



Bury Care Leavers Newsletter

July 2021

COVID-19 Update

We hope you are all well and have managed to stay safe and supported during the COVID-19 restrictions. We are currently in Step 3 of the restrictions.

It is expected that England will move to Step 4 on 19 July, though the data will be reviewed after 2 weeks in case the risks have reduced. The government will continue to monitor the data and the move to Step 4 will be confirmed one week in advance. For more information on the restrictions visit ([COVID-19 Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do))

Care Leaver Support Fund

As you know, a Fund for Care Leavers has been set up with a fund of £50,000 per year for the next two years. This fund is to be allocated to assist care leavers to get support, equipment, funding or goods that would not be available through normal Social Care Funding channels. The fund has been available since the summer and many care leavers have already accessed this. We have already allocated around £33,500 to care leavers. Items such as laptops for studies, driving lessons for employment, clothing and equipment for college have already been paid for.

Speak to your PA if you feel you have a need that could be addressed using this fund.

Care Leavers Alternative Christmas Day 2020



As Corporate Parents we recognize the importance of family during the festive period and as such an alternative Christmas day was arranged for a number of our care leavers. Funding was sought via the Friends of Bury Care Experienced Young People, Six Town Housing and the Care Leaver Fund to host a Christmas meal, personalized present, Christmas stocking and games.

Members of the Constituted Group sought support from the owner of the Eagle and Child Restaurant in Ramsbottom, Glenn Duckett. He offered to provide a three course Christmas lunch, mocktail making class and offered the care leavers an opportunity to speak to the apprentice about future opportunities and career options in the catering industry.

The room was decorated and looked fabulous as the young people arrived. They were greeted with a seasonal mask and a non-alcoholic fizz. The young people watched a mocktail making demonstration by Glenn and Max of the Eagle and Child and had the opportunity to make their own cocktails or follow the recipe menu. The day continued with a delicious three course meal, a quiz and games and much fun was had by all.

The young people all received a gift, a goodie bag with treats and a large stocking filled with wrapped gifts to take home to open on Christmas morning. Christmas cards from corporate parenting champions were handed out to the young people.

There was also an opportunity to take home a large amount of food and “goodies” to see them through the Christmas holidays which was kindly donated by Brandlesholme Food Bank. The young people arrived and were taken home by taxi. Many friendships were made and much laughter and excited chatter could be heard throughout the day.

May we once again give a heartfelt **thank you** to our sponsors at The Eagle and Child, Brandlesholme Foodbank, Six Town Housing and the members of the Friends of Bury Care Experienced Young People Constituted Group for their support and hard work putting this event together.

Care Leavers Offer



As you know, we have a dedicated website hosted by The Bury Directory where all care leavers from Bury can access a host of information.

There is up to date information on the Corona Virus situation and support available as well as other information such as events, opportunities and information that may be useful to care leavers <https://theburysdirectory.co.uk/care-leavers-offer>

Please could all care leavers have a look at the website, tell us what you think and be honest – your feedback is really important. What is missing? What information would you like to see? What do you like about the website? Is it easy to use? There is a feedback form on the website, please let us have your comments using this link. We can only improve the website if you tell us what you want to see 😊

Constituted Group for Care Leavers



A constituted group has been set up entitled “Friends of Bury Care Experienced Young People”. The group has been agreed and the statutory roles of the group have been allocated to its members, for example chair, treasurer. This will allow the group to bid for grants and funding not open to the Council or other statutory agencies. Any funding that we receive will be used to pay for support and activities that are currently not available to young people through statutory services. The young people themselves will decide where the money is best spent. Unfortunately we have been unable to bid for monies during the Corona Virus period as

most charitable funds have been directed towards supporting people during this crisis. However, we will continue to look for funding and collect ideas from young people on what they would like to be funded. However, this does not mean the Group have not been busy, it has been agreed that the Constituted Group monitor and agree the funding from the Care Leaver Fund to ensure it is independent of Social Care and is being spent on the items that Care Leaver’s feel will be of benefit to their future. If anyone is interested in joining the group, please

let me know. We only intend to meet a couple of times a year so it will not be a massive commitment. It would be great to have care leavers as trustees on this group.

