

Annual Report 2021

MOMENTUM MADE BY YOU



Our Purpose

is to develop a sustainable model of best practice which is replicated across the UK.

Our Mission

is to enable care-experienced young people to achieve their full potential through sustainable and fulfilling employment.

Our Vision

is a society where care-experienced people enjoy opportunity, empathy and respect.

Care-experienced young people disproportionately suffer the consequences of the world fighting the Coronavirus.

Check me out



**Help them recover
Help them drive forward**

#becausewecare

Foreword

Tracy Lee, Chair



Our Drive Forward team has delivered another year of tireless work to help our young people achieve their goals.

Oprah Winfrey says that when it comes to career, luck is where preparation meets opportunity and I think that is a perfect description of our work this year. The team has provided the space for our amazing young people to prepare for all that they can achieve - be it through our bespoke 1-2-1 employment support, mental health counselling or as part of our early intervention programmes. We have continued to create job opportunities for them to build a career and realise their ambitions whether that's through securing a full-time role in the Civil Service, landing a job with one of our corporate partners or taking up a work experience placement or going into further education.

Throughout 2021 we worked with over 500 care-experienced young people and we have even greater ambitions for next year. We plan to welcome more young people who need our services and will be creating more full-time job opportunities with new corporate partners who share our ambitions.

What makes Drive Forward so special is that from the board down we place our young people at the heart of everything we do and we are continually inspired by them to work harder.

I look forward to the next year and all that they will continue to achieve.



Introduction

If I were to describe 2021 in one word it would be: transformation.



We came into this year with such sadness after the passing of our Founder, Martha Wansbrough, but it was her extraordinary passion for our work which provides such a strong platform from which to continue this important work.

Throughout this year, the charity has been restructured in order to provide for sustainable future growth. We are receiving more referrals year on year, and have a duty to deliver transformation to more young people's lives.

We have also secured funding from Youth Futures Foundation, an organisation tasked with evaluating models of best practice for transitioning disadvantaged groups into employment. We have chosen Kings College London as our evaluation partners and over the course of the next two years they will work with us to find out why our model is successful.

This evaluation has necessitated a new database in order to use the data we collect more effectively. We have also employed two new employment consultants to increase our capacity and include more of our beneficiaries in our service evaluation.

But through all of this transformation, there has been one constant, the most important transformation of all. The commitment to transform the lives of the care-experienced young people we work with, to support them on their path to a sustainable career, an aspirational belief that each and every



Anton Babey,
CEO of Drive Forward Foundation

person has the right to opportunity and it is our role at Drive Forward Foundation to facilitate their journey.



I am so grateful for the commitment and passion shown by all of our team, our funders, our corporate partners and other passionate stakeholders, of which there are too many to count. Throughout the year, we have together achieved something which would not have been possible without every single person.

It is these achievements and successes that will provide the platform for us to serve our beneficiaries even better next year, the transformation will continue.

Our impact

Our Employment
Consultants worked with

410

young people aged 16-26



90

The Early Intervention team
worked with another 90 participants
aged 13-16



14

young people
started an
apprenticeship

52

young people
started a work
placement or
an internship



91

young people
gained full-time
employment

43

young people moved into
further education or training



34

young people started
part-time or flexible jobs

Our team



Heaven Teshome
Senior Employment Consultant



Felix Fry
Employment Consultant



Rachel Neuer
Senior Employment Consultant



Nicholl Hardwick
Senior Employment Consultant



Justin Sesay
Employment Consultant



Juno R. Schwarz
Director of Fundraising & Communications



Lucy Bourne
Head of Corporate Engagement



Monique Hewey
Employment Consultant



Shereen Taha
Employment Consultant



Sarah Dyson
Compass Programme Manager



Claudia Roehlen
Breakthrough Programme Manager



Riona Athisegeran
Director of Programmes



Sareena Hashmat
Communications Officer



Nina Dei
Head of Mentoring & Community engagement

Our trustees



Tracy Lee
Chair



Clive Pitts
Treasurer



Maggie Collier



Jordan Morgan



Tony Simpson

A day in the life of an Employment Consultant



**Nicholl
Hardwick**
Senior
Employment
Consultant

Every day as an Employment Consultant is different. All of the young people I work with are unique in their character and journey, so every day brings fresh experiences, challenges and updates.

My first point of call in the morning is to check my emails and turn on my mobile to ensure I am up to date with any pressing issues, opportunities, and contact from my young people. Once up to date, the rest of the day will be a string of calls checking in on the young people I work with, sending round opportunities, handling challenging and emergency situations and scheduling in meetings. On top of this, I will also be conversing with other staff members, organisations and companies to ensure we are providing the best service for our young people.

As well as the above, my day also involves tailored job searching, CV editing, cover letter improvements as well as application sessions and interview prep sessions with young people. These can be long periods of intense and bespoke work to ensure that young people are not only applying for jobs that they want, but that they are ready

and prepared to smash any interview that comes their way. I may also have advocacy cases that need to be acted upon. This may involve contacting Local Authorities or organisations on a young person's behalf to ensure that their needs are being met and their rights are being upheld.

My typical day is usually jam packed with tasks and young people to attend to and I take each and every one of them very seriously. I understand that it is a privilege to provide a service to this group and I never want to let anyone down. As a Senior Employment Consultant, I may also be training other staff members, managing other caseloads and ensuring our crew are all performing well, both professionally and personally.

Every day closes with me usually having a to-do list as long as my arm and a feeling that I still have so much to do! But none the less, each day is usually filled with purpose and the knowledge that I am supporting our young people to the very best of my ability.

Going from Strength to Strength: Shanelle

Like many young people, Shanelle had been struggling to find employment opportunities. With a love of content creating and ambition to get her career moving, a lack of on-the-job experience was making it hard to get a foot in the door. However, things started to change when Shanelle was taken on as a Strategy Intern by one of our partners: Wunderman Thompson. WT offers care-experienced young people the opportunity to gain insights into the world of marketing and advertising.

"I started this internship amidst the lockdown 2.0, which felt quite daunting at first, however, the team made me feel extremely welcome. From the get-go I was trusted with client work, despite having no previous work experience. They took me on purely for my love for content creating, which really shines a spotlight on how much WT values people vs. paper. As someone who has struggled to find opportunities because of lack of experience, I thought their process was fair and gave people a chance.

I was instantly added to the weekly strategy meetings. This helped me gain an understanding on other projects and showcased the team's collaboration. To me, this really highlighted the importance of 'teamwork makes the dream work.' During my internship, I worked on a particular client brief with my team where I was tasked with doing some research and had to create a PowerPoint presentation to present to colleagues. My team went on to use my research in their briefs with the client which was a great moment for me."

Matt Redman from WT's product innovation leadership team was impressed by Shanelle's contribution and was full of praise when giving feedback: "You've been in some really big client meetings and you have also been really positive and confident. You've helped create a client presentation by mining lots of useful insights which will help us shape the creative brief. Not bad for week one!"

Using her positive experience at Wunderman Thompson, Shanelle joined M.I. Media through the Government's Kickstart Scheme. Craig Gallagher, previous Business Director of M.I. Media describes Shanelle's time with them: "Shanelle interned with us for 6 months as a Media Assistant. She worked between two teams at MI Media: Planning (particularly TV and Press advertising) and Digital (focused on Paid Search and Paid Social). In the planning team, Shanelle was closely managed by one of our Senior Account Executives and developed a really close bond. I think this aided Shanelle's development immensely. In the Digital team, Shanelle was able to experience the team during one of their busy periods and this is especially helpful for any future jobs she will have.

Shanelle was the first intern we've had for this length of time so we've learnt a lot as an employer. A 6-month placement will look great on anyone's CV but as employers we need to ensure that the experience has a lot of opportunities to develop the intern's skills. Going forward I'd also be keen to explore 1-3 months internships in the future.

