

Recruiting a Care Leaver

Definition of a Care Leaver

A care leaver is a young person who has been 'looked after' by the Local Authority and is in the process of or has already left care. 62% of young people leave care and become independent by the time they are 18 years old (*cited Barnardos*). It is important to remember that not all young people will identify themselves to employers as a care leaver therefore it can be a hidden demographic.



Things to consider...

It is not down to lack of potential but due to the nature of their upbringing a care leaver may become disengaged and lacking in confidence in school, coupled with the pressure of starting new schools and being distracted by their unstable home life.

A care leaver may not show basic skills which you would expect from your employees including;

- Good time keeping - this is because they may have dropped out of school and have not had to show up on time for anything regularly or had the guidance from a parent to show up consistently.
- Do not judge appearances – it may be the young person is restricted by budget because they are living independently therefore they cannot afford brand new clothes.
- Confidence - due to the unstable nature of a care leaver's upbringing they may not have confidence in new situations or the confidence to ask a question. Resulting in a mistrust of adults in new situations.



How you can support...

- Guarantee an interview to any care leaver to encourage applications and to start the dialogue, if the applicant is not successful they will still have gained valuable interview experience.
- Offer pre-interview support by; confirming details via email and telephone; provide a checklist of what is expected (dress etc) to help best prepare the candidate; and provide a named contact with number/email for the candidate to reach in case they have any worries beforehand.
- Set clear directions and an understanding of what will happen from the outset, care leavers value this.
- When recruited a care leaver will thrive from; goal setting and praise/support. This gives them focus and an understanding of what will happen and what they are working towards. A mentor/buddy

system will also benefit the individual for example assigning an existing member of staff as a buddy allows the care leaver to shadow staff and allows them to settle in slowly. It is also a great form of development for the existing team member.

- Care leavers may continue to be supported by the Local Authority until they are 25 years old therefore allow them time for appointments when needed, if possible. This means they will be encouraged to maintain their role with you.
- Educating your other employees so they can be supportive and understanding and help to make the transition into employment as smooth as possible for the care leaver, an open and understanding culture makes for a welcoming atmosphere for the care leaver so they feel accepted from the outset.
- Make time to learn more about the care leavers current support system, it may be that a trusted adult such as personal adviser (PA) will support you when recruiting and can help you understand the care leaver a bit more.

Benefits of recruiting a care leaver...

Care leavers have many positive attributes which any employer would look for including;

- Resilience
- Determination
- Maturity
- Strong problem solver
- Fresh ideas

You will be providing a young person with the opportunity to;

- Earn money and take care of themselves
- Give back to society
- Build their confidence
- Take control of their life

If you are recruiting a care leaver as an apprentice there are additional benefits as well as up skilling a young person you will also benefit from a £1,000 grant from the Government.

Further support...

Support for employers can be found here;

- Learning & Work Institute [Employer Guide](#)
- Gov support regarding [apprenticeship bursary](#)
- Information on proposed [Care Leavers Covenant](#)
- [Wiltshire Council](#)



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