



Thinking about becoming a Young Person's Advisor?

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What does a Young Person's Advisor (YPA) do?

A YPA supports young people from the age of 17/18 who are leaving care to prepare to live independently, and offers advice, guidance and support after young people leave care up to the age of 25.

It is a really rewarding job where you will build positive relationships and play a key role in helping young people to:

- ✓ Develop life skills to live independently and manage their home
- ✓ Finding somewhere to live
- ✓ Manage their money
- ✓ Accessing education, training and employment opportunities
- ✓ Develop a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ Sustain relationships with their family and friends
- ✓ Participate in hobbies, leisure and social activities
- ✓ Learn how to use other services which can support them, for example a GP, mental health services, drug and alcohol services etc.

How often you see or speak to each young person and the amount of support you provide to each young person will depend on their needs and what they want from you. Some young people, for example, may need extra support because they:

- ✓ Have special educational needs or a disability
- ✓ Came to the United Kingdom as an asylum-seeking child
- ✓ Are in or leaving custody or have had contact with the criminal justice system
- ✓ Are a young parent
- ✓ Are going through a difficult time in their personal life

You will work proactively and creatively with professionals from within Durham County Council and with partner agencies from the statutory, voluntary and independent sector to ensure each young person has access to resources and services, acting as an advocate for young people where required.

Who can be a YPA?

Our YPAs have different backgrounds and qualifications, which means that we can match each young person to the YPA who can best meet their support needs.

To be able to apply to become a YPA you should have a level 3 qualification in a relevant children's services field, and significant experience of direct work with young people in a social care, health, education, housing or youth and community setting. You should be able to communicate well with young people, forming positive and effective working relationships, and to network, negotiate and advocate on behalf of young people to achieve positive outcomes.

What do our YPAs say about working in Durham?

These are some of comments our YPAs made when we asked them why they loved the job.

The best part of the job is the relationships you build with young people.

There is lots of variety. Every day is different

Its great to see how the young people move on from where they started. You see them make progress in their lives. Sometimes the progress is small and sometimes its big.

None of the young people are the same. You need to adapt to the needs of each young person

It's a great team to work in. We all help each other out.

We are not expected to know everything about everything. We have specialists we can go to for advice when we need it.

I didn't realise how flexible flexitime is. It helps me balance my work and personal life, especially the school run.

I'm able to manage my own time.

What do young people say about their YPAs?

These are some of the comments young people shared with us about their YPAs.

K was a big help with looking for a job she referred me to Durham works which has helped me a lot to find a suitable job, overall K has helped a lot she's very friendly and she always does her best.

I like you, you're down with the kids. You know kids.

Thank you so much for everything you have helped me with. I would probably be dead if it wasn't for you. I went and claimed my benefits and changed address at the bank by myself today, just need to get a job now. You have taught me so much for my future.

Thank you for all your kind words, your advice and guidance and your friendship for these past years, it really has changed my life.

Words can't describe how grateful I am or how much I'll miss you in the future.

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Why work with young people in County Durham?

County Durham is a great place to work with young people. You will benefit from:

- Competitive salary (starting salary dependent on experience and current salary)
- Contributory career average salary pension scheme
- Car salary sacrifice scheme
- Interest-free travel loans
- Discounted gym membership

A senior leadership team that listens

- Opportunities for meaningful communication including regular briefings, and practice weeks where senior managers spend time with you in your workplace
- A culture of high expectations, high challenge and high support

A consistent practice framework

- Signs of Safety is our Practice Framework supporting consistent practice across Children's Social Care and all of our Partners.

Support for your work with children and families

- A team manager who has oversight of your work with young people
- A social work consultant who will provide you with regular one-to-one meetings, help you reflect on your work with young people and support you with the most important decisions
- Supported lodgings workers and an accommodation and support co-ordinator within the team who can help you to identify appropriate places for young people to live
- Welfare Rights workers who can provide young people with specialist advice about benefits
- Named workers in DurhamWorks who provide young people with advice and practical support to get into education, employment or training
- Housing Solutions workers who can provide young people with advice and guidance about housing
- Social Work Assistants who can support you with specific tasks
- A small team who can provide support with administration and finance
- A locality based voluntary and community sector worker who can help you find the support you need for young people

An electronic case recording system which supports your work

- Liquid Logic is our case recording system

Career progression

- As the 7th largest local authority in England, and the largest in the North East we offer excellent opportunities for career progression

Professional development

- A clear professional development offer
- Funded specialist training
- A commitment to offer you 5 days a year for continuous professional development (CPD)
- You can apply for support to undertake the level 4 apprenticeship Children, Young People and Families Practitioner or the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship

Celebrating your work

- We make sure you get positive feedback about the things you do well

Holiday

- 26 days holiday per year, increasing to 31 after five years continuous Local Government service.
- Option to purchase up to 10 additional days annual leave per year through our salary sacrifice scheme.

Flexible working

- Laptop/tablet and mobile phone to help you work wherever you can access wifi
- Tools to support you to work effectively at a distance (including Microsoft Teams for meetings)
- Freedom to arrange your working day and up to 13 days flexi leave per year
- Opportunities for part time/job share working and for flexible retirement

Family life

- Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave
- Dependent leave for carers

Support when you need it

- Physiotherapy
- Confidential telephone counselling
- Occupational Health service
- Opportunity to join a trade union

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Ready to Apply?

If you are ready to take your first step towards becoming a Young Person's Advisor (Leaving Care), these tips will help you to make the best application you can.

Completing your application form

- ✓ Make sure you understand the role and what we are looking for. Read the job description and person specification and **attend one of the open sessions for applicants** to find out more.
- ✓ Reflect on your own experience, skills and qualities. Your chances of getting to interview are far greater if you apply for positions that are relevant to your existing skill set and experience.
- ✓ **Tailor your application to the job.** We are interested in your experience and skills that are relevant to the role, so teasing out the most relevant aspects of your own skills, knowledge and experience in your application will demonstrate that you are a good candidate.
- ✓ **Where possible** pick out each of the elements of the person specification provide examples of how you meet these, highlighting relevant experience, skills, knowledge and personal qualities.

Preparing for your interview



- ✓ Make sure you understand what we offer our Care Leavers. We recommend you read our [Local Offer for Care Leavers](#) and our [Care Leavers Strategy](#) which can be found on [Durham County Council's website](#).
- ✓ Refer again to the job description and person specification for the role – ensure you are confident about how you meet these requirements.
- ✓ Your interview is likely to take place through Microsoft Teams. When you receive your invitation to your interview read the information carefully so you are in the right virtual place at the right time. Think about the best place to sit so that you are comfortable and have a drink ready.
- ✓ Remember that the people interviewing you want to get the best out of you on the day. It is ok to pause and think about a question, or ask for a question to be repeated.
- ✓ Don't worry if your interviewers are writing rather than giving you eye contact. We need to make sure we record your answers carefully.
- ✓ Think about what you might want to ask your interviewers at the end of the interview.

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