



# Transforming Futures

A toolkit for organisations supporting homeless young people into education, employment and training  
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# About

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### The Young Foundation

The Young Foundation's mission is to develop better connected and more sustainable communities across the UK. As a UKRI accredited Independent Research Organisation, social investor and community development practitioner, we combine all our skills and expertise, to further that mission.

We amplify the stories and lived experiences of people in our communities; using this as a spur to drive locally-led community action and enterprise. And we use what we learn across different communities to spot national patterns of need and opportunity; working with national partners to support new ideas to tackle those shared, national challenges.

Bringing together our own – and other people's – work, we are building a shared body of evidence, tools and insight about how communities are taking action on the issues that affect them.

We have created and supported over 80 organisations including: Which?, The Open University, Language Line, Social Innovation Exchange, School for Social Entrepreneurs, Uprising and Action for Happiness.

Find out more at [youngfoundation.org](http://youngfoundation.org)



### End Youth Homelessness

End Youth Homelessness is a UK-wide movement of local charities that have joined forces to tackle youth homelessness together. It provides a national platform to raise awareness, share experience and generate voluntary income.

The funds we raise help our members to increase capacity, services and sustainability in extremely challenging times. Our Member Charities house and support over 30,000 young people facing homelessness.

EYH Member Charities:  
1625 Independent People  
Aberdeen Foyer  
Amber Foundation  
The Benjamin Foundation  
Centrepont  
Llamau  
MACS  
The Rock Trust  
Roundabout  
St Basils  
Step By Step

Find out more at [eyh.org.uk](http://eyh.org.uk)



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# Aims of this toolkit

This toolkit is aimed at organisations supporting young people facing homelessness to access education, employment and training (EET) opportunities in their area.

The recommendations made in the toolkit are based on learning gained during the delivery of Transforming Futures, a three year programme funded by the H&M Foundation, which was launched by End Youth Homelessness in 2016.

The programme was delivered by four different charities across the UK and included the hire of dedicated Job Coaches, a bursary fund, digital careers platform and regular knowledge sharing workshops.



# Core Values

It is important to recognise that supporting homeless young people into education, employment and training requires more than just practical support such as funding and job coaching. The core values that underpin your work with homeless young people are the key to ensuring your programme is able to effectively target, support and sustain young people's transition into EET.

The Transforming Futures core values:



## **Trust**

Job Coaches need to be able to build mutually trusting relationships with each young person and be seen as independent from other key workers, such as Housing Officers, who sometimes have a punitive role in young people's lives.



## **Patience**

Programmes should be designed to provide young people the time and space to come to decisions about EET without pressure. Job Coaches also need to take the time to get to know young people and help explore their interests.



## **Understanding**

Obstacles are likely to be experienced on the way to EET, and a second (or third) chance can be the difference between success and failure in the long term. Many homeless young people have been let down in the past so having the reliable, non-judgemental support of the Job Coach can be invaluable in helping rebuild confidence and self-esteem.

**The young person doesn't fit into the service, the service has to fit them.**

Graham, Job Coach, Aberdeen

**It's more like a professional relationship and not like the one with the housing worker which has an educational component.**

Rosie, Job Coach, Bristol





### **Collaboration**

Young people require holistic support to prepare for, enter and sustain EET. Job Coaches should form strong and collaborative relationships with colleagues from other services, particularly mental health, and get to know local colleges, course providers and employers.



### **Realism**

Job Coaches should recognise the wider determinants of being out of education, training and employment and support young people with referrals to other services they need before they are ready to access EET. This requires the Job Coach to see each young person holistically and as an individual, tailoring support to their specific needs, without putting pressure on them to access EET before they are realistically ready.



### **Flexibility**

Transforming Futures was in part successful due to the ability for Job Coaches to operate independently within their charity. Giving Job Coaches flexibility to tailor the way they target homeless young people and freedom to make decisions depending on their context, including the allocation of bursaries, is key.

**What makes the programme successful is being committed to the young person, building up their confidence and finding something that they want to do and reinforce that there are so many different opportunities out there.**

Rosie, Job Coach, Bristol

**[The Job Coach is] more focused around you and making sure that you get to where you need to be. They won't just leave you high and dry in a situation where there's more to be done. They make sure they finish it ... They follow up, they make sure you're alright. They make sure you're in a situation where you don't need them anymore**

Jordan, 18, Bristol

## Moving into Youth Work

# Jess' Story

Jess, 19, was kicked out of her home shortly before her GCSEs. She moved into a Benjamin Foundation hostel at the age of 16. During this time, she failed her GCSEs and was left confused about her future. She enrolled in a couple of courses at nearby colleges but did not enjoy them. She was unable to afford the course she really wanted to do, which was focused on youth work. That is when the staff at her hostel referred her to Sharon.

