

2021 with Carefree

Well it's been another challenging year. We have managed to get out and about, support each other and have some fun.

In this issue we share what we have been up to including an update on the residential and pop up programmes which we were able to run this year, our Care Leaver celebration event at Christmas, our 'You said – We did' page and information about Carefree Careers.

Our Work with Care Leavers in 2021

2021 was a time to really adapt and change our services to meet young people's needs during this time, learning from what worked in 2020.

We focused the first half of the year on young people's welfare, particularly those living independently, recognising the impact of loneliness on young people during the lockdown. We carried out weekly online chats and phone calls.

From January to May we ran 3 online "coffee catch ups" groups per week which were open to all young people and these groups were a source of support through a difficult time.

We also ran groups outdoors called 'Walk with me' all over Cornwall in beautiful spaces, enabling young people from their local area to see us and each other safely and eat some lovely food together.

As the summer continued we tried to remain outside as much as possible. Our groups included 'arts in the park' a creative project in Penlee gardens helping young people to emerge from lockdown.

Summer sessions included website design, visiting local animal sanctuaries, cooking sessions, museum visits, and axe throwing!

Since September we are back to our face to face indoor groups and planned the Care Leaver celebration event 'It's been emotional 2021; Masks' which was held on the 8th December at Royal Cornwall Museum.

Endings

This year we celebrated our 25 year olds leaving Carefree with an event at BF Adventure which was where it all started for some of them 14 years ago! The day was very emotional. We recognised the commitment and time they had given to us and the strong connections they had built with each other and Carefree over the years. We will run events for leavers twice a year.



Councillor Barbara Ellenbroek (pictured above) Portfolio holder for Children and Families along with Ben Davies, Service Director Children and Family Services attended our Christmas event.

Culture Card Launch

In May we launched the Culture card a joint project with Cornwall Museums Partnership with 3 online events. All young people in care and 1 other can gain access to 7 museums and art galleries for free. www.culturecard.info for more info.

Check out Carefree Cornwall on Facebook or CarefreeV4Us @CarefreeV4US on Twitter for up to date info on what care experienced young people are doing in Cornwall.

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Original Programmes

This summer it was fantastic to be able to run residential programmes for our 11-17 year olds again. We welcomed 16 new young people to Carefree over the year through our original programmes at Delaware, BF Adventure and Carnyorth.

Young people were able to meet others, build confidence and develop their teamwork skills. Young people get to know each other through team building activities, support each other in outdoor challenges, plan for and cook meals together, stay overnight and travel across Cornwall on the public transport challenge. The activities this year included gorge scrambling, climbing, drumming workshops, printing and arts, forest school, kayaking, swimming, archery, biking and visits to see Grease in Plymouth and the Rogue theatre at Tehidy.

Young People are supported by our trained peer mentors who befriend them and support them to take part in the programme. At the end of each programme we held a celebration event where carers and other workers were invited to share in the young people's achievements.



Here is some of what was said by and about young people:

“ They were really brave at trying new things ”

“ She made amazing pasta bake ”

“ He is great at singing ”

“ I loved it ”

“ I have made friends ”

“ On the first day she had a chat with me and was supportive of me being new ”



Carefree Careers!

We have a brilliant team of Careers Advisers who are ready to support anyone who is in Year 11 or over 16 and wondering what to do next after leaving school. Choosing education or finding work can be very confusing but we can help.

Kate, Laura, Liam, Lisa and Louise are ready to meet with you. They will spend time getting to know you and provide information, advice, support and guidance in choosing what to do next.

Just so you know we can't make you do anything but we can support you in making informed decisions about what you want to do and we can offer practical support such as filling in application forms, writing CV's or taking and supporting you at interviews as well as careers guidance!

Your adviser can visit you at home or somewhere else convenient for you. Many young people like to meet us at a coffee shop where we can provide drinks and get to know you.

We run a popular drop in session every Wednesday from 11am – 3pm at The House Youth Project in St Austell. If you're a care leaver and can get to St Austell on a Wednesday come and say hello and access advice, food, games and more!



Celebrating our success

Some of our young people have managed to get a job that they really like or they have returned to education on a course that they are interested in or they have started an apprenticeship.

We offer a range of qualifications which cover a wide variety of topics such as Preparation for Work, Emotional Wellbeing, Working with Animals and Customer Service to name a few. We will work with you to find out what you are interested in and then find the right qualification for you to take. We also offer an Arts Awards which a group of young people achieved this summer.

This year we have funding from Cornwall Council to offer careers advice and guidance, decision making, communication and interview skills, motivation, goal setting and action planning to children in care in Year 1, together with the opportunity to gain a qualification in Preparation for Work. Kate is delivering this to all secondary schools in Cornwall. So far she has worked at Budehaven Community School, Redruth School, Treviglas Academy and Newquay Tretherras.

If you would like careers support from the Carefree team, please call us on 01209 204333 and one of our Careers Advisers will ring you and arrange to meet.

This work is funded through Cornwall Council, and two ESF projects, Compass and Skills Your Way.

Coming soon

Our new logo and website, co designed with a group of young people and LEAP, will be launching early in 2022 so watch this space.



skills  your way

‘You Said - We did’

A round up of issues Carefree young people have been working on to improve services for all young people In and Leaving Care in Cornwall.

Our Transport Campaign for Care Leavers has continued



An amazing film was made by a group of care leavers about how their quality of life would be improved with the provision of free or subsidised public transport. This has been discussed by Cornwall Council and we are hoping for good news any day now that the council will agree to fund bus passes for care leavers.

Improved outcomes in Cornwall

Care experienced young people have improved outcomes in Cornwall by ensuring that professionals understand their needs

In the last 6 months, young people have helped interview new social workers, worked with a psychologist so that they could train others about how to help young people have good endings and they have planned training for foster carers.

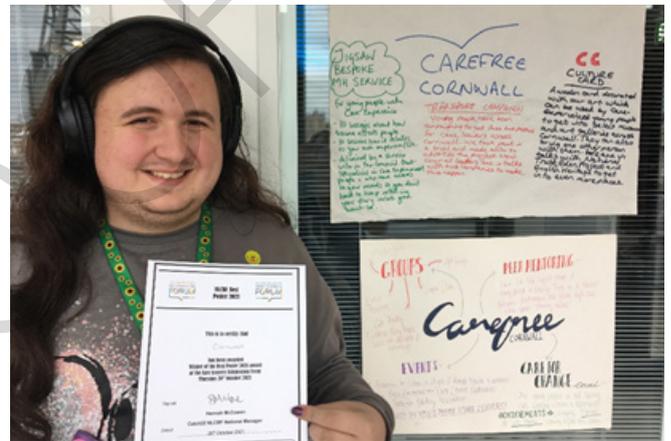


Training new social workers

We’ve been influencing national policy

A young person and two workers, one with care experience, presented to the All Party Parliamentary Group, Children in Care and Care Leavers in June. We told them about Carefree’s focus on how important it is to develop positive relationships to get on in life.

We also highlighted Carefree’s role in facilitating change in Cornwall by bringing together care-experienced young people and those in Cornwall Council who make the important decisions to have conversations about what matters to young people in and leaving care.



Carefree win the best poster ward at the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum Event in October

And locally

Carefree’s Care for Change Council took over Cornwall’s Corporate Parenting Board in October. The result of this takeover included advocating for better therapeutic support for care leavers, making sure that Children in Care nurses gave children and young people their contact details and for better support for young people in College. It was also agreed that the Care Leaver Setting Up Home Grant should be reviewed. Watch this space!

If you want to get involved in improving services for yourself and others, get in touch.

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