



DRIVE FORWARD

MOMENTUM MADE BY YOU

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

OUR PURPOSE

To provide personal support that allows young adults from a care background to aspire and succeed professionally, and achieve the self-worth and purpose attached to being in meaningful employment.

OUR VISION

Unlocking potential, broadening horizons, breaking down barriers and creating new routes to employment for one of society's most let-down and socially excluded groups. Empowering more care leavers to become engaged and productive members of society.

OUR MISSION

Drive Forward Foundation aims to assist young people leaving the care system to achieve sustainable living through sustainable employment.



MARTHA WANSBROUGH,
CEO & FOUNDER

MESSAGE

FROM THE CEO

Over the last financial year, we have engaged 20% more care leavers than in the previous year, a testament to our youth engagement team, which has been enhanced through the recruitment of an Outreach Coordinator, Zachariah. He first came to know Drive Forward as a young care leaver himself in 2013. His engagement enabled more outreach work in hostels, housing associations and supported housing where he is very quickly able to establish a connection with the young people.

Drive Forward's reputation for providing a bespoke service is constantly growing and it is due to the mix of 1-2-1 tailored support, skills training and direct relationships with top employers in London that we have achieved sustainable outcomes for over 40% of those young people working with us. Key to our success is providing access to our professional networks through our Aim Higher Days, HR Speed Dating events and our personal introductions to professionals to provide advice once a young person has made a decision on their career path.

This year we have devoted a considerable amount of time and resources to our Business Development in order to progress with our transition into statutory funding. Drive Forward has been successful in securing funding through a payment by results contract with the Greater London Authority, running from June 2017 to June 2020. The DWP has changed its procurement process, which now works exclusively through an online dynamic purchasing system. Our now long-established relationships with Job Centres mean that this will still be a source of ongoing income.

We have realised that having a Quality Assurance Mark was a

prerequisite to successfully securing statutory funding and have worked towards qualifying for the industry standard PQASSO.

My access to the World Economic Forum has generated new opportunities to create awareness about our work and to access senior level buy-in for our young people. It has been a productive year for developing existing partnerships and establishing 7 new partnerships and generating 60 exclusive work placements designed to upskill our clients and give them the chance to show their potential in the workplace.

In July 2016, Drive Forward launched a new mentoring programme, providing in-work support to young care leavers who have started employment. These mentors have been trained by our consultant psychologist which has hugely improved how the relationships created are maintained, thereby increasing sustainable employment outcomes for our beneficiaries.

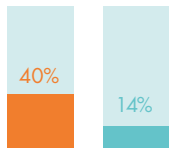
Perhaps what I am most proud of this year is the ongoing success of the Drive Ambassadors group, which consists of care leavers who have experienced our services and successfully moved into employment. They are committing time and energy to evaluate our existing service offer, as well as into influencing its constant development and delivery model. They are building awareness about our work and drawing attention to the challenges that young care leavers face and that need to be addressed at a government level.

To protect the privacy of the young people working with Drive Forward Foundation names and personal details may have been changed.

There are over **70,000** looked after children in the UK (excluding adoption).



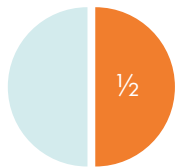
young people aged 18 or over left care in 2016.



In 2016, 40% of 19-21 year old care leavers were not in employment, education, or training as compared to 14% of all 19-21 year olds.



60% of children are looked after due to abuse or neglect.



Almost half of children and young people in care suffer from a mental health disorder.

This year we worked with **450 PEOPLE** (304 new joiners)



58 full-time jobs



36 part time jobs



59 work placements



11 apprenticeships



25 into training and further education

OUR APPROACH

Having supported over 500 care leavers into sustainable employment, education and training over the past 6 years, we have gathered invaluable insight and experience to improve outcomes for one of society's most disadvantaged and neglected groups.

The young people working with us know that the services we provide are not just about placing them into jobs, it is our focus on their individual interests and career goals which creates sustainable employment. Based on dynamic working relationships, our Employment Consultants offer bespoke 1-2-1 guidance, and relationships built upon trust which are so important to this client group. To facilitate care leavers' access to the tailored support of our Employment Consultants, we

have established five service delivery Hubs since 2014, which have proved immensely successful, allowing us to steadily expand our reach across London. The Hubs are a combination of co-located services enabling young people to access Drive Forward, Leaving Care Teams and Jobcentre advisors under one roof. The training we offer improves young peoples' employability skills, broadening their horizons and building their professional networks. Our corporate partners offer young people ring-fenced work opportunities, internships, apprenticeships and employment, enabling them to gain insight and experience in a variety of industries. Since July 2016, we are also offering professional mentors to help young people better navigate the world of work and further their career.



1 - 2 - 1 SUPPORT



EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING TRAINING



DIRECT RELATIONSHIPS TO EMPLOYERS



ACCESS TO A PROFESSIONAL MENTOR

As a charity working on the frontline with care leavers to help them achieve their employment goals, we realised that our team would benefit from a more in-depth understanding of the psychology of our client group. To meet this need, we began our partnership with clinical psychologist Alex Hassett (Canterbury Christchurch University) in 2016. Alex specialises in childhood trauma and brain development, and has extensive experience with care leavers. After a period of detailed consultation during which Alex learnt all about the structure and approach of Drive Forward Foundation, and the multi-faceted roles of our small team of staff, we began training with him. Whilst delivering regular group learning workshops to the whole of the team, Alex also provides bespoke supervision to frontline staff on a 1-2-1 basis. His expertise and practical knowledge has revolutionised our services and the way in which we interact with our young people.

