ABZ WORKS

Your route to skills, training and work

Removing Barriers to Employability for care experienced young people

Lori Leslie, Senior Project Officer, Aberdeen City Council



We're delighted to be here!







Why care experienced young people?



Looked after children are defined as those in the care of their local authority

Children (Scotland) Act 1995

- Residential Care
- Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- Looked After at Home
- Prospective Adopters

Being care experienced means you will have been looked after at some point in your life.

Children and young people who are care experienced have the poorest outcomes of all children and young people in Scotland.

Why Care Experienced Young People?



More looked after children are staying in school for longer and achieving higher qualifications than last year. However, there are still large gaps compared with all pupils.

For pupils looked after at any point August 2021-July 2022:

Leaver stage

68.3% looked after school leavers staved on in S5 or later

up from 62.7%



in 2020/21

compared with 87.6% of all leavers in 2021/22

Leaver attainment

78.3% looked after school leavers with 1 or more qualification at SCQF level 4 or better

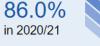




Leaver destinations

84.8% looked after leavers were in a positive initial destination

down from 86.0%



compared with 95.7% of all leavers in 2021/22

70.4% looked after

leavers were in a positive follow-up destination

down from 71.0% in 2020/21

2021/22

compared with 93.5% of all leavers in 2021/22

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Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (CfE)

a lower proportion of looked after pupils achieve CfE level relevant to their stage compared with all pupils

The largest gaps between looked after pupils and all pupils are:

29.9 percentage points in reading (P4)

32.0 percentage points in writing (P4)

27.2 percentage points in listening and talking (S3)

32.5 percentage points in numeracy (P4)

Education Outcomes for Looked After Children, 2021-22 Scottish Government

Why care experienced young people?



Evidence shows that care experienced young people are more at risk of experiencing homelessness, of engaging in risky behaviours and offending, are more likely to have experienced trauma and adverse childhood experiences which can impact their development and their lifelong mental health.

Care experienced young people can face a broad range of barriers and without family support and guidance, or indeed ongoing family issues, can feel overwhelming.

It is our duty as a corporate parent to provide opportunities and moral duty as well Community Planning Partnership and Local Employability Partnership buy-in

Community Planning Aberdeen Improvement Project



Support 15 care experienced young people progress to employment through public sector funded employability programmes by 2023

- Guaranteed Interview Scheme set up in Aberdeen City Council, where if a person indicates that they are care experienced and they meet the minimum criteria for the role, they are guaranteed an interview
- Building stronger links with employability service and social work and education
- Commissioned employability training course, delivered by third sector partner, Working Rite



Building stronger links



It quickly became apparent that our social workers were trying to everything for our young people – they were drowning, not waving trying to be everything to everyone including guiding young people into employability services.

Social workers are the gatekeepers to the young people.

We initiated:

Open conversations

Challenge

Information sessions

Relationship building

RESULT: Collaboration, trust, shared purpose and vision, and opportunities for the young people – social work became ambassadors for ABZWorks.

RiteWorks



- RiteWorks Employability support provided to Care Experienced Young People in Aberdeen, in partnership with ABZ Works
- **Relationship Based** More time given to create and foster a relationship with each individual. Vital to build rapport and trust.
- **Bespoke Delivery** Each young person is met on a 1 to 1 basis, and the project is tailored to them. The Young People oversee their own journey, WorkingRite are there to support.
- Partnerships RiteWorks has been delivered in every care home in Aberdeen
 - Aberdeen City Council Kingsfield, Gilbert Road, Marchburn.
 - Action for Children Clifton Road.
 - Barnardo's Linksfield.
- **Young People** 38 Care Experienced Young People have been on programme in Aberdeen in 3.5 years.



Pilot Project



We invited care experienced young people to co-design an employability programme with us, based on their ideas, experiences, wants and needs.

- Young people could input in-person, in a 'trusted location' for them, followed by a survey to reach a wider group
- We listened to their experiences of support and what had or hadn't worked for them.
- Together we considered various employability activities to help them decide what they wanted to include, how many weeks the project should run for, the frequency, and how many activities should be included each week.

