

# [News story: Major new scheme launched to support young people leaving care](#)

Businesses including Amazon, Rolls-Royce and Barclays LifeSkills have pledged to support care leavers through a landmark government scheme launched to raise their career aspirations and improve their life skills.

More than 50 businesses, charities and every government department in England have signed up to the [Care Leaver Covenant](#), which commits to provide work based opportunities to young people leaving the care system.

Children's and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi has today (Friday 26 October) set out an ambition for the scheme to create 10,000 work opportunities over the next ten years helping these young people gain vital skills and experiences as they enter the jobs market.

Due to be launched today in Birmingham, the Care Leaver Covenant is part of an unprecedented package of support for young people leaving care and smooth their transition into adulthood.

Too many care leavers do not achieve the same outcomes as their peers, with 40 per cent of care leavers aged 19 to 21 not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared to 13 per cent for this age group overall.

The Covenant will help care leavers navigate the work opportunities available and support them in fulfilling their ambitions. From today, they will have access to work placements and internships with big businesses, government departments, museums, theatres, or Premier League football clubs, as well as training workshops or life-skills coaching.

Ahead of the launch event in Birmingham, Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi, said:

Becoming an adult is a daunting and challenging time for all of us, but I know from speaking to many young people leaving care, this transition can feel like facing a cliff edge.

This is a landmark moment on how businesses can support care leavers, who through no fault of their own have been dealt a difficult hand in life.

Young people leaving care have often overcome huge challenges but struggle to achieve the same positive outcomes in life as their peers, which is simply not fair. When we talk about burning injustices, this is what we mean – so we need to be more ambitious for these young people.

Working with businesses, charities and every government department, our new Covenant will improve the offer we make to these young

people, through work placements, skills training or access to university so that they can fulfil their potential and flourish as adults.

The Covenant, run by Spectra First, is part of the government's ambition to improve care leavers' outcomes so they go on to lead happy and successful lives. The pledges on offer include work placements with organisations such as Liverpool FC Foundation, the Science Museum Group and Rolls-Royce to help them get their first step into a career.

In addition to the private and voluntary sector offers of support, the package of support for care leavers includes:

- 12-month internships from every government department in Whitehall, including 100 12-month internships from January 2019;
- Support from universities, such as bursaries and accommodation, with Cambridge, Leeds, and Manchester universities committing to supporting care leavers – data shows that only 6 per cent of care leavers aged 19 to 21 go on to higher education; and
- Resources and tools from Barclays Life Skills to help care leavers to manage their money better, as they often lack the safety net of financial support from their families.

At the launch of the Covenant at Birmingham ICC today, the Children and Families Minister will urge more businesses to sign up and consider how to build on the offers of support, as well as challenging employers to offer dedicated mentors for care leavers taking up placements and internships.

The Covenant has been signed by 65 organisations, and dozens more have committed to sign, as well as attracting the support of advocates for young people in care including award-winning children's author Dame Jacqueline Wilson – whose series of books about Tracy Beaker tell the story of a young girl living between the care system and a foster parent.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson said:

I think it's fantastic that at last there's going to be a Care Leaver Covenant. About time too! If my fictional Tracy Beaker were real she'd be yelling 'Yay!'

Seriously though, I'm so pleased that care leavers will have the help, information and access they deserve so they can get on with their lives and fulfil all their hopes and ambitions.

The Covenant builds on a breadth of government work already underway to improve the lives of care leavers, including schemes such as Staying Put, allowing care leavers to continue living with their foster families after the age of 18, and piloting Staying Close so young people leaving residential care can keep links with people they trust.

The government is already providing £5 million for three Social Impact Bonds to help care leavers into education, employment or training post-18 and £3.2 million for 47 councils to employ specialist personal advisers to help care leavers most at risk of rough sleeping in 2019/20.

The role of these personal advisers has been extended to support care leavers up to the age of 25, and councils now have a duty to publish their offer of support for care leavers online. Many councils have chosen to exempt care leavers from council tax to support them financially.

Kirstie Mackey, Director of LifeSkills at Barclays, said:

LifeSkills helps young people to make the difficult transition from education into the world of work, whilst also preparing them for independent living and how to better manage their finances.

We've helped 6.7 million young people so far and are delighted to be working with Spectra First to use the knowledge we have gained and the educational resources we have developed to really help transform the lives and financial capability of young care leavers across the UK. I encourage other businesses to sign up to the Care Leavers Covenant so that we can work together to help some of the most vulnerable young people in society.

Paul Broadhead, Rolls-Royce Head of Community Investment and Education Outreach, said:

At Rolls-Royce we are committed to inspiring and equipping a future generation of innovators and pioneers. Every child deserves the opportunity to explore the world of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) and it is why we offer a wide variety of programmes and activities supporting this. This includes robotics challenges, nearly 700 work experience placements and our young apprentice programme.

