

Southwark Council

Coaching for care leavers



Endorsement by the strategic director for Children's Services: [Romi Bowen](#)

Providing the best support we can for our young people as they begin the exciting journey into adulthood is a top priority for the Council. For those leaving the council's care it is especially important that we do all we can to help them succeed in education, work and society. I know that Southwark Council's staff are passionate about making life better for people in Southwark, so I'm delighted that this coaching scheme will give staff from all parts of the council the opportunity to make a real difference to a young person's life.

Coaching offers our young people unique support, complimenting the services we already provide. It gives young people the opportunity to work out their goals and to work towards achieving these with the guidance and help of a more experienced adult. Coaches will benefit too; by developing valuable skills, gaining practical experience and making a real difference in the local community.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff who volunteer to support this important initiative as it's a great contribution to our shared aspiration to improve our young people's life chances.

Romi Bowen
Strategic Director, Children's Services

Introduction

As part of the council's commitment to helping young people make the transition from care to independent adult living the Coaching for Care Leavers scheme adds a unique strand to the support already provided.

Whether it's help with finding a job or getting into university, looking after their home or building support networks, a more experienced adult can help a young care leaver navigate life's challenges more effectively.

Objectives

The objective of the coaching programme is to help young people identify their goals and to work towards achieving them.



How the scheme works

Southwark's coaching scheme builds on the learning and success of other schemes around the UK, but adds a unique dimension. Where other schemes recruit coaches from the local community or from children's services teams, the Southwark scheme provides managers from all parts of the council the opportunity to provide coaching to a young person as they leave Southwark's care.

1. Recruiting and developing coaches

It is important that council staff volunteering to coach a young person have the support and skills necessary to be successful in this role. The process below is designed to ensure positive benefits for both the coach and the young person.

Step 1: Complete the mentor development workshop

When working with care leavers there will be times when mentoring activity will be most helpful and at other times a coaching approach will be needed. Mentor development workshops are delivered about once every two months. These workshops have been used for several years to develop mentors as part of the Southwark Council Mentoring Scheme the Staff who have already attended the workshop and worked with a mentee will not need to repeat this stage. For more information about mentoring see <http://thesource/Newssectionlandingpage.asp?id=19896&cat=956>.

Step 2: Attend a Children's Services briefing

This two-hour briefing gives volunteers an opportunity to learn about the looked after children's service and the typical challenges faced by young people leaving care. The session will also cover the likely challenges you as a coach/ mentor would face, when to ask for help and who to contact. You can find out more about the service at the following link: [Support for Young People Leaving Care](#).

Step 3: Complete an application form

The form allows us to gather information that will help us to make a compatible match between coach/mentors and young people. The nature of this project requires the council to undertake CRB checks for coach/mentors and the form will ask for your permission to do this. For more information about CRB checks follow this link: <http://www.crb.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=4762>. See the application form here (add hyperlink).

Step 4: Attain a coaching qualification

Volunteers will undertake a three day coaching programme leading to achievement of the Certificate in Leaderful Youth Coaching (CLYC) Coaching Qualification This is accredited by the International Coach Federation, the largest professional coaching association in the world: www.coachfederation.org.uk.

Once volunteers complete this process the scheme co-ordinators will look at the information available to identify a suitable match with a young person.



2. Promoting the scheme with young people

Mentoring and coaching works best when both parties enter the relationship voluntarily. All young people who join the scheme will do so because they want to. The scheme is promoted to young people by distributing leaflets and through contact with their personal advisers, who have been briefed on how the scheme works and who can benefit. A referral form will be completed to allow the scheme co-ordinators to make the best possible match between young people and coach/mentors. In setting up the scheme, the council has consulted with young people through Speakerbox. <http://www.whtvr.org/get-involved/whats-your-thing/speaker-box>

3. Getting started with coaching

Once a match between a young person and a volunteer has been proposed and is accepted by both parties an introduction session will take place. This will be a group session facilitated by the scheme co-ordinators.

4. Continuing support and development

Confidentiality is critical to the success of any coaching or mentoring relationship. Coach/mentors will however be asked to keep a record of where and when their meetings took place and whether progress has been made in setting and achieving goals. Coach/mentors will be able to contact the scheme co-ordinators if they have any problems or if there is a need to re-consider the relationship and development sessions on specific subjects will be organised as needs arise.