Jane Slowey

Putting vulnerable young people in control of their lives, Jane Slowey graduated from Birmingham in 1974 with a BA in French and Italian

Why she is outstanding

As Chief Executive of The Foyer Federation, Jane is heading a drive to help disadvantaged young people all over Britain make a successful transition to adulthood.

The Federation is made up of a network of 136 integrated learning and accommodation centres – known as Foyers. Run by agencies such as Housing Associations, the Foyers offer a residential place for up to two years as part of a package of individually tailored services including education, training, health and employment.

'In exchange we expect the young person to commit to the process, with a contract to that effect,' explains Jane. 'Foyer isn't just about accommodation. It's about equipping young people with a whole range of skills for life that enables them to achieve their full potential.'

Her focus on youth originally developed when, in a previous role as a Birmingham Labour councillor, Jane was involved with several community groups including the board of the local Housing Association. 'They won the contract for what was planned to be the first new-build Foyer, which was my first contact with the Foyer concept,' she recalls. 'It was quite controversial at the time because it was radically different from anything else in this country, so it grabbed my attention.'

Jane's passion for her cause has not gone unnoticed and she was awarded the CBE in 2009 for services to disadvantaged young people.

Jane will be presented with the 2010 Alumna of the Year award in December at a graduation congregation ceremony.

Jane Slowey "I loved Birmingham and I'm still in touch with lots of people from my time there. It also made me very conscious of the luxury of a university education. I know how much education opens doors – I think it is the single most important factor in social mobility."

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