

WORCESTERSHIRE CARE LEAVERS

Worcestershire Care Leavers
Newsletter 11 NOVEMBER 2021

**WHAT'S BETTER –
HALLOWEEN**

OR

BONFIRE NIGHT

OR

CHRISTMAS?



**Care Leaver Luke Ward
Goes To Space!**

**Feedback on
Our PA's!**

**Leaving Care
Entitlements**



WORCESTERSHIRE CARE LEAVERS

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The newsletter is for you and we would like to see more contributions from our Care Leavers. Contact your PA, or BSO Steve, if you have any ideas you'd like to discuss or contribute.

If you are visually impaired, or reading this newsletter is difficult for you for any other reason (perhaps English is not your first language), we can make the document available in a different format so you can still access the contents.

Please visit our website for more information.

The Worcestershire Care Leavers Newsletter is produced in-house by the **Worcestershire Care Leavers Team**. All articles and design by BSO Steve Roach unless otherwise stated. Images sourced from Pexels / Shutterstock / Internet. To discuss contributions and content please get in touch with Steve at sroach@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk
The Care Leavers Team are based at the County Hall site on Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP.



WHAT'S THE BEST?

*A lot of people don't like the autumn/winter months but smack-bang in the middle of the darkness are three very different celebrations that round the year off with a scare, a bang and a smile - **Halloween**, **Bonfire Night** and **Christmas** all come along in relatively quick succession and each is very different in their own special way.*

**SO WHICH ONE IS THE BEST?!
LET'S FIND OUT!**





The Origins of Halloween

Back in the mists of time, ancient Gaelic people celebrated **Samhain**, a festival marking the end of the harvest season, the end of the year and the beginning of winter. It was also a day when the domain of the gods was visible to mortal men, and the border between this world and the next was at its thinnest. Souls and spirits drifted into our realm and our ancestors wore costumes and masks to avoid being recognised. Over time, the Christian church incorporated this (and other) festivals as a way of easing more non-believers into the fold.

Halloween is a shortening of **All Hallow's Eve**, the day before **All Saints Day**, where the memories of all the Christian saints and martyrs are honoured. There are quite a few of them, and gone are the days when there were so few that the year could afford each their own day. Traditional celebrations include temporarily abstaining from eating meat, attending religious services and lighting candles on the graves of the departed. More modern celebrations include going **Trick or Treating**, dressing up in costumes and watching a decent horror film.

Nowadays, Halloween has been appropriated (like everything else) by rampant commercialism and is a hodge-podge of ancient and modern beliefs with an ever-thinning religious coating and a veneer of horror enjoyed by children and adults the world over. That's not necessarily a bad thing – without the commercial interest pushing it in our faces who knows how long somewhat obscure traditions like this will otherwise survive in the future?

So What's So Good About Halloween?

Speaking as a grown man who has just been thoroughly irresponsible and spent £25 of the monthly food budget on a 4ft plastic skeletal spider (which I think is a bargain but my hungry girlfriend disagrees), the opportunity to decorate the house with spiders, skulls and all things monstrous is amazing. Sometimes it's nice to slow down the pace of life a bit and reflect on mortality and the one thing we **ALL** have in common – one day we will all die. Whilst we're still alive though, let's try to enjoy life!

Since leaving care I find Samhain more fun! I just watch movies and eat sweets! Whereas for Yule it's a family thing and I don't talk to most of my family and those I do talk to live an hour away so it's a trek to see them. I don't have an opinion on bonfire night as I've never celebrated it and think it's a waste of money!

Alfie



BONFIRE NIGHT

The Origins of Bonfire Night

Remember, remember the 5th of November...

Although bonfires were lit throughout the winter for various festivals (including All Hallows Eve and the days following), what we traditionally celebrate as **bonfire night** is firmly linked to the failed gunpowder plot of 1605 where Guy Fawkes and a few other plotters – all Catholics – tried to blow up the House of Lords in an attempt to kill Protestant King James I and replace him with a Catholic head of state.

People lit fires to celebrate the failure of the plot and the government brought in an Act of Parliament called the '**Observance of 5th November Act**' to ensure the masses engaged in a public, annual thanksgiving celebration. The Act was eventually repealed but the observation was quickly embedded in British culture and remained.

Nowadays, people still burn effigies of Guy Fawkes (who has become a symbol of anti-authoritarian rebellion due to a stylised mask of Fawkes' face being the protagonist's disguise in the Alan Moore graphic novel (and subsequent film) '**V for Vendetta**', and also in the real world to hide the identities of members of groups such as **Anonymous**). Life-sized Guy dolls are usually perched atop great bonfires and accompanied by firework displays.

