

# LEAVERS COME FIRST NEWSLETTER

Monday 18th  
August  
2025



## Welcome to this edition of our Leavers Come First Newsletter

This newsletter is packed with:

-  Chances to take part at different events with other young people and practitioners
-  Opportunities to build your future
-  Tips and tricks for everyday life
-  Real voices from young people like you

**We believe your story matters. Your voice matters. And this newsletter? It's all for you.**

## NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

**Page 2 - 3:** Voice of the Child Apprentice Team Updates

**Page 4:** Understanding the Role of a Personal Advisor

**Page 5:** Bright Star Academy Boxing Summer Event

**Page 6:** Bright Spots Survey Update

**Page 7:** Research opportunity - £25 reward!

**Page 8:** Reverse Mentoring sessions with Senior Management Team.

**Page 9:** Story teller app

**Page 10:** National databank scheme

**Page 11:** Leavers come first summer programme

**Page 12:** Events in Telford

**Page 13:** Employment and training

**Page 14:** Care to dance

**Page 15:** Help lines

**Page 16:** Hints and tips

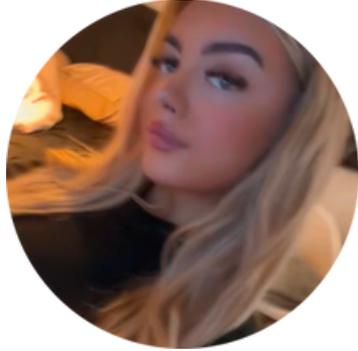
**Page 17:** Get in touch





# VOICE OF THE CHILD

## APPRENTICE TEAM



Leona Jones



Jamie Perkins



Liam Bradley



Rhianna Nielsen

Hello!

We are the Voice of the Child Apprenticeship Team, a group with real lived experience. We're here to make sure you feel heard and to shout about things that could be better and ensure that your voice is at the heart of everything that is happening in children's services!

## Recent Team Updates

*Rhianna recently moved into her own home!!*



*Wishing the very best of luck to everyone receiving their GCSE and A-level results, and exploring university options! We hope all your hard work has paid off and you're one step closer to achieving your dreams. But remember....no set of results defines your future. Keep believing in yourself, and amazing things will follow!*



*Rhianna plays a vital role in our Child Participation Working Group, which meets fortnightly. Her role is to support activities and planning are not only suitable for children, but also shaped by their input. Rhianna also attends the events we run, offering hands on support and helping gather valuable feedback directly from the children involved.*



*Exciting news. Our Manager, Laura, has a new addition to the family! Say hello to little Dande 🐾❤️*



# Below are a few examples of events and activities that we have planned or been part of since our last newsletter!

**Madlug bags**

Madlug bags are a bag for life. The bag is for those in need so they do not have to carry their life/belongings in a black bin bag as this is not fair on them at all! These bags are much nicer and more convenient as The man himself who created these bags said

"No child deserves to carry their life in a bin bag".

Please get in touch with [hubprojectteam@telford.gov.uk](mailto:hubprojectteam@telford.gov.uk) if you require a bag for a child in need!

Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL

**Just a quick reminder: If you're preparing to move and need a bag to carry your personal belongings, your Personal Advisor can help you request for a Madlug Bag. 😊**



Leona and Rhianna recently hosted a fantastic pizza-making event for children in care aged 8-14.

It was incredibly rewarding to witness new friendships blossoming among the young people, as well as the strong, supportive bonds they share with their carers.

The session was filled with laughter, creativity, and of course, plenty of delicious pizzas! With such a positive response, we're excited to keep the momentum going. Our 8-14 forum is being established as we speak, keep an eye on future newsletters for more information!!



yummm!



Liam recently headed to Arthog with a group of our young people for an action-packed day of outdoor adventure. The morning kicked off with a peaceful paddle along the River Severn in canoes, soaking in the calm surroundings and enjoying a riverside lunch under the open sky. In the afternoon, the energy shifted as the team took on the challenge of rock climbing.

Despite feeling the burn after a full morning on the water, spirits stayed high and everyone had a brilliant time!

LAST TIME WE DID NAILS / FACE MASKS AND YOU ALL SAID YOU WANTED MAKE UP!! SO WE ARE BRINGING YOU WHAT YOU WANT!