The fundamental pillar of our learning has been around childhood trauma – what exactly trauma is and how it impacts brain development. Whilst we were aware that for many of our clients their first months and years in the world would have seen them neglected, abused or insufficiently and inconsistently cared for, Alex taught us just how profound the effect of this is on future development and adult behaviour. We have worked with Alex to embed our understanding of these theories into our day-to-day practice, ensuring that empathy (rather than our own personal reservations and judgements) drive what we do. Some of the key areas, which have positively developed as a result of our learning are:

- Effective goal setting and ownership of individual's action plan
- The process of giving feedback to a young person
- Acknowledging, accepting and addressing concerns and anxieties (to help clients self-regulate)
- Re-designing our gateway processes
- Training of corporate partners
- Training of mentors

We have seen our interactions with clients grow to be far more positive, productive and structured as a result. We are more effective at building trust with the clients and ascertaining what services are best suited to each care leaver. The importance of high-quality 1-2-1 consultation is still paramount – Alex has confirmed the value of this work and its power in building trust.

To crystallise our knowledge in a format that centres the whole team around a common purpose and practice, we created a manifesto. Not only is every member of staff passionately behind this message, but feedback from young people has also been extremely positive.

On Alex's recommendation, we have introduced the practice of reviewing case studies in detail, as a group and in 1-2-1 sessions with him. We learn from and support each other in our challenging roles, and allow individuals to be supported in particularly complex cases.





PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

Introduced in 2016, the Professional Pathways programme is designed to equip young care leavers with the skills and confidence they need to succeed in today's competitive job market. Taking care leavers' background and specific needs into account, the programme offers a range of career-focussed activities, from CV masterclasses to sector-specific interview practice and networking events with professionals from a broad spectrum of industries. Playing an integral part in our whole approach, our corporate partners host aspirational workshops and training days, where young people discover different businesses and careers, experience diverse work environments, and benefit from first-hand professional advice. We encourage participants to apply for a variety of exclusive work placements, internships and opportunities with our corporate partners in London. Opportunities range from entry-level and part-time roles to full-time career options in industries as varied as retail and law, accounting and hospitality, advertising or construction.

Young people on the course know that Professional Pathways offers much more than employability skills training. It's an experience, which invites them to develop new skills, challenge their creativity, and broaden their horizons, enabling them to successfully embark on the career of their choice.

“ The Professional Pathways course gave me more confidence, showed me how to approach people and put me in a good mind set. Micah, 19

“ It was a great two weeks, versatile and really catered for everything you need with a range of activities. It was great to meet young people from similar backgrounds, really empowering. Sally, 26

“ The course built up my interest and made me realise what I need to do in employment. Before I came here I didn't know even half of the things I needed. Cameron, 19

HR SPEED DATING

Mastering the job interview is a challenging task and young people in particular need practice and support to overcome initial insecurities and anxiety. The concept of HR Speed Dating is, therefore, as easy as it is effective: participants complete a series of mock interviews with professional volunteers, who provide constructive feedback after each round. The exercise allows participants to become familiar with the interview setting, whilst strengthening their self-presentation skills and improving their confidence. To take HR Speed Dating one step further, we are also offering tailored interview sessions, during which participants prepare for a specific job role e.g. administration assistant or front-of-house.

The interaction with volunteers coming from a broad spectrum of industries also provides an opportunity for young people to learn about diverse and interesting careers as well as the different pathways professionals took to get to where they are now.

“ The HR Speed Dating was so helpful and I really used the feedback constructively so when I had my real interview two days later I felt much more confident and I have been offered the job. Sally, 26

“ This experience has helped to refocus me; a reminder of my past that acts as a stimulus for my future. Candace, 18

“ This was really helpful – I never really thought about doing practice interviews before. I was not sure what to say at first but by the end I felt much more confident and was taking on board the feedback. Finbar, 18

AIM HIGHER DAYS

Hosted by our corporate partners around the city, Aim Higher Days provide young people with the opportunity to experience different work environments and talk to professionals about their own career paths. Last year, we visited the offices of the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson, the world of public relations at Hill+Knowlton Strategies, explored the workings of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, and discovered the various routes into law with Squire Patton Boggs and many more. Presenting young people with the variety of opportunities available to them increases their appetite for becoming part of the working population and encourages them to follow their dreams, actively pursuing the career they desire.

“ I really enjoyed this and I wish we could have made the advert after coming up with all those ideas. Care leaver about a visit to J. Walter Thompson

“ Today I learnt about recruitment companies and how they work. Before I thought that recruitment only happens online. Care leaver about an Aim Higher Day hosted by SThree



Aim Higher Days may also have a more practical focus, aiming to provide young people with insight into the workings of different industries as well as useful life skills e.g. on budgeting and finance. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCO), thus, hosted a session explaining to participants the concept of credit scores and their impact on individual's futures. Participants didn't only benefit from professional advice on how to best manage their own credit score, but also learned about roles and career opportunities within the FCO.

“ I found it really useful and informative. I was completely clueless about credit scores... after this great session I'm more knowledgeable. Lola, 23

“ It went really well. I got to find out what it means to check your credit score and pay payments on time. Sainey, 20

“ The session was really incredible. The quiz really helped me memorize the key facts. Monica, 20



ASSESSMENT DAYS

These half-day sessions are for young people who are motivated and looking to improve their employability through work experience and entry-level jobs, particularly in the hospitality industry. Mindful of the sentiments and wellbeing of the young people working with us, Hotel Chocolat took a more informal approach to assess potential candidates' suitability for customer facing roles. They decided to deliver a very simple information session at our offices, followed by a Q&A. Observing individual's behaviour throughout the session, they then selected candidates who they offered a more formal interview at their own premises.