What's so good about Bonfire Night?

Unless you're an animal, specifically one that resides outdoors and wonders in terror why bits of the sky have suddenly start to explode, the fireworks displays of 5th November (or nearest weekend to it, whichever is most convenient) are a welcome flourish of excitement and colour in the otherwise dank, dark month of November.

There's something wonderful about standing around a roaring fire with a few friends (and many strangers), staring hypnotically into the flames and feeling the heat on your face. In a world of computers, sterility and sometimes over-the-top Health and Safety measures, it's nice to engage with the outdoors and invoke the same primal feelings our ancestors used to have on a daily basis.

Darkness.

Fire.

Awesome.



Ablaze

A Poem by Luke Ward

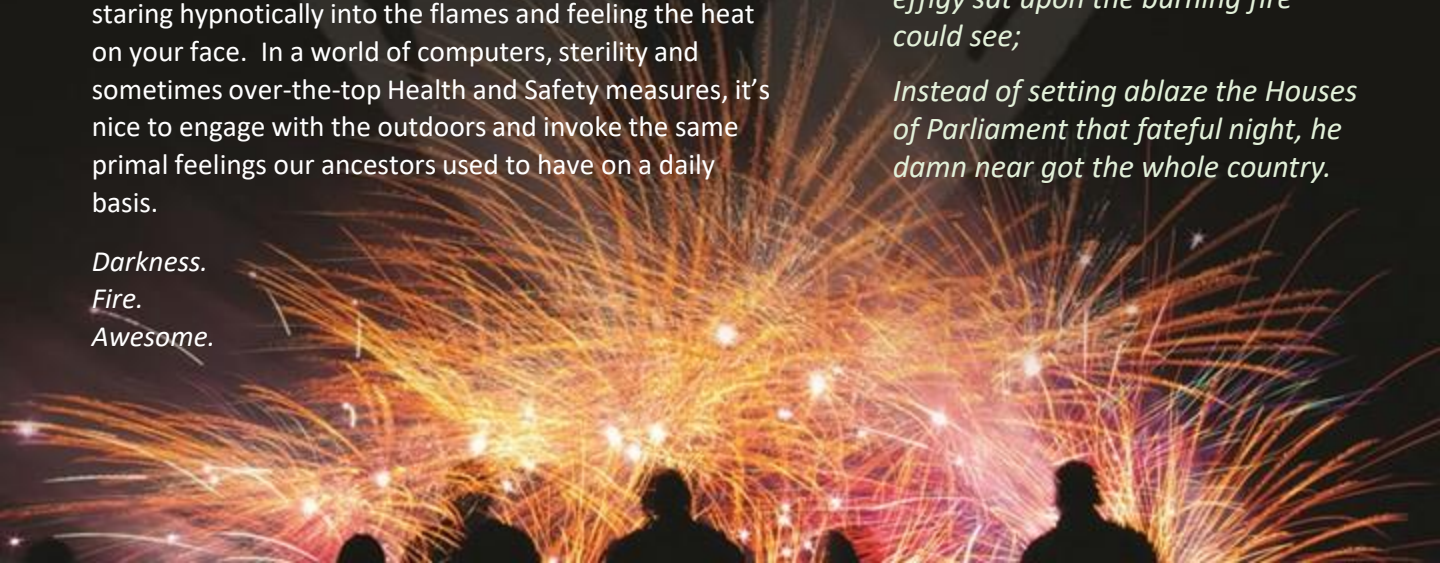
*Bonfire night is the time where we
set the star strewn sky alight.*

*Fireworks in every size, shape and
colour.*

*They burst and tumble down like
droplets from a kaleidoscopic
shower.*

*Indeed it is quite the sight to
believe, if only the Guy Fawkes
effigy sat upon the burning fire
could see;*

*Instead of setting ablaze the Houses
of Parliament that fateful night, he
damn near got the whole country.*



The Origins of Christmas

Christmas was looked at in detail in a previous newsletter (*Issue 8 if you missed it and need to request a copy from your PA or from BSO Steve*).

Traditionally, Christmas Day is the birthday of Jesus Christ and, over the centuries, bits and pieces from other cultures, religions and festivals have been appropriated and added.

Today, Christmas is indelibly associated with Santa Claus and the giving and receiving of presents, two elements that would have baffled Jesus if asked what he thought his legacy would involve.

What's so good about Christmas?

Presents! Pretty much everybody is in a good mood! Time off work! Loads of food! House lights and decorations!

For many of us, Christmas is cemented with having a good time from early childhood and brings warm feelings of comfort throughout our adult lives. Whether you're religious or not, there's something undeniably special about this time of year.