**PAMPER SESSION**  
19th August 1-3pm @ the Leavers Lounge

- hair styling
- face masks
- make up

LEVEL AT THIS

Rhianna and Leona are back with another fabulous pamper session and this time, we're swapping nail polish for makeup magic! Expect fun tips, tricks, and a chance to experiment with new looks in a relaxed, friendly space.

Not into makeup? No worries at all! Come along for a chilled-out chat, pop on a soothing facemask, and enjoy some well-deserved downtime with great company.

It's all about feeling good, connecting, and having fun, so don't miss out!

# Understanding the Role of a Personal Advisor

## Your Personal Advisor (PA)

Your PA is here to support you as a care leaver. They'll work with you, your social worker, carers, and others to help you build life skills and become more independent.

They'll meet with you every 8 weeks until you turn 21—or up to 25 if you still need support.

Leona spoke with Personal Advisor, Mark to learn more about what his role involves!



What does the role of being a PA mean to you?



Being a PA to me means, being able to support young people who may not have other adults to ask for help and advice. I can use previous life experience and knowledge from jobs I have done to give them informed guidance.



How long have you been a PA?



I have been a PA since may 2024. Before that I was a careers advisor and also worked with neuro diverse adults to support them in to employment



What do you help the Young people with/do?



I provide young people with support, advice and guidance. I am not here to tell people what I think they should do, but to help them achieve and realise their wishes and goals



What's the most rewarding thing you have done in this role?



Most rewarding.....help a young person to overcome barriers and move in to employment.



# Bright Star Boxing Summer Event



## Bright Star Boxing Academy

Liam and Jamie visited Bright Star Boxing in Shifnal, where a free one-hour training session was offered exclusively for our young people. We were proud to see one of our care-experienced young people take the lead, delivering a dynamic and supportive session.

Although only one young person attended, the session was a great success. It kicked off with introductions and a warm-up using skipping ropes, followed by high-energy rounds on the punching bags. The participant practised a range of techniques in two-minute bursts, building both skill and confidence.

To wrap up, the young person stepped into the ring with Liam for some light movement and sparring—adding a fun and interactive finish to the session. This was a brilliant opportunity to promote physical activity, boost self-esteem, and celebrate the leadership of our care-experienced young people.



# Bright Spots Survey



## BrightSpots - Your life beyond care

Hopefully you will all be aware that we have recently launched a survey called "Your Life Beyond Care".

We really need you to get involved and feedback and there is a reward of a £20 voucher to thank you when the survey has been completed with screenshot proof. The voucher will come when the survey closes after the 11th august.

We have been messaging you all via WhatsApp or emailing people who are unavailable on WhatsApp.

We have received some questions revolving help around housing and we are hoping to find ways to work with the other members of the council to improve this and we do understand your frustrations.

The survey is really important because:

- It collects information on what matters most to care leavers in Telford and Wrekin and what contributes to your well-being.
- What you tell us helps us to make sure that we are making changes that will better support you and all care leavers.
- The survey lets us compare ourselves with how we are doing compared to other local authorities and know where we are doing well and where we can be better.

Hi I am Rhianna and I am leading on the survey so please get in touch with me on the following:  
yourvoicematters@telford.co.uk  
my contact number 07866982529 if you have any questions regarding the survey!



The survey takes around 8-15 minutes to complete, the questions are optional and anonymous. To access the survey link, you need to contact Rhianna or check your whatsapp as it may have already been sent to you! If you need any assistance we are happy to phone you or help you in any other way!

### We've Had an Amazing Response...Let's Keep It Going!

We're thrilled with the incredible response so far but we're not stopping here! Every voice matters, and your feedback helps us make real, meaningful changes. The survey closes on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> August at 5pm.

**Your experience and honesty are powerful**, and even though responses are anonymous, we're genuinely so thankful to all of you who have taken part so far 😊

# Research Participation Opportunity!

**Care-experienced**  
individuals needed for a new  
research study!



## Help us learn more about:

Your experiences and opinions of placement changes within the UK care system.

## You can participate if you:

- Are aged between 16-24 years old.
- Are care-experienced.
- Have experienced at least 2 placement changes in the UK care system.
- Can speak English fluently.

## How will you help?

You will participate in a 45-60 minute interview discussing your experiences of placement changes. You will also have the chance to share your recommendations on how young people could be better supported through these changes.

