

Care to Mentor is a Lottery funded programme initiated and run by Black Country Housing Group which supports young people leaving care with independent living skills. It also recruits and trains people with lived experience to become mentors to the young people. The aim of the project is to improve the outcomes for young people leaving care as these are very concerning for us.

Case Study – David – In his own words with name changed to protect identity

My past

I was born in Dudley and moved to many different locations due to various reasons. I moved back to Dudley after losing my accommodation and having nowhere else to go with nothing at all just the clothes on my back.

A BCHG outreach worker told me about the Care 2 Mentor project and explained her role. I really wanted to work but needed to sort out accommodation with an affordable rent. My BCHG worker listened to my concerns and she helped me apply for a programme called Live and Work. It is open to 16–24-year-olds who have an apprenticeship with the NHS and the £43 a week rent is very affordable. I applied for the programme with my BCHG workers support and was given an interview.

On the day of the interview, I decided that I was not going to attend as I suffer from anxiety and was stressed. My BCHG worker had already arrived at my interview location, so she phoned me to see where I was and reassured me when I said I was too stressed to attend. She then arranged and paid for a taxi to come and pick me up and she met me at the hospital. I would not have attended otherwise. When I arrived at the hospital, I was very nervous, so my key worker reassured me again. The interview went well, I took control of my nerves and gave an excellent interview (so they tell me) and they offered me the job!

My present

I started the job and moved into my new accommodation. BCHG gave me a lot of support at move-in with budgeting, food and registering for doctors, dentists etc. I have now been promoted at work and am a volunteer mentor with the Care to Mentor project myself!

My future

I am applying to BCHG and other providers for permanent accommodation after my years tenancy with the Live and Work scheme ends.

I feel supported, listened to and valued. I feel that you have gone beyond your role and any young person would be very lucky to have you supporting them. Thank you for your kindness and believing in me. I now have a new and exciting future unfolding and I am overwhelmed with gratitude and thanks for not just the opportunities but above all the confidence and emotional support.