Overall, the 6 months Shanelle worked with us was a really positive experience. Shanelle is a wonderful person, was well liked throughout the company and the quality of her work was also very good. Shanelle achieved a lot with us including winning the award for CEO's favourite person in 2021! In addition to this, she passed her Thinkbox TV Masters course and passed her Google Analytics exam.

Based on how well she integrated with the team, her quality of work and achievements, it is easy to recommend Shanelle to any future employers."

Lucy Bourne, Head of Corporate Engagement at Drive Forward explains what these internships mean for Shanelle and our young people:



"Employment is one of the single biggest factors that can positively transform the life of a young person leaving care and Shanelle's story is a great example. We're here to give employers all the support they need to bring about positive change for young people and we're incredibly grateful to all our corporate partners for making such a difference for the young people we work with."

Breaking down Barriers to Employment - Counselling Highlights

"Counselling has been a blessing for me and you have been amazing with me. I really appreciate Drive Forward for helping me during a point in my life when I needed someone to talk to."

Care-experienced
young person



Good mental health and wellbeing are key for creating positive relationships in our lives as well as supportive networks in and around the workplace. In contrast, poor mental health constitutes a serious barrier to sustainable employment. Too many care-experienced young people are having to cope with mental health challenges on a daily basis, hindering them from actively driving forward and building fulfilled lives for themselves.

Recognising this vital issue, we have offered bespoke counselling as part of our services since 2019. Richard Barnardo who leads the service, is a certified counsellor, former Social Worker, and is care-experienced himself. Covid-19 has exacerbated the pressures our young people face from increased loneliness and social isolation, to losing their source of income, and rising concerns with regards to education as well as decreasing motivation to find employment. Reflecting on the past year Richard says, "My highlight for the year has been our ability to remain available for in-person appointments at a very challenging time, when so many people have felt socially isolated and cut-off."

Even though we are limited in the number of free sessions we are able to provide, it is clear that they have made a difference to each young person involved.

Kim, a 24-year-old from South London says, "I have had 11 weeks of free counselling through Drive Forward, and it has been amazing and very useful. It provided me with the opportunity to explore and discuss some of the trauma I have experienced in and out of foster care in a safe environment. The Counsellor Richard was very friendly and supportive, he gave me some practical and helpful tips for dealing with anxiety."

Another young person comments, "Richard, from the start, had made it clear that this is a participation of both of us working together like a team, and has always taken my lead which has seen to improve my mental health and supported that ability to be open and use my voice."

Over the past three years we have consistently increased our capacity to offer free counselling sessions to the young people working with us, allowing them to work through the internal barriers keeping them from actively driving forward.

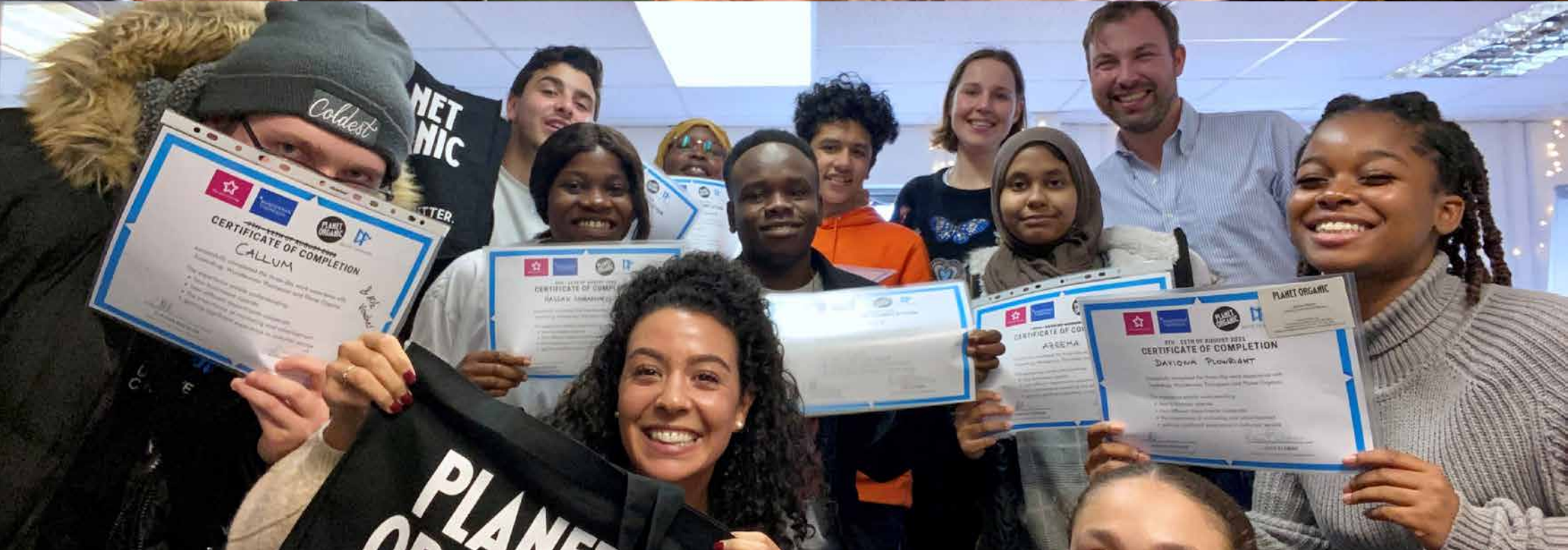
"The outcome of these sessions every week builds upon the ability and strength I have to challenge my anxiety, depression and other areas - and it has been evident how it works. I feel so much better about myself currently and equipped with the relevant tools to express my emotions than I ever did before!"

Setting children and young people in care up for success

In 2019, our late founder Martha Wansbrough reflected on her decade-long work with care-experienced young people in the UK during which she noticed 'a growing number of our young clients being trapped in a system that makes them dependent upon benefits and therefore unable to afford the transition into work.' It soon became clear to her and our team that in order to counter-act these developments, we needed to expand our work to engage with a much younger age group.

With the support of The Mercers Company and The Clothworkers Company, we were able to launch two new projects, Breakthrough and Compass, which work with looked-after children aged 13-18. These programmes promote self-belief and aspiration, whilst teaching individuals practical skills that prepare them to move from secondary school into independence. They also provide access to business networks, thus encouraging care-experienced young people to complete their education and focus on a future career.





Compass – Navigating Your Own Way

Compass is now in its final year of supporting 14–16-year-old young people in care; exposing them to various experiences, broadening their horizons and showing them options available to them as they navigate school life and embark on their next steps towards their careers. We believe that young people can only aspire as far as they can see. Therefore, our programme widens their field of vision to a

greater range of opportunities, experiences and industries, previously perceived as unattainable. It challenges their beliefs about who they are and highlights their true potential. Underlying our service is the strong desire and passion to make a lasting difference in these young peoples' lives and enabling them to gain the skills, knowledge and networks they need to have a greater chance of success and fulfillment in adulthood.



**11 Hours
at Zoom
Study socials**



**6 Qualifications
in Sports
Leadership**



**14 Snow Sports
First Tracks
Awards**



"I had never met anyone who's been in the care system until Compass. I think it is important to see and hear of other people's experiences. Being able to talk about topics related to your actual experiences in foster care or asking questions about how other people are living and what's made their experience more bearable for them has been really useful. Just knowing that there's someone your age who's going through exactly what you are going through makes me feel better. Compass has taught me that it's okay for me to feel the way I feel because many people feel the same way about being in care and that's normal."



Mohammad, 15

"When I first joined Compass, I went to the meeting spot and I entered a building full of people that were actively strangers. However, there was one thing in common with all of us: we all had some experience in the care system. It felt very validating to hear our shared stories every time we met up. I really enjoyed an icebreaker activity at the residential where we all had to stand up and move if we related to the statements like: "move if you had more than 3 social workers," or "move if you've moved house placements more than once." I really felt supported seeing how many people were moving as much as me. It highlighted how much we really had in common despite our different backgrounds. As a result of getting involved with Compass I've realised that my experience is very similar to other children.

