



Care Experienced History Month Q&A Spotlight on Care Experienced Staff

Sophie's Story

How has your experience of being in care influenced your life?

When you're in care all you hear about is trauma and how this will affect you negatively, but I wanted to use my experiences and channel it to do well in life. Although I have had some struggles along the way, I think that my adverse childhood experiences have made me more determined to do well, more focussed and more driven.

How has your experience of being in care influenced your career path?

During my time at school as a looked after child I felt I got more support and I think it's so important to have a good support network around you to encourage you to make good choices during your teenage years. Because of my experience of care – even though it wasn't for long – I was given the opportunity to become a Modern Apprentice with SCRA at 17-years-old and get a qualification in Business and Administration.

Since joining SCRA as a Modern Apprentice a few years ago, I have really started to use my experiences to help others; I am now an Assistant Reporter and doing Children's Hearings and I can really see how far I have come in my life. Ten years ago I was sitting at a Hearing as a young person of 16-years-old getting my supervision order terminated and now I am the Reporter in the Hearing and seeing similar outcomes for other kids. I feel a huge sense of achievement and appreciation for the chances I've been given because of my time in care.

What advice do you have for other care experienced young people and/or organisations working with/for care experienced young people?

I think my experience of being in care changed my outlook on life and I can see how easy it could be for you to take the wrong turn if you don't have the right support. I think this view has made me more determined to do well personally and professionally and sometimes I think that this makes me put too much pressure on myself so I have to be careful of that.

I really do feel that there are organisations – such as SCRA – who really value having staff with experience of care, and a lot of other adverse life experiences. Just because you've had a tricky start doesn't mean you can't use it and do well. The fact that SCRA do the Modern Apprenticeship scheme for care experienced young people is a huge thing for young people in care. As a 17-year-old coming into the organisation I felt like someone was giving me a chance and I am so thankful for the opportunity SCRA gave me over 8 years ago which has helped me get to where I am today. I want to let other young people in care know that you can use your life experiences to further your career and don't be afraid to share them with your employer and colleagues because your experiences can add so much value to the work that they do.