Participants  
will receive a

**£25**

voucher

For more information, or to participate, email  
Cody Varnish at [cv339@bath.ac.uk](mailto:cv339@bath.ac.uk)



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BATH**

This study has been approved by the Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Bath: 2713-3901



# Reverse Mentoring sessions with Senior Management Team.

Each member of our team has been paired with a mentor from the Senior Management Team at Telford & Wrekin Council. We have been paired based on our interests, ideas, and career goals. This has created some brilliant opportunities for learning and connection.

Over the past few months, we've been meeting regularly with our mentors. Some of us catch up over drinks, go for a walk or talk over the phone. These sessions have helped us share ideas, build confidence, and explore new pathways. Leona and Fliss have teamed up for reverse mentoring. Hear from both of them below as they share the benefits of their experience.



## **Leona Jones:**

I want to become a social worker so I have been paired with Fliss. Personally it helps me have an extra person and place i can go to and speak to. As an apprentice, working with a director I learn a lot and enjoy our meets and Fliss also is learning too! She helps me with things I need help with or events we are planning she will help and get involved in ways she can - for the pizza event she helped us with a venue and also came for a bit! She also has spoken to me about my future plans and what do I want to do next! She has also recently helped me get involved in the Youth Parliament working with Sarah Underhill. I am looking forward to more meets and more opportunities that Fliss may be able to help with.



## **Felicity Mercer:**

I'm the Executive Director for Adult Social Care, Housing and Customer Services, and I have been paired with Leona because of her interest in social work and improving housing for young people. It has been a pleasure working with and getting to know Leona. She makes me look at things from a completely different perspective, her passion and ideas to improve things for others is infectious, and she isn't afraid to ask why we do things and suggest new approaches. It has been amazing to see Leona growing in confidence and throwing herself into loads of new projects, she makes a success of everything she tries, and I'm so proud to be a part of her journey.



**Some images of when we meet up ...Coffee!!!!!!**

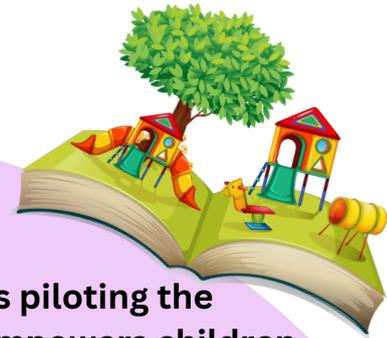
**A good luck card for my driving test... the one that made me pass.**

**And a lovely pic of Fliss supporting our pizza event!**





# Story teller app



We're pleased to share that Telford & Wrekin is piloting the Storyteller App. This secure digital platform empowers children to capture and preserve their life stories through photos, videos, audio clips, and written reflections. Designed to support life story work and promote relational conversations about a young person's life experiences, the app enables children, carers, social workers, and family members to contribute meaningfully to a child's narrative, helping them explore family identity, transitions, and key moments in their journey. The trial will be beginning soon and we look forward to seeing how it enhances our practice and the experience of our young people.

The good thing about this app is that you can add pictures and have like a photo album... but we all know in the heat of the moment we delete pictures and sometimes are unable to recover them BUT we will be able to just hide the images and also recover.



Daniel Machin

Clinical Lead and Systemic Team Manager at Telford and Wrekin Council.



# National Databank Scheme

This scheme distributes free SIM cards offering mobile data, calls, and texts to people who meet specific eligibility criteria:

- **Aged 18 or over From a low-income household**
- **Limited or no access to the internet at home or on the go**
- **Unable to afford a monthly contract or top-up**



## Get Boxes

These are compact, book-sized devices that provide an instant and secure Wi-Fi network, helping families get online quickly and safely



## Smartphones and Laptops

The project also includes the distribution of smartphones and laptops to individuals who are digitally excluded.

## Drop-in Support and Training

Free digital drop-in sessions are offered across Telford. These sessions help residents learn how to use devices, access online services, and build confidence in digital environments



## Community Engagement

Posters have been used to raise awareness among professionals working with families, ensuring they know how to refer individuals to the scheme. I have also attended some team meetings to highlight the offer and encourage the uptake of the offer.

