

Case Study: GAMH Young Carer

'X' is a 17 years old female originally from South Africa but has been in Scotland since the age of 10 when her parents sought asylum due to the increasing violence in her country of origin. Her mother has depression as a result of the aforementioned violence in South Africa. The family were in a highly volatile situation and there was a constant fear and threat of violence. Her father worked in the airport and her mother was a teacher in South Africa but due to her mental health issues her mother was unable to work.

At the age of 11 'X' became a vital support to her mother, who had just had a child and was suffering with depression. She is the oldest of 4 children and has a lot of responsibility in the upbringing of her younger siblings including her younger brother who is on the Autistic Spectrum.

Unfortunately, 'X' suffered a sustained barrage of racist comments in her original Secondary school. This led to her facing up to the racism in a confrontational manner and she was suspended from school for a short time in S5. Her parents took the decision to move her to another school. In spite of this set back in education 'X' gained Higher Finance at A, English National 5 at A and PE National 5 at A. Now in S6 she is focussing on her Highers in Physics, Maths, Computing, English and Graphics.

We supported 'X' on the Employability Programme within Young Carers Project where we delivered workshops on identifying Skills & Qualities, CV building and career progression. We also worked with 'X' on the Work Star, a tool designed to highlight aspirations, skills, job search and any barriers to reaching a goal. 'X' is an extremely focused individual with a strong motivation to work in Aerographic and Mechanical Engineering. She identified that main barriers to her reaching her goal would be gaining the required qualifications for the courses she identified given that she'd had to move school. We discussed alternatives and she remained focused on education and would continue to work hard to reach her goal. She did learn about alternative options i.e. undergraduate apprenticeships and moving from college to Higher Education as a route, through our discussions.

Again taking any of the opportunities to assist her in this goal has been a strong influencer for 'X'. The school has helped her with UCAS applications and she is on the routes for all programmes, she has a mentor who she meets with on a monthly basis. However 'X' cites Young Carers as being invaluable to help her progress, providing her with support and guidance to cope with the responsibilities of caring, providing letters of support for the family's application for leave to remain and providing a space for her to spend time with friends.

To sum up in 'X's words *"I wouldn't be who I am now without Young Carers"*