

Foyer Legend Award



Awarded to a member of staff who has worked tirelessly for a decade or more in their Foyer, someone who has remained committed to the Foyer through the years and rolled with the punches, leading on new and creative services for young people.

Gary Smith - Bridge Foyer



Gary has worked at the Bridge Foyer for 12 years and has always been an integral part of the team. His passion and enthusiasm for supporting young people is evident every day, he truly is the heart and soul of the Foyer. Gary has close links with the local area and his knowledge of local partners, events and community based charities or organisations ensures he plays an immense role in helping young people integrate into the local community.

Gary embraces both changes and challenges and is always happy to give something new 'a go'. He has recently worked with four young people on a programme we at the foyer like to call 'The Duke of Gary'. Gary taught these four young people key outdoor skills such as planning and plotting a route as well as map reading, before taking them on a 14km walk. On their journey Gary educated them about wildlife and pointed out key landmarks of Chester and its surrounding areas and despite being exhausted when they got home, the young people couldn't wipe the smiles off their faces. Gary also organises fundraising events, delivers creative writing sessions and with his DIY skills helps young people make foyer flats a home. He encourages fitness and takes the lead on an annual football tournament.

Gary's ability to find that 'in' with each young person he supports, whether this be sports, nature or good book is a key skill he has when being able to build a trustworthy rapport with each of the young people on his caseload. Despite being a keen Liverpool FC supporter, I knew that Gary would literally do anything to engage a young person when I found him googling the Manchester UTD crest to put on a 121 letter for a new young person who had just moved in attempt to put them at ease before their first meeting. Apart from being one of the nicest people, as a work colleague he is exceptional - his attendance is impeccable, attitude is second to none and he is a nightmare to send home at the end of his shift! Gary simply loves work, but more importantly he loves the foyer and he cares for each young person he works with.