Another successful example are our corporate partners at Premier Inn, who hosted two exclusive sessions, where participants have the opportunity to show off their creativity, team working and leadership skills. Candidates were then invited to complete a two-week work trial, allowing them to peek into different areas of hospitality e.g. reception, food and beverage, and host roles. Based on individuals' performance and motivation, Premier Inn would then offer successful candidates part-time and full-time positions within their hotels all over London.



ALLAN

HAVING YOUR GOAL IN MIND

"My experience of the Assessment Day with a company like Premier Inn was really good. Even though it was only for a couple of hours, I met many great people. I met with managers and they told me what the company is and what it expects from candidates. By them telling me what they expected, they gave me an idea of what I had to do in order to work for a popular company like that and that's what I needed."

When Allan first stepped through our door, we found a motivated young man, eager to move forward in life, "I need a job because that's the main factor of being independent." His curiosity and enthusiasm led him to participate in different assessment days and gain some work experience very quickly. "Had I been sitting in a classroom learning about Premier Inn, I would have been slower. I learned so much in only 2 weeks."

The 20 year old's commitment and dedication to the task left such a good impression, that Premier Inn promptly offered him a full-time job. "Here I would love to be successful; to be a manager someday or even more than a manager."

Allan clearly enjoys his work and the people he works with. He is focused on being successful, but also delivering outstanding customer service, "The most important thing is that your customer is happy. The more feedback we get from customers, the better the business gets." He also appreciates advice from his colleagues and managers, and he is aware that the more feedback he receives, the quicker he will improve and progress.

"You need to be cooperative. Drive Forward can help you find the opportunities, but it's up to you to take



them. You also need to listen to people and take any advice you can get on board. But you also need to be serious and most importantly, believe in yourself. There was another young man who started a two-week's work trial here at the same time as me, but simply couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. He didn't think that he could be successful from the outset. He was constantly complaining saying that we're just here to clean tables and refill the ketchup. He didn't understand that working for Premier Inn means to be part of a team. There's the reception, the bar, the restaurant. And when you're opening the restaurant, those are the kind of things you need to do. You need to be patient and serious."

Allan's ultimate goal in life is to be successful in whatever it is he is doing, "If you know what you're going for and you know how to get it, then you'll get it. It depends on your faith."

FORWARD

MOTION



LIGHT IS EVERYWHERE

Using the art of light painting as a form of creative expression, the workshop encouraged participants to discuss current affairs and issues concerning young people in the UK. They then transformed their opinions and personal views into pieces of art, using flashlights, light sticks and cameras. You can watch the final project "[Have Some Pride](#)" on our youtube channel.



I feel so much more confident and unified as a group. I feel now that I can do anything as I have been listened to and my opinions have counted for something. Roopa, 21



Invite me again... I'll do another course, I didn't want to start this course but meeting the people has made me feel like I'm meant for something in life. Ceyhan, 18

This programme helps young people recognise their own strengths and weaknesses, and become more capable of approaching their future pro-actively. Through creative activity and workshops, we encourage young people to engage with their peers and their surroundings, increasing individuals' confidence and becoming more self-aware. Whilst teaching participants practical skills such as developing a radio podcast, writing a play script or handling a professional film camera, the programme aims at building young people's transferable skillset. The work place presents certain challenges and young people need to develop a solid set of skills to meet them.

DEAR CARE, I'M LEAVING

Under the motto of "Two weeks – one play" professional actors Tom Colley and Jennie Gruner stood up to the challenge of putting on a play with only two weeks' rehearsal. Assisted by the writer Nadège René, the group wrote a script telling the struggles of leaving the care system and trying to become independent. The performance of "[Dear Care, I'm Leaving](#)" took place in front of a full house at the Courtyard Theatre in Hoxton on 28th October 2016.

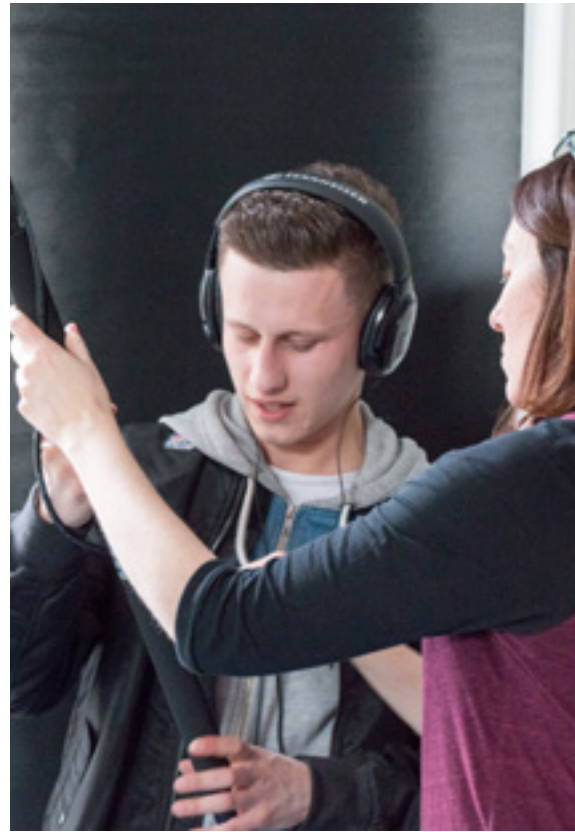


I made new friends and trained my brain and it showed me I can do more than I thought. Cher, 24



It has helped me to express my feelings and emotions in a way that doesn't really affect me as much. I almost feel relieved, because I know I'm not the only one. Marisia, 19





YOUR VOICE, YOUR MUSIC IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EAST LONDON RADIO

Young people were invited to explore the fantastic world of radio during a programme put together by East London Radio. "[Your Voice, Your Music](#)" explored Hip Hop music and artists from the past decades and brought on a lively discussion about the particular role of women in the hip hop scene.



