



**Feeling safe in my neighbourhood;  
financial & practical resources;  
relationships**



**Linking care leavers to  
community hubs to help  
them feel settled in their  
neighbourhoods and  
financially and  
practically supported  
Stockport, Sep 2021**

‘Community hubs’ is a pilot run in conjunction with Stockport Homes which aims to help care leavers increase their network of support. feel more settled in their neighbourhood & offset financial hardship. It links care leavers to ‘Local pantry’, a community food schemes where they get free food and help from volunteers as well as opportunities to volunteer themselves.

## Why?

When the Bright Spots survey was conducted 51% of Stockport's care leavers felt settled in the neighbourhood where they lived. Although similar to care leavers nationally, Stockport wanted to improve this. Like elsewhere, some care leavers also reported struggling financially. The leaving care team was concerned about the impact that the Government's planned cut in Universal Credit would have on care leavers.

## What?

- The Local Pantry is a community food scheme staffed by volunteers and run by Stockport Homes, Stockport's social housing provider.  
<https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk/about-us/>
- The volunteers are able to offer advice on recipes and ideas on cooking. They also use their skills and contacts to link young people with other community resources, e.g. DIY support in the area.
- There are opportunities for the young people to become volunteers themselves, with the aim of really establishing young people within their local communities.
- Creating community hub pilot linked to the Local pantry was built into Stockport's New Belongings action plan to improve the leaving care service and hopefully make young people feel more settled in their neighbourhoods
- 75 care leavers living independently in Stockport were identified that could benefit from being linked into scheme. (Stockport has 37% care leavers living independently.)
- The young people identified were offered the opportunity to be introduced to their Local Pantry by their Personal Advisor.
- The leaving care service paid the £10 joining fee and the £3.50 weekly charge for each young person. An initial payment was made to cover the estimated costs for 6 months.
- Regular review meetings are held between the Leaving Care Team and Stockport Homes to track the take up of the scheme and address any barriers or issues.
- Each week the young people linked to the scheme can attend and select 10 food items (worth approx. £20) as well as a choice of free fruit and vegetables.

## What difference will it make?

It is hoped that the pilot will:

- increase the links young people have to their neighbourhood, helping them feel more settled and secure.
- Help offset the loss of the £20 Universal Credit top up payment offered due to Covid 19, which is being phased out.

### Stockport's New Belongings Action Plan

#### We will ...

Support you to feel safe, supported and secure in your home, by:

- Listening to you about your plans for your future
- Improving safe and supported housing options for you so you can have more choice about where you want to live.
- Develop community hubs so you can feel safe and supported within your home and in your neighbourhood

*"It's been really useful, excellent choice and have tried things that I wouldn't normally have or have the money to purchase ...and tried new recipes." (Care leaver)*