



Supporting care experienced
young people to access the
world of work

PROGRAMME INFORMATION PACK



include
YOUTH



The number of children and young people in care in Northern Ireland is at its **highest in over 30 years**, with inequality of entry into care widening.

Children from the most deprived areas are nine times more likely to enter care here.

Children who've been in care experience **much higher levels of unemployment** and are **more likely to receive benefits** in the eight years after leaving school.





Business in the Community, the Responsible Business Network, has supported businesses and communities for 35+ years in Northern Ireland. With more than 270 members, it is the largest business-led coalition dedicated to responsible business.

PEOPLE | PLANET | PLACE

BITC drives best practice by convening, sharing learning and recognising great performance across its influential network.



Include Youth has more than 45 years' experience in working with care experienced young people and those from disadvantaged communities.

It works with approximately 700-800 young people per year who are at risk of not receiving the care and support they need when it matters most.

WHY GET INVOLVED?

Practical interventions **support the transition into the world of work** for care-experienced children to improve their long-term outcomes.

Young people express interest in, and benefit from, the opportunity to **make connections with role models**.

This project provides a tangible way for your business to demonstrate **social value** in action.



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Four key indicator changes



**Improvement in
communication
skills**



**Learning skills
for building a CV
and readiness
for interview**



**Understanding
behaviours for
work**



**Improvement in
confidence and
aspirations**



1

Four young
people
employability
sessions
(Over two
dates)

2

Three speed
networking
sessions-
Belfast
North-West
Fermanagh

3

Online Hub

4

Work
experience
opportunities

5

Care-
experienced
training for
business



Shared pathways to employment with the young people. GOAL: Offer permanent roles

1

Four young people employability sessions

Focused on:

- CV Skills
- Interview Skills
- Behaviour at Work
- Managing a Budget

Lesson plans will be created by Business in the Community, in partnership with Include Youth, to ensure they are audience appropriate. These will be delivered in-person, however, provision will be made for some online delivery.

Representatives from business will attend one of the four sessions and share their experience of the world of work, what their business does, and job opportunities available.

THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Empower several of your colleagues to attend one or more sessions in Belfast, Derry and Fermanagh.

2 places available per session (total: 12 sessions)

BELFAST/LISBURN

1:30 - 3:30 pm

1 October 2026

CV Skills & Interview Preparation

15 October 2026

Behaviour at Work & Payslips and Managing a Budget

DERRY/BALLYMENA

1:30 – 3:30 pm

7 October 2026

CV Skills & Interview Preparation

21 October 2026

Behaviour at Work & Payslips and Managing a Budget

FERMANAGH

1:30 – 3:30 pm

29 September 2026

CV Skills & Interview Preparation

13 October 2026

Behaviour at Work & Payslips and Managing a Budget

2

Three speed networking sessions

Belfast | North West | Fermanagh

These will involve young people meeting 20+ business people at each session to gain further insights into the world of work and the barriers they face when entering the labour market.

THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Empower one or two of your colleagues to attend one or more sessions in Belfast, Derry and Fermanagh. Fast paced, fun and informative.

1:30 – 3:30 pm

19 November 2026 | BELFAST

11 November 2026 | DERRY

24 November 2026 | FERMANAGH

3

Online Hub

Creation of an online hub for businesses to share helpful advice and tips for young people.

Timebound: One year

THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Brand profiling on this platform. Individual profiling – share your career journey and top tips for getting and keeping a job. Share entry level routes into your business.

4

Work experience opportunities

Where possible a workplace visit would also be aligned to help young people see behind the scenes of local businesses. We would aim to provide this for every young person taking part.

Share your pathways to employment.

THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Offer one or two work experience opportunities. These could be half a day for a group up to three days for an individual. BITC will support.

5

Care-experienced training for business

A two-hour training webinar for business people involved in the project to ensure awareness of potential issues or barriers and how to manage these with care. This would include advice on how to develop trauma-informed policies.

THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Training can be made available to as many people in your organisation as you would like on the following dates.

14 September | 23 September 2026

Timeline



September - October
Delivery of facilitated sessions

29 September - Fermanagh
1 October - Belfast
7 October - Derry
13 October - Fermanagh
15 October - Belfast
21 October - Derry