## Partnerships

The project is supported by organisations like the Good Things Foundation and local services such as Sight Loss Shropshire, Forum 50+



Jolene Hallen is the overall Project Manager for the national databank scheme and Karen Stevens has now taken over from me distributing and communicating with staff members to give out phones, sims and get boxes.

**To receive support with one of these anyone can get them from the south water library - just come and drop in and ask to speak to Karen Stevens.**

# Leavers Come First Summer Programme



**Independent Living Skills workshop** A workshop to help the independent living skills such as cooking and meal planning, budgeting housing options and setting up home advice.

26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> August

10 - 3pm

The Leavers Lounge - Meeting Point House



## Makeover Session- with Leona and Rhianna!

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August

1-3 @ The Leavers Lounge

What's included?



- Face masks
- Make up tips and tricks
- Eye masks
- Hair styling

**IF YOU WANT TO BOOK ONTO ANY OF THESE EVENTS CONTACT LOUISE BULL, CARE LEAVER PARTICIPATION LEAD BY TEXTING 07530 097681 OR CONTACT YOUR PA.**

**WE CAN PROVIDE TRANSPORT TO SESSIONS!**



## Barmouth

A trip to the beach with chippy lunch and transport included!

Thursday 21st August - 9am start until 6/7pm

**LIMITED SPACE - Booking a space is essential!**



# EVENTS

## TELFORD COMMUNITY BASKETBALL

MONDAY NIGHTS:  
TELFORD COLLEGE  
SPORTS HALL  
(8-9:30PM)



TUESDAY  
NIGHTS:  
CHARLTON SCHOOL  
SPORTS HALL  
(7-9PM)

AGE GROUP: 16+

PRICING: FIRST SESSION FREE,  
THEN £5 PER SESSION

Haybridge Rd, Wellington,  
Telford TF1 2NP



## Balloon fiesta- Telford town park, Hinkshay road, TF3 4EP

SATURDAY 23 and SUNDAY 24 AUGUST

No tickets required: Free family fun from 12noon to 7pm  
including:

- ✦ Wings Parachute Team flying into the arena\*
- ✦ Kidszone
- ✦ Teenage Zone
- ✦ Live Music Stage
- ✦ Tethered balloons in the arena
- ✦ Carnival Parade (Sunday from 12noon)
- ✦ Circus Workshop and Shows
- ✦ Food and Drink vendors
- ✦ Crafts and Stalls
- ✦ Balloon flights\*

\* weather dependent



4 May - 14 Sep

 **Park Yoga - FREE outdoor yoga  
at Bowring Park, Telford.**

Haygate Rd, Wellington, Telford TF1 1QX

 Join us for FREE Park Yoga.

 Every Sunday from 4th May until 14th September.

 9.30am - 10.30am.

 Look out for the Park Yoga flag.

 No need to book.

 Bring a mat or towel.

# Employment / Training

## Supported internship – Starting this September!



## Search apprenticeships

44,895 apprenticeships currently listed

What	Where
Enter a job or company	Enter a city or postcode
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="Telford, Shropshire"/>
<input type="button" value="Search"/>	<a href="#">Browse by your interests instead</a>

An apprenticeship is a paid job that combines on-the-job training with study, leading to qualification. It's a structured program where apprentices work alongside experienced professionals, gaining practical skills and knowledge while also dedicating time to formal learning and development, typically 20% of their working hours.

Search up :

<https://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/>  
and you should be took to the image above! Put your desired location in to work and just search! A range of different apprenticeships will come up which you can apply for..

Are you looking for work?

Do you need training?

The Job Box in Southwater library are now doing supported internships that you may be interested in.

But what is a supported internship?

They are basically an exciting opportunity to gain confidence and make steps towards a paid work placement

Speak to one of the Job Box advisors at Southwater One, Telford from:

Monday to Friday (10am-5pm) to find out more about them. Or call on 01952 388988



Indeed is a online website where you can job search! You can also upload your personal CV here and companies can reach out to you.

<input type="text" value="Job title, keywords or company"/>	<input type="text" value="City or postcode"/>	<input type="button" value="Find Jobs"/>
-------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

You will be asked to put in a location for where you want to work or a job title. If you are looking to work in Telford simply type "Telford" OR if you know what job you want to do already, (for example) simply search in "hairdresser" and follow the steps to apply!

# TELFORD COLLEGE

Telford also has a college. You can apply for apprenticeships through here or a range of other courses ranging from beauty courses to construction courses.