This said, lots of people don't grow up having a great Christmas. As an adult, when you are in control of your own life, you have the option to take back Christmas and shape it to what you want to be. It doesn't have to be a religious thing for you, or a capitalist spending spree, or even a painful catering experience for family members you might not even like – but it can be a chance to think about yourself, relax and take some downtime to appreciate the things you do have.

And, of course, it's the time of year when you get to watch the movie 'Elf' all over again, which never gets old!

Sadly, as a Christian, Halloween isn't something I subscribe to. Christmas doesn't hold any real significance for me as I believe the birth of Jesus is actually a different date to the one we've all been told. This said, I do like the idea of people and families coming together and sharing gifts and joy. I only wish people did as much during the rest of the year!

Nathan



Do We Have a Winner?



YES WE DO!

After having carefully looked at all three festivals in turn, and seeing what's so good about them all, we must surely come to the **only** possible conclusion and say the winner is...

YOU!

All three festivals are very different, and each can be a ton of fun, so it seems rude to single one out above the others! You get to enjoy all three and dot the dark months of autumn and winter with fireworks and tinsel, bonfires and masks. From all of us in the **Care Leavers Team**.....



**HAPPY
HALLOWEEN!**



**HAPPY
BONFIRE NIGHT!**



**HAPPY
CHRISTMAS!**

LIGHT NIGHT WORCESTER



For 3 nights this year, from 19th-21st October, bits of Worcester were lit up in the most spectacular way as part of the Light Night Worcester festival. Following on the heels of the Worcester Paint Festival street art project, which quickly followed the Worcester Big Parade and dozens of beautifully decorated elephants dotted around, our city is definitely becoming something of a cultural powerhouse. If you missed the light shows this year, it returns 23-24 February 2022 – put the date in your diary!

In his own words, Care Leaver Alfie recaps his COVID Lockdown experience.



Being in lockdown was tough for a lot of us! It halted our social lives, kept us inside and for some we lost loved ones!

My personal experience of lockdown was hard but manageable. I started writing short stories and doing more artwork - it gave me time to find myself and reflect over my life! It even made me appreciate the small things!

Since august 2019 to summer 2020 I lived next door to some horrid people who, once lockdown started, became unbearable to live next to! And because of lockdown I found it hard to find help or even get away from them for a few hours! So I put a request in with my local council to have me moved and I'm glad I did!!

Since moving to my new and current flat, I've spent more time getting my flat homely. I've painted every room and decorated it with my current artwork collection (all my own work). I've been able to spend more time outside enjoying the sun and listening to the song of the birds! I've even taken up photography taking amazing pictures of my animals and the sunsets from my evening walks!

But it's not all being good! In the year that Covid lockdown/restrictions have been in place I've not seen any of my family and, other than the odd shop keeper or trip to the pharmacy, I've not really spoken to anyone, making it harder for me to communicate and causing me anxiety in social situations! One thing I'm looking forward to is being able to hug my family again and letting them meet my cats and my 2 old rats!

My animals have kept me going though hard times. They are there when I need a hug or when I want someone to talk to. They are there to keep me company and watch over me as I sleep! I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for my animals!

In my eyes I think Covid will be here for at-least the foreseeable future and we may have many more lockdowns, at least during the winter season when most illnesses are always heightened by the cold air and warm homes!

But for now let's take one day at a time and never forget how far we have already come!

Stay safe! *Alfie*



The Care Leavers Team currently has access to Greenhill Lodge and it's already opened up a world of possibilities – in the short time we've been utilising the building so far we've run a number of cookery sessions, a Halloween crafting session and even a Saturday lunch. It's been a real bonus to have a place to base ourselves from where our young people feel comfortable and can actively participate in special events set up for them.



PA Oli ran the first session in early October and cooked up a storm in the kitchen. Spaghetti bolognese, veggie bolognese and garlic bread were all on the menu and when our Care Leavers had helped to make it they went outside with some of the staff and thoroughly enjoyed eating it! Such opportunities don't arise very often at the more formal offices at County Hall so Greenhill Lodge has been something of a godsend for the team and our young people.

Our Greenhill Lodge site is open for drop-ins every Wednesday. We are hoping to put on a number of events throughout the winter – ask your PA for details. Also note that we are available for drop-ins every Thursday at our workspace at the Housing Advice Centre in Trinity Street central Worcester.

"I can speak to her in confidence, having a supportive friend rather than a figure of authority. I can trust her too and that's a big thing. It's had a really positive impact on my mental health, when I've been really poorly I can still speak to her."

"100% positive. It's nice to have someone completely impartial and having someone fight your corner is brilliant."