Alongside the residential, Compass had lots of events planned and I guess one thing I learnt is that there's a lot of hobbies like rock climbing and kayaking that I want to pursue when I am older. I think Compass made those activities more accessible and because the events were

all over London, it made me more comfortable to travel on my own too. Even when Covid-19 happened and we couldn't meet up in person, Compass still kept going by having Saturday link ups online. It gave me something to look forward to because we were able to play online games and see each other. I felt this was helpful especially after the first lockdown when we were confused about all the restrictions and had to stay at home.

When I think of the future when it comes to Compass, I think they want us to aim high by getting work experience and maybe attending university. I know Compass has links with other companies to help with accessing opportunities depending on what you are interested in. They are willing to reach out to other organisations on our behalf as well. I feel like we are less likely to reach out to big companies to try and see if we can work something out that way. However, knowing that we can just easily tell Compass, I want to do this or I don't want to do that, is much more comforting because they can find those experiences to begin with."



Jay, 15

"Being a part of Compass has changed me as a person because I am happier and I am more open to going out to try new things. Before I didn't really want to meet people but after the events Compass has held; I don't mind being persuaded to go out now. I would rather spend time on new experiences rather than staying at home. Participating in Compass has made me more open to sharing my ideas because before I wouldn't really say anything, I found it easier to go along with the group but now I feel that I can use my own voice to say what I think.



Carolyn, 15

"Compass has impacted me through their study socials. We were able to meet professionals and get help from them in subjects where we needed more support in. So, there was like English, Maths, Spanish and ICT study sessions. I have gotten a Maths tutor and together we went through a couple of things which was really helpful and great to see that Compass was organising things that would actually help us. I know for some of us we would like to see ourselves as confident to begin with but Compass has allowed us to like reinforce that in a sense. It has given us the space to express our confidence and build our self-esteem even.

I was a confident person beforehand, but now I am able to express that confidence.

Another thing that I appreciate about Compass is the fact that you do literally have their number on your phone. You can message or ask a question or arrange a phone call if you wanted and you can do it yourself without having to go through a number of different other people. During Covid-19 I really enjoyed the events Compass held, because generally school work and staying at home was repetitive and just boring. So, it gave me something to look forward to knowing at the end of the week there's a Compass event especially when almost everyone was stuck at home doing their own thing. I was able to tell my family all the different activities I was doing with Compass, so in general I was having a great time being a part of the programme."

Without Compass, I wouldn't have known what was normal, what was not normal for those in care. By sharing our experiences with each other I wouldn't have learnt that that my time in care was normal as well. However, there's no gloomy atmosphere about what you have been through in your past. Instead, it's a warm, friendly atmosphere. The Compass programme is good, the people are good and what we do is good as well because it's not boring.

You can rely on Compass to have something to keep you looking forward to and in between the meet ups over the holidays, you get to know mentors. It was reassuring to know that even with the social workers and the carers, that there are these people outside of your bubble that if you did have any questions about your care experience or your post care you can comfortably ask them. It's helpful to have another view outside of your social worker's."

Breakthrough – Realise your full potential

The Breakthrough programme has been designed to empower care-experienced young people aged 16-18 to create a compelling future and overcome adversity along the way. The programme is now in its third and final year. Following a dynamic multi-level approach, our Programme Managers closely work with foster carers, social workers, teachers and other professionals to create a stable support network around each young person. At the centre of all their efforts, however, they recognise that children want and need to be children before being 'children in care'. With an emphasis on providing a space, trusting relationships and personal development, Breakthrough truly lays the foundations for young people to flourish and progress confidently into the career of their choice.

Inspired by evidence-based research on positive psychology, we recognise the importance of self-belief and aspiration. By having an understanding of thinking patterns, we can help our young people to achieve success and happiness in their lives. We understand that biography doesn't equal destiny. The Breakthrough programme offers care-experienced young people an opportunity to step outside of their life and see their future from a different perspective, by nurturing their development through tailored one-to-one support, as well as group sessions and advocacy work.

Levelling Up - Luana

"Before joining DFF I didn't really know what I wanted to do or how I could progress. I didn't really want to go to university and it was difficult finding opportunities or advice. By being a part of Breakthrough I feel like I've grown a lot in confidence. I am not afraid to ask questions anymore and I learnt so many things related to career pathways and also about leaving care. I received a lot of help with my work placement and university applications so now I understand the process much better. Out of all the events Breakthrough has organised I think my favourites are the Link Ups. This is where we have group meetings and have the chance to come together. We have fun

but we also learn different things about life and how to cope with difficult situations. I also LOVED the trip to the beach in Brighton, that was fun!

I am passionate about event management, helping people plan big events and making them happy. I want to become someone who supports others, that's why I am aiming to continue my learning and find more opportunities. I believe that I can do it and I will be successful. With everything I've learnt with Breakthrough, I now want to go university so I can be successful and live a fulfilling life. I've become much more optimistic about my future."

"Ever since Luana joined our programme in 2020, she was engaged, proactive and quickly became a central part of the group. It is amazing to see how Luana grew in confidence and achieved some impressive outcomes such as engaging in work experiences, and even securing a paid part-time opportunity. I have no doubt that she will be successful and fulfilled in wherever life takes her. Well done, Luana!"

Claudia Roehlen, Breakthrough Programme Manager





A Social Worker's view on Breakthrough

"One of the kids I'm a social worker for is part of the Breakthrough programme and I think that the peer support on offer is invaluable. I feel that kids in care have a lot of adults supporting them but to be able to hear from other kids who have gone through the same things is a different experience. It increases understanding and reduces shame. I think the group has given my young person more confidence and a sense of belonging. I think she feels like she has a group where she will always be welcome, that isn't based on merit and where she can be open, honest and grow. She's learnt so much and her world is richer because of the experience with Breakthrough. Ever since I've met her, she has been specific in the job she wants to do and I believe this is because of support she has had. Her confidence has definitely grown and she has been supported in thinking about which qualifications she could do to reach that goal. Her life journey has been molded due to the support.

I would encourage any care-experienced young people to join Breakthrough because it's not social workers, teachers, or other strange adults telling them what to think or supporting them. It is people who have been through the same experience so there's a sense of connection and most importantly it means you are not alone. This is in addition to the positives such as job support, activities and work experience."

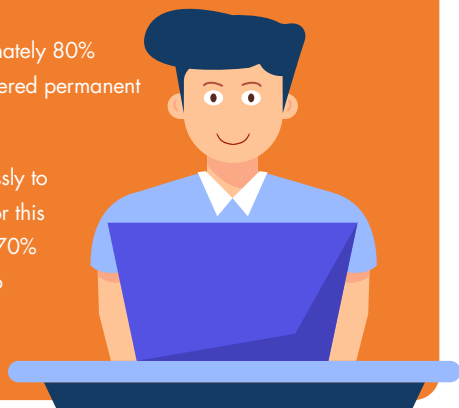
From Care into the Civil Service

This extraordinary initiative has come a long way since the first interns joined the Department for Education and the Department for Culture, Media and Sports over five years ago. In 2020, despite the additional challenges posed by the pandemic, our team supported over 70 young people with their applications and 52 of them have successfully started their positions!

In contrast to the highly competitive Civil Service Fast Stream, roles within the Civil Service Care Leaver Internship scheme do not require any prior qualifications or work experience. Care-experienced applicants are encouraged to use examples of experiences and skills acquired across all aspects of their lives; from demonstrating excellent communication and conflict resolution skills when standing up for their younger siblings in school, to effective prioritisation and project management skills gained throughout their experience of moving into independent living and furnishing a home on a limited budget.

Data from previous years shows that approximately 80% of Drive Forward young people have been offered permanent employment after completing their internship.

In 2021, our team and partners worked tirelessly to prepare 48 care-experienced young people for this fantastic opportunity. We are very proud that 70% of them have been successful and are eager to learn more about their roles and departments.



