

# FIRST JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

**30 unemployed young people  
work for 6 months in  
College Square North  
to gain valuable work skills  
2014 - 2018**



# 'FIRST JOBS' WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

YouthAction Northern Ireland recognises that youth unemployment is an ongoing problem in Northern Ireland. Many of our young people face significant challenges and barriers which prevent them from gaining the skills, qualifications and real work experiences to make a successful and sustained transition into work.

Youth unemployment can be devastating for young people and their future prospects; affecting their confidence, motivation and their ability to plan for their future. Paid work placements allow young people to gain the confidence, skills and real work experience to secure a job where they can contribute to the economy and grow and flourish.

## INVESTING IN PAID WORK PLACEMENTS PAYS OFF FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

**100% of young people on our paid placement scheme progress into employment or further education.**

Youth unemployment costs the economy an estimated 300 million pounds per year (Nevin Economic Institute April 2013). For an investment of £3,900 we can provide a 6 month paid, work placement for a young person.

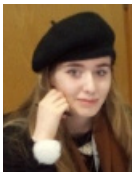
Since YouthAction NI commenced the paid placement scheme in 2014 we have invested £117,000 in 30 young people resulting in 100% progressing into further work or training.

Using our youth arts and learning hub at College Square North (CSN), young people are employed on 6 month paid placements in jobs which support the administrative running of YouthAction NI and the smooth running of our building, College Square North. These placements are also linked to key growth sectors; finance; IT; admin; PR and communications; and technical theatre. 4 young people are employed at any one time.

# 100% PROGRESS TO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER EDUCATION



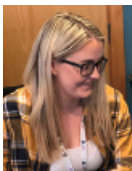
# A PROFILE OF OUR 30 YOUNG PEOPLE ON OUR PAID WORK PLACEMENT SCHEME 2014 - 2018



**Elven, age 22 -  
College Square North  
Support Assistant**  
(Nov 2018 - Present)

*'I have been able to see a major confidence growth within myself'*

I hope to gain relevant experience which will help me to find employment afterwards. I have been made to feel part of the team and have been able to see a major confidence growth within myself. My roles can range from a number of things such as welcoming and greeting visitors and young people to CSN; room set up for internal and external bookings, catering for functions; preparation of the theatre and workshop for shows, conferences etc. These duties have helped me to become more organised and a lot more confident with my interpersonal skills. With the help of on-the-job training and a brilliant team here at YouthAction I have been able to feel more confident with myself. I really enjoy coming to work each day!



**Katie, age 18 -  
College Square North  
Support Assistant**  
(Oct 2018 - Jan 2019)

*'My time keeping skills and organisation have greatly improved'*

I'm on reception answering the phone, taking room bookings, dealing with any public inquiries, and visitors coming and going. I've learnt a lot and gained many skills from working here, such as my communication skills as I deal with the public every day. My time keeping skills and organisation have greatly improved. There are so many different things you do here in YouthAction and you will definitely learn something new every day and that's always a good thing when in a job. I've got what I expected out of this internship and a lot more as

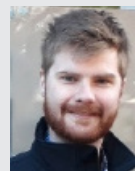
well! I have really enjoyed working here with all the amazing staff and young people! If anyone was ever offered this internship and asked for my advice, I would tell them to jump at the chance for it as it is an amazing place to work! **Kate has now gained work as an administrator.**



**Chris, age 18 -  
Admin Assistant**  
(Oct 2018 -  
Dec 2018)

*'I am enjoying the opportunity to work within a professional team'*

I am working in the finance department, filing invoices, purchase orders and cheque requisitions as well as writing and posting them out to companies. I have also been taking calls from the public and organisations involved with YouthAction. It can be very high paced and it is important that I am organised at all times. Through dealing with phone calls, bookings, I have been able to develop my communication skills which is beneficial to me not just in my professional life but in my personal life to. **Chris gained work as an administrator.**



**Sean, age 23 -  
Finance Assistant**  
(July 2018 -  
Oct 2018)

I came to YouthAction because I wanted to improve my employability skills and to be able to walk into a job once my internship had run its course. I am delighted to say that I achieved both of these goals and so much more. I am eternally grateful for the opportunities that YouthAction has given me. **Sean is now working full time in a finance company.**



**Sarah, age 24 -  
PR & Communications  
Assistant**  
(March - Aug 2018)

After graduating I moved back to Northern Ireland and began looking for a job in the arts sector. After unsuccessful searches, I spent the year and a half that followed working in hospitality and retail. After hearing about the paid internship opportunity, I applied and was really grateful to have been selected. I'm looking forward to gaining a much greater understanding of communications and increasing my awareness of this type of role. **Sarah now works as a Support Worker on the Peace IV programme.**