"I could ring her anytime and she will give me advice. I can talk to her openly and say anything. I've never had that trust with a support worker or social worker in the past. She's changed my perception of social services."



"He's done loads for me. He's inspired me to do the same job as him when I finish uni."

"She has really helped me stay on level and stable. She's kept me on ground zero."

"The fact that the service isn't so structured means things aren't so intrusive and are on my terms. It's not just seeing me and ticking a box, it's worthwhile."

FEEDBACK

"Sue literally saved me. I was going through a tough time and Sue really helped me."

"Everybody I have spoken to has been really helpful and willing to support. Really, I cannot fault the care leavers team."

"She's the social services version of a mum!"

"Best worker I have ever had. 1000/1000!"

"Communication has been great, I don't have a bad word to say about the service."



Peace is a White Horse

Peace is a white horse,
A beautiful white mare.

She is beautiful to look at but as wild as
a summer breeze. Don't search for her
in time she will find you.

And when she does don't rush to greet
her as you'll only scare her away let her
make the first move then slowly reach
out with one hand and feel her breath
on your hand, feel the warmth within
her breath because it is within her
breath that you will find true
compassion now look into her eyes,
look deep within her eyes and say that
there is no judgement because it is
within them that you find true love.

Now open your heart and let her
spirit wash through you
because it is within you
that you'll find
true peace.



CARE LEAVERS

A man with a large, dark, bushy mustache is dressed as a captain. He wears a gold and black captain's hat with a skull and crossbones emblem. He is wearing a brown leather jacket and a matching leather glove on his right hand, which is pointing directly at the camera. The background consists of a red and white striped pattern, reminiscent of a flag.

YOUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS

YOU

CONTRIBUTE ARTICLES AND PICTURES!

EARN YOURSELF A £10 REWARD VOUCHER!

SEE YOUR PA FOR DETAILS!



10 THINGS THE LAW SAYS YOU ARE ENTITLED TO WHEN LEAVING CARE



Leaving Care Entitlements

AN ASSESSMENT OF YOUR NEEDS

You have a right to have your needs assessed before you leave care to make sure that you leave **at a time that is right for you** whilst **knowing what support you will be getting** and **understanding what your options are if things don't work out for the best.**

For many young people, it is important to know that you can stay in care up until you are 18, unless you agree that you are ready to leave before.

A PATHWAY PLAN (or 'Leaving Care' Plan)

You should have a Pathway Plan, started sometime after your 16th birthday, that you have helped to put together and agree with. This should make clear the help you will be getting in preparing to leave care and what support you will receive after you have left.

This should say how your local authority will help you achieve the things you want in life (such as a place of your own, educational achievement, having your own money to spend, going on a training course or getting the job that you want). This is very important to you, as your Pathway Plan says exactly what help you should be getting before, during and after you leave care. Once agreed, it should be kept to by all those who have signed it.

When the time comes for you to leave care, you should be able to look after yourself, keep yourself healthy, continue with your learning, enjoy and achieve things in life, stay in touch with family and friends, and be confident about who you are.

A PERSONAL ADVISER

Children's social services should make sure that you have a Personal Adviser. This could be your current social worker or a worker from the 'leaving care' team. It is their job to keep in touch with you, check that you are alright and help you in getting what you need. To do this they must make sure that your Pathway Plan is followed, reviewed (at least every six months) and kept up to date.



A PLACE TO LIVE

Your local authority must make sure that you have somewhere 'suitable to live'. This means that it has to be right for you and, above all, safe. It is important that wherever you prefer to live, you make sure that your local authority puts this into your Pathway Plan. You can decide to return home if this is what you and your family wish.

In deciding whether accommodation is suitable for a care leaver to live in, a council must take into account the care leaver's wishes and feelings about their accommodation, as well as whether the accommodation suits the care leaver's needs and what the landlord is like. ('Young People's Entitlements', Department for Education)

If the council arranges accommodation for a care leaver, they must do a review after the care leaver has lived there for 28 days – and at least every three months after that. The personal adviser must visit in the first week, at least every two months after that and, also, before each review of the Pathway Plan. ('Young People's Entitlements', Department for Education)

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Until you are 18, then children's social services must arrange for your financial support to help you pay for the things you need to live on (for example for food, clothing, travel, hobbies and for your accommodation). They have to make sure that you are not any worse off than if you were on benefits. Once you are 18, if not in employment or full-time education, you can claim benefits. However, your local authority should continue to give you financial help (for example towards the costs of your education and training), if that is what they have agreed to do. In order that children's social services keep to their promises, they should make sure that all agreed support is written into your Pathway Plan.