Sharon helped her enrol in a Level 2 certificate in Youth Work and apply for a grant that covered the tuition. When Jess found out she would need a laptop and printer to do her course work, Sharon used a bursary to buy them for her.

Having successfully completed the course, Jess is now enrolled on Level 3. With help from Sharon, she has found a full-time job as a Youth Worker, supporting vulnerable young people locally. Sharon's support has given her the motivation to set even higher goals for herself. She now aims to study Youth Work at university, and feels more independent than ever. She is cooking for herself and has moved out of the hostel. She loves her work and says, **"One thing that makes me so passionate about helping other people is that I have been through a similar process."**

**Sharon was the first person who actually listened to me. I said, 'this is what I want to do, I'm 100% sure I want to do this. How do I go about it?'**



# Essential programme components

During Transforming Futures, the combination of Job Coaching and the bursary fund, were found to be highly effective in supporting young people on their journey into EET. These were underpinned by peer to peer support between Job Coaches and the opportunity to share learning between charities delivering the programmes.



Job Coach



Bursary Fund

**The job coach won't just do an application for you, they'll help you do it. Which is a lot better than someone who fills out your application. Because you don't learn anything then.**

Susy, 22, Sheffield

## Job Coach

The Job Coach directly identifies young people who are interested in accessing EET or may work with young people who are referred to them by colleagues within their charity. Their role is to support and guide individuals on their journey into EET, with a focus on building their confidence, self-belief and aspirations, providing encouragement and reassurance along the way. If necessary, the Job Coach refers and helps young people to access other support, such as with their mental health, if they are not yet ready to start preparing for education, training or employment.

The Job Coach holds individual or group sessions where they offer assistance in writing job applications and CVs, help with job searches and develop young people's interview skills. When young people need moral support, the Job Coach can accompany them to open days, interviews or other appointments. It is the Job Coach's responsibility to establish relationships with training providers, colleges, and employers so young people can gain access to local EET opportunities.

**With my Job Coach's help, I can definitely achieve [my] goal. I think it's just the fact that she doesn't give up. She'll sit there and explain something to you 100 times if you need it. It's just nice to know you have that extra support.**

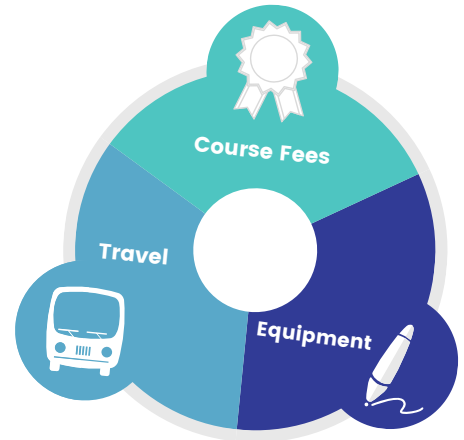
Taylor, 19, Bristol



## The Bursary Fund

The Bursary Fund is used in cases where young people encounter financial barriers that prevent them from accessing EET. Young people apply for a bursary in a process assisted by the Job Coach and the application is judged against criteria such as their ability to manage their own finances and the demonstration of a clear need for the funding before its distribution. The bursary is a flexible fund designed to address the multiple barriers that might prevent a homeless young person from engaging in EET. This might include travel costs, buying specialist equipment for a course or course enrolment fees.

In addition to the Job Coach and bursary, other programme components can help strengthen the offer for homeless young people.



**I found it quite a quick and easy process to get the laptop and printer. [It] took about two weeks to get both and I only had to fill out a few simple forms. There wouldn't have been funding besides the bursary to get the equipment I needed.**

James, 18, Norfolk

## Digital skills support

Digital literacy is an essential skill for the 21st century. Providing young people with access to the internet and equipping them with the ability to search and apply for jobs or courses online can be an important step on the way to EET. Job Coaches can compile lists of relevant job and course finder sites, as well as platforms where young people can explore different career options.

## Knowledge Sharing

Opportunities for Job Coaches and other EET workers to meet and share learning are a valuable way to celebrate success and find solutions to local challenges. Meetings between programme staff can be complemented with site visits to other organisations running EET programmes targeting homeless young people. Including an advocacy component to your programme could also fund meetings with potential local and national employers, to help them understand the challenges homeless young people face when trying to get into EET.