Believe and Achieve Awards 2020



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The Annual Believe and Achieve Awards ceremony 2020 could not take place in the usual way due to the COVID restrictions. However it is important to recognise and acknowledge the outstanding work and resilience of our young people during 2020. Therefore, the Believe and Achieve nominations were collected and judged in the usual way for each of the nomination categories. The categories cover a wide range of achievements including Progress in Education, Employment and Training, Personal Achievement, Achievement in Physical Activity, Excellence in Arts, Drama and Music, Community Action and Volunteering and Outstanding Achievements by a Care Leaver. For 2020, an additional category was awarded entitled "Rising to the challenge of lockdown" to recognise the young people who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic.

There were a record number of nominations across the 7 categories (255!) and 28 winners in the 2020 category for Rising to the challenge of lockdown. Although the event could not take place, we ensured that the young people were congratulated by their corporate parents for their achievements.

May we take this opportunity to thank our partner Carrick Signs Ltd who sponsored and produced certificates for all the nominees and Perspex awards for all the winners. Many thanks go to Carrick for their generosity and ongoing support for care leavers.

The awards were distributed in person by the young person's social worker/PA/carer as appropriate. The Mayor of Bury, Cllr Tim Pickstone, has also recorded a personal video message for each of the category winners and for all the nominees to congratulate them. Thank you to The Mayor, Cllr Pickstone, for supporting this and for ensuring the young people feel a sense of achievement on receiving their award. Your support is much appreciated.

Quilts For Care Leavers, aka Q4CL



Twenty of our care leavers in Bury will be receiving "hugs" from this fabulous project. It aims to provide care leavers aged 16 – 25 with a handmade quilted patchwork wrap to give a material, permanent hug, to bring them care and support and remind them that there are people out here who care about them, unconditionally.

Care leavers are able to choose their own design from a long list to make sure their hug is personal to them. Thank you so much to the organizers of this great project. If you would like to receive a quilt, please let your PA know.

Ofsted Focused Visit

An Ofsted focused visit to Bury children's services took place between 29 and 30 September, and 1 October 2020. The visit was in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. However, the delivery model was adapted to reflect the COVID-19 context. This visit was carried out fully by remote means. The outcome of the visit was, on the whole, very positive. Ofsted reported that "senior managers and leaders understand the magnitude and complexity of strategic and operational considerations, and they have appropriately prioritised their response to COVID-19 in relation to reconfiguring services. They have implemented new ways of working in order to maintain 'business as usual' for children in need of help and protection, and for children in care, by developing mechanisms to identify children newly vulnerable and by providing support and safety to staff.

There was particular recognition for the importance and dedication that Bury Council places on its corporate parenting responsibility. Ofsted stated that "Dedicated care leavers champions and ongoing training have improved the understanding of corporate parenting responsibilities across the council. This has intensified during the pandemic and the support for care leavers is impressive".

Consultation:

We would like your views and ideas on the following:

- What would you really like Corporate Parenting Champions to do? What could they do to make a difference? We are to develop a mentoring and volunteering programme for champions following the lifting of coronavirus restrictions – does this sound useful and what would you find most valuable?
- We have set up a constituted group for care leavers and young people in care (see above). What's the best way to gather ideas on what is needed by care leavers? We will use the care leaver forum and CiCC but are there other ways?
- Corporate Parents have asked for some case studies from care leavers. This would tell your story and help corporate parents realise what it like is to be in care and the ups and downs of life in care. This would be anonymised. Is anyone interested in doing this? Jacqui would write it, you'd just have to meet her for a chat and you would agree the case study before anyone read it (obviously this would take place after the current Corona Virus Outbreak)

Please contact Jacqui about the above on j.waite@bury.gov.uk

Regular events:

All face-to-face events have had to be postponed due to coronavirus restrictions. However, these will recommence shortly following the opening up of restrictions. In the meantime, please keep in touch with your PA. The Care Leavers Forum continues to run fortnightly via Zoom. This is a fabulous group and a great chance to keep in touch with us and other care leavers. Please contact Heather Walton (h.walton@bury.gov.uk) for more information on how to log in and what happens at the Care Leavers Forums. The Care Leaver Hub at the New Kershaw Centre has now reopened and the CAMHS drop is running at the New Kershaw Centre – speak to your PA to find out more.

Regular events will recommence shortly as Government Guidance allows for an end to most restrictions from 19th July. Once this happens, details of regular events will be found on the Care Leaver Offer <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/care-leavers-offer>