Local authorities must pay the Higher Education Bursary for all eligible care leavers. Looked after young people and care leavers are guaranteed a £1,200 bursary if they stay in full-time education (and £2,000 if going to university). Young people should get in touch with their education provider (that is school or college) to find out how to claim the bursary. For advice speak to student support services or your tutor, or go to www.direct.gov.uk/16-19bursary. ('Young People's Entitlements', Department for Education)

Local authority allocation of setting up home allowances will be crucial in helping young people establish their identity and independence and should be used to ensure that they have appropriate equipment and household items to set up safe, secure and stable accommodation.

You can ask your authority for £2,000 for the Setting Up Home Grant allowance. This was the amount that the young people agreed, at the regional meetings for Chairs of Children in Care Councils, to ask their local authorities for. ('Young People's Entitlements', Department for Education).



MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

Your Personal Adviser should help you to keep contact with relatives and also friends that you have met whilst in care. If you would like more information about finding friends that you met whilst in care why not visit;
www.careleaversreunited.com

TO HAVE YOUR SAY IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY ABOUT SOMETHING

Although you have left care you are still entitled to let children's social services know and, if necessary, complain if not satisfied with the support you are getting. REMEMBER: You also have the right to have an advocate to help you do this.

INVOLVEMENT IN DECISIONS

You have a right to be involved in all major decisions, including when you leave care, where you go to live and what support you receive.

TO SEE YOUR FILES

The law says that you have a right to see information written that is about you. This includes social services files and many young people would like help in getting access to these.

TO KNOW ABOUT SERVICES YOU CAN USE

You have a right to be told, and given information telling you, about all the services that you are entitled to use once you leave care (for example, children's social services, health, further and higher education courses, housing advice).

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like more information about any of your entitlements when leaving care contact any of the following organisations or visit their websites. You can also contact your local Care Leavers Team.

A National Voice

Tel: 0161 237 5577

www.anationalvoice.org

Who Cares? Trust

Tel: 0207 251 3117

www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

Care Leavers' Association

Tel: 0161 275 9500

www.careleavers.com

National Leaving Care
Advisory Service

Tel: 0207 840 5620

www.raineronline.org



**MACKENZIE
BUCKLE
INSPIRATIONAL
PHOTOS**

*“Don't tell people
about your dreams,
show them!”*





0330 094 5645

contactus@reesfoundation.org

www.reesfoundation.org

Ask us about Ask Jan!

**Our membership
scheme for care
leavers**



ASK JAN
MEMBERSHIP

- 24-hour counselling helpline - direct & immediate access to a BACP accredited counsellor
- Face to face counselling sessions
- Personal finance advice - pensions, debt & savings
- Nutrition & wellbeing advice
- Specialist advice helplines
- Access to a wellbeing App
- Cognitive behavioural therapy
- Discounts and special offers on days out

ARTS PROJECTS



A creative challenge for care experienced people with new projects every month.

CAREERS COACHING



Step by step help in exploring the employment market.

CARE EXPERIENCED PEOPLE IN CUSTODY



Highlighting support channels whilst in custody and upon exit.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



Grants, financial help and crisis payments may be available.

HOUSING & MENTORING



We manage a range of quality properties in Worcestershire.

PANEL PROJECT



Training for care experienced people to join a fostering panel.

REES CAFES



Safe social spaces in the heart of the community for all.

GENERAL SUPPORT & SIGNPOSTING



We are on hand to offer general and emotional support as needed.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS



Fully funded opportunities in the great outdoors.

PEER NETWORKS



Connections can lead to life-long and empowering friendships

TIME TO TALK



We offer a listening ear in total confidence in times of need



www.reesfoundation.org

Rees Foundation is a Charity registered in England & Wales. Registration number 1154019



UNDER THE SKY

Are you aware that Care Leavers have access to FREE adventures in the outdoors?

If you have spent any of your life in care, even for a short amount of time, you are eligible for a FREE adventure in the outdoors with Under the Sky Events. These opportunities are for care-leaver adults who would benefit from the chance to spend time outdoors, learning new skills to create a healthier lifestyle.

Hiking
Bushcraft
Orienteering
Mindfulness
River Dipping
Nature Photography and Art

Throughout 2021 we ran numerous events, including:

Beasley Back Dane (trip for care-leavers aged over 30)

This was a great opportunity to develop artistic skills and take some time to clear busy minds. Surrounded by the beautiful Peak District, Care Leavers enjoyed art classes, stone carving, photography and nature walks, as well as plenty of opportunities to sit back and relax in nature.

Welsh Adventure - YHA Brecon Beacons Danywenallt

While exploring the beautiful hills of the Brecon Beacons care Leavers were introduced to map reading, orienteering and camping skills, as well as going on nature walks and forest bathing.