"I am over 2 months into my Civil Service internship, and I have already learnt so much. At the Civil Service they allow you to get used to your role and encourage questions. I'm only able to have this opportunity thanks to Drive Forward, who walked me through the application step by step and provided multiple interview prep sessions. They encouraged me to believe that I did have the skills to apply for the role and supported me through the process. It is often difficult being a care leaver and having to live independently with no support. However, as a result of this internship I feel like I am in a better position to further my career and support myself. I would encourage anyone who has an interest in working in the Civil Service to apply."

- Care-experienced young person

The Civil service does not just pride itself as a role model for diverse recruitment, but also demonstrates the power of supportive and informed management; not least thanks to the extensive training line-manager receive from our team and volunteers. Rachel Neuer is a Senior Employment Consultant at Drive Forward Foundation and has worked with over 500 care-experienced young people. Reflecting on the previous year, Rachel remembers one young person in particular:

"Benjamin was working in retail at Halfords when we applied for the Civil Service... I wanted to know how it's going. He started back in March 2021 year with BEIS [The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy] as an AO [Administrative Officer].

He loves the job, and said everyone in the department of Delivery Governance had put him at ease straight away and was very friendly. He has learnt so much and is happy to have passed probation. His manager has been great regarding his development, and has even spoken to him about how he can get to the next grade up and stay on in the department."

Over the course of the year, we delivered training to over 200 Civil Service managers, ensuring that they are best equipped to effectively support our young people in the workplace, enabling them to thrive and realise their full potential.

A young person's story to success

I've entered the care system a couple of times in my life, but when I was 15 or 16 it was because I wasn't really getting along well with my nan who was like my foster mum. My nan was looking after me because my father passed when I was a baby and my mum is terminally ill. So, when our relationship was unstable, I was housed in a hostel and now that I've moved out our relationship has improved.



I remember when I turned 18, I was unsure of what I wanted to do with my life. During my time in care, my Personal Advisor from Lambeth showed me an apprenticeship vacancy with the Prince's Trust, working with HSBC in customer service. I did a week's worth of training and the work experience was about two weeks. I enjoyed that because it gave me an insight into banking and customer service. They provided us with uniforms and that made it a bit more realistic, which I think was good. However, over time I started to think seriously about what I was going to do. I was doing job interviews with Co-op and not succeeding, so I didn't know what to do. I've always known that getting a career is something important for your life. So, I have to get up and work, I have to do something, but the problem was that I didn't know how to get there. Then I was put in touch with Drive Forward and then that problem was solved.

Even though I was struggling to pass interviews with Co-op, my Employment Consultant at Drive Forward suggested roles with the NHS or the Civil Service. When I saw the job descriptions, I didn't think I was capable but Drive Forward wanted me to aim high!

Now I'm an Elementary Caseworker at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The work varies; for example, we have dealt with UK nationals who have been vaccinated twice and have their COVID passport, but they're still unable to travel so they contact us and we have to write back. Sometimes the Prime Minister writes to us with questions so we respond to those too. The most difficult part of the job is having deadlines because small mistakes can create delays but it's good once you get the hang of it because it keeps me busy. I also enjoy working from home as I have a young son so it helps to have that flexibility.

Drive Forward have been really supportive through the whole process. Before I started with the Civil Service, I didn't have access to Wi-Fi and Heaven, my Employment Consultant, sorted it out for me. I have also been matched with a mentor who I can ask for help. It's useful having someone there for me because this job is very different. The extra support has really meant a lot for my mental health and anxiety. Drive Forward for me, is like the light at the end of the tunnel. All the staff have been so helpful, very on point, honest and open and I appreciate that a lot.

I feel proud about getting this role and I'm at a point in my life where I'm learning to give myself a lot of credit because I feel like a lot of my journey in care has been very discouraging. I was really lost about my career because I thought there was a stigma attached to being in care or being a looked-after child and I just thought: Who's going to employ me if they know that I've been in care? Whereas now that I'm working every day, it can be tiring, it can be overwhelming, but I'm doing something that could potentially set me up in the future to come.

I feel like I'm doing something, and now I feel like I'm not just living for the sake of living. I'm working, yes, but now

I feel running into Drive Forward meant that I'm fulfilling my true potential which is to help advocate for people that are in the system, that have been having trouble or struggles somewhere along the line, and help bring that number down.

Finding My Voice

"I applied for the Kickstart Scheme with Drive Forward because I wanted the opportunity to share my story and to show the world that young people in care should not be treated differently."

by Joesphate Kamuna-Makaya



Working with Drive Forward has allowed me to not only build up my work experience but also my confidence and my voice. I was able to meet a lot of companies, see what they had to offer, but most importantly, challenge their perceptions of what it means to be a young person in care. Before Drive Forward, I was unsure whether sharing my story would actually make a difference to those around me. However, I learnt through having a platform amongst Drive Forward's partners and young people, that my voice is heard. I have really enjoyed attending, speaking and performing my music at different venues across London to show partners what a child from care truly looks like.

'People vs paper' was the message I wanted to share. The way we apply for jobs or opportunities at the moment focuses more on how someone appears on paper and if you do not meet the formal standards or unwritten rules, the person behind the words is lost.

Being in care, feeling lost is the only thing you can guarantee, so I wanted to use any opportunity with Drive Forward to try and change that for someone else.

Over time I started to view the Drive Forward team as family because they supported me as a person, helped me to achieve my goals and made

me believe in my own power. It took some time but with each small step forward, it made a significant change to my life, even though I did not see it at first. I was always surprised when a job or college application was done and dusted because it was something that was very difficult for me to complete on my own.

My proudest achievement, although the list is now much longer since starting with Drive Forward, is leaving my mark. I had the opportunity to share my story and leave a lasting impact on people that had no previous knowledge about the care system. It is so important that people see the light that every young person in care has rather than the darkness because that is where we have been for so long.

If I had more time with Drive Forward, I would like to do more of everything because there is more we can do to raise awareness of the challenges young people in care face.

Drive Forward, for me, feels like a family and one that I will never forget or leave.



The Power of Lived Experience

2021 was another successful yet exhaustive year for Drive Forward's Policy Forum, as the group yet again demonstrated their commitment to driving change in the face of Covid-19 restrictions with endless Zoom calls. However, towards the end of the year, we were able to enjoy the slight return to normality with some brilliant in-person meetings, which was wonderful and uplifting experience for our members.

Ending unnecessary criminalisation

The Policy Forum's big achievement of 2021 was the publication of [the London protocol on reducing criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers](#).

This was an issue they had been campaigning for since 2019 after the group heard of the staggering overrepresentation of care-experienced people in the criminal justice system. Something the group knew from their own experiences, but with the research from the Howard League for Penal Reform revealing that children in care were 15 times more likely to be criminalised than their peers, the Policy Forum decided it was imperative that this issue was addressed.

They planned to kick off their criminalisation campaign by demanding a London-wide protocol to encourage the Metropolitan Police, local councils and care providers in the capital to work together to stop children in care being unnecessarily criminalised. After organising a large, young person-led event, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, agreed to implement such a protocol to accommodate the holistic approach. Despite the pandemic, the young people involved in Drive Forward's Policy Forum have worked tirelessly with Sophie Linden's office to ensure the protocol was as effective and young person-friendly as possible. Following its publication in March 2021, the protocol has already made a significant impact on reducing criminalisation of care-experienced young people across London. Drive Forward also continues to have regular meetings with the Metropolitan police, Local Authorities and children home providers to educate and ensure the protocol is being delivered across London.

At the same time, our members are eager to raise awareness and increase knowledge across the legal professions, particularly among barristers. They are at the frontline and in order to adequately represent and indeed support care-experienced clients, barristers need to know and understand the manifold and complex issues associated with the care system, including the use of police as a correctional measure often drawn on by residential or foster homes. With this in mind, our members developed and delivered bespoke training to a group of about 40 barristers at Garden Court Chambers; exploring how they can better support the care-experienced young people they're working with.

