



Coping financially

Sheffield
‘Reality Cheque’:
**Promoting
awareness of care
leavers’ financial
circumstances**
September, 2020

Care leavers in Sheffield created a project (‘Reality Cheque’) which challenged their corporate parents to live on a low income – they wanted people to experience what life was like and to start conversations about how to improve money management skills.

Why?

Having a low income or struggling financially is associated with low well-being. Following on from the Sheffield Brightspots findings for care leavers (where care leavers were 3 times more likely to be struggling than general population) young people decided they wanted to develop a way for others to connect on a personal level with this issue.

What difference is it making?

Over 90 people from across the council (including the DCS & Executive of the People 's Portfolio) took part in the campaign and subsequent activities like the recipe book. The project received local press attention. People feel it has raised the profile of care leavers' concerns in relation to finance and led to some brilliant conversations and ideas about what more can be done. Other local authorities have been in contact to ask if they can run the challenge in their area.

What?

Sheffield Care Leavers' Union (SCLU) designed a challenge ('**Reality Cheque**') for 'corporate parents' so they can experience what life is like living on a low income. They created a challenge pack and set of rules. People had to live on £24 for 5 days (average weekly budget that some who have recently left care have to spend on food, drink, fun and non-essential travel).

Care leavers wanted to raise awareness of the financial struggle some young people face and challenge negative stereotypes (you need skills to manage on a low income!).

Those taking part were given daily diary sheets to fill in to record all their expenditure, write down how they were feeling and record ideas for different ways to support care leavers (such as how local businesses could help more).

People were encouraged to send in budget recipes and these have been collated into a new cook book given to care leavers as they move into their first home after leaving care.



Read more: <https://bit.ly/2YRJ3NG>