2021 still available for bookings:

Parents & Tots Christmas - YHA St Braivel's Castle

Monday 13th December to Thursday 16th December

Christmas time is the perfect time to get cosy and improve your craft and baking skills and where better to do it than a Castle! This trip offers an exciting opportunity to spend a few festive days in the exquisite St Braivel's Castle! This event will be packed with lots of lovely activities to take you back to the medieval days, including a visit from Father Christmas, baking and crafts sessions, a Christmas PJ party and nature walks.

www.undertheskyevents.org

We will be asking you for a small refundable deposit of £25 to show us that you are serious about going, if this is difficult for you then tell us when you apply. If you are not working or are a full-time student we can even help you get there!

You can also work as a volunteer with us on our events! Are you a professional person with a love of the outdoors? We are looking for volunteers for all our events, all your food and accommodation will be paid.





Join **Our Care Leavers Council!** It is a fab opportunity to meet other care experienced people and have an opportunity to have fun and activities all chosen by you. We meet online every month on a Monday evening. (But hope to be able to meet up in person soon). We usually catch up, play a game, or do a quiz and have a chat about life. Sometimes people ask to visit and give a talk, and we can help them to make positive changes to services for children and young people.

Feel free to come to meetings when you can. You don't have to come every month. We have support workers who are available during the week. They will keep in touch and remind us of meetings and share opportunities.

Contact our support workers for more info:

Twitter @SpeakOutWorcs

Instagram @youthvoiceworcs

Phone: 01905 846498

Email: youthvoiceteam@worschildrenfirst.org.uk

NEW

Worcestershire's

Young People's Panel

Training

We are offering a free opportunity to gain a recognized qualification in interview skills.

From this training you will be invited to join the young people's panel.

Being a member of a Young People's Panel means that you get to help one of the largest employers locally and decide who will work for them and the citizens of Worcestershire.

Panel members will receive training on how to interview and will have the opportunity to create their own interview questions.

Putting what you have learnt into practice by taking part in the Young People's Panel.

If you would like more information please contact:

youthvoiceteam@worschildrenfirst.org.uk

The **Young People Panel** are always looking for new members. It is a group of young people aged 12-25 years old who are crucial part of the employment process.

All panel members are invited to attend a Worcestershire County Council training session with other trainee panellists. On completion you will receive a certificate and be invited to take part.

Young people panels work together with Worcestershire County Councils Human Resources Team offering support for various roles in the County Council and Worcestershire Children First. One candidate said they "enjoyed the challenge of the interview and young person's panel".

Gabrielle Stacey, Service Manager for SEND and Vulnerable learners said: "Since working with Worcestershire Children First I have had the pleasure of working with young people as panel members in a number of interviews for key positions in our organisation. The feedback from those interviewed by the young people has been unflinching positive.

They have found the questions they ask to be challenging and relevant and I have more than once heard it said that 'they really get to the heart of what the job is about'. The young people are always professional, thoughtful and approachable. I am very grateful for their support and wouldn't dream of interviewing for senior positions without their involvement."

If this sounds like an opportunity you would like to be part of or you have further questions, please speak to your PA or contact the participation Team: youthvoiceteam@worschildrenfirst.org.uk.



Thank You EDT!

The EDT team are kind, caring and helpful in every single way,
I ring them when I feel stressed or need someone to talk to,
and they always brighten up my day.

The EDT team are all amazing and there for people,
each one of them has a heart of gold,
the love and care they each show for people, will never grow old.

The EDT team are there to support people,
help in emergencies, and even offer support through a breakdown,
with the EDTs support it is impossible to frown.

Lorraine has supported me through my transition,
also Carol, Hannah, Tracy, Tracy, Marina and Julie have too,
there is one thing I would like to say to you all,
which is a massive thank you.

Each and every EDT staff member has helped me
during my hardest of days and have each been a ray of light,
you have all been there for me on my darkest night.

I want to thank you all for being there for me,
from beggining, to now, to the end,
not only are you social workers - each one of you is a good friend.
I want you all to know, everyone of you has saved my life,
from your kind and caring words,
to your gentle friendly advice,

Thank you all once again you are all absolutely incredible,
the things you do for people is beyond amazing,
you all deserve to be noticed,.

You all work really hard and don't get enough notice
and thanks for everything you do well here is my thanks to you...
Thank you EDT, love from

Novaleigh



Care Leavers 
Poetry Workshop 

Would you like to create poetry?
Meet with other care experienced
young people?
Would you like support in sharing
your voice in a creative format?
**If the answer is yes we would like
to hear from you!**
We are currently seeking interest to
potentially offer this opportunity and
create a poetry book.

