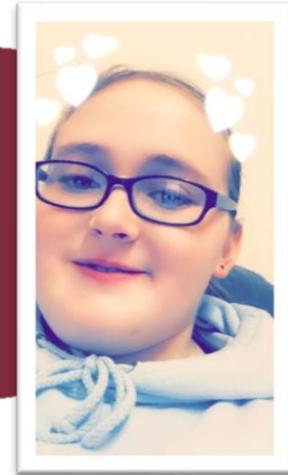


JEANETTE'S STORY

JOURNEY OF A CARE EXPERIENCED LEARNER

A CASE STUDY



Jeanette is Care Experienced and currently studying an HNC in Social Services at college, whilst living independently. As a Care Experienced learner, Jeanette has faced barriers which have made it difficult at times for her to prioritise education. In this case study, we'll explore what these obstacles have been for her, and what support was most useful for her in overcoming them.

Jeanette had a great start in education. She thoroughly enjoyed primary school, and at that time she describes everything as being "on track". Throughout her learner journey, Jeanette had different kinds of care placement, including foster, residential and living with a supported carer. In her second year of high school, she moved from her foster care placement into a residential house.

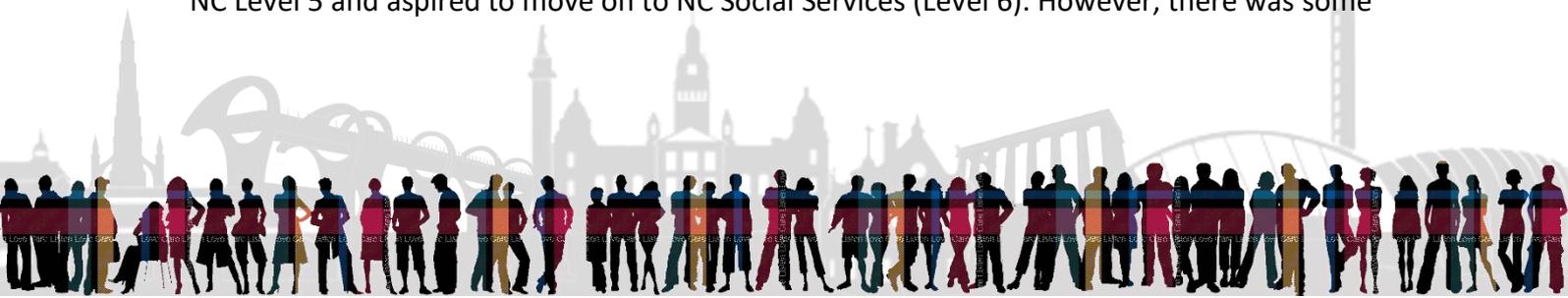
Moving placement was highly disruptive for Jeanette, especially during the time she was studying for her National 5 qualifications. She found it difficult to focus on school and was eventually excluded for fighting.

However, Jeanette persevered and achieved a range of National 4 and National 5 qualifications in high school before deciding that college would be a better fit for her to continue her studies.

She applied to college and was successful in her application to study NC Business (Level 5). Nearing the end of the course, a social worker told Jeanette that she would never achieve an HN level qualification. This message was disheartening for Jeanette, who says:

“ I felt that she never believes that I *can* achieve, and I *can* do well and I also felt disappointed that a Corporate Parent doesn't care about my academic ability.

However, despite this knock to her confidence, Jeanette went on to successfully complete her NC Level 5 and aspired to move on to NC Social Services (Level 6). However, there was some





confusion. Jeanette wasn't aware of the application process. The college sent her out an application form, but it was sent to the wrong college campus. By the time Jeanette received her form and made her application, there were no spaces left on the course. She was notified by email, and the college apologised. Struggling to find an alternative course, Jeanette went on to study NC Retail (Level 5). This meant repeating an SCQF level and revisiting content she had already covered in NC Business. Jeanette found this hugely frustrating.

After successfully completing her NC Retail Jeanette successfully applied for the course she really wanted to do – NC Social Services (Level 6). Whilst studying for this course, Jeanette was living with a supported carer. However, during Jeanette's studies, her carer had to hand in her notice and give up her job. This left Jeanette with 52 days to find somewhere to live. This was highly stressful for Jeanette, who again struggled to focus on her studies as her life outside of college was so unstable and demanded huge amounts of time and energy to find a solution. A social worker advised her that she might be best to apply for homelessness support but fortunately, Jeanette has secured her own tenancy and is now living independently.

Though Jeanette managed to stabilise her life outside of college, throughout the ordeal she struggled to focus on her studies. She passed the course, but her marks were just below the threshold of the entry requirements for the next level, NC Social Services (Level 7).

It was at this point that Jeanette felt as though she could not continue with her studies. It took some encouragement and support from her tutors to convince her to persevere and find a solution for the barriers she faced. One of Jeanette's tutors spoke to the Curriculum Manager and explained that Jeanette had been struggling with issues outside of college such as securing accommodation and support from the local authority. The college considered Jeanette's qualifications contextually and she later received an email saying that she had an unconditional offer to study HNC Social Services (Level 7) - she was thrilled.

“ When tutors reassured me and convinced me to come back to college, I felt that people believed that I can achieve...that they wanted me to be successful and not to give in to the people who told me I can't. The thing that drives me to study is to achieve more and prove the people that told me I can't that I *can*.

Next, Jeanette hopes to gain second year entry to university to study Public Sociology. She said,

“ My aspiration for the future is to do my degree then eventually get a job within residential as a





child care worker, helping kids in care to be the best they can be.

Jeanette considered her experienced and suggested a number of asks of Corporate Parents:

- Be understanding of the circumstances which care experienced people face outside of school, college or university which can make it difficult to study. It's also important that you don't judge care experienced people when they share information with you.
- Believe in care experienced people. Support us with positive messages of encouragement! Sometimes we're going to need it, especially when we don't believe in ourselves. Get to know us and help us to break down barriers when you see them e.g. tutors having conversations with a manager on my behalf.
- Be clear with us when communicating, such as information around important application processes. If you don't get a response, please chase us up – there might be a reason we're not getting your message.