FILM-MAKING COURSE WITH LESLEY PINDER

In March this year, professional filmmaker and participatory art workshop leader, Lesley Pinder introduced a group of young people to the magic of filmmaking. In just two weeks, the group went from designing an actionable idea, to writing a script, familiarizing themselves with the equipment, scouting locations, and rehearsing to shooting and editing a 5 minute short film. "[Tore Gide](#)" is a mockumentary exploring the daily struggles of a not so typical London tour guide.



MINDFULNESS COURSE

The brain is like any other muscle in the body and develops based on experience. Mindfulness provides individuals with methods and exercises to train their brain to stay calm and focused. Increasingly, mental health professionals are recognising the positive impact of mindfulness for those who have suffered trauma and in calming the fear centre of the brain (amygdala), which becomes hyper-reactive in response to trauma, as we have learnt from our training with Alex Hassett.

So, what is mindfulness? Professor Mark Williams, former director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, says that mindfulness means knowing directly what is going on inside and outside ourselves, moment by



“ It increased my awareness of how task-orientated I am and helped me to soften a little bit my self-criticism and constant pushing forward.

moment. Over the course of the 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme, run by Kerry Stevenson, an independent Mindfulness trainer, the group discovered mindful eating, the benefits of breath meditation and being present in communication. Every day, we often miss what's happening around us, simply because we aren't paying attention. We all have a tendency to react to our environment on autopilot, leading to the perception of stress as something that just happens to us and is out of our control. When we start to become more aware of our habitual reactions, thoughts and behaviours, we can choose to pause and refocus our attention to break out of autopilot mode. We can then make a conscious choice about how we would like to respond. This often results in a balanced and rational response, rather than a reactive and emotional one.

The course was attended by a mix of young people, most of them having worked with us for a longer period of time and successfully moved into employment, as well as their mentors and members of the team.

A strong bond formed amongst the group, driven by the communication exercises and realisation that we all share similar dilemmas in life and can offer enormous comfort to others by sharing our own experiences.

“ I started to think in a non-judgmental way about others and stopped judging my own thoughts.

“

Being care leavers, we go through many struggles, and I think this is a great tool to help calm our bodies and teaches us how to appreciate the small things in life and how to be calm and not react aggressively to situations. The power of doing it in a group really worked for me and was very empowering. Listening to other peoples' experiences and the similar struggles we go through, made me understand that some things were just 'normal' and I wasn't alien.

CHANCE 2 CHANGE

Facilitated by Cara Williams, a group of young people went on a journey of positive transformation. Chance 2 Change is an 8 session programme developed by beyondyouth.org.uk aiming at reducing negativity and marginalisation within communities. Based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, participants were prompted to think about their own behaviour, challenge their core beliefs and build emotional intelligence.

The approach builds on the premise that individuals' behaviour is shaped by the environment they live in. It is learnt, which meant that it can also be unlearned. Through the creation of a safe and comfortable environment, participants felt more at ease addressing the emotional causes behind negative attitudes and behaviour, which they have themselves acquired over the course of their lives. This, in turn, enables them to create new and positive templates for coping with difficult situations, allowing them to better respond to life's challenges and improving their readiness to move into the world of work.

“

Doing this course has given me clarification of what I want to do, I am 100% sure now.
Tyler, 20

“

I definitely gained a lot, especially handling certain situations differently. I have to read people and react in the correct way.
Programme participant

“

My behaviour changed after the third session. I was happy to keep on learning and my self-awareness improved.
Programme participant

MENTORING

In July 2016, Drive Forward launched a new mentoring programme, providing in-work support to young care leavers who have started employment. Over the past seven years, Drive Forward have been achieving great results in supporting care leavers from welfare into work. However, we are aware that the long-term effects of childhood trauma and negative experiences made during adolescence can make it very difficult for them to cope with change and to settle easily into a professional environment. With this in mind, we now offer a professional mentor to all of our young people once they start work.

The mentors meet their mentees on a regular basis to offer careers advice and support, as well as providing someone who will listen and a safe space for the mentee to talk

through any difficulties they are facing in the workplace. Mentoring sessions are focused on overcoming challenges, celebrating the young person's achievements in order to boost their self-confidence, and setting both short and long-term goals to help them progress in their chosen career.

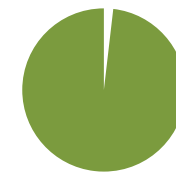
The mentoring programme has been very successful, with 23 young people currently benefitting from the support of a professional mentor. All of the young people have given positive feedback and say that they enjoy meeting up with their mentors and are finding the on-going support very helpful. Most significantly, the programme has had a noticeable effect on lowering the percentage of young care leavers not sustaining their employment.



Over the past financial year:



We have paired **23** young people with a mentor.



22 out of 23 participants managed to sustain their employment. This is a huge improvement and equates to a drop-out rate as low as **4%**, compared to 42% before the programme began.



4 young people have progressed in their careers and been offered more senior roles since being paired with a mentor.

Our mentors represent a varied range of industries and professional backgrounds. They come from companies as diverse as Flamingo, Middle East Eye and J. Walter Thompson, The Civil Service, The Post Office, Weil, Gotshal & Manges and PWC, as well as recruitment experts like Pod Talent and SThree, and also Macmillan Publishing, OC&C Strategy Consultants, Lloyds Banking Group, St James Property Developers, and Just Giving.