Either speak to your PA or email:
youthvoiceteam@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

CHAT HEALTH

IF YOU'RE AGED 11-19 YEARS AND
LIVE IN WORCESTERSHIRE, YOU CAN
TEXT THE NUMBER BELOW AND
SPEAK TO A SCHOOL HEALTH NURSE
FOR CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE AND
SUPPORT ON A RANGE OF HEALTH
AND WELLBEING ISSUES

text: 07507331750



How long have you worked for the Care Leavers Team?

I joined the Care Leaver's Team in March 2020. This was the same week that lockdown started so I never got to come into the office! Before this I was working with young parents for a few years and before that I have worked with loads of different people like asylum seekers, people who are experiencing mental health problems and things like that. I grew up in the North West but I also lived in London for a few years and have been in the Midlands for about 15 years now. I couldn't decide whether to move back up North or stay in London so came to the middle!!!

Why did you become a PA?

I have always liked working with people and I like to see people get a fair chance in life. I think that young people deserve decent opportunities to take part in society and progress in their lives. I am not sure they always get the chances that they deserve. I am happy to spend my time trying to change this. You are the future!!

What's your favourite part of the job?

I like to get out and about and to meet different people. I have worked in an office 9-5 and I got bored of being in the same place all day. I like being a PA because I get the chance to manage my own time and travel about visiting people. Every day is different and there is always loads going on. This makes for a more interesting job. I also think the young people are great – I'm always really impressed by how hard the young people are working to achieve their potential and get the life they want and deserve. I admire it.

What do you do in your spare time?

I don't get much free time but we all need a break sometimes. I like looking after my pets (bunnies, hamsters, birds & fish). I enjoy reading and am always willing to join a book club or listen to recommendations from anyone. I love seeing my friends, watching Netflix, and I really like travelling – I was hoping to go to Goa at some point but I don't think that will be anytime soon due to covid-19. I can dream!



Change to number for Children and Young People's Sexual Assault Referral Service in the West Midlands region

If you want to make a referral from any of these areas in the West Midlands region, please note the new number below:

- Birmingham and Solihull
- The Black Country
- Coventry and Warwickshire
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

For all acute and non-recent cases from 00:01 on 1st January 2020, call 0808 196 2340

Before this date, please continue to call 0800 953 4133

Mountain Healthcare will be supporting the existing service provider by working together from 07:00 on 27.12.2019. This will ensure a seamless transition of the service in readiness for 1st January 2020.

For more information, please go to www.westmidscyps.co.uk

The BASEMENT Project

"Creating a Foundation for Independence"

WE ARE STILL HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

We are available 5 days a week:

Virtual Drop in via Skype and Live Web Chat

Monday - Friday 11am - 4pm
visit: www.basementproject.org.uk

Office staffed

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9 - 4.30
for food parcels and donations to the food bank.
Call 01527 832993

Web Chat: <https://bromsgrovebasementproject.org.uk>

Download: Skype and search for The Basement Project

Phone: 01527 832993

Email: info@basementproject.org.uk

Facebook Messenger: @NorthWorcestershireBasementProjects



Traineeships for 16-18* year olds

* Up to 25 years old with an ECHP



Finding it hard to secure a job or an Apprenticeship, but feel you need more guidance and experience? Have you thought of doing a Traineeship?

A Traineeship is a great opportunity for you to build up your experience through a work placement, whilst improving your skills.

The Traineeship programme lasts for 6 months, improving your job prospects.

You will spend two days per week on a work placement and 1 day per week in the classroom completing functional skills Maths and English.

For further information please contact Katie on 07404 895438 or e-mail [worcestere@wrecltd.co.uk](mailto:worcester@wrecltd.co.uk)

Feeling stressed, anxious or depressed? Healthy Minds could help you

All of us at some point feel low, anxious, worried or depressed. It is completely normal but it can also start to impact what we do and who we are and when we reach that point it is important to get help to prevent these feelings getting worse.

We understand that seeking support is a big step. There are many situations in a person's life which may cause stress, anxiety, low mood or depression. We hope to provide you with support and information that will help you feel yourself again.

Our NHS Healthy Minds provide a range of free, confidential support. This includes:

- Online therapy which you do at your own pace and in your own time
- Groups and Courses where you can share (as much or as little as you wish) and learn from other people
- Or more traditional 1:1 support
- We can also help you access some of the great resources available in your local area.

To access the Herefordshire Healthy Minds service you must be aged 18 or over and registered with a GP in Herefordshire. You can self-refer by either calling: 01432 347606 or to complete the online self-referral form.