**Ellis, age 23 -  
Admin Assistant**  
(February 2018 -  
July 2018)

*'I have gained so much experience and confidence from this role'*

As the Admin Assistant, my role involves reception duties and administration for the building and the finance team. Every day is different and I have learned new skills such as invoicing and other financial paperwork, e.g. the process of room bookings. I really enjoy working as part of the YouthAction team and the support everyone gives is amazing. **Ellis went on to further training.**

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*'I am learning how to prioritise tasks'*

Sarah, age 20



**Amy, age 17 -  
College Square North  
Support Assistant  
(Feb 2018 - July 2018)**

*'I have been building my admin and communication skills'*

I cover reception, do invoicing and research for things that are needed around the building. To build my communication skills I've been taking phone calls that come into the building and being helpful to people who hire rooms in College Square North, or even the young people that come in for programmes or for their Rainbow Factory classes. My job also includes setting up rooms, clearing rooms and catering for the groups that hire our rooms. **Amy is now at BMC studying Fashion Design. She also works part time and volunteers with the Front of House team at YouthAction.**

Amy's Internship was kindly sponsored by The Rotary Club of Belfast



**Patrick, 'Paddy' age 23  
Research Assistant  
(July 2017 -  
December 2017)**

*'I have become a more confident person in my work and in myself'*

My internship has allowed me to become a more critical thinker. I have developed skills in analysing data, public speaking, presenting and event planning. The internship has also given me the chance to connect and develop with a whole range of networks which has opened the doors to so many more opportunities. I can communicate with others a lot more effectively and have become a much more organised person. **Patrick now works as a youth worker in YouthAction NI and is completing the Postgraduate Diploma in Community Youth Work.**



**Nicola, age 21 -  
Admin Assistant  
(June 2017 -  
Dec 2017)**

*'I knew this internship would give me the experience I needed to further myself in work'*

Since I've started the post everyone has been so welcoming and positive which has made the experience so much better. I hope to gain admin and reception skills so when I finish the internship I will be able to get a full time job. I am aware that there will be a lot of work heading my way but I'm looking forward to learning things and improving my skills. **Nicola gained full time employment as a Compliance Officer in a national bank.**



**Rebecca, age 18 -  
PR & Communications  
Assistant  
(June 2017 - Dec 2017)**

I decided to go for this position after I finished school in West Belfast. I wanted to increase my skills within media and public relations and to help me with my career ambition of working in the media industry. **Rebecca went on to study Cinematic Arts at Ulster University.**



**Lisa, age 22 -  
PR & Communications  
Assistant  
(June 2017 - Dec 2017)**

*'My aim is to develop new skills and improve my confidence'*

I gained an interest in Communications through carrying out a digital marketing module in my degree. Throughout my time here at YouthAction I aim to develop new skills and to improve my confidence. **Lisa gained a full time job with the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster.**



**Alex, age 20 - College  
Square North Assistant  
(March -  
Aug 2017)**

I want to send my appreciation for how welcoming you all have been. I hope to enjoy the 6 months of my internship, working to help the CSN building run as smoothly as we can. I have youth work experience and training through the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and Newtownabbey Arts and Cultural Network, and have taken a job with YouthAction to get experience in another youth work organisation and to meet more youth workers. **Alex secured a place at college after completing his internship.**

Alex's internship was kindly sponsored by The Rotary Club of Belfast.



*'I have a much better insight into the hard work that is done to keep the Rainbow Factory running'*





**Sarah, age 20 -  
College Square North  
Assistant**

**(Nov 2016 - April 2017)**

*'I am learning how to prioritise tasks'*

My role is to ensure that the building runs smoothly and looks professional. I also set up events and ensure that people from outside will be satisfied with services that we provide. I have gained lots of skills such as communication because before I started working, I was very nervous about working in a hearing environment as a young deaf person and understanding everyone. It has improved my confidence with socialising with my hearing colleagues. I am learning about time management and how to ensure that everything is ready before the events start and how to complete things on time. I am also learning how to prioritise tasks to ensure that everything is done by the end of the day or before the beginning of the event. Wherever I end up in my working life, I will always be grateful for the opportunities that YouthAction NI has given to me. **Sarah went on to work for Action Deaf Youth.**

Sarah's internship was kindly sponsored by Park Inn by Radisson.