## Pre-EET support

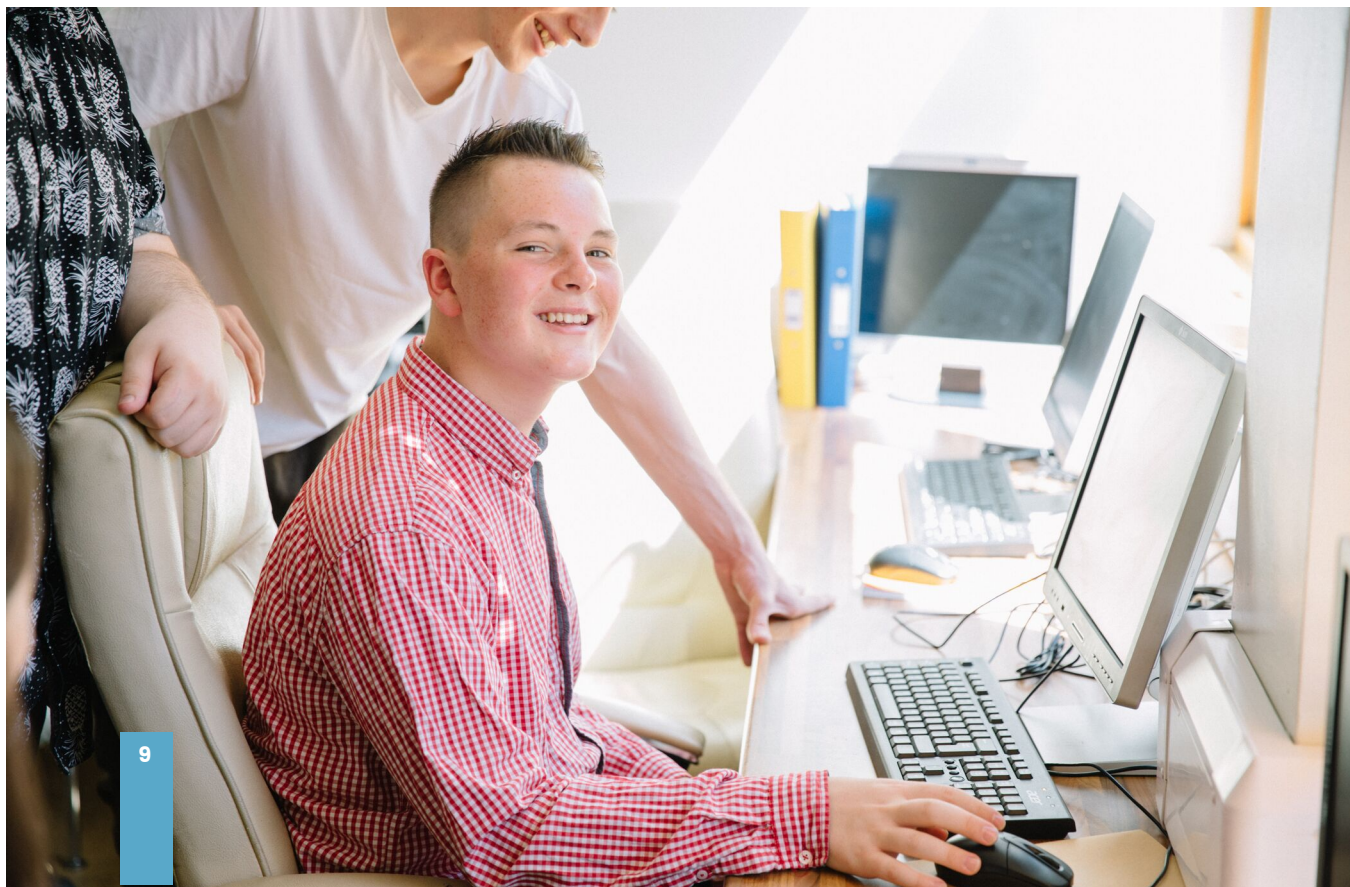
Some young people referred to a Job Coach will not be ready to access EET and may first need support with things like mental health, housing or finances. Organisations working with homeless young people should link with other services that can provide pre-EET support to young people before referring them back to Job Coaches if and when they are ready.

## In-job support

Once young people have started attending a course, placement or job, it is still important to conduct regular check-ins to ensure they are feeling confident and happy in what they are doing. Even if these are brief meetings, young people should know that they are able to seek support if they face a problem in the future, and that someone is still interested in their progress.

## Mental health service links

Mental health support is often an essential precursor to success for homeless young people. Consider this in programme design from the outset, creating partnerships with local mental health providers if this service does not exist within your organisation currently.



# Self assessment tool

Thinking of creating your own education, employment and training programme for homeless young people? To help you design your programme, complete the self-assessment tool below.

