

## **Children's rights and participation team**

### **Elevate Independent Living Skills programme**

The children's rights and participation team provide opportunities for looked after children and care experienced young people. In September 2021 the service, working alongside the Adolescent Development Service launched the Elevate independent living skills programme.

The Elevate programme was set up, taking into consideration young people's views on areas that they felt were important to develop in preparation for living independently.

Consisting of weekly sessions, young people are invited to attend the programme to develop the practical and emotional skills to prepare them for independent living. This includes cooking sessions every week.

The programme is open to young people aged 16+ who are in care or care experienced.

A large proportion of our care leaver population are unaccompanied asylum seekers and a large proportion are Muslim, adhering to a Halal diet.

We quickly identified that young people being referred to the programme were unable to access public funds due to immigration status and that many of them required a Halal diet.

The programme was adjusted to take into consideration the individual attendees circumstances and needs, and any guest speakers were advised of this prior to attending.

Meals to be cooked were agreed in advance with the young people. With young people being encouraged to share traditional recipes from their home countries.

Preparation of food was prepared that was either Halal or used vegetarian alternatives to ensure it was inclusive to all.

Young people continue to attend sessions and are developing practice and emotional resilience, developing relationships with staff and learning to cook.