
www.water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier

Please 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/

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>



STAY WARM STAY WELL THIS WINTER

Winter can make existing health conditions worse and can also make us more vulnerable to respiratory and other serious illnesses.

It's important to stay protected against a drop in temperature as cold weather can affect your body's ability to fight off viruses and infections. By keeping warm, you can help yourself stay well this winter.

Tips for keeping warm

- Keep internal doors closed to stop draughts
- Have at least one hot meal a day
- Have hot drinks throughout the day
- Layer up - many layers of clothing are best
- Close curtains at dusk
- Ensure your main living and sleeping areas are between 18°C and 21°C
- Keep your heating on overnight and close windows
- Contact your energy supplier to find out about Social Tariffs or Priority Register Schemes
- Ensure your home is well insulated and boiler serviced
- Get your free flu jab if you are in a vulnerable group (click below to find out more) Flu prevention



Warm Welcome Spaces in Birmingham

With hundreds of spaces available across the city, you'll find things to do, people to meet and a 'Warm Welcome' near you. Often there's free warm drinks and sometimes food. There's also internet and charging access and free advice on offer.

Use the directory below to find information about Warm Welcome spaces near you and across the city.

You can enter a postcode or share your current location to find a space.

Scan this QR code to find out all of the spaces available



Scan this QR code to go to the postcode checker for spaces



Winter colds and sore throats

You should treat minor winter ailments like colds or sore throats promptly. NHS England provides information on steps you can take to manage:

Colds

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/common-cold/>

Sore throats

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat/>

There is also advice when it may be appropriate to visit your local pharmacist for further advice and treatment.

If you are worried about your health or feeling down, contact your local pharmacist, NHS 111 or your GP, who will all be able to offer advice and support.

In an emergency dial 999.



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



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



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





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





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





Christmas Dingbats

<p>ABCDEFGHIJ KLMNOPQ RSTUVWX YZ</p>	<p>Y Y MEN Y</p>	<p>MISTLETOE XXX</p>	<p>CHRISTMAS CHRISTMAS → CHRISTMAS</p>
1	2	3	4
<p>DONKEY → DONKEY</p>	<p>CE CE CE ^lCE π π</p>	<p>MANAWAYGER</p>	<p><u>LEFT</u> TURKEY</p>
5	6	7	8
<p>NIGHT</p>	<p>PRES ENTS</p>	<p>W ← ↑ → E S</p>	<p>*JACK*</p>
9	10	11	12
<p>XMAS</p>	<p>GOOD DAY SPRING HI THERE SUMMER HEY AUTUMN HELLO WINTER</p>	<p>PPP </p>	<p>BLANPIGPIGKETS</p>
13	14	15	16
<p>D NER</p>	<p>DECOR = 8/10</p>	<p>VORDERMAN DANVERS SMILLIE KING</p>	<p><u>PRESENCE</u> PRESENTS</p>
17	18	19	20

ANSWERS ON PAGE 2