**Jenna, age 23 -  
PR & Communications  
Assistant**

**(Oct 2016 - Apr 2017)**

*'I am learning from those more experienced in the office'*

As PR and communications assistant I get the chance to work with nearly everyone in the organisation as well as our partner organisations. My work is specifically based around our LIFEMAPS initiative which raises awareness of mental health in young people and youth workers. I enjoy the chances to network, learn from those more experienced in the office and pick up some new skills along the way. **Jenna got onto the fast track programme in the Civil Service in London.**



**Laoise, age 18 -  
PR & Communications  
Assistant**

**(July 2016 - Dec 2016)**

*'I've gained valuable skills in event planning and promotion'*

I have grown as a person and gained an insight into where I would like to take my career. Through preparing for our summer show I've gained valuable skills in event planning and promotion, as well as an understanding and appreciation of how the front of house and box office team work for a show. Everyday there's a new challenge and every day I surprise myself with my own capabilities. **Laoise went on to study Media and Performance at University of Salford.**

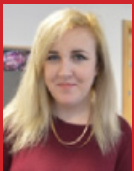




**Caitriona, age 22 -  
College Square North  
Assistant**  
**(June 2016 - Dec 2016)**

*'There are many busy days but everyone is very helpful and encouraging'*

I was a participant on the GET SET programme in the YouthAction building beforehand and that is how I heard about the internship. I knew I wanted to apply for the position because all the people I had interacted with in the building all had such a positive energy and attitudes and I knew I would gain a lot from this position. There is a lot to learn and there are many busy days but everyone is very helpful and encouraging and that makes working here a very positive experience and I am delighted that I have been given this opportunity. Caitriona went to do a part time IT course at the BMC.



**Laura, age 22 -  
Arts Admin Assistant**  
**(Apr 2016 -  
Sept 2016)**

*'I was finding it hard to get a job'*

I was going to the GET SET for Work programme as I was finding it hard to get a job. I was told about the position by my worker who helped me apply for the job. I was very grateful to be chosen for this opportunity as I knew I would get a lot out of the next six months. I work for the Youth Arts department and I am aware that there will be a lot of work to be done in this department however I am very excited for all the experience that I will gain. I have always admired YouthAction and how they work with young people to give us support and opportunities such as this placement. Laura secured employment with the Salvation Army.



**Gerard, age 22 -  
Admin Assistant**  
**(Apr 2016 -  
Sept 2016)**

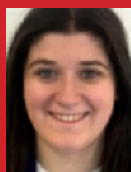
*'I have a much better insight into the hard work that is done to keep the Rainbow Factory running'*

I have been with Rainbow Factory for 8 years and volunteered at many of the events. Working in YouthAction I am not only gaining skills myself but I am also seeing how an organisation I have been so involved in for so long is run. I look forward to giving more back to YouthAction as they have helped me with so much over the years. Gerard now works in the hospitality sector.



**Jordan, age 18 -  
Technical Theatre  
Assistant**  
**(June 2016 - Dec 2016)**

YouthAction is a perfect place for an internship, as they are based around helping young people, meaning they have the experience and knowledge of how to help them in any struggles they may be having, this is why I enjoy working with them, they provide an understanding, caring yet professional environment. Jordan went on to do Media Studies at SERC.



**Amy, age 19 -  
Finance Assistant**  
**(March 2016 -  
Sept 2016)**

*'I wanted to be a part of giving back as they have helped me so much throughout the years'*

I have been with Rainbow Factory 8 years and have also volunteered with YouthAction on many occasions. When I saw the job opportunity I was very excited to apply as I enjoy learning and wanted to find out more on how a company like YouthAction is run. I enjoy working with YouthAction as I know how much they give out to the

community throughout Northern Ireland and I wanted to be a part of giving back as they have helped me so much throughout the years. Amy got a full time job as receptionist with a local building company.

Amy's internship was kindly sponsored by The Rotary Club of Belfast.



**Amy, age 23 -  
PR & Communications  
Assistant**  
**(Dec 2015 - May 2016)**

Before I got this job, I had been in and out of education and employment for several years. Amy went on to do a Higher Level Apprenticeship in Digital Marketing.



**Christopher 'Cricky',  
age 20 - College Square  
North assistant**  
**(Nov 2015 - May 2016)**

*'For 2 years I had been in and out of employment'*

For 2 years prior to applying for this post, I was in and out of employment. I could not find something that I truly enjoyed until I saw the ad for the internship. As CSN Assistant I have gained the knowledge and the experience of what is needed in the setup of rooms for internal and external bookings. I am also learning new things every day, administrative work and switchboard duties to list a few. Ultimately I would like to be a dancer but while I am working towards this I am keen to have some skills I can fall back on. Christopher works for EventSec Belfast and has been employed as a stage manager for two Rainbow Factory productions.



