

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME



Information Guide

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

This guide is designed to introduce you to The Staffordshire Independence Programme. Not only that, but it also acts as a resource that can be revisited when needed throughout supporting a young person to complete the programme.

This information guide will cover the following areas:

- *Why* have we created The Staffordshire Independence Programme?
- *What* is the Staffordshire Independence Programme?
- *When* should the Staffordshire Independence Programme be delivered??
- *Who* has a role to play in delivering the Staffordshire Independence Programme?
- *How* will progress with The Staffordshire Independence Programme be recorded?
- *What* will young people gain from completing The Staffordshire Independence Programme?

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

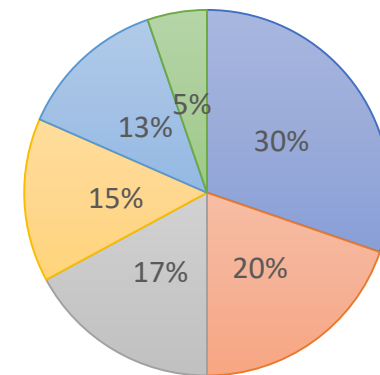
Why have we created The Staffordshire Independence Programme?

When The Voice Project asked Care Leavers aged 17+ what two issues they were experiencing in 2017, they told us that *they did not feel prepared to live independently, budget and manage their finances.*

Not only this, we know that Care Leavers are heavily represented in national homelessness data. According to Home for Good (2020) 25% of homeless people have Care Experience, and it is reported that 1/3 of Care Leavers experience homelessness within their first two years of independent living.

After a pilot of an existing resource promoting independence skills, it was decided that The Voice Project would create an in-house programme. This process involved research and coproduction workshops with Young People, Foster Carers, Social Workers, Personal Advisors, Private Accommodation Providers and more.

The Big Vote 17+ 2017 Results



- Managing Finances and Budgeting
- Preparation for Adulthood
- Access to Support
- Managing Relationships and Loneliness
- Knowing about ETE Entitlements and Options
- Stigma and Labelling


STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

What is The Staffordshire Independence Programme?

The Staffordshire Independence Programme is a resource for all young people in care to complete ahead of moving into independence.

It is made up of twelve modules ranging from learning basic cooking skills to the ins and outs of Universal Credit. The modules are designed to not be too wordy, but instead include a range of interactive activities. These activities work best with open discussion between the young person and the supporting professional.

Modules have been RAG rated according to the risk this poses to losing a tenancy.

- **MODULE 1:**
SHOPPING AND COOKING
 - **MODULE 6:**
RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS
 - **MODULE 8:**
MANAGING YOUR TENANCY
- 

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

Twelve modules in total varying in intensity

Modules 1-6 focus on life skills as well as skills needed for living independently

Modules 7-12 focus in on information and skills young people will need to successfully manage a tenancy

For all the activities, including quizzes at the start of each module, there is an *answer booklet* available for you when supporting a young person.



- Module One: Shopping and Cooking
- Module Two: Setting up your own Home
- Module Three: Doing-it-Yourself
- Module Four: Home Safety
- Module Five: Staying Healthy
- Module Six: Relationships and Support Networks
- Module Seven: Understanding the move to Independence
- Module Eight: Managing your Tenancy
- Module Nine: Getting to know your Bills
- Module Ten: Your Local Community
- Module Eleven: Benefits, Budgeting and Buying in to your Future
- Module Twelve: Avoiding Debt



STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

When should The Staffordshire Independence Programme be delivered?

Young people themselves, including our Children in Care Council, have told us that preparation for independence should happen from the age of 16.

Every young person's journey to complete the Staffordshire Independence Programme will look differently, and we encourage this.

As long as a young person completes the programme before moving into independence, we know that as Corporate Parents, we have *best supported them to reach their full potential in adulthood.*



This is a *guide* and we know that this will not work for all. Some young people will not be ready to think about independent living when they are 16, and there will be some young people who already have a lot of the skills included in the programme.



The same applies to the activities included within each of the modules. The tasks have been designed to encourage open discussion and learning with the young person. Some activities will not suit all young people.

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

When should The Staffordshire Independence Programme be delivered?

