

FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Pledge 48 – Provide support for care leavers up to the age of 25

What we said we would do: We will look to provide support for care leavers up to the age of 25, ensuring that the City Council plays its part in supporting young people leaving care, including guaranteeing a work placement with the City Council to help them start their working lives.

What we wanted to achieve: We wanted provide a range of meaningful work placements and opportunities to care leavers up to the age of 25 to aid their journey into the world of work. Through working closely with other partners who are ‘Corporate Parents’, we wanted to understand young people’s aspirations so we could develop relevant opportunities that broaden horizons, inspire and engage care leavers. Our aim has been to integrate this into the daily work of professionals who support care leavers, including Social Workers, Personal Advisors and colleagues from education.

What we have done: An aspirations audit with care experienced young people aged 14+ helped us to understand their ambitions and aspirations in life. Young people have also asked for mentoring opportunities as an alternative to work experience. Other highlights include:

- A register of work experience offers from council departments, councillors, partner agencies and businesses across the city.
- The monthly **Post 16 Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) Panel** offers a creative solutions approach to supporting young people accessing post 16 education, employment and training. The Panel operates with representatives from the Children, Young People and Families Service; the Virtual School; Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Team; Education, Participation and Skills; key partner agencies; and our local training providers.
- **The Plymouth Skills Launchpad (Skills4Plymouth)** links young people with key training and employment opportunities. The Youth Hub is now ready to be launched. A Personal Advisor will be co-located in the Youth Hub to ensure direct access for care experienced young people is well supported.
- Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, there have been some positive examples of young people securing apprenticeships in recent months, for example: a 17 year old young woman has secured a Business Administration apprenticeship with the NHS at the Royal Eye Infirmary. She had been out of education for over a year. This has inspired her sister, who had also been out of education or training for a long time, to secure a Healthcare Assistant role.
- We currently have 23 active offers of work experience/mentoring opportunities; 20 of these have been on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. Three matches are due to commence and all others will go ahead when the restrictions are lifted.
- Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership, Barnardo’s and Plymouth City Council have created an Assistant Project Worker role to work support the work of the Young Safeguarders group. A care leaver has been appointed to the role and will start in March 2021.

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What's next:

- We have increased the number of Personal Advisors to support intensive work with each young person to support their education, training and employment. This work stream is accountable to the Corporate Parenting Group, chaired by the Lead Member for children. An operational group monitors all progress.
- Regular quarterly bulletins will be sent to key stakeholders sharing information, as well as extending offers of potential work experience and mentoring opportunities.
- The Corporate Parenting Operational Group is responsible for the coordination of an update to the aspirations audit undertaken with all young people in care to inform the menu of placements that Plymouth City Council and partners need to develop.

