

A student at Willow Bank Children's Hospital School is interviewed by a volunteer from Leicester City Council

Work with vulnerable students in 2018-19

A key focus of our education projects in 2018-19 has been on increasing our engagement with special schools and improving support for vulnerable and disadvantaged students. We have longstanding relationships with Keyham Lodge and Millgate School, both of which work with young people who have been excluded from mainstream education for a range of reasons.

This year, we developed our targeted work to deliver sessions in Willow Bank Children's Hospital School, which supports students with serious mental health problems, and Ellesmere College, a special school which caters for students with a wide range of educational difficulties and complex needs. We also offered mainstream partner schools additional, tailored support for care experienced students following research we carried out with care leavers, which showed that they require more focussed and consistent support as they enter their GCSE years.

The following page includes feedback from teachers, students and business volunteers at these events, demonstrating the difference they made to these vulnerable students. We look forward to building on this work in the 2019-20 academic year.

Charlotte Robey-Turner
Head of Children and Young People
Leicestershire Cares



Volunteers from TT Electronics deliver a careers talk to students at Ellesmere College

Leicestershire **Cares**
Together we **Can**

For more information on our work with special schools, or to get involved, email CharlotteRT@leicestershirecares.co.uk.



A student at Millgate School shows off his Interview Technique Star Certificate

Feedback and data

Below is the feedback from teachers, students and business volunteers involved in our work with vulnerable students in 2018-19.

Feedback from teachers

A main aim of our work with special schools this year was to encourage teachers to deliver more employability-focussed activities with their students. Senior leaders felt that teachers were unaware of their students' ability in this area and assumed that they would be unwilling to engage.

However, our experienced volunteers were very successful at putting students at ease and, without fail, ensured that they performed above and beyond teachers' expectations at each event. As a result, teachers reported that they were far more likely to run similar events in their schools in the future.

"I was impressed with how well the students coped with the event, despite how anxious they often feel with change... The business volunteers helped the students to feel at ease in their interviews and helped them to obtain employability skills that are so important to their futures." **Teacher, Willow Bank School**

Feedback from volunteers

While we always receive very positive feedback from our education volunteers, those who engaged in our events with special schools found the experience to be particularly rewarding.

Volunteers appreciated the opportunity to engage with students who needed additional support and felt that they were truly able to make a difference to their confidence, skills and plans for the future.

Volunteers also reported an improved understanding of students with additional needs as a result of participating in the events. Consequently, they were keen to engage in future targeted work with these groups and encourage their colleagues to do the same.

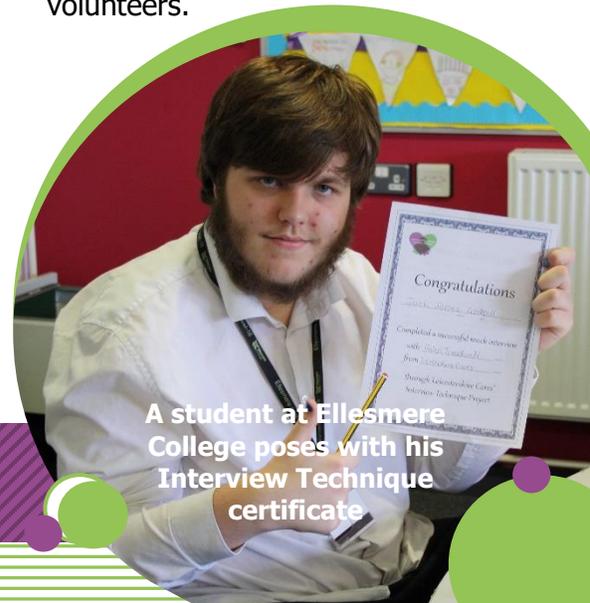
"I found the session rewarding and thought that all students were a credit to staff at Ellesmere College."

Business volunteer, East Midlands Chamber

Feedback from students

Students' feedback suggests that the events improved their interview skills, awareness of potential career routes and, possibly most importantly, their confidence to engage with adults outside of the school environment.

At each event, students' engagement in the activities was much higher than expected. This was particularly the case at Willow Bank School, where students were generally very keen to take part in mock interviews, despite high levels of anxiety. Similarly, students at Millgate and Keyham wanted to do more employability activities, as their mock interviews had increased their confidence to engage with business volunteers.



A student at Ellesmere College poses with his Interview Technique certificate