**Morgan, age 16 -  
PR & Communications  
Assistant**

**(Oct 2015 - March 2016)**

*'I have learned a lot more than I expected'*

I have learned a lot more than I expected, things like; switchboard duties, using the photocopier and updating the website and that's only a small preview of a very long list. **Morgan is now a coach in the T13 skate complex.**



**Nathan, age 19 -  
Technical Theatre  
Assistant**

**(Oct 2015 - March 2016)**

*'I am learning how to work to deadlines'*

Alongside my job I am also getting various and detailed technical theatre training such as Genie Training which will benefit me as an employee and my career in the field of technical theatre. I am developing skills such as team work, organisation skills and learning how to work to deadlines as working in the theatre is a demanding environment where tasks need to be completed promptly. **Nathan secured an acting role in a show at Grand Opera House, and applied for HND Performing Arts at BMC.**

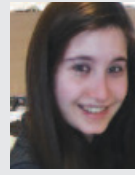


**David, age 24 -  
Admin Assistant**

**(Sept 2015 - February 2016)**

Before joining the placement scheme I was volunteering with YouthAction. This is a great opportunity to see a lot more of YouthAction and the work they do with young people. It is also a great chance to see what goes on behind the scenes, to see the effort put in by everyone to make YouthAction what it is. I have learned how to input data online, this includes data input for

updating databases, reception duties including meeting and greeting visitors and young people to CSN. **David went on to study Community Youth Work at Ulster University.**



**Holly age 19 -  
Finance Assistant**

**(September 2015 -  
February 2016)**

*'I am learning about spreadsheets and databases as well as working as part of a team'*

After leaving school I started looking for jobs to apply so I could gain valuable experience of the working world on my year out from formal education. I've increased my knowledge of how a business functions and how dependant charities are on funders for pretty much everything as well as the claims processes that occurs to allow them to gain this funding. Pulling evidence for audits has shown me just how precise paperwork has to be for funders to be content. I am also completing my essential skills in ICT and platinum Youth Achievement Award. **Holly got an administration post in the Ulster Bank.**



**Jonathan 'Johnny' age  
22 - College Square  
North Assistant**

**(May - October 2015)**

*'I was unemployed for nearly 6 months'*

Before being on the GET SET for Work placement scheme I was unemployed for nearly 6 months. Going into a new environment with many people I didn't know made me feel slightly anxious. But that abruptly changed when I met the YouthAction team. They're all friendly and help when they can. I've learned a lot more than I first anticipated, simple things, but important none-the-less. I've learned how to correctly set up events for up to 120 people, administrative work and

switchboard duties and that's just the tip of the iceberg. **Johnny now works in the retail sector.**

Johnny's internship was kindly sponsored by The Rotary Club of Belfast.



**Eugene, age 22 - College Square  
North Assistant**

**(October 2014 - February 2015)**

Eugene was our first building support assistant. He supported our building administrator to ensure the smooth running of College Square North for our youth groups and for external bookings. **Eugene now works in the Civil Service.**

**Curtis, age 19 - Technical Theatre  
Assistant**

**(March 2014 - June 2014)**

Curtis was our first technical theatre assistant, supporting the Rainbow Factory and our youth arts productions as well as theatre set up for external groups. **Curtis went on to study Performing Arts in Dublin.**

**Grainne age 22 - PR and  
Communications Assistant**

**(March 2014 - June 2014)**

Grainne was our first PR and Comms assistant and played a key role in developing YouthAction's social media profile. **Grainne went on to work in an administrative post.**





**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 30 YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR SUCCESSES AND WE WISH THEM THE BEST FOR THE FUTURE!**

**Key features of our paid work placement scheme**

- **Young people are paid a living wage**  
Young people are paid a wage which is aligned to the national living wage and, regardless of age, all our interns are paid the same rate. Paying young people a good wage helps motivate them and make it worthwhile to move off benefits. It demonstrates that we value them and their work contributes to the running of our organisation. A living wage enables young people to achieve greater independence.
- **Young people get on and off the job training**  
Each young person receives on and off the job training relevant to the post they are working in and their future career aspirations. Achieving industry specific

qualifications supports them in their work placement job and enhances their CV for future jobs.

- **Young people are mentored**  
Young people receive one to one mentoring from our transitions youth worker. Each young person develops a personal action plan which helps them set goals for their 6 month placement alongside future planning beyond their placement. Our mentor helps young people with job search, job applications and mock interviews so that they are prepared for and ready to move into work. Mentoring support helps young people make the most of their placement experience and follow up post placement support helps them stay on track.

**About YouthAction Northern Ireland**

YouthAction Northern Ireland is a regional youth work charity with 75 years' experience of tackling issues most critical to young people. We improve the life chances of 15,000 young people each year by increasing their well-being, aspirations and opportunities.

Tackling youth unemployment has been a key priority since 1988 and each year we increase the skills, qualifications and employability of 1000 young people.

**Supporters and Funders**



This project is part funded through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014 – 2020 and the Department for Economy



If you would like to sponsor a young person on our paid work placement scheme please contact Anne McTaggart [annemct@youthaction.org](mailto:annemct@youthaction.org)

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