For more information, view their website!  
<https://www.telfordcollege.ac.uk/>



From Musical  
Theatre to Hip Hop  
to Contemporary  
dance!

This is an opportunity to join our new inclusive dance group where you will learn different genres of dance. If you are care-experienced and aged between 7-25 years old, we would love to hear from you.

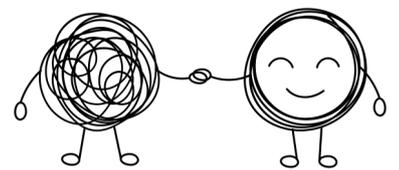
This is a brand new 12-week programme due to commence in 2026. We will hold weekly dance classes where you will learn lots of different types of dance! You will have opportunities to perform, showcasing your creativity. There will also be social events where you and your dance group can have a fun time together!

We are holding a taster session on 4<sup>th</sup> December 4-6pm at Charlton School, Apley Ave, Wellington, Telford TF1 3FA

If interested and would like to reserve your space or you have any queries, please contact: [virtualschool@telford.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@telford.gov.uk)



# HELP LINES!



Here are some additional contacts that may be use to you if you need any additional support. Remember it is ok to speak out and ask for support. You matter.



Shropshire domestic violence -  
03003031191  
24hr support - 08082000247

Support with addictions



03004564291  
www.telfordstars.org



Are you in a mental health crisis?

111 - Mental health support 24/7

FREE online counselling



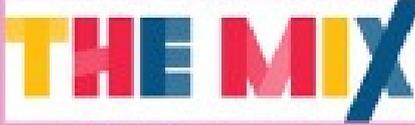
Anonymous online service  
www.kooth.com

Support for suicidal thoughts



9am - midnight  
08000684141  
pat@papyrus-uk.org

Support for under 25s



www.themix.org.uk  
08088084994

Emotional support 24/7



Free call 116 123  
jo@samaritans.org

Support with personal crisis



www.youngminds.org.uk  
Mon-Friday 9.30-4pm  
08088025544

Mental health support



Mon-Friday 10am-5  
07434869248  
talk2@telford-mind.co.uk

Support to understand self-injury



www.lifesigns.org.uk

IT'S OKAY to ASK for HELP

# HINTS AND TIPS

In this weeks edition, we have included  
Banana pancakes recipe as well as  
Mindfulness techniques!

## Banana pancakes

### Ingredients

(makes about 6 small pancakes):

- 1 ripe banana
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 tsp baking powder (optional, for fluffiness)
- A pinch of cinnamon (optional)
- Butter or oil for cooking

### Method

1. Mash the banana in a bowl until smooth.
2. Crack in the eggs and mix well
3. add baking powder and cinnamon (optional)
4. Heat a non-stick pan over medium heat and add a little piece of butter or oil to pan
5. pour small amounts of batter into the pan
6. cook for about 1-2 minutes until golden brown
7. (optional) serve with honey, fresh fruit or yoghurt



**Below is a activity that is great for reducing anxiety and improving focus it also helps young people feel more in control !**

### 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

This activity helps you reconnect with the present moment using your senses.

Instructions:

Find a quiet space where you can sit or stand comfortably.

Take a few deep breaths in and out.

Now, notice:

5 things you can see

(Look around and name five things you can see right now.)

4 things you can feel

(Focus on sensations—your feet on the floor, the texture of your clothes, etc.)

3 things you can hear

(Listen carefully—birds, traffic, a clock ticking.)

2 things you can smell

(Take a deep breath—maybe fresh air, coffee, or your surroundings.)

1 thing you can taste

(Notice any lingering taste or take a sip of water.)



# Hey there! We want to hear from You!



Thanks for reading this edition of our newsletter—we hope you found something inspiring, helpful, or just plain fun!

Please can i remind you of the Local offer for care leavers  
<https://www.telford.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/local-offer/who-is-the-local-offer-for/>

Got ideas? Thoughts? Something for to share which is helpful to other young people?

We'd love to hear from you! Whether it's:

- A cool tip or life hack you want to share
- A question you'd like answered
- A shout-out to someone awesome
- Or just your thoughts on what we should include next time...



Get in touch with the team!!

[yourvoicematters@telford.gov.uk](mailto:yourvoicematters@telford.gov.uk)