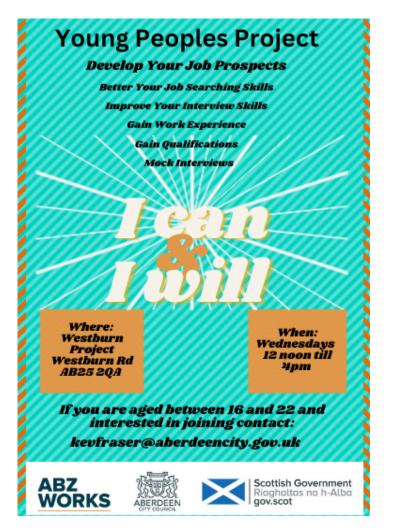
ABZWorks is creating an employability pilot project for care experienced young people. Want to be part of it? Information session at Westburn. 2.30pm on 20th February **Email Catherine at** cgeorgeson@aberdeencity.gov.uk **ABZ**

Pilot Project



Over nine weeks we:

- Ran CV building, job searching, interviews skills, mock interviews, job application support, confidence building, and certificated Emergency First Aid training sessions.
- Arranged hotel work experience to find out about different jobs.
- Visited and NHS hub to look at career opportunities.
- Met with an SDS careers adviser who ran a session offering careers advice.
- Were visited by North East Scotland College (NESCol) to explore opportunities, courses, and support available.
- Celebrated with an afternoon of 10-pin bowling and other activities at the Codona's fun fair and arcade



Pilot Project Outcomes



10 young people were referred to the programme and achieved the following:

- 6 young people engaged with project, 4 never engaged
- 1 participant went into employment
- 1 participant accepted on to College course
- 1 participant applied to college, waiting to hear back
- 2 participants receiving ongoing ABZWorks employability support
- 1 participant left due to life events, but continues to engage with a keyworker

All participants showed improvement and progression overall and we received great feedback with a theme emerging that the young people were delighted to have been involved in the co-design and to see what was agreed, be delivered.



- Aberdeen City Council is a large employer and a corporate parent
- We used employability funding to create paid work experience placements
 within the authority in roles the young people were interested in, and identified
 supportive managers and buddies for them.
- These young people were provided with 12-week paid internships, paid at Real Living Wage rate, on incrementally increasing hours. Support to remove financial barriers to employment were provided.





Youth Team Aberdeen

18 June 2021 · 3

Check out Rebekah's awesome story of how she has come to work for the council!

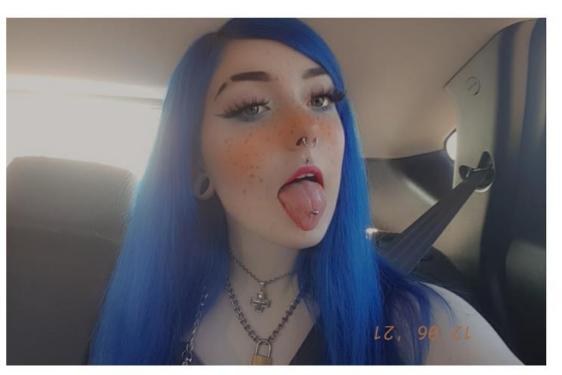
'My name is Rebekah Davidson, I am 21 years old and I am a care experienced young person who is doing an kickstart internship for Aberdeen City Council. I wanted to tell you some more about how I got this opportunity.

I have lived in Aberdeen my whole life and had always had social work or another agency involved. I didn't get the grades I wanted in school and struggled at times with my mental health because of my home life. At times I felt like I was in a position where I wasn't sure I would ever be able to stick in somewhere. I worked for a year and a half but after losing my job I remained unemployed.

