

# CASE STUDY | LOCAL AUTHORITY

*"The organisation and the people in it go over and above what is required of them and it shows in the outcomes we achieve for our young people who are supported within their service"*

Kirsty Hanna, Team Manager, Gatwick Children Services



## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

### Support and nurture

Pathways to Independence has forged a strong and mutually beneficial partnership with Gatwick Children's Service, a part of West Sussex County Council. This partnership has gone from strength to strength over the past seven years. Gatwick Children's Service is a social work team that deal with any child in need or child protection issue that originates from Gatwick Airport, Tinsley House or Brook House in West Sussex. In addition they are responsible for any unaccompanied child seeking asylum across West Sussex.

Kirsty Hanna is Team Manager and has worked with Pathways to Independence since its inception in 2003. Kirsty explains, "We deal with initial assessments and taking children into care where necessary and appropriate. Our focus is then to support and nurture our children so they can fulfill their full potential. Alongside this we have to plan according to their asylum status, often having twin track plans that deal with the possibility of staying in the UK or being returned home. We work with the child right from the point of arriving in the UK to becoming care leavers, then leaving care for full independence, wherever that may be."

### A clear need

Alice Conroy founded Pathways to Independence in 2003 to address a growing need she identified for strong support to

young people seeking asylum in the UK. Alice explains, "I felt there was a clear need for an organisation to complement the work that agencies were doing to support young people. Working together with agencies, by providing supported accommodation and other services, I knew we could have a really positive impact."

Alice presented the new project to Kirsty and they quickly established a strong working relationship and started utilising group homes to support young asylum seekers making that step towards full independence.

Since then Pathways and Gatwick Children's Services have worked closely together and worked on numerous referrals for young people who need a stepping stone to move to full independence.

### Consider it done

"We know that they will get a supportive yet realistic experience of living with other young people," says Kirsty. "We have always been impressed with Pathways workers and how committed they are to supporting our young people. They have the right balance of nurture and pushing that young person to achieve. We are confident that if you ask Pathways to do something, consider it done. We have had Pathways work with young people with serious mental health issues where they have had to know how to deal with self harm, possible suicidal thoughts and even being a birthing partner for a young person."

### Committed, energetic, motivated

"One of the challenges is building up a trusting relationship with an accommodation provider – where you know they are doing their best for the young person with the right mix of nurture and boundaries alongside being 100% professional. You have to work in partnership with agencies on projects like these and so the social workers and Pathways workers have to form a team that surrounds that young person making them feel safe and giving them consistent messages and support. That is a difficult thing to achieve but we do it with Pathways. Pathways is a professional organisation that is committed, energetic and motivated to provide a good quality service to unaccompanied asylum seeking young people. The organisation and the people in it go over and above what is required of them and it shows in the outcomes we achieve for our young people who are supported within their service. Pathways has a great ability to get young people plugged into mainstream services that stay with them after we stop working with them as care leavers."

Pathways and Gatwick Children's Services continue to work together and work hard to continue to develop and build their partnership through open dialogue, regular reviews and feedback.

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