Drive Forward Trustee and Policy Forum Founder, Jordan Morgan says:

"The training increased barristers, solicitors, and legal professionals' awareness of the acute challenges vulnerable, care-experienced young people face in their journey through the criminal justice system. However, the Policy Forum also learnt so much about the challenges facing barristers in the youth criminal courts...Together, I hope we can work to address shared challenges, improve the national guidance for barristers, and ultimately, reduce the needless criminalisation of care-experienced young people in the system."



Youth mental health in crisis

“I want mental health services to become accessible where all care leavers can access timely therapeutic interventions that address their specific needs.”



The Policy Forum also saw success with their campaign on mental health. Chosen by the group in 2020 as its ‘key campaign’, a vast amount of the Policy Forum’s meetings and efforts have been dedicated to furthering their demand of bespoke mental health services for care leavers. The ask is simple: for there to be at least one in-house counsellor in every local authority leaving care team across England.

With the bulk of the research and networking completed, 2021 was dedicated to raise awareness of the campaign amongst senior stakeholders and highlight how essential mental health services are for care leavers. The group met with Josh MacAlister, the Chair of the [Independent Review into Children’s Social Care](#) on several occasions, detailing their lived experience, research, and vision for better mental health services. They also presented to the quarterly ministerial

board, chaired by the Secretary of State for Education and the Cabinet Office Minister. On top of all of this, they also [hosted a major event](#) in November, in collaboration with Catch 22’s National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum, which allowed stakeholders from mental health and social care sectors to come together and find tangible solutions to the issue of care leavers’ mental health.

Once again, the Policy Forum has had a fantastic year and demonstrated just how far determination, passion and collaboration can take you. 2022 will be an even bigger year for care leavers’ policy as we anticipate the publication of the Independent Review into Children’s Social Care. Our Policy Forum will be there, as always, holding those in power accountable and making sure that every effort is being made to improve the lives of children in care and care leavers.

Kickstarting young careers with Apprenticeships – Shazia's Story

No matter how hard I tried to find a new job, I just wasn't making any progress. I didn't feel very hopeful about my future until I met Heaven, my Employment Consultant at Drive Forward. She showed me all the opportunities DFF had and that's when I finally started getting hopeful for progression within my career.

I really like the relationship between Heaven and I because she is easy to talk to. She always helped me whenever I needed her. She answered everything and she was just the best person I've ever worked with in regards to helping me find a job.

Right now, I'm working in construction as a Business Admin apprentice, but I'm training to become a Logistics Project Manager. I would have never considered an apprenticeship because I would have to do my GCSEs again. However, the apprenticeship is flexible and more focused on actual work, which is what I was looking for. Despite having to study, it's a good opportunity and promises me the career progression I need. I was really nervous at first but my team is so amazing. They helped me settle in so well and they answered all of my questions. I've been there for a few months now and they want me to know more.

I think knowledge is key, it can get you so far. I'm more than happy to learn as much as I can as quickly as I can. The apprenticeship is for two years but since I'm employed by my company, they're going to keep me on afterwards too.

During my apprenticeship I've learned how to do QR codes and how to upload our health and safety regulations and documents so everyone in my company can see them. On top of that I'm completing my GCSEs for Maths and English. So, it's a busy time but I'm managing it well; I'm making sure I'm keeping myself mentally healthy while I do it. I know it sounds like a lot of responsibility but I was eased into the role.

If I'm honest, since joining Drive Forward I'm more confident because they helped me tweak my CV so many times. Through their support, it made me realise how good I actually am. I never realised how driven I am in comparison to others because I just thought everyone else had a similar mindset to mine. I think having people working on my CV showed me how humble I can be, when I really should be trying to present the best version of myself. I really feel like that has helped me gain a lot of confidence as I've had to really push myself outside of my comfort zone.

Now I can talk to people that I don't know to ask for help and Drive Forward have changed my perspective on apprenticeships too.



Let's talk Apprenticeships

Joseph's journey

Joseph has been with Drive Forward since 2019, and has tried out a number of opportunities with us because he wasn't sure about going to university. After introducing Joseph to our partners at Multiverse, a London-based apprenticeship provider specialising in upskilling people from diverse backgrounds, he decided to pursue a level three digital marketing apprenticeship with a global consultancy firm instead.



Why did you choose to do an apprenticeship?

I chose to do an apprenticeship because it's a great way to learn whilst actually doing the job. I get support from the Multiverse coaches who help me throughout the apprenticeship and I also get paid whilst learning. So, I thought it made sense to try out an apprenticeship because it's a great alternative to university at this moment.

What else makes an apprenticeship different to, for example, an internship?

An apprenticeship isn't just like working in construction for example, there's loads of different apprenticeships that you can do. With Multiverse they offer things like digital marketing apprenticeship qualifications, business admin, project management and a few others. So, the main difference with an apprenticeship is that you are working towards a qualification at the end of it as well as working a normal job.

I would say you spend around 20% of the time studying to learn a new skill or depending on the qualification you might have certain modules to complete. So, your learning might include having to complete assignments that your coach sets you throughout the apprenticeship. I think the number of modules varies depending on what qualification you're doing but I've got about eight different modules that I have to finish over the 18-months that I'm doing for my apprenticeship. However, the rest of the time, so like 80%, is doing the job and receiving training from your company.

Can you tell us more about modules?

Modules are like a broad overview of the principle of marketing for example. I won't necessarily use that in my job role but it's about learning the different aspects of digital marketing. I know I'll also be learning how to code in a couple months for another module but again that might not be relevant to my role but it's just what we have to learn as part of the apprenticeship. In order to gain my qualification, I also have to sit three different exams based on the modules I have been learning. At the moment my modules are all virtual because of Covid-19.

What kind of training did you receive during your apprenticeship?

I didn't know anything about the CRM platform they use, called Hub Spot, but they taught me everything from scratch. So now I know that

it's a database that stores all of their contacts and relevant information and I can use that to help me during my apprenticeship.

What sparked your interest in digital marketing?

Someone recommended that I should look at some online courses since I had just finished my Creative Media course at college and I didn't have anything else to do. When I looked online, I found the Google Digital Garage courses and one of them was called 'Fundamentals of Digital Marketing'. Through that I was learning about e-commerce and selling products online so that's when I thought I wanted to learn more about digital marketing and how to grow an online presence. So, when I found out that there were digital marketing apprenticeships, I really wanted to apply to one to express my creativity and explore new skills and maybe starting my own brand.

Is having your own brand something that you want to do in the future or are you interested in how digital marketing works?

I think it's a bit of both because I think I do want to start like a brand and build an online presence but I feel like I need the experience of doing that with like a team first and then try and do it myself. I like the idea of either building a gaming brand where I have my own YouTube channel or maybe a fitness brand where I would do fitness videos.

Have you always been determined or have you ever felt a bit lost?

"I think for me I was a bit lost after I finished college. I didn't really know what to do from there but Heaven, my Employment Consultant at Drive Forward, helped me apply for some jobs. "

There was an internship for Apple that I went for and that was to do with app development which I thought was interesting. At that time, I didn't really know what else to do. I didn't know if I could get apprenticeships in creative media or if I wanted to train as a personal trainer. Yeah, I didn't really know what to do but then I kept going back to Drive Forward who always supported me with applying for jobs. Luckily Multiverse partnered with Drive Forward and that's how I found the apprenticeship.

Would you recommend the apprenticeship experience to other young people?

Yeah, it depends because everyone is different but I would recommend it if you like learning on the job and having practical experience. Some people might think that apprenticeships are easy but actually it can be quite difficult to manage both your job and your coursework. I don't think there are many downsides to doing an apprenticeship either because you're not missing out on the social life that you'd get at university that much because there's like a community platform where you get to know all different apprentices on your course. There used to be community events where you'd meet the other apprentices in person but not so much now because of Covid-19 but we have those events virtually.

On those video calls they do show you how to manage the workload or how to split your time between the virtual office and your course. Even though the studying is only 20% of the job, it's a requirement that you have to pass in order to complete your apprenticeship. So, I just let my manager know when I need more time to focus on my coursework and not job-related things to ensure I giving myself the best chance at passing.