After so long not being successful finding a job my Universal Credit coach sent me applications for something called a 'kickstart internship'. This is a UK government initiative which provides employment opportunities for young people aged 16-24 who are in receipt of Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

I think not many young people think about working for the council as it's thought of as being for older people or that it is boring etc. I certainly didn't ever consider the council as a place for me to be accepted due to my piercings, dyed hair and tattoos. I also never thought I would be interested in any of the work they do. As it turns out there are so many interesting opportunities within the council. Things you probably haven't even thought about before. I am excited about the work I am involved in and the opportunity I have been given'

Keep your eye's peeled for more information on Rebekah's Kickstart Internship and how you can be like her!















These two lads were successful in securing internships with the Roads team and have progressed to sustain Modern Apprenticeships.

Skye's Story

Young mum Skye spent many years in care, moving into her own flat four years ago with her baby son and partner. She had never worked and was unsure she would ever get a job.

She was referred for an internship project and at first was unsure if it was the right thing for her, or whether she would enjoy it. After discussions with ABZWorks keyworker Kevin, her social worker, the Council's school catering team, Skye found the confidence to give it a go.

She excelled and has since secured a permanent post in the school her little boy attends. "One of the highlights of her placement was getting to serve my little boy his dinner at nursery."

Skye has recently moved into a new house with her young family and states that she is really happy with her life and still loves doing her job.

Paid Work Experience Outcomes WORK



34 referrals, 10 young people progressed into an internship and following this:

- 3 into employment (care sector and catering)
- 3 into Modern Apprenticeships (roads and early learning & childcare)
- 1 young person progressed into College (social work)
- 2 young people continue to engage with keyworker
- 1 young person disengaged

Challenges



- Young people disengaging- the door remains open to our service for when they are ready to return
- Trust- it is so important to take the time to invest in building trust and at it's core, it is about doing what you say you will, communicating and persevering
- Open and honest communication- managing expectations and realistic conversations
- Funding landscape- employability funds are awarded on an annual basis which presents a risk around continuity of service

Successes



- Young people with complex barriers being supported into fantastic outcomes
- Stronger working relationships and trust between services like social work and employability
- Trust developed among the young people, who are promoting our service via word of mouth and are becoming ambassadors for our service
- An opportunity to demonstrate our efforts to be a good Corporate Parent through our actions
- As an employer, attracting fresh talent and perspective to the organisation

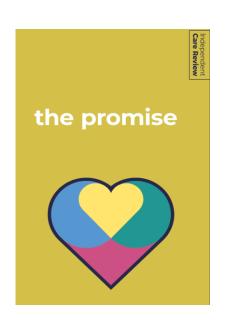
Government Policy



- Employability
- Care experienced young people









In Aiden's Words...



Once on my knees, shattered and frail, ABZWorks illuminated, paved my trail. From darkness to light, I found my stride, Each day mine, no longer to hide. Erecting an empire, uniquely my own, A throne awaits, a kingdom to throne. Locked in, I'm in the zone, undeterred, With goals and purpose, my vision's assured. From broken to whole, I embrace my why, No limit to what I can defy. With courage as my compass, I chart my course, From shore to shore, my legacy endorsed. Now, with clarity's grace, I paint my reality, No longer confined, in realms of banality. For I am the architect, of my own fate, In the tapestry of life, I eternally create.

From the brink of madness, sanity regained, Now, I soar high, purpose unchained. With newfound wings, I'm destined to fly, Like Peter Pan, to Narnia's sky.

Lost to be found, homeward bound, In the realm of dreams, my victory crowned. In the depths of despair, I found my truth, ABZWorks' beacon, a guide in my youth. Through trials and tribulations, I found my strength, In the crucible of life, I persevered at length.

I rise from the ashes, a legacy to weave, Boundless confidence, my dreams to achieve.

With resilience as my armour, I faced the storm, Emerging unscathed, with wisdom transformed.

Now, with every step, I pave the way, For others to follow, to seize their day.



Aidan's Performance - YouTube

Thank you!





Website: www.abzworks.co.uk

Phone: 01224 346100

Email: abzworks@aberdeencity.gov.uk











Email: lomanson@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Phone: 01224 067263