We recognise the importance of attracting talent, which is equally distributed across our communities while the opportunity is not. This is why Rolls-Royce is committed to help change this and we are delighted to be supporting the Care Leaver Covenant.

Barnardo's Chief Executive, Javed Khan said:

Sadly young people leaving care often struggle to gain good qualifications and get their foot on the career ladder. That's why Barnardo's is committed to offering high quality work placements as well as specialist advice and support. We believe that all young people deserve the opportunity to follow their dreams. That's why our ambition is for care leavers to have the same life chances as

other young people, including access to employment, education and training.

Matthew Gordon, Chief Executive of Spectra First, delivery partner for the Covenant, said:

We are thrilled to be a part of this ground breaking initiative and are confident that we can use our creativity to find meaningful and practical opportunities for our care leaving community.

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## **Press release: British public urged to be aware of poppy merchandise scams**

- the Intellectual Property Office and The Royal British Legion urge consumers to beware of fake poppy merchandise ahead of Remembrance 2018
- no-one benefits – both charity and public lose out with fake poppy merchandise
- advice to buyers to ‘buy responsibly’ through official channels, and how to report fake poppy merchandise

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and The Royal British Legion (RBL) are urging members of the British public to be extra vigilant when buying poppy merchandise for Remembrance this year. Their donations are intended to support Armed Forces community men, women, veterans and their families. Instead they could end up benefitting fraudsters if their poppy merchandise turns out to be fake.

The RBL has registered its rights for the poppy goods to prevent such counterfeiting.

The IPO and The RBL have teamed up with the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) to crack down on the rogue traders making money from the fake Remembrance goods. The warning applies to poppy merchandise – scarves, jewellery, poppy pins and larger poppy brooches. This does NOT apply to the traditional paper poppies.

The PIPCU team has been targeting suspected sellers by visiting addresses and speaking with people in connection with this crime. In Autumn 2017, Border Force officers at Tilbury intercepted a shipment of poppy merchandise intended for the UK worth in the region of £150,000.

Intellectual Property Minister Sam Gyimah said:

It is truly shocking that anyone would target and exploit one of the UK's most cherished charities and take advantage of public support for our Armed Forces community

Together we can ensure donations go to the people they are intended for, by only supporting approved merchandise. Be vigilant when you are buying your poppies this year, and look out for the Royal British Legion logo to ensure the merchandise is approved and genuine.

Claire Rowcliffe, Director of Fundraising, from The Royal British Legion said:

It is a sad fact that there are people who actively defraud the public in order to take funds intended for the support of our Armed Forces community. We would urge everyone wishing to purchase a Remembrance poppy brooch, to do so through official channels. For example, you can buy from one of our trusted volunteers, from The Royal British Legion's online Poppy Shop, or from one of our corporate partners.

Join with us, the IPO and PIPCU to help make sure your donation doesn't line the pockets of criminals. We want to make sure that it goes to supporting those who have made such a unique contribution to our society.

## **Fake poppy merchandise – what to look for**

The public are being asked to look out for counterfeit goods in the shape, or bearing the image of, the RBL's familiar two-petal red poppy, or Poppy Scotland's four-petal poppy in Scotland. The RBL have registered their rights for the poppy goods to prevent such counterfeiting.

To help consumers beat the fraudsters, here are the top tips to avoid buying fake poppy merchandise online:

- be a 'responsible buyer' – buy from official channels and The Royal British Legion's corporate partners
- avoid cheaper priced products. If the price is too good to be true, it usually is
- the Royal British Legion works with a number of corporate partners. Only [corporate partners](#) are authorised by the Royal British Legion to sell poppy merchandise
- if in doubt, buy through [The Royal British Legion](#) or [The Royal British Legion official eBay](#) or Amazon pages – you will be sure of the authenticity

## **What to do if you think you've spotted fake poppy merchandise**

Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or [report it online](#) if you spot anyone

selling what you believe to be fake poppy products.

### Notes to editor:

- the IPO is part of the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial strategy and is responsible for the national framework of intellectual property rights, comprising patents, designs, trade marks and copyright
- the IPO's intelligence hub is recognised within the Home Office Serious & Organised Crime Strategy as the UK lead on counterfeiting and piracy
- the RBL is one of the most trusted charity brands, with the Poppy Appeal standing out as the best known national charity campaign. Their work supports not only the families of the fallen but also a new generation of veterans and service personnel
- PIPCU is a specialist national police unit dedicated to protecting the UK industries that produce legitimate, high quality, physical goods and online and digital content from intellectual property crime

### Media enquiries

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# Speech: Better Education and Stronger Political Opportunities for Women

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Thank you very much Mr President and thank you to your delegation for putting this important topic as an open debate today. Thank you to our two Ministers for joining us; I found your presentations really powerful. It's excellent that you've given us time to be with us today. Minister Wallström, you are a very frequent visitor to this Council which is extremely welcome and I think all I can say is that I wholly endorse what you said in the Council today, both of you, so thank you very much indeed for that. It's a very important opportunity; thank you to the Secretary-General, the Executive Director and Randa Siniora. I just wanted, if I may Mr. President, to digress briefly to repeat what I said on 17 October about the content of briefings to this Council but we do believe that civil societies contribution is essential.