MARIE BROAD

HEAD OF CSR, STHREE TALKS ABOUT HER MENTORING EXPERIENCE

I was very impressed when Ruby reached out and got in touch with me about the charity. I was immediately interested to see how we could provide support and it was lovely that we were organisational neighbours just 20 minutes' walk away.

Before starting my mentoring experience, I went on some excellent training with Drive Forward, during which I learned a good deal about the purpose of mentoring and the opportunities it brings for both the mentor and the mentee.

With mentoring being an experience unique to each mentor-mentee pair, my mentee Sally and I wanted to make it as enjoyable as possible for both of us whilst keeping up commitment. We agreed to do two catch-ups each month, one face to face and one call. That was manageable for our busy schedules.

It took a while to get beyond the surface stuff, and then we got into meaty life topics, which made it interesting and helped us to connect on a deeper level.

During our time together, Sally and I have covered a lot of ground across our work and home lives. We have gone to classes together and tried out new restaurants and cafes, as well as visiting each other's workplaces. I have tried to open up my network as much as possible, taken her along to events and made introductions to people I felt could add value to a young person's future career path. It has been really fun 'networking the room' together!

When Sally started looking for CSR jobs, I was very pleased to provide support with the interview process, and delighted that the first job application was successful!



Mentoring has truly been a two-way experience for me. I have been able to pass on CSR knowledge, contacts and advice, and Sally now shares a lot back with me. She regularly inspires me with her boldness and how she pushes down barriers to break into new grounds.

More than that, it is amazing to support someone starting out in a new career, helping her to establish herself in the sector. To see someone grow into new opportunities is completely awesome. I have seen Sally blossoming into a corporate CSR job and thriving doing what she loves. What is better than that?

For anyone who wishes to pursue a career in CSR, I would suggest to research sites like [Heart of the City](#) or [Business in the Community](#). Utilise social media platforms to reach people who are in jobs that they are aspiring to and ask them for advice. Go to free events, do some work experience at a company or volunteer with a relevant charity to build up your skills and contacts.



STthree is a global staffing organisation providing specialist services in the STEM industries (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). They work with companies of all sizes, from industry leading multi-nationals, to innovative start-ups. A key part of their CSR is supporting bright young people from underprivileged and diverse backgrounds in the STEM industries. Since partnering with STthree in 2015, together we have run a couple of successful HR Speed Dating events, Aim Higher Days, and other workshops and bespoke advice for young people starting their careers.

In 2016, STthree has also committed several training sessions upskilling the Drive Forward team aiming at generating an even bigger impact.

Read more about STthree's CSR programmes [on their website.](#)

OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It has been a brilliant year of dynamic corporate partnerships, establishing 7 new partnerships and generating 60 exclusive work placements designed to upskill our clients and give them the chance to show their potential in the workplace.

Hill+Knowlton provided four successful individuals with exciting month-long paid internships across the agency. The youngest of the candidates, Robyn Gautier, made herself so indispensable that H+K created a full-time role for her, and she has since gone on to win their 'Rising Star' award.

J. Walter Thompson have overseen three more internships, their staff providing excellent tailoring and support to suit the diverse strengths of each candidate. One of them made such a great impression, that he has been invited back for a second placement with them.

We were delighted to welcome newcomers to our pool of partners, including Premier Inn and Hotel Chocolat, who between them have provided over twenty young people with work opportunities in just one year!

PHENOMENAL VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Aim Higher Days and HR Speed Dating events present an opportunity for young people to perfect their interview skills and build their own professional networks. In 2016-17, our corporate partners hosted over 10 such training events, the high quality of which was down to the hard work and passion of our corporate volunteers.

Pod Talent and Oakleaf Recruitment have proved invaluable as HR Speed Dating volunteers, repeatedly donating whole teams of recruiters to deliver a professional session that really boosts individuals' interview skills and self-esteem.



One thing I've learnt today that I never knew, is that there's about 100,000 medical devices in use at any one point. *Monica, 20*



It made me feel more confident in improving my CV. I'm more self-aware of my shyness at the start of interviews. I'm also more confident talking about something that I know. *Clara, 19*



This session made me feel more relaxed about when I have to go into a real interview. *Ricky, 19*





Squire Patton Boggs put law on the agenda for a hugely popular Aim Higher Day which demystified the legal field and revealed all the possible routes into law for our young people.

Our most unusual Aim Higher Day yet, was hosted by another new partner - MHRA (Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority). Clients were invited to take a look behind the scenes of this large government department, learning all about illegal medicine trading and medical devices.

More than anything, it has been incredible to see care leavers actually begin their careers with trusted partners. Accenture hired yet another Drive Forward client onto their challenging Technology Apprenticeship, whilst another has joined our legal partner, Squire Patton Boggs, as a full-time member of the Business Development team.

Drive Forward also linked with the Learning and Work Institute to begin a long-term research project called 'What Employers Want' in which care leavers interview a wide range of employers about what they look for in a new hire. We are delighted to continue this work and appreciate how it encourages young people to really investigate what their 'dream employer' is after.

“ I felt that doing this kind of research is good for both employers and employees particularly young people as it is VERY difficult to attain employment and knowing what someone is looking for so you can show your best self will help achieve that goal.
Programme participant

AMEX

A PARTNERSHIP THAT WORKS

Since partnering with American Express in late 2015, the company have delivered five superb work experiences - and there are more planned for the near future. AMEX's Brighton office was chosen as the best location for our clients due to its friendly, inclusive atmosphere and the wide variety of roles available. A team of fifteen AMEX staff took part in DFF's training workshop on better management of care leavers in the workplace, finding this very useful in their design of work opportunities.

