

Bromley by Bow Centre's Story

the
switch

Work Experience



"The students enhance our service. They bring joy, they're hardworking, and it's nice to have young energy around us." - Clare, Bromley by Bow Centre

For young people studying specialised subjects, Work Experience is crucial to connecting classroom learning to real-world practice. It allows them to develop skills, gain confidence in a professional setting, and explore career pathways firsthand.

The Switch's Work Experience programme connects Tower Hamlets students with local employers in their chosen field, giving them hands-on experience and insight into workplace environments.

In February 2025, the Bromley by Bow Centre, a community organisation dedicated to improving well-being and providing support in health, social care, and education, hosted 2 BTEC Health & Social Care students from Central Foundation Girls' School for a 2-week Work Experience placement.

As an arts-based organisation, the students had the opportunity to support a variety of workshops and interact with clients through activities such as mosaic-making, pottery, reading, and gardening.

Clare and Alison supported the students during their placements and enjoyed having them at the Centre. The students not only helped the centre run its activities, but they also engaged with their clients, enriching their overall experience.

"There's not a lot of money in social care, so the placements give us a couple of extra pairs of hands in our sessions." - Clare

"The students really want to learn. They're constantly asking questions and talking with the clients. It's nice for the clients to sit and chat with someone younger and share their experiences." - Alison

The Centre hosts a diverse group of volunteers, all eager to gain hands-on experience in the social care sector. This includes students pursuing Health and Social Care courses and degrees and those seeking to build work skills. The placements can provide long-term opportunities, with some volunteers becoming employees within the organisation years later. As Alison reflects:

"I started out as a volunteer, and 32 years later, I'm still here! I spent 10 years as a volunteer, and then I became an employee in 2002."

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Clare and Alison highlight the importance of recruiting and training people from the local community, particularly in multicultural areas like Tower Hamlets. Providing local young people with opportunities not only helps them develop skills, but the Centre also benefits from having staff who truly understand and relate to the people they serve.

"It's good to recruit and train people from the community. I've interviewed a few people for previous jobs who have travelled in from quite far, and they speak with real kindness about the Centre, but I think the connection to the community isn't there. It's good to work with people from the community and give them employment." - Clare

"Locals know a lot more about the area and the community." - Alison

Clare is passionate about social care and takes pride in the work she does. She believes it's a deeply rewarding career and wants young people to see the value of working in the sector. By offering placements, she hopes to inspire the next generation to pursue a career in social care, helping them recognise the opportunities and fulfilment it can bring.

"Social care is something I'm really proud of. I think it's such a rewarding career, and I want people to be able to experience worthwhile placements with us. I want to get good people into social care and help them realise that there is a great career path, and it's really rewarding and enjoyable."

Clare and Alison recognise the importance of creating opportunities for young people, not only for the students' growth but also for the positive impact they bring to the workplace. Clare values these experiences, hoping her own children will one day have access to similar opportunities.

"Don't be put off by their age. It can sometimes be hard to host young people because it's almost like having another person to look after, but it hasn't felt like that with these students. We got a good feeling from them on their first day, they were on time, friendly, and made the right impression. I think it's really important to offer young people opportunities. I hope that there are opportunities like these for my 2 teenagers." - Clare

In 2025, the Bromley by Bow Centre will continue to support young people with Work Experience opportunities, hosting an additional 5 cohorts throughout spring and summer.

By offering Work Experience placements, organisations like the Bromley by Bow Centre support local students in their career development and lead by example, paving the way for the next generation.

Find out more about The Switch's Work Experience programme:

theswitch.org/employers/host-a-work-experience-student

theswitch.org

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