Your apprenticeship has not only given you the opportunity to learn new skills and work but it even led you to being nominated at the BAME Apprenticeship Awards! Can you tell us more about that?

I was delighted to have been nominated and picked as a finalist in the BAME Apprenticeships Awards 2021. I have learnt and developed many soft and hard skills since the start of my apprenticeship. In the past, I have struggled with staying up late, not having a routine and not knowing how to organise my tasks during the day and with help, I have vastly improved in these areas.

I also gained the motivation to start exploring digital marketing outside of my apprenticeship and I have been learning how to create digital branding. As a result, my mental health has improved, I am healthier and I am more productive. The team from Drive Forward Foundation, Multiverse and Global Counsel have helped me find a clear direction in my career path.

Transitioning from University into the Workplace



Lola's journey

Care leavers are 38% more likely to drop out of university than their peers, and those who make it through the other end often find themselves standing at a cliff's edge with no support network to rely on as they try to navigate life after university. The Office for National Statistics estimates that almost one-third of British graduates move back in with their parents after graduation.

Care-experienced graduates don't have that option; they need to find the means to support themselves when it's time to leave student halls. That's where our Advantage Programme comes in. Equipping them with the networks, skills and confidence needed to compete in today's graduate job market, our programme aims to enable young people transition from university into a career of their own choice.

Lola is from the London borough of Merton and was studying Accounting and Finance at Kingston University when she heard about the Advantage Programme. Since the programme works directly with universities, Beth Taswell, Access and Support Advisor at Kingston University, was able to refer Lola to us and open the door to all the services available at Drive Forward.

"Preparing to leave university can be a daunting experience for any young person, but if that young person has come from care, that transition is peppered with the additional stress of needing to be able to quickly support themselves as soon as their student status ends. As a University, we work hard to prepare our care-experienced students for life after their studies, but we understand how important it is to develop networks of support outside of the university environment which they can access beyond their studies. I was really struck by the Advantage Programme with how personalised and extensive the support would be for students, and knew that the opportunity of having a very personalised work experience where employers would understand the needs of these young people would be so valuable for the students involved."

Beth Taswell, Access and Support Advisor at Kingston University

Lola was relieved when she was able to join the programme because she knew that work experience, in addition to her degree, would really help her gain employment after university.

"I went into care at about 15 or 16... I wanted to do Accounting originally and have my own business but... It was so tough trying to find this experience all by myself; I felt scared but didn't want to give up. I just thought I want to do my degree and get out as it was too hard to find any placements so I thought I might have to just leave the placement."

Lola

Lola joined Drive Forward in March 2021. Since then, she not only secured a 2-month long internship but she also benefitted from our tailor-made workshops, insight sessions with corporate partners and additional work placements. Lola attended CV-building sessions with Baringa Partners, who then extended an offer to her for a two-week placement with their finance department. With that experience under her belt, Lola went on to complete a one-week placement with Lloyds Bank.

"The placements helped me open my mind; I took everything day by day... I now know how to behave with professionals... Doing a placement means you can learn without putting pressure on yourself and people understand you are still learning. University has been quite isolating and you only speak to your friends really,"

Lola

Seizing the opportunity with The Crown Estate

Our partners at The Crown Estate designed a bespoke work placement that allowed Lola to acquire the 300 working hours needed in order to equate to a full university module. Over the two-month period, Lola dived further into the working world, learning about finance and picking up a variety of new skills,

"I learnt the software and how to operate it... I can now see how this knowledge relates to the job. The Crown Estate provided me with a step-by-step guide and I was not left by myself to complete tasks. I was doing real work."

With any placements, insight sessions or events, continuous support is key. En-route to and during her internship, Lola could always count on the team at The Crown Estate. They were pleased with her work ethic and enthusiasm to learn.

"We had a timetable set up for Lola to experience the different aspects of finance, treasury, tax and accounts so she can make an informed decision about her future. We supported her with step-by-step learning so not to overwhelm her with too much information. We catered for her level, but then steadily challenged Lola as we went along. We introduced her to various software, e-comms with external and internal stakeholders. Exactly what she would do if she was officially working here."

Winta Teckle, AP & AR Manager

Callum Simpson, National Skills and Training Partnerships Manager, was particularly impressed with Lola's "positive attitude, willingness to learn and she was not afraid to ask questions. Even if she needed to ask more than once which is great. From her first tasks here, she has picked things up like accounts software very quickly. Lola is really confident and I admire this."

Lola & Callum



Closing the Gap



As Covid-19 restrictions eased further, Lola was able to attend The Crown Estate's offices two days per week. This allowed her to build closer relationships with her co-workers and experience an office environment.

This meant, however, that Lola was facing travel costs exceeding £200 a month; a cost that she was unable to bear. Knowing of the financial pressure care-experienced people are under when starting out in their careers, Drive Forward created a fund in 2015. The Closing the Gap fund aims to enable young people to focus on their learning and experience rather than having to decide between travel and lunch. Therefore, we were able to support Lola with her travel, whilst The Crown Estate agreed to pay a London Living Wage and provide lunch.



"Without you I don't think I would have been able to complete the placement." Lola

Defying the Statistics

Many care-experienced young people are unsure of where to turn to for help especially when they have been phased out of the care system. Over 2,000 young people in London alone leave care every year ill-equipped for the challenges that await them. This is also true for those of them who have already defied the statistics and gone to university. Lola is one of the 12% of young care leavers working towards a university degree (compared to over 40% of her non-care-experienced peers). Completing a degree is not the end of the story, but only the beginning of a professional journey.

Lola explains, "It is hard, I need to go out and do it by myself without family support; but Drive Forward have been there with that support and guidance and they help me know how to go about it. It can be so daunting doing this by yourself"

Our team at Drive Forward are there to enable care-experienced young people to access the support and networks they need to succeed. Rachel Neuer, one of our Senior Employment Consultants, identified the need for the Advantage Programme's bespoke service for care-experienced students and graduates,

"We work closely with local authorities and virtual schools, but many of our partnerships were offering experiences where we felt university students could really benefit from. Reaching out to universities allowed us to access more young people who were ready for this kind of help."

The Advantage Programme provided Lola with access to the networks, support, and training she needed to prepare her for a smooth transition from university into a meaningful career. Beth Taswell explains,

"Referring students for the Advantage Programme was really straightforward and Rachel was so supportive in getting students set up on the initiative. As practitioners, collaborating with external partners can be challenging when it creates a lot of additional work for us, but working with Drive Forward has felt really easy and smooth. I feel confident in the way that the organisation works with young people. If you are working in a university supporting care-experienced students, I would strongly encourage you to look at referring students to Drive Forward Foundation as it can unlock so many opportunities, and help students to access support outside of your institution."



Email Rachel to learn more about the programme and how you can get involved.

Rachel@driveforwardfoundation.org



"Lola is now going to graduate with some great 'advantages' which will definitely give her the edge in the job market and with the practical knowledge and insight about what kind of jobs she wants to pursue."

"I would recommend Drive Forward Foundation to other people as many care leavers will miss out; but this help really guides you to meet your goals and be open minded. I still want to learn more and have more experiences, maybe also learn about running my own business in the future."

Mentoring. It's more than volunteering

Drive Forward's Mentoring Programme has enabled countless young people to sustain their employment, progress in their careers, and find success for themselves since 2016. We've seen that engaging in a professional mentoring relationship is often crucial to a young person (mentee) who wants to take charge of their professional as well as personal development. Our mentors, on the other hand, are eager to seize the opportunity to guide a young individual starting out in their career; sharing experiences, knowledge, and skills.

For a mentoring pairing to succeed they require time, commitment, patience and clear plans of action. Take a look at Nahom's journey with his mentor Joe Welton, Account Manager at Amazon Web Services.

As he was coming to the end of his university course, Nahom found himself at a crossroads. His prospects for finding a job during the height of the pandemic were sobering and so, he reached out to his Drive Forward Employment Consultant, who subsequently referred him to our Mentoring Programme.