Steps marked as being of 'high' or 'medium' importance need to be addressed before programme launch. Steps rated 'low' importance should be addressed by the Job Coach once they are in post, before the programme begins to engage young people.

Do you have?	Importance	Yes / No
A Theory of Change* outlining how you anticipate homeless young people accessing EET	High	
Funding for a Job Coach	High	
Flexible funding pot for bursaries	High	
Internal referral pathways to and from Job Coaches with other services/ staff members	Medium	
Links with external organisations that can offer holistic support to homeless young people when needed	Medium	
Networks with local course providers and colleges	Low	
Relationships with local employers and organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce	Low	
Links with hostels and supported accommodation where young people live	Low	
A list of job websites and other sources to help young people to search for local opportunities	Low	
A plan for tracking young people's engagement with the programme	Low	

\*There are various tools available online. You could start with NCVO's guide and specific example of a Theory of Change for a youth homelessness programme.

# Programme design & delivery checklists



The following checklists are a resource to help you design and deliver an effective EET programme with homeless young people. The recommendations provided are based on what worked during the delivery of Transforming Futures.

## Programme funding




- **Recognise that not all homeless young people are ready to access EET:** Look for funding or link with other services that can provide pre-EET support for young people including counselling, mental health support, access to financial and housing support etc.
- **Design longer programmes for greater impact:** Seek funding for at least 3 years as this will give young people the freedom to engage with a Job Coach when they feel ready and return as and when they require additional support.
- **Seek flexible funding:** try to get funders to commit to funding being used flexibly during the delivery of the programme, with opportunities to reforecast the budget at regular intervals depending on what aspects of the programme are found to be more effective in your context.

## Programme design



- **Make links with mental health providers:** Mental health support is often an essential precursor to success for homeless young people. Consider this in programme design from the outset, creating partnerships with local mental health providers if this service does not exist within your organisation currently.
- **Establish referral pathways to the Job Coach within your charity:** Hold a kick off session with all staff who work with young people and ensure they refer young people to the Job Coach when appropriate.
- **Don't try and hit EET targets from day one:** include an 'inception period' of 2-3 months to allow for hire of Job Coach, set up of monitoring systems, building internal and external referral networks etc.
- **Don't bite off more than you can chew:** Ensure the geographical area the Job Coach will cover is realistic and hire an additional Job Coach if travel will take up a significant proportion of their time.





**The Job Coach took me to a college once and went around with me so I could have a look. It's quite helpful to have someone to go around with you.**

Chris, 17, Norfolk



## Job Coaching



- **Write a plain English 'elevator pitch' version of the Job Coach's role:** Job Coaches should carefully define how they describe their role to young people (and others) to ensure they are seen as distinct from other Key Workers, Housing Officers etc.
- **Work at young people's pace:** Recognise that it can take many months, or longer, before young people are ready to access EET and take things at a pace that works for them, rather than rush them to make decisions about what route they are going to take.
- **Take time to explore young people's interests:** Young people have often been told what they should do in relation to EET, but haven't always reflected on what they want to do. Showing young people different types of EET opportunities can help widen their aspirations and help find EET that they then stick with.
- **Be solutions focused and encourage young people to see past barriers:** Job Coaches should focus on solutions, encouraging young people to see their own potential and showing them opportunities they may not have considered, ideally with practical examples of others who have pursued these.
- **Set realistic goals with young people:** Even getting out of bed every day will be a struggle for some so start with short term, achievable goals and build up to longer term goals directly related to EET.
- **Anticipate that young people will face setbacks:** Keep supporting young people even when they encounter obstacles or fail - they have been let down by others so the difference you can make is to be a constant, non- judgemental presence offering them support when they need it. Use failure as a learning opportunity.
- **Don't do it for them:** Equip young people with the skills required to fill in application forms, write CVs and cover letters, as well as how to find out about opportunities, rather than doing the work yourself.
- **Make support tangible:** print out improved CVs, share local job adverts and go on site visits to demystify different types of work or training.
- **Be proactive about communication:** find out how young people want to be contacted (text, WhatsApp, email etc.) and then check in regularly, just to see how they're getting on and to let them know they can return for support as needed.