The first three work experiences gave candidates the opportunity to gain experience in collections, customer service and fraud. They were also provided with insightful training on how to discover their own strengths and weaknesses, making them better placed to sell themselves or choose the right career path in the future. At the end of each placement, AMEX hosted a celebratory lunch during which young people gave presentations to senior staff on their individual journey and experience.

There was no doubt that the first round of placements was a massive success.

The second round focussed in on the fraud department, as this was by far the area of work that candidates found most exciting. Candidates spent all 10 days in fraud, reviewing illegal applications and other fraudulent activity, learning about the subtle differences between forged and genuine documents and shadowing complaints procedures.

“

This placement gave me an insight into the corporate world of finance as well as exposing me to challenging work, which has left me feeling more prepared and equipped to begin a career within the financial sector.

Adonay, 21

“

I wanted to learn exactly how a company like AMEX functions and this opportunity gave me just that. I loved this department – if I had one word to describe my time it would be 'cool'.

Linda, 24

“

Having a team of professionals from AMEX visit us to conduct interviews was great fun and they found the experience of interviewing Drive Forward clients 'incredibly moving and rewarding.'

Ruby Lawrence, Head of Corporate Engagement at Drive Forward Foundation

WHY I VOLUNTEER

WITH DRIVE FORWARD

JACQUIE BECK

FINANCE DIRECTOR, OAKLEAF PARTNERSHIP

My employer, Oakleaf Partnership, engaged with Drive Forward as part of our Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. I was very motivated to get involved as I remember being that age and not having a clue about what I wanted to do and no one to really talk to about the options.

On my first day with Drive Forward, I was nervous. I really felt a duty and a responsibility to give the best advice I could. It was so enjoyable finding out about the young person I was helping and what they really wanted help and support with. I was really impressed by how eager the young people were, and was so touched by the feedback I received from them. I was so glad to be able to make a difference to them and their future career prospects.

I hope that I can offer the young people details about the various qualifications and career paths in the finance field so they come out with a better idea about which direction to take. I have tried to give them creative ideas about how they can get into the field of work that they want to be in, other than straight job applications, as the finance field is quite competitive. I have also offered them examples from my own experience and that of my friends who are also finance professionals. I hope that they realise that if they work hard they can do it.

I believe volunteering is such a rewarding thing to do. You definitely receive much more than you give. It is such an easy thing to do and I wish more people would consider volunteering in the future. It is great that Drive Forward facilitates this.

People who want to get into finance have to keep in mind that you do have to work hard to get your examinations, but then you are set up for life. It is so worth it. The time flies by when you are studying - you have a peer group going through the same thing so you are not alone. Before you know it, you have a qualification that is recognised, respected, and sought after by employers. It will give you financial security and many options for your future career including working abroad. Do not hesitate!



Oakleaf are an HR Recruitment SME, founded in 2005. They are the UK's largest independent HR recruitment consultancy and have been voted one of The Sunday Times 100 Best Small Companies to Work For in 2016 and 2017. Having partnered with Oakleaf in 2015, their staff has provided a number of young care leavers with practical interview, CV and general application guidelines and advice.

EVENTS

A TRIP TO EASTBOURNE

BY ROOPA MEHTA

When Martha approached me, asking me to speak about my experience of working with Drive Forward at the Annual General Meeting of the Rotary Club in Eastbourne in October 2016, I was pretty excited.

I really enjoy talking to people about things that matter to me and I've found people generally enjoy listening too. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to say, but I knew I wanted to do Drive Forward justice. The team and I developed an outline of things to talk about and once I'd seen the completed framework I knew roughly what I wanted to say.

Let's talk about the journey that took us to Eastbourne. Believe me, it was quite an adventure! I was very nervous to begin with. The train journey was long but it gave me a chance to gather my thoughts. I hadn't taken any notes because I knew what would happen: For me, talking in front of a lot of people is nerve wracking, and I knew if I had written anything down I'd talk really fast and I wouldn't look at my audience at all.

The big day. Martha, Anton and Jordan did their speeches before me. They were polished, poised and beautifully eloquent. Not intimidating at all! Then it was my turn. As I walked out on to the stage, I felt overwhelmed. I looked out at a sea of people, all silent and eager to listen to what I had to say. "What's the worst that could happen?" I thought and started talking. I made a few jokes and I stumbled over some of the things I said, but most of all I believe I got my point across.

I explained how Drive Forward has allowed me to have autonomy and independence over the choices I've made, whilst working with them, and the freedom I have in terms of my career aspirations and the pace in which I reach those goals; how they raised my confidence and made me feel like I was making a difference in myself. I still have my anxiety and my depression but it's gotten better over the past year. I've realised being at Drive Forward, in that nurturing environment with all the people who want only the best for me, is better than any "happy pill".

I learnt a lot about the Rotary Club too. They're a very inclusive group of people. I feel like they genuinely care and want to help young people like myself to create a better life for themselves. I also found that the Rotary Club is full of different types of people from all walks of life, just like the young people who work with Drive Forward. After the conference, Rotarians came up to us and congratulated me on my speech, wishing me all the best for my future.



I've learnt a lot about myself on this journey. I've seen myself grow into a more confident person who believes in herself. Being in my element, airing my thoughts and talking to some of the most empathetic people I've met in a long time.

I'd like to end this by saying a massive thank you to all the staff and other young people I've worked with, who've made me into this person. That and the stairs to that office full of wonderful people. And remember, every step you take is a step closer to your success.

