

Staying Close:
**Supporting York's
Care Leavers into
Employment**



**I STILL
MATTER**

York's Children in
Care Council and
Care Leavers Forum





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Introduction

Who are care leavers?

Care leavers are young people who have experienced the care system (consisting of foster homes and residential care) as they reach adulthood and move to independent living, primarily at 18.

Why is this important?

Care leavers, due to the instability and disruption of their childhood, education and family life, often face significant challenges in gaining and maintaining employment. However, they are some of the most talented, skilled and ambitious young people you will meet. It is our responsibility as a society, and employers, to give these young people every chance to succeed and progress. Currently, care leavers make up almost 25% of the prison population and 25% of the homeless population. **We can all help change this.**

Support for you:

- Conversations before the placement begins
- A facilitated introduction between you and the young person prior to starting
- Regular check-ins if needed (to be agreed with employer)
- Information on managing expectations and effective strategies for you and any employees working with the young person

Benefits to your business:

- Care leavers are skilled in ways you can't train – resilience, decision making, creative problem solving and taking initiative.
- You, as an employer, will gain an insight into current societal issues.
- You will gain sensitivity when working with employees and customers.
- You will be able to market your business as supporting care leavers, a growing national focus.
- You, as an individual, could be the person they remember for the rest of their lives. You could be the person they credit for helping them succeed and changing their futures.

How you can help:

There are a number of ways you, as an employer, can help York's care leavers and genuinely change lives. Outlined in this booklet are a range of offers you can make to support these young people.



Why employers are working with us:



The Grand:

The Grand is delighted to collaborate with Staying Close, an organisation dedicated to supporting care leavers. Our shared values of providing support, creating opportunities, and fostering a nurturing environment make this collaboration a natural fit. Together, we aim to empower care leavers with the skills, confidence, and resources they need to succeed, reflecting our ongoing dedication to giving back to the community that has supported us.

Middletons Hotel:

At Middletons Hotel we are firm believers in supporting our local community and already work on a number of initiatives in the city. Supporting care and foster leavers through the Staying Close campaign aligns with our values of inclusivity and social responsibility. We are proud to be working alongside the council to offer mentoring, internships and employment opportunities to empower care leavers to build their skills, gain work experience and to help break the cycle of disadvantage to create a more inclusive society in York.

The difference you can make

Care leaver (27 years old):

“We, as care leavers, are often some of the most resilient and hardworking people due to our past experiences. Unfortunately, we do still reside in a world where care leavers are generalised and discriminated against by employers therefore it makes all the difference when opportunities are provided. This often results in persevering, dedicated and keen individuals who are grateful for chance to excel.

I think the most important thing to remember when you're working with care leavers is to never assume- we may be coming to you having gone through circumstances adults will struggle to even comprehend, and only through understanding, recognition, support and the provision of opportunities can we help both young person and adult look past the label and successfully promote positive relationships and working skills that can be used across life- something that could be the difference between living and thriving.”



Guaranteed Interviews

Employer Involvement:

Offering care leavers a guaranteed interview if they apply for a job and they meet the minimum criteria.



Benefit to Care Leavers:

Due to disrupted education and lack of a stable network, some care leavers may have a minimal or empty CV which acts as a barrier to gaining employment. A guaranteed interview gives them a chance to demonstrate their unique skills and suitability for the job in person.

Can you help?

Contact Jasmine Bhatt, call 07720155649 or email jasmine.bhatt@york.gov.uk, for more information.



Buddy System

Employer Involvement:

Matching care leavers with a 'buddy' when they start a job or a placement. This would be someone they work closely with who can give them guidance and support as they settle in.



Benefit to Care Leavers:

Starting out in a working environment can be stressful for anyone, but for care leavers this can be a much more daunting experience. A colleague there to support and guide for the first week or so can make a huge difference, both in building confidence and skills, and being a person of trust that the young person can come to with any questions or worries.

Can you help?

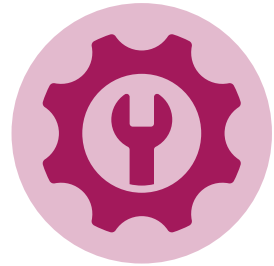
Contact Jasmine Bhatt, call 07720155649 or email jasmine.bhatt@york.gov.uk, for more information.



