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New business to supporting young people leaving care

A new business venture has been launched to help support young people who have been cared for, by health and social care services across the Southern area, to seek employment when they leave care.



There are around 1500 young people known as 'care leavers' aged between 16 and 21+ in Northern Ireland. Of these, 231 live in the Southern area.

Young people in care are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in society and often do not have the levels of stability and support that other young people have access to when they leave care.

This new Social Enterprise Business will aim to enhance the life and wellbeing of young people who have come through the care system and provide them with new opportunities to become self-sufficient through self-employment opportunities. The scheme will also directly and indirectly increase employment opportunities for these young people.

The project, developed by the Health and Social Care Board, is funded by the Early Intervention Transformation Programme and has been established with the help of care experienced young people across the Southern area.

Launching of the new venture, Fionnuala McAndrew, Director of Social Care and Children with the Health and social Care Board said: “I am delighted to endorse this business concept. It is a first for us in Northern Ireland to develop a social enterprise with young care leavers. The commitment and enthusiasm of the young people involved has been commendable and we are all excited to see what happens in the next stage of the journey.”



Speaking at the launch; Sandy Jamison, one of the young people involved in setting up the new business, commented: “At the beginning I didn’t have a clue and I can’t believe I am standing here today and seeing that our idea may become a reality. This has been somewhat of a journey for me commencing this project and to now representing the group in launching what could be a new business venture for Looked after Children. This is the start of my journey and I hope it entails a bright future where I am employed and remaining a part of a team now that I know I can do it and have found something which I enjoy.”

The business plan launched this week is the basis of the organisation and how it will grow over the next three year period. The key focus now is to drive this plan into reality by establishing a Board of Directors that will act as the driving force behind it and to identify future funding opportunities to aid the business to become self-sustaining.



Businesses across Northern Ireland who are interested in this new venture are being invited to attend a meeting.

For more information or to express and interest in supporting this venture please contact Helen Dunn by telephone at 028 95 362619 or email Helen.dunn@hscni.net