May
Introducing Career
Connect
21 May

January - March
Work experience
opportunities

March
Project review and
forward
recommendations

April
Launch project

July - September
Training webinar for
businesses

14 September
23 September

November
(National Care Leavers Month)
Speed networking
events x 3

11 November - Derry
19 November - Belfast
24 November - Fermanagh

**October
onwards**
Interview(s) and
offer role(s)
where
appropriate



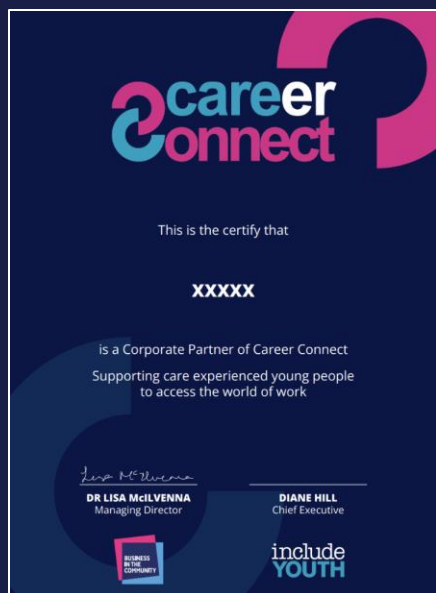
Become a Programme Partner

- This opportunity comes at no financial cost to your business
- Gain access to a new and diverse talent pool for recruitment
- Be associated with this ground-breaking project
- Have first access to volunteering opportunities
- Have first access to the speed networking sessions
- Enable more young people to understand your pathways to employment
- Receive profile throughout the life of the project – social media campaigns, websites, online hub, media opportunities
- Become a regular contributor on the online hub
- Receive support for running a great work experience session
- Receive 'Care Awareness' training
- Signposting to further support for business mentors
- We will provide a certificate for you to display and a digital badge for your volunteers





Programme Partners will
receive a certificate endorsing
their commitment



Individual volunteers will receive a
digital badge for use on social
media and internal profiling



Digital Media Campaign

Join in during our two, one-week long digital campaigns and share key messaging and visuals for the campaign. Book these into your calendar now and think about ways you can share below:

WEEK ONE:

28 September – 2 October 2026



Internal
screens



Newsletters



HR Updates



Social Media



Listen to
the radio



Share on
websites



Listen and
share the
podcast



40 - 50

young people
supported

20 - 30

businesses involved

Every

young person to
have an experience
of work

60%

target into
employment rate
(24 - 30)



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**BECOME A
PROGRAMME
PARTNER**

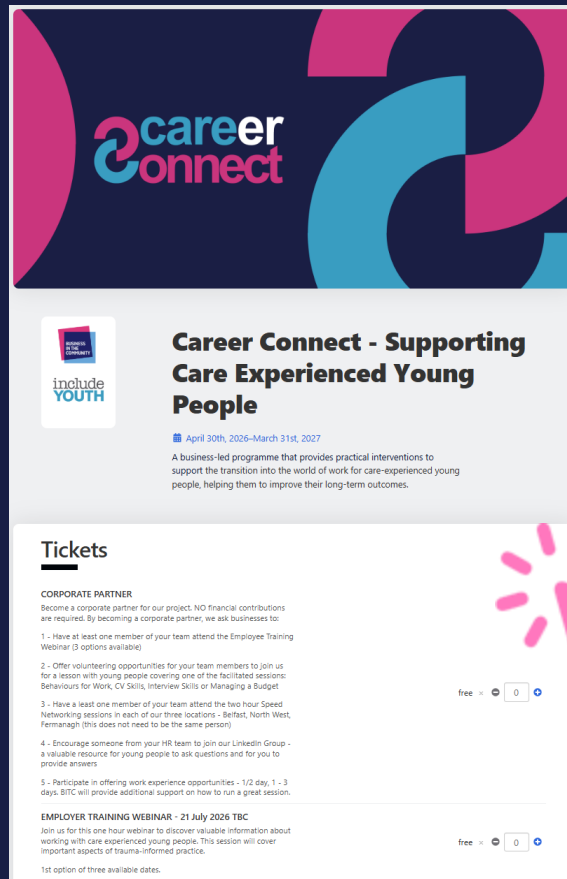
**SUPPORT A
LEARNING SESSION
(2 hours)**

**SUPPORT A SPEED
NETWORKING
EVENT (2 hours)**

There is no cost for employers to participate in Career Connect.

The opportunities align with employer supported volunteering and accessing new talent into your organisation.

This project also supports social value principles and actions.



**For more information, please
contact mhairi.sim@bitcni.org.uk
or call 028 9046 0606 and ask for
our Education Team**



**include
YOUTH**

*Beyond **Career Connect**, additional support is available for employers through a mentoring project being delivered by Extern – see page 17.*

Further support for employers, at no cost

If you would like to hire care experienced young people following the programme, **Extern offers a fantastic support package for your business** to build stable, safe, inclusive workplaces. The cost of this support has been covered for the duration of the project, so will be **free to your business until August 2027**.

Extern's training equips managers and team members to support care experienced work colleagues. **The aim is for 60% of care experienced new starters to be in work 12 months after starting.**

What the Support Looks Like

- Support to define in-house mentor expectations, role descriptors, and clear processes for selecting mentors
- Guidance on Safeguarding, matching & compliance requirements
- Training for mentors including safeguarding, professional boundaries, trauma-informed approaches, and adverse childhood experiences (ACES's).
- Follow-up & sustained support including a 20-week support package with regular check-in phone calls
- Mentor handbooks and best practice guidance

Next steps

To sign up for your free support to build your stable, safe, inclusive workplace, contact lauren.bailie@extern.org

Extern NI is a registered charity employing over 200 staff and supporting more than 10,000 of the most vulnerable individuals each year. Among the groups its works with are children in care and care leavers, a field in which Extern has over 20 years of dedicated experience.

Based on Extern's extensive work in mentoring care-experienced young people, the most significant impact arises from the development of a trusting, consistent relationship with an adult who provides non-judgmental guidance and support. Through this relational approach, young people build confidence, strengthen self-esteem, and develop resilience. This empowers them to recognise their strengths, overcome challenges, and build the skills necessary for long-term stability and successful adulthood.

This project will help bridge the gap between care experienced young people and employment opportunities.