"Joe, my mentor has helped me in more ways than one."
Nahom

When I was searching for jobs in the height of lockdown, there were many rejections but he taught me how to become resilient. Joe helped me to build multiple CV's that were tailored for different roles to increase my chances of success. Despite having a busy work schedule, Joe always found the time to jump on a call and run me through any questions I had and always gave me good feedback, he even provided tips on how to do presentations better. Joe has and continues to help shape my career because I never knew what sector I wanted to specialise in before I met him. However, since being paired with him, we have narrowed down all of the industries I could see myself working in.

Not only did Joe personally help me with all of his time and knowledge, he also used his connections to widen my network. This was amazing because he connected me to an employee at my current company before I had my interview. As a result, I was able to gain insight on the job role and learn how to answer any questions that may have arisen during my interview. Having Joe as my mentor has had a profound impact on my professional progression. No matter what, I know I can reach out to Joe and he will always be at the end of a phone call or email."

Nahom has been paired with his mentor for over two years now and progressed to become a full-time Data Analyst at Brainlabs, one of Drive Forward's committed partners. The continuous support, guidance and knowledge Joe continues to provide coupled with Nahom's determination to succeed in his career, we are certain that he has a bright future ahead.

"Mentoring with Drive Forward Foundation has made a profound impact on the way I operate as a leader within my business. Working with Nahom over the past 2 years has taught me a lot about courage, perseverance and integrity, three critical skills for life. Nahom has a deep-rooted sense of purpose, cultivated from his start in life – which has honed his ability to turn every challenge into an opportunity and navigate the curveballs that life has thrown his way. The work Drive Forward Foundation does is so important. Whether it's helping individuals pursue their passion, providing a network to create chances in life or enlightening mentors to the immense talent that is out there within the Care Experience community. Nahom has a bright future ahead and I have no doubt he will go to the very top! I look forward to working for him one day."

Joe Welton



Making a Difference: Baringa Partners

Baringa partnered with Drive Forward in 2019 after one of their senior partners, Neil Maidment, volunteered with us at a lunch club. Neil offered career advice to care-experienced young professionals and saw the potential both in the individuals he met and in what Baringa could offer to further our mission.

“Drive Forward is a fantastic organisation, and we’ve been impressed by the passion and dedication of the team to deliver on their mission of assisting care leavers into employment. As a Partner, there are so many varied ways to support the organisation, and we work together with the team to develop new opportunities,”

Courtney, Senior Consultant at Baringa

Baringa have worked closely with us to develop a bespoke placement programme. Using their well-established internship programme, they created a two-week work experience placement designed to lead onto a longer-term internship, thereby providing care-experienced young professionals a pathway into sustainable employment with Baringa. Where possible, the placement is conducted in their Head Offices near Victoria to provide candidates with a more rounded experience of working for a global consulting firm.

“We hosted the work placement as a team for Yousif, an aspiring young engineer, with many people across the business unit volunteering and supporting Yousif. It was an extremely rewarding experience for the whole team, particularly witnessing Yousif’s development over the week.”

Caroline, Senior Manager at Baringa.

Yousif remembers:

"I learnt how to act professionally in your work place or during a client visit... how to create a LinkedIn profile and use it... and I was able to develop my communication skills, develop my CV and learnt how to prepare for a three-stage interview. (Baringa is an) excellent company to work with, great work environment, very friendly staff and great management team. I really appreciate all your time and help. I had a wonderful experience. Thank you so much for having me."

For another young person, the placement had an even bigger impact. At the beginning of 2021, Jasper, an International Political Economy student, took part in Baringa's work placement scheme. Jasper wanted to experience working in a corporate environment to prepare him for the working world after he graduates. Based on his degree and interests, Baringa placed him with their Central Government Advisory Business Unit where Jasper absolutely excelled. It was an easy decision to offer him a year-long role that would count towards his university degree!





The Power of Work Placements: Jasper's Story

Growing up in an Asian household, I felt a lot of pressure when it came to my academic success. This was particularly evident when we emigrated to the UK because my parents wanted nothing but the best for my future. However, this became more difficult to attain when I entered the care system.

For two years I was switching between carers and social workers so frequently that the instability made me increasingly more apathetic towards education. Despite these challenges, I left secondary school with grades that I am more than proud of! Now, I am currently on track for a First Class in International Political Economy (BSc).

During sixth form, I became increasingly aware of the fact that academic success alone was not enough to excel in the workplace. I learned about the vast numbers of students all leaving with bachelor degrees who would be hitting the job market at the same time as me and knew it would be imperative to gain work experience early. Regardless of my academic success, I was forced to leave home due to my sexuality, and this made everything much more difficult. Juggling both my schoolwork and having to support myself independently from my parents, I often lacked the time and headspace to properly consider my career. However, this is where Drive Forward Foundation came in. My Employment Consultant, Nicholl, supported me by regularly checking in on my well-being, organised interview preparation with working professionals and provided assistance with writing both my application and my CV. As a result, I was accepted onto Baringa's work placement scheme!

The scheme boosted my confidence during a time where I doubted my ability to enter an industry or even properly pursue a career. This opportunity provided insight into the different career paths of other working professionals, what skills and attributes companies often look for in potential employees, and what consultancy is as a career. By the end of the scheme, I familiarised myself with the language that was used both in written and verbal communication, took note of the most commonly used programmes/applications and felt more comfortable interacting with those in senior positions. Before this experience with Baringa,

I did not think that consultancy was a career I could pursue (let alone within central government!) because of my background and lack of experience. I had met with numerous professionals with the same academic background who were facing a lot of difficulties in pursuing careers. However, Baringa's passion for consultancy showed me that a career in consultancy was not just for a certain demographic!

As someone who hasn't had the easiest of upbringing and as a student of politics, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is something I hold close to my heart. During my two-week placement, I was able to incorporate this into my research project that I presented to senior Baringa stakeholders. I researched the Diversity & Inclusion trends within the Civil Service focusing mainly on the representation of ethnic minorities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, age, gender and neurodiversity. My work at Baringa currently has also given me the opportunity to implement my research by working closely with my business unit's Diversity & Inclusion team. Here I was able to organise my first business unit workshop on the importance of intersectionality! I also supported the Work Placement team in rolling out and improving the scheme, and setting up a Work Placement Alumni network to ensure those who have participated had access to additional support post-Work Placement.

As previously mentioned, the scheme boosted my confidence in myself, my abilities and showed me that I have what it takes to perform well in a corporate environment regardless of my background and lack of experience. This confidence helped me secure an offer for a 6-month internship from Simpart CIC. However, I had to turn it down because Baringa offered me a 10-month internship after seeing my skills during their Work Placement Scheme! Drive Forward works with so many young people to help them pursue their careers.

I just want to highlight how schemes like the one at Baringa can have a massive impact for care-experienced young people and I am excited to take the next step.

Running with Passion: The Brighton Marathon

Axel Krueger is the General Manager at Park Plaza London Riverbank, and has been a dedicated partner of Drive Forward since 2018. He and his team have welcomed several young people into their workplace and always made a distinct effort to suit their specific needs and aspirations. He is so committed to making a lasting impact on the lives of our young people, that in addition to all the support he offers us all year around, he also decided to run the Brighton Marathon!

Axel takes a lot of his inspiration from his own experience of adopting his son and knows of the many positive changes that love, care, and tailored support have on young people. So, Axel chose to put all his fundraising efforts into supporting a young person through the whole of Drive Forward's services - from intensive 1-2-1 support, to counselling, to bespoke training and job opportunities - in order to set them up for future success. We want to give another massive thank you to Axel for successfully running the Brighton Marathon 2021 and smashing his £2,000 fundraising goal! It has been such a joy having Axel as one of our partners from the very beginning. His passion for helping care-experienced young people is inspiring and we cannot thank him enough for all that he has done.