DRIVE FORWARD AMBASSADORS

ONE YEAR ON



Set up in January 2016, the Drive Forward Ambassadors group celebrated its one-year anniversary at the beginning of the year. King's College London kindly provided a beautiful space for current ambassadors and those interested in joining the group to get together and look back on a busy year.

Having successfully managed the transition into independence and meaningful employment, Drive Forward Ambassadors act as positive role models for other care leavers starting out on their career. They know the challenges of leaving care, the insecurity and financial pressure, and are all too familiar with the overwhelming fear of the unknown, that is being on your own, literally.

Mentoring has become a proven practice of effectively supporting young people on their journey into adulthood and independence. Peer mentoring further provides the benefit of personal insight and mutual understanding. Shared experiences can help breaking down individual barriers, making it easier to establish trust and build a fruitful relationship.

As peer mentors, our ambassadors listen to the concerns and worries of their mentees. They help them navigate the world of work, share their own experiences and provide tips on time management, planning and goal setting.

Furthermore, our Ambassadors are committed to addressing salient issues and realising positive change for London's care

leaver population. Affordable rent, social landlords, housing crisis and other catch phrases have been dominating public debate for quite a while. For care leavers, the situation is even more complicated. Many of them do not have a family home to go back to, no financial cushion to get through tough times, no shoulder to lean on. Recent changes to social housing policy has made it difficult for care leavers to move into independence, whilst increasing the risk of debt, long-term unemployment and homelessness.

Having experienced precarious housing situations themselves, Drive Ambassadors set up an advocacy committee to raise public awareness and promote policy change. After several

meetings with policy makers, MPs and Lords, the group presented their case in the House of Lords last December, prompting Lord Listowel to mention what he had learned from his encounter with our young people during the debate that followed in the House.

Inspired and motivated by this first success, Ambassadors and the Drive Forward team joined forces to start an insightful research project to highlight the real-life effects of social housing reforms including 'affordable rent' and 'fixed term tenancy' on London's care leavers. You can read up on some preliminary findings in our [policy brief](#) on our website.



DRIVE FORWARD AT

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

IN DAVOS

For more than 30 years, the Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, has been a significant networking opportunity for leaders around the globe. With a vision of 'improving the state of the world' the unique 'Spirit of Davos' refers to mutual collaboration and collegiality amongst all participants. As an international organisation, the World Economic Forum in Davos brings together figures from government and politics, business and civil society, to shape global agendas and influence change.

After her first visit to Davos in 2014, our CEO Martha Wansbrough has made her way once again into the Swiss alps to be part of this global conversation.

“ Davos has provided Drive Forward with access to a variety of companies at a senior level, which has led to increased opportunities for our young people.

Martha Wansbrough, CEO and Founder of Drive Forward Foundation

This year, I had the opportunity to make a couple of promising connections to Nike Inc. and Dell Technologies and met with leading personalities from the business world, who were all sympathetic to Drive Forward's mission.

One of the highlights of my stay in Davos was being introduced to the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, who has shown interest in our charity and particularly issues around housing for London care leavers.

Another fantastic experience was getting the chance to talk to Facebook COO, Sheryl Sandberg, at the 'Leaders and Resilience' lunch. We had a discussion about how the experience of trauma and adversity influences peoples' lives, especially with regards to young people leaving the care system. In her new book 'Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience and Finding Joy', Sandberg explores how people can learn to build their own resilience and be able to better cope with difficult situations. Intrigued and empathetic to hear more about the challenges young care leavers have to tackle, Sandberg expressed her interest in visiting our charity during her book tour in London later in the year.



“

Although it has a reputation for being elitist and focused solely on profit and business deals, Davos has provided Drive Forward with access to a variety of companies at a senior level, which has led to increased opportunities for our young people. In 2014 and 2015, for example, my attendance at the World Economic Forum enabled us to successfully connect with Accenture, Google, WPP, and DHL. This didn't only lead to the creation of invaluable experiences and work opportunities for the young people working with us, but these initial conversations opened up networks to other top companies in London: J. Walter Thompson, Hill+Knowlton, Squire Patton Boggs amongst them.

Martha Wansbrough, CEO and Founder

TEAM VOLUNTEERING DAYS



At Drive Forward, volunteers are an integral part of what we do. From our experienced and inspiring trainers, whose knowledge helps to get our young care leavers job ready, to our mentors who guide them through their first few months in a new job, our volunteers are embedded in the services we provide.

The young people we support don't always see the value of volunteering. That volunteering can open their eyes to different careers, give them a sense of self-worth and teach them new skills is meaningless when they're struggling to find work and trying to make ends meet on a minimum income.

Last year, we found that it was time to practice what we preach. Some of us volunteer in our own time but what better way to send a clear message about to our young people about the benefits of volunteering than to give a day as a team.

Our partners at Benefacto (a social enterprise which organises employee volunteering) quickly found us an opportunity and we spent a day at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, one of London's Magnificent Seven. Not only is the Victorian cemetery of historic importance, it is the capital's most urban woodland and Tower Hamlets' only dedicated woodland park. After a great day spent outdoors as a team we reflected on the value of volunteering:

- Even short-term volunteering makes a difference;
- You can gain a fresh perspective by just removing yourself from your usual environment;
- Regular volunteering is great opportunity to find your place in your community and combat isolation;
- Understanding motivation is vital, be it to get to know new people, gain new skills, or appreciating the positive impact you can have on the community.

Volunteering is a great way to demonstrate characteristics such as an interest in community, responsibility and dependability, all of which employers are looking for. Young people can gain valuable experience in leadership and communication and, depending on the task, ven build specific skills such as marketing, project management or research.

