



# Boarding school lifelines from LTC for hospitality staff

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**Being a working parent can be tough, especially when your job is in the hospitality industry, where the hours are long and the busiest times include the weekends and the school holidays.**

So when a crisis hits, maybe a relationship breakdown, illness or mental health issues, it's reassuring to know that the Licensed Trade Charity (LTC) is on hand to help, not only with its confidential helplines, financial, health and housing support, but with schooling through LVS Ascot.

For two families, LVS Ascot – a co-educational, independent school in the magnificent 25 acres grounds of leafy Ascot – has been a lifeline.

Not only has it provided the parents with peace of mind, knowing their children are safe, supported and enjoying a great education, but the children have received the care and attention they have needed to excel and live their best lives.



## LVS Ascot

**LVS Ascot (formerly the Licensed Victuallers School) was set up in 1803 by the Society of Licensed Victuallers\* to offer education for the children of poor publicans. Today, under the ownership of the Licensed Trade Charity, LVS Ascot is still supporting the children of families working in the licensed hospitality industry**

Sue Chance worked in and managed pubs for more than 20 years with companies like Greene King and Marston's – her dad and uncle were also publicans, having had tenancies with Banks's (Marston's).

After a relationship breakdown, she looked for ways to enable her to continue to work and give her children, Lauren and Alfie, the best education – Alfie had been struggling with dyslexia and wasn't getting the support he needed. So, Sue got in contact with the LTC and after being interviewed about her situation, she obtained a trade discount to get the children into boarding school with LVS Ascot.

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Sadly, a subsequent a car accident left Sue unable to work. This resulted in the charity reassessing her financial situation, before awarding her a full bursary for the children, which allowed them both to stay at the school and give Sue time to get well.

When things didn't improve for Sue, who just a few years later was diagnosed with a rare form of

cancer, the charity was there with its unrivalled support and care. “For Alfie, a 15-year-old boy doing his GCSEs, it was a dreadful time. He heard the word 'cancer' and thought his mum was going to die. But his house master, James Wilder, was wonderful and helped Alfie through some of the toughest days of his life,” remembers Sue.

“The charity has just been brilliant, supporting both me and Alfie, in particular. To know that his education was secure, was amazing. It allowed me to concentrate on getting better,” says Sue, explaining that her daughter, Lauren, left LVS Ascot to take up a place at a local school, to be nearer to her mum.

Sue continues: “LVS Ascot and James have made my boy the person he is today – a kind and confident young man.”

In addition to his education, LVS Ascot supported Alfie with pastoral care, organising counselling for him and he went on to thrive within the caring and compassionate environment of the school. He excelled there, becoming a house captain and achieving great results in his GCSEs and A-levels. Alfie is now studying for a business degree at Nottingham Trent University.

Sue’s story doesn’t end there. Despite all of the difficulties she has experienced in her life, when her niece and nephew experienced massive trauma in their lives, it was Sue who took them into her home and became their guardian. One of the children now at LVS Ascot, after the charity reassessed Sue’s family circumstances.

“The charity looks at the whole picture, not just the child’s circumstances,” adds Sue. “They have helped us in so many ways. It’s not just about the money either, they really care. When we went into lockdown, the principal, Christine Cunniffe, heard we were struggling and got in touch – she even sent me some flowers to brighten my day. Little things like that make such a difference – everyone at the charity and the school are such kind and genuinely caring people. LVS ascot builds strong relationships with the children – we are one big family.”

## **Bursaries based on financial circumstances**

Another family that has benefited from the LTC support is the Hamilton family.

Richard Hamilton has worked in the pub trade for 30 years, the past 20 with the Stonegate Pub Group, where he is currently a general manager in London.

When Henry Hamilton was struggling at his local school, mum Rebecca started to investigate other options. She hadn’t been aware of LVS Ascot and the help available via the LTC, but within an hour

of finding out about both the discounts and bursaries available to families employed in the licensed drinks trade, she gave LTC a call.

“I started talking to them about Henry and they invited us to apply for a bursary. Henry is dyslexic and was predicted low GCSE grades. He had always been sporty but he had lost all of his confidence,” explains Rebecca. “But within three weeks of beginning at LVS Ascot, his life just turned around.”

Where Henry had been predicted to achieve Cs and Ds at GCSE, his final grades at LVS Ascot were As and Bs. “The smaller class sizes and the fact that he was given a fresh start and encouragement all meant that he was able to turn everything around. When a person begins to believe in themselves, they can achieve amazing things.”

With the support and guidance of the staff at LVS Ascot, Henry took every opportunity offered to him, and went on to be awarded deputy house captain and head boarder. “He won lots of prizes and achieved a scholarship, on top of his bursary, which was massive for us,” says Rebecca, explaining that bursaries are based upon a family’s financial circumstances, whereas a scholarship is given for academic, sporting, art or musical achievements.



Having successfully completed his A-levels with LVS Ascot, Henry went on to study sports science at Nottingham Trent University and has achieved a placement with a professional rugby team.

When Henry’s younger sister, Maddie, also began to struggle, Rebecca again turned to LTC for help, and Maddie joined LVS Ascot in Year 7. She is now in Year 12, having benefited from the kind and

enabling environment provided by LVS Ascot. Maddie is now set to travel to Ecuador in the summer with Camps International, organised through the school, and she is hoping to go on to study criminology and psychology at university.

Rebecca adds: "I feel guilty about all the support we've been given, but we are all so grateful for the help we've received. I know how lucky we are and our children have grasped every opportunity offered to them.

"If you work in the licensed trade and you are worried about your children's mental health or education, or even if you're interested in the benefits of an independent education, there is help available from the LTC. We have four children and two are doing well in mainstream education, but sometimes things don't work out and it's about finding a way to help each of your children achieve the best they possibly can," she says. "I would encourage anyone in a similar situation to ours to get in contact and visit the school. I'd be very happy for the LTC to put me in contact with anyone wishing to speak to me about LVS Ascot."

- For more information about bursaries, scholarships or trade discounts, contact the Licensed Trade Charity via the helpline 0808 801 0550 or visit [www.licensedtradecharity.org.uk](http://www.licensedtradecharity.org.uk).

\* In 1793, the Friendly Society of Licensed Victuallers was set up to help publicans distressed by illness, age or poverty. Much of its income came from the publication of a trade paper, the Publicans'

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