"As I learn more about the positive impact we can have on a young person's life, my desire to make a difference becomes even stronger. The Brighton Marathon was another great opportunity to further support Drive Forward's fantastic work. I am so glad that I managed to hit the fundraising target... I need to rest my legs today!"
- Axel Krueger

102%
of target



Raised over £2,058

Total plus Gift Aid: £2,392.50



Target: £2,000

Running to Change Lives: London Marathon

Every year, thousands of UK charities put their names into the hat to win a place in the world renowned London Marathon. In 2020, this small charity was successful! But then, the pandemic hit. Fast forward to 2021 and Drive Forward presented their first ever runner in the London Marathon, Andy Hearne. Andy works with our partners at The Crown Estate, who within one year of partnering with Drive Forward, have created a 3-months long internship for a young person and subsequently offered them a long-term position!



Committed to taking his effort to another level:



**Andy ran
26.2 miles**



**55,000
steps**



Raised over £1,000!

"I have always aspired to run the London Marathon...I'm relishing the opportunity to run it for Drive Forward and be an ambassador for The Crown Estate. It's a fantastic event to raise both awareness and money for great charities and causes such as DFF. It's incredibly important that we continue to engage in charity events, as the need for support has never been greater. No matter how small the effort it goes towards a great cause and can change lives."

We've said it before but we'll say it again. Thank you so much Andy for running the London Marathon for us, you're the first person to do so and we'll be forever grateful!

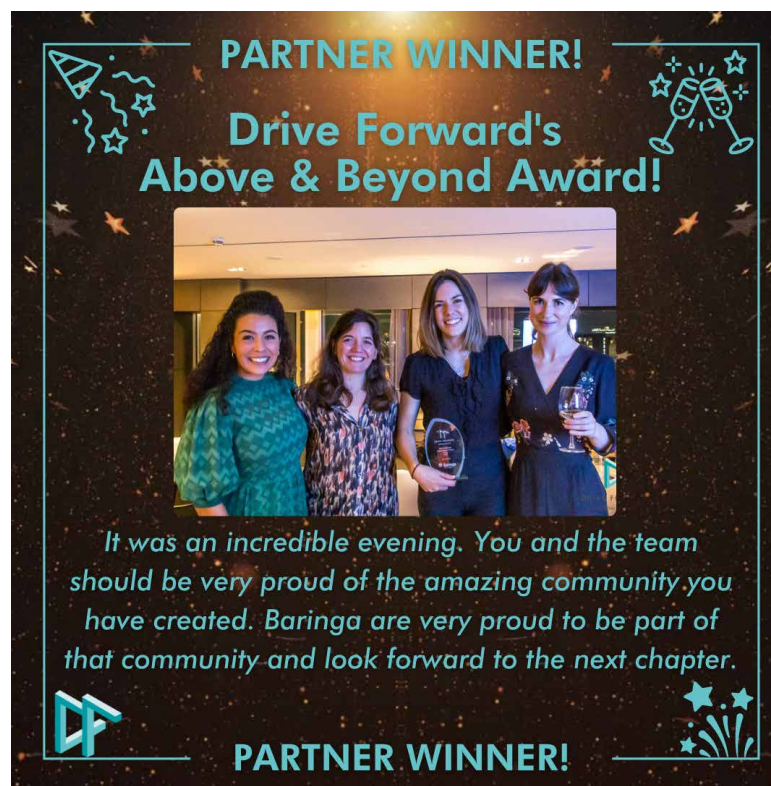
Above and Beyond Awards 2021!

Our annual awards celebrate the impact that partners and mentors have made during the year offering invaluable support as well as fulfilling and sustainable employment to care-experienced young people across London. This year we were delighted to announce Baringa Partners and Phoenix Tarampi from Oddbox as our winners!

"Thank you and the team for a fantastic evening last night – it was really fun, and so touching. Swear I almost cried a few times during the talks/performances. And thank you for the award!" - Baringa Partners

Angel, one of our care-experienced mentees nominated her mentor Phoenix because, "she has supported me from the start of my process into finding and starting my role at the civil service. She always took time out of her busy schedule to ensure my well-being and answer any questions I had. She answered and made sure I had support at all times and was the person I could talk to when life became really difficult that I just wanted to give up."

Thank you to both for being the employer and mentor our young people need!



The FriendShip Brothers

Drive Forward are incredibly grateful that the wonderful Friend brothers have chosen us to be one of three charities to support in their massive fundraising event! The brothers – Euan, Jack, Hamish and Arthur (made up of two sets of twins born 18 months apart) are hoping to raise more than £150k by competing in the epic Talisker Atlantic Challenge in December 2022. The challenge starts off from the Canary Islands and finishes in Antigua and they hope to complete the voyage of discovery within 30 to 40 days!

The Friend brother's journey with Drive Forward began long before taking on this monumental task. The oldest of the four, Jack, tells us how it all began: "Through a very happy turn of events I was able to spend a summer working with Drive Forward a few years ago. I witnessed first-hand the incredible work their team do in supporting young care leavers on their journey into the world of work and study. Hamish, Arthur, Euan and I recognise the immense privilege we have in coming from a family who have supported us in everything that we have set out to achieve, this challenge being the latest example.





For children and young people who have come through the care system this support is not always there, that's where Drive Forward comes in, providing mentoring, access to job opportunities and a support network for young people in London who have often been forgotten or find themselves lost in the care system.

We have all loved being able to work with Drive Forward over the last year, supporting through mentoring where we feel we have learnt just as much from our mentees as we hope they have learnt from us.

Knowing that every penny we raise for Drive Forward will support them in their incredible work is a driving force for all of us as we take on the Atlantic Ocean!

The brothers have been training hard to get them through rowing day and night. They will be switching between rowing, eating, washing, navigating and sleeping until they reach the other side. The crossing will also be home to 40-foot-high waves, shark-infested waters and busy shipping lanes.

"I'd have never imagined anything like it when I first had the pleasure of working with Jack during his summer internship with us five years ago. Truly inspirational!"

Juno Schwarz,
Director of Fundraising & Communications



With over £41,000 already pledged out of their £150,000 target, can you help them cross the finish line?



Financial statement 2021

Statement of financial activities incorporating income and expenditure account
for the year ending 31 March 2021

	Unrestricted funds 2020 (£)	Restricted funds 2020 (£)	Total funds 2020 (£)	Total funds 2019 (£)
INCOME FROM:				
Income from donations and legacies	541,228	447,810	989,038	547,880
Other trading activities	-	-	-	2,109
Investments	30	-	30	16
Total income	541,258	447,810	989,068	550,005

EXPENDITURE ON:				
Raising funds	11,439	-	11,439	10,512
Charitable activities	412,222	307,454	719,676	506,288
Total expenditure	423,661	307,454	731,115	516,800

RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:				
Total funds brought forward	115,233	44,196	159,429	126,222
Net movement in funds	117,565	140,356	257,921	33,207

Total funds carried forward	232,798	184,552	417,350	159,429
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Our Partners & Funders



"Drive Forward are impressive in how they bring together strong understanding of government policy as it affects care-experienced young people, and those young people themselves: what they need and what they can contribute. We are proud to support Drive Forward's policy forum, which is an energetic and impactful group of young people who are well supported by staff to expertly advocate for better policy outcomes. They are a leading example of how young people with experience of social injustice can be meaningfully brought into policy-making through a number of routes including by themselves taking up careers in government."

Philippa Knott Kos, Policy Manager at The Blgrave Trust

"Since we started funding Drive Forward, it has become clear that they put the interests and aspirations of young people first. They provide care-experienced young people with the tools and support infrastructure needed to get into and sustain employment in a field they are interested in. We see a real strength in the individual and long-term support Drive Forward can offer to young people catering to any circumstances they may have or go through. We are excited to keep learning from the fantastic team at Drive Forward and hear from the inspiring young people that they work with."

Lynn Hohenfeld, Foundation Executive at Greenwood Place



info@driveforwardfoundation.org
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@drive_forward

Drive Forward Foundation 14-15 Lower Marsh, Lambeth, London SE1 7RJ

T: 020 7620 3000 | driveforwardfoundation.org