Young Person starts Staffordshire Independence Programme

Young Person completes Staffordshire Independence Programme

Young people can complete modules as quickly or slowly as they want to, according to their needs.*

Young Person turns 16

**Young people will be supported to complete modules and activities by those working with them, and those who have the best relationship with the young person. Those working with the young person will be best placed to support the young person to get the most out of the programme at their own pace.*

Young Person turns 18/
moves into independence

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

Who has a role to play The Staffordshire Independence Programme?

It is our responsibility as Corporate Parents to provide our young people with the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully live independently and reach their potential as adults in society.

The Staffordshire Independence Programme has been designed to not be delivered by one professional, but instead relies on the *team around the young person* and those who have the best relationship with them.

It has also been designed to play to the strengths of each of the professionals playing a role, the purpose of the programme is not to train on areas included within the modules, but to *utilise the existing knowledge* of those working with young people.

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

As a *Foster Carer* you would be introducing the young person in your care to the Staffordshire Independence Programme, and supporting them with earlier modules, including life skills such as cooking, cleaning, staying healthy. These are areas you are likely supporting young people with already within your role, but we want to standardise this for all young people.

As a *Residential Support Worker*, similar to the role of a Foster Carer, you would be introducing the young person to the Staffordshire Independence Programme and supporting them to complete earlier modules.

As a *Social Worker*, your role would be to support the young person and Foster Carer/Residential Support Worker through the earlier modules of the programme. If you have a good relationship with the young person, you may be more involved in supporting the completion of some of the modules. You will also be responsible for tracking progress and logging this on to Care Director.

As a *Personal Advisor*, your role will be to support the young person to complete the later modules in the programme, tailored more towards tenancy-specific information; this will be done primarily by yourself, or depending on the plan for the young person, their Foster Carer, or Private Accommodation Provider. Alongside the Social Worker, you will also be responsible for tracking progress and logging this on to Care Director.

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

As a *Family Support Worker*, your role will be to support the young person, and the professionals working through the programme to complete modules. Where you have the best relationship with a young person, you may be the one to complete this work with the young person.

As an *Independent Reviewing Officer*, your role will be to oversee the progress being made by the young person through the programme. An example of best practice would be to include an agenda item about this at the young person's review.

As a *Fostering Social Worker*, your role will be to check in on the progress being made Foster Carers supporting young people to complete the programme, seeking to see whether any additional support is needed by the Foster Carer.

As a *Private Accommodation Provider*, your role will not be dissimilar from what you do already. When a Staffordshire Care Leaver is living in one of your properties it is expected that you will support the young person to complete any remaining modules in the Staffordshire Independence Programme before moving on into independence at 18.

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

How will progress with the Staffordshire Independence Programme be recorded?

To make sure that young people's work through the twelve modules is not lost, especially if they move within this two year period, we must record progress.

Open and effective communication is essential to ensure everyone in the team around the young person is aware of the progress a young person is making.



As well as this we would encourage some evidence of completed modules to be saved onto Care Director, this could be included within Pathway Plans and Young People's reviews, or could even be saved on to file as a 'Case note'.

It will be the responsibility of the Social Worker, or Personal Advisor, to ensure this progress is being recorded to reflect the work of the young person and their readiness to move into independence.



STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

What will young people gain from completing the Staffordshire Independence Programme?

Aside from learning lots of essential knowledge and honing the skills needed for successfully living independently, we hope that young people will come out of completing The Staffordshire Independence Programme tenancy-ready.

One of the benefits of completing The Staffordshire Independence Programme is that prospective housing associations and borough councils will see this as evidence that young people are as ready as they can be to hold and manage a tenancy of their own.



Learning the skills essential for managing a tenancy before having to do so, will hopefully reduce some avoidable instances of young people losing their tenancies and having to declare themselves as homeless, which has ongoing effects on any future tenancies they will hold.

Once all twelve modules have been completed young people will be prompted to follow a link to complete the 'End Quiz'. This will ask questions about the different areas covered in The Staffordshire Independence Programme, and once completed, the young person will receive a certificate of achievement for the work they have done. This certificate proves the work dedication and effort the young person has put into the modules, and can be shown to housing providers/borough councils to evidence this.

STAFFORDSHIRE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMME

Good Luck!

We hope you are excited as us to be a part of The Staffordshire Independence Programme and the positive impact this will have on the life chances of our young people as they move into independence.

Remember to utilise the Answer Booklet available alongside the team around the young person. If in doubt, someone else working with the young person will know the answer or be able to advise you.

We wish you the best of luck supporting your young people to complete the Staffordshire Independence Programme.