To access the Worcestershire Healthy Minds service you must be aged 16 and over and registered with a GP in Worcestershire. You can self-refer by either calling: 0300 302 13 13 or to complete the online self-referral form.

@NowWereTalkingWorcs

@NowWereTalking_





Care Leavers Duty Number:

01905 845613

CareLeaversDuty@worcestershire.gov.uk

Due to Coronavirus we are currently offering a limited drop-in service but you can contact us during business hours by phone, text or email. We can arrange a visit to you if you want or need one.

Struggling to pay your fuel bills due to COVID and have built up debt?

Got a faulty boiler and can't afford to fix it?



If you live in Worcestershire we can give you a helping hand

Call Free: 0800 988 2881

Email: advice@actonenergy.org.uk

www.actonenergy.org.uk

[f actonenergy](https://www.facebook.com/actonenergy)



YOUNG Solutions

Seek and Reach

MOVE ON with your MENTOR

Why have your own mentor?
Because they can support YOU...

- One to one at a location you feel comfortable in
- Find your feet, recognise your potential and succeed in the future
- Manage and build positive relationships
- Remove barriers to progression
- Build your confidence and self-esteem
- With any challenges you are facing
- Practically and emotionally
- Accessing work, education and training
- With CV's, application forms and interviews
- Regardless of any learning difficulties or disabilities you have

To find out more contact Sarah Whitehead

Seek and Reach is a support and mentoring scheme for young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, training or employment living in Worcestershire.

07458 012719

sarah.w@youngsolutions.org.uk

www.youngsolutions.org.uk

Seek and Reach

New baby?

Your local Health Visitors are here for you.
Call the **Telephone Advisory Service (TAS)** on 0300 123 9551 Mon-Fri 9am-3pm.

You've got this.

But if there are some things you're worried about, your local Health Visitors are here for you.

Call the Telephone Advisory Service (TAS) on 0300 123 9551 Mon-Fri 9am-3pm.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Here are some useful numbers to get help and advice, from accommodation to foodbank vouchers. There are also numbers to call if you're feeling low, anxious or just need a listening ear:

SAMARITANS

Call 116 123
Free to use and available 24/7

SHOUT

For support in a crisis.
Text 'SHOUT' to 85258
Free to use and available 24/7

CHILDLINE

Call 0800 1111
Free to use and available daily
7.30am-3.30pm

BECOME

Support and guidance to care experienced people and supporters of care experienced people.
0800 023 2033
becomecharity.org.uk

REES FOUNDATION

Helping care experienced people thrive
Support, advice and info for Care-Experienced young people
www.reesfoundation.org

NIGHTSTOP

Preventing homelessness through community hosting
Call on 01562 743111

STONEWALL

Stonewall is a charity that supports people from the LGBT community.
stonewall.org.uk

KOOTH

Online platform all ages includes forums, magazines and individual counselling.
www.koothplc.com

Worcestershire Children First

Care Leavers Duty 01905 845613
EDT/Out of Hours 01905 768020

CareLeaversDuty@worcestershire.gov.uk

Due to Coronavirus we are currently offering a limited drop-in service but you can contact us during business hours by phone, text or email. We can arrange a visit to you if you want or need one.

MIND

Mental health advice, info and support
www.mind.org

YOUNG MINDS

Fighting for Young People's Mental Health
Mental health advice, info and support for young people.
www.youngminds.org.uk

RETHINK MENTAL ILLNESS

Crisis numbers, advice and support for mental health issues
www.rethink.org

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTHY MINDS

0300 3021 313
Wulstan Unit, Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR5 1JG
<http://www.hacw.nhs.uk/our-services/healthy-minds/>

RESPECT

Men & Women working together to end domestic violence
Useful information regarding Male Domestic abuse
www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Worcestershire Mental Health

Helpline for urgent advice
01905 681 915
(24 hrs a day 365 days a year)

PAPYRUS

Prevention of Young Suicide Service
www.papyrus.org.uk

CRUSH

A structured group programme of support and empowerment for young people in the age range of 13 - 19 who have witnessed, experienced or are at risk of domestic abuse.
www.westmerciawomensaid.org



If you are struggling TALK TO SOMEONE!
There are people there to help and support you.
If you don't know where to begin, call your Personal Adviser.

WORCESTERSHIRE CARE LEAVERS

We are looking for contributors for our quarterly Newsletter.



Previous Newsletters have featured articles about attending university; a round-the-world trip; a film project; a musician's new release and the experiences of an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young person. If it's going to interest other Care Leavers we will print it - and we'll reward you with a £10 voucher for a High Street store of your choice!

If you are a Worcestershire Care Leaver and would like to contribute to a future Newsletter please get in touch with your PA.