Work Experience

Employer Involvement:

This can range from half a day to a longer-term placement. It could also take the form of one day a week for an extended time as well as every day for a fixed period. Format and time would be arranged in conjunction with employer and care leaver.



Benefit to Care Leavers:

Due to some care leavers having a disrupted education and lack of a stable network, they may have a minimal or empty CV which acts as a barrier to gaining employment. Work experience can help them gain an insight into employment, build their confidence and make them more likely to gain employment in the future.

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Mentoring

Employer Involvement:

Regular conversations to support the growth, confidence and potential of a young person. This could be work specific or for general life skills.

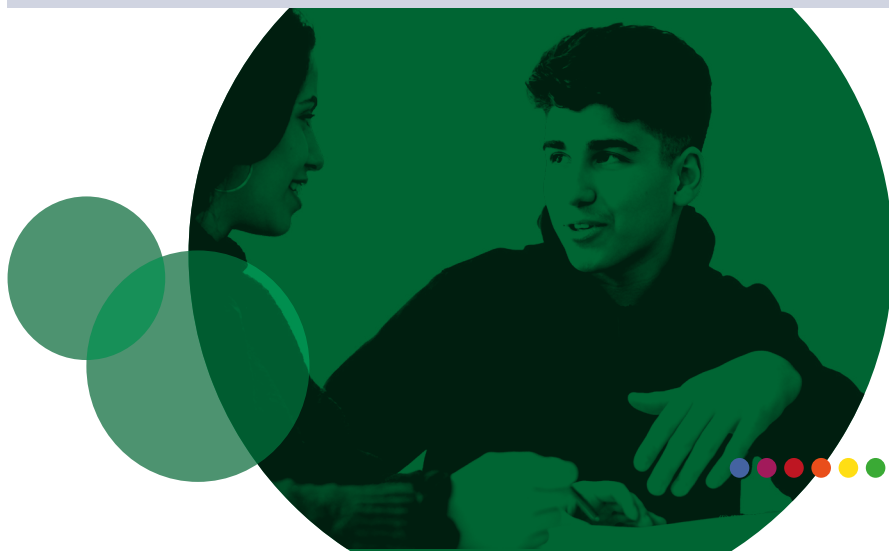


Benefit to Care Leavers:

Care leavers may not have had a supportive social network in the childhoods and may still not have that as adults. A mentor to support and guide them, both professionally and personally, can make a huge difference to their aspirations, careers and lives.

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Training

Employer Involvement:

Introducing and training young people in key skills relevant to the business. This could be specific to the sector such as customer service or operations, or more general.



This could also involve supported internships and apprenticeships.

Benefit to Care Leavers:

Building new skills and gaining experience not only increases opportunities but also fosters aspiration, confidence and motivation. For care leavers, this can be the opportunity to enter the professional world with the experience and qualifications needed to succeed.

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Open Events, Tours and Talks

Employer Involvement:

A set time for care leavers to visit, tour the site and be introduced to the different roles of the business and day-to-day practicalities.



Informative talks to groups of care leavers – for example, talks on different careers, interview skills, CV writing skills, how to foster ambition.

Benefit to Care Leavers:

Like many young people, some care leavers may not know, or have been exposed to, the wide range of opportunities out there. Tours, talks and open events can demonstrate the various roles in different sectors, fostering aspiration and motivating young people to persevere in their search for meaningful employment.

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Education Support

Employer Involvement:

Support with continued education during their employment. This could take a number of forms such as funded courses or ring-fenced time for them to study.

For example, if a job requires functional maths, rather than a care leaver being unable to fill the position, support could be put in place to enable them to gain their functional maths while working.



This could also involve supported internships and apprenticeships.

Benefit to Care Leavers:

Some care leavers may have had a disrupted education and as a result may not have the qualifications needed through no fault of their own. This can be a barrier to gaining employment when qualifications such as functional maths and English are required. However, a lot of our care leavers in this situation are very keen to get these qualifications and the chance to do so, alongside employment, can be an effective way to do this, benefiting both employer and care leaver.

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If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact:

 (01904) 551550

 ycc@york.gov.uk

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For more information, please contact:

Jasmine Bhatt, Employment and Opportunities Broker

Phone: 07720155649

Email: jasmine.bhatt@york.gov.uk