I want to add our voice to those congratulating the Nobel Peace Prize winners. I think in this year it's a very important signal of the criticality that their work has, not just for the communities who benefit from it and are protected by it, but what it says overall about the international community's priorities when it comes to putting the issue of women and girls and women, peace and security right at the centre of policymaking.

Two years ahead of the twentieth anniversary of Resolution 1325, we're very pleased to have this important moment to reflect on progress and consider what more can be done. It's not just a moral issue, this issue of women's political and economic empowerment; fundamentally it's an economic issue. Countries who enable equal opportunities for all their people, who enable equal access to the law and services, who enable equal participation in the economic life of that country are much more likely to thrive and prosper than countries who do not. So fundamentally, enabling half of your population to participate fully is much more likely to improve inclusive growth and sustainability. And I think that's a really important economic point that we all need to bear in mind.

Mr President, successive Security Council resolutions have of course argued that greater political and economic empowerment of women is a key element of conflict prevention and I think this is all part of the Secretary-General's core agenda. He spoke very powerfully today. We welcome his leadership, we welcome that of the UN Secretariat and we look forward to working more with them.

When women meaningfully participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35 per cent more likely to last at least 15 years. It will be more inclusive and hence, it will better serve the community it represents. I'd like to echo what the Swedish Minister said about the importance of participation being a right, not a bonus.

As conflicts around the world become more complex and formal peace processes risk stalling, women's efforts to tackle conflict have never been more needed or more vital. In this regard, we as the United Kingdom were pleased to bring members of the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth network to New York this week to exchange experiences with other regional women's mediation networks and explore ways collectively to drive the agenda forward. I do think these mediation networks, whatever their label and wherever they come from, are actually an important resource for us all. The Executive Director was able to describe some of the work on the ground that has been very important and I am sure that they would be delighted to work even more closely with the United Nations.

Mr President, SDG5 collectively makes clear that empowering women isn't just about these community-based actions. It also requires addressing systemic challenges and structural issues and getting to the core of the barriers to women's full and equal participation and exercise of basic rights. In line with this, my government has cross-government National Action Plan committing to increasing women's participation in decision-making and scaling up interventions to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. I commend such plans to all of those countries who don't have them. And we also commend a signing-up of the UN Compact on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse which the Secretary-General also mentioned today.

We often hear about the importance of mainstreaming gender equality right the way through policy. As an example of this, the United Kingdom has opened all military roles to women and we are closing in on our target to have women make up 15 per cent of our armed forces. It is not enough but we believe it's a good start.

Mr President, you may not know, colleagues may not know that there is today a British aircraft carrier sitting just off the coast of Staten Island. It's on a friendly visit to New York. I want to stress the word 'friendly.' But what I also want to stress is that 13 per cent of that ship's company are women. 83 out of 650 personnel on board are women. It's the highest that we have of our Royal Navy fleet. As I say it's not enough but it's a good start and we hope very much to build on that.

Mr President, I'd like to talk a little bit about education. Education is key to achieving our ambition and this means educating women, men, boys and girls if we want to change attitudes and behaviours. We have a Leave No Girl Behind campaign. This has the goal of empowering women and girls through quality education, including education in emergencies. And I do just want to stress the word 'quality.' A lot of excellent work has been done around the world in getting girls into school. I previously had the honour to be the British Ambassador to Afghanistan and I've seen girls going to school and I've seen the difference it makes to their lives. The next challenge is to make that a real quality education so that they get the skills and the tools necessary so that they can as they grow up play a full role in the political and economic life of their country. Also as part of this campaign, we've endorsed Safe Schools Declaration and we believe that this represents an important step forward.

We've talked also about sexual and gender-based violence. By definition, this prevents women from being active participants at school, in the workforce and in other political and economic spheres. I want to endorse what the Netherlands Minister said in particular about speaking out against violence against women leaders because they are the people who at the moment will be driving this forward and we support you in that.

Finally Mr President as we collectively look towards 2020, the ambition for all of us should only continue to grow. I want to really echo what the Ministers and others said about the need to change our plans into concrete implementation. I think it's very important. I hope we will be able to continue to address these issues in the Security Council. I just wanted to close by referring to Minister Wallström's quote from the women she met about wanting bigger boats, bigger nets and not to get raped. I think there is a wealth of meaning and description in that very simple sentence. If we do nothing else, we ought to be able to provide them with better equipment, better safety and the personal security that they require.

Thank you very much Mr President.