JESSY

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Jessy was born in China where she lived with her mother, who she describes as “a very strict Chinese parent”. When she was nine years old, her mother sent her to Britain to live with her father, who turned out to be the opposite of the loving and caring parent every child would wish for. After two years, social services took Jessy into care.

Jessy had a hard time adapting to her new surroundings at the children’s home and became involved with people who had a bad influence over her.

Her turning point came when, at the age of 13, she was excluded from school and transferred to a pupil referral unit. Her intrinsic drive and talent began to shine through and she realised that she can work harder on her education. “I’ve had that ingrained in me: working hard and wanting to be the best.” She asked for more challenging tasks and ended up taking her GCSEs early. “From there, I realised I could really achieve things and... that gave me the drive to try harder.”

Jessy worked very hard indeed, excelling at her A-levels and starting a degree at King’s College London a year early.

Unlike other care leavers in higher education who get support from their local council up to the age of 25, Jessy relies on a student loan and bursary to make ends meet. This is because when she turned 15, the authorities wanted her to move back to China. Jessy refused and lost all entitlements to future social services. When she came out of care, she did not have a place to stay, no income or other support. If it had not been for her cousin and boyfriend, the



16-year-old girl would have ended up on the street.

“Last summer, I was working in Greggs... I’ve been working through most of my degree. In my first year, I was working as a waitress in Shoreditch for four nights a week after uni, coming home at 2am, getting up, going to uni. So it’s been really hard.”

This year, however, Jessy will be interning at Flamingo, an insight and brand consultancy and one of Drive Forward’s oldest corporate partners. Jessy first visited the company on one of our Aim Higher Days, “Flamingo was full of young people and the office was really bright and colourful... I left Flamingo thinking I love this, I’d love to work here.” She then met her future mentor, Kieron, at an HR Speed Dating session. A few meetings and chats about Jessy’s dreams and career aspirations later, he introduced her to a colleague who works in Flamingo’s digital forensics department. His colleague was equally impressed and quickly offered Jessy a summer internship.

With just a year to go until she graduates, Jessy is looking forward to the future. “I just want to be living a life where I feel like I’m doing something that I’m enjoying and using all of my capacity as a person.”

WE’RE COMMITTED TO CLOSING THE GAP

Most people remember how hard it can be to move out of your parents’ home, get your first job, and start an independent and adult life. Most of us, however, could still count on the support of our families providing a helping hand when times were tough. For most young people leaving care, however, that option does not exist. Their only true safety net is the welfare state and its benefits system. They rely on it to have a place to live, they rely on it to provide them food, clothes, living essentials, they rely on it when they are sick, and often they even rely on it when they just need somebody to talk to.

Drive Forward has been committed to enabling care leavers to successfully move into independence through meaningful employment and education since 2010 by providing training, tailored support, and job opportunities. Finding ourselves confronted with an increasing number of young people financially struggling when moving into employment, we added another layer of support to our services.

Introduced in 2016, thanks to the ongoing support of our committed donors, the Closing the Gap fund supports care leavers to overcome periods of financial hardships related to moving into employment or training. This includes bridging the financial gap occurring between the end of benefits payments and receiving their first month’s salary, enabling young people to pay their bills, avoid eviction, buy food and living essentials etc. Expenses relating to moving into employment do not stop there, but individuals need suitable clothing, they need to travel to and from work or interviews, they need to have credit on their phones to be available, and so forth.

The fund has facilitated the transition into the workplace of over 20 care leavers. Thanks to your ongoing support, they were able to avoid eviction and falling into rent arrears, to complete their training and move into work, to pay their bills, not go hungry, and impress employers with suitable work outfits.

To find out more about Closing the Gap and how you can support a care leaver’s successful transition into employment visit our project on GlobalGiving.org – Closing the Gap – Empower Care Leavers in London.

FINANCIAL

STATEMENT

Statement of financial activities incorporating income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2017

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	2017 £	2017 £	2017 £	2016 £
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	184,285	205,200	389,485	622,786
Other trading activities	1,721	-	1,721	128,415
Investments	37	-	37	-
Total income	186,043	205,200	391,243	751,201
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	15,176	-	15,176	25,717
Charitable activities	321,320	219,350	540,670	405,224
Total expenditure	336,496	219,350	555,846	430,941
Net income / (expenditure) before transfers	(150,453)	(14,150)	(164,603)	320,260
Transfers between Funds	(6,623)	6,623	-	-
Net income / (expenditure) before other gains and losses	(157,076)	(7,527)	(164,603)	320,260
Net gains / (losses) on investments	74	-	74	57
Net movement in funds	(157,002)	(7,527)	(164,529)	320,203
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	245,478	138,277	383,755	63,552
Total funds carried forward	88,476	130,750	219,226	383,755





TRUSTEES

Owen Woodley
Guy De Selliers
Judy Goldberg
Lisajane Bridgwater Wynne
Tracey Harrison

Damian Dwerryhouse
Chantal Sheridan
Tejal Petal
Helen McAnally

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The Worshipful Company of Drapers
Totland Bay

EMPATHY

Empathy is a cornerstone of our practice

ALWAYS

We strive to always be consistent in our service and clear in communication

UNDERSTANDING

We do not give up on our clients and we never stop learning

CONSISTENT

We must keep trauma in mind

DRIVE FORWARD

Expulsion is a last resort

VALUE

Complex cases deserve a team effort and a group consultation - no member of staff is alone

LISTENING

Never underestimate the power of listening

Reward and punishment hinders progression, as does the activation of shame

COMMUNICATION

PROGRESSION

The theories of attachment and 'two-part mind' inform our understanding and should be familiar to us

We value and practice communication with others outside of Drive Forward to achieve the best outcome for an individual

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