**The job coach  
helps you feel like  
you're worth  
something**

Susy, 22, Sheffield

## Meetings with young people



- **Be flexible about where and when to meet with a young person:** For first meetings, find out if they would be more comfortable if accompanied by someone else.
- **Hold different types of sessions to meet different needs:** You could hold drop in sessions at different locations or schedule one to ones in charity offices or supported accommodation. Having consistency will allow young people to know how to reach you.
- **Use first meetings with young people as a 'discovery period':** Existing Job Coaches recommend first meetings with young people being seen as a 'discovery period', where the focus is on building trust and mutual respect and understanding what their interests and goals might be.
- **Avoid early morning meetings!** Schedule meetings with young people in the afternoon, especially when they are new to EET.
- **Be consistent, even when young people aren't:** Be on time, follow through with promises and be proactive in making contact with young people. Anticipate that meetings will be missed and make sure to follow up and reschedule cancellations, even if these happen more than once.
- **Do regular informal follow ups:** Try and follow up once a young person is in EET, to ensure they know they are able to seek support if they face a problem in the future.

## Collaboration with others



- **Make links with other services and staff that can address young people's non-EET needs:** in particular those that address mental health, financial literacy and housing.
- **Do 'warm handovers' with young people accessing other services:** Physically take young people to make introductions with others, rather than pass on contact details and expect them to follow up alone.
- **Build trusting relationships with local course providers and employers:** enrolling and employing homeless young people comes with challenges so it is vital you have strong and transparent relationships with those you refer young people to.
- **Hold face to face meetings with employers:** Organise regular check-ins with employers if possible and have follow up meetings in person if things go wrong to ensure they will still offer work to homeless young people in future.
- **Be realistic about a young person's likely commitment to a role:** If a young person is less reliable and committed, place them with a more flexible employer who has experience with the challenges likely to be faced and a willingness to support them.

## Bursary Fund



- **Do ensure flexibility in the amount awarded:** The amount of funding given per person needs to be flexible from small amounts for bus fares to larger amounts for equipment and course fees.
- **Stay open minded:** Purchasing an alarm clock may not seem like an obvious use of a bursary but it may make the difference in attending or missing interviews. Think outside the box when trying to identify barriers the bursary could help overcome.
- **Recognise that speed is of the essence:** The distribution of funds needs to be made quickly as expenses arise spontaneously and young people's motivation for enrolling on courses can decrease with long waiting times.
- **Involve other staff in making decisions about bursaries:** Decisions about the distribution of funds should involve consultation with other staff working with the young person who has applied for a bursary. This will help ensure that they are going to benefit from the bursary given.
- **Make the bursary available to all young people in need:** To maximise impact, the bursary should be available for other staff in charities to make applications or referrals on behalf of young people they support.

## Digital Resources



- **Use funding to purchase shared digital resources:** Tablets or laptops can be a useful investment to help young people search and apply for jobs and update CVs. Keep these at a central location to maximise the number of young people who can benefit from them.
- **Ask tech savvy young people for help:** Draw on young people's knowledge to help you compile a list of websites related to EET that are appropriate for the age group being supported. This might include online learning resources, courses and tools to explore different careers.
- **Compile a list of job search sites:** Talk to other staff and ask for links to online job sites that are used by local employers. Share these with young people who are seeking work, helping them build profiles and use filters to find relevant job opportunities.

## Monitoring, evaluation and learning



- **Create a Theory of Change:** Before you apply for funding, develop a Theory of Change to understand the steps you anticipate as necessary for young people to enter and maintain EET. This will help tailor your programme to the local context and provide a basis for developing your monitoring plans. You should involve staff from across young people's services in developing your Theory of Change as this will help them 'buy in' to the programme before its kick off.
- **Include outcomes targets:** include targets related to 'soft' outcomes and essential skills development for young people. These could include measuring changes in self-confidence, self-efficacy, motivation, aspirations and behavioural outcomes.
- **Don't just 'count' young people once in targets:** Consider case-based monitoring where each young person is tracked across different interactions with the programme. If you are only counting young people when they take up a course, placement or job, you're missing the chance to understand their whole journey, which may not be linear.
- **Don't forget to record demographics:** Include gender and diversity data in the reporting to see whether the programme supports different demographic groups equally and ensure certain groups aren't missing out on support.
- **Make sure the way to measure progress is understood from the outset:** Hold a kick off meeting to communicate how progress against targets will be captured by all programme staff. This will ensure a shared understanding of record keeping and consistency in reporting.
- **Create plans to regularly share learning:** find ways for Job Coaches to share learning and progress with other staff as well as other charities who employ similar roles. Invite local employers to meet with homeless young people to understand their perspective and build potential links to future jobs.

I love the role – I am able to work with people from different departments and can help people to achieve, make people happy. What I do is open doors for people.

Graham, Job Coach, Aberdeen

A great part about my job is that I can make it my own, I have a lot of flexibility. I set up a Facebook page where I share all job opportunities I find or get sent to and then the people I work with can see it there.

Sharon, Job Coach, Norfolk





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