



## Kayleigh – age 18

### THE MACHAN TRUST

#### BUILDING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

When I was 17, I noticed that youth workers were running a lunch club for young people at my school. I spoke to the youth workers running the club and they said they were happy to for me to volunteer. Initially, I volunteered at the lunch club during the school day, and then I began volunteering with the youth group on the Thursday night.

It was hard at the start– I wasn't sure how I could contribute. The youth workers helped me to get settled and made it clear that they were there to help me with whatever I needed. They made sure that I felt like a proper part of the team. It never felt difficult to ask for help, but over time, I was able to take on more responsibility and make more decisions myself. I'm more confident to deal with the issues that come up with young people now, especially helping them deal with conflict and disagreements. I've learned not to try to fix it for them – but to make space for them to talk to one another and sort things out together. I've also learned how important it is to keep going back to try to engage with young people who don't seem to want to participate. I've learned not to give up - if you keep being friendly and encouraging, that makes a difference in time.

I'm training to be a nurse and my volunteering experience has 100% helped me to prepare for that. In particular, I've learned to deal with my own emotions better. As a youth work volunteer it's important to be empathetic, but you also have to try not to get too personally involved. And in caring jobs like youth work and nursing, you also have to learn to leave your own personal problems at the door - even when you're not in the mood, or there's something going on at home, you have to leave it